Apple Orchard

Assessment Policy

Amended by	Anne Davis	Date: February 2025
Approved by:	Richard Keightley	
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Next review due by:	January 2026 (or if further guidance changes)	

Relevant Policies and Documents

- Examinations Procedures Manual
- Learning and Teaching Guidance
- Literacy Policy
- Numeracy Policy
- Programmes of Study including Schemes of Work from each subject
- Feedback guidance
- Principles of learning
- Apple Orchard Marking and Feedback Policy

Explanation of Terms

- **MIS**: Management Information System
- **MSP**: Managed Service Provider
- **PEP**: Personal Education Plan
- **PCP**: Progress Checkpoint
- **A2L**: Attitude to Learning
- **SoW**: Schemes of Work
- **AWL**: Assessment Without Levels
- **SEND**: Special Educational Needs and Disability
- **Awarding bodies**: Official name for examination boards.

Purpose of the Policy

This document outlines the policy for carrying out the assessment and monitoring of progress of students through the prescribed curriculum at Apple Orchard School. This policy includes assessment principles and practices, expectations related to the marking of students' work, recording and reporting procedures, homework, examinations, the Internal Appeals Procedure, and procedures relating to controlled assessments.

Policy Statement

Apple Orchard School believes that the purpose of assessment is to improve standards, not merely to measure them. Our aim is that every student makes more than national rates of progress from Year 7 to 11, including key knowledge and skills. It is the role of every member of staff to work towards this goal strategically and on a day-to-day basis and to understand their contribution towards whole school targets through their own Performance Management.

Assessment is the process of obtaining, analysing, and interpreting evidence for use by both students and teachers to enable the review, planning, and improvement of learning and progress. It is fully integrated with the delivery of the curriculum and is an essential component of effective classroom practice. Effective assessment is a key requirement in

assuring the success of students of all abilities across the curriculum and in every year group.

Effective assessment means:

- Knowing where students are in terms of knowledge, skills, and understanding;
- Knowing their targets and related learning;
- Understanding how to help each student progress towards their target and its related skills and knowledge and putting these steps into operation through their PEPs.

We will use the following Assessment for Learning strategies where and when appropriate to promote learning of all students:

- Strategic use of questioning Effective teacher feedback
- Peer feedback
- Student self-assessment
- Formative and summative assessment

Responsibilities

This list of responsibilities is indicative, not exhaustive.

Headteacher

- Model good practice with regard to assessment.
- Ensure that assessment practices lead to maximum and above average progress of students in their schools.
- Hold their staff to account for assessment practices and the progress of students in their schools.
- Hold senior staff to account for the application, promotion, and monitoring of all aspects of the Assessment Policy at school level.
- Report on the progress of students to the school board and other stakeholders.
- Responsibility for application, promotion, and monitoring of the Assessment Policy at school level.

Leadership Team and subject teachers

- Model good practice with regard to assessment.
- Assist the Headteacher with ensuring that assessment practices lead to maximum and above average progress of students in their schools.
- Assist the Headteacher with holding staff to account for assessment practices and the progress of students in their schools.

Deputy Headteacher

- Lead the whole school assessment system.
- Ensure that staff have the appropriate training to use assessment systems and carry out assessment appropriately.
- Monitor the moderation practices of subject areas.
- Ensure appropriate leadership by subject teachers in respect of assessment, moderation, examinations, etc.
- Champion assessment for learning in the classroom and the 'learning dialogue' between staff and students.
- Ensure all staff have access to the data they need to make informed professional decisions on the progress of students.

SENCO

- Ensure all staff have access to the inclusion data and information they need to make informed professional decisions on the progress of students.
- Organize and carry out appropriate training with respect to SEND and inclusion for staff, ensuring maximum progress for students of all ages, abilities, and levels.
- Ensure access arrangements are in place for all key assessments and examinations.
- Ensure PEP and STAT reports are completed in timely manner.

Subject Teachers

- Monitor the quality of lesson planning over time via collaborative planning, monitoring of planners, and informal observation of teaching during monitoring activities such as learning walks.
- Ensure detailed SoW are in place for each unit of work, at all key stages, which include planned assessment points and activities.
- Shape, promote, and monitor the assessment practices of their subject area.
- Ensure all members of staff in their area are following the systems and expectations laid out, including revisiting curriculum gaps and misconceptions post assessments and milestone marking.
- Shape whole school and individual school targets.
- Responsibility for application, promotion, and monitoring of the Assessment Policy at subject level with all staff teaching in their subject area.
- Ensure homework is set regularly and marked swiftly when handed in. All homework must be treated the same way as all other work in terms of assessment and marking.
- Provide staff teaching in their subject areas with information about levels and grades that enable teachers to accurately assess student performance.
- Ensure that assessments made are in line with national standards for their subject(s).
- Ensure the use of the tracking system that is in place to monitor the progress of students towards their targets.
- Use assessment data and tools to identify skills gaps within classes and across year groups.
- Respond to tracking information provided after each PEP/STAT reporting cycle to address underachievement and narrow gaps.

- Have a range of strategies to intervene in order to improve the performance of underachieving students.
- Amend/improve course content and methodology in response to results obtained to build upon success and improve where shortcomings are found.
- Be able to account for the performance of students in their subject areas, taking into account performance against targets, performance with other subjects, and national statistics.

SENCO Team

- Ensure they know students' names, abilities, SEN, and medical information of all students in their year group(s).
- Monitor the academic and pastoral progress of all students in their year group(s).
- Promote Enjoy, achieve and thrive or the 6Cs to Success. The 6 C's of Education and Their Classroom Importance
- Work with tutors to ensure learning is the focus of every activity.
- Provide a range of form time activities focused specifically on learning and reflection.

Teaching Staff

- Ensure they know students' names, abilities, SEN, and medical information to understand the learning needs of the students for whom they are responsible.
- Demonstrate their knowledge, skills, understanding, attributes, and capabilities through a wide range of evidence including specific assessment tasks, activities, tests, and examinations.
- Shape and review their learning by reflection, setting learning goals and next steps including through personal learning planning.
- Work with staff to ensure they are addressing their areas for development and maximising progress.
- Review their own learning through self-assessment.
- Collaborate in peer assessment.
- Contribute to moderation activities.
- Complete all homework activities to the best of their ability.

Care Team / Parents

- Actively involved in supporting the children's learning, including homework.
- Be aware of and contribute to the development of the child's PEP and the contribution that can be made from home towards that PEP.
- Provide conditions at home that are conducive to learning.
- Use school data/information to monitor the progress of the children and raise any concerns with House Managers and school staff.

Principles of Assessment

Apple Orchard School believes in the underpinning Principles for Assessment as outlined in the Report of the NAHT Commission on Assessment February 2014. These principles are adopted here to ground the school through the period in which the national system of assessment is in a state of significant change. Assessment commission report document (2).pdf

Underpinning Principles for Assessment

Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning

- Assessment provides evidence to guide teaching and learning.
- Assessment provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate and review their progress.

Assessment is fair

- Assessment is inclusive of all abilities.
- Assessment is free from bias towards factors that are not relevant to what the assessment intends to address.

Assessment is honest

- Assessment outcomes are used in ways that minimize undesirable effects.
- Assessment outcomes are conveyed in an open, honest, and transparent way to assist students with their learning.
- Assessment judgments are moderated by experienced professionals to ensure their accuracy.

Assessment is ambitious

- Assessment places achievement in context against nationally standardized criteria and expected standards.
- Assessment embodies, through objective criteria, a pathway of progress and development for every child.
- Assessment objectives set high expectations for learners.

Assessment is appropriate

- The purpose of any assessment process should be clearly stated.
- Conclusions regarding pupil achievement are valid when the assessment method is appropriate (to age, to the task, and to the desired feedback information).
- Assessment should draw on a wide range of evidence to provide a complete picture of student achievement.
- Assessment should demand no more procedures or records than are practically required to allow students, their parents, and teachers to plan future learning.

Assessment is consistent

- Judgments are formed according to common principles.
- The results are readily understandable by third parties.
- A school's results are capable of comparison with other schools, both locally and nationally.

Assessment outcomes provide meaningful and understandable information for

- Students in developing their learning.
- Parents in supporting children with their learning.
  - Teachers in planning teaching and learning.
  - School leaders and governors in planning and allocating resources.
  - Government and agents of government.

Assessment feedback should inspire

- Greater effort and a belief that, through hard work success can be achieved.

Marking and Feedback

In *The Power of Feedback[1]*, John Hattie summarises effective feedback: "To be effective, feedback needs to be clear, purposeful, meaningful, and compatible with students' prior knowledge, and to provide logical connections."

What can be ineffective?

Marking does not necessarily result in feedback and marking is not the same as giving feedback; just because comments have been written on pupils' work does not mean pupils will have received feedback.

Marking is effective when it has a clear purpose to:

- correct misconceptions
- provide further clarification
- increase effort
- increase aspiration
- build pupil confidence

Instructional feedback is the most effective kind of feedback to lead to improvements or an enhancement in pupil performance. This could be by presenting pupils with a probing question or a further challenge. If the desired impact of the feedback is to increase effort, feedback is effective when it focuses on the task, not the student, ie the failure of the task is clearly attributed to a lack of effort, not the ability of the pupil.

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[1] John Hattie and Helen Timperley, 'The Power of Feedback', Review of Education Research, March 2007, Vol. 77, no. 1, pp 81-112

Marking and feedback should be responsive to pupils' needs and not disjointed from the learning process. It is effective when it is focused on developing pupils' understanding and teachers should have these questions in mind: "Will this help pupils learn? How will I know?" This could be in a subsequent piece of work or in an immediate response from the pupil, depending on the context. When responding immediately to feedback, pupils' responses are best if the feedback is of low quantity but high quality.

Research shows that certain kinds of praise as feedback can be motivating, however, it may also have the effect of making pupils less likely to act on written feedback. Praise is most effective when it is specific and rewards effort, and least effective when it rewards ability and is general. When marking, do not praise pupils for meeting the minimum standard; this could be perceived as having low expectations. Use praise sparingly, as part of feedback is knowing what impact you want it to have.

Ineffective **written** feedback may include:

- marking that doesn't involve pupils in responding to feedback
- marking that doesn't inform planning
- marking that uses inaccessible language for pupils
- extensive written comments which could be summarised more concisely

Teachers at Apple Orchard School are encouraged to decide in advance the purpose and expected impact of their feedback to make it more effective.

Marking is planning

When marking, teachers inevitably draw useful conclusions about what pupils can do now and what they may be able to do in the future. Marking should inform future planning and enable teachers to decide what needs to be taught again or better.

Making written feedback more efficient

Teachers' marking workload should be manageable for teachers and pupils.

Clarify expectations for students

Marking can breed overreliance on the teacher and schools may want to consider establishing expectations for pupils about presenting their work to teachers for feedback. For example, this might include the minimum expectation that all work is proofread before it is handed in (with a checklist intended to provide guidance on what they should address during proofreading), and pupils identifying where they have made mistakes and annotating accordingly.

Pupils need to be familiar with each subject's approach to marking and understand that this may vary. For example:

- some marking may have a specific focus on a particular skill and a piece of work does not have to be marked for everything
- marking is one form of assessment, and it may take the form of spoken, written, peer-marking or self-assessment with the common purpose of supporting pupils' learning and progress
- pupils are trained on decoding specific marking and feedback
- with certain work, only the application of the learning will receive the feedback, not necessarily anything else that is in books leading up to this. This creates high expectations about pupils applying their learning into a piece of work for teachers' consideration and prioritises teachers' time effectively.
- marking is a two-way process and there is an expectation that pupils will need to think and act in response to the feedback given

Make more efficient use of teachers' and pupils' time

Suggestions aimed at making marking more efficient for teachers, and enabling pupils to receive and act on appropriate and challenging feedback are:

- Use a list of codes which match likely feedback tasks in advance.
- Predict likely misconceptions or errors and design a list of numbered actions likely to be required for pupils to challenge their thinking further. Pupils are then simply assigned a number, and the numbered feedback tasks are displayed on the board.
- Prioritise redrafting and only accept and mark work after feedback has been given and acted on; only mark work once it has reached a specific quality.
- Mark a pupil's work in relation to the quality of a previous piece of work by issuing plus, minus or equals.
- Make more use of in-class feedback, for example use a visualiser whilst pupils are undertaking a task to support the identification of common mistakes and give the whole class timely and immediate feedback.

Effective feedback leading to enhanced pupil performance

"The only important thing about feedback is what students do with it." *Dylan Wiliam[2]*

In order to improve learning, pupils must actively use the feedback. Dylan Wiliam advocates making feedback into detective work so that pupils are encouraged to look at the feedback more closely and think about their own work more analytically. The following are some suggestions as to how this can be achieved:

a) Tell the pupils the number of incorrect answers to questions and ask them to find them and correct them before marking ('find and fix').

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[2] Dylan Wiliam, 'The Secret of Effective Feedback', Educational Leadership, April 2016, Vol 73, no. 7, pp 10-15

b) Write feedback comments on separate strips of paper and pupils have to match the comments with the piece of work.

c) Ask pupils to rank pieces of work compared to success criteria.

d) Ask pupils to develop success criteria for an 'outstanding' piece of work then give them anonymised examples to assess against the criteria.

e) Ask pupils or groups of pupils to devise a plan to move a piece of work to the next stage or a higher grade.

Peer and self-assessment

A strong culture of peer and self-assessment needs to be established throughout the school and college, starting from when pupils join. Strategies to develop pupils' capacity for self-assessment are essential and the suggestions are provided to help develop effective practice:

a) Introduce pupils to self-assessment using samples of anonymous work and ask pupils to describe what feedback they might give to the author of the work. Pupils can then move more confidently into peer assessment.

b) To develop pupils' reflective skills, start with a simple approach of 'plus, minus, interesting' when judging a piece of work.

c) Pupils may be asked to reflect on something they found challenging or easy or how they might improve if they did the task again. (It may be worthwhile telling pupils in advance that they won't have to make the improvements they have identified on this piece, to avoid the incentive to say the work is fine as it is!)

d) Teachers may select a good answer to share with the class and pupils use this to improve their own work.

e) Create pupil-friendly mark schemes so that pupils can mark their own work effectively.

f) Issue highlighters to pupils so they highlight areas of work where they have demonstrated evidence of skills according to the mark scheme, or success criteria for the piece of work.

g) Develop pupils' meta-cognitive skills so they understand how they learn best and can apply this to their own self-assessment.

Schedule of marking and feedback in books

Each piece of work should be marked with written feedback given at least twice a week. This can be completed either in class, during PPA or after school and must offer an opportunity for students to respond either verbally or in writing (verbal responses can be recorded). Other forms of feedback must be clearly annotated.

Further reading

DfE, Reducing Teacher Workload: Marking Policy Review Group Report
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher- workload-marking-policyreview-group-report
DfE, Teachers' Standards
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/301107/Teachers__
Standards.pdf
ASCL guidance Lesson Planning and Teacher Resources
http://www.ascl.org.uk/help-and-guidance/guidance-papers/ascl-guidance-lesson- planning
Education Endowment Foundation, A Marked Improvement?
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/on-marking/#closeSignup
No More Marking
https://www.nomoremarking.com/