



READING BLUE COAT SCHOOL

Assessment, Marking and Reporting Policy

Assessment

The School views effective assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, as based on the following principles:

- i. Assessment should help pupils to develop fully their academic abilities and self-confidence, to develop skills which they need for reflective and independent study and to establish shared understanding by pupils and teachers of clear and explicit study goals.
- ii. Assessment, both formal and informal, should complement and reinforce the delivery of the curriculum. It should enable the learning needs of individual pupils to be identified and allow future teaching strategies to be determined.
- iii. Assessment should recognise individual progress and achievement and provide pupils with meaningful information which will allow them to participate in self-evaluation.
- iv. Assessment should involve a range of techniques both formal and informal, carried out in a variety of contexts, which will allow individual pupils to show what they know, understand and can do.

Assessment can take many forms: indeed, it is the *range* and *variety* of the assessment methods used within the School which enable teachers to gain the clearest picture of a pupil's attainment.

The School naturally makes use of regular formal and informal assessments, such as examinations (public and internal), coursework, homework, practical work, oral work, and class tests, to determine pupils' progress.

Teachers are also involved in the continuous assessment of pupils' work during class activities and day-to-day classroom interaction, monitoring not only academic attainment but other skills such as co-operation and teamwork. These skills are also assessed in an informal way through the programme of extra-curricular activities.

Pupils who are encouraged to assess their own effort and performance are often more highly motivated and develop more confidently the skills needed for effective independent study. Departments are therefore encouraged to involve pupils in the assessment process, wherever possible, such as adopting Assessment for Learning techniques. These help pupils to take responsibility for their learning because they are encouraged to understand their successes and misunderstandings and to take responsibility for improving.

Marking

Through assessment, pupils become aware of what they are learning and of their progress in a subject – and, most importantly, how they can progress further.

Marking is the main way of regularly communicating this awareness; it also demonstrates how their work is valued by their teacher. This, in turn, enables pupils to focus their efforts on important aspects of the subject and to take on more responsibility for their own work and progress. Effective marking also highlights the quality and effectiveness of the teaching.

This approach is upheld in the following ways:

- i. It would be neither reasonable nor helpful for staff to correct every single mistake that a student makes. However, it is expected that staff will draw attention to errors in understanding, mistakes in the use of subject-specific language and any glaring grammatical or spelling mistakes or errors in calculation. The degree to which such mistakes are to be corrected on the student's work is a matter for individual teachers and departments to take into account in the light of the effect that the correction would have on a student's self-esteem or motivation – especially in the case of students with SEN.
- ii. As assessment must be both formative as well as summative, it is essential that there is an appropriate balance of grades/marks and constructive comments. In practical subjects and, at times, in other subjects, these comments will best be given orally either to the class as a whole or to individual students e.g. if several pupils have written poor conclusions to an essay, it would make perfect sense to comment to them in class about how to improve a conclusion rather than writing the same comment on each essay. This would be an example of how assessment could inform future teaching. However, it is expected that, in the majority of homeworks, there would be at least one comment giving guidance as to how the work can be improved, and that future teaching would allow opportunities for such improvement to be demonstrated.
- iii. All marks or grades given must be meaningful to students. It is expected that departments will, at the outset of the year, ensure that their marking and grading system is explained to all pupils. One easy way to achieve this is to have departmental policy outlined on a single piece of paper that can be placed in books or files. Pupils in classes being prepared for public examinations should have access to the marking principles used in assessing the specification they are studying. Departments will consider how best to present these to pupils.
- iv. In subjects where folders and files are used, it is expected that, once each half-term, pupils would have to demonstrate to subject teachers that files/folders are organised and up-to-date.
- v. Marking should be as constructive as possible. Pupils benefit greatly from knowing that teachers are interested in their work and have noticed the effort that has been expended and that progress has been made. The Commendations system should therefore be actively used, as outlined in departmental and school policy, to reward attainment, effort and progress.

- vi. In different subjects and year groups, pupils should know when work is to be set and when/in what form they will receive the assessment feedback. Deadlines must be clearly established, as well as interim deadlines for coursework. Assessed work should always be returned to pupils within reasonable timeframes that each department will establish, and students should be appraised if there are circumstances preventing this; respect for deadlines will best be encouraged by that respect being mutual.
- vii. Marks and grades should be accurately recorded in mark books and entered into relevant department and school databases when required.

Reporting

The procedures for reporting in the School are the responsibility of the Deputy Head (Academic). In this task, he is assisted by the Director of Section..

The School has a range of strategies to keep parents fully informed of their child's progress:

- i. A formal report on pupils is issued to parents once a year. These reports will refer to the pupil's knowledge and understanding, their strengths and weaknesses in terms of subject specific skills, their behaviour and effort and an outline of future targets. These reports will also include a report by the Form Tutor, the Head of Year and a brief comment by the Headmaster. The timing of the reports is as follows:

Year	Time of Report	Reason for Timing
7	July	Following Summer Examinations
8	July	Following Summer Examinations
9	February	Prior to GCSE Option choices
10	March	Following two terms of GCSE study
11	December	Prior to GCSE Mock Examinations in January
12	March	Following two terms of AS level study
13	December	Update following one term of A level study

- ii. Grades are also issued every half term, except when internal or external examinations are imminent. These consist of grades for attainment (1 to 5 in Years 7 to 9; exam grades in Years 10 to 13) and a grade for 'Commitment to Learning' in the Middle School and Sixth Form and separate grades for effort, organisation and behaviour in the Lower School. These are expressed on a five-point scale:

Grade	Descriptor	Y7-9 Attainment Criteria
1	Exceptional	Work is characterised by great skill and insight, outstanding detail and accuracy, with frequent evidence of flair
2	Very Good	Work displays a high level of skill, with very good detail and accuracy; occasional signs of flair
3	Good	Work displays a generally good level of skill, with some detail and general accuracy
4	Sound	Work is satisfactory but would benefit from greater depth, accuracy and attention to requirements
5	Unsatisfactory	Work consistently displays little substance or understanding; significant improvement is required in terms of depth, detail and accuracy

- iii. The Form Tutor also writes a report at the end of terms when a formal written report is not produced or when there is not a parents' consultation evening. This comments on academic progress in part but the principal focus is on the pupil's co-curricular development and social wellbeing. Such reports also track pupil progress since previous assessments.
- iv. Consultation sessions for each year group are also held once a year, when parents and pupils are invited to discuss performance and with individual subject teachers.
- v. Further to this, for pupils in Years 7, 9 and 12, there is an evening for parents to meet the new Form Tutor at the start of the Autumn Term.
- vi. Where a pupil's academic performance gives rise to specific concern at other points in the year, the Head of the relevant section may request an *ad hoc* report from subject teachers and arrange a meeting with parents to discuss its conclusions. Heads of Department may also be in contact with parents where subject-specific support or advice is required.

Parents may, of course, contact the school at any time to request to see any subject teacher, the Form Tutor, the Head of Department or the Head of Section if they have a concern about any aspect of their child's progress.

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