



WESTWARD HOUSE SCHOOL

Ratification

Role	Name	Date
Proprietor	Harriet Harrison	18 th September 2022
Reviewed	EB	Sept 2024
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Assessment Policy

We use a multitude of methods to gain an understanding of the student's development. Assessment at Westward House is both formative and summative.

Our aim is for a strengths-based approach to assessment, from merely providing information **to** the "assessor" to sharing positive information **with** the "assessed". A strengths-based approach is a person-centred approach and an approach that identifies capacities rather than deficits.

There should always be a clear purpose and function for assessment that ultimately has a positive impact on the learner.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment evaluates children' knowledge, skills and understanding on a regular basis, day-to-day and lesson by lesson. It aims:

- to provide feedback for teachers to modify subsequent learning activities and experiences;
- to identify and remediate group or individual deficiencies;

- to move focus away from achieving grades and onto learning processes, in order to increase self-efficacy and reduce the negative impact of extrinsic motivation;
- to improve children' metacognitive awareness of how they learn; • to both fine-tune instruction and children' own focus on progress.
- Possible strategies include quick recap questions, scrutiny of children' work, providing verbal feedback, observing children, classroom quizzes.

Summative assessment

This is the more traditionally understood form of assessment, involving an end of-learning activity to summarise overall learning at the completion of a course or unit. Summative assessment helps form a judgement of progress.

Summative assessment at Westward House should be:

- Appropriate
- Standardised in test and procedures
- Confidential, but accessible to all those concerned
- Used effectively - to prepare planning, for teaching and future progress development

Methods of summative assessment include:

- End of unit assessments
- Standardised tests
- Questionnaires
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Observations
- Projects

Externally standardised summative assessment

This is externally set, marked and standardised, as well as being validated by an external body, usually an examination board.

Peer Assessment

Children play an active role in this process to help them become self-aware and self-critical learners.

Before a child joins Westward House and when they first join:

Initial assessments which include:

- teacher observation
- standardised testing when appropriate
- diagnostic testing when appropriate
- social and emotional aspects

Pupils will be assessed when they join the school using these standardised assessments:

- i) Dynamo Maths assessment
- ii) CAT4
- iii) NGRT
- iv) NGST
- v) Free writing exercise in timed conditions

These tests are repeated 12 weekly or termly, apart from the CAT4. .

In addition, where necessary other assessments will be administered as appropriate such as for insights into phonemic proficiency, orthographic fluency etc. WIAT 4 is the test battery used in these situations, but others may be used as appropriate.

In Maths assessments are administered at the end of each unit of study; these are either using Conquer Maths or Dr Frost or for GCSE students via the online platform. Bi- annual assessments are conducted using National Numeracy Tests.

Assessments for Progress

Pupils are also assessed using the 7C's framework learning portfolio. The framework consists of assessment in:

- curriculum
- cognition
- communication
- creativity

- control
- compassion
- co-ordination

The Lead teacher will monitor progress. This will form the basis of specific individual planning.

General Marking and Feedback

As well as summative assessment, the role of feedback is highly important in helping children to progress.

Informal feedback

Teachers will be expected to offer positive and specific feedback to children, which could be subject-specific or about behaviour and / or attitude.

At Eastward House most feedback is given verbally due to the ratio of teachers to children. Children at Westward House respond better when receiving *immediate, verbal* feedback.

- Marking (see marking policy) is to provide both the student and the teacher with insights into the progress, strengths, and areas for improvement in a student's academic journey. The key aims of marking is to:

1. Provide Clear Feedback to Students

Marking serves as a tool for delivering constructive feedback to students. Feedback helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement. It should:

- Highlight what has been done well.
- Point out specific areas where improvement is needed.
- Offer guidance on how to improve future performance (e.g., suggestions for further reading, revision, or practice).

2. Promote Student Reflection and Self-Improvement

Marking should encourage students to reflect on their work and their progress over time. It enables them to:

- Identify patterns in their mistakes or misunderstandings.
- Make informed decisions about how to approach future tasks.
- Set goals for their learning and track their improvement.

3. Ensure Consistent and Fair Evaluation

Marking should be consistent across different subjects and teachers, ensuring fairness and equity. It provides:

- A standardised way of assessing student work, reducing subjectivity.
- A clear understanding of how a student's work is evaluated according to pre-established criteria.
- Assurance that all students are measured against the same academic expectations and standards.

4. Support Teacher Planning and Instruction

Marking is a valuable tool for teachers to:

- Identify areas where the class or individual students are struggling.
- Adjust teaching strategies, lesson plans, and resources based on the feedback from student work.
- Recognise common misconceptions, gaps in knowledge, or areas that require further clarification.

5. Monitor and Track Student Progress

Marking allows teachers and schools to monitor students' progress over time. It helps in:

- Identifying trends in a student's performance, such as improvement or decline.
- Making decisions about appropriate interventions, additional support, or enrichment opportunities for students.
- Providing evidence of achievement that can be used for reporting to parents, guardians, and external stakeholders.

6. Encourage Engagement with the Learning Process

Marking helps to foster a deeper level of engagement with the subject matter. By providing feedback and guidance, students are more likely to:

- Stay motivated and engaged in their studies.
- Take ownership of their learning and actively seek to improve.
- Be open to learning from their mistakes and see them as opportunities for growth.

7. Facilitate Communication between Teachers, Students, and Parents

Marking and feedback serve as a key mode of communication between the school, students, and their families. It:

- Allows parents to understand how their child is performing academically.
- Encourages a collaborative approach to student learning, where teachers and parents work together to support the student.

- Provides students with a sense of accountability for their academic work, knowing their progress is being regularly reviewed and discussed.

8. Celebrate Achievement and Success

Marking is also a way of acknowledging and celebrating student success. It:

- Reinforces a positive learning environment where students feel their efforts are recognised.
- Encourages further achievement by providing positive reinforcement, motivating students to continue striving for excellence.

Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

- Each lesson has a learning objective to clarify to the learner and adult the purpose of the lesson / task and to be able to assess accordingly.
- Success criteria's have been implemented which aids with differentiation and encourages the learner to be more aware of their learning goals. This promotes not only more specific teacher assessment but self and peer assessment too.

Reporting

Written reports:

Parents receive written reports at the end of each term. Teacher comments should be positive and developmental. Parents are given the opportunity to comment on the reports and are invited to discuss the report with the lead teacher.

Data collected by subject teachers is used to inform parents and guardians of progress and achievements throughout the term. However, due to the complex needs of the students that attend Westward House School, grades are not given unless parents specifically ask for them directly.

Parents' Evenings:

Are held twice each year, one in the Autumn Term and another in the Spring term. Parents may arrange to discuss their child's progress at any time during the year and in practice discussions between parents and the lead teacher often happen on a daily or weekly basis at pick up.

Special Considerations and Adjustments

We are committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with additional learning needs (ALN) or other extenuating circumstances.

Adjustments may include:

- Extended time on exams
- Alternative assessment methods (e.g., oral presentations instead of written exams)
- Use of assistive technology
- Adjusted deadlines
- Practical or Hands-on Tasks: For students with learning difficulties or physical impairments, practical assessments that involve hands-on tasks or real-life scenarios may allow them to demonstrate their skills in a more accessible way.
- Projects and Portfolios: These allow students to work over time and showcase progress in a more holistic way. Portfolios provide an opportunity to document a student's work and achievements over an extended period, making it easier to track growth and development.
- Observational Assessments: Teachers and support staff can assess a pupil's learning through observation. This can be particularly valuable for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or emotional and behavioural needs. Teachers may observe interactions, behaviour, and skills in social settings or during group work.
- Modified Assessments: Provide adapted versions of assessments (e.g., simpler language, reduced length, extra time) that meet the student's specific needs. For example:
 - a. Reduced reading levels or verbal instructions for students with dyslexia.
 - b. Extra time on exams or tasks for students with processing difficulties or ADHD.

Focus on Individualised Goals and Progress

For students with ALN, the assessment should not only focus on end results but also on progress over time, taking into account their starting points, challenges, and individual learning goals.

- Individual Development Plans (IDP): If a pupil has an IDP or a similar learning plan, assessment should be closely linked to the goals outlined in the plan. Regular reviews of these plans will help track progress and adjust interventions as needed.

Adapting the Assessment Environment

The physical and emotional environment in which the assessment takes place can significantly impact a pupil's performance. For pupils with ALN, we consider making the following adjustments:

- Provide a quiet, distraction-free environment for students with ADHD, anxiety, or sensory processing issues.
- Allow breaks during assessments to accommodate pupils with attention difficulties or physical needs (e.g., for students with conditions like ADHD, dyslexia, or chronic fatigue).

- Use sensory supports (e.g., noise-cancelling headphones or fidget tools) for students with sensory sensitivities.

Reviewing the Policy

This policy will be discussed, reviewed and revised annually, in consultation with children, parents, staff and members of the school community.