



# Assessment Policy

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# Assessment Policy

## Rationale

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Curriculum Policy and Teaching and Learning Policy, as well as the Trust's Assessment Principles document.

This policy was reviewed and rewritten in June 2022. The policy is based upon extensive research and evaluation of the techniques and principles of assessment that have the greatest impact on pupils' learning and progress. Neatherd is committed to raising the achievement of all its pupils through excellence in teaching and learning, we recognise that effective, principled and evidence-informed assessment design and practice are central to the learning process. Done well, assessment, tracking and feedback combine to have a powerful impact on pupil progress.

Our core principles are centred upon Evidence Based Education's 'four pillars of assessment':



- **Principle 1:** We ensure that all assessments have a clearly-defined **purpose**. We begin by thinking about what we want to find out and why.
- **Principle 2:** We ensure that **validity** is at the heart of all assessment practices. We design our assessments so that they meet their stated purpose and allow us to make justified inferences about pupils' learning.
- **Principle 3:** We seek to maximise **reliability** in our assessment practice. We acknowledge that no assessment can ever be 100% reliable but we take all reasonable steps to increase accuracy and to remove sources of bias and inconsistency.
- **Principle 4:** We ensure that our assessments add **value** to learning at every step. We acknowledge the high opportunity cost of assessment by consciously increasing its positive effects and reducing its negative effects on pupils and teachers alike.

## Purpose

When assessing, we should start by asking ourselves **what** we want to measure and **why**. This is key to helping us choose the right assessment tool. As an assessment principle, the idea of 'purpose' can be further broken down into three steps:

1. **The construct:** What is the specific knowledge, skill or understanding (drawn from the curriculum) that we intend to assess?
2. **The end use:** What do we want to do – the interpretation, decision or action – with the information generated by the assessment process?
3. **The best tool:** What and when is the most appropriate, effective and efficient way to assess in this instance?

## Validity

Assessments should be **valid for a specific purpose** and should enable us to **make valid inferences** based on the information generated. When designing our own assessments, we should therefore be conscious of two potential failings:

1. **Construct under-representation** is when the assessment is focused on too narrow a sample of curriculum content to provide the information required for the desired assessment purpose.
2. **Construct-irrelevant variance** is when the assessment outcomes are influenced by things other than the target of the assessment.

## Reliability

No assessment can be 100% reliable but teachers can improve reliability by taking steps such as:

- acknowledging that teacher bias, subjectivity and assessment conditions can be sources of error
- using exemplar work to clarify what success looks like in specific assignments
- blind-marking assignments
- blind-moderating samples of pupils' work

## Value

Effective assessment requires careful planning, administration, reviewing, feeding back and analysis. Every minute we spend on assessment is a minute that cannot be spent doing something else. We must therefore ensure that the positive effects of assessment outweigh any negative ones in order to ensure that assessment adds value to pupils' learning. These effects can be referred to as the washback effect.

- Examples of **positive washback** include pupils studying more, pupils being able to recall more, and pupils receiving high-quality feedback on what to do next. **We should aim to maximise these effects.**
- Examples of **negative washback** include unmanageable teacher workload, teaching to the test, increased stress for pupils and decreased time for other activities. **We should aim to minimise these effects.**

(Kime, 2017)

The **aim** of this policy is to guide impactful assessment that leads to pupils making excellent progress whilst at the same time ensuring that teachers have a reasonable workload and are not carrying out practices that are excessively time-consuming or that have no proven impact on pupil progress.

## **Guidance and best practice; a summary of evidence-informed best practice that can help inform the work of our school leaders and teachers.**

### **Assessment for formative purposes**

This may also be referred to as 'responsive teaching' There is therefore significant overlap with pedagogical knowledge, requiring leadership teams to ensure that regular, high-quality professional development and opportunities for deliberate practice are provided for teachers. This form of assessment should be happening at all stages of learning. Its main purpose is to enable teachers to answer these questions:

- Have pupils learned what I set out to teach them?
- Are there any gaps in their knowledge or understanding?
- Are there any misconceptions that need addressing in order for pupils to make progress?

For assessment to provide valid and reliable information, teachers must be clear about what they are setting out to teach, why they are teaching this, and any misconceptions commonly faced by pupils when faced with this content. These points should be specified in schemes of work.

There are many effective techniques for impactful formative assessment, some of which are outlined here.

- **At the start of a lesson / sequence:**

Regular **low-stakes testing** and **quizzing** is effective in recalling prior learning and identifying any gaps in knowledge and understanding that may affect the teaching planned for that lesson.

- **In the middle of a lesson / sequence:**

High quality **verbal questioning** is often used to evaluate pupils' understanding. The effective use of **Cold Calling** allows us to engage a wide range of pupils, increasing the reliability of our inferences and keeping pupils cognitively active at all times. Any concerns about Cold Calling causing anxiety for pupils can be mitigated through:

- i. Building in thinking time through the use of **Question-Pause-Name**
- ii. Using **Pre-Cold Calling** to give a pupil a little advance notice that they will be called
- iii. Establishing positive teacher-pupil relationships, and a classroom culture in which errors are seen as a normal – and helpful – part of the learning process
- iv. Ensuring that teachers know their pupils well and avoid asking an individual a question that is clearly beyond their level of understanding

The use of **Question Shells** can be effective in developing and probing pupils' thinking, helping the teacher to identify misconceptions. With a Question Shell, a simple recall question is adapted slightly to generate discussion showing deeper understanding of a concept:

Original	Reframed
Is a square a trapezoid?	Why is a square a trapezoid?
Is this a sentence or a clause?	Why is this a clause rather than a sentence?
Is <i>être</i> a regular verb?	Why is <i>être</i> an irregular verb?

(Extract from Wiliam, 2018)

Teachers will want to check that pupils have sufficiently secured their knowledge and understanding of a key concept before moving on to the next stage of their teaching sequence. **Hinge questions** are designed to take no more than a couple of minutes to answer, and for the teacher to judge the whole class's response within 30 seconds or so before deciding if s/he can move on or if further explanation and modelling is required. (The use of **mini-whiteboards** or **voting technology** can facilitate this.) They are often carefully designed **multiple-choice questions (MCQs)** in which the incorrect answer options are based on common misconceptions and are therefore *interpretable* to the teacher. A more nuanced version is the **multiple-correct MCQ** in which there is more than one right answer. Incorrect answer options will still relate to common student errors, but the various correct options can be used to reveal different levels of understanding. These types of hinge questions fulfil two functions: they reveal if pupils have the minimum level of understanding to enable to class to move on, whilst simultaneously providing stretch and challenge for more able learners.

**Self-assessment** and **peer-assessment** may be used judiciously in lessons where they will help pupils to make progress. The use of **highly-specific success criteria checklists** is particularly effective here: when pupils and their peers complete such checklists, it encourages close checking and proofreading of work, thereby developing self-regulation, embedding routines and motivating pupils to take pride in the production of high-quality work.

When pupils are working independently, teachers purposefully **circulate** the classroom to check on pupil understanding, enabling them to address misconceptions at the earliest opportunity or to spot excellent examples of pupil work to share with the class.

- **At the end of a lesson / sequence:**

Teachers will need to assess if pupils have secured their knowledge and understanding of the lesson's key content. **Exit tickets** are short tasks that pupils complete on a piece of paper in the last few minutes of a lesson and that the teacher takes in for review. They could be based on one or two multiple-choice questions, a question shell or possibly require pupils to produce something such as the introductory paragraph to an essay. They should not require marking but will enable the teacher, in very little time (ideally no more than 10-15 minutes, and frequently much less), to decide whether to move on, re-teach the whole class or intervene with individuals or small groups. In some cases, having made the decision, the teacher may simply discard the exit passes; in others, the teacher may wish to record data for his or her own markbook to build up evidence of mastery or to identify pupils needing intervention.

- **In between lessons:**

Teachers should periodically monitor pupils' written work (whether this is general classwork, note-taking or extended writing) in order to identify errors and misconceptions, as well as any next steps for improvement. **This does not require extensive marking and written feedback** (see section on Feedback).

## Feedback

The EEF tells us that there is extensive evidence showing that effective feedback is one of the most impactful strategies in raising achievement.

Teachers should ensure that feedback adheres to three key principles: it should be **meaningful**, **manageable** and **motivating**. When planning to give feedback, teachers should consider these questions:

- How widespread is the error or issue and is it something I need to address with the whole class?
- Is this something that the students can fix themselves? If so, when am I going to give them time to do it?
- How will I know if this feedback has 'sunk in'? What am I expecting them to do with it, or how am I expecting their thinking to develop?
- What is the most time efficient way to work with pupils on this development point?  
(Fletcher-Wood, 2018)

Feedback can take many forms, including:

- Whole-class verbal feedback
- Group verbal feedback
- One-to-one verbal feedback
- Re-teaching
- Consolidation exercises
- Extension exercises
- Brief written comments (see section on Written Feedback)

Feedback should be precise and focus on specific information that the pupil can use to improve performance. It should introduce "desirable difficulties" that cause pupils to think and to move their learning forwards by addressing gaps in their knowledge and understanding, or by making them think more deeply about the content. **Feedback should always produce more work for the recipient than for the provider.**

## Written feedback

The Department for Education (2016) recognises that "in many schools, written feedback has become disproportionately valued and unnecessarily burdensome... The quantity of feedback should not be confused with the quality." Providing extensive written comments in pupils' books takes many hours of a teacher's time but the nature of such comments makes it difficult to be precise, leading to little or no impact on learning and progress.

**Extensive written feedback is therefore to be avoided wherever possible.** Complex ideas are much better explained through a face-to-face discussion between teachers and pupils.

Effective and impactful alternatives to extensive written comments include:

- Use of **sheets with common targets** on which ticks can be placed as relevant.
- **RAG-rating** work: The teacher marks a pupil's work as Red, Amber or Green (using a coloured marker or the initials R/A/G). At the start of the following lesson, differentiated tasks are set for pupils depending on which colour they received, focusing on intervention, consolidation or extension work.
- **Numbered targets**: The teacher identifies common targets and writes these onto a Word document for display on the whiteboard. Each target has a number. The teacher writes the relevant number(s) in pupils' books and pupils then copy the target from the whiteboard into their own book.
- **'Examiner Reports'**: Having reviewed pupils' work, the teacher writes a summary that is similar in style to the examiners' reports produced for public exams, outlining how pupils fared in general, the most common errors and any misconceptions that seem to have been encountered by a number of pupils. The report is then printed, copied and glued into pupils' books.
- Work can be sampled using a **Book Look sheet** (see Appendix 2). Feedback can then be provided to the class or to individuals or groups, as necessary.
- If an error is a result of process or a lapse of concentration, rather than a fundamental lack of understanding, it could be circled or highlighted, and pupils told to make corrections / explain the error in the following lesson.

### Assessment for summative purposes

Assessments should be guided by the following evidence-based conclusions:

- In order to make reliable and valid inferences about pupils' attainment (and, in turn, the progress they are making), formal assessments should aim to sample from a broad domain of subject knowledge, including content taught in previous terms or years.
- Whilst pupils will make continual progress in their learning through mastering individual components of a subject, it should be recognised that subjects include vast domains of knowledge. Therefore, improving attainment in the subject as a *whole* takes time. For this reason, it is recommended that high-stakes summative testing should happen on no more than three occasions per year in each subject.
- When interpreting the results of such assessments, teachers and school leaders should bear in mind that a test result is no more than a snapshot of performance (as opposed to learning) at a particular point in time. Furthermore, even the best-designed assessments can only cover a sample of everything that has been covered within the curriculum. We should therefore be wary of making judgements about pupils' learning based on the results of a single assessment. For this same reason, decisions regarding changes to setting (where applicable) should **never** be based on one assessment alone.

- The purpose of summative assessment is to provide a shared meaning based on valid inferences about pupils' attainment. This requires honesty and transparency in how we report the results of school-devised, curriculum-linked assessments. These are not nationally standardised assessments and the use of grades, levels and categories such as 'expected,' 'emerging' and so on is likely to be flawed, bringing a risk of invalid judgements. In contrast, recording test results as percentages or scaled scores, or rating pupils' performance by percentiles, gives an accurate and incontrovertible record of each pupil's results on a given assessment.

## Ensuring high standards

We want to assure that assessments are of a high standard and are contributing to raising pupil achievement. Therefore, we will:

- compare a cohort's test results with the mean and distribution of the same cohort's results from standardised tests to see if they are broadly aligned
- share and discuss assessments and assessment findings with colleagues from other Trust schools (e.g., via termly Subject Network Meetings)
- moderate the marking of assessments where more than one school is using the same or similar assessments (e.g., mock exams for the same exam board)
- develop high standards of assessment literacy through high-quality professional development

## Essential reading for Senior Leadership Team assessment leads

- Christodoulou, D. (2017) *Making good progress? The future of Assessment for Learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Department for Education (2016) *Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking: Report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group*. Crown Copyright.
- Department for Education (2016) *Eliminating unnecessary workload associated with data management: Report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group*. Crown Copyright.
- Education Endowment Foundation (2015) *Teaching and Learning Toolkit*.
- Education Endowment Foundation (2016) *A Marked Improvement? A Review of the evidence on written marking*.
- Evidence Based Education's *Great Teacher Toolkit: Assessment Lead Programme* (<https://evidencebased.education/great-teaching-toolkit/>)
- Fletcher-Wood, H. (2018) *Responsive Teaching: Cognitive science and formative assessment in practice*. Routledge.
- Kime, S. (2017) *Four Pillars of Assessment* (<https://evidencebased.education/pillars-assessment-purpose/>)
- William, D. (2014) *Redesigning Schooling – 8: Principled Assessment Design*. London: SSAT (The Schools Network)
- William, D. (2018) *Embedded formative assessment*. Solution Tree Press



## Target setting

- The school does not provide Key Stage 3 pupils with target grades that they are expected to achieve within certain timescales. We want our pupils to aspire to achieve the highest grades possible and do not believe that targets based on Key Stage 2 data alone will help them to do this.
- On entry to the school, all pupils (including those joining during the academic year from other schools) sit CATs (Cognitive Ability Tests) to help us understand each pupil's potential.
- At Key Stage 3, the results of *GL Assessment Progress Tests* in English, maths and science are used each year to track pupils' progress in core subjects.
- At Key Stage 4, we use Department for Education transition matrices, GL Assessment data and estimates from Fischer Family Trust to help guide us in analysing pupil progress. These grades are used as a benchmark and not as a specific target that should be achieved in the GCSE exams. Using FFT20 (top 20% of schools nationally) helps us to ensure that we are maintaining aspirational goals for both pupils and teachers alike.

**Recording and reporting – See Trust Assessment Calendar, Appendix 1.**

Pupils and parents receive three reports per year. Two of these are 'short' reports with data only; one is a 'long' report with a written comment.

At Key Stage 3, reports contain the following information:

- **Autumn Term**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - Year 7 only - Standardised age scores for CATs and reading
- **Spring Term**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - Results of mid-year assessments
- **Summer Term**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - Results of end-of-year assessments
  - Summary reports and standardised age scores of *GL Assessment Progress Tests* in English and maths
  - Written comment from the pupil's form tutor

At Key Stage 4, reports contain the following information:

- **Short reports**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - KS4 Target Grade
  - Teacher forecast grades: these are the grades for each subject that, in the teacher's professional judgement, the pupil is likely to achieve at the end of Year 11
- **Long reports**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - KS4 Target Grade
  - Teacher forecast grades
  - A brief written comment for each subject
  - Written comment from the pupil's form tutor

## Guidelines for teachers

Subject teachers should follow these guidelines when reporting on pupils:

- The pupil is the recipient, so the report must address them in the first person, e.g. 'Michael, you have made good progress this year' as opposed to 'Michael has made good progress this year.'
- All comments must be related to learning and progress in the subject. Statements should guide the pupil to what they need to do to improve.
- Maximum of three sentences per pupil.
- Teachers should double-check all spelling, punctuation and grammar. The spell-checker in SIMS will not pick up everything. They should seek assistance from colleagues, and be prepared to give assistance too.
- Not to name any other pupil on the report of a child. (This rule also applies to the entering of behaviour incidents on MIS / Class Charts)

Form Tutors should follow these guidelines when reporting on pupils:

- Tutors to write approximately five sentences per tutee.
- Tutors do not need to refer to the pupils' subject reports. Knowledge of their progress should come from their own academic mentoring and discussions with/about the pupils.
- Tutors should not refer to exact attendance figures as these will have changed by the time the report is extracted. However, a tutor statement should comment on their attendance with the following guidelines:
  - over 98% - excellent attendance
  - 95-98% - good, but room for improvement
  - under 95% - cause for concern
- Tutors to make sure they are fully aware of any medical/family issues before making a comment on attendance.
- Examples of things a tutor statement should include could be:
  - Participation in form time activities
  - Organisation of school equipment
  - Completion and neatness of pupil planner
  - Responsibilities such as monitors, pupil council, team leadership
  - Extra-curricular involvement – sports, arts, clubs
  - Social skills within the tutor group
  - Specific targets discussed in academic mentoring
  - Uniform, punctuality and behaviour in tutor periods

## Deadlines

It is crucial to stick to the deadlines given in the reports schedule. The MIS mark sheets are open all term, so there is plenty of time in which to complete our reports. The process of checking, auditing, correcting, amending, printing, collating and distribution has to be done to meet the date given to parents. When teachers miss reporting deadlines, this creates extra work for the Data Team.

## Role of Subject Leaders

Subject Leaders are responsible for making sure their team meets the deadlines, and for the accuracy of the information given therein.

## Distribution of Reports

Paper reports will be distributed either by Royal Mail or by pupil post. They will also be uploaded to the MCAS, to which all of our parents have been offered free access.

## Contact with parents and carers regarding learning:

Pupils' planners are a means of passing quick messages between teachers / tutors and home. Parents are encouraged to check planners periodically.

Teachers are also to be encouraged to contact home if the pupil gives cause for concern on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Any informal contact should be recorded on the notes page of Class Charts/MCAS.

If parents have a query or concern about a particular subject, the class teacher is the first person to contact. If the query or concern relates to a child's learning more broadly, parents should contact the relevant form tutor or, for pupils with Special Educational Needs, the SENCO. Initial contact can be made by sending an email to **office@neatherd.org** or by phoning the school and asking for the relevant teacher to phone back at a mutually convenient time.

## Monitoring and evaluation

The Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher (Teaching and Learning) are the designated senior leaders responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of assessment and practice in school.

Assessment, feedback and intervention are specific areas of focus in the school's half-termly Quality Assurance Cycle. We monitor the quality of assessment through:

- Learning walks
- Work scrutiny
- Data analysis
- Questionnaires
- Meetings with pupils
- Annual department reviews

Where monitoring activities identify any areas for development, we will use Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and line management systems to secure improvements.

Senior leaders provide regular feedback on the quality and impact of assessment to members of the Local Governing Board through the termly Head's Report and to the Academy Trust through half-termly Impact Meetings.

## Appendix 1: Trust assessment calendar 2022-23



Enrich Learning Trust  
Assessment Calendar: 2022-2023

	Date	Year group	Assessment type	Data required in Bromcom
<b>AUTUMN</b>	09/09/22	11 & 13 (leavers)	GCSE and A Level final outcomes	Results broadsheet
	12/12/22	YR – 11	PASS Survey	Percentile for each area*
		1-6	PiXL tests – reading / writing / maths	Standardised scores
		7	GL Progress Test baseline – English / maths	Standardised scores: PTE11T and PTM11T
		11 & 13	Forecast grades (exam subjects)	Whole grades (standard results format)
<b>SPRING</b>	06/02/23	YR	Forecasts: Expected / Below Expected Standard for GLD	Expected Standard / Below Expected Standard (overall)
		10 & 12	Forecast grades (exam subjects)	Whole grades (standard results format)
	27/03/23	1-6	PiXL tests – reading / writing / maths	Standardised scores
		11 & 13	Forecast grades (exam subjects)	Whole grades (standard results format)
<b>SUMMER</b>	26/05/23	11 & 13	Forecast grades (exam subjects)	Whole grades (standard results format)
	03/07/23	1	Phonics Screening Test	Raw score (x/40)
		4	Multiplications Check	Raw score (x/25)
	17/07/23	YR	Final: Expected / Below Expected Standard for GLD	Expected Standard / Below Expected Standard (overall)
		1/3/4/5	PiXL tests – reading / writing / maths	Standardised scores
		2	KS1 Teacher Assessment	Below Standard / At Standard / Greater Depth for reading / writing / maths
		6	KS2 SATS results	Standardised Scores for KS2 reading / GPVS / maths tests
		7/8/9	GL Progress Test – English / maths	Standardised scores and progress category: PTE12/13/14 and PTM12/13/14
10 & 12	Forecast grades (exam subjects)	Whole grades (standard results format)		
<b>Colour coding:</b>		<b>PRIMARY</b>	<b>SECONDARY</b>	<b>ALL</b>

\*PASS Survey areas:

1. Feelings about school (FAS)
2. Perceived learning capability (PLC)
3. Learner self-regard (LSR)
4. Preparedness for learning (PFL)
5. Attitudes to teachers (TCH)
6. General work ethic (GWE)
7. Confidence in learning (CIL)
8. Attitudes to attendance (ATA)
9. Response to curriculum (RTC)

**APPENDIX 1**

**Book-look quick marking sheet**

**Class:**

**Date:**

**Praiseworthy:**

**Missing / incomplete:**

**Literacy issues:**

**Cause for concern:**

**Misconceptions:**

**Presentation:**

**Response activity:**