THOMAS ALLEYNE'S HIGH SCHOOL

Assessment Policy

September 2020

Approved by	
Learning and Standards Committee September 2020	
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Reviewed: Mrs Peers

Thomas Alleyne's High School – Assessment Policy

Policy Principles

This policy is a core component of the drive to raise educational standards at Thomas Alleyne's High School at all Key Stages, and to bring greater consistency to the quality of Teaching and Learning for all of our students. Students have a right to know and understand at all points in the course what progress they are making against established criteria and against their own target grades. It should be clear to them at all stages in their followed courses what they need to do to improve their achievement.

During their teaching and learning they should experience a wide range of effective assessment strategies which support learning and ensure good progress is made regardless of their ability or prior knowledge and attainment in the subject. Teachers have a duty to follow schemes of learning which contain a variety of assessment strategies and styles.

Post-16 assessment has a range of purposes, all of which are important. It needs to help students to improve (formative assessment); it needs to inform teachers, parents and students about progress made (summative assessment). It also needs to inform teachers about their teaching; the results of assessment to feed into teachers' planning for future learning. This may impact on pace, content, teaching methods and the revision needs of sixth form learners.

Policy Aims

1. To provide clear guidelines on the school's approach to assessment

2. To establish a coherent approach to assessment across all departments

3. To provide a system which is clear to students, staff and parents

Principles of Assessment

1. Primarily assessment at Thomas Alleyne's High School is based on the principles of Assessment for Learning, which are designed to improve learning and thus raise standards. Assessment of Learning, for the purposes of grading and reporting is also used.

2. Assessment of students' work should tell students and their parents:

 a) How well a student is achieving

b) How current levels of achievement relate to target grades and levels

c) What a student needs to do to improve

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

AfL is formative and takes place all the time in the classroom.

 It has been defined as: 'the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where their learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there' (Assessment Reform Group 2002).

The principles of this policy are underpinned by the DfE workload document and exemplar assessment policy (DfE July 2018).

All feedback:

- informs pupil progress
- has a positive impact on pupil outcomes
- is a good use of teachers' time

Thomas Alleyne's High School will put these AfL into practice by integrating five strategies into everyday teaching and learning.

These are:

• Sharing success criteria with students

• Questioning

• Giving formative feedback to students (this will include verbal feedback); where relevant staff must ensure that exam regulations are adhered to (e.g. BTEC coursework)

• Peer and self-assessment

• Formative use of summative tests where appropriate

Assessment of Learning Over Time - Progress

Assessment of learning tends to be summative and is carried out periodically e.g. at the end of a unit or year or key stage. The teacher undertakes this kind of assessment to judge how well a student is performing in terms of grades and marks.

Assessment in Practice

Teachers should constantly monitor student understanding and progress through questioning, discussion and observation. In addition, students' work should be assessed frequently and regularly so that students receive feedback on their strengths, weaknesses, attainment and the next steps that need to be taken to secure improvement (or for the improvement of future work in the case of BTEC assignments rather than re-drafting, to ensure compliance with exam board requirements). This is known as the SWANS system. When teachers mark students' written work, they will use a red pen. When students respond to teachers' marking in the form of completing next steps, they will use a green pen.

Teachers should mark the book of the student in the class that they know will produce work of a high quality as a 'benchmark'. The next books looked at should be all the PP pupils' books in the class to ensure we have high expectations for PP students. This includes PP students at Key Stage 5.

Curriculum Leaders are responsible for producing a document that sets out how the whole school policy will be applied in their department (whilst also considering exam board guidance for BTEC subjects on permissible feedback). All Curriculum Leaders will need to consider the DfE workload guidance and the points below:

A teacher should only write in a pupil's book if it is going to impact on progress.

The more immediate the feedback the greater the impact. All subject areas will identify in their area policy a bare minimum standard in terms of regularity of feedback, taking into consideration the frequency of lessons, and the nature of the subject i.e. practical/theory based.

Other than a tick for completion a teacher should only write in books if…

- they are pointing out a good attribute that a pupil must continue to use ie strength
- they are pointing out a literacy error

- they are pointing out an area for development (this can be highlighted in the text) as weakness
- The work will conclude with a GCSE/A-level or BTEC style mark (where appropriate) and a tangible **next step** to move learning on.

Where verbal feedback is given teachers should only record the feedback if it will reinforce the implementation of the next step, not purely for the benefit of book looks.

Curriculum Leaders must ensure:

- departmental assessment policy establishes clear practices, both formative and summative which ensure that assessment of knowledge, skills and competence is fully integrated into each Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 course, to ensure that it becomes part of the continuous process of learning so that students make rapid and sustained progress
- that exam style questions are used for all year groups as part of homework routinely for all subjects (this could also be coursework development where relevant e.g. BTEC units), and that this should include elements of 'spiral learning' to develop retrieval practice and/or build on prior skills
- that at least 6 common assessments for the year group are completed over the academic year which are purely exam style questions, which are then used to inform assessment points entered into SIMS and also to inform any set changes where appropriate
- effective moderation of a sample of mocks (this can be a full mock paper if desired or focus on a specific question or skill) is completed using validity moderation across the department, which is shared with their line manager and Mrs. Maingay to inform any professional development needs
- that 'spiral learning' is evident in homework and assessments
- that a wide range and variety of assessment methods and practices, appropriate to purpose, are built into schemes of learning and lesson plans
- assessment accurately reflects student attainment and achievement, so that marks awarded, and written statements made in the form of strengths, weaknesses and next steps accurately reflects progress towards clearly defined levels of achievement, assessment criteria or examination grades. Where areas of weakness are identified teachers must indicate clearly how progress can be made
- all work is assessed in line with individual student target grades which are predictions made based on prior attainment
- departmental practice allows students to identify personal strengths and abilities and build upon them through personal reflection, developing their self-regulation and meta-cognition
- that the expectation for regularity of feedback in books and from assessments in the department is clearly laid out.

Assessment Schedule

The school will publish a termly assessment schedule on its website. This will be collated by the Assistant Head with responsibility for data. This will support parents in understanding what their son/daughter will be tested on in each term.

Presentation of Work

- Students must be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work:
- The covers of student books and folders must not be defaced with graffiti or doodling
- The inside of student books and folders must not be defaced with graffiti or doodling
- Student handwriting must be completed in blue of black ink, or where next steps work is completed, green ink
- All work must be dated

- All dates and titles must be underlined using a ruler
- Homework must be clearly marked with H/W in the margin
- Diagrams should be completed in pencil and labelled in ink
- Handouts and worksheets should be stuck inside exercise books or filed correctly in a folder

Quality Assurance and Professional Development

Monitoring of students' work in all Year groups will take three forms:

1. SLT will conduct work scrutiny in line management with a Head of Department, using data to identify books
2. SLT will conduct focussed work scrutinies with outcomes recorded electronically on the school's chosen evaluation system.
3. Heads of Department will conduct work scrutiny each half term as part of the Line Management Narrative process. Outcomes will be recorded on recorded electronically on the school's chosen evaluation system.

Heads of department and senior leaders will quality assure marking and feedback, and provide appropriate support.

The focus of work scrutiny will be to look at how the pupil is making progress. It will not focus on how much the teacher writes. It will be purely on the impact this has had on pupil progress. The actual practice of a pupil improving their work is more important than how much the teacher writes.

1. In the first term the HOD/senior leader(s) will prioritise staff and or subject areas needing support (based on previous book looks or progress data) and agree next steps.
2. Staff who demonstrate good practice in feedback and marking will only require a 'light touch'/informal check in future.

Other opportunities to share good practice related to feedback will be built into the calendar, but each HOD will timetable these when it is appropriate for their department.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/feedback-and-marking-reducing-teacher-workload

Grading of Students Work Key Stages Three, Four and Five

Class work and homework will be graded as follows:

B = Work below expected standard/target grade

TG = Work showing evidence of the standard/grade expected for the student's target

E = Work showing evidence of exceeding the standard/grade expected for the student's target

Where it is necessary to grade work, for example on tests and mocks, grading will reflect relevant exam specification criteria and students will be given an exam board grade relevant to the subject area.

Target grades should be used in summative assessments so that a comparison between the target grade and the grade achieved by a student in their work can be made.

Individual student progress and differences from targets as well as residuals for all students in all subjects is available to staff via SISRA and should be accessed regularly for tracking and monitoring purposes at all Key Stages.

Data will be provided to Curriculum Leaders and Line Managers as matrix tables for easy identification of students at risk of not making the expected progress. The matrices will be used for line management narratives.

Curriculum Leaders, Line Managers and the Head of Sixth Form for KS5 must analyse the data derived from each reporting cycle via SISRA and/or the supplied subject matrix assessment grids for all Year group assessments so that students in danger of underachieving can be quickly identified and appropriate and rapid intervention strategies are put in place.

Reporting Progress & Effort and Estimated Grades

Progress is reported according to the assessment schedule and grades will be entered into SIMS to create reports for parents/carers.

Effort and estimated attainment grades will be used on student reports. The attainment grade will be an estimated exam grade that reflects likely final levels of attainment and the effort grade will be taken from the four-point scale outlined below:

- Excellent
- Good
- Requires Improvement
- Poor

If a student is performing below their target grade, or they have an effort grade of requires improvement/poor, then teachers must provide a written comment to explain why this is the case. The comment should be written in a constructive manner to support the student in making progress towards achieving their target grade. In addition, the qualitative statement should be utilized to provide information to parents/carers so they can actively support their child/ren in their academic journey at Thomas Alleyne's.

Post-16 Reports and UCAS:

- Post-16 reports are used to feedback on current student attainment against their individual target grades, as determined from the tracking data used by classroom teachers. They are also used to give a predicted grade based on the student continuing to achieve at the current reported levels.
- If a student is performing below their target grade, then teachers must provide a written comment to explain why this is the case. The comment should be written in a constructive manner to support the student in making progress towards achieving their target grade. In addition, the qualitative statement should be utilised to provide information to parents/carers so they can actively support their child/ren in their academic journey within the Sixth Form at Thomas Alleyne's.
- In the Autumn term of year 12 staff are required to write UCAS references and supply predicted grades via UniFrog. Such information provides the Sixth form Team with the information necessary to complete UCAS references (for university applications) and other references should they be required.
- UCAS references are completed for all students regardless of whether they intend to apply to university or not. UCAS references and predicted grades are open documents which are routinely shared with students and should therefore be written in an honest, but constructive manner.

Target Grades

Students will receive a target grade in all of their subjects

At Key Stage Three and Four, the target grade will be an exam grade based on Fischer Family Trust Aspire top 5% criteria.

At Key Stage 5, the target grade is generated through the Oxford Analytics system which uses the students' average GCSE point score to work out the grade they are statistically most likely to achieve on their A-Level and/or BTEC courses. It then works out what grade would put that student into the top 20% of the country wide cohort and sets that as a Target Grade. This will be referenced against FFT 5 if needed to ensure grades are aspirational and add value to a student's learning pathway.

Response to Eliminating Unnecessary Workload around Marking (Report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group)

1. **Making marking meaningful:** the report argues that the purpose of marking should be 'to advance pupil progress and outcomes' and that the 'the most appropriate person in deciding what is appropriate is the teacher.' Our policy is broad and flexible gives curriculum leaders the flexibility to interpret how it applies to their subject area and to write their own specific departmental policies.
2. **Making marking manageable:** written marking is one type of assessment and feedback. Other appropriate types are verbal feedback to individual students, verbal feedback to whole classes, peer assessment and self-assessment. Written feedback is useful as evidence of assessment but an emphasis on student 'next steps' and the quality of the work they produce is a more effective way of judging the effectiveness of teacher assessment. Work scrutiny will place a greater emphasis on student response rather than written feedback from teachers.
3. **Making marking motivating**: there is no expectation that next steps advice should necessarily involve detailed written comments and in fact, such comments can be difficult for students to respond to. An emphasis on short challenging comments and targets (written and/or verbal) is more effective.

Helpful Strategies

ASCL have responded to the Response to Eliminating Unnecessary Workload around Marking document and suggested a number of useful strategies:

1. Use marking as planning, marking should inform teachers what needs more clarification and what needs re-visiting.
2. Clarify expectations of marking with students. A minimum expectation checklist may be shared (proof-reading, dates, underlined headings etc.) to be eligible for marking.
3. Widely use other methods of feedback, spoken, peer and self-assessment to support progress.
4. Use a list of codes which match likely feedback tasks.
5. Predict likely misconceptions or errors and design a list of numbered actions likely to challenge students' thinking further.
6. Prioritise re-drafting and only accept work after feedback has been acted on; only fully mark when it has reached a specific quality.
7. Feedback only on a specific skill or for particular content. Have a primary focus for the marking.
8. Share good examples of work visually with students before students undertake a task in order to identify common mistakes and pitfalls.
9. Develop peer assessment with a 'plus', 'minus' and interesting criteria when judging work. Ask students to use highlighters to emphasise examples, evidence and analysis to make marking explicit.

Whole school marking of literacy

Literacy Marking Guidelines

All staff will use the following codes for marking pupil work with a literacy focus.

Mark in the margin	Means
Sp	Try this **spelling** again.
C	Find the missing or misplaced **capital** letter.
P	Put in the appropriate **punctuation** mark/s (full stop, comma, semi-colon, speech marks, etc).
Gr	Check this section for your use of **grammar**.
//	Mark in where the **paragraph should be.**
Exp	Rewrite this short section at the end, to improve the **expression**.
+	Add in this point that you forgot to include.
✔	Well-written section-apt and clear.
✔✔	Striking or imaginative writing.