



The Holt School Assessment for Learning Policy

April 2017

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Responsibility	Mrs K Pearce
Committee	Standards and Curriculum
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Introduction

Assessment at The Holt School is an integral part of the teaching and learning process for all students and regular and robust Assessment for Learning (AfL) are the essential tools necessary for ensuring successful teaching and learning.

Purposes of assessment

- To recognise fully each student's achievement in school.
- To enable students to understand where they are in their learning and to understand what they need to do next.
- To diagnose each student's difficulties and to identify appropriate ways to overcome them.
- To enable students to review their own progress with staff on an ongoing basis and plan ahead by using a set of individual targets.
- To measure the value added by the school by comparing achievement to potential.

Types of assessment

The Holt uses both summative and formative assessment

Summative Assessment

Where all students are assessed to see how much learning has taken place at the end of a unit/ term/year. For example a written examination, a verbal test or a recording (music, MFL).

Formative Assessment

Where progress is assessed along the way. For example, students are given oral feedback, written work is marked or a practical activity is discussed.

Internal Formal Assessment

Where exams take place within the school, with a formal setting. For example KS3 assessment fortnight and Pre Public Exams (PPEs) at KS4 and 5.

External Assessment

Where an outside agency assesses the students. For example, GCSEs and A level exams.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment for learning at The Holt School is at the heart of our teaching and learning policy. This follows our principles of AfL.

These are:

To foster motivation

Students with significant educational needs have the greatest anxiety about the value of their achievement. Assessment should emphasise the progress students have made in terms that a student can both understand and appreciate. It should focus on the individual student and their achievements rather than in comparison with others who may be of a different stage in their own learning. This should include feedback that is face- to- face and immediate. On this

basis, a student is more likely to listen to constructive advice on how to meet the next challenge and so learn to take risks in a secure environment.

To help learners know how to improve

Students need explicit feedback on the steps that they are following and how to move along these steps. They need specific statements about their current strengths, but also the new skills and knowledge they might acquire to move to the next level.

Through this process, students will be able to plan ahead and so develop a longer term view about learners. They will develop from individuals enjoying a single process of learning to one of a continuous progress and achievement.

To promote understanding of goals and criteria

All students need to understand what it is that they are trying to achieve. Teachers need to tell their students what the point is in a lesson or module that is being studied and what the expected outcomes will be so that they can judge if the planned goal has been achieved. In this way the student can become more autonomous in the learning process. At the same time, students need to exert their own influence on planning so that they can set goals in aspects that they value.

To develop a capacity for self-assessment

Students with additional learning needs have difficulty standing back and forming judgement about their learning. They have a limited vocabulary to describe their actions and analyse the value of these actions. They also find it problematic to use this information about past performance to influence future actions. All students need to reflect on how well they have done and why. They will be enabled to move towards greater independence as learners if they are more included in the process that judges how successful they have been.

To be part of effective planning

There should be formal arrangements across the school and within each class for both the student and teacher to come together to gain information about progress being made. In this way it is more likely that future planning would be influenced by what has gone before and both teacher and student will be more prepared for what is to come. These formal arrangements will make it clear how the student is to take part, to receive feedback and to make their own contribution to future plans.

To use data to help students know how to improve

The Holt School has a target setting arrangement for all students which is used to determine the overall progress of students. A student's KS2 SATS and CATS tests data is recorded on SIMS and used to project an aspirational GCSE target grade range. Subject teachers then use this grade range as a benchmark to measure progress against formally assessed pieces of work.

To focus on how students learn

The process of learning has to be in the minds of both teacher and student, utilising a variety of teaching and learning strategies. Students are assessed and the assessment outcomes are shared with them.

The role of the teacher in assessment :

In the context of AfL at The Holt all teachers should

- Recognise that *all* students can improve.
- Plan opportunities and strategies to help students to understand the *how* of learning as well as the *what*.

- Appreciate that good assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process through good use of Feedback and Improvement Time (FIT).
- Be aware of the emotional impact of comments, grades and marks and give regular oral and written feedback that is positive and constructive, recognising achievements as well as being developmental, and that focuses on the work that has been produced, rather than on the person.
- Understand learner motivation by emphasising progress and achievement and embracing a growth mindset.
- Be clear about a learner's strengths and how to develop these as their areas for improvement and identify the next steps needed for them to make progress and share these with the learners.
- Encourage independent learning by enabling students to take charge of their learning though developing their skills of reflection, self- assessment and their capacity to identify next steps (FIT).
- Praise progress and reward achievement through comments and the school's praise and reward systems.
- Recognise that assessment for learning should be used in all areas of educational activity and that it should enable all learners to achieve their best and have their achievements recognised.
- Make it fit for purpose, varied and use it to inform future planning and teaching.

The role of the Head of Department

Departments have their own marking policies which reflect their individual needs. HoDs monitor the marking policy through drop ins and "booklook" weeks.

Feedback and marking, incorporating FIT

To make feedback to students effective, teachers should ensure that:

- Students are clear about what is expected of them and what they can expect from the teacher. Students should expect the feedback they receive to explain what they have done well with reasons and where and how they can improve and for it to be as soon after the completed work as possible.
- The learning objectives/ learning outcomes and/or marking criteria are used as the benchmark for the teacher's oral and written feedback. They should be shared and made clear to the students in advance of attempting the task.
- It complies with the department's marking policy (see above).
- Students receive regular and detailed feedback on their work, which is constructive, informative and focused, so that they understand how they are progressing and what steps they need to take to improve. Oral feedback will be the most frequent and interactive form of feedback in their lessons.

- Feedback is given for different purposes such as correcting an error, providing information, organising, challenging, confirming and moving on, crystallising next steps or encouraging reflection.
- Advice on “next steps” is clearly explained in accessible language and students have the opportunity in the lesson to take the next steps and act on the feedback (FIT).
- It also includes comments from peers and from self- assessment. Students need to be shown how to assess and evaluate their own and their peers’ work. Feedback also involves teachers receiving feedback from students about their learning.