



The Willows School  
Academy Trust

**Learning - Achieving - Succeeding**

## **Assessment Policy**

### **Introduction**

**The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning, as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. Information is needed about what knowledge, understanding or skills students need. By finding out what students currently know, understand and can do, any gap between the two can be made apparent. Assessment is the process of gaining information about the gap and learning is about attempts to reduce the gap.**

The philosophy on assessment at The Willows School has at its core knowledge of the need to embrace a range of assessment methods appropriate to each curriculum subject and the learning process used by the pupils. To this end, assessment is both formal and informal, summative and formative. Thus, its aim is not only to mark out where a child is in their attainment, but informs both the teacher and learner of future learning steps they need to take to achieve an outcome that is clear and achievable.

Teachers need to be clear on the intended purpose of any assessment, and the assessment itself must be reliable to support this purpose. To achieve this, The Willows uses a simple yet effective assessment cycle

that provides not only clear assessment at any point in time, as mentioned but allows for an ongoing picture of the individual and group achievement of pupils over time.

### **Assessment is done with the student, not to the student.**

As is the case with teaching and learning, assessment is a collaborative endeavour between the teacher and the student - where both want to determine what the student knows and what might be learnt next.

Therefore, a major role for the teacher is to manage the learning culture of the classroom in order to maximise students' motivation to engage keenly with assessment. If the student is not motivated to try with the assessment, it is likely that the results will not really show what the student knows or can do. Such a result will not help either the teacher or the student to plan next steps.

### **Teachers should always involve students in assessment decision-making**

Where possible, informal or formal, assessment is to involve the students in decision-making about as many aspects of the assessment of learning as possible. These include the timing, the design and the assessment criteria, so that students are able to properly see themselves as co-constructors of the assessment, with equal ownership of the results. Some tools will lend themselves to greater student involvement than others, depending on how they have been designed, however even where there is little opportunity for student input into the actual assessment construction, students will be supported to see the assessment results as providing them with valuable information about what they know and what they might choose to learn next.

### **Target Setting**

Three curricular targets in Literacy and Mathematics are agreed and set in Maths and Literacy, which can be presented on a target wall or in the children's exercise books for reference when they need it and as a reminder of specific learning goals for the term. Teachers ideally are to teach at least one activity linked to each child's target every 2 weeks, and marking of children's work reflects progress towards them. These are reviewed at the end of each term or earlier if met.

A target is deemed to have been achieved if three pieces of independent work on separate dates show achievement of the target. The assessment of progress against targets involves a range of strategies including teacher, peer and pupil self- assessment.

### **Work Scrutiny**

Annual KS1/KS2 SATs and other in-school topic analysis is to be carried out to inform future planning and the School Improvement Plan.

Whole schoolwork audits are carried out in all subjects annually and termly in Literacy and Numeracy by members of SLT and Phase Manager

### **Assessment Tools/ Evidence of Achievement and Attainment**

Assessment occurs naturally through everyday classroom interactions. Teachers and students gather information, and subsequent analysis and interpretation allow them to adjust their teaching and learning accordingly. Ideally this is not always a conscious reaction but occurs spontaneously as a result of discussion or feedback.

Formal assessment ensures consistency in the interpretation of both progress and achievement by students and teachers. It also helps to ensure that other stakeholders in education - governors, parents and family - get the types of information that they need in order to be able to support teaching and learning.

The main assessment tool used to record information on a weekly and half-termly cycle is **Target Tracker**. The Information recorded is both summative and formative. As teachers assess learning intentions against the Target Tracker curriculum 'I can' statements, they are also informed of the next step for each child in that subject of study.

Levels have now been replaced across all curriculum subjects with a new system of banding, that has been developed with the New Curriculum in mind. The strength of this method of recording is that it allows for both individual and class progress to be monitored over time, and also provides a break-down of information on different categories of pupils, analysing, for example, the progress made by girls compared with boys, by cultural background or free school meals. In short, the

school is now in a position to be able to closely monitor the progress of any group of children to ensure that all pupils are accessing the learning they need in order to progress and achieve.

Thus, assessment ensure that what is recorded is valid (based on what students have learned), reliable, and informative (provides information on what students have learned and what they need to learn) and, where appropriate, how they measure up against expectations for their cohort.

Triangulation ensures that the achievements recorded are in accordance with what the children have actually done throughout the year.

### **Assessments Used**

#### **Summative and Formative**

“Formative Assessment refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by the students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessments become formative when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet the needs.” (Black and William, Inside The Black Box, 1998)

#### **a. Assessment *for* Learning**

Also known as formative assessment, “Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.” (Assessment Reform Group, 2002)

#### ***What is Involved?***

Assessment for learning describes the assessment processes that take place during teaching and learning. Evidence is used to adapt the teaching work to meet the needs of the learners, teaching students to “learn how to learn”. This is included explicitly in their own learning using

strategies which show them how to diagnose their own strengths and weaknesses and act upon them.

### **How do we do this at The Willows?**

Sharing learning goals/objectives with pupils helps them to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for.

Included in this are:

- pupils involved in self and peer assessment
- feedback that leads to pupils recognising their next steps and how to take them
- both teacher and pupils reviewing, and reflecting on, assessment Information.

### **Assessment for Learning in Practice**

As a matter of classroom practice, teachers should:

- Share the learning objectives of a lesson to give focus and purpose to each learning task ( taking care to ensure the children are told what they will be learning rather than doing).
- Use traffic light system to identify if children have successfully achieved their learning outcome
- Clarify the learning outcomes of each task:  
teachers are clear about their expectations and communicate these to pupils. The learning outcome(s) will specify what is expected from the pupil as a result of a task or episode within a lesson It will explain the criteria for success Wherever possible these should be hierarchical, e.g. differentiated outcomes, so that students can see what they have to do in order to 'move up a level
- Expectations/outcomes should be discussed before students start the activity and should be referred back to during the course of the lesson.
- View the process of completing a piece of work to be as important as the outcome.
- Model and share ideas of quality.
- Share assessment objectives and marking criteria before commencing a piece of work.
- Involve students in the assessment of their own work and the evaluation of the work of others, in relation to specific criteria.

- Create an environment where students develop as active learners
- Enable students to have clear, detailed and focused targets for improvement by providing appropriate feedback
- Adjust teaching to take into account the results of Assessment for Learning
- Mark selectively by focusing on the learning objectives.

### **Some examples of Assessment for Learning Strategies**

*(links with Willows Marking Policy)*

- Peer and self- assessment using pupil-friendly criteria that engages pupils with the quality of their work and in reflecting on how to improve it.
- Provides pupils with valuable feedback, enabling them to learn from and support each other
- Adds a valuable dimension to learning – the opportunity to talk, discuss, explain and challenge each other

### **Develop skills of self and peer assessment**

This process is continually developing. As with all school children, pupils at The Willows do not become self-evaluative overnight. The development of self and peer assessment will take planning, time, patience and commitment. Many pupils do not naturally find it easy to critique their own or other pupils' work and they need to be taught structures of language that they can use.

#### **Teachers need to encourage them to:**

- a) Start with positive language, identifying where criteria have been met, before ...
- b) Discuss where things are missing, and then ...
- c) Make suggestions about what they can do to fully meet the criteria

### ***Developing a language for peer assessment***

You have met the criteria here by ....

This is your best sentence because ...

You could improve this further by .....

You have not met this part of the criteria because ....

To reach the next stage you need to include more of ...

- Thinking skills
- Dialogue about tasks rather than monologue
- Open questioning
- Written frameworks to scaffold, then move towards independence
- Students to annotate and assess pieces of work according to specific criteria
- Providing models so students understand what a successful example of the task is – in other words helping students recognise the standards they are aiming for
- Comments on marking which create an expectation that the students respond in some way and marking that is focused on “Closing The Gap”
- For the student who has fulfilled all of the learning objective, give them an extension task at a higher level

### **b. Assessment of Learning**

Also known as summative assessment, this is carried out periodically (e.g. end of a unit or year) to judge how well a pupil is performing. It is reported in terms of grades, marks or levels, allowing the school to track progress over time.

## **English**

### **PM Running Record**

In addition to work samples, PM running records are used to provide both summative and formative assessment information. A running record, which can be done quickly and frequently is individually conducted, ongoing and curriculum based. It provides a graphic representation of a student's oral reading, identifying patterns of effective and ineffective strategy use. Through a running record, teachers can obtain:

- Information about a student's use of reading strategies
- Information about a student's self-monitoring
- An accuracy rate
- An error rate

- A self-correction rate

Used effectively they document reading progress over time and help teachers decide what students need to learn, matching each pupil to appropriate books

In short, the running record helps teachers measure students' progress, plan for future instruction, provide a way for students to understand their progress, and communicate progress to parents and the school community when needed.

### **Schonell Spelling Assessment**

The Schonell test is a standardised assessment which can be administered to individuals or groups. It is a dictated list of words which gives a quick and easy assessment of spelling attainment and is designed for pupils from Years 1 to 10. Scoring and data analysis is straight forward, with scores being added, and a quick calculation made to ascertain a pupil's spelling age.

These tests are provided in the context of a book of spelling lists for teaching and learning, which are based on family groupings, so children only learn similarly spelt and pronounced words altogether.

This assessment is half-termly.

### **Writing Samples**

Formalised independent writing samples are analysed half-termly using the Ros Wilson writing assessment format. This assessment allows for writing skills to be broken down into specific criteria against which work can be assessed. The criteria from Level 2 to Level 5 have been subdivided into three sections which give an indication of common performance at the sub-levels, C (low), B (secure) and A (high).

### **Nfer National norm-referenced Assessments**

Compatible with the 2014 curriculum this objective test can help to monitor pupil progress without levels by using age standardised scores, and identify strengths and weaknesses. It has the added advantage of helping to assess pupil achievement and attainment relative to a national age-related average.



**SATS assessment tests:** English and spelling

## **Mathematics**

**Nfer** assessment

**SATS testing** (End of KS2 and optional for Year 5)

**Abacus** ½ termly assessment (optional)

Teacher assessment and pupil peer assessment for learning

Progress measured weekly and half termly against **Target Tracker** objectives.

## **Humanities and Science**

Progress to be measured against **Target Tracker** standards

Peer assessment and conferencing

### **Collection of Evidence**

Samples of children's learning in English and Mathematics is collected half-termly, which forms a snap-shot of progress over time. The work samples chosen reflect the children's cognitive functioning and standard of presentation and should be a correct and measured representation of each child's learning. Teachers are aware that this sample is representative but not the entire story of the child's learning. It does not give a total picture of the children's knowledge and progress over time, however, it has the potential to provide visual support when use used in conjunction with other assessments.

### **5. Policy Review**

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Governing Body and updated routinely in line with The Willows School Academy Trust Policy Schedule.

### **4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

This policy encourages the practice of inclusion for all. at the Willows Academy, we aim to ensure that no member of the school community experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination within the learning environment because of their age; any disability they may have; their ethnicity, colour or national origin; their gender; their religion or beliefs. We value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not

discriminate against anyone because of 'differences'. We believe that all our children matter and we value their families too. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when devising and implementing school policies and procedures.

(Last reviewed: September 2015)  
(Next review: )