



Cookstown High School

Assessment Policy

Reviewed: November 2024

Next Review: November 2027

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POLICY OVERVIEW

DETAILS

TITLE	Assessment Policy
TARGET AUDIENCE	Governors', Staff, Parents/Guardians
REVIEW DATE	April 2024
REVIEW LEAD	Mr A McGeown
POLICY DEVELOPED BY	Senior Leadership Team
POLICY RATIFIED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ON:	November 2024
EFFECTIVE FROM:	November 2024
REVIEW FREQUENCY:	Every 3 years
REVIEW DATE:	November 2027
PRINCIPAL	Miss G J Evans
CHAIR OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS	Mrs L Dripps

RECORD OF POLICY AMENDMENTS

The following table outlines any significant changes/amendments made to this procedure since it was ratified by the Board of Governors on:

DATE OF REVIEW OR AMENDMENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGED / AMENDMENTS TO PROCEDURE	AMENDED BY

Introduction

Rationale

This document establishes expectations and recommendations for assessment at Cookstown High School. This document must be used by all teachers in the effective use and design of assessment procedures. Departments are expected to have assessment practices in place that are designed in line with the whole-school policy. These departmental assessment practices should be reflective of the guidelines contained in this document.

Assessment in Cookstown High School supports each pupil in reaching his or her own potential, fostering personal responsibility and self-motivation. Reflective practice is encouraged by teachers to engender self-evaluation with involvement from pupils, parents, and all staff. Effective assessment is foundational to ensuring high quality teaching and learning.

Ethos

This policy should be interpreted and implemented in a manner consistent with the school ethos. The school ethos values the uniqueness of each individual, promotes mutual respect and personal responsibility. The ethos seeks to encourage the development of young people who are independent learners. Assessment for Learning is now fully embedded across the curriculum, emphasising the importance of developing pupils as effective learners at all levels.

Northern Ireland Curriculum

The Northern Ireland Curriculum places emphasis on a variety of assessment procedures, integrated with classroom practice. This practice of Assessment for Learning is overt at **Key Stage 3** and involves the following key actions:

- Sharing Learning Intentions
- Sharing and negotiating success criteria
- Giving feedback to pupils
- Effective questioning
- Self and peer assessment

Developing this practice develops transferable learning, encourages learner responsibility, and increases transparency, as assessment shapes the learning experiences for each individual pupil. At **Key Stages 4 and 5**, assessment is often focused on summative assessment, tests, and examinations.

The following five principles are useful when devising assessment events at Key Stages 4 & 5:

- It should be complementary to and supportive of learning
- It should be valid and reliable
- It should be fit for purpose and manageable
- It should support teachers' professional judgement
- It should support accountability

Assessment is a key professional competency, requiring teachers to use a range of assessment strategies and assessment information to make teaching more effective. Assessment is embedded into all aspects of the curriculum and is an essential component of effective classroom practice.

Purposes of Assessment

The four main purposes of assessment at all levels are:

Diagnostic: this takes place at the start of a learning programme and identifies strengths and learning needs. Results from diagnostic assessment can be used to design intervention strategies towards improvement

Formative: this is part of everyday teaching and learning and occurs through observing, listening, questioning, discussing, and reviewing. Formative assessment generates evidence to help identify underachievement at an early stage, can identify progress and gaps in learning, is useful for setting learning goals and success criteria and is a means of communicating quality feedback to pupils

Summative: This provides information to pupils, parents, and teachers about individual overall performance at a specific point. This usually takes place after a unit of work, at a specific time of examination or testing and the information indicates progress and achievement. Summative assessment needs to assist pupils in the improvement of their learning

Evaluative: evaluative assessment ensures accountability across all levels of the school. It is useful for curriculum planning and monitoring. The Department of Education requires information on outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 for target setting and benchmarking. This also informs areas for school development and improvement. This information may also be used at departmental or individual teacher level for evaluation and development planning.

Aims and Objectives

Assessment in Cookstown High School seeks to develop the learning potential of all pupils. Through a variety of learning experiences, pupils will develop important skills of self-evaluation, reflection and setting personal goals. At all times, assessment should complement the teaching and learning of the curriculum.

The objectives of assessment are:

- To use methods, appropriate to the learning experience with expectations which are clearly explained and understood
- To ensure that all pupils experience challenge and success
- To recognise the whole range of pupils' experiences and achievements
- To develop transferable skills needed to become effective learners
- To provide quality feedback, informing pupils on strengths, weakness, and strategies for improvement

Development and Implementation

Methods of Assessment

A range of assessment types is used across the school, including formal and informal.

These include:

Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning)

- End of unit/topic tests
- Pupil tracking events
- External examinations

Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning)

- Pupil/peer assessment
- Teacher observation
- Formative feedback
- Coursework and homework

It is the responsibility of each Curriculum Leader to devise a Departmental Assessment Policy, outlining any subject specific requirement or methods of assessment.

These methods of assessment are outlined briefly in the next section. For further detail consult the Assessment Handbook.

Summative Assessment

At Cookstown High School, pupils in Years 8-10 will be formally assessed in December, March, and June through internal examinations. Years 11-14 will take internal examinations in November and March as mock examinations in advance of the external GCSE, AS and A2 examinations in May/June. There will be an interim assessment window in October for Y11-Y14 pupils.

Pupil tracking events will take place on three occasions through the school year. The results of the November and June examinations will serve as tracking one and three. The three tracking events are scheduled as below:

	Interim Assessment	Tracking 1	Tracking 2	Tracking 3
Year 8		November examinations	Mid-point of Term 2	June examinations
Year 9		November examinations	Mid-point of Term 2	June examinations
Year 10		November examinations	Mid-point of Term 2	June examinations
Year 11	October	November examinations	March examinations	GCSE External examinations
Year 12	October	November examinations	March examinations	GCSE External examinations
Year 13	October	November examinations	March examinations	AS External examinations
Year 14	October	November examinations	March examinations	A2 External examinations

Tracking 1, 2 and 3 are formal examinations and these tests must be robust and rigorous. These may be an end of topic or unit test.

Years 11, 12, 13 and 14 will have an interim assessment in October, this is an informal assessment which will be sat during lessons.

Pupils will be given opportunities to reflect on their tracking performance, setting personal targets and evaluating their progress.

Pupil Tracking and Target-setting

There are three tracking events through the school year:

Tracking 1 follows a series of formal examinations in late November.

Tracking 2 follows class assessment in each subject using rigorous and robust testing, taking place at the mid-point of Term 2 for Key stage 3. Tracking for Years 11-14 will be Trial Examinations and will be carried out in the examination hall.

Tracking 3 follows a series of examinations that will take place in lessons for Year 8-10.

The purpose of pupil tracking is to monitor pupil progress across all subjects throughout the year. Following assessments, pupils have opportunities to set targets for development. Targets should be guided by the subject teacher and must be focused on specific areas for improvement. A tracking logbook is in the Homework Diary, for each pupil to use to collate their assessment outcomes and to set their own individual targets. Tracking Intervention Mornings will take place after each examination series, to allow pupils to complete target-setting and to discuss areas for improvement with the Form Tutor.

The process of tracking is set out below:

Tracking Process	
Part of the Process	Who
Tracking assessments take place either informally during classes or during formal examinations	Curriculum Leaders Subject teachers
Assessment outcomes are returned to pupils with feedback on how to improve	Subject teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets are set for future improvement • Targets should be meaningful, specific, and tailored to the individual pupil • Departments may support target-setting with a list of targets for pupils from which they may select the most appropriate for their needs • Subject teachers should devote time to this aspect of tracking within classroom teaching and ensure that logbooks have been completed satisfactorily 	Curriculum Leaders Subject teachers Pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Tracking Intervention Morning will take place for Form Classes to review targets with Form Tutors • Form Tutors should discuss the targets set by the pupils 	Form Tutors Pupils

<i>Part of the Process</i>	<i>Who</i>
Parents are invited to read through the targets set in the log	Form Tutors Pupils Parents

Tracking outcomes provide data that inform teachers about:

- Pupils who are underachieving and may need intervention. These pupils may also need class movement.
- Pupils who are overachieving and are suitable for class movement (see Class Movement Procedure)
- Appropriateness of the assessment task
- The quality and consistency of learning and teaching within departments

It is an important aspect of the use of data that departmental action is taken where it is required to support pupils' development and progress in their learning.

Effective Strategies to Target Underachievement

- 1:1 support with class teacher for underachievers
- After school revision classes and clinics with extra support classes
- Revision morning/afternoon session before an examination
- Monitoring - Class teachers completing progress grids
- Materials provided with questions, summaries, and mind mapping pages
- Essay question practice in class and essay mark schemes as guidance
- Discuss progress with individuals as appropriate after each tracking stage
- Head of Year kept informed of performance through tracking
- Homework set and marked regularly to ensure all pupils are working at the level expected of them
- Encourage parents to support revision at home.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is used to improve learning through the whole learning process. It is useful for teachers to gain information on how learning is taking place and for pupils who can reflect through the process on their own learning.

Assessment for learning at Key Stage 3 focuses on the following activities:

Sharing learning intentions: this helps to focus pupils on the objectives of the lesson/unit and helps the emphasis to remain on the learning expectations rather than just the activity.

Sharing and negotiating success criteria: this provides signposts to success. Pupils may be involved in deciding what these should be, thereby demonstrating knowledge of the characteristics of a successful outcome.

Giving feedback to pupils: this can happen in a variety of ways, verbally, written or a combination of the two. Informative feedback must provide strategies for improvement.

Effective questioning: this involves asking questions in a way that elicits maximum feedback from pupils, which can then be used to evaluate, plan, and extend learning. Ask 'open' questions or reframe questions to invite more responses. Also, ask questions and then allow thinking time

Self and peer assessment: this promotes pupil reflection about their own work and that of their peers. This strategy can promote independence and a sense of support in the classroom

Further detail about these activities can be found in the Assessment Handbook.

Assessment of the Cross-Curricular Skills, and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (KS 3)

Reporting on CCS and TS & PC at KS 3 will be shared across teaching subjects and remarks will be included in the end of Year 10 report. The responsibility of subjects for this area of reporting will be reviewed regularly by SLT.

Examinations and Pupil Tracking

During Tracking 1, 2 and 3, the normal school timetable will be suspended, and an examinations timetable will be prepared by the Internal Examinations Officer. The exception to this is Tracking 2 for Key Stage 3 pupils, they will continue with lessons as normal, and assessments will be conducted in class with prior notice given.

Tracking data will be used for various reasons:

- To inform parents of individual pupils' progress
- To ascertain effective teaching and learning
- To estimate possible grade outcomes
- To identify underachievers and provide suitable support

Pupils who are frequently below target will be identified as underachieving and will be given suitable intervention support.

Key Stage 3

At Key Stage 3, pupils in the C and H bands will take a common paper, with a differentiated paper for the S band pupils.

Pupils at Key Stage 3 will be measured against their stanine score which is generated from the CAT testing in Year 8. This stanine is individual and is based on aptitude for success. Class averages will not be used. This stanine score will be the target grade for each pupil and will determine whether the tracking inputs are green (above target), yellow (on target) or red (below target).

Key Stage 4

Pupils in Key Stage 4 will all take November examinations; these will serve as Mock examinations for Year 12. Year 11 pupils will have external **modules in English, Mathematics, and Science** in May/June and subject examinations internally.

Pupils at Key Stage 4 will be measured against the CAT outcome from tests done at the end of Year 10. These tests provide suggested outcome grades for the GCSE subjects taken by each pupil. These are individual and need to be discussed between the pupil and the subject teacher. When a grade is agreed by the teacher and pupil, this is set as the target grade for pupil tracking. This grade can be changed after a period of review.

Key Stage 5

Pupils in Key Stage 5 will take November/March examinations as Mock examinations.

The grade the pupil achieves during pupil tracking events is the working grade. The difference between the target grade and the working grade will determine whether the tracking inputs are green (above target), yellow (on target) or red (below target).

Data from GCSE outcomes create chance analysis graphs which are used to predict AS and A2 grades. These will be used in conversation with the individual pupils to decide a target grade for each pupil.

Pupils in Years 11-14 are assessed externally as follows:

- Year 11: modules in modular subjects; internal examinations in linear subjects in June
- Year 12: GCSE examinations, May/June
- Year 13: AS examinations, May/June
- Year 14: A2 and AS re-sits, May/June

Some GCSE, AS and A2 subjects will have visits by external examiners for practical aspects of the courses from March-May.

Most subjects at GCSE, AS and A2 have a component of controlled assessment or coursework to submit. The school's Controlled Assessment Policy provides all relevant information.

Recording and Reporting

Keeping valid and up-to-date records of pupils' assessments ensures regular and relevant communication of attainment and progress can be made available to pupils, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. Both formative and summative assessment events should be detailed in departmental schemes of work.

All interim and full reports will be sent to parents via the SIMS app. Full reports are completed once a year for all pupils

	Interim Assessment	Tracking 1	Tracking 2	Tracking 3
Year 8		November examinations INTERIM Report	March examinations INTERIM Report	June examinations FULL Report
Year 9		November examinations INTERIM Report	March examinations INTERIM Report	June examinations FULL Report
Year 10		November examinations FULL Report	March examinations INTERIM Report	June examinations INTERIM Report
Year 11	INTERIM Report	November examinations INTERIM Report	March examinations FULL Report	
Year 12	INTERIM Report	November examinations FULL Report	March examinations INTERIM Report	

	Interim Assessment	Tracking 1	Tracking 2	Tracking 3
Year 13	INTERIM Report	November examinations FULL Report	March examinations INTERIM Report	
Year 14	INTERIM Report	November examinations FULL Report	March examinations INTERIM Report	

Interim reports will detail the pupil tracking outcome, the measure against the target grade and an effort grade.

An annual full report will provide a more detailed overview of progress in classwork, homework, coursework, and assessments.

Parents' Consultations will take place for each Year Group throughout Terms 1 and 2. These are a valuable opportunity to connect with parents and guardians about the following:

- Progress and achievement
- Homework
- Classwork
- Coursework/controlled assessment
- Effort and attitude
- Presentation of work and personal organisation
- Behaviour
- Targets for improvement

Roles and Responsibilities

The Assessment Policy and its implementation across departments is monitored and evaluated by:

- Vice Principal (Curriculum)
- Senior Teacher (Pupil Improvement)
- Curriculum Leaders

The Vice-Principal (Curriculum) and Senior Teacher (Pupil Improvement) are responsible for leading Curriculum Leaders to review, monitor and evaluate all aspects of the Assessment Policy within the context of the whole School Development Plan.

Vice-Principal (Pastoral) and SENCo should liaise with examination officer, parents, and pupils to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are in place for examination candidates.

Curriculum Leaders should devise a departmental assessment and homework policy, in line with the whole-school assessment policy. This departmental policy should be dynamic and informative, providing structure and purpose to assessment procedures used at departmental level. Curriculum Leaders should establish subject specific expectations, guidelines, and procedures for assessment in the department.

Curriculum Leaders will provide opportunities for the standardisation of mark schemes/rubrics within departments. Departmental staff will agree marking processes, use exemplars of good work and also examples of marking, particularly with new staff.

Curriculum Leaders should oversee departmental colleagues, and quality assure the comments from

the department.

Subject teachers should become familiar with the whole-school assessment policy and engage with the departmental policy in everyday teaching and learning. All aspects of assessment should be compliant with this policy.

Subject teachers are responsible for setting appropriate and meaningful homework, and for collating, marking, annotating, and returning homework in a timely fashion. Persistent failure to complete homework to the appropriate standard should be sanctioned in line with the departmental procedures.

Subject teachers are responsible to engaging with individual pupils after each tracking event to review progress and suggest strategies for improvement.

Form Tutors have responsibility to lead in Tracking Intervention Mornings by meeting with individual pupils to review overall progress and discuss strategies and targets for improvement.

Examinations Officers

The Internal Examinations Officer has responsibility for the organisation and timetabling of the November and May examinations.

The External Examinations Officer has responsibility for liaising with pupils, teachers, parents, and examination boards about all aspects of external assessment.

Pupils will have opportunities through the school year to reflect on their tracking performance and, through self-assessment, to set targets for improvement. This will be guided by Form Tutors and a pupil logbook will be used to support this task.

Parents/Guardians

Parents are invited to participate in the successful development of their children in all aspects of school-life. They are encouraged to attend Parents' Meetings, to engage with progress through the homework diaries and Parent App and to ensure that appropriate time is given to homework, revision, and controlled assessment work at home.

Quality Assurance

All formal reports are firstly completed by subject teachers with a review by Form Tutors, Year Heads and the Principal. The Head of Year liaises with the Senior Teacher for Pupil Improvement to discuss pupils identified as underachieving, with appropriate strategies for intervention put in place.

External examination results are analysed at departmental level and then reviewed by the Curriculum Leader with the Principal/Vice-Principals. Comparison will be drawn between previous years' outcomes and the NI averages. Factors relating to good and poor achievement will be identified and noted for action planning.

The Assessment Policy will be reviewed annually and amended as required.

Linked Documents

Class Movement Procedure
Assessment Handbook
Controlled Assessment Policy
Teaching and Learning Policy
Curriculum Policy