



Watford Grammar School for Girls

Assessment Policy

This policy adopted by Board of Governors	10th July 2017
Next review date	July 19
Committee Responsible	Education

The Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the approach of WGGs to the assessment of pupils' work, to assist in effective learning and teaching and to set out the details of the reporting of pupils' achievements and progress. This should ensure there is a common understanding, so that pupils, teachers and parents are aware of the school's approach. This policy encompasses assessment of learning in the lesson, assessment of written/produced/performed work and internal examinations.

Assessment is an essential element of effective teaching and learning. The aims of the school cannot be achieved without valid assessment procedures for the whole school. All teaching involves assessment of some kind as part of the process; it is important, however, to ensure that assessment does not dominate or overburden classroom practice and that the emphasis remains on teaching.

The Aims of the school include the goal that each girl:

'Is encouraged to achieve academic excellence, fulfil her potential and participate actively in all areas of school life, aiming to reach the highest standards in all she does'.

Assessment is considered to play a key role in the fulfilment of this aim.

This policy should be read alongside the QWC (Quality of Written Communication) policy.

Outcomes

Assessment is a vital component in helping pupils to make progress. Assessment should be used to:-

- inform pupils of what they need to do to make progress,
- inform pupils of when they have made progress
- give pupils an indication of their attainment,
- inform teachers if teaching strategies and schemes of work need to be adapted,
- inform teachers of next steps required in their lessons,
- inform the school of progress of pupils,
- inform parents of their daughter's attainment
- inform parents of how their daughter can make progress.

This policy should ensure that assessment at WGGs:

- Helps pupils and the school to reach and even exceed their targets,
- Encourages pupils' learning, by providing meaningful yet challenging feedback and setting aspirational yet achievable targets,
- Encourages pupils to take more ownership of their progress by involving pupils in their own feedback and other pupils' feedback,
- Is built into the planning of teaching and learning, so that sufficient curriculum time is dedicated to it,
- Is manageable, effective and constructive,
- Provides useful information in terms of attainment and progress to all interested parties,

- Supports the ethos of the school.

If assessment is to have these benefits, it must be characterised by certain basic principles.

- * It should be fair, accurate and consistent.
- * Within each department, teachers should use similar assessment procedures.
- * Within a department, grades and marks should be of a consistent standard.
- * It should be clear to the pupil at the start of the task what is to be assessed.
- * Comments used in assessment should be positive and supportive and useful to teacher, parent and pupil alike.
- * Effort and perseverance should be recognised as well as attainment.
- * Pupils should have some opportunity to take part in assessment including peer assessment, self-assessment and responding to comments.
- * A variety of assessment methods should be used.

What is assessed?

Assessment should be based on a variety of evidence. Pupils need to be aware that assessment of tests, exams and homework tasks is merely one part of the process and that their contributions in the classroom, together with their work ethic all are taken into account by teachers, as are practical work, group work, project work and presentations.

How is work assessed?

All teachers should follow their department's policy. Each department should have its own policy that should reflect and adhere to this whole school policy. Department policies should also consider the marking guidelines in Appendix 1; this will ensure that there is an element of consistency for the pupils. The department policy is the responsibility of the Head of Department and should be reviewed annually and made easily available for staff to access. Teachers must ensure that pupils can interpret any grading system used by the department.

Feedback should consist of informing the pupil what has been done well and setting targets about how to make further progress. This will often be linked to criteria stated by the department or individual teachers.

A mixture of self-assessment, peer assessment and teacher assessment should be used. Where self-assessment and peer-assessment are used, the success criteria should be clear to all pupils, so that their feedback can be useful. Pupils will need guidance on how to provide constructive feedback to each other. Teachers may want to provide to the whole class a number of options for all the pupils to select the most appropriate feedback from for the piece of work they are assessing. Where peer assessment is used, teachers should try to ensure that a student's work is not always assessed by the same student.

Teachers must pay careful attention if pupils in any group eg SEN so the specific needs of each pupil are taken into account when assessing them.

As feedback is key for pupil progress, it is essential that time is given in lessons or homework to allow pupils to take on board feedback provided by the teacher and make sure it is understood. Time should be given for pupils to respond to any targets if appropriate and also for clarification of feedback if required. Opportunity must also be given so that, before the next piece of work is

to be completed, pupils can look at the previous comments to consider how best to apply them if appropriate, or time set aside in lessons for “Polishing time”.

Record keeping

Departments should keep records of work and assessment data that provide the evidence of pupils’ attainment. It should be possible to transfer these easily from one teacher to another as appropriate and these should be accessible to HoDs, HoYs and SLT if required (but it does not have to be electronic) and they must be easily interpreted.

Data should be entered into SIMS as the Staff Reporting Help sheet sets out.

Internal exams including Mock Examinations

Internal examinations are utilised in order to monitor standards across the entire year group, to build evidence of progress and to get pupils used to sitting examinations in preparation for GCSE and A-level examinations. In Years 7-10 and Year 12, pupils sit exams in the Summer Term and the exam should cover content from across the entire year. The Year 10 and 12 exams should be in a format similar to that of the GCSE/A-level examination style for that subject, based on the work they have done so far.

In Year 11 pupils sit GCSE Mock examinations in January and in Year 13 Pupils sit mock A-level examination in February. These mock examinations should, as far as possible, be in the format of the examination they will sit in the summer for that course and ideally be based on past examination questions and marked in accordance with exam boards’ mark schemes and grade boundaries.

The results are entered onto SIMS and made available to all staff. The Mock Examination result grades are not made available to pupils until the designated Results afternoons.

Reporting

Reporting is a key part of assessment, for details please refer to the Staff Reporting Help Sheet.

Reporting Timetable

A timetable is published by the Assistant Head at the start of each academic year. In general terms, there will be an initial report for each pupil in the Winter term which, depending on the year group, will have predicted Pathways / grades and a work ethic descriptor. At one or two more times in the year, reports will be published with a Progress descriptor and a Work Ethic descriptor and a bespoke comment informing what the pupil needs to do to make further progress for each subject.

Predicted and Target Grades / Pathways

In KS3, pupils are predicted a Pathway; in Key Stage 4 pupils are given a predicted and target GCSE grade and in KS5 pupils are given a predicted and target A-level grade.

A target grade is the grade that the pupils capable of achieving given her ability in that subject. A target grade will be set at the start of Year 10 and at the start of Year 12 and cannot be changed.

A predicted grade or Pathway is the grade or Pathway that you think the pupil will achieve and therefore combines their ability with their work ethic and attitude and adaptation to your course. A prediction will be given at the start of every year.

Parents' Consultation Evenings

Each pupil has a Parents' Consultation Evening once a year. The different year groups have these at different times in the school year, as is deemed most appropriate. These evenings allow the parents to meet each of their daughter's individual subject teachers to discuss their daughter's progress, attitude and how their daughter can make further progress; the pupils are encouraged to attend so the conversations can be more productive.

If required, parents can make appointments during the school year to meet with the Head of Year or Heads of Department to discuss any urgent issues. Heads of Year or Heads of Department may also feel a meeting with parents is required. HoYs and HoDs will seek input from subject teachers before these meetings as necessary.

Appendix 1

Marking Guidelines

Research shows that if pupils are given a mark and some written feedback on a piece of work, they tend not to reflect on the comment and simply focus on the mark. Therefore, at Key Stage 3 at Watford Grammar School for Girls, much of the pupils' work should not be graded so as to encourage pupils to focus on ways to improve. Pupils should realise that the most important aspect of written feedback from teachers as it's the contribution it makes to them making further progress. As students move into Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, more work should be graded as appropriate and should be given a mark appropriate to departmental guidelines; constructive comments.

Work should be marked and returned to students promptly; only in exceptional circumstances should this exceed two weeks (practical projects or long reports may need longer).

Teachers must pay careful attention if a student is in any group e.g. SEN so the specific needs of each pupil are taken into account when marking and providing feedback.

For some work, verbal feedback will be most appropriate. Teachers should bear in mind that the purpose of feedback is to help students improve and therefore consideration must be given when providing verbal feedback or feedback on work that may be displayed as to how students will remember these comments and apply them to future pieces of work. When appropriate, whole class feedback may be effective.

For some work, acknowledgement marking will be all that is required. The expectation is not that all pieces of work are marked in depth.

All teachers have a responsibility for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum ; teachers should therefore not focus solely on subject matter but also comment on any literacy or numeracy issues that are relevant. The school's QWC Policy should be followed to provide feedback on spelling grammar and written expression using the standard nomenclature.

Classwork/ Homework.

If a mark is given on pupils' work, this should be relevant to the Key Stage the pupil is in and should reflect individual department policies on marking. A GCSE grade should be used for pupils in KS4 and an A-level grade in the Sixth Form. It is not appropriate to give a Pathway grade for such assignments.

Feedback should be used to inform the pupil of what has been done well and for setting targets about how to make further progress.

Tests and Assessments.

Approximately twice a term, in each subject, a test or assessment should be set which will indicate progress according to Pathways at Key Stage 3 and progress according to GCSE grade or A-level grades at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Advice on what went well and how the student can make progress should be given. Graded work should have success criteria of which pupils

are made aware in advance. It is expected that tests, assessments and internal exams will be moderated within departments as appropriate.

Internal examinations

Internal examinations are set for girls in all year groups. Marking of exams should adhere to the same good practice as for tests and assessments (see above).

Coursework

Teachers marking any coursework for public examinations should ensure they are fully conversant with the relevant exam board's correct procedure for indication of marks on work, or the level of comment that is required and what feedback, if any, is allowed to be passed to the student. Should there be any uncertainty, teachers must speak to their Head of Department or the Exams Officer.

Appendix II - Roles

Senior Leadership Team

The SLT is responsible for:

- Ensuring that these guidelines meet statutory requirements,
- Ensuring that the policy is followed,
- Evaluating the impact of assessment in terms of helping pupils and groups of pupils to make progress and meet targets,
- ensuring that the quality of assessment is consistent across the school,
- ensuring that Pathway criteria are comparative between subjects,
- ensuring that data is collected and used effectively and that assessment systems are manageable for staff.
- Determining and publishing the assessment cycle and timetable for the year in terms of reporting and
- Identifying assessment priorities for the whole school.

Heads of Department

As well as writing and reviewing their department's policy, HoDs have a key role in ensuring consistency and clarity within their respective departments. New colleagues must be familiarised with the school guidelines and department-specific marking guidelines and ideally effective exemplar material should be provided. HoDs should also check regularly to ensure that there is consistency within the department. Key common assessments should also be reviewed, potentially in department meetings, for moderation purposes. HoDs should also review their subject's Pathway criteria. HoDs should also review their department's data to identify areas needed for improvement and to monitor standards.

Subject Teacher

The subject teacher:

- is responsible for providing feedback and assessment to pupils,
- should help the pupils to develop the skills of self and peer assessment,
- use a range of assessment methods and techniques,
- provide feedback of the appropriate level of challenge for each individual pupil and for different groups
- record progress and identify under-achievement and, where appropriate, report this to their HoD,
- enter data as required into SIMS, so as to report to parents as outlined in the reporting guidelines, and
- ensure information is available for the next teacher or next school.

Heads of Year

HoYs should

- use assessment data to identify pupils or groups of pupils causing concern and put in place intervention measures where appropriate.
- track student progress so as to liaise with parents, staff and pupils as appropriate.