

School's Assessment Policy

When the school's assessment policy was first officially drafted, it was in line with the then existing National Minimum Curriculum, as our school combined summative and formative assessments between year 4 and year 6 (Creating the Future Together, NMC, Ministry of Education, 1999, pg 78), with the aim of

- i) providing feedback to the teaching and learning strategies and methods being employed;
- ii) emphasising and celebrating the students' learning and achievements rather than using assessment for segregation and exclusion purposes;
- iii) facilitating the students' participation in self-assessment as they come to make more and more choices and decisions in their learning.

The call is for assessment practices that are more formative in nature, focus on the individual learner and on process rather than product and give a more holistic picture of what the student has learnt. This is as emphasised in Principle 9 of the NMC that states:

An education which recognizes diversity regards formative assessment as indispensable for the carrying out of a democratic agenda. This mode of assessment focuses on the individual student in a manner that is beneficial to him or her.

These modes of assessment do not discriminate among students. On the contrary, their purpose is to indicate the stage at which students had started their present stage of learning and the stage or stages they can reach in their individual process of educational development. Formative modes are more accurate in their assessment than those of a summative nature. Formative modes give a holistic picture of the student's development in terms of how much the student has learnt and the manner in which the student has learnt. (ibid, pg 37)

In keeping with the principles stated above our school employs a variety of assessment strategies as listed below:

- Observations by class teacher of how the students are performing in class.
- A variety of questioning techniques employed by the teacher during lessons.
- Classwork and its correction. This can take on various guises including oral work, written work on copybooks and handouts, and presentations using different media.
- Homework and its correction. This includes projects using different media.
- Short topic based tests usually set at the end of a topic to assess the students understanding of the topic.
- Use of revision handouts and past papers (of the previous past two years).
- Oral tests such as quick question and answer or quizzes to test children's knowledge of certain topics.
- Formal class based tests. These are necessary especially where students have no previous experience of formal testing. These experiences will help them gain confidence in sitting for formal exams. These should not be held more than twice during one scholastic year.
- The use of checklists and other standard tests available.
- School based special papers.

- College based Half-Yearly Exams.
- National Annual and Benchmark Exams

Furthermore these principles should be adhered to:

- ✓ It is essential that the feedback received from the various assessment strategies listed above is used to modify the teaching and learning activities as required.
- ✓ Teachers have to plan their lessons in such a way that they build upon the knowledge, information and skills that the students **already** possess. This means that time has to be allotted to allow students to speak during brainstorming and discussion sessions.
- ✓ The use of **Learning Intentions** is essential if the students are to become more conscious of what they are expected to learn. Learning Intentions should be clear and unambiguous. They should be displayed prominently in class and explained to the students at the start of the lesson.
- ✓ Linked to this is the use of **Success Criteria**. This is vital if the students are to become more responsible for their self-assessment. Students need to be made aware of what they are expected to do and on which criteria their work will be assessed. The teacher will do well to focus on specific success criteria at a time in certain tasks, such as composition writing, which require the use of a large number of skills.
- ✓ **Questions** asked by teachers during lessons should include all types of questions ranging from those requiring Yes/No answers and other simple recall answers to open-ended questions requiring much thought on the students' part,
- ✓ Constructive feedback will give students the opportunity to improve their learning. This includes the body language used by teachers, oral feedback as well as written comments. Feedback should include the listing of positive features of the students work as well as suggestions as to how the work can be improved.
- ✓ All this should lead pupils to become capable of self-assessment – a skill which can contribute a lot to the progress made by the different students.
- ✓ An important skill which needs to be instilled in students is the **revision and editing** of their work. For this to be meaningful, there should be an ultimate aim such as presenting the work in front of an audience or publishing the work on Fronter or the school's website.
- ✓ **All written work should be seen by the class teacher and clearly marked accordingly.** It should include comments where feedback is needed. Copybooks and handouts taken home by the students serve as feedback to students, parents and guardians about the students' progress.
- ✓ No use should be made of surprise testing as the tension, stress and other problems these create greatly outweigh any benefits there may be.
- ✓ Homework, classwork, topic based tests and class based test should be graded so that all students can at least manage part of the work required. In this way, these will provide good feedback at a glance of the level the student has reached.
- ✓ **Copies of class tests should be passed on** the school's SMT for monitoring and recording purposes.
- ✓ **Maximum** use should be made of the formative aspect of tests/exams.
- ✓ Students, parents and guardians have a right to receive feedback on the progress of the student involved within a reasonable time. This feedback

should emphasize the positive achievements of the students along with advice on how the student can continue to progress in his or her work. Apart from the formal occasions such as parents' evening (1st term) and parents' day (2nd term), teachers may make use of a variety of other strategies where necessary to inform parents and guardians of the students' progress.

In the case of statemented children a further number of strategies are employed depending on the individual cases.

- A Map session is held prior to the students' admission to the school so that adequate preparations are made.
- Assessment is carried out formally during review sessions.
- The teacher and the LSA plan together the student's work to be done during the scholastic year (according to the IEP). The work is adapted depending on the abilities on the individual student.
- Where needed students are put on remedial programmes as are used in the school.
- A variety of assessment strategies as listed above are employed depending on the abilities of the individual student.
- These students are encouraged to sit for all or some of the college based and national formal exams (as agreed during the IEP sessions). If these formal exams will result in more harm than benefits to the students concerned, then, the students are exempted from any formal exams.