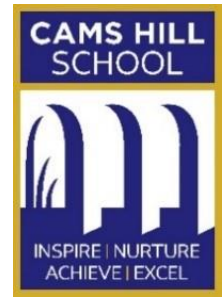


CAMS HILL SCHOOL ASSESSMENT POLICY



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Date created: 7 April 2017
Review period: 2 years
Last Reviewed: 7 April 2019
Ratified by governors: N/A
Next Review Date: 7 April 2021

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Cams Hill School Assessment Policy

The importance of assessment and feedback should not be underestimated: there is sound evidence that high-quality feedback has a significant impact on pupils' learning and progress; however, there are many types of assessment and many forms of feedback. This policy is not intended to privilege one form of assessment or one form of feedback over another and decisions will be made by departments and by individual teachers about the most appropriate forms of assessment and types of feedback at key points, based on professional judgement and understanding of pupils' needs.

All marking should be meaningful, manageable and motivating. This means that time spent on any assessment or feedback activity should help ensure that teachers are able to support their pupils to make progress, whatever form this takes. Pupils are entitled to high-quality feedback on their work and teachers should approach this in a thoughtful way that gets the best out of their pupils.

Expectations

- Teachers should have a clear overview of pupils' starting points and targets as well as a thorough understanding of progression in their subject(s). Assessment should inform teachers about their pupils' levels of understanding and skills and should enable teachers to use the Cams Hill trajectory assessment model (Key Stage 3) or GCSE gradings (Key Stage 4) in order to report accurately at data capture (assessment tracker) points throughout the year and use this assessment data to intervene as necessary to support pupils at risk of poor progress.
- Assessment should be *planned* for rather than merely retrospective - the knowledge and skills that pupils need to progress in each subject should be identified and clarified by departments and individual teachers and these should be taught explicitly, with opportunities for practice built into schemes of learning.
- Assessment should be regular and timely. Understanding pupils' progress in lessons and through homework is more likely to inform planning and address misconceptions usefully if assessment is frequent and feedback relatively rapid.
- Assessment should inform planning for teaching and teachers should adapt their teaching to address misconceptions and/or skills gaps that become apparent through assessment. On a larger scale, departments should use the knowledge gained through assessment of pupils' work to refine and improve schemes of work and resources.
- Feedback should primarily be formative for pupils and should include the expectation that pupils will act on feedback given - lesson time should be set aside for this; however, this **does not mean** that there is an expectation of 'deep' or 'triple impact' marking where the teacher then re-marks pupils' written responses to written marking.
- Feedback must be personalised and targets should be as specific and actionable as possible.
- Feedback comments on pupils' work, whether written or verbal, should be clearly understandable by pupils and should limit the use of jargon.
- Grades/numerical marks should not be given for every piece of work.
- Teachers of all subjects must uphold high literacy and oracy expectations when assessing and giving feedback on pupils' work.
- Pupils should have opportunities to review and reflect on their progress over time.
- Key Stage 3 has its own identity and is not simply preparation for Key Stage 4 and should therefore not be assessed primarily through Key Stage 4 exam-style tests and tasks.
- In short, teaching should be responsive, teachers should use a range of strategies to identify pupils' current learning, and plan to build directly on that. This may be immediate in lessons, or longer term throughout units of work.

Maximising Impact on Pupils' Learning and Progress; Minimising Unnecessary Workload

The key intention of this policy is to ensure that time spent on assessment and feedback is purposeful and has an impact on pupil progress, while bearing in mind that marking plays a central role in teachers' work and can be a key driver of excessive workload. Written marking is not the only form of feedback and may not always be the most appropriate, manageable for teachers or motivating for pupils.

Departments should develop an assessment policy that enables teachers to work 'smarter rather than harder' and should avoid requiring practices that create unnecessary workload. Equally, departments must ensure that assessment is robust and effective and feedback is precise and helpful.

Forms of Assessment and Feedback

Teachers use a wide range of strategies to assess pupils' learning and all of the following may be appropriate at different times:

- written feedback (ie traditional teacher marking on written work);
- verbal feedback to individuals or groups of pupils;
- checking pupils' learning in class, either verbally or by the teacher reviewing written work as it is being done;
- watching pupils participating in practical or oral activities and giving verbal feedback;
- reading through pupils' work and identifying common areas of strength and weakness before planning the next lesson;
- identifying pupils within the group who need additional support with a particular skill and adapting planning to accommodate this;
- using codes/icons/symbols to link to targets rather than giving full written comments;
- setting learning tasks to address errors, misconceptions or knowledge gaps;
- peer or self-assessment linked to criteria;
- filling in a whole-class marking sheet identifying strengths, weaknesses and next steps for teaching/revision (and potentially sharing these with the class).

Spending Time Wisely

Where detailed written marking of exercise books might take a number of hours, teachers should use their professional judgement to decide whether this time is needed by the pupils at this point in the term - which it might be, for the sake of pupils' motivation or because of the nature of the work that has been completed - or whether the time might be better spent in work that could be shared with other teachers or re-used during the next teaching cycle, for example, teachers could read through the pupils' work and use the knowledge gained from this activity to:

- collate or create resources to address misconceptions or skills gaps evident in the pupils' work;
- create a knowledge organiser for the topic;
- design flipped learning tasks;
- create a video explanation of the topic;
- create a model of excellence for this piece of work;
- refine the planning of the sequence of lessons that led up to the piece of work;
- create a set of targets linked to the task that can then be applied using symbols;
- review trajectory statements or GCSE criteria.

Pupil Engagement with Feedback

At appropriate points, pupils should be given time in lessons to reflect and act upon feedback given (whether this is verbal or written feedback). This might mean that they are asked to:

- practise a skill;
- read or revise a text or topic;
- correct errors;
- re-write a response to a question or task;
- read or look at another pupil's work;
- learn key vocabulary, facts, spellings or techniques.

It is not required for the teacher to re-mark additional work completed in response to feedback.

What Doesn't Work

There is no evidence that acknowledgement marking ('tick and flick') has any impact on pupil progress; it is not the expectation that every page of an exercise book should be marked, nor that in practical and creative subjects every task or activity should be given equal importance in terms of feedback. Teachers should consider carefully which pieces of work to mark and where their effort in providing feedback will have the most impact.

Feedback has limited impact if a) the pupil does not understand the terminology used, b) the target is vague (for example, if the main target is 'work in greater depth and detail', it is likely that the pupil will struggle to follow this instruction without more specific guidance) and/or c) the pupil is not given time to reflect and act upon feedback.

There is very limited evidence of the effectiveness of 'deep', 'dialogic' or 'triple-impact' marking where a pupil is expected to enter into a written conversation with their teacher and/or where the teacher re-marks work done by pupils in response to written feedback. There is nothing to suggest that a written dialogue is preferable to a feedback conversation and therefore the person-to-person immediacy of the dialogue is both warmer and more time-efficient than the intensive labour and workload of deep marking.

There is no expectation that there should be a written record of verbal feedback given by the teacher (eg through the use of 'verbal feedback given' stamps or by asking the pupil to write down what has been said) as there is no evidence of the usefulness of this practice.

Motivation

Their teachers' attention to their work is a significant motivating factor for pupils and therefore teachers need to be mindful of this when adopting time-saving approaches to assessment and feedback: pupils need to know that their teachers care about their work in order to care about it themselves. It is therefore doubly important to ensure that pupils know that their work has been seen and valued through the specificity and personalisation of comments given verbally and through celebrations of success and effort.