

St. Patrick's College



Promoting Personal Excellence

Assessment Policy

Rationale:

The purpose of assessment is to improve standards, not merely to measure them. The quality of assessment has a significant impact on attitudes to learning and on attainment in St Patrick's College by stimulating and challenging pupils to work hard and by encouraging teachers to focus on how to improve the learning of individual pupils.

Assessment should:

- be complementary to, and be supportive of, the key aims of the NI Curriculum at Key Stage 3;
- be complementary to, and be supportive of, the individual subject specifications at key Stages 4 and 5;
- be fit for purpose;
- be manageable;
- be supported by the teacher professional judgements that are consistent and reliable;
- be appropriate at all levels for system-wide accountability.

Purpose of Assessment

Diagnostic: to identify strengths and areas for improvement and to inform next steps.

Formative: to use assessment information to make specific improvements in learning.

Summative: to acknowledge, record and report pupils' overall performance and achievement at a point in time.

Evaluative: to inform curriculum planning and to provide information for monitoring and accountability.

Aims of the Policy

The aim of assessment is 'to facilitate the monitoring of standards over time in order to inform the development of policy and practice leading to better pupil outcomes' (The Big Picture).

In our assessment process we aim to gather information which enables us as teachers:

- to evaluate and record each pupil's attainments and progress and identify individual strengths and weaknesses;
- to evaluate our teaching effectiveness and to plan future teaching and learning experiences;
- to match work to the needs of individual pupils;
- to compare individual and school levels of attainment and progress with that of the wider school population;
- to provide reliable information and colleagues about the progress and development of each pupil.

Assessment encompasses a wide range of activities, formal and informal, summative and formative.

Summative assessment (external and internal examinations) has traditionally tended to dominate teaching and assessment and does have a place in providing a summary of achievement. However, in St Patrick's College, that formative assessment or assessment for learning (AFL) has an impact on motivation and attainment.

Summative Assessments

Pupils are assessed to see how much learning has taken place at the end of a unit/term/year. This can take place by a written examination, an oral test or a tape recording. Outcomes of external examinations are a component part of our summative assessments.

Formative Assessments

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

Internal Formal Assessment: examinations take place within the school, with a formal setting.

External Assessment: an outside agency assesses the pupils. For example: GCSE's and A Levels.

Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment takes place in the context of normal classroom activity on a daily basis. Teachers observe and monitor progress of the whole class group, groups within the class and individual pupils, without necessarily committing such assessment to paper. In addition formal and planned activities and tasks are used to evaluate pupil progress in respect of attainment in aspects of the subject curriculum. Such activities/tasks may be end of topic tasks, home works, oral and practical work in addition to continuous monitoring tasks or summative assessments.

Teachers should use such assessments as an integral part of planning, teaching and learning. Outcomes should be clear, realistic and understood by pupils. It is the expectation in St Patrick's College that written work is marked regularly, and, in a manner consistent with departmental standardisation and the whole school Monitoring and Evaluation policy.

Formal School Reports, Assessment for Learning results and Electronic Pupil Tracking information give pupils the opportunity to identify their progress in each subject or learning area.

In compliance with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, homework should be meaningful and relevant to pupils, seek to reinforce and extend knowledge and understanding gained in class and provide the teacher with evidence of progress.

Assessment for Learning (AFL)

The purposes of AFL are:

- to build a more open relationship between learner and teacher;
- to provide clear learning intentions, which are shared with pupils;
- to share and negotiate success criteria with pupils;
- to set individual targets;
- to take risks for learning;
- to advise on what to and how to improve it;
- to provide opportunities for peer and self assessment;
- to celebrate success against agreed success criteria;
- to provide peer and self evaluation of learning.

At the end of each formal assessment session (tracking, end of unit, etc.) a grade or mark is given, a teacher comment outlining areas of strength and areas to be developed and practical suggestions on how to develop these areas will be given. Comments will also be invited for the pupils and parents as well as parental signature.

Key Stage 3 Reporting

Information is to be provided annually to the parents of each pupil in Key Stage 3 in relation to his/her educational and other achievements.

The assessment of the pupil's progress in relation to Communication (taking account of his/her achievement in the Language and Literacy area of learning), Using Mathematics (taking account of his/her achievement in the Mathematics and Numeracy area of learning) and Using ICT (from 2013/14). Progress in these three areas will be reported on using Levels of Progression.

Brief particulars of the pupil's achievement in any other area of learning or activity which forms part of his/her curriculum including:

- Other skills:
 - Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision Making
 - Self Management
 - Working with Others
 - Managing Information
 - Being Creative
- Areas of Learning:
 - Modern Languages
 - The Arts
 - Environment and Society
 - Science and Technology
 - Learning for Life and Work
 - Physical Education
 - Religious Education (optional)
- Interests and Strengths
- Focus for Development
- Any further Optional Content

Additional information is provided to parents of each pupil in Year 10:

- the transitional level the pupil has achieved in Using Mathematics and Communication.

- the level of progression the pupil has achieved in Using Mathematics (from 2012/13), Communications (from 2012/13) and Using ICT (from 2013/14).
- a statement of the level of progression expected for a pupil at the end of key Stage 3 in each of the cross-curricular skills.
- a statement of the percentage of pupils at the end of Year 10 in the school:
 - attaining each level in that cross-curricular skill;
 - attaining the expected level or above in that cross-curricular skill;
 - working towards the level expected for a pupil at the end of Year 10, but who have not yet attained the level in that cross-curricular skill;
 - exempted from assessment in that cross-curricular skill.

Where a pupil has been exempted from any part of the assessment arrangements at the end of Year 10, a statement to that effect will be included.

Key Stage 3 Assessment Reporting

Assessment Heading	Manner of Reporting
CCS	Level 1 - 7
Test Result	0 – 100%
Behaviour	A – E (see description below)
Classwork	A – E (see description below)
Homework	A – E (see description below)
Attendance	0 – 100%

Grades Descriptors

A = Excellent; B = Good; C = Satisfactory; D = Need for Improvement; E = Poor

Key Stage 3 Tracking

Students' progress in KS3 will be monitored 4 times throughout the year. October/November of term 1, end of term 1, March/April term 2 and at the end of the summer term. Students will have agreed targets to meet regarding performance. These targets will be set in Year 8 based on PIE and PIM performance. The numeracy and literacy coordinator will provide guidance to Heads of Departments on matching PIE and PIM scores to suitable targets. Years 9 and 10 targets will be based on PIE and PIM but cognisance will also be taken of tracking performance in Year 8 and 9. The nature of the assessment task will be dependent on the subject being assessed. Not every subject will lend itself to a formalised test. The task should be reflective of the nature of the subject and the skills and knowledge that is being taught.

Data stored on SIMS is used to produce reports;

Parent's Report. This report is sent home to every parent/guardian outlining performance of student against agreed targets. Form teachers, Heads of Key Stage and the Principal will keep a copy of this report also

Head of Department Report. This report shows performance of every student in the Year group and highlight students that are achieving, underachieving and overachieving. This will inform target setting for the next round of tracking.

Form Teacher Report. This report shows each students' performance in each subject and highlights students that are achieving, underachieving or over achieving overachieving. A similar report will exist for each Year group to allow progress and underachievement to be identified by the Head of Key Stage.

Key Stage 4 Reporting

Information is to be provided annually to the parents of each pupil in Key Stage 4 in relation to his/her educational and other achievements.

The assessment of the pupil's progress in relation to Communication (taking account of the achievement in the Language and Literacy area of learning) and Using Mathematics (taking account of the achievement in the Mathematics and Numeracy area of learning).

Brief particulars of the pupil's achievement in any other area of learning or activity which from part of his/her curriculum including:

- Using ICT
- Other Skills
 - Problem Solving
 - Self Management
 - Working with others
- Learning for Life and Work
- Physical Education
- Religious Education (optional)
- Interests and Strengths
- Focus for Development
- Any further Optional Content

Key Stage 4 Assessment Reporting

Assessment Heading	Manner of Reporting
Test Result	0 – 100% (may or may not be included in report)
GCSE Grade	A* - U (in line with GCSE standard grades)
Occupational Studies/COPE	Levels 1 – 2
Behaviour	A – E (see description below)
Classwork	A – E (see description below)
Homework	A – E (see description below)
Attendance	0 – 100%

Grades Descriptors

A = Excellent; B = Good; C = Satisfactory; D = Need for Improvement; E = Poor

Key Stage 4 Tracking

Students' progress 4 times through the year within the same time frame as the Key Stage 3 model of tracking. At the end of Key Stage 3 Year 10 students sit GL Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs). The data from these tests include standardised predicted grades. These grades are used as a bench mark for each KS4 student in relation to their different course of study. These are recorded on SIMS and a tracking grade is recorded at each tracking session.

The data on SIMS is used to produce reports;

Parent's Report. This report is sent home to every parent/guardian outlining performance of student against CAT predictions (& teacher predictions in Year 12). Form teachers, Heads of Key Stage and the Principal will keep a copy of this report also

Head of Department Report. This report shows performance of every student in the Year group and highlight students that are achieving, underachieving and overachieving.

Form Teacher Report. This report shows each students' performance in each subject and highlights students that are achieving, underachieving or over achieving overachieving. A similar report will exist for each Year group to allow progress and underachievement to be identified by the Head of Key Stage.

Post 16 Assessment Reporting

Assessment Heading	Manner of Reporting
Classwork/Homework/Assignments	A* - U (in line with GCE standard grades)
National Award/BTEC	Distinction/Merit/Pass/Fail
Attendance	0 – 100%

These indicators represent pupil achievement in relationship to the level/grades achieved in the pupils formally assessed tasks and progress to date based on academic and pastoral assessments.

In the case of moderate learning difficulties, where through one level of attainment to the next may be on a longer timescale, teachers may relate the allocation of marks to the targets set in individual or small group education plans rather than the nationally defined levels in the subject(s).