The Polesworth School
ENSURING EXCELLENCE

Title of Policy: Assessment and feedback

Member of leadership team with lead responsibility for oversight and update of policy	QUI
Approved at SLT	November 2024
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Policy review cycle	Annually
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COMMUNITY ACADEMIES TRUST

Assessment and Feedback Policy

The curriculum and how that curriculum is assessed are intrinsically linked. Our subjects identify the core knowledge throughout the curriculum and ensure that this is effectively assessed and that students receive the regular feedback that is essential to support them to make outstanding progress in their learning.

Although "Feedback is among the most critical influences on student learning", the form in which feedback and assessment takes place must be specifically related to the individual subject to ensure its effectiveness. Research by the Education Endowment Foundation suggests that "the method of assessment is likely to be less important than ensuring that the principles of effective teacher feedback are followed." Therefore, teachers follow our whole school core principles while selecting assessment strategies to ensure the greatest impact from the attached "toolkit". Where specific assessment strategies are to be used to assess threshold knowledge these are specified in schemes of learning.

As a school we understand that it is not feasible or beneficial for all feedback to be 'evidenced' or 'recorded'. A guiding principle should be that feedback allows students to improve and causes thinking and learning to take place. Effective feedback could therefore take other forms, including verbal (ie. in response to oral contributions or whiteboard work).

> 'Effective feedback, whether it be written or verbal, should move the learning forwards. 'Comments should identify what has been done well and what still needs improvement, and should give guidance on how to make that improvement…to be effective, feedback should cause thinking to take place.' Working inside the black box, Black et al (2002)

Purpose of assessment and feedback

• To ensure classroom teachers are fully aware of students' capabilities via appropriate assessments, to inform planning and match work to their needs.
• To ensure assessment for learning strategies are used in everyday lessons to ensure pupils are able to take ownership of their learning
• To report on current progress and future targets
• To analyse standards within school to minimise in-school variation and compete with national benchmarks
• To contribute to the picture of effectiveness of teachers as leaders of learning
• To identify learning challenges in order to improve groupings, create interventions and motivate students for success

Evaluation of assessment and feedback

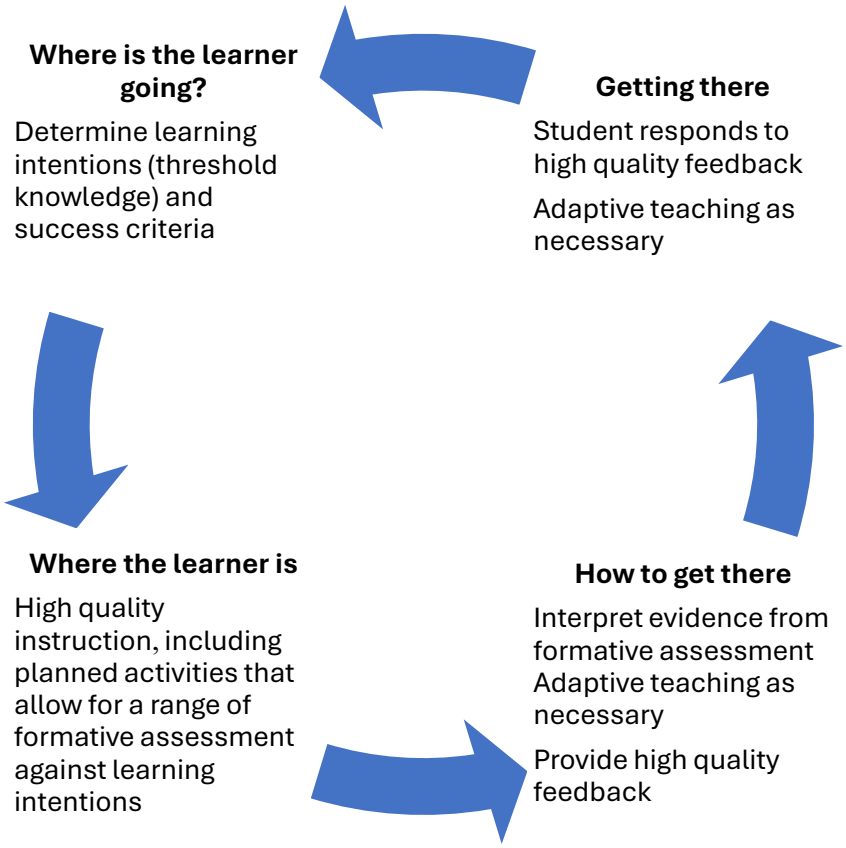
• Senior and middle leaders will regularly evaluate the procedures and processes for assessment, the implementation of core principles and recording and reporting, and ensure that assessment strategies are used effectively for the benefit of students
• All staff are involved in rigorous quality assurance procedures interrogating assessment data to inform departmental planning to raise student progress and attainment
• Senior and middle leaders consult with students and teachers to evaluate the impact of assessment

Whole school core principles of assessment and feedback

1. Regular assessment and feedback are essential in supporting students to make outstanding progress.

2. Formative assessment (which informs decision making and leads to adaptive teaching) and feedback are ongoing throughout all lessons as part of high-quality instruction.
3. Assessment is considered and carefully structured to be based on clear learning intentions and to ensure valid conclusions about knowledge gaps and misconceptions.
4. Students are assessed using a wide ranging “toolkit” of assessment methods (see appendix 1)
5. Students receive high quality feedback (in an appropriate format for the subject, task, pupil and class) which moves learning forward, targeting the specific learning gaps that pupils exhibit. This feedback may focus on the task, the subject or self-regulation strategies.
6. Improvement and reflection time is an integral part of teaching and learning to allow students to give a thoughtful response to high quality feedback and to close the feedback loop so that learning can progress.
7. Summative assessment is completed as specified in subject schemes of learning where the assessment criteria is shared and understood.
8. Exam groups are regularly exposed to exam board questions as directed by SLT
9. Consideration must always be given to the balance between the usefulness of the information obtained by assessments and staff workload.
10. It is the expectation that teachers will ensure students’ books are well looked after and work is well presented, graffiti free and there are no loose worksheets

Assessment and feedback loop (adapted from William, D and Heritage M)



Targets, tracking and reporting

Assessment through Years 7-9 is based upon threshold knowledge. This is an approach to assessment where instead of a target grade and flightpath we have an aspiration that every student will achieve the threshold knowledge within a subject. This threshold knowledge is explicitly identified in each subject area and represents the core substantive and disciplinary knowledge that students need in order to unlock future learning and make progress. Threshold statements are benchmarked against the National Curriculum and regularly reviewed to ensure that students who have acquired the knowledge and skills identified are able to access the full grade range at GCSE. To ensure challenge students are set a target of the percentage of threshold knowledge that they have securely demonstrated at any given time. Students will high prior attainment are set a target of 90% and others have their target set at 70%. This target does not set a limit on attainment and progress but acts as a minimum expectation to ensure challenge and as a way to prioritise students for intervention. Although the target percentage can be reviewed and adjusted if needed, it is anticipated that the target percentage for the majority of students will remain the same in each year in Key Stage 3 as the threshold knowledge is designed to become increasingly challenging as a student moves through thus the curriculum is the progression model.

All students in Years 10-11 are set a “national minimum expected grade” based upon what a student with comparable scores at Key Stage 2, is expected to achieve at the end of Year 11, (the attainment 8 estimate) which is then reviewed to ensure challenge. This review is on an individual basis based upon the progress that a student has made while at The Polesworth School. A similar system, based upon a progress measure, is used to generate A level targets. These targets are then broken down into progress targets we would expect a student to be achieving at the end of each year and at each of our data points throughout the year. This allows us to identify students who are not achieving their progress target which contributes to the picture of a student’s achievement built upon

evidence from ongoing diagnostic assessment. Our tracking system also generates strengths and improvements in each subject to ensure that staff, students and parents know what knowledge or content a student needs to develop. We want every child to achieve their potential during their time at The Polesworth School and, to assist with this, we keep target grades under review to ensure that they remain challenging.

Parents and carers receive written information three times per year on their child's attitude and behaviour for learning. In Years 7 to 9 parents/carers will receive a statement of whether their child is working towards, working at or working beyond the curriculum related expectations represented by the threshold knowledge. The report will also indicate the threshold knowledge which is a particular strength and which are a priority for development. This feedback is entered on an individual basis for each student. Year 7 also receive a settling in report which includes attitude to learning and behaviour for learning in each subject along with a summary from their tutor.

In Years 10 to 13 parents/carers will receive their child's current attainment grade in each subject, skills or topics of strength and skills or topics that need to be a focus for development. They will also receive the grade that their child's teachers are forecasting them to achieve at the end of the course. Parents and carers are also invited to a range of subject evenings, information evenings and parent forums throughout the year in addition to being encouraged to contact the school whenever they would like to. We believe that our approach to assessment and to tracking data is proportionate and sustainable while providing meaningful information.

Appendix 1

Assessment and feedback toolkit

This toolkit is not an exhaustive list because teachers are creative and can deliberately plan activities that provide formative assessment information. This toolkit contains some useful classroom strategies for assessment for learning and providing feedback that teachers can draw upon.

Questioning

Strong questioning is an essential aspect of strong pedagogy. To be effective questioning must be planned and include a balance between low-level questioning aimed at recall and higher-level questions to produce deeper learning and thinking. Providing students with appropriate thinking time when questioning has a very positive impact upon learning. Sherrington T and Caviglioli O recommend thinking time of anything from five seconds to thirty seconds or more depending on whether the question is low level knowledge based or higher order.

From Jonathan Doherty https://impact.chartered.college/article/doherty-skilful-questioning-beating-heart-pedagogy/ and Sherrington T and Caviglioli O, Teaching WALKTHRUs - Five step guides to instructional coaching, John Catt publications, 2020

Assessment/feedback method	Information
Cold calling	Aim the question at everyone in the room, use thinking time to scan the room, select a student to respond, respond to the answers by turning them into a short exchange, repeat.
In the hot seat	Students take it in turns to sit in the 'hot seat' and answer questions.
Ask the expert	The teacher puts questions to a student on a given topic, extending this to encourage other students to ask questions.
Ask the classroom.	The teacher displays a number of written questions to stimulate thinking about pictures or objects in the classroom.
Think-pair-share	Establish talk partners for each student to avoid someone not taking part. Set the question with a goal and a clear timeframe e.g. you have three minutes to discuss X. As with all questioning build in thinking time, circulate to listen to the student discussions and choose students to sample their responses.
Phone a friend	A useful strategy in which a student nominates another to answer the teacher's question. The first student also provides an answer.
Eavesdropping.	When groups are working, the teacher circulates around the classroom and poses questions to groups based on what is heard in their discussions.
Here is the answer what is the question?	Deliberately back to front to encourage out-of-the-box thinking.
More than me	The teacher asks a student a question and deliberately cuts short the answer to involve another student to build on this answer.

Probe	This is what teachers often instinctively do. Turning each answer into a short exchange allows for the follow up question that prompts further thought and deeper understanding, such as 'So how would that affect…'
Say it again better	Ask a student a question, acknowledge their first response in a positive way and give supportive verbal feedback. After exploring what a better answer could include, invite the student to "say it again better", respond to the improved response.
Process questions	Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction suggests that more effective teachers typically ask more process questions. This encourages metacognitive talk in lessons. Before asking process questions model your own thinking, emphasizing how and why. Ask students to explain their reasoning, method, ideas or choices and then challenge them about how a similar question or problem may be approached.

Other assessment for learning strategies

Adapted from https://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/simple-assessment-strategies/

Assessment/feedback method	Information
Peer assessment	Successful peer assessment requires students to be very clear about the learning aim from the activity, as they will apply the success criteria to another learner's work and make value judgements based on these. To maximise the impact, ideas on how to improve the work should be provided. Through this both students will be increasing their own understanding of what makes a successful piece of work.
Self assessment	A student evaluating their own work and reflecting upon their own learning. This works best for short knowledge based activities but can be developed through practice to the point of self-assessment of activities showing greater depth of understanding.
Observation	The teacher circulating around the room taking note of how students are achieving in the learning activity. Provides an opportunity for verbal feedback and questioning.
The formative use of school tests and exams	A summative assessment such as a test only shows what the student can do at that particular point in time and past exam papers are not designed to give a clear picture of which precise knowledge has not been understood. This means that care needs to be taken in interpreting the results of a summative assessment. However there is a significant value in returning marked written assessments so that students can spend time understanding where they gained marks and where they had misunderstandings.

Ask students to reflect	During the last five minutes of class ask students to reflect on the lesson and write down what they've learned. Then, ask them to consider how they would apply this in a different setting or scenario.
Use quizzes and formative pencil–paper assessment	Give a short quiz to check for comprehension. Students respond individually to short, pencil–paper formative assessments of skills and knowledge taught in the lesson. Teachers may elect to have students self-correct. The teacher collects assessment results to monitor individual student progress and to inform future instruction. Both student and teacher can quickly assess whether the student acquired the intended knowledge and skills. This is a formative assessment, so a grade is not the intended purpose.
Ask students to summarise	Have students summarise or paraphrase important concepts and lessons. This can be done in a variety of ways, orally, visually, or otherwise.
Hand signals	These can be used to rate or indicate students' understanding of content. Students can show anywhere from five fingers to signal maximum understanding to one finger to signal minimal understanding. This strategy requires engagement by all students and allows the teacher to check for understanding within a large group.
Show me	Index cards, signs, whiteboards, magnetic boards, or other items are simultaneously held up by all students in class to indicate their response to a question or problem. Using response devices, the teacher can easily note the responses of individual students while teaching the whole group.
Four corners	The teacher poses a question or makes a statement. Students then move to the appropriate corner of the classroom to indicate their response to the prompt. For example, the corner choices might include "I strongly agree," "I strongly disagree," "I agree somewhat," and "I'm not sure."
Choral reading	Students mark text to identify a particular concept and chime in, reading the marked text aloud in unison with the teacher. This strategy helps students develop fluency; differentiate between the reading of statements and questions; and practice phrasing, pacing, and reading dialogue.
One question quiz	Ask a single focused question with a specific goal that can be answered within a minute or two. You can quickly scan the written responses to assess student understanding.
Socratic seminar	Students ask questions of one another about an essential question, topic, or selected text. The questions initiate a conversation that continues with a series of responses and additional questions. Students learn to formulate questions that address issues to facilitate their own discussion and arrive at a new understanding.
3-2-1	Students consider what they have learned by responding to the following prompt at the end of the lesson: 3) things they learned

	from your lesson; 2) things they want to know more about; and 1) questions they have.
Exit ticket	Students write in response to a specific prompt for a short period of time. Teachers collect their responses as a "ticket out the door" to check for students' understanding of a concept taught. (Link to sticker marking below)
Misconception check	Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a concept you're covering. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and to explain why.
Analogy prompt	Periodically, present students with an analogy prompt: "the concept being covered is like ____ because ____."
Peer instruction	Have one student try to teach another student what they have learned. If they can do that successfully, it's clear they have understood.
"Separate what you do and don't understand"	Whether making a t-chart, drawing a concept map, or using some other means, have the students not simply list what they think they know, but what they don't know as well. This won't be as simple as it sounds–we're usually not aware of what we don't know. This strategy is a bit crude because students may not be fully aware of what they do and don't know.

Verbal feedback

Verbal feedback is powerful because it can be provided at the exact time that a student has gone through a thought process. Verbal feedback should still move learning forward, targeting the specific learning gaps that pupils exhibit. It may focus on the task, the subject or self-regulation strategies. All answers should be valued using a positive but honest response which will help to encourage students to speak up in future, such as 'Well done for having a go but not the right answer this time.'

From Torsten Payne's 'Eight verbal feedback strategies to improve learning', from Optimus Education's Knowledge Centre. http://my.optimus-education.com/eight-verbal-feedback-strategies-challenge-pupils-and-improve-progress

Assessment/feedback method	Information
Redirect	This is when a contribution shows that a pupil hasn't properly understood an idea and needs it explained to them again. In this instance I would usually say something like 'That's not quite right but that's my fault as I didn't explain that very well. What I meant to say was…'
Mirror	Clarify their contribution by rephrasing it and repeating it back to them such as, 'So what you're saying is…' This allows any misconceptions to be addressed, gives the rest of the class two opportunities to understand the point and builds rapport.
Bounce	The teacher bounces the answer onto another pupil for them to evaluate it, for instance, 'Thank you Susie. What do you think Liam, is that a good answer?' This keeps all pupils alert as any of them

	might be called upon next, and it forces them to evaluate responses. You can also shape the answers with comments such as, 'That's a great answer Beth. Billy, tell me why that's so good.'
Devil's advocate	Ensure that they have fully understood a point by making them defend it and consider the repercussions, with phrases such as 'So what would happen if…'
Metacognitive talk	This models the process of learning to others. A simple 'Well done' to a pupil does nothing to improve anyone else's understanding; it's vital to understand the process by which they reached the correct answer. This can be done by asking them directly to model their process – 'Perfect answer Sundeep. How did you figure it out?' – or by bouncing it to another pupil, with a sentence such as 'That's an excellent answer Sophie. Nathan, how do you think she worked it out?'

Written feedback

This is often the often feedback method recognized by parents/carers as they think of "marking". It can be though the most time intensive method of providing feedback so it should only be used for key pieces of work where feedback on the specific piece of work is necessary, an individual depth of understanding needs to be seen or students must be able to refer back to comments. It should be positive in tone, move learning forward and target the specific learning gaps that pupils exhibit. This feedback may focus on the task, the subject or self-regulation strategies.

Assessment/feedback method	Information
Individual written comments	This can be a powerful strategy especially if it is comment only without a grade or mark. These individual written comments should be meaningful and manageable for both the student and the teacher. They should be clearly based upon the learning objectives and success criteria. They should also be specific and include an action that prompts the student to do something to improve their work or apply their learning in a different context. This should be directly related to learning and sufficiently detailed and challenging to make the student think and move their learning forward. (Link to DIRT below.)
Codes or symbols	Based on 'Marking: minimum effort for maximum pleasure' from Andy Tharby, writing on the blog of Shaun Allison, at Class Teaching: Find the Bright Spots. https://classteaching.wordpress.com/2013/10/28/marking-minimum-effort-for-maximum-pleasure Use a series of codes or symbols to prevent re-writing the same target out in pupil's books. When students receive their work back, they write the explanation of the code underneath their work so that they know what they need to improve. A word of caution: care does need to be taken to make sure the system doesn't become too complex with too many different codes and symbols that could get confused.

Sticker marking on exit tickets	Based on Every Book Every Lesson: The Ultimate Marking Strategy, from Joe Kirby, blogging at Pragmatic Reform https://pragmaticreform.wordpress.com/2013/11/02/every-book-every-lesson/ This strategy is based on sticker marking on exit tickets. Give students an exit ticket (a short task at the end of a lesson that sums up their key learning). When you come to mark their books, use red/amber/green stickers to let students know whether they have fully/partially/not met the learning aim. Set students a task in the following lesson that extends (for green stickers) consolidates (for amber) or repeat (for red) the key learning.
DIRT: dedicated improvement and reflection time	Based on Marking is an Act of folly from David Didau, blogging at The Learning Spy https://learningspy.co.uk/leadership/marking-act-folly/ When you mark, give each student one piece of feedback to act upon, then give them time in the next lesson to act on it. In this strategy, your marking helps you to plan lessons because students will need time to act on the feedback you have given them. Dylan Wiliam says that feedback should be more work for the recipient than the donor and he's right. If it takes a minute to mark a piece of work, it should result in 10 minutes' worth of improvement from the student. Furthermore, marking is differentiation because you can respond to how individuals have progressed in their learning and give them specific follow on tasks to move to the next level.
Dot round	Based on Doug Lemov, writing in his "field notes" section of his blog, at Teach Like a Champion. Walk around the room while pupils are working independently, and place a dot next to any aspect of a student's work that needs to be improved. The dot simply means, 'check this'. The dot should encourage the student to reflect on their work, either independently, by discussing with an elbow partner, or by asking you for advice. Once they have established the reason for the dot, they make the relevant corrections. As with any new classroom strategy, some initial training is required. The first few times that you try dot marking with a class, you will need to explain what the dots might mean.
Live marking	Based on the blog at Learning from my mistakes: an English teacher's blog During the lesson while pupils are working independently, pupils come to your desk, you mark their book and they then act immediately on that feedback. This method means you can support pupils then and there if they are struggling. However, the timings mean this cannot be of equal benefit to all pupils: some get feedback right at the start, meaning they have only done a little bit, and you can't see how much depth of understanding they

	have. Some will get feedback at the very end, meaning they don't have enough time to act on the feedback. A way of overcoming this could be by sample marking. (Link to whole class feedback)
Whole Class Feedback	Skim read students' work (or sample during live marking) and make a note of frequent misconceptions, errors, excellent points and incomplete work. Once you have summarised the piece of work, use the whole class feedback sheet to generate comments about the piece of work in general, students who deserve praise, misconceptions etc. Photocopy the sheet for every member of the class. Talk through the general feedback with the class and provide DIRT time to improve their work based on the comments you have written/discussed. This strategy is particularly useful for feedback on exam practice prior to PPEs, where students are doing lots of practice questions but you are unable to mark individual books before the assessment.
Yellow box marking	Choose one area of a student's work to mark. Mark it in detail and offer detailed, specific feedback. By avoiding any assessment, students should understand that their work is in progress and by 'zooming in' on one area to improve, the Yellow Box focuses students to act on that feedback in a clear and specific framework.

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