

Assessment for Learning

The school's aim is to foster the individual aptitudes and meet the individual needs of each child and assessment is one of the key means by which we are able to meet this aim. The prime purpose of all forms of assessment is to translate our understanding of each child into action that will benefit a child's learning and our assessment procedures are to be valued in so far as they contribute to this end. Assessment can be summarised as fulfilling the following functions:

Summative: to provide us (and others, including parents, future schools, educational psychologists) with a picture of a child's development through time

Diagnostic: to provide a detailed picture of the child's strengths and weaknesses, to inform any necessary action to benefit the child

Formative: to aid teaching and learning planning and to aid the mapping out of the next steps in children's learning

What matters most is that we should be able to reflect upon and analyse assessment information and use it to inform our future teaching. To this end, the assessment process is routinely translated into action through a variety of meetings between teachers that lead to action planning for each individual child.

Management

The overall management of assessment for learning throughout the school is the responsibility of the Director of Studies, supported by the Assistant Director of Studies, the Byron House Director of Studies and the Heads of Subject. Our calendar of assessment is reviewed regularly to ensure that there is an appropriate overall balance of assessment, conducted at appropriate times, and to conduct an annual review of assessment procedures.

Forms of Assessment

Assessment for Learning - Routine Teacher Assessment

The most frequent and most vital form of assessment takes place in the course of each lesson, in the teacher's responsiveness to the children's learning as the lesson takes place. This is the primary form of assessment. Conversations with children as they are in the process of working and observations of how children approach a task are crucial features of lessons and will often result in proper and positive divergence from lesson plans or adjustment to future plans. The teacher's ability to notice, to adjust to and to give positive feedback to children as a lesson proceeds is the most important form of assessment in that it is the form of assessment most likely to translate directly into benefits for each child. In the course of each lesson, we should always aim to be pinpointing a child's strengths and advising how to develop them as well as being clear and constructive about any weaknesses and how they might be addressed, and providing opportunities for the child to improve upon his/her work. This approach develops the child's capacity for self-assessment so that he/she can become reflective and increasingly independent as a learner.

Graded assessment

For teacher assessment, we use clearly benchmarked grading throughout the school, to:

- place the emphasis on the teacher's judgement of a child's performance
- foster discussion of children between teachers within a year group or department
- see a child's performance in relation both to the demands of the curriculum

Discussion between staff, focusing on the children's actual work is at the heart of our assessment procedure. To achieve consistency in the grades across the year and between years, the grading process involves teachers discussing and agreeing grades as appropriate within subjects and year groups, based primarily on samples of children's work. Discussion about the children's actual work rather than 'numbers in a mark book' leads to a clearer picture of the child's performance and the process itself encourages reflection about each child's strengths and needs. In this way, the process of grading enhances our understanding of a child and allows for flexibility in teaching approaches.

Teacher's assessments are completed at the end of each term and inform the pupil review and action planning process at the beginning of each new term (see Pupil Improvement Group Roles & Responsibilities and Annual Pupil Transfer and Michaelmas and Lent Review documents in the [Teaching & Learning section of the Staff Handbook](#)). The assessment process is, in this way, linked directly to review and action on behalf of each child.

Termly grading is reported to parents in written reports. Effort grades communicate the amount of effort teachers think a child is putting into their work:

E = exceeding expectations for effort

M = meeting expectations for effort

Y = yet to meet our expectations for the amount of effort.

Attainment grades in English, maths and science describe the attainment level a child has reached in relation to a set of level descriptors. In Forms 5 and 6 this can be related to what might be expected, at that point in time, for a child to achieve at Common Entrance:

A* = 80%+

A = 70%+

B+ = 65%+

B = 60%+

C+ = 55%+

C = 50%+

D+ = 45%+

D = 40%+

In earlier years, a C grade describes a child who is coping with the level of work required by the St John's curriculum but working in the lower ability for the subject, B is working well within the curriculum and A is working above the level of the St John's curriculum and being extended within the class. A D grade applies where a child is having difficulty coping with our mainstream and there will be a plan in place to support a child working at this level.

Departmental assessment involves a department in reviewing the performance of a child, children or a whole year group and allows for adjustment in provision. Assessment for these purposes may be based on standardised or internally generated forms of testing.

Each subject department has a calendar of key points of assessment for each year group, which includes e.g. module testing and internal tests in those subjects for which this is appropriate. Where revision for tests is needed, children are set revision tasks for prep.

Departmental meetings are used to consider the outcomes of assessment and to adjust provision accordingly, as necessary. Assessment results also contribute to the departmental review discussions and planning when Heads of Department meet with the Director of Studies on a termly basis to review children's progress and plan for development.

Standardised assessment uses forms of testing that are generated beyond the school and therefore gives a snapshot of each child and of a year group as a whole, from a different perspective. Such assessment may be used departmentally (e.g. Spelling or Reading testing) or may be more abstract (e.g. CAT tests). Overall, such information can provide valuable confirmation of teacher and/or departmental perception can raise queries that need to be pursued, or can provide more general information about a child's potential and progress, strengths and weaknesses. Standardized tests are mainly completed during the Summer term each year, with some tests being completed in November for benchmarking purposes in Pre-Prep.

In KG, the '2Build a Profile' is completed at the end of each term and at the end of the first half term and tracks the children's progress across the areas of learning. Children's progress is shared with parents through weekly surgery times, the Michaelmas and Lent Parent Evenings and through the end of year reports.

Tutor:Tutee discussion – Forms 3-6

It is important that each child also has time to reflect on his or her progress. To this end, tutor:tutee meetings take place between a tutor and each child on a fortnightly basis, fostering pupil self-assessment and a growing independence in, and responsibility for, their learning. In addition to dealing with general pastoral issues, tutors concern themselves primarily with a child's effort and self-esteem, as the task of managing teaching and learning falls to subject teachers and departments. The tutor needs to know that a child is doing his or her best and is doing so happily.

Analysis of Assessments

Assessments are continuously analysed and inform decision making about:

- provision, such as whether a child needs further support or extension in a given area
- setting
- advice for future schooling
- curriculum developments

Decisions about ability grouping are not made on the basis of a single set of statistics but are determined, subject by subject, over the course of the year, by analysing all relevant information.

Analysis of assessments takes place through:

- The ongoing analysis of an individual teacher to inform planning on a day to day basis
- Analysis by Heads of Department leading to departmental development planning and support for teachers with individual pupils. Pupils are discussed in departmental meetings and assessment analysis is also discussed at termly meetings between each Head of Department and the Director of Studies (meetings are recorded and inform development plans).
- The Pupil Improvement Team review all grades and standardised scores at the end of each term to inform our Pupil review process and individual children are then discussed at Pupil Improvement meetings throughout the term (see Pupil Improvement Group Roles & Responsibilities in the [Teaching & Learning section of the Staff Handbook](#)).
- The Assistant Director of Studies analyses assessment information, on an annual cycle of half termly reports, about cohorts and groups to inform development planning as well as planning for individual pupils. The analysis is reported to SMC and to Governors on a termly basis.

Individual Needs

The Pupil Review procedure may bring to light unresolved queries about a child's progress and this may prompt an assessment by the school's Individual Needs department, which may in turn lead to an internal or external assessment. The Director of Studies and the Head of the Junior Department, together with the Individual Needs Co-Ordinator, will ensure that any necessary specialist provision is put in place. The school's Individual Needs Policy is set out separately.

Extension Needs

The Pupil Review system and the systems for routine monitoring are used to identify those very able children whose needs may not be fully met within the school's mainstream curriculum. Plans are made following discussion and assessment for how the most able children will be extended both within and beyond the classroom.