



# **Milbourne Lodge School**

## **Assessment Policy**

September 2016

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rationale and approach to assessment, recording and reporting in our school. This policy has four parts.

Part 1: Assessment

Part 2: Recording assessment information

Part 3: Reporting to parents

Part 4: Evaluation

## Part 1: Assessment

### 1.1 Types of assessment

We assess in different ways and with different purposes during the academic year. We use three forms of assessment.

Formative assessment	In-school summative assessment	Standardised summative assessment
Used by teachers to evaluate pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding on a day-to-day and lesson by lesson basis and to tailor teaching accordingly. <i>This includes: quick recap questions, scrutiny of pupils' work, providing feedback and pupils' responding, observational assessment, quizzes.</i>	Used by teachers to evaluate how much a pupil has learned at the end of a teaching unit and should include, where relevant, internal standardisation. <i>This includes: end of unit assessments, mid or end of year exams, reviews for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.</i>	Externally set, marked and standardised. Also validated by an external body. <i>This includes: GL PTE/PTM, CAT4 tests</i>  <i>Also ISEB Common Entrance, ISEB CASE which is externally marked and set but not standardised.</i>

All summative assessment should be used formatively. Teachers should routinely analyse summative assessment and identify the next steps for subjects and specific pupils.

### 1.2. Principles of assessment

The primary principle of assessment is that it should be fit for the purpose intended. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and lies at the heart of promoting pupils' learning. Assessment should provide information which is clear, reliable and free from bias. The guiding principles below are used to help ensure that we maximise the impact of our assessment.

We assess and keep records in order to improve the quality of our teaching and the children's learning. Assessment is a complex process and should be at the centre of our teaching. Its aims are:

1. *To assist the pupils as learners.*
2. *To help the teachers plan their work.*
3. *To inform the parents.*

Teachers should always consider the following questions:

1. *What do you want the children to learn?*
2. *Have you set key objectives?*
3. *What activities and experiences assist in meeting these objectives?*
4. *How is this evidence of learning demonstrated?*
5. *How is this evidence recorded?*

The teacher should specifically consider:

1. *What the pupil can or cannot do (Diagnostic assessment).*
2. *What the child needs to do next (Formative assessment).*
3. *What the child has achieved so far (Summative assessment) which can be used to inform all interested parties.*

Both teachers and children should be as clear as possible about what kind of assessment is taking place. We believe that good assessment practice should be:

1. *Based on clear curriculum intentions.*
2. *An integral part of the classroom activities (and not an add-on).*
3. *Appropriate to the task.*
4. *Concerned with learning processes and outcomes.*
5. *Able to make allowance for unexpected outcomes.*
6. *Placed achievements in context.*
7. *Based on a wide range of evidence. Exams and tests are significant, but only a part of the evidence available.*
8. *Able to identify strengths and weaknesses.*
9. *Able to inform teachers, pupils, parents and other interested parties about individual progress.*
10. *Aimed at clearly encouraging the children to fulfil their maximum potential.*
11. *Clearly recorded. Teachers' records should be based on results from objective tests, classroom evidence, cumulative, accessible and easy to interpret*

### **1.3 Principles of formative assessment**

Formative assessment should:

- give 'of the moment' information about pupils' knowledge and understanding of a topic, skill or concept;
- be interactive and lead to dialogue;
- help pupils understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve;
- be inclusive of all abilities;
- support immediate planning to improve progress and attainment; and
- support home learning and home-school partnership.

### **1.4 Principles of in-school and standardised summative assessment**

These forms of assessment should be used:

- formatively by teachers to plan for the next steps, target set and precision teach;
- to triangulate wider assessment judgement;
- to evidence progress over time;
- to compare cohorts and groups of pupils;
- to assess against agreed benchmark standards; and

- as a basis for reporting.

We believe in the regular marking of books and assignments; our children expect their work to be marked promptly. We have a marking policy that provides guidelines for the marking of books, although each subject has its own distinctive features. The aims are to correct and encourage and set meaningful targets for all pupils based on all the data available. This will provide valuable evidence for assessment.

We aim to assess each child against their own abilities and the requirements of the 11 plus pre-testing system and CE/Scholarship (criterion-referenced assessment).

### **1.5 Mastery and depth**

The current version of the National Curriculum is predicated on a different assumption than that in previous versions where there was an expectation of 'acceleration', i.e. moving children on through levels and sublevels regardless of the security of their learning. Now, we are looking for depth and mastery in learning. This does not exclude acceleration but 'moving on' should never be at the expense of depth and mastery.

A mastery approach to learning is at the heart of the National Curriculum and also part of great pedagogy. This means that teachers need to think, plan and teach differently. Teachers need to consider how to ensure that their pupils have opportunities to develop depth and mastery in their learning before considering acceleration. By promoting depth, learning is more likely to become secure and embedded.

Our school therefore ensures that our pupils can evidence the meeting of the 'Minimum Expectations' as set by Cognita, which are linked to National Curriculum assessment criteria and are included in the document 'Minimum Expectations for English and Mathematics'. Our staff understand that this document has been designed to identify the minimum expectations and should not be used to put a ceiling on our pupils' achievement and attainment.

The 'Minimum Expectations for English and Mathematics' document does not define a set curriculum model for any Cognita school and our school will ensure that there are appropriate schemes of work and curriculum maps in place to guide both coverage and expectations. Although end of year group expectations are indicated, these are viewed as a guide. The absolute minimum expectations are those for the end of each Key Stage. Our school may therefore decide to move the content from year to year to meet the needs of different groups of pupils or a change of context for the school. It is anticipated that, as a Cognita school, we should constantly aim to exceed these minimum expectations and that the content of the 'Minimum Expectations' document should not cap expectation in our school.

### **1.6 In-school and standardised summative assessment**

Our key summative assessment points over the year, whether in-school or standardised, are identified in the following assessment planner so that all staff and pupils can see and prepare for them.

Year Group	Assessment	When	How is the data used?
Rec	Baseline	Autumn Term	To identify the needs of the pupils and help plan their individual learning programme.
1-U6	CAT4	September	To identify the potential of each pupil, their learning strengths and weaknesses and help identify suitable future schools.
PP1-U6	Suffolk Reading Test + Single word spelling test	Autumn Term	To track progress of pupils over time, to identify underachieving pupils and/or pupils who are struggling and may need referral to the Academic Support Department.
1-U6	School Exams	November + June	To track progress/performance of pupils relative to their peers. To monitor performance towards 11+/13+. To inform future teaching.
1-L6	PTE / PTM	June	To monitor progress of pupils in core subjects and identify weak areas for each cohort and individuals.

There are regular tests of children in class for individual subjects, but we do not have a set policy for the frequency or mode of such tests. We believe that each teacher (or HOD) should be responsible for the number and mode of tests to best enhance the children's progress. Where there is doubt, the relevant HOD or a Deputy Head should be consulted for guidance as a matter of course.

In the final year, pupils are given formal 'mock' exams for Common Entrance or Scholarship in December and March. Common Entrance candidates sit entrance exams to their chosen school in June, whereas Scholars sit the exams to their respective schools at a time determined by the senior school (usually in May, but some schools are as early as February). All other year groups sit internal exams in every subject at the end of the Autumn and Summer terms.

### **1.7 Integrity of assessment information**

In order for our assessment processes to be robust and valid, we ensure that all staff are competent in the use of assessment. We do this by:

- using clear assessment criteria
- assigning time to support the training of staff in what constitute robust assessment;
- assigning time for the moderation of assessment judgement; and
- triangulating judgements from a range of assessments, including from learning walks and pupil work.

A key strategy for ensuring that assessment judgements are valid and reliable is the use of in-school moderation. Moderation is used to ensure that the judgement of all relevant staff about the quality of a piece of work or of an assessment piece is the same.

Where possible our school will look for opportunities to moderate our assessment judgements with colleagues from different schools.

### **1.8 Use of formative assessment**

The school avoids ideas of fixed ability and emphasises the belief that all pupils can achieve success if taught effectively. Formative assessment is used by staff in the school to assess knowledge, skills and understanding on a daily and lesson by lesson basis, to identify gaps and misconceptions and to how to address them.

How does the school involve pupils in assessment? Pupils are involved in assessment by self and peer assessment as deemed appropriate by the subject-teacher. Results of school exams are shared with the pupils and targets for development set.

### **1.9 Use of in-school summative assessment**

Progress over time is measured in the first instance through the usual interactions of the teacher and pupil, e.g. answers given in class, work produced and marked, in-class tests etc... . School exams and externally marked assessments are also used to measure progress over time and against objective tests PTE PTM CAT4. Exam results are shared with parents via school reports. Standardised test data shared via parental consultations with the Headteacher and Deputy Heads so that the data can be explained.

### **1.10 Inclusion**

Our school has high expectations of every pupil, including those with SEN and/or disability. Pupils with SEN are assessed appropriately according to their need. Adaptations will be made where this enables a more valid and robust assessment outcome. Students with SEN are expected to make the same rate of progress as other students.

### **Part 2: Recording assessment**

It is essential that we have a coherent and understood system for recording assessment outcomes. Within our school we record data using SIMS. This aspect of recording and reporting assessment is currently being updated within school.

Staff regularly discuss pupils' progress on an informal basis in the Staff Room, but there are also formal academic meetings every half term and staff meetings every week, meetings after each Assessment period and prior to any Parents' Evenings.

The Deputy Head Academic publishes a calendar of assessment, recording and reporting which is shared with staff.

### **Part 3: Reporting to parents**

We value our partnership with parents and reports are one way of ensuring that parents have clear information about both pastoral and academic matters in relation to their child. Reports to parents do not replace our regular dialogue with them. Any parent with a query or concern is always invited to contact the school via the Form Tutor/Subject Teacher in the first instance. Heads of Department, the Deputy Head Academic and Headteacher may also be involved if necessary.

Throughout the academic year we report to our parents in the following ways:

- Parents' Evenings
- Half Term Orders
- End of Term Reports (Autumn and Summer terms)
- Shorter Report (Spring term)

- Informal and formal meetings with parents as necessary (by appointment)
- Short term Report Cards (to monitor effort, attainment, behaviour as necessary) for individual pupils if necessary. These are seen by the parents, a Deputy Head and the form taker daily.

Pupils causing concern are also assigned a mentor who meets weekly with the pupil and reports to parents half-termly.

Academic staff meetings are held after each assessment period, in which any pupil can be raised – either as a point of concern, or for positive reasons. Letters/emails are sent to parents whose child has been discussed with a view to being moved up or down a class, advising them of our ‘monitoring’ system. At the end of the next assessment period, the child will then be discussed at the subsequent meeting and, if necessary, moved class at an appropriate time, usually with effect from the start of the new term. All meetings are minuted and copies of emails/letters to parents are retained on the system.

#### **Part 4: Evaluation**

This policy complies with the Independent School Standards. As is expected of us, we publish particulars of the school’s academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations.

##### **4.1 Responsibility**

The person with responsibility for the overview and yearly evaluation of this policy is the Deputy Head Academic. However, all staff are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and acted on.

When evaluating the use and impact of this assessment policy, our school leaders will evaluate the extent to which:

- assessment information is gathered and used to inform teaching and learning, including ensuring that pupils falling behind or those with SEN and/or disabilities are supported in their learning; and
- assessment information is shared with parents to help them support their children.

When evaluating the accuracy and impact of assessment, our school leaders will evaluate the extent to which:

- teachers use assessment for establishing pupils’ starting points;
- teachers use assessment to modify teaching so that pupils can achieve their potential by the end of year or key stage;
- assessment draws on a range of evidence of what pupils know, understand and can do across the school’s curriculum;
- teachers make consistent judgements about pupils’ progress and attainment, for example within a subject, across a year group and between year groups; and
- the use of assessment is leading to the improved progress of all pupils.

When evaluating the effectiveness of leadership and management, Cognita, through our ADE, will consider:

- the effectiveness of the actions our school leaders take to secure and sustain improvements to teaching, learning, attainment and progress; and

- how effectively our school leaders monitor the progress of groups of pupils (e.g. gender, SEN, more able, EAL) to ensure that none fall behind and underachieve.

<b>DATE OF REVIEW:</b> 1/9/16	<b>REVIEWED BY:</b> Judy Waite/Jo Dicker Sept 2016	<b>COMMENTS:</b>
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**Summary of Operational Procedures for Staff**  
**ASSESSMENT RECORDING AND REPORTING**

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4. *To assist the pupils as learners.*
5. *To help the teachers plan their work.*
6. *To inform the parents.*

Teachers should always consider the following questions:

6. *What do you want the children to learn?*
7. *Have you set key objectives?*
8. *What activities and experiences assist in meeting these objectives?*
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Both teachers and children should be as clear as possible about what kind of assessment is taking place. We believe that good assessment practice should be:

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14. *Appropriate to the task.*
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16. *Able to make allowance for unexpected outcomes.*
17. *Placed achievements in context.*
18. *Based on a wide range of evidence. Exams and tests are significant, but only a part of the evidence available.*
19. *Able to identify strengths and weaknesses.*
20. *Able to inform teachers, pupils, parents and other interested parties about individual progress.*
21. *Aimed at clearly encouraging the children to fulfil their maximum potential.*
22. *Clearly recorded. Teachers' records should be based on results from objective tests, classroom evidence, cumulative, accessible and easy to interpret*

Our policy has the following components:

1. We believe in the regular marking of books and assignments; our children expect their work to be marked promptly. We have a marking policy that provides guidelines for the marking of books,

although each subject has its own distinctive features. The aims are to correct and encourage and set meaningful targets for all pupils based on all the data available. This will provide valuable evidence for assessment.

2. We aim to assess each child against their own abilities and the requirements of the 11 plus pre-testing system and CE/Scholarship (criterion-referenced assessment).
3. Marks are collated twice a term, in addition to those from school exams, and form the basis of our internal assessment. Grades are issued for effort (A-E) as well as an attainment percentage and class average. At present, there is also a rank order system in keeping with the school's competitive academic ethos. These marks are discussed with the children by form teachers/tutors and sent home to parents; they are designed to reflect each pupil's performance in relation to the standards required by Common Entrance/Scholarship and the pre-testing system. Copies of all assessment records are retained, and these form an important component of monitoring each child's academic progress throughout the school. The data is then put into SIMS.
4. Academic staff meetings are held after each assessment period, in which any pupil can be raised – either as a point of concern, or for positive reasons. Letters are sent to parents whose child has been discussed with a view to being moved up or down a class, advising them of our 'monitoring' system. At the end of the next assessment period, the child will then be discussed at the subsequent meeting and, if necessary, moved class at an appropriate time, usually with effect from the start of the new term. All meetings are minuted and copies of emails/letters to parents are retained on the system.
5. Formal end of term reports, including form tutor reports, are issued for each subject at the end of the Autumn and Summer terms; a shorter report format is used at the end of the Spring term. Copies of all reports are kept and retained as part of each pupil's academic profile. The system of report writing is regularly reviewed, but enables sufficient diversity for members of staff to include any relevant information that they feel is necessary. There are, however, guidelines issued to staff that must be fulfilled – these are outlined in a separate policy.
6. CATs (Cognitive Ability Test) are sat on an annual basis at the beginning of the Autumn term. In addition, there are Spelling and Reading ages, using resources from GL Assessment to ensure continuity of approach and results:
  - [Suffolk Reading Test](#)
  - [Single-Word Spelling Test](#)

- PTE
- PTM tests are also carried out in June

The results of these tests are recorded on SIMS and used by the school to compare with pupils' performance in class; in this way, we are able to quickly identify and address those pupils whose scores and academic progress do not correspond.

7. These diagnostic tests may be the subject of further referral to the Learning Support Department who will decide if there is a case for investigation by an Educational Psychologist. In the unlikely event that a pupil has a reading or spelling age one year below their chronological age they will be referred for further investigation immediately. Otherwise, referral to a Deputy Head may occur at any time if there is anxiety about a child's performance. Communication with the parents, via the Deputy Head or Headmaster is the appropriate course of action.
8. There are regular tests of children in class for individual subjects, but we do not have a set policy for the frequency or mode of such tests. We believe that each teacher (or HOD) should be responsible for the number and mode of tests to best enhance the children's progress. Where there is doubt, the relevant HOD or a Deputy Head should be consulted for guidance as a matter of course.
9. In the final year, pupils are given formal 'mock' exams for Common Entrance or Scholarship in December and March. Common Entrance candidates sit entrance exams to their chosen school in June, whereas Scholars sit the exams to their respective schools at a time determined by the senior school (usually in May, but some schools are as early as February). All other year groups sit internal exams in every subject at the end of the Autumn and Summer terms.
10. Staff regularly discuss pupils' progress on an informal basis in the Staff Room, but there are also formal academic meetings every half term and staff meetings every week, meetings after each Assessment period and prior to any Parents' Evenings. Children can be put on a Report Card to monitor their effort, attainment and/or behaviour as deemed appropriate. This is signed by academic teaching staff every lesson and shown to the form teacher/tutor at the start of the day (to check it has been counter-signed by parents) and a Deputy Headmaster at lunch-time. Parents are required to read and sign this document each evening for its duration (usually a week).
11. Pupils causing concern are also assigned a mentor who meets weekly with the pupil and reports to parents half termly.
12. It is good practice to communicate with parents about their child's progress as often as necessary. In addition to the formal assessment and reporting system we have Parents' Evenings for

each class; these are designed to give the parents and teachers an opportunity to meet and discuss the children's performance. Teachers are also available for meetings with parents prior to (or after) the school day by appointment through the school office.