



# Assessment, Feedback and Marking Policy

## **Assessment**

### **Rationale**

We are committed to regular assessment and know that its main purpose is to improve learning.

We believe the key purpose of assessment is to move all students on in their learning in order for them to reach their full potential, now and in the future. Continual monitoring of each student's progress gives a clear picture of their progress, achievement and supports to identify next steps in their learning.

It is important that each teacher knows what has been remembered, what skills have been acquired and what concepts understood. This enables teachers to reflect on student's learning and this informs future planning. For many of our students, transference of skills into other environments and settings is also key.

We recognise that assessment is a vital element of curriculum planning and has four purposes:

**Diagnostic** – determining what the students already know, their knowledge and skills and possible gaps or weaknesses.

**Formative** – providing information that can be continually fed into the planning process.

**Summative** – providing a summary of what students know and can do.

**Evaluative** – providing information on teaching and learning and the progress of individual students and/or groups across the school, as part of a process of continuous improvement.

### **Our aims**

- To ensure that assessment for learning is ongoing in all lessons and the results of this are fed into the planning and review cycle constantly.
- To involve students in their own learning e.g. timetable sessions to develop personal skills and metacognitive abilities, or adapting learning to capture a specific area of interest for a student
- Set clear learning objectives that are phrased in a student friendly way so that students can understand them and respond appropriately to them. For some students working within early communication levels, this may take the form of visual information, or a step-by-step guide to the learning activity
- For students to know how they are making progress with their own learning from their starting point.
- For students to value assessment and see this as a positive learning tool (rather than something to make them feel anxious or worried)
- To provide feedback which leads students to recognise the 'next steps' in their learning and how to work towards these.
- To include reliable judgements about how students are performing in relation to their own starting point as well as against national expectations where appropriate.
- To enable parents/carers to be involved in their child's progress.

## **Principles that underpin assessment at The Fitzroy Academy**

### **Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning**

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

### **Assessment is fair**

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

### **Assessment is honest**

- Assessment outcomes are conveyed in an open, honest and transparent way to assist students with their learning
- Assessment judgements are moderated by experienced professionals to ensure their accuracy

### **Assessment is ambitious**

- Assessment places progress in context against nationally standardised expectations (if appropriate) and against individual starting points
- Assessment embodies a pathway of progress and development for every student

### **Assessment is appropriate**

- The purpose of any assessment must be clear
- Assessment should draw on a range of evidence to provide a complete picture of progress

### **Assessment is consistent**

- Judgements are formed against common principles

### **Assessment outcomes provide meaningful and understandable information for:**

- Students in developing their learning
- Parents/carers in supporting students with their learning
- Teachers in planning teaching and learning

### **Our approach**

These types of assessment can take place (based on individual needs and abilities):

#### **Self-assessment and peer assessment**

Self-assessment encourages students to take greater responsibility for their learning and we actively encourage this.

Self – We encourage students to be participants rather than ‘spectators’ in their learning. At the beginning of new topics their views and opinions are actively sought and where possible are fed into the topic design. After key pieces of work, the students are taught how to reflect on their learning and to edit/assess their own work. Our aim is to ensure that the students’ perception of learning is

not a merely a passive process whereby they listen to the teacher, absorb the information and then regurgitate the information with no links to what they know already or with no change to their deeper understanding and long-term memory.

For some students working at early developmental levels, self-assessment may be 'in the moment'. For example, by indicating that they have clearly enjoyed and understood learning through facial expressions and engagement levels, or by using signs or symbols to communicate that they have understood.

Peer – where meaningful and appropriate to developmental levels, students are taught skills in how to provide positive feedback to peers about their work and over time learn appropriate ways to highlight how peers may improve their work. We value students working collaboratively and we carefully plan opportunities for this to happen.

### **Verbal feedback**

This is our main form of feedback to our students given their range of complex needs and is continually offered during a lesson as the teacher circulates or in a one-to-one setting and a learning conversation takes place to address misconceptions and embed/extend a student's learning. For students working at early developmental levels this may take the form of praise for engaging or completing an activity with increased independence, or a 'thumbs up' when a learning activity has been completed. For other students, teachers and support staff will record that verbal feedback has been given in the student's workbook and may include a short summary of the learning point discussed if meaningful to the learner.

### **Rich, probing questioning**

In our classrooms, the ability of students to be able to express their views and thoughts is generated through the questioning skills of our teachers. Good questioning skills from the teacher help to:

- Develop interest and motivate young people to become actively involved in learning
- Help the students to develop their own deeper thinking skills
- Support and push learning to ensure that it is fully embedded and mastered
- Encourage students to ask their own questions and start to pursue their own knowledge
- Review learning

Our teachers use both open and closed questions, depending on the context.

Closed – these tend to be used to assess memory recall of previous facts/learnt information e.g. when was World War II?

Open – these are used to encourage students to apply and analyse their knowledge e.g. how might a child feel if they had been evacuated during World War II?

We build a culture where every student knows that they may be asked a question at any point during a lesson. We ensure that a 'safe' classroom environment is created where the students know that making mistakes is part of the learning.

### **Reflection and review points**

This is a regular part of our teaching and assessment practice. School staff provide time for students to engage in a discussion about a particular piece of work and they are encouraged to talk about what progress they have made and any areas of difficulty. This is an opportunity for the young person to be fully engaged in their learning and to understand what their next steps are to continue their

learning journey. These conversations are summarised in a student's subject learning journal. The focus of these conversations could be:

- Evaluating progress through a topic
- Reviewing short and long term targets, linking to EHCP/PEP targets
- Listening to the student's view about how they are progressing
- Making it clear what the student needs to do to improve and applying this to the next task/topic
- Supporting a student to respond to the teacher's marking comments
- Setting intentions for future ways of working
- Jointly agreeing ways of overcoming any obstacles or barriers to a student's learning
- Staff scribing student's thoughts and feelings about a particular learning activity or piece of work

For some students, reflection and review may take the form of using visuals or sign language to express likes and dislikes.

### **Formative assessment**

Formative assessment is on-going throughout the lesson or series of lessons and is a vital tool in the planning, teaching, assessing cycle. Teachers will also seek to help students make links in their knowledge between subjects. Formative assessment is used to complement the more formal summative assessments.

### **Summative assessment**

Summative assessments are used to assess what a student can do at a particular time. When conducting summative assessments at The Fitzroy Academy, teachers are mindful of the student's ability to cope academically and emotionally with formal assessment.

At KS2 and KS3, where developmentally appropriate, teachers assess pupil progress against key elements of the agreed standards for the stage of their learning that they should achieve at the end of each year, and in line with their EHCP targets. Pupils are assessed against these expectations termly based on the bespoke content currently taught at that stage.

The following summative assessments may take place;

- End of unit/topic teacher-devised assessments (e.g. practical activities, quizzes or games) based on adapted elements of the National Curriculum learning objectives for that stage.
- A half termly piece of unaided writing (where appropriate)
- A discussion between the learner and teacher which makes clear the learner's level of understanding (especially useful when a young person's written skills may not yet match their cognitive level).
- A speaking and listening/spoken language task.
- Reading comprehension.
- Assessment is across all subjects including foundation subjects to ensure cross curricular deep learning is promoted and embedded and allows us to give a summative assessment grade (working towards, working at or working above) in all subjects.
- Assessment via B Squared (half termly) on the appropriate curriculum pathway for each student

#### **Working Towards**

Children assessed as **working towards** expectations are not secure in all the termly objectives but are able to access the taught curriculum.

#### **Working At**

Children assessed as **working at** expectations have met all the termly objectives and are on track to meet their end of year expectations

#### **Working Above**

Children assessed as **working above** expectations have a deep understanding beyond the expectations for the time of year.

The curriculum is designed to progress through the year, by building on skills, knowledge and understanding of concepts. Progress is tracked against the individual’s personalised targets; this may include termly PEP targets for our Looked After Children and progress against the medium and long term targets in the learner’s EHCP. Teachers know their students well and set realistic targets for their students. It is expected that students will make at least expected progress over the school year; where a learner makes unsatisfactory progress, teachers are quick to address concerns, seeking advice from the SENCo where necessary, on alternative strategies and extra interventions, to ensure the student is able to grasp current learning, and move forward with their learning to meet their end of year target. The table below helps to show how progress is measured.

Autumn Term Grade		Spring term grade		Progress Measure
Working towards	→	Working at	=	Accelerated progress
Working at	→	Working above	=	Accelerated progress
Working at	→	Working at	=	Expected progress
Working towards	→	Working towards	=	Expected progress
Working at	→	Working towards	=	Unsatisfactory progress

For KS4 and KS5, students are assessed against relevant accreditation criteria. Summative assessment methods include;

- End of unit tests, either teacher devised or using accredited organisation provided content
- Qualifications at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2
- Successful completion of ASDAN units/qualifications

All students may access additional testing that may be requested to further explore why a student may have a barrier to progression, these may be carried out by our SENCo or therapy team or we may commission a more extensive piece of work on behalf of the placing Local Authority.

### Initial/Baseline assessment

An essential feature of any assessment system is the identification of starting points for learning from which progress can be measured.

All new students where amenable, are assessed, sometimes in class, sometimes individually by the teacher or SENCo, within the first few weeks of starting at The Fitzroy Academy. Students may join our school at any time during Key Stage 2, 3, or 4 and prior attendance at school may have been irregular.

Information obtained and considered during the assessment period includes:

- Any previous school records (we try to obtain verbal as well as written records because these can often be more informative).
- Individual Development Plans (Wales) or Education, Health and Care plans and Annual Review Reports.
- Standardised assessments to profile basic skills and potential barriers to learning e.g. ‘WRAT5’ CAT4, TOMAL2, CTOPPS.
- We use B Squared to support academic baseline assessments across the school.
- Views of the parent/carer and/or placing authorities/allocated social worker.
- Reports from the students’ home or previous care placement.
- Views of the young person.

From this baseline, teachers' must be alert to students who make less than expected progress in relation to their developmental stage, working at levels and individual circumstances. This can be characterised by progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- fails to match or better the learner's previous rate of progress
- fails to close the attainment gap between the learner and peers working at the same stage
- widens the attainment gap

*(SEND Code of Practice May 2015)*

All school staff have a responsibility to raise these concerns with the Head Teacher and to seek opportunities to explore what may be going-on in a collaborative meeting with colleagues, such as a staff meeting.

The School should also be alert to students who have particular talents and aptitude in certain subjects or special interests, where they should be challenged and stretched. This could be achieved through enrichment activities in school, extra tuition, visits and trips, or engaging other specialists to support a particular curriculum area.

### **Book scrutiny and Moderation**

Book scrutiny will happen during learning walks carried out by the Head teacher, and in more depth in line with the Quality Assurance calendar. Moderation will take place at least three times a year in staff meetings. This will include reviewing progress and evidence to ensure learning is being embedded across a range of environments and settings. Students work will be compared and discussed to ensure consistency across the whole team. Teachers are also facilitated to attend Shropshire Network meetings where appropriate, and to build networks with subject teachers in other special schools to facilitate an understanding of standards nationally. We encourage all of our teachers to be reflective practitioners. The emphasis is on understanding why students perform in the way they have and exploring different ways of maximising each learner's potential whilst ensuring we do not put artificial ceilings on their attainment aspirations because of their perceived learning difficulties or earlier life challenges.

### **Lesson observations**

Teachers are encouraged to undertake regular lesson observations of all practitioners working at the school to ensure that reciprocal learning takes place and standards of teaching continue to be raised across the whole-school. The philosophy must always be that we can learn from one another. Once observed, a peer review sheet should be completed to ensure that the visiting teacher has reflected on what they have seen and any strategies and aspects of their own pedagogy that can be honed following their observation. At least three formal lesson observations will be conducted by the Head teacher to ensure consistency across the whole-school regarding the quality of teaching and this will feed into the on-going school self-evaluation as well as link to performance management and appraisals. The Head teacher will visit lessons more frequently on learning walks to inform areas of development and to share good practice. If a teacher is struggling, a support programme will be set up and targets set and monitored more regularly. We have the advantage of having access to both primary and secondary school specialist colleagues within the New Reflexions Group and supportive links can be made. Our appraisal, performance management and capability policy gives further guidance for supporting teachers.

## **Reporting**

It is important that we share information with those who are involved with or supporting a student and to do this we make the following available;

- Daily reports about engagement and any successes (this takes a range of forms, dependent on the individual circumstances of each student)
- An annual written report for each student in the summer term
- A short summary report for the autumn and spring terms that includes attitude to learning, behaviour, social and academic progress
- For Children who are Looked After, PEP meetings set termly targets (three per year) and bi-annual LAC meetings review progress and set medium term targets.
- Information to inform reviews of each student's EHCP outcomes, conducted in line with statutory regulations
- Information to support full completion of the PEP and LAC review reports.
- Any verbal reporting required by parents, carers or social care to support decision making for that young person.
- Any therapy reports that pertain to individual students.

## **Marking and Feedback**

### **Our Aims**

For feedback to be:

- Meaningful (for both the student and as a record for the teacher to feed into subsequent lesson planning, reporting or individual targets)
- Manageable
- Motivating

At The Fitzroy Academy, to be accessible to our students whose written skills may be significantly below their verbal skills, guidance and prompts on what students have done well and how to improve their work is verbally or visually fed back throughout each lesson. For students following the pre-formal pathway, written feedback is not used. Feedback is given in the context of the lesson, to provide immediate feedback and response to the student's work and engagement.

When feedback is given, teachers use clear and concise language appropriate to help our students to:

**Understand what they have done well** – students need to know what they have done well and the reasons for it.

**Understand how to improve** – students are actively encouraged to read, or have read to them, their marking comments and discuss what they could do to improve before starting any new work.

**Make visible signs of improvement as a result of feedback** – for marking to be effective there must be visible signs through the students' work of progress as a result of marking and feedback.

### **Consistency**

All teachers working in the education block follow the school's marking code, (see Appendix A), so that students are familiar with the terms used. In addition, teachers follow the school's marking protocol, (see Appendix B) to provide consistency between teachers and additional adults who may support their learning.



## **Appendix A: Marking Code**

- Students to write in pencil or black pen (where appropriate).
- Teachers to mark in green pen.
- If a student is required to make a correction or improvement, a green star \* is placed next to it.
- When the correction has been made, a pink tick ✓ through the star is used to show that it has been completed.
- For errors which are not a focus for correction or improvement a dot ● may be used.
- When marking any work repeated spelling mistakes are not corrected.
- Where appropriate, some spelling mistakes may be selected for correction using a green star as above.
- Comments need to reflect on the lesson objective and not describe the task/activity (depending on the child's ability).

## **Appendix B: Marking Protocol**

1. In core subjects and subjects in which teachers see students for 3 or more lessons a week books must be marked weekly
2. In subjects where students have 2 or less lessons a week, books should be marked at least fortnightly
3. Teachers, with the help of teaching assistants, are expected to support students to record their learning in a learning journal style, through the inclusion of:
  - a. Photos
  - b. Comments which summarise verbal feedback (VF)
  - c. Worksheets
  - d. Assessments/tests
  - e. For students on the pre-formal pathway, B the photographic journal on B Squared is used to record learning
4. Marking should address the following:
  - a. Help students to know what they have done well (What Went Well - WWW)
  - b. To help students understand how to improve (Even Better If - EBI)
  - c. To recognise clear progression and reflect on the next steps of their learning journey (Next Steps)

The following activities are suggestions of activities that will be carried out with students at least half termly:

- Self-assessment - skills will be taught and students encouraged to evaluate whether they have met the learning objectives
- Peer assessment – this will be encouraged, with students guided in the process of giving positive feedback. This may need to be structured to support the students to engage effectively
- Target setting/discussion about targets in the subject area
- Frequent opportunities to reflect on subject progress, development of subject specific skills and how students are using them across other contexts
- Regular inclusion of discussions and activities which develop the young person's self-understanding of how they learn best
- Functional learning/applied learning/real life examples
- Student written response to teacher marking/feedback (where appropriate)