Uffculme School Assessment Policy

Rationale

Assessment is the process of evaluating how effectively learning is occurring. It may be undertaken by learners themselves, by teachers, by the two working together, or by learners in collaboration with one another. It is a crucial and integral part of the teaching and learning process: it is not, and never should be seen as a bolt on activity, or after thought.

A wide range of activities undertaken by teachers and learners can provide information on learning. Different assessments will often be required according to the determined purpose – one size does not fit all. It is essential that the purpose of any assessment is firmly established before it is undertaken – we do not assess then find ways of using the information.

Given the multitudes of purposes for which assessment is required it makes sense to make assessments multi-use wherever possible. Attention will always be paid to this so that the burden of assessment is minimised for all of those involved in the process.

Aims

It is the aim of this policy to establish the purposes for which assessment of student learning takes place, and the roles and responsibilities of those involved in this process.

Why we assess student learning

The purposes for which we assess student learning can broadly be grouped under two headings – "assessment for learning" where the focus is directly centred on supporting the learning process; and "assessment of learning" where the focus is primarily on the provision of information for reasons of accountability.

Assessment for learning

We assess learning in order that students can:
- Understand their current levels of knowledge and skills and the progress they are making in them
- Understand the next steps they need to take to further advance their learning
- Identify any barriers to their learning and how they might effectively tackle these
- Be mentored (i.e. supported and challenged in their learning)

Assessment of learning

We also assess learning in order to provide information to identified 'audiences':
- So that difficulties encountered by students in learning can be identified and diagnosed and appropriate support put in place to address them
- To establish clear learning expectations for each student over time against which their progress can be monitored and appropriate interventions made as required
- To provide objective evidence for reporting to parents and carers;
- To ensure continuity of learning during the process of transition and transfer – to ensure that prior learning is fully accounted for in planning learning when students transfer in, and to ensure that appropriate information is passed to recipient schools when students transfer out;
- As part of school improvement – as a self-evaluation tool to improve individual teaching practice, to feed into department development planning and whole school improvement.

Planning Learning

Teachers will take into account the prior knowledge, skill and understanding that the students bring to each learning situation. They will personalise their planning and the teaching styles accordingly to meet the needs of individuals. To support this, academic data about students will be made available to teachers by the Data Manager as soon as is reasonably practicable at the start of each year (and updated where necessary).

Teachers will always frame their planning in the context of learning objectives with clear, specific, learning intentions for assessment, and associated success criteria, to illustrate expectations for students. Following each learning episode teachers will reflect upon the progress made by learners against the key learning intentions, and will feed these outcomes forward into future planning.

Teachers will make clear to other adults working in the classroom, their role in assessment. The SENCO will provide guidance to teaching assistants to support their awareness of this role, including the communication of significant information about students to the class teacher.

Feedback on progress

Teachers will provide prompt and regular feedback to all students about the work they have undertaken: this feedback maybe verbal, written, through some form of digital media, or a combination of all of these. Feedback will focus on the learning intentions and the associated criteria for success, and include guidance on the next steps for development. Teachers will provide students with regular opportunities to reflect and talk about their learning, progress and goals. It is recognised that feedback need not be given on all learning tasks.

Opportunities will be provided within lessons for students to assess their own and others' work and to give feedback to their peers. Guidance will be given to students through the school's Tutorial Programme on how to give meaningful feedback to peers in a challenging and supportive way.

Students will be given opportunities and encouraged to set their own targets to improve/strengthen their learning. Guidance will be given to students, through the school's Tutorial Programme, on how they can assess their progress in learning and then identify areas to target that will positively impact upon it.

Each department will maintain its own "Marking and Feedback Policy" to provide guidance and direction on providing appropriate feedback on progress to students within the subject context. These will be reviewed annually in line with the school's Assessment Policy.

Monitoring student progress

The Data Manager is responsible for establishing minimum and challenge targets for the end of the key stage for each student. A protocol will be developed and regularly reviewed by the Data Manager establishing the means by which these targets are set to ensure they are challenging and realistic for each student, and consistent across subjects.

These targets will be made available able to teachers and shared with parents and carers as soon as practicable.

Pupils' progress will be tracked through the key stage using evidenced-based teacher assessments: where available, nationally moderated tools and resources will be used to support this process so that standards can be assured.

All subject areas will maintain a markbook held centrally on the school's information management system. Throughout the key stage teachers will regularly update this markbook so that a record of student progress is maintained. Where a student's progress begins to deviate significantly from that expected, early interventions will be made by the teacher to 'recover' them, supported by the Head of Department and Head of Year as appropriate. Parents and carers will be fully involved in this process where concerns arise.

Reporting to parents and carers
Parents and carers will be given access to an online system of reporting that will enable them gain an overview of their child's progress in all aspects of school life and indicate areas that need to be developed.

A printed 'snapshot' of this record will be sent to parents and carers termly. At least once a year one of these snapshots will include a written summary of the student's achievements across the curriculum, (including enrichment activities), and comments on their general progress. This summary will be written by the student's tutor, who will usually also be the student's designated mentor to support and challenge them in their learning as they progress through the school, although another adult may at times contribute to this role or in some cases also take full responsibility for it.

Students will be actively involved and contribute to this reporting process through the mentoring process and as they record information in each subject about their 'next steps' for learning.

Opportunities will be provided at least once a year for teachers, students and parents to talk together about each child's progress and how they can move forward in their learning.

Continuity during transition and transfer
Information regarding current attainment, as well as strengths and areas for development, will be sought from all schools when a pupil transfers into the school. This request for information will always cover the statutory requirements for data transfer.

When students transfer out to a new school, the Head of Year will ensure that the appropriate assessment information is transferred promptly to minimise disruption to the student's learning. This information will identify the student's strengths and areas for development and will cover the statutory requirements for data transfer.

School Improvement
The Data Manager, working from the individual student targets generated will establish whole school targets for each year group. These targets will be cross-referenced against Fisher Family Trust (target data D), and LEA suggested targets, to maintain rigour and ensure they are appropriately challenging.

The Data Manager will maintain an overview of all performance data including the performance of key pupil groups (e.g. gender, ethnic groups, EAL, SEN, looked-after students, and gifted and talented students), and identify significant trends in performance bringing them to the attention of the leadership group. Where actions are to be taken they will be noted in the School Improvement Plan.

Heads of Year working with the Data Manager will establish a Year Group Profile based on the whole school targets for their year group against which progress can be monitored and reviewed. Twice yearly each Head of Year will report to the school's Leadership Group on

progress of the Year Group noting significant exceptions in performance (both over and under achievement), and any actions to be taken as a result.

Heads of Departments will use prior attainment information to set appropriate department targets for each cohort in their subject. Departments will analyse the assessment information related to their subject area and use this in their self evaluations to identify issues to be addressed in their department development plans.

Information about student progress in individual teaching groups will be used by performance managers to inform the performance management process.

Policy Review and Evaluation
The Assessment Manager has overall responsibility for assessment, recording and reporting.

The Assessment Manager will coordinate an annual review of the school's assessment, recording and reporting practices, evaluating their effectiveness in terms of their impact upon both teaching and students' learning. Students' views on how assessment can help their learning will be sought as part of this review.