

ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, NEWRY

Assessment Policy

Revised November 2024

"Assessment and other data is used to effectively inform learning and teaching across the school and in the classroom to promote improvement"

Every School A Good School – April 2009

"Teachers use varied forms of assessment which are matched to the students' ages and stages of development. The assessment tasks have clearly identified purposes which are understood by the students".

"The students' progress and attainment are monitored and recorded in line with statutory requirements."

Together Towards Improvement – 2010

Rationale

Assessment is an integral aspect of learning and teaching in St Mary's. It supports each student in their own learning, empowering them to achieve their full academic and creative potential. Effective assessment engages students in the learning process, develops their self-esteem and sense of personal responsibility. Assessment data is essential to whole school planning and review, creating a child centred learning environment based on individual learning and high expectations of all.

The school's mission statement states:

"We will work in collaboration with other educational institutions and in partnership with parents and students to maximize academic and creative potential of students, enabling them to achieve the highest educational standards, thereby enriching their lives, the community and the economy".

- Learning, teaching and assessment are a continuous cycle, effective planned assessment is an integral part of this process;
- Assessment is focused on learning and contributes to the raising of student attainment, which is closely monitored and tracked throughout all key stages;
- Assessment is based on clear learning objectives and criteria for success that are made explicit to students;
- Assessment is an ongoing process, integral to learning and teaching in the classroom;
- Assessment involves the use of high-quality effective questioning to deepen learners' understanding;

- Assessment strategies and tasks are varied and differentiated to meet the needs of all students;
- Assessment supports students to improve attainment through effective feedback;
- Assessment includes 'Scaffolding Reflection' giving time to students to recognise what and how they are learning and to make changes as they progress;
- Assessment is as objective and consistent as possible;
- Assessment data informs whole school planning and review.

Purpose of Assessment

For School:

- Assessment supports class teachers and subject leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching and in planning teaching strategies to take account of student attainment;
- Assist teachers/curriculum leaders in making decisions about appropriate curriculum pathways and class groupings;
- Assist class teachers, heads of department, pastoral leaders and SLT in monitoring student attainment:
- Tracking of student attainment and the use of whole school intervention strategies to support identified underachieving students;
- Monitor and support students with additional learning needs;
- Identify gifted and talented students to enable the provision of extension work;
- Support whole school target setting and exam analysis
- Monitor, evaluate and benchmark whole school attainment, creating a reflecting learning environment
- Recognise and reward the achievement of students and celebrate success;

For Students:

- Encourage students to take greater ownership of their own learning and progress through the setting and monitoring of their own Target % (KS3) and Target Grade (KS4 and Post 16)
- Enable students to reflect on their own performance against their targets, recognise individual achievement and success;
- Encourage students to identify areas for improvement and possible learning difficulties.
- Support students in overcoming possible barriers to learning including the use of whole school intervention strategies;

For Parents/Carers:

- Inform parents/carers on a regular basis about their daughter's/son's (collaboration students) progress;
- Assist parents in helping their daughter to make informed choices in relation to curriculum pathways and career choices;
- Help parents to encourage and support their daughter to achieve their full potential;

Assessment for Learning – Key Features

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students attend a Learning and Assessment Seminar each September (Appendix 18,19). The seminar highlights the key elements of the learning and assessment cycle including: types of assessment and key assessment dates. Each student receives their Learning and Assessment Plan for the year.

(Appendix 1- KS3: Appendix 2- KS4 Learning and Assessment Plans)

(a) Learning Intentions

Learning Intentions are explained to all students and form an integral part of the learning cycle. Learning Intentions allow each student to have a clear understanding of what will be learned during the lesson allowing them to complete tasks successfully, they:

- + help students to focus on the purpose of their learning rather than merely on the completion of the activities;
- **♣** make connections with previous learning transferable learning;
- help teachers to review progress;
- may be expressed in terms of:
 - Knowledge;
 - Understanding;
 - Skills Development;
- **Key Stage 3** Individual Learning Intentions are shared with students at the start of each lesson and students are encouraged to record these in their books.
- **Key Stage 4/5** Learning Intentions/Subject content is shared with all students as outlined in the subject syllabus, these are displayed in the student exercise or workbooks.

(b) Success Criteria

Success Criteria is discussed and agreed with students, enabling them to have a greater appreciation of what is required from them to achieve their personal targets. Success Criteria enables students to gain a better understanding of what a 'good' piece of work should be.

- **Key Stage 3** The success criteria relate to the assessment which the students will be completing at the end of the learning and assessment cycle.
- **Key Stage 4/5**Success criteria is matched to the subject content within the syllabus. Marks schemes are continuously used by teachers to enable students to identify successful answers and reflect on their own performance.

(c) Effective Questioning

Teachers use a range of questions to challenge and develop learning and also to evaluate the teaching strategies used. Both thinking time and effective questioning encourages deeper understanding and promotes self-reflection. Effective questioning:

- involves all students in classroom learning;
- **♣** deepens students' learning, understanding and attainment;
- develops examination techniques;
- assists the classroom teacher in assessing the students' level of understanding and informs future planning;

(Teacher guidance on Effective Questioning – Appendix 4)

(d) Types of Assessment

(i) Formative

Such assessments are undertaken informally within normal planned classroom activities and are Assessment FOR Learning. This is ongoing and provides evidence of progression in learning. It supports learning through identifying difficulties, providing feedback and diagnosing future learning priorities. This can take the form of observations, class tests, presentations, research, homework and practical projects.

(ii) Summative

This formal process is Assessment OF Learning and is used to measure student attainment, normally carried out at the end of the learning and assessment cycle. This can take the form of: External Examinations, Christmas and Summer Examinations, End of Topic Tests and Standardised Assessments. These assessments are used to:

- inform learning and teaching;
- monitor attainment:
- identify student progress and success;
- identify underachievement;
- measure the success of student support strategies;

Standardised Summative Assessment

Standardised Department Assessments are given at set times throughout the school year, outlined in the school calendar and student diary.

Key Stage 3 4 Standardised Assessments (Oct, Dec, March, June)

Key Stage 4 5 Standardised Assessments (Oct, Dec, Feb, April, June)

Attainment in each assessment is recorded in SIMS Assessment Manager by class teachers and tracked against the students' Personalised Target for each subject (KS3 Target %, KS4 Target Grade).

At Post 16 Key Assessments are completed on a regular basis by General Subjects and in preparation for external examination units by Applied Subjects as outlined in the relevant Department Assessment Policies. Student attainment in such assessments and in portfolio completion is tracked by class teachers against the students' target grades.

Personalised Targets

All students have a personalised target in each of their subjects, attainment in summative assessments is monitored and benchmarked against this target.

Key Stage 3 Personalised Target Percentages

Based on the MidYis results (Sept. - Year 8) students are given a Personalised Target % in each subject, these are based on relevant stanines (Vocabulary, Maths or Overall). The Target Percentages are shared with students, and they record them in their Homework Diary.

Review of Targets

<u>January</u> - Year 8 Student Target % are reviewed by departments (after Assessments 1 and 2) and if necessary, these are changed based on student attainment and teachers professional judgment. Departments may also use CCEA Adaptive Assessment results (Yr8 Term 1)

<u>June</u> - Years 8 and 9 Student Target % are reviewed and if necessary are amended

Key Stage 4 Personalised Target Grades

Subject teachers support students in establishing an agreed target based on KS3 results, CCEA Adaptive Assessments, previous assessments, and professional judgment in each subject.

Review of Targets

Student target grades are reviewed after Standardised Assessment 2 and 5 in Year 11. The targets are shared with students and recorded in their Homework Diary.

Key Stage 5 Personalised Target Grades

Subject teachers support each student in establishing a target grade in each subject, this is completed in consultation with parents at the Year 13 Parent Teacher Meeting (Term 1). Teachers use GCSE grades, SIMS Best Chance Predictions, student assessment results and their own professional judgement to assist with this process. Student attainment is monitored by class teachers and matched to the students' personalised target grade.

In Year 14 students reflect on their 'AS' module results or attainment to date (Vocational subjects) and this target is reviewed.

(iii) Self and Peer Assessment

Students are given opportunities within each subject area to evaluate their own and other student's performance. Self and Peer Assessment encourages students to become independent learners, increases motivation and supports students in identifying ways to improve the quality of their work. Such assessment takes place in a climate of high expectation where success criteria is shared and agreed. Class teachers create a supportive learning climate where students feel comfortable and trust one another, encouraging successful peer assessment. Peer assessment supports collaborative working and develops the skill of evaluating their work and the work of other students. Peer and Self-Assessment gives students insights into the criteria of quality learning and what constitutes a 'good' piece of work. Peer and Self-assessment assessment encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning, they encourage a reflective learning culture and independence in learning.

(e) Marking for Improvement, Feedback and Scaffolding Reflection

Marking for improvement, Feedback and Scaffolding Reflection supports students to 'further' and improve their learning. Marking and feedback focuses on the learning intentions and encourages students to act on the comments provided to improve their own performance. Teachers, where possible, try to feed forward to allow pupils to make use of the feedback given in their next piece of work.

Marking for Improvement

Consistent Marking for Improvement is essential for effective learning and teaching. Teachers provide quality feedback on the quality of the content and presentation of the work including spelling, punctuation and grammar, this is in line with the Whole School Presentation and Marking Code. (**Appendix 5**)

Teacher comments provide feedback on how work can be improved, the emphasis of all feedback is effort rather than ability, supportive feedback builds students' self-confidence and attainment. Marking for Improvement focuses on providing high quality, detailed and informative marking on selected pieces of work.

When marking teachers will:

- share criteria for marking with students;
- ensure that students receive feedback relating to their work as soon as possible;
- recognise and comment on strengths and areas for improvement;
- indicate ways that the students can make improvements;
- recognise good work and effort and give praise;
- keep a record of marks in their planners/electronic devise or mark sheet using Assessment Manager and retain work according to their Departmental Policy;
- use the whole school Marking and Presentation Code;

Feedback

Feedback is focused on the learning intention and success criteria of the tasks set. This helps students understand the causes of their success or areas for development and become aware of the steps needed for improvement. Oral and written feedback are closely interrelated and equally valued within learning and teaching. Peer and self-assessment, as well as teacher assessment, contribute to formative feedback.

Structure of quality feedback:

- ♣ highlight success referring to the success criteria;
- identify areas for improvement;
- provides improvement suggestions:
 - o reminding the students of the learning intention and success criteria;
 - o giving examples of what they could do or ask focused questions;
 - o giving students examples or suggestions they can use to improve;
- encourages students to read the constructive comments and make any necessary changes;
- Reflection Plans in Key Stage 3 (**Appendix 6**) and standardised assessment cover sheets in Key Stage 4 (**Appendix 7**) are used to:
 - o record student attainment;
 - o provide written teacher/peer feedback;
 - o scaffold the students own self reflection;
 - o involve parents in their child's progress

Types of Feedback

Different types of feedback are appropriate for different purposes, these include:

- verbal teacher feedback;
- teacher checked acknowledged marking (dated and signed);
- comment only marking/marking for improvement this will exclude marks or grades and will include 'closing the gap' prompts to facilitate improvement;
- marks/Grades marking:
- self marking marking by the student of their own work with structured guidance by the teacher linked to the Learning Intention and Success Criteria;
- peer marking marking by another student with structured guidance by the teacher linked to the learning intention and success criteria;

Scaffolding Reflection

Reflection helps students to recognise what and how they have learned and what they need to focus on in the future. It involves helping the students to make judgements about their own and others' learning. This approach will be modelled by the class teacher and students should view it as part of their learning experience.

Scaffolding Reflection helps:

- develop students understanding of the success criteria/examination marks scheme in both giving and receiving feedback;
- students become more aware of the ways to improve their own work;
- improve attainment due to the emphasis placed on identifying areas of success and improvement;

Scaffolding reflection can take place:

- at the beginning of the lesson to connect new learning;
- during the learning helping students to stay focused and make necessary improvement during the learning cycle;
- after the learning helping students to become aware of successes and areas for improvement to inform their learning targets;

Student Reflection

- <u>Key Stage 3</u> Teachers use Student Reflection Plans to provide quality written feedback on the standardised assessments. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own progress by identifying what they did well and areas for improvement. (**Appendix 6**)
- <u>Key Stage 4</u> All teachers use standardised assessment front cover sheets to provide written feedback, benchmarking their result to their target grade for that subject. Students reflect on their progress identifying areas of strength and improvement. (**Appendix 8**)

(f) Recording, Monitoring Progress and Raising Standards

Student attainment is monitored using a variety of assessment tasks and progress is tracked by Class Teachers, Heads of Department, Pastoral Leaders, the Raising Standards Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team.

Formative Assessments

Formative Assessment results for all Key Stages are recorded in the teacher's planner. Homework, class work and end of topic/unit tests are recorded by teachers in their planner (paper or electronic copy);

Summative Assessments

In **Key Stage 3 and 4** all Standardised Assessments are recorded by class teachers in SIMS Assessment Manager. Each result is benchmarked against the students' Personalised Target % (KS3) or Personalised Target Grade (KS4). Each result is classified using a shading system:

- Above Target Green shading
- On Target Yellow shading
- Below Target Red shading

Students record each assessment result in their diary and use the following key to monitor progress; Parents/Guardians are encouraged to discuss their daughter's progress and sign each assessment column in the diary.

+	Above Target
0	On Target
	Below Target

Teachers use SIMS Behaviour Manager to reward student attainment and effort but also to highlight and challenge underachievement.

Achievement points may be awarded by class teachers to students who are working hard and making progress. Teachers may also reward effort and progress using a variety of other means including student of the month, rewards, certificates, department postcards and notes in diaries.

Student attainment is monitored by Class Teachers, Heads of Department, Year Tutors, the Raising Standards Leaders and SLT to track student progress and identify students who are underachieving and need extra support through the Raising Standards Programme as outlined in the Cycle of Improvement. (**Appendix 9**)

Students with additional needs – All Key Stages

The Learning Support Co-ordinator closely monitors and tracks the progress of students with additional educational needs using a range of attainment data and teacher feedback. This information is used to monitor progress and employ relevant support strategies but also to measure the effectiveness of strategies in place. Class teachers track the progress of all students completing and reviewing the targets for those on the Learning Support Register.

(Appendix 10 Individual Education Plan)

Newcomer Students – All Key Stages

The Newcomer Co-ordinator closely monitors and tracks the progress of New Comer students using a range of attainment data and teacher feedback. This data is used to identify underachievement and employ relevant support strategies but also to measure the effectiveness of strategies in place. Newcomer students are assessed within each subject against the CEFR (Common European Framework of Languages) and given a grade for talking and listening and reading and writing.

(Appendix 11 CEFR template and PowerPoint)

At **Post 16** attainment in key assessments and portfolios is recorded by class teachers using their planner/recording system. Any student who is underperforming in relation to their personalised target grade is identified using SIMS Behaviour Management. Students are supported by their Class Teacher, Heads of Department, Form Teacher or Year Tutor.

All parents are encouraged to contact the school to arrange an appointment if they have any concerns about their daughter's progress.

Assessment Data and Raising Standards

The school collates and uses a range of data to track and monitor student attainment across all year groups. This is in addition to other assessment data recorded by individual department teachers eg class tests results, homework results which is used to monitor the progress of individual classes. (**Appendix 17**)

Assessment data is monitored by Class Teacher, Heads of Department, Learning Support Coordinators, Pastoral Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team to monitor student attainment and progress.

Intervention strategies are initiated for those students who have been identified as underachieving in a number of subject areas. Mrs L Little (Raising Standards Leader - Data), Mrs S Haddad (Newcomer Co-ordinator) and Mrs F Mc Cloy/Miss C Mallon (Learning Support Co-ordinators) liaises with Subject Leaders, Year Tutors and the Senior Leadership Team.

(h) Homework

Quality homework consolidates work which has been undertaken in class and helps to reinforce and extend students' knowledge. It encourages students to think and learn independently and the work completed can be used within the assessment process. There are many different types of homework which can be used as a basis of assessment, these include; written, learning, research and practical.

(i) Cross-Curricular Skills

The cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics, and Using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are the core skills which learners' access and apply their knowledge and understanding. These skills are developed across the curriculum and are the responsibility of all teachers. Emphasis is placed on transferring, applying and 'using' skills effectively, throughout the curriculum.

(j) Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

The ability to think both critically and creatively and to develop personal and inter-personal skills is essential for all learners. The development of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TS&PC) is embedded in learning and teaching within all subjects helping to prepare students for employment and their role as active citizens in society.

(k) <u>Reporting</u>

Reporting:

Reports are given to parents/carers at set times throughout the school year:

Key Stage 3		
December	C	Christmas Report – short (Appendix 12)
Term 1/2	P	Parent Teacher Meeting
June	S	Summer Report – detailed (Appendix 13)

Key Stage 4	
September	Results from Summer Year 11 GCSE external modules (Appendix 14)
Term 1/2	Parent Teacher Meeting
Decenber	Christmas Report – detailed (Appendix 15)

Key Stage 5	
Term 1	Parent Teacher Meeting
March	Interim Report – detailed (Appendix 16)

(1) Assessment Data for Collaboration Students:

All Assessment results for collaboration students are forwarded to the Year Head in home schools. Teachers also co-operate with both partner schools in relation to sharing assessment data to monitor student progress and to facilitate each schools' reporting arrangements.

Responsibilities

Principal and Senior Leadership Team

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team have overall responsibility for developing effective practices within the school for assessment, recording and reporting. The team:

- ≠ identify assessment priorities as outlined in the School Development Plan;
- ensure the school meets all statutory obligations in relation to assessment across all Key Stages;
- ♣ lead whole school target setting ensuring effective procedures for the identification
 of underachievers and initiate support strategies to raise student attainment;
- ensure consistent whole school approach towards assessment, recording and reporting;
- develop effective procedures to fully utilise relevant assessment data from primary schools to allow ease of transition of students between Key Stages 2 and 3;
- ♣ analyse assessment data to monitor and evaluate student attainment and progress against whole school targets as outlined in the School Development Plan;
- ensure assessment arrangements are clearly shared with all members of staff in line with the whole school policy and relevant data is disseminated to facilitate selfevaluation, planning and target setting (Appendix 25);

- ♣ present whole school targets and statistics to Governors and relevant external stakeholders eg DENI;
- monitor, evaluate and review the Whole School Assessment Policy, procedures and arrangements;
- ensure assessment is an integral part of whole school self-evaluation and quality assurance (Appendix 20,26)

Heads of Department

- ♣ effectively use assessment data, both internal and external, to facilitate selfevaluation, planning and target setting within their department;
- ensure all statutory requirements are met in relation to all external assessments including portfolio assignments/controlled assessments;
- identify relevant training opportunities for department members in relation to all aspects of assessment;
- monitor assessment arrangements within their department, ensuring a consistent department approach;
- ♣ share good practice in relation to assessment within their own and other departments;
- develop effective department strategies to support those students who have additional educational needs, the gifted and talented, new comer students and those who are deemed to be underachieving;
- collate and analyse relevant formative and summative assessment data within their department and report to the Principal and SLT in relation to all aspects of assessment when required;
- monitor, evaluate and review their departmental assessment procedures in line with the whole school assessment policy;

Subject Teachers

- successfully implement their department's assessment procedures to include the use a range of assessments;
- ♣ liaising with the learning support coordinator to review and write IEP's and the new-comer coordinator to complete CEFR for relevant students;
- ensure the needs of those students identified as gifted and talented are being met by providing extended activities/assessments;
- address student underachievement using whole school and department procedures and arrangements;
- ensure the key principles of assessment for learning are implemented within classroom practice;
- ensure all students' work is regularly and consistently marked, highlighting strengths and areas for development;
- ♣ keep accurate and consistent records of student performance to inform future learning and teaching. Such data is shared at department meetings;
- explain the personalised target percentages to students in Key Stage 3 to ensure understanding of the target setting process
- agree personalised target grades with students in Key Stage 4 and Post 16;

- ♣ liaise with key members of staff e.g. form teachers, year tutors, learning support coordinators to support students who are underachieving;
- set high quality homework at regular intervals which is marked consistently in line with the marking policy;
- use comment only marking/marking for improvement on a regular basis to provide students with meaningful feedback on their achievements and areas for development;
- reward student achievement using oral and written feedback and the pastoral system
 achievement points;

Leader of Learning- Raising Standards (Data)

- initiate procedures within the school to identify and support students who are underachieving using baseline data;
- develop whole school strategies to support students who are underachieving;
- **↓** co-ordinate the whole school assertive mentoring programme (KS4);
- develop effective communication procedures to inform parents/carers regarding their daughter's progress and areas for improvement;
- the leader will coordinate whole staff training on the effective use of data to monitor student progress across all Key Stages and disseminate data to staff;

Curriculum Leader – Examinations and Quality Assurance

♣ monitor and quality assure identified department summative assessments (Christmas and Summer Tests) to ensure a consistent whole school approach.

Learning Support Coordinators

- ♣ liaising with other staff, identify students with additional educational needs and assess their specific needs;
- working with other staff, develop and support appropriate assessment arrangements for students with additional needs;
- ensure statutory requirements are met to support students on the learning support register during external assessments;
- ➡ monitor and evaluate the performance of students, reporting to parents/carers and other stakeholders at set times throughout the year;
- ♣ lead whole staff training in relation to assessment arrangements for students with additional educational needs.

'Newcomer' Coordinator

- ♣ liaises with all staff to share information and support appropriate assessment arrangements for Newcomer students in subject areas;
- ensure statutory requirements are met to support Newcomer students;
- ♣ lead whole staff training in relation to assessment arrangements for Newcomer students:
- liaise with Newcomer Classroom Assistants to monitor and support students
- ♣ liaise with staff to ensure every subject teacher contributes to the CEFR process to monitor and assess the progress of Newcomer Students.

Year Heads

♣ Monitor student use of diaries to effectively record homework's and assessment results (Appendix 23)

Associated Whole School Policies:

This policy is set within the broader school context of Curriculum and as such should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Curriculum Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Homework Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Literacy Policy
- Numeracy Policy
- IT Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Examinations Policy
- Controlled Assessment Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Parental Engagement Policy
- Inclusion Policy

All policies are available from the school website www.stmarysnewry.com.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

The Vice Principal, Mr Fitzpatrick is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the Assessment Policy. Mr Fitzpatrick will report annually to the Principal and wider SLT on the development and progress of Assessment procedures:

- Heads of Departments will ensure that assessment is incorporated in schemes of work;
- Heads of Department will ensure that their departments' assessment procedures are consistent with the whole school policy;
- The Senior Leadership Team will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the whole school assessment policy;
- The Vice Principal is responsible for evaluating the progress of the whole school approaches to Assessment
- The Vice Principal is responsible for reporting progress under this policy to the Principal on an annual basis.
- The Curriculum Leader Raising Standards (Data) is responsible for evaluating the whole school raising standards procedures and reporting to the Senior Leadership Team.

Signed by Chair of Governors:				
Date:				
Signed by Principal:				
Date:				
Date of Review: November 2027				

Appendix

1	KS3 Learning and Assessment Plan	
2	KS4 Learning and Assessment Plan	
3	KS3 Learning Plan	
4	Effective Questioning – Guidance for Teachers	
5	Presentation and Marking Code	
6	KS3 Reflection Plans	
7	KS3 Assessment Cover	
8	KS4 Standardised Assessment Cover Sheets	
9	Cycle of Improvement	
10	Individual Education Plan	
11	CEFR template and powerpoint	
12	KS3 Sample Report – Short	
13	KS3 Sample Report – Detailed	
14	KS4 September Module Report	
15	KS4 Sample Report – Detailed	
16	Post 16 Interim Report	
17	Assessment Data	
18	KS3 Learning & Assessment Presentation	
19	KS4 Learning & Assessment Presentation	
20	Quality Assurance of tests	
21	Curriculum and Assessment Overview	
22	Collegial Book Monitoring	
23	Diary Monitoring Checklist	
24	PRSD Lesson Observation Sheet	
25	Student Tracking Key Dates	
26	Overview of self-evaluation and quality assurance	
27	Staff assessment and recording update	
28	Staff information	
Staff Area Whole staff Documents Staff Information – Learning and Assessment		

