



HENLEY-IN-ARDEN SCHOOL

Achieving Excellence Together

Name of Policy	Assessment for Learning Policy	
Lead	Mr Nick Lunn, Assistant Headteacher	
Governor Committee	Chair of Governors	
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1. Purpose of Assessment

1.1 The purpose of assessment is to provide teachers with meaningful data about student strengths and areas for development. This information is used to inform teaching, enabling staff to close gaps in knowledge and skills and ensure that all students make progress. Assessment also plays a vital role in helping students understand where they are in their learning journey. It gives them clarity on what they are doing well, what they need to improve, and how to take the necessary steps to do so. Ultimately, assessment is a tool for both teachers and students to support learning and achievement.

2. Assessment for Learning

2.1 Assessment is not limited to formal, summative tests at the end of a unit. Instead, it is a continuous process that includes a wide range of techniques designed to provide ongoing feedback. Teachers are trained in a variety of Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies that allow them to identify when students have not grasped key concepts. These strategies enable timely intervention to prevent misconceptions from becoming embedded and ensure that no child is left behind. While summative assessments are important, they are just one of many tools used to monitor progress and support learning. The emphasis is on formative assessment and feedback that helps students improve throughout the learning process.

2.2 Students are actively involved in the assessment process. They are made aware of the success criteria before completing work and are encouraged to reflect on their performance. Students are also encouraged to reflect metacognitively on the learning strategies they used for revision and practice of key knowledge and skills, and to plan how they might do things differently to further improve their performance. In this way, students are supported to become more reflective learners, understand expectations, and set realistic and achievable goals for themselves. Departments ensure that students understand how their work is assessed and what evidence is required to demonstrate attainment.

3. Principles of Assessment Design

3.1 Assessments should be thoughtfully designed to be both accessible and challenging for all students. Tasks must cater to a range of abilities, ensuring that every student can engage meaningfully with the assessment. Assessments should test knowledge and skills cumulatively over time, revisiting key concepts to reinforce learning and support long-term retention. This approach avoids reliance on isolated “end of module” tests and instead builds a comprehensive picture of student progress.

3.2 Effective assessment design begins with feedback in mind. Teachers must consider how students will understand their performance, identify their next steps, and be supported to take those steps. Assessments should be benchmarked to reflect pathways to different GCSE and BTEC outcomes, ensuring that students working towards a grade 1 and those aiming for a grade 9 are both appropriately challenged and supported. This inclusive approach ensures that all students are given the opportunity to succeed.

4. Assessment Types and Frequency

4.1 The nature and frequency of assessments vary by subject. Heads of Department are responsible for leading the design of assessments, ensuring they align with the carefully sequenced curriculum and assess the right knowledge and skills at the right time. This allows students to receive meaningful feedback that they can act on.

4.2 In many subjects, assessments will be written and conducted in silence, but in others, they may take the form of performances, speaking assessments, presentations, or practical tasks. The format is chosen to best reflect the subject content and learning objectives.

4.3 Marking expectations are clearly defined across subjects and key stages. Core subjects at KS4 provide feedback at least three times per half term, while other KS4 subjects offer feedback twice per half term. KS3 core subjects provide feedback twice per half term, and other KS3 subjects once per half term. These expectations ensure consistency and support student progress. Please see appendix 2 for a summary of marking frequency expectations.

5. Assessment Windows

5.1 Each year group has three main assessment windows throughout the academic year, followed by a data collection point. These windows are staggered to help Heads of Department manage marking workloads and ensure that different year groups are assessed at different times. Please see Appendix 1 for an example of how assessment windows are spread over the academic year.

5.2 Before each assessment window, parents receive a summary of upcoming assessments, guidance on how to revise, and information on where to find revision materials. Students are informed of assessment dates and revision tasks by their classroom teachers via the Class Charts app.

5.3 Assemblies and tutor time activities are used to help students understand how to revise effectively, while staff CPD supports the development of assessment and feedback techniques.

5.4 Some departments use the assessment window as an opportunity for mini-assessments, used formatively to adapt teaching and guide student revision for the main assessments at the end of term. In practical subjects like dance, the assessment window provides an opportunity to highlight the continuous feedback students receive and helps sharpen their focus on next steps.

5.5 All assessments contribute cumulatively to the overall picture of student progress, and a range of data is considered when determining grades.

6. Feedback to Students

6.1 In all subjects, students receive detailed feedback on their performance in assessments. This feedback identifies their strengths and areas for development against the success criteria.

6.2 Students are given follow-up learning tasks to help them act on their next steps. This process is known as “Time to Improve.” In written subjects, students use a green pen to redraft answers or complete follow-up questions that help them practice and embed knowledge and skills they did not demonstrate in the assessment. This helps to visually demonstrate how students have acted on feedback and furthered their learning.

6.3 During Time to Improve lessons, teachers re-teach common misconceptions and provide targeted support to help all learners move forward. This includes stretch tasks for the most able students, enabling them to progress beyond the success criteria if they have already met or exceeded expectations in the assessment itself.

6.4 Students are expected to respond to substantial feedback through redrafting, corrections, dialogue with teachers, or other forms of improvement. This engagement ensures that feedback leads to meaningful learning gains.

6.5 Following feedback, teachers plan further “closing the gap” activities that provide them with the opportunity to re-teach and re-test misconceptions over time. This spaced practice of common misconceptions helps students learn from mistakes over time and embed the right knowledge and skills in their long-term memories.

7. Feedback to Parents and Carers

7.1 Parents receive reports twice a year following each assessment cycle. These reports detail their child’s targets, working at grades, and teachers’ views on their attitude to learning.

7.2 Attitude to learning is broken down into specific areas such as attitude to classwork and homework. These grades are based on published criteria displayed in classrooms and planners, and are shared with parents through reports and homework diaries.

7.3 If parents have questions about their child's report, they are encouraged to contact the Head of Year in the first instance.

7.4 Students record their progress in their planners and complete reflection exercises. These reflections are designed to help students keep their next steps at the front of their minds in future lessons and focus their efforts so they can make progress. Parents are encouraged to look at student reflections in planners and discuss next steps with their child.

8. Target Setting

8.1 Students are given GCSE targets based on Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data, with an expectation of making three levels of progress from KS2 to the end of KS3.

8.2 Targets are aspirational and designed to encourage students to achieve their best. No student is given a target below a pass grade (grade 4), regardless of their KS2 starting point.

8.3 Targets may be increased if students consistently demonstrate that they are on track to exceed their original target.

8.4 Assemblies and in-class reflections help students to understand what their targets mean and how well they are progressing towards them.

9. Reporting of Grades

9.1 At Key Stage 4, students receive two types of grades: "working at" grades, which reflect what they would likely achieve if they sat the exam now, and "expected" grades, which indicate what they are projected to achieve by the end of the course if current effort and progress continue.

9.2 At Key Stage 3, students are placed on performance "pathways" that mirror the distribution of GCSE grades nationally. This helps students understand whether they are on track for their target grade.

9.3 In practical subjects such as dance and PE, students are assessed using a mastery pathway with five levels: Emerging, Developing, Secure, Mastery, and Mastery+. This also applies to RS.

10. Access Arrangements

10.1 Students with SEND or other needs may have access arrangements in formal GCSE and BTEC exams that reflect their normal classroom practice. Students and parents will work with the SENDCO and the wider SEND team over the years preceding final assessments to ensure students who need access arrangements have them in place,

and that all learners are supported to access exams, in line with the relevant JCQ regulation.

10.2 In regular classroom assessments, students are allowed to use the tools they normally use as part of their normal way of working, such as word processors.

10.3 Where possible, assessments are designed to be longer for all students, so that extra-time is not necessary. If this is not feasible, teachers take individual student needs into account when grading.

11. Mocks

11.1 Mock examinations are held once in Year 10 and once in Year 11, with additional mocks for core subjects (English, maths, and science).

11.2 Year 10 mocks are not full exam papers but are designed to assess students with appropriate rigour based on the content covered so far.

11.3 Year 11 mocks use full past papers, marked according to official exam board mark schemes. Grade boundaries may be adjusted upwards to account for grade inflation, based on the Head of Department's professional judgment.

12. BTEC and CNAT Component Assessments

12.1 In many BTEC and CNAT subjects, formal assessments that count towards final grades begin in the first term of Year 10.

12.2 Staff communicate directly with students and parents about the dates, requirements and necessary preparation for these assessments.

12.3 These assessments must be treated with the same seriousness as final GCSE exams, requiring thorough preparation, revision, and practice. Whilst some can be re-sat, this is not true for all BTEC and CNAT courses. Whether or not re-sits are possible will be communicated to students and parents by the relevant Head of Department.

13. Use and Storage of Data

13.1 Teachers maintain marksheets detailing assessment data, which are used to inform grades and support teaching.

13.2 These marksheets are stored securely on the school's OneDrive and in SIMS, in accordance with data protection policies.

13.3 Data is entered into SIMS three times a year, including current grades, projected grades, and attitude to learning scores. This data is used by SLT, Heads of Year, and

Heads of Department to monitor progress, identify underachievement, and plan interventions.

13.4 SISRA is used to analyse trends over time and support strategic planning. Progress forums and departmental meetings use this data to celebrate success and prioritise support.

14. Quality Assurance

14.1 The quality of assessment and feedback is regularly monitored. Heads of Department quality assure marking, feedback, and student responses after each assessment window. These findings are logged in the Middle Leaders QA document and reviewed by the Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Data.

14.2 “Student voice” is conducted to ensure students understand their feedback and can articulate their progress and next steps. During these meetings, students bring their books, folders or records of their assessed work and talk through their progress and the feedback they have received.

14.3 Regular learning walks and work scrutinies, conducted at a department-level by Heads of Department and at a whole-school level by the Senior Leadership Team, also focus on student understanding of feedback.

14.4 Outcomes of Quality Assurance activities are shared with Heads of Department in briefings, and actions are recorded in Middle Leader QA logs and monitored by SLT line managers.

14.5 Heads of Department are responsible for maintaining accurate and consistent records of assessments. These records include test and module results and are overseen to ensure alignment with departmental practices.

Appendix 1: Example of assessment windows calendar

Assessment cycles for 2024-5					
Wee	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	11
1					Revision
2	Presentation checks (incl. year 11)				
3					
4	Revision	Revision	Revision	Revision	
5					
6					DIRT
7					Data
8					QA
Half term					
9		DIRT			
10	DIRT	Data			Revision
11	Data	QA		DIRT	Revision
12	QA		DIRT	Data	Revision
13			Data	QA	Revision
14			QA		MOCKS
15					MOCKS
Christmas					
16		Revision			DIRT
17				Revision	DIRT
18		Assess	Revision		Data
19				Assess	QA
20	Revision	DIRT	Assess		
21	Assess	Data		DIRT	
Half term					
22		QA	DIRT	Data	
23			Data	QA	
24	DIRT		QA		
25	Data			Revision	
26	QA			Revision	
27				Revision	Data
28				Revision	
Easter					
29	Revision				MOCKS
30		Revision			MOCKS Speaking
31	Assess		Revision	DIRT	Speaking
32				DIRT	
Half term					
33	DIRT	Assess		Data	
34	Data	DIRT	Assess	QA	
35	QA	Data	DIRT		
36		QA	Data		
37			QA		
38					
39					

Marking is an opportunity for teachers to provide meaningful feedback to students that praises their achievements and signposts areas for further development and their next steps. In most cases, marking will be written, but it may take other forms, for example typed feedback or voice recordings.

Live Marking and Verbal Feedback

The most impactful form of marking is live marking and verbal feedback. This immediate feedback reinforces student learning through the delivery of timely and impactful praise and addresses misconceptions early before they become embedded. Teachers are trained to provide opportunities in their lessons to circulate the room, live mark, and give verbal feedback. Students are expected to respond to this feedback in green pen during the lesson, ensuring that they engage with the feedback and take ownership of their learning.

Time to Improve Activities

More formal feedback is provided through 'Time to Improve' activities. These are structured opportunities for students to act on feedback and embed learning.

Time to Improve tasks **must** include:

- Clear feedback on students' strengths, including praise.
- Clear feedback on students' areas for improvement.
- A reflection carried out by students on their next steps.
- Activities to help them respond to their feedback and carry out their next steps.
- Feedback on Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation (where appropriate).

Time to improve tasks **may** include:

- A grade or numerical mark.
- Opportunities for further peer- or self-assessment.

Time to improve activities include, but are not limited to: redrafting work; completing follow-up questions that explore the same knowledge and skills as the assessment; correcting errors; or engaging in targeted practice. Feedback may take the form of written comments, checklists, or other formats appropriate to the subject.

Marking Frequency Expectations

Key Stage	Subject	Frequency of Feedback
KS4	Core Subjects (English, maths, science)	3 times per half term
KS4	All Other Subjects	2 times per half term

KS3	Core Subjects (English, maths, science)	Twice per half term
KS3	All Other Subjects	Once per half term/per term (dependent on frequency of lessons)
KS3/KS4	Character Sessions (once every 2 weeks)	No traditional marking expected

Timing

For marking to be effective, it needs to be timely. This will look different in different departments and for different teaching groups; sometimes it will be appropriate to mark and return work quickly, while at other times the return of an assessment may be delayed to allow for the re-teaching of common misconceptions before work is handed back and improvement tasks are carried out.