Assessment Policy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidelines on our approach to formative and summative assessment
- Establish a consistent and coherent approach to recording summative assessment outcomes and reporting to parents/carers
- Clearly set out how and when assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated
- To guide impactful assessment that leads to pupils making excellent progress whilst at the same time ensuring that teachers have a reasonable workload and are not carrying out practices that are excessively time-consuming or that have no proven impact on pupil progress.

2. Legislation and guidance

Schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment since the National Curriculum levels were removed in 2014.

This policy refers to:

- The recommendations in the final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels
- Statutory reporting requirements set out in the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005: schedule 1

3. Principles of assessment

Neatherd is committed to raising the achievement of all its pupils through excellence in teaching and learning, we recognise that effective, principled and evidence-informed assessment design and practice are central to the learning process. Done well, assessment, tracking and feedback combine to have a powerful impact on pupil progress.

Our core principles are centred upon Evidence Based Education's 'four pillars of assessment':

- **Principle 1**: We ensure that all assessments have a clearly-defined **purpose**. We begin by thinking about what we want to find out and why.
- **Principle 2**: We ensure that **validity** is at the heart of all assessment practices. We design our assessments so that they meet their stated purpose and allow us to make justified inferences about pupils' learning.
- **Principle 3**: We seek to maximise **reliability** in our assessment practice. We acknowledge that no assessment can ever be 100% reliable but we take all reasonable steps to increase accuracy and to remove sources of bias and inconsistency.
- **Principle 4**: We ensure that our assessments add **value** to learning at every step. We acknowledge the high opportunity cost of assessment by consciously

increasing its positive effects and reducing its negative effects on pupils and teachers alike.

4. Assessment approaches

At Dereham Neatherd we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

We use 3 broad overarching forms of assessment: formative assessment, summative assessment and nationally standardised summative assessment.

4.1 Formative assessment (Responsive Teaching)

Effective in-school formative assessment enables:

- **Teachers** to identify how pupils are performing on a continuing basis and to use this information to provide appropriate support or extension, evaluate teaching and plan future lessons
- **Pupils** to measure their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives, and identify areas in which they need to improve
- **Parents/carers** to gain a broad picture of where their child's strengths and weaknesses lie, and what they need to do to improve

There are many effective techniques for impactful formative assessment, some of which are outlined here:

At the start of a lesson:
Regular low-stakes testing and quizzing is effective in recalling prior learning and identifying any gaps in knowledge and understanding that may affect the teaching planned for that lesson. We refer to these tasks as '**Do Now tasks'**. They are a requirement of all Neatherd lessons.

In the middle of a lesson:
High quality verbal questioning is often used to evaluate pupils' understanding. The effective use of **Cold Calling** allows us to engage a wide range of pupils, increasing the reliability of our inferences and keeping pupils cognitively active at all times. Any concerns about Cold Calling causing anxiety for pupils can be mitigated through:

i. Building in thinking time through the use of Question-Pause-Name
ii. Using Pre-Cold Calling to give a pupil a little advance notice that they will be called
iii. Establishing positive teacher-pupil relationships, and a classroom culture in which errors are seen as a normal – and helpful – part of the learning process
iv. Ensuring that teachers know their pupils well and avoid asking an individual a question that is clearly beyond their level of understanding

Self-assessment and peer-assessment may be used judiciously in lessons where they will help pupils to make progress.

When pupils are working independently, teachers **actively circulate** the classroom to check on pupil understanding, enabling them to address misconceptions at the earliest opportunity or to spot excellent examples of pupil work to share with the class. Independent working is an expectation of all Neatherd lessons (where it is appropriate).

At the end of a lesson

Teachers will need to assess if pupils have secured their knowledge and understanding of the lesson's key content. Exit tickets may be used in some instances, these are short tasks that pupils complete on a piece of paper in the last few minutes of a lesson and that the teacher takes in for review. Alternatively other activities may take place, such as whole class questioning, in order to review pupil progress in the lesson.

In between lessons

Teachers should periodically monitor pupils' written work and quality of presentation in order to identify errors and misconceptions, as well as any next steps for improvement. This does not require extensive marking and written feedback (see section on Feedback).

4.2 In-school summative assessment

Effective in-school summative assessment enables:

- **School leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment
- **Teachers** to evaluate learning at the end of a unit or period, and the impact of their own teaching
- **Pupils** to understand how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time. It should be used to provide feedback on how they can improve
- **Parents/carers** to stay informed about the achievement, progress and wider outcomes of their child across a period

Assessments should be guided by the following evidence-based conclusions:

- In order to make reliable and valid inferences about pupils' attainment (and, in turn, the progress they are making), formal assessments should aim to sample from a broad domain of subject knowledge, including content taught in previous terms or years.
- Whilst pupils will make continual progress in their learning through mastering individual components of a subject, it should be recognised that subjects include vast domains of knowledge. Therefore, improving attainment in the subject *as a whole* takes time. For this reason, high-stakes summative testing will happen on no more than three occasions per year in each subject.
- When interpreting the results of such assessments, teachers and school leaders should bear in mind that a test result is no more than a snapshot of performance (as opposed to learning) at a particular point in time. Furthermore, even the best- designed assessments can only cover a sample of everything that has been covered within the curriculum. We should therefore be wary of making judgements about pupils' learning based on the results of a single assessment. For this same reason, decisions regarding

changes to setting (where applicable) should **never** be based on one assessment alone.
- The purpose of summative assessment is to provide a shared meaning based on valid inferences about pupils' attainment. This requires honesty and transparency in how we report the results of school-devised, curriculum-linked assessments. These are not nationally standardised assessments and therefore any grades assigned are based on prior assessment data and are therefore not certain.

Feedback to pupils after any form of assessment

Teachers should ensure that feedback adheres to three key principles: it should be meaningful, manageable and motivating. Feedback should be precise and focus on specific information that the pupil can use to improve performance. Feedback should always produce more work for the recipient than for the provider.

When planning to give feedback, teachers should consider these questions:

- How widespread is the error or issue and is it something I need to address with the whole class?
- Is this something that the pupils can fix themselves? If so, when am I going to give them time to do it?
- How will I know if this feedback has 'sunk in'? What am I expecting them to do with it, or how am I expecting their thinking to develop?
- What is the most time efficient way to work with pupils on this development point?

(Fletcher-Wood, 2018)

Feedback can take many forms, including:

- Whole-class verbal feedback
- Group verbal feedback
- One-to-one verbal feedback
- Re-teaching
- Consolidation exercises
- Extension exercises
- Brief written comments
- Feedback-Action-Response (FAR) marking activities after formal summative assessments

Ensuring high standards

We want to assure that assessments are of a high standard and are contributing to raising pupil achievement. Therefore, we will:

- compare a cohort's test results with the mean and distribution of the same cohort's
- results from standardised tests to see if they are broadly aligned
- share and discuss assessments and assessment findings with colleagues from other Trust schools
- moderate the marking of assessments where more than one school is using the same or similar assessments

- develop high standards of assessment literacy through high-quality professional development

Target setting

- The school does not provide Key Stage 3 pupils with target grades that they are expected to achieve within certain timescales. We want our pupils to aspire to achieve the highest grades possible.
- On entry to the school, all pupils (including those joining during the academic year from other schools) sit CATs (Cognitive Ability Tests) to help us understand each pupil's potential.
- At Key Stage 3, the results of *GL Assessment Progress Tests* in English and maths are used each year to track pupils' progress in core subjects.
- At Key Stage 4, we use national Department for Education subject performance data and GL Assessment data to help guide us in setting targets and thus analysing pupil progress as they move through the courses.

4.3 Nationally standardised summative assessment

Nationally standardised summative assessment enables:

- **School leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment
- **Teachers** to understand national expectations and assess their own performance in the broader national context
- **Pupils and parents/carers** to understand how pupils are performing in comparison with pupils nationally

Nationally standardised summative assessments take the form of GCSEs and vocational qualifications at the end of Key Stage (KS) 4.

5. Collecting and using data

Teachers are required to report assessment data centrally 3 times per year for each year group. This data will be shared with parents within the designated reporting schedule and enrich Trust. (see Appendix 1)

6. Artificial intelligence (AI)

Pupils **may not** use AI tools:

- During assessments, including internal and external assessments, and coursework
- To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work

For further information please see the Enrich Trust Artificial intelligence (AI) Policy

7. Reporting to parents/carers

At Dereham Neatherd we will report to all parents 3 times each year (see Appendix 1)

In addition all parents will be invited to attend an annual Parents Evening each academic year where they will have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with subject teachers.

8. Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of pupils' special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all pupils. However, this should account for the amount of effort the pupil puts in, as well as the outcomes achieved.

For pupils working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to pupil starting points, and take this into account alongside the nature of pupils' learning difficulties.

9. Training

Teachers will be kept up to date with development practices through the schools internal CPD programme, Enrich Trust training along with access to subject specific communities such as exam board training opportunities.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1 Trust Executive/Trustees and Local Governors

Trust Executive/Trustees and Local Governors are responsible for:

- Being familiar with statutory assessment systems, as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all pupils
- Holding school leaders to account for improving pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data
- Monitoring that school staff are receiving the appropriate support and training on pupil assessment, to ensure consistent application and good practice across the school

10.2 Assistant Headteacher (Achievement)

The Assistant Headteacher (Achievement) is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is adhered to
- Monitoring standards in core and foundation subjects
- Analysing pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement

- Reporting to governors on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years
- Making sure arrangements are in place so teachers can conduct assessment, marking and feedback competently and confidently, including training and moderation opportunities
- Continuing professional development (CPD) for middle leaders/subject specialists on how assessment points should be planned and delivered and, for teachers, how to get pupils to the assessment points
- Tracking completed assessments and making sure they are moderated, data is collected and teachers respond to the results appropriately

10.3 Heads of Department

Heads of Department are responsible for:

- Ensuring assessment both formative and summative are embedded in their subject curriculum and that these assessments meet whole school expectations, including use of FAR marking for all summative assessments.
- Their teachers are adhering to the assessment schedule and expectations for their subject
- Their teachers are moderating data collected
- Their teachers meet reporting deadline

10.4 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- Following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy, including for effective marking and feedback
- Meeting reporting deadlines
- Creating and sharing clear mark schemes for the purposes of moderation
- Being familiar with the standards for the subjects they teach
- Keeping up to date with developments in assessment practice

11. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 5 years by the Assistant Headteacher (Achievement). At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

All teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy. Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed.

Assistant Headteacher (Achievement) will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the school, through:

- Moderation
- Lesson observations
- Informal learning walks

- Work scrutiny
- Pupil progress meetings with Heads of Department (‘Learning Conversations’)

12. Links with other policies

This assessment policy is linked to our:

- Curriculum Policy
- Enrich Trust AI Policy
- Exams Policy
- Teaching and Learning Strategy

Recording and reporting – Appendix 1.

Pupils and parents receive three reports per year. Two of these are 'short' reports with data only; one is a 'long' report with a written comment.

At Key Stage 3, reports contain the following information:

- **Autumn Term**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - Year 7 only - Standardised age scores for CATs and reading
- **Spring Term**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - Results of mid-year assessments
- **Summer Term**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - Results of end-of-year assessments
  - Summary reports and standardised age scores of *GL Assessment Progress Tests* in English and maths
  - Written comment from the pupil's form tutor

At Key Stage 4, reports contain the following information:

- **Short reports**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - KS4 Target Grade
  - Teacher forecast grades: these are the grades for each subject that, in the teacher's professional judgement, the pupil is likely to achieve at the end of Year 11

- **Long reports**
  - Attendance data
  - Attitude to Learning data
  - KS4 Target Grade
  - Teacher forecast grades
  - A brief written comment for each subject
  - Written comment from the pupil's form tutor

Guidelines for teachers

Subject teachers should follow these guidelines when reporting on pupils:

- The pupil is the recipient, so the report must address them in the first person, e.g. 'Michael, you have made good progress this year' as opposed to 'Michael has made good progress this year.'

- All comments must be related to learning and progress in the subject. Statements should guide the pupil to what they need to do to improve.
- Maximum of three sentences per pupil for KS4 subject comments.
- Teachers should double-check all spelling, punctuation and grammar. They should seek assistance from colleagues, and be prepared to give assistance too.
- Not to name any other pupil on the report of a child.

Form Tutors should follow these guidelines when reporting on pupils:

- Tutors to write a maximum of five sentences per tutee.
- Tutors do not need to refer to the pupils' subject reports. Knowledge of their progress should come from their own academic mentoring and discussions with/about the pupils.
- Tutors should not refer to exact attendance figures as these will have changed by the time the report is extracted. However, a tutor statement should comment on their attendance within the following guidelines:
  - over 98% - excellent attendance
  - 95-98% - good attendance
  - under 95% - room for improvement
- Tutors to make sure they are fully aware of any medical/family issues before making a comment on attendance.
- Examples of things a tutor statement should include could be:
  - Participation in form time activities
  - Organisation of school equipment
  - Completion and neatness of pupil planner
  - Responsibilities such as monitors, pupil council, team leadership
  - Extra-curricular involvement – sports, arts, clubs
  - Social skills within the tutor group
  - Specific targets discussed in academic mentoring
  - Uniform, punctuality and behaviour in tutor periods

Deadlines

It is crucial to stick to the deadlines given in the reports schedule. The MIS mark sheets are open all term, so there is plenty of time in which to complete our reports. The process of checking, auditing, correcting, amending, printing, collating and distribution has to be done to meet the date given to parents. When teachers miss reporting deadlines, this creates extra work for the Data Team.

Role of Heads of Dept.

Heads of Department are responsible for making sure their team meets the deadlines, and for the accuracy of the information given therein.

Distribution of Reports

Reports will be uploaded to the MCAS, to which all of our parents have been offered free access.

Contact with parents and carers regarding learning:
Pupils' planners are a means of passing quick messages between teachers / tutors and home. Parents are encouraged to check planners periodically.

Teachers are also to be encouraged to contact home if the pupil gives cause for concern on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Any informal contact should be made using the MIS (Brom Com).

If parents have a query or concern about a particular subject, the class teacher is the first person to contact. If the query or concern relates to a child's learning more broadly, parents should contact the relevant form tutor or, for pupils with Special Educational Needs, the SENDCO. Initial contact can be made by sending an email to **office@neatherd.org** or by phoning the school and asking for the relevant teacher to phone back at a mutually convenient time.