

The Orchard School



# Assessment & Marking Policy

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Chair of Governors:

Headteacher :

## **The Orchard School**

### **Assessment and Marking Policy**

The Orchard School caters for pupils from 7-16 years of age. The Orchard School is a Foundation Special School catering for 80 pupils who have Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties and Learning Difficulties (for Secondary aged pupils) as identified by their Education Health Care Plans (EHCP). The School caters for primary and secondary aged pupils although they are kept in two separate departments but all students are characterised by having difficulties with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties demonstrating Behavioural responses which are barriers to learning and prevent them fully succeeding in a mainstream environment. Our students vary in their academic ability as a result of a variety of issues around their EHCP, attendance and engagement issues. It is therefore vital that the education they access whilst in our care is personalised and provides every student with timely and appropriate feedback in order to maximise progress and accelerate learning.

The purpose of assessment and marking within our School is to:

- Establish a clear baseline from which progress may be measured accurately.
- Recognise achievement and progression.
- Identify next steps for learning for the student.
- Provide accurate information on what each student can do and what gaps exist in their learning.
- Support planning for future educational accreditation.
- Identify specific learning needs which may require additional support and intensive recovery work.

#### **Initial Assessments**

All pupils attending the School undertake a series of baseline assessments. Core subjects (English, Maths, ICT and Science) are assessed using standardised assessments. A group reading test is also undertaken along with spelling testing and NVR assessments. This information is moderated for accuracy through comparison with the referral levels and teacher observation of engagement during the testing process. Where it is felt that the pupil has made insufficient effort and the assessments do not reflect the true level of attainment, the pupil is expected to re-do the assessment tasks.

Testing at all Key Stages is undertaken on a 1:1 basis over a period of one to two days based on an induction programme set up by the PSO's with the support of Learning Mentors, HLTAs and where appropriate Peer mentors. The scores will be compared with any historic scores supplied from previous school. Any discrepancies in results are highlighted and discussed. A decision will then be made to see if re-testing should happen before the pupil moves into their nominated class within the School.

All pupils will also have a pre-admission meeting which includes themselves and their parents / carers and is an opportunity for an initial observation assessment (SLT or PSO) to take place. The meeting allows discussions to take place about the presenting behaviours, barriers to learning and ability to access the curriculum. It is also the first point of contact in developing the relationship between home and school and sets the foundations for engagement, progression and future planning.

### **Communication**

The purpose of assessment is to inform staff of the pupil's attainment levels and highlight gaps in learning. This then allows staff to plan effectively for teaching every individual pupil and providing suitable learning opportunities which will both challenge and aid progression.

Once testing is completed, the member of staff responsible for baseline assessment adds this to the pupil tracking sheet which will be filed and copies provided to staff.

Prior attainment is obtained from the previous school and, where information is missing and cannot be obtained Baseline assessments will be used as primary data. This information is recorded on the Pupil Tracking Sheet / Pupil Asset. At KS3/4 we expect to see information on CAT scores where available, KS2 and KS3 results, current working Stage and predicted grades (KS4 pupils). For accuracy of prediction, schools are asked to provide grade predictions for GCSE based on the path the pupil is currently following where behaviour is a barrier to learning to ensure that progress measured reflects the impact of behaviour and attitude improvements too.

### **Differentiation**

The ability ranges of pupils attending The Orchard School are varied and broad. However, many pupils display poor progress and sometimes lower levels than previously indicated due to their attitude to school and learning and significant periods of education missed due to poor attendance or frequency of time spent out of lessons (fixed term exclusions, isolation, internal truancy).

One of the key roles of teaching and support staff in the service is to ensure that differentiation is in place to tailor each learning programme to the individual student. In some subjects this may mean that the student is following a personalised programme with teacher / TA individual input and in others the class are being taught as a group with differentiation by outcome of through personalised resources and tasks. Teaching staff plan lessons around previous learning and initial assessments as well as regular monitoring of progress. It is expected that all lesson plans will indicate how teaching and learning has been differentiated to promote individual progress.

### **How feedback is given**

Feedback is given to pupils at every opportunity. Verbal feedback is given in lessons on both a 1:1 basis and through mini-plenary and also in a summing up of learning and progression at the end of each session.

Baseline assessment information is shared with pupils as well as progress data when testing is repeated at the end of each term.

Teachers are responsible for regularly marking work and providing feedback on what each pupil has achieved and what they need to do next to move onto the next level. Pupils are involved in this process through discussion and the completion of Progression Sheets to show where they are at and to highlight visually what they need to do next.

### **Target Setting and Assessment for Learning**

Targets for behaviour and learning (if targets exist a review will be made to ensure they are appropriate) are set after the Initial Meeting where the information from the baseline testing and initial observations is combined with the Statement of SEN (If not transferred to EHCP) or Education Health Care Plan and a collective decision is made on individual targets by the Teacher and TA with support from SLT and PSO's where necessary after consultation with parent / carer and pupil. These targets are then broken down into small steps and monitored weekly through the Credit System. Behaviour and potential presenting risk is also discussed in the Initial Meeting and a Positive Handling Plan agreed to reduce risk and highlight behaviour management strategies for staff working with the child or young person.

Every subject will also set individualised targets for the pupil which will be made explicit to them in every lesson. These should be documented in lesson planning by the teacher and also highlighted on the visual Progression Sheets.

Marked work must include the following information:

- **Indication of the Stage or grade** (for KS2 this may not be reported on in every piece of work but pupils should over time have an indication of where they are at).
- **A specific comment** on what has been learned or achieved, highlighting positive areas of progress including reference to effort and motivation. (WWW)
- **A small step target** for the next lesson or learning objective to move the pupil on with information on how to move to the next Stage / fine GCSE grade. At KS2 as both recognition of achievement and a method of positively highlighting the next small steps in line with levels. (EBI)

### **Frequency of Marking**

It is expected that all finished work is marked between lessons so that pupils obtain timely feedback on their learning. Where possible, work should be marked with the pupil so that no learning opportunity is missed. The minimum expectation is that all work is marked at least once every week and that records of marking are kept in teachers' planners.

### **Reporting on Progress**

Progress is reported on an on-going basis. Teachers inform pupils every lesson of the progress made verbally and through marking of work / tasks and comments on Credit Sheets may also be used to highlight particularly good effort or attainment.

Progression is reported on termly in core subjects and documented on the Pupil Asset using Stages at KS1-4 as well as current grading at KS4 in line with GCSE criteria. To allow progression to be

measured and reported on accurately, GCSE gradings are 9-1, with 9 being equivalent to the old definition of A\*

Progress is also reported on to parents / carers through Review Meetings at Parents Consultation Days. A short written report is produced for terms 2 & 4 and a full written report during term 6. Written reports indicate achievement, progression and individual targets for every pupil.

### **Monitoring of Progress**

Progression of pupils is monitored through analysis of the Pupil Asset termly. Staff are expected to provide assessment information at the end of each term using teacher assessment or standardised assessments. Internal moderation of assessments takes place in departmental meetings and externally with mainstream and Special School peers immediately prior to the progression updates to ensure accuracy and consistency in marking / assessment. External work scrutiny also occurs termly.

The School also operates a Monitoring Calendar which includes a series of lesson observations and work scrutiny sessions to monitor the teaching and learning and to set standards for progression.

### **Marking of Spelling**

Spelling is marked with consideration given to motivating pupils whilst highlighting areas for improvement. Pupils are encouraged to improve their spelling by:

- **Testing words they are unsure of and looking at them to see if they “look right”.**
- **Using a dictionary** (Spelling dictionaries are available in all classrooms at KS3 and 4).
- **Sounding out a word and building it up phonetically.**
- **Relating an unknown word to another with similar sounds which they know how to spell.**
- **Asking a peer to help them work it out.**

The focus is on developing greater independence in solving spelling problems and confidence in overcoming them.

At KS1/2 pupils are expected to copy out and learn spelling corrections. At KS3 the same method is used. KS4 pupils have spelling mistakes highlighted and are orally tested on them in lessons on a 1:1 basis to encourage improvement.