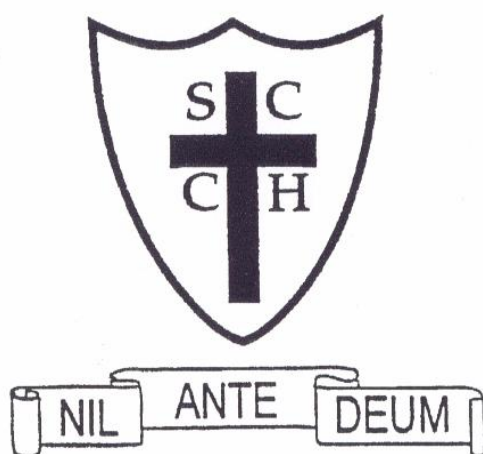


ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



ASSESSMENT AND MARKING POLICY

Last Reviewed: December 2010

Review Date: December 2011

“Overall the purpose of assessment is to improve standards, not merely to measure them”
(OFSTED, 1998)

“Effective teachers encourage pupils to judge the success of their own work and set targets for improvement. They take full account of the targets set out in individual education plans for pupils with Special Educational Needs”
(OFSTED Inspection Framework – Handbook for inspecting secondary schools, 2005)

SUMMARY:

St Catherine’s Catholic High School is committed to ensuring that students are able to recognise how they may fulfil their potential to the best of their ability.

In order to assist them in this, it is vital that staff provide the necessary constructive guidance through the assessment and feedback, both written and oral, of their output.

In best practice, this would be evident in the use of comment-led marking, providing diagnostic analysis of what students’ have done well, what they must do to make the necessary improvements and indicators as to how they may achieve this.

Introduction: Why mark students' work?

- **For them:** students need to know when they have done well, to praise them for their efforts when they have worked hard and to inform them how to improve and to address misconceptions.
- **For us:** we need students' responses, oral and written, to help us to judge what they have learned and how effectively we have taught.
- **For parents and carers:** they use our marks and comments to gauge their child's learning and to work with us to motivate students to seek improvement and to monitor progress.

Assessment is a term that encompasses a wide range of activities, formal and informal, formative and summative.

Formative assessment involves the **continuous monitoring** of students' progress on a daily/weekly basis. It includes teacher assessment of oral responses of students in the classroom, class tasks, homework activities and end of topic or unit tests. This will also include student peer- and self-assessment of their own and others' progress.

Summative assessment indicates a students' **achievements at significant points** during his/her school career. At St Catherine's there are currently six **Data Collection Points (DCPs)** – once per term. End of term/end of year examinations fall into this category and this form of assessment is **most commonly used to communicate predicted progress**.

We seek to implement assessment which:

- is closely **linked with learning and progress**;
- involves **sharing outcomes and success criteria** with students;
- aims to **show the students the standards to which they are aiming** and how they may recognise them (e.g. through the use of modelled answers and examples of student work);
- involves regular **peer- and self-assessment**;
- provides **frequent and diagnostic feedback** which assists students in taking their next steps;
- is underpinned by an **assumption that every student can make progress**;
- involves **student and teacher reflection and review** of assessment data.

The purposes of assessment:

Assessment is a procedure which identifies every student's strengths and areas for improvement. It **measures knowledge, skills and understanding** and should **aid progression**, so that **an effective learning programme will build on prior achievements**, setting **realistic yet challenging targets** for future performance.

Assessment information is used to **develop appropriate teaching and learning strategies**, to **plan effective lessons** and sequences of lessons, to **meet the range of abilities** within a class, to **review and modify departmental units and schemes of work**.

Assessment information and data is used to **monitor student progress, group and subject performance and student achievement** relative to individual potential, local and national standards and benchmarks.

Records of assessment will **ensure the learning needs of students are met** and that **progression will be continuous**.

Assessment should be used to **celebrate achievement and success** and should help to **raise the awareness, self-esteem and self-image of students**.

Assessment lies at the heart of the teaching and learning process and ***the overall aim is to improve the quality of learning for the students*** and to provide informed objective evidence on progress for teachers, students and their parents.

The characteristics of effective assessment:

- Effective assessment procedures **recognise the whole range of student achievements** and experiences.
- Teachers help students to **develop the skills they need** to flourish as reflective, confident and independent learners.
- Clear and **explicit learning outcomes** are **shared** with students.
- Students **actively contribute to the assessment of their own work** and progress.
- Parents understand, cooperate and support their child's progress.

What should we assess?

Assessment activities should recognise and target as appropriate the following areas:

- The **different intelligences**, as appropriate to subject area;
- Different **learning styles**
- Subject specific **knowledge, understanding and skills**
- **Cross-curricular areas** – literacy, numeracy, citizenship, presentation, ICT competency etc.
- Assessment activities must target **specific level and grade criteria**.

Responding to student work and marking procedures:

Staff should continually monitor student understanding and progress through **targeted questioning, classroom discussion and observation**. What follows is an attempt to quantify formal assessment:

- Feedback from students in Year Group Monitoring has indicated that students lose interest in their work if teachers do not mark it.
- **Students' work should be marked regularly** – this should take place in proportion to the number of periods each subject has per week: as a guide, once per five contact hours or once per fortnight, whichever is the soonest. Staff will **ensure that all work is acknowledged**. Most class work, homework, notes and diagrams will be **tick-marked**. Marking can also include:
 - **Peer and self-assessment/marking**
 - **Teacher calling out answers (quizzes/tests etc.)**
- All students should be **assessed formally at the end of each key unit**, or at least **once per half term**, and in line with the agreed DCPs.
- Formal assessments **provide opportunities for students to receive appropriate and constructive feedback** using the **PIN (*Praise, Improvements, Next Steps*) comment marking system** as follows:
 - **PRAISE:** *An indication of what the student has done well*
 - **IMPROVEMENT:** *Guidance on aspects that require amendment or clarification*
 - **NEXT STEPS:** *Information that enables students to progress.*
- Such responses will include **reference to target, predicted and, where applicable, working at grades**, National Curriculum **level descriptors**, exam **grades, effort (E1-6)** and **personalised targets** for future assessment.
- **Intervention Windows** will be opened following each DCP. This will allow staff to identify individuals and groups of students for intervention. This will take a variety of forms, from detailed one-to-one oral and written feedback, small group sessions, after-hours catch-up, additional assessment preparation/assessed activities, liaison with Form Tutors, PaLMs, the Progress and Intervention Manager and with parents/carers.
- Staff should, where appropriate, make **effective use of technology** – such as visualisers – for instant feedback, as well as using modelled marked answers and other exemplars linking to success criteria.
- **Exceptional effort and attainment should be rewarded** following the whole school **Rewards** system – through the award of Achievement points in SIMS – and also with the use of departmental systems – postcards and telephone calls home as appropriate.

Specific guidance – Learning Targets:

- Students should have **target setting/progress sheets** at the front of their class books/work folders and these should be **completed and reviewed on a regular basis, as per the calendar of Data Collection**.
- Students' books may also contain a **guide to basic expectations for work presentation**. Work failing to meet these standards will need to be resubmitted.
- In addition, we have a responsibility to develop students' literacy/numeracy skills following a consistent approach using the following codes:
 - **SP** – select up to three common spelling errors, underline the incorrect word and write the code and the correction in the margin. Incorrect subject specific terminology should be identified and corrected.
 - **//** – used to indicate the need to begin a new paragraph.
 - **O** – incorrectly used or missing punctuation should be circled.
 - **CL** – written into the margin to indicate that capitalisation should/should not be used as applicable.
 - **?** – to indicate confusion/incoherence.
- In some departments, student assessments may be kept in '**Progress Files**' that allow for more explicit **teacher-student dialogue, target setting** for future assessment and a record of **progress** at each DCP.
- Students should know what they must do to improve to achieve the next level or grade and there should be **opportunities for, and evidence of, students' responding to teacher comments**. This should be an integral part of the assessment process and conducted regularly with specific time allocated for it.
- Where targets are met or bettered, it should be appropriately rewarded – e.g. an Achievement point/departmental postcard home.

Ensuring assessment criteria are met:

NC levels/GCSE criteria should be understood, shared and used regularly. **Departmental Standardisation Booklets** have been introduced (Oct 2010) with relevant assessment materials and exemplars for reference purposes. Regular sharing and discussion of department and whole school data is encouraged through the use of the **Whole School Data Analysis Tool** (WSDAT).

Students can be informed of predicted progress against NC levels/GCSE grades and a variety of other parameters. Best practice has shown that students are better motivated when their data is shared with them and they understand how their performance is and will be measured.

Assessment must be planned for and integrated into schemes of work and accompanying lesson plans. **Assessment criteria must be taught alongside subject content**. Assessment criteria should be shared with students in **student-friendly language**. Students should be encouraged to

use **mark schemes** for each major piece of assessment and these are returned highlighted to demonstrate strengths and areas for improvement, alongside informative **comments**.

Many assessments also include the use of other **support materials** (such as word mats and differentiation (outcome, task, resources, and teacher intervention) for students with Special Educational Needs and higher-level thinking activities and opportunities for **extended tasks** to challenge the most able.

ASSESSMENT BEST PRACTICE:

Responding to students' work, staff will routinely:

- Move around the room during lesson time using **observations to challenge and identify specific strengths and areas for development and addressing misconceptions as appropriate.**
- Use **targeted questioning** which probes the depth of knowledge and understanding, and allows students to demonstrate what they can do.
- **Use students' work to demonstrate standards** relating to set criteria, e.g. using visualisers or display.
- Use **peer- and self-assessment** to allow students to grow in confidence and develop as independent learners.
- Use **modelling** and examples of students work (relating directly to NC/GSCE descriptors and success criteria) to share with the class.
- Use **display examples** to highlight assessment criteria.
- **Correct short sections** of student work to model improvement, e.g. key vocabulary/modelling explanation, analysis etc.
- Use **mini-plenaries** to review learning and depth of understanding.
- **Explicitly share and frequently revisit and review outcomes**, whilst also allow students the opportunity to frame episodes of learning.
- Use **oral and practical, as well as written evidence** in making judgements regarding student progress.
- **Keep appropriate records**, following departmental policies, of:
 - Assessment and homework tasks set, how long it should take and relevant dates for submission
 - Late/failed submissions
 - Grades awarded
 - Topic areas for development/extension/revisiting
- Communicate **basic standards of work presentation.**

SUMMARY – LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT:

1. **CONSTANT ASSESSMENT:** on-going, in class time, judgement and guidance.
2. **TICK-MARKING:** acknowledge all student work.
3. **COMMENT MARKING (PIN):** thorough check of more substantial pieces of work with clear praise and specific and personalised targets set for improvement, along with guidance of how this might be achieved and graded against NC levels and/or examination targets/predictions.
4. **MODELLING:** frequent appropriate use of student and teacher exemplars, using technology effectively to embed peer- and self-assessment and student familiarity with success criteria and mark schemes.
5. **MONITORING:** Formal work scrutiny and student monitoring will be used to assess the application of assessment and marking procedures. These will be undertaken by SLT and HoDs. One of the outcomes of such reviews will be the sharing of good practice across the school. HoDs will be encouraged to hold informal '*sharing good practice*' sessions within departments as part of *Learning and Performance* time.

Signed: (Head) Mrs P Sheard Signed: (Chair of Governors) Mr T Miskell

Date ratified by Governing Body: December 2010

Date to be reviewed: December 2011