



THE BEECHES

INDEPENDENT SPECIAL SCHOOL

Assessment Policy

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Introduction to the Policy

The Beeches Independent Special School provides education and care for pupils between the ages of 9 and 19 years who have a learning disability. These can include autism, ADHD and a range of other disabilities.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidelines on our approach to formative and summative assessment
- Establish a consistent and coherent approach to recording summative assessment outcomes and reporting to parents
- Clearly set out how and when assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated

2. Legislation and guidance

Since the removal of National Curriculum levels in 2014, schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment.

This policy refers to the recommendations in the [Final Report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels](#).

It also refers to statutory reporting requirements set out in [the Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005: schedule 1](#).

3. Principles of assessment

Rationale

Assessment for Learning (AfL) refers to all activities undertaken by teaching staff and pupils that provide information that can be used to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are involved.

AfL is a process, which provides information on individual pupil experience and achievement and identifies what the pupil knows, understands and can do.

Assessment is the key to the promotion of our pupils' learning. The different aspects of planning, teaching, assessment and record keeping strategies, when looked at as a whole, form a complete 'jigsaw', which fits together to create an environment where quality teaching and learning takes place. Such an environment is where pupils and teachers work together and aim for high achievement.

Recording is the selection and retention of significant and relevant information on the pupils' experiences and achievements, including what the pupil knows, can do and informs planning.

Reporting is the communication of significant and relevant information on the individual pupil's experiences and achievements.

The Principles of Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The assessment policy is built upon the whole-school curriculum policy, which encompasses learning and teaching. Assessment is both formative and summative. Planning is led by learning intentions, aims and objectives, not activities. Assessment is not one thing: it involves a whole range of activities and strategies.

Assessment includes achievement of areas beyond and not included in the National Curriculum. The individual needs of our pupils are paramount.

Aims of Assessment

- To provide up-to-date information about the attainment of individuals and groups of students
- To establish what pupils know, understand and can do
- To provide a record of pupil progress and consolidation of learning
- To assess the readiness of pupils for future learning in order to inform planning
- To identify patterns over time, which is useful when pupils learn in very small steps
- As a basis from which to set targets for improvement
- To promote rigour and pace
- To give an insight into the curriculum received by the pupils
- To enable the school to review the effectiveness of the curriculum and model of delivery
- To assess the progress of specific groups of pupils (gender, ethnicity)
- To assess the need for additional, specialist support

- To help motivate pupils and staff
- To encourage pupil motivation and self-esteem
- To provide information to discuss with and report to parents and carers
- To provide information for other teachers
- To satisfy statutory requirements

Assessment should:

- + Value all pupils equally and free of bias
- + Recognise and give credit for pupil achievements in and outside school
- + Involve pupils in self-assessment where appropriate
- + Form an integral part of learning and teaching
- + Use a variety of approaches to assessment
- + Provide valid and reliable evidence of achievement.
- + Measure and monitor performance against agreed criteria
- + Identify positive achievements
- + Provide opportunities for contributions from all involved in pupils' learning

4. Assessment approaches

At The Beeches Independent Special School, we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

We use two broad overarching forms of assessment: day-to-day in-school formative assessment and in-school summative assessment. We also, where possible and appropriate, use nationally standardised summative assessment.

4.1 In-school formative assessment

Effective in-school formative assessment enables:

- **Teachers** to identify how pupils are performing on a continuing basis and to use this information to provide appropriate support or extension, evaluate teaching and plan future lessons
- **Pupils** to measure their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives, and identify areas in which they need to improve
- **Parents and carers** to gain a broad picture of where their child's strengths and weaknesses lie, and what they need to do to improve

Formative assessment is day-to-day, ongoing assessment which is based on how well our pupils fulfil the learning intentions, providing feedback and wherever possible involving pupils in improving their own learning.

How planning links with formative assessment:

Effective planning provides an essential framework within which to facilitate learning and therefore provides a basis on which to assess progress.

Long-term

- ✓ Shows coverage and progression
- ✓ Provides an overview of the curriculum for each pupil
- ✓ It helps to provide learning aims

Medium-term

- ✓ Includes the learning intentions

Short-term

- ✓ This is a working tool
- ✓ Includes a breakdown of the learning intentions, including differentiation

Suggested criteria for making judgements:

- ❖ Changes in demeanour – pupils looking bright eyed and interested, not half-hearted
- ❖ Students extend concepts themselves through interest and understanding
- ❖ Students may use a learnt process in a different context, transferring concepts and skills
- ❖ Students are able to explain what they have learnt
- ❖ Students are able to focus their attention on a task for a longer period of time

Our school's approach to formative assessment includes:

- Marking and in-depth feedback in written form, no less frequently than once a fortnight in each subject
- Questioning
- Self and peer assessment in lessons

Formative assessment will be used to assess knowledge, skills and understanding against the learning objectives recorded in the current scheme of work. Teachers will RAG rate students against the objectives for each week, the outcome of which will identify gaps and misconceptions and be used to modify planning, teaching and learning for the following week. Records of RAG ratings will be maintained by individual teachers and stored centrally to enable access for school leadership. Students will each have a copy of the learning objectives for each unit and will update their personal RAG ratings on a weekly basis, in-line with teacher assessment.

4.2 In-school summative assessment

Effective in-school summative assessment enables:

- **School leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment
- **Teachers** to evaluate learning at the end of a unit or period and the impact of their own teaching
- **Pupils** to understand how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time. It should be used to provide feedback on how they can improve
- **Parents and Carers** to stay informed about the achievement, progress and wider outcomes of their child across a period

The Beeches Independent Special School uses in-school summative assessment as a baseline from which to measure progress, to highlight areas of strength and for development in order to assist planning and to monitor the effectiveness of teaching.

Our school's approach to in-school summative assessment includes:

- Clearly identified and planned assessments per half termly unit in each subject
- Baseline assessments in English and Maths upon entry to the school and termly thereafter
- Termly testing of reading age and spelling age (sight reading and comprehension ages)

Summative assessment allows teachers to identify areas of strength and areas for development within each unit of work that they deliver. This impacts upon future planning for the subject as well as for the individual students and their personal development. Summative assessment will be able to demonstrate progress over time through specific reference to attainment against specific targets and objectives which go to make up each assessed piece of work. Assessments are standardised internally by the school leadership team, which oversees the accuracy of marking and ensures consistency across the subjects. Data is recorded by teachers on a centrally held spreadsheet, so that information may be accessed by school leaders and each student's key worker. It is data from these in-school summative assessments that will inform the termly data drops for each subject per student. These data drops are formal and recorded and analysed, with information relating to attainment and progress being reported to parents, carers and placing authorities.

Data from in-school summative assessments will also be used to inform the annual report that is sent to parents, carers and placing authorities alongside detailed comments from all subject teachers.

4.3 Nationally standardised summative assessment

Nationally standardised summative assessment enables:

- **School leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment
- **Teachers** to understand national expectations and assess their own performance in the broader national context
- **Pupils and parents/carers** to understand how pupils are performing in comparison to pupils nationally

Nationally standardised summative assessments may include:

- National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 (year 6)
- GCSEs and vocational qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4
- AS levels, A-levels and other post-16 qualifications in Key Stage 5.

At The Beeches Independent Special School, it is more than likely that many of the pupils will be unable to undertake these tests because, generally, they work at a level lower than their appropriate Key Stages. If it is felt appropriate for a pupil to undertake these tasks or tests, then they will do so. Leadership will support students in accessing tests at the level at which they are working.

5. Collecting and using data

The recording and celebrating of achievement is a key area. It has a direct impact on raising our pupils' self-esteem and on raising achievement. We acknowledge and celebrate success in all aspects of school life. Achievement is defined as something the pupil and/or teaching staff is proud of or regards as significant in all areas of the whole curriculum.

Why do we record?

- To assess a starting point
- To be a record of what's gone before – what pupils have experienced, encountered and covered
- To help teaching staff and parents/carers to track pupil progress
- To enable teaching staff to focus on the attainments of individual pupils
- To acknowledge achievements, increase motivation and self-esteem
- To ensure there is breadth, balance and relevance
- To be a way by which continuity and progression in the curriculum can be shown

What do we record?

We record any significant developments and findings in a pupil's learning. This applies to the whole curriculum, including social skills.

How do we record?

We record in a variety of ways which are easily accessible, manageable, understood, consistent and useful. They include: written daily observations, photographs, pupil work evidence files, Personal Development Records, Wows and daily record sheets.

Our school's approach to recording data:

- Data relating to assessment levels is centrally recorded and only shared with teaching staff prior to standardisation and checking.
- Data may be shared with students so that they know about their attainment, progress and performance.
- Data may be shared with parents, carers and placing authorities once it has been checked and standardised by the school leadership team.
- Data will be used to inform curriculum planning including timetabling, differentiation of work, grouping of students, future assessments and educational visits. This list is not exhaustive.
- Data collection will not add to teachers' workload as the collection of data is incorporated into a teacher's planning, preparation and assessment time and is not an additional task.

6. Reporting to parents

Parents/carers receive an Annual Academic Report towards the end of the summer term. Annual Academic Reports include a report from each subject teacher outlining the course content, comments about the student's overall performance, including strengths as well as any areas of concern, suggested targets for the future and level achieved. The AAR also includes a report from the pupil's Key Worker, with more focus on pastoral achievement and development. Finally, there is an extended comment from the headteacher, which acknowledges achievements and progress across both academic and pastoral areas of school life.

In addition, parents and carers will receive data regarding their child's attainment and progress once per term.

Parents/carers also receive a weekly written report, compiled by the student's Key Worker. This includes information about summative assessment, strengths and areas for development, weekly targets, attendance, Wows and any barriers to learning or behaviour incidents that have taken place that week. These reports are sent to parents/carers each Friday during term time.

Communication between home and school is excellent, with the majority of the school's students residing in residential care. All parents and carers are actively encouraged to engage in communication with the school and are also contacted without delay to communicate positive achievements and attainment as well as areas for concern.

7. Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities.

Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of pupils' special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention will be met by setting appropriate targets.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all pupils. However, this should account for the amount of effort the pupil puts in as well as the outcomes achieved.

For pupils working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to pupil starting points and take this into account alongside the nature of pupils' learning difficulties.

8. Training

All teaching staff are trained and guided by fully qualified teaching staff who hold QTS. Both members of school leadership hold QTS and have a number of years of experience in marking and moderating external examinations. School leadership ensure that training and refresher sessions are held regularly so that teaching staff are able to confidently assess the students that they teach.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- Being familiar with statutory assessment systems as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all pupils
- Holding school leaders to account for improving pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data

9.2 School Leadership

School Leadership is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is adhered to
- Monitoring standards in core and foundation subjects
- Analysing pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement
- Reporting to governors on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years

9.3 Teaching Staff

Teachers are responsible for following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy

10. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by School Leadership at The Beeches Independent Special School, Emma Sutters (Head of Education) and Red Bensley (Deputy Head of Education). At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

All teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy. Emma Sutters and Red Bensley are responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed.

Emma Sutters and Red Bensley will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the school, through:

- Moderation
- Lesson observations
- Learning walks
- Book scrutinies
- Supervisions
- Data drops

11. Where the Marking and Feedback Policy may be accessed:

- The policy will be sent electronically to all teaching staff
- The policy will be saved to The Beeches Independent Special shared platform
- The policy will be shared on The Beeches Independent Special School's website
- The policy will be stored in hard copy in the Head of Education's office

12. Links with other policies

This assessment policy is linked to:

- Curriculum policy
- Teaching and Learning policy
- Accessibility policy and accessibility plan
- EAL policy
- SEND policy
- Marking and feedback policy