

CROMWELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Assessment Policy

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Introduction

Assessment, recording and reporting are fundamental to effective teaching and learning. This policy aims to ensure an efficient and effective system for assessment, recording and reporting which fulfils all statutory requirements and which enhances the learning of all pupils. Assessment for Learning is a key aspect of this policy.

Aims

- to provide pupils with feedback about their achievements and areas for development so that they can become more effective learners.
- to encourage and motivate pupils to achieve their full potential
- to encourage independence in learning
- to involve pupils and parents/carers in the process
- to provide individual members of staff, teams of staff and the school as a whole with information to improve the quality of education that they provide
- to ensure that assessment, recording and reporting practice adheres to the equal opportunities policy of the school

Fundamental Principles

Assessment, recording and reporting at Cromwell Community College should:

- be an integral part of the teaching and learning process
- offer all pupils an opportunity to show what they know, understand and can do
- help pupils to understand what they can do and what they need to develop
- recognise that the National Curriculum and GCSE syllabi do not encompass all learning; there is the wider curriculum and pupils' personal and social development which is not always quantifiable
- be based on a considered view of what learning should be assessed in each subject or area of experience
- relate to shared learning objectives
- advance the learning process by being assessment for learning as well as assessment of learning
- enable teachers to plan more effectively
- help parents/carers to be involved in their child's progress
- provide school with information to evaluate work and set appropriate targets
- be manageable
- meet statutory requirements
- be consistent within and between departments

Assessment guidelines

Departmental assessment procedures should:

- be based on whole school policy
- be based upon clear curriculum intentions
- play an integral part in teaching and learning activities
- be formative: to enable positive achievements to be recognised and discussed and the appropriate next steps planned

- be diagnostic: to enable the identification of learning difficulties and identify strategies to provide support and guidance
- be summative: to enable the recording of achievement in a systematic way
- be appropriate to the task
- focus on learning experiences as well as learning outcomes
- draw upon a wide range of evidence
- place achievement in context
- indicate strengths and identify weaknesses
- involve pupils in reflection and review
- use a variety of methods of assessment
 - Formative
 - Summative
 - Ipsative - assessment whereby the norm against which assessment is measured is based on prior performance of the person being assessed - the present performance is assessed against performance in the past. In athletics, "personal best" is an example of ipsative assessment.

Assessment for Learning

Classroom based research has shown that assessment for learning makes a difference to both pupils' attainment and their levels of engagement and motivation. Gains in attainment of sample groups against control groups are between one and two GCSE grades.

The key characteristics of effective assessment for learning is :-

- embedded in a view of teaching and learning of which it is an essential part
- involving sharing learning goals with pupils
- aiming to help pupils to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for
- involving pupils in peer and self assessment
- providing feedback which leads to pupils recognising their next steps and how to take them
- involving both teacher and pupil reviewing and reflecting on assessment data

The Senior Management Team is fully committed to the principles of AfL and has identified this as a key area in the School Improvement Process in 2005/2006. Additional support has been provided for the coming year from the KS3 team, and all faculties will have access to further training, either from individual consultants, CAS courses or internally provided support.

Principles of Good Classroom Practice

The following strategies can be identified as methods of putting assessment for learning into practice: -

- Ensure objectives for lessons are given orally and on the board at the start of the lesson;
- Share the learning objective to enable the child to know the purpose of the activity;
- Model the activity, to show the link between objectives and outcomes;

- Revisit the learning objectives at the end of the sessions;
- Show work in progress to exemplify standards;
- Display portfolios of work;
- Interpreting mark schemes in order to explain where marks can be achieved;
- Use of praise and rewards for success in achieving standards;
- Self-marking of work, against the standards set;
- Reading each others work and then annotating;
- Performance and presentation of work in progress and discussion of that work;
- Reflect on their own work;
- Be supported to admit problems without risk to self-esteem;
- Pupils to be given time to work out problems
- Comments, either detailed written or oral, which provide clear guidance on what needs to be done to improve;
- Brainstorming session on how to improve;
- Create a dialogue with pupils;
- Effective use of questioning to improve whole school understanding;
- Feedback to focus on the learning objectives of the lesson;
- Encouragement which focuses on good aspects of the work;
- Challenging tasks;
- Creating a classroom environment where all pupils are treated with respect by their peers;
- Setting objectives that are appropriate to the ability of the children;
- Targeting the assessment on elements that have been specified;
- Create time in lessons to reflect on formative comments and get them to look back over the work or a sequence of tasks;
- Make use of the plenary for reflection.

Current thinking about learning acknowledges that learners must ultimately be responsible for their learning since no one else can do it for them.

- Reviews the school expectation on 'bulk marking' moving toward informative marking for a purpose

Assessment for Learning will move away from:

- Comparing pupils against one another. The learning dialogue will be 'more individual' and involves personal change relating to where that particular pupil is on their learning route.
- Ignoring the advice and learning function when handing back marks and grades
- Simply marking and assessing to provide a social/managerial function. Assessment for Learning will include Self Assessment Principles that:
 - Reflect on past experiences
 - Seek to remember and understand what took place
 - Gain a clearer idea of what has been learned and achieved
 - Involve pupils in their learning and encourage them to take responsibility for their learning

Effective Feedback and Marking

Written marking has essentially two functions:

1. To provide an assessment record.
2. To provide feedback to the child.

Assessment should be

1. Linked to the learning objectives of the lesson;
2. Fit for purpose and have appropriate mark schemes;
3. Evaluative of the assessed piece of work;
4. Positive in tone;
5. Indicative of what the pupil could target to improve their work;
6. Indicative of how improvement might be achieved.

Oral feedback

- Will be provided during lessons and in plenary sessions, individually or collectively;
- Be regular and recorded.

Children should be given opportunities to act on the feedback in both written and oral marking to improve their work.

This area of the assessment policy is likely to include looking at how marking and feedback can be used to improve pupil motivation, and in particular:

- Looking at the benefits of oral feedback, and how it can be improved;
- Looking at peer and self-assessment;
- Looking at the use of comments versus grades in written feedback;
- Cutting down the amount of marking without compromising pupil attainment – quality and quantity;
- Issues of monitoring and quality control.

Target Setting – Reporting to County

In line with new reporting accountability to the local authority, we now have to report targets for Yr 8 & Yr 10 students. These targets for their end of Key Stage examinations are reported under the following headings: - English & Maths combined results L5+ (SATs) and A-C (GCSE); % of students making two levels of progress in the Key Stage; and L5+ in Science. These targets are agreed with our School Improvement Partner and then are sent to County. A review of the targets and our progress towards them happens on a regular basis. This review will help to identify students that will require intervention and support to ensure that they meet their targets.*

Baseline Data

Prior to entry to Cromwell

Baseline data is collected from KS2 feeder schools by Cromwell and the LEA.

The LEA provide Fischer Family Trust information to Cromwell; this includes KS2 to KS3 level predictions and KS2 to KS4 predictions on cohort and individual pupil basis

Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 Target Setting

The College is obliged to provide level to Governors and the LEA on cohort and individual pupil basis.

The LEA provides Fischer Family Trust information to Cromwell; this includes KS2 to KS3 level predictions on cohort and individual pupil basis. This statistically based information is available on the school network for each cohort.

Adjusting the Target Level

The individual teacher may adjust the target level. In general, the target level should NOT be moved downwards, although on occasions this may be necessary.

Professional judgement will allow the lowering of the target for individual cases. These should be discussed with the Head of Subject/Department/Faculty.

Currently, this information is made available to staff via our reporting system and via SIMS Assessment Manager

The cohort target should remain the same or better because of any adjustments.

End of Key Stage 3

Teacher Assessments levels will be collected from all subject areas and SAT's information for English, Mathematics, Science and ICT.

The LEA provide Fischer Family Trust information to Cromwell; this includes KS3 to KS4 subject predictions on cohort and individual pupil basis

This is made available to staff via our reporting system and via SIMS Assessment Manager

This information should be used to -

- ✓ group/set pupils into pastoral and/or teaching groups
- ✓ set cohort and individual targets for end of KS3 assessments
- ✓ be the basis for Cromwell staff to set targets for individuals and subjects
- ✓ inform the individual teacher of where the pupils are starting from and where they should be finishing
- ✓ enable progress to be monitored
- ✓ indicate the quality of teaching for a given cohort/class/individual
- ✓ assist in keeping parents and pupils aware of expectations and progress
- ✓ enable early identification of the 'gifted and talented' and/or the underachiever
- ✓ enable early intervention strategies to be adopted
- ✓ assist in line management and performance review

Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 Target Setting

The College is obliged to provide GCSE targets to Governors and the LEA on cohort and individual pupil basis.

The LEA provides Fischer Family Trust information to Cromwell; this includes KS3 to KS4 level predictions on cohort and individual pupil basis. This statistically based information is available on the school network.

Adjusting the Target Grade

The individual teacher may adjust the target grade. In general, the target grade should NOT be moved downwards, although on occasions this may be necessary.

Professional judgement will allow the lowering of the target for individual cases. These should be discussed with the Head of Subject/Department/Faculty.

The cohort target should remain the same or better because of any adjustments.

Currently, this information is made available to staff via our reporting system and via SIMS Assessment Manager.

This information should be used to -

- ✓ set cohort and individual targets for end of KS4 assessments
- ✓ be the basis for Cromwell staff to set targets for individuals and subjects
- ✓ inform the individual teacher of where the pupils are starting from and where they should be finishing
- ✓ enable progress to be monitored
- ✓ indicate the quality of teaching for a given cohort/class/individual
- ✓ assist in keeping parents and pupils aware of expectations and progress
- ✓ enable early identification of the 'gifted and talented' and/or the underachiever
- ✓ enable early intervention strategies to be adopted
- ✓ assist in line management and performance review
- ✓ assist the decision making for the pupil on best post-16 pathways

Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5 Target Setting

For the initial year of Post-16 provision at Cromwell, the proposal is that KS5 targets will be set from the GCSE results average points score. Predictions will be made based on the ALPS system. This method is not subject specific and does not give chances graphs.

Our Post-16 partner, Neale-Wade use the ALIS system; this does give chances graphs. Cromwell will consider this as a future development

Intermediate Stages for the Collection of Data

In accordance with our reporting policy and timetable, there should be 3 reporting stages for each year group. These reports are –

- ✓ First Interim report
- ✓ Second Interim report
- ✓ Full report

The order of the reports may vary e.g. the full report is sent out prior to Easter for Year 9 and the second interim with end of Key Stage assessment details in July.

Each report should contain the following information –

- ✓ Target level or grade
- ✓ Current attainment
- ✓ Whether the pupil is on target to meet the level or grade

- ✓ A comment as to how the pupil can maintain his/her standard, get back on track and /or improve

There may need to be a review of individual reporting times to fit any new assessment criteria or regulations

Data Format

Key Stage 3

Data at Key stage 2 is reported to parents in whole levels; Cromwell receives intermediate levels in a 10-point scale.

Similarly, information given by Fischer Family Trust is given in decimal places of levels e.g. 4.6. This format allows mathematical calculations to be carried out whereas the intermediate levels of 4a, 4b, 4c do not.

At Key stage 3, all reporting will be done in levels. In line with KS3 reporting guidelines, reports to parents will be given in whole levels.

Intermediate levels always rounded down for reporting purposes i.e. someone achieving a high level 5 and close to a level 6 is reported as being level 5

Where departments keep records of intermediate levels, these will be kept and recorded in decimal places of levels. If the whole 10-point scale is inappropriate then 4.3, 4.6 and 4.9 shall be used to indicate low, middle and high achievement within the level.

In written/verbal comments, intermediate levels may be mentioned.

Key Stage 4

At Key stage 4, all reporting will be done in grades for those courses at GCSE level and in appropriate nomenclature for other level of courses.

All marks for homework, tests and essays should be given as a grade.

In written/verbal comments, intermediate grades may be mentioned.

Current Attainment Data

This will be collected alongside current reporting practices and will indicate 'where the individual pupil is now'.

Departments will be asked to provide the latest data they have and not be required to arrange their assessment dates to fit the reporting schedule.

This information could come from data gathered from homework, class work, coursework and/or modular tests.

There should have been a common policy within each Department/faculty that is applied to all classes taught in each subject area.

The Use of On Target 'Yes' and 'No'

Tracking a subject
Tracking a cohort
Tracking a class
Tracking an individual
Comparing targets to performance
Recognising achievement
Identifying intervention needs
Use in Performance Management/Threshold application

For the Teacher -
Recording the assessment of learning
Tracking a class
Tracking an individual
Tracking marking
Sharing information with pupils
Comparing targets to performance
Recognising achievement
Identifying intervention needs
Making consultation meetings with parents meaningful
Use in Performance Management/Threshold application

For the Pupil -
Knowing subject targets
Knowing where he/she is now
Helping to identify what aspects are complete
Helping to identify what has to be done
Helping to know where marks are on the sliding scale from one grade to the next
Aiming high
Initiating dialogue between the pupil and teacher

Reporting to Parents - Written

Reporting will be completed in line with the reporting timetable issued and currently using the PAP reporting software.

In addition to the statistical information provided to parent and pupil there should also be a comment.

On the interim report the comment box should contain a comment, even if it is simply to say 'Carry on as at present'.

Reports to parents may be written and/or verbal.

Annual reports are based on the pro-forma prepared by the HoKS or ICT staff.

They are typed using the PAP reporting software and should be written without jargon.

The purpose of the reports is-

- To provide formative information as well as test results.
- To give a comment that relates to what the child has learned not to what has been taught.

- To inform parents of progress made
- To report on strengths
- To report on weaknesses and strategies for improvement
- To report areas of concern, which may be expressed as a target (refer to recording section).
- To inform parents as to how their child is performing in relation to his/her potential
- To inform parents as to how their child is performing in relation to his/her past achievements,
- To inform parents as to how their child is performing in relation to the rest of the class
- To inform parents as to how their child is performing in relation to national/exam board standards

Principles of Good Report Writing

1. Target the Audience

Reports should be written for parents in a clear and straightforward way. Most parents want to know:

- how their child is performing in relation to their potential and past achievements, to the rest of the class and to national standards
- their child's strengths and particular achievements
- areas for development and improvement
- whether their child is happy, settled and behaving well
- how they can help

Reports should:

- be personal to the pupil
- be well written with correct spelling, punctuation and grammar
- include succinct comments and wording which is precise and appropriate
- avoid jargon if it is unlikely to be understood
- not be purely statement banked based

2. Concentrate on Performance

The report should:

- concentrate on what the pupil has or has not learnt rather than what has been taught
- provide both formative, summative and ipsative information
- indicate what standards the pupil has achieved (in relation to previous performance, progress in other subjects, other pupils or national/exam board standards)
- give specific details of internal/external assessments
- indicate what the pupil has to do to achieve/exceed targets

3. Motivate the Pupil to Make Further Progress

Reports can be a way of helping pupils make progress by:

- highlighting strengths
- recognising and valuing achievements in different areas of school life, including social, sport, cultural and academic
- identifying areas for development and making suggestions about how these can be achieved
- giving an accurate picture of current attainment
- involving the pupil in setting clear, achievable and time-related targets for his or her learning

Principles of Verbal Reporting to Parents

This is normally done at the subject evening or review day, but could also be at any other time of the year and could be initiated by either the parent or the College

Teachers should expect every child they teach to make an appointment; it is not a pupil choice. Where one or more class is taught in a year group this can be impossible, BUT most parents would prefer a shorter interview rather than none at all.

The response to *'My parents do not want to see you!'* is *'No, but I want to see them!'*

During these meetings Parents want –

- ✓ to meet their child's teachers
- ✓ to feel that the teacher is interested in their child
- ✓ to be assured that the teacher knows who their child is
- ✓ to ask questions and gain insight into their child's attitude and performance.
- ✓ to clarify issues that their child may have reported home
- ✓ to be given honest information about their child's performance and get the full picture, even when it is uncomfortable
- ✓ to be given information about performance and potential
- ✓ to be given specific advice about how to help their child improve, even when the child is already doing well
- ✓ to be given specific information
- ✓ to agree a way forward

During these meetings you should –

- ✓ be aware that some parents feel very uncomfortable in the school environment
- ✓ try to develop a positive relationship with the parent – get them on our side
- ✓ show the parents that you know and are interested in their child
- ✓ use the parent's interest in their child to support you in trying to do the best for their child – develop a 'let's work together' ethos
- ✓ ensure that any written comments and your verbal comments do not conflict
- ✓ be prepared to justify your written comment
- ✓ explain any progression/regression or changes you have seen since the written report
- ✓ mention any immediate responses the pupil has made to comments on the report
- ✓ have your records of the pupil's work

- ✓ have copies of the reports that have gone out for the year prior to the meeting
- ✓ have examples of the pupil's work to help support your comments
- ✓ have the scheme of work available, either in written form or be able to explain it
- ✓ give opportunity for the parents to ask you questions and gain insight into their child's attitude, performance.
- ✓ get the pupils and parents to give undertakings from them about targets e.g. punctuality, coursework, attendance and homework. These may be more relevant to some pupils than others.
- ✓ keep a record of who you have seen; it can prove useful information for later
- ✓ not get into a protracted disagreement. If a difficult situation is developing, terminate the interview and/or seek help from others. Investigate the basis of the disagreement and report back later or simply 'pass the buck' to HoD, HoY, HoKS etc.