



This Policy covers the following key areas:

- Assessment
- Feedback and Sharing Criteria for Success
- Involving Pupils In Their Own Learning
- Attainment
- Recording and Reporting
- Support for Pupils
- Internal Standardisation/Moderation
- Retention of Material for Quality Assurance/Evidence
- Malpractice
- Complaints
- SQA Presentation Policy
- Estimates for SQA Examinations
- Candidate Enquiries and Appeals
- Value-Added
- Assessment in the Junior School

Assessment

Assessment is an integral and vital part of the teaching and learning process. It will provide information about the current performance of pupils and the effectiveness of the classroom teaching, and should create an accurate picture of a pupil's performance and potential for staff, parents, interested educational bodies and the pupil themselves.

The School's approach to assessment and reporting, as set down in this document, is intended as a framework for individual departmental policy. Each department will have its own guidelines on assessment and recording, set down in its Department Handbook, and teachers joining a department will be made fully aware of relevant practice.

The School's policy on the assessment of pupils' progress has a central part to play in fulfilling the following expectations:

- that staff establish and foster the link between assessment, learning and attainment, using assessment to support learning and personal improvement
- that staff cultivate a positive approach to each pupil's progress, as part of a process of building confidence
- that staff help pupils to develop the skills which they need both to understand what their learning targets are and to reflect on their progress towards achieving those targets
- that staff seek to recognise and acknowledge the whole range of each pupil's attainment, achievements and successes, in relation to the taught curriculum, their personal and social development and their extra-curricular activities
- that pupils, parents and staff are engaged in purposeful dialogue in relation to academic targets, progress and next steps

Any formal assessment policy must primarily concern itself with what is delivered within the curriculum, acknowledging that assessment is part of a repeated cycle. Diagnostic assessment, at a whole school level prior to, and after admission, and at department level, precedes the teaching and learning



process, to establish pupils' prior knowledge and any potential barriers to learning. The effectiveness of the teaching and learning is then assessed formatively, to provide regular feedback on progress and, when appropriate, the results of summative assessment are recorded. The whole process is then evaluated as a necessary preliminary stage to planning for pupils' next steps in learning.

Departmental policy determines the frequency, method and arrangements for assessments with the exception of formal School-based examinations in Senior 2 and above, Preliminary and SQA examinations which lead to nationally recognised certificates. Individual teachers are expected to take responsibility for a formative approach to their classroom practice, ensuring that pupils understand clearly what they are trying to learn, giving feedback about the quality of their work and involving them in deciding on the next steps required to achieve success.

In the Junior School [see also specific section at the end of this Policy document dealing with Junior School issues], evidence is recorded in each pupil's assessment folder on a weekly basis – for example, spelling and mental arithmetic tests, check-ups, end of unit assessments, assessed writing pieces (one of each genre).

Effective and informed assessment has always been an integral part of the teaching process at the School. Continuous monitoring and review of school assessment policy and practice and information from external sources about attainment nationally aids the process of School self-evaluation and contributes to the School Improvement Plan and individual Department Improvement Plans.

This policy is intended to encourage further the development and use of assessment procedures which are purposeful and which measure and, as appropriate, record significant information in the educational development of each of the school's pupils. The following methods of assessment should be used as appropriate to each subject/stage within the School:

- A Written Tests:
 - 1. Objective Tests
 - 2. Short Answer Questions
 - 3. Extended Writing & Extended Answer Questions
 - 4. Open Book Tests
 - 5. Self-Assessment of Written Work
 - 6. Grid Box Tests
- B Practical Tests:
 - 1. Set Piece Practical Tests
 - 2. Periodic Assessment of Practical Skills
 - 3. Self-Assessment of Practical Work
 - 4. Peer-Assessment of Practical Work
- C Oral Tests:
 - 1. Individual Tests
 - 2. Peer-Assessment of Oral Work
- D Aural Tests
 - 1. Individual Tests
 - 2. Group Tests
- E Combined:



1. Projects/Assignments/ Investigations

Proper and accurate records of pupil performance in tests should be maintained by the individual subject/class teacher and should be appropriately recorded and available to PTs or senior management.

Feedback and Sharing Success Criteria

The main purpose of assessment is to enable informed decisions to be taken in relation to learning and teaching. All concerned – teachers, pupils and, at appropriate stages, parents – need to know whether a pupil or group of pupils has mastered each planned step in learning before decisions can be made about tackling the next stage.

Pupils and their parents clearly benefit from feedback about progress achieved and next steps. Parents receive two written reports and are invited to two Parent/Teacher Interview evenings each session. In the Senior School parents receive formal appointment times for each of their child's subject teachers and their Tutor and, in addition, the Senior Vice-Principal and Principal are available on each of these occasions. Parents are similarly provided with formal interview times in the Junior School.

In addition, there is, as required, regular contact between Tutors and parents in relation to individual pupils. There are also many other, less formal ways in which parents can be kept informed of their child's progress e.g. teachers' comments on pieces of work and test results can be used in this way, Cause for concern letters and additional target-setting for specific pupils.

Involving Pupils in their own Learning

Effective assessment depends upon teachers taking appropriate steps to ensure that pupils know what they are learning, why they are learning it and, above all, how well they are learning it. Such discussion with pupils fosters personal learning planning, a sense of confidence in their own abilities as learners and a willingness to meet challenging targets for future development which teachers will set for them but which, increasingly, they will be able and willing to identify themselves.

A range of formative assessment strategies and other examples of best practice is used at department level across the School:

- clear sharing of learning intentions at the start of lessons, of success criteria and, where appropriate, exemplification
- concepts are mastered before moving on to next steps
- frequent feedback and focus on next steps
- target setting
- collaborative, cooperative and active learning
- emphasis on shared enterprise
- peer explanation of learning
- opportunities for personalisation, choice and independent learning
- giving practical reasons for things
- criteria for evaluating learning achievements are made clear to pupils
- increased waiting time prior to accepting responses to allow all pupils to answer
- open questions and discussion to encourage thought, exploration and deeper understanding



- a supportive, positive approach to the use of wrong answers
- pupil self-evaluation techniques, such as traffic lighting
- self-assessment and peer assessment are used in order to discuss and reflect on progress toward outcomes
- teacher focus on teaching learners for full understanding more than on content

Attainment

When teachers use the evidence gathered from assessment of pupils' work to reflect on the progress and attainment of the individual pupil or of the class, they are well placed to judge, among other things:

- what it is that the pupils are learning effectively
- at what pace each pupil is progressing/learning
- how relevant and appropriate the content of the teaching is for each pupil
- how appropriate/effective the resources are which have been used to assist the pupils

Consideration of what should be done next may lead to a decision that, for example:

- some areas need to be covered again
- some skills need to be reinforced by reintroduction in a different context
- some (or all) pupils are ready for more demanding activities
- a given idea/concept needs to be presented in a different way

Assessment opportunities have to be a planned and integral part of the teaching process. Planning for assessment should involve:

- identifying the intended aims or learning outcomes of a planned series of activities
- deciding which aspects of the work to assess
- devising suitable assessment activities with clear and simple criteria
- deciding what information should be recorded, communicated to pupils or reported to parents

Recording and Reporting

Teachers should record only what is useful for evaluating a series of activities, for planning next steps in a pupil's learning or for reporting progress. Recording should not become an end in itself.

The records a teacher might keep about a programme of teaching could include:

- a brief account of the aims
- an indication of the teaching methods used
- an appraisal of how the class coped
- a summarising evaluative comment
- evaluative comments on forward planners.

The records a teacher might keep about pupils' achievements could include:

- brief notes or descriptive comments
- annotated folios or collections of work
- indications of levels of achievement, grades or test results
- if appropriate, comments made by the pupils themselves through self-evaluation
- individual targets recorded in a folder of achievements[Junior School]



- assessment folders which are passed to next teacher [Junior School]

A written record could be made, informally, whenever there is something significant to note about a pupil's progress. A more formal assessment, drawing upon what pupils say, what they write or what they do, might be undertaken:

- at the end of a planned block of learning and teaching
- at certain fixed points determined by School policy, for example during a period of examinations
- just before bi-annual Reports or Parent/Teacher Interviews

To avoid the risks of unnecessary repetition and of unfounded assumptions about learning targets met, it is helpful if records of a pupil's attainment are such that any teacher to whom the pupil is transferred – for example at the beginning of a new session – has access to a meaningful and objective picture both of what the pupil has achieved and of what the appropriate next steps in learning might be. This is particularly critical at the major transition points of Nursery/Junior 1 and Junior 6/Transitus.

Support for Pupils

All pupils are encouraged to seek guidance and help from their subject teachers and Tutors at a mutually convenient time. All teaching staff [Junior & Senior] offer an extra Tutorial on one evening per week from the end of October until the commencement of the SQA Examinations in May of each academic year.

All pupils assessed by Support for Learning staff as requiring additional support will be accommodated in all external exams. This may involve a reader, a scribe, provision of a laptop or extra time and similar arrangements will be put in place for internal exams, NABs etc. With advice from SfL, departments will ensure that all questions are unambiguous, written in appropriate language and, if necessary, printed on appropriately coloured paper and of a sufficient size to ensure that the assessment is accessible to all. Please refer to Support for Learning Policy for further detail on this.

Internal Standardisation/Moderation

It is important that staff have a shared understanding of the criteria for success, in all aspects of school life. The best moderation practice involves staff in discussing pupils' work produced in the course of a class activity, evaluating the effectiveness of the learning and teaching that has taken place, and agreeing appropriate feedback on next steps in learning. It is noted that this is not easy in the context of a number of single-person departments within the School but support from Faculty Heads and mutual support between colleagues in related fields can be of some help in this regard.

Within departments, quality assurance of summative assessment takes place to ensure assessments are consistent between classes and it is the responsibility of the Principal Teacher to ensure that the assessment tool will fulfil its function and, if necessary, provide reliable and valid evidence for estimates and appeals.

In larger departments, if more than one person is involved in marking a paper, a reasonable level of consistency will be achieved by cross-marking. Once the entire set of scripts is marked a sample should be moderated by the Principal Teacher.



In line with SQA Guidelines, standard marking symbols will be used as far as possible to indicate where marks have been lost by candidates, and for what reason. This is particularly relevant to certificate classes if scripts are likely to be submitted to the SQA.

All marking criteria must be agreed with those responsible for the marking. Should it become clear from pupils' responses that the marking scheme is deficient in some way, changes should be made in consultation with the Principal Teacher.

Principal Teachers will observe a taught lesson by each member of the department and provide detailed written feedback on that lesson. They will, in turn, will be observed by a member of SMT as part of the School's Quality Assurance procedures.

Retention of Material for Quality Assurance/Evidence

All evidence of satisfactory completion of SQA NABs will be kept by departments at least until after the publication of the outcome of Appeals. At that time they will not be moderated by the SQA. However, the Appeals process may not be exhausted at that stage and if the NABs have the potential to provide evidence of attainment at level C or above they must be kept to the end of the session - otherwise they may be shredded.

All examination scripts and associated marking schemes associated with national examinations must be archived for future reference and must not be shredded/destroyed until at least the lapse of one full academic session after the one in which they were taken.

All other examination scripts and marking schemes may be held for longer at the discretion of individual departments.

In relation to National Assessments, the most recent level passed should be retained in the pupil's confidential file and all preceding levels shredded.

Malpractice

Once an examination paper has been finalised, either electronically or in hard copy, it must be stored in a secure location. When pupil copies have been duplicated these must also be stored securely. External examination papers, depending on their bulk, are either held in the School safe or in a secure cabinet in a locked room. There should be no leakage of information prior to any examination.

All pupils are briefed about the seriousness of a breach of examination regulations and, as far as possible, all internal examinations are conducted in accordance with SQA guidelines.

Plagiarism, and the potential consequences, and the potential consequences of being involved as a provider or recipient of material are discussed in PSHE [PSD]. Anyone found guilty of plagiarism will face disciplinary action as determined by the Principal.



SQA exams involve independent invigilators employed by the school specifically for the purpose of supervising the conduct of the exam. Any breach of exam protocol will be reported to the exam body by

the invigilators who will have the full support of the school. In such cases the school reserves the right to take disciplinary action.

In School exams common forms of malpractice might be:

- unauthorised material and equipment (e.g. notebooks, "crib notes", charts, pencil cases, mobile phones etc.) found to have been in the examination room
- information found to have been written on part of the body
- information found to have been passed between candidates

This list of examples is not exhaustive.

The invigilator who detects/suspects malpractice must report this immediately to the relevant Principal Teacher and the Senior Vice-Principal. It is likely that disciplinary action would be taken and the result of the examination for the pupil(s) in question declared void.

SQA Presentation Policy

It is sound educational practice that all pupils are entered for Scottish Qualifications Authority examinations at an appropriate level of presentation that affords a reasonable prospect of success.

We have very high expectations for all of our pupils and if a pupil demonstrates that with genuine effort and application they have a realistic chance of a pass they will be encouraged to strive for that goal. However, there must always be a sense of realism which expectations must match. Throughout each academic year, staff will offer clear professional advice to pupils and parents on realistic presentation levels to be attempted and it should be remembered that it does not serve the individual pupil's interests if they are presented for examinations that they are not yet equipped to take. For example, a pupil may be advised to tackle General and Foundation level papers at Standard Grade if there is no secure evidence of a pass at Credit level and/or some doubt of success at General level. Similarly, a pupil may be advised to either defer presentation at Higher level in a given subject or to revert to presentation at Intermediate 2, if there is no evidence of the possibility of a pass at Higher in that academic year. The vast majority of parents and pupils respect the professional advice of the teaching staff but some in the past have not. Data from previous presentation years demonstrates a clear correlation between refusal to accept the advice of the School and failure in the final examinations.

The School's Presentation Policy, with effect from August 2008, is that the School reserves the discretionary right to withdraw any pupil from presentation for an SQA examination in a given subject if there is insufficient evidence of a realistic chance of a pass at the presentation level in question in that academic year. Such a decision will only be reached in the last resort and will have been supported throughout the academic year through the issue of Cause for Concern letters, Reports, discussions at Parent/Teacher Interviews and, critically, pupil performances in internal school assessments, SQA Unit tests, homework exercises and Preliminary Examinations. Senior 6 pupils, however, will always be given the opportunity to tackle the final examination in each of their subjects regardless of the chances of success in the final examination.

Complaints



If candidates wish to make a complaint about the conduct of any examination or an individual invigilator, that complaint should be made to the Senior Vice-Principal in the first instance.

Estimates for SQA Examinations

Estimates for every candidate taking a SQA national course are submitted by departments annually. These estimates are based on each candidate's demonstrated attainment in assessments; they are not a prediction which takes into consideration any potential for improvement in the last few weeks prior to the examinations diet. Accurate estimates are essential if a candidate is to be eligible for an award in the event of absence from the final examinations or for consideration of any appeal.

Estimates are based on performance in different assessments depending on the subject. It is the responsibility of each Principal Teacher to ensure that the assessment instruments are valid, reliable and of the correct standard for each presentation level in their subject.

To be considered valid the assessment instrument must replicate as far as possible the actual SQA question papers in terms of course coverage, allocation of marks, time allocation and level of demand. Marking must conform to the standards expected by SQA, including clear indication/detail of allocation of marks on each pupil script and a clear indication of the breakdown of marks awarded.

To be considered reliable the assessment instruments must not have been seen by candidates in advance. Departments should ensure security by adhering to SQA advice – specifically, only the current year's commercially produced paper should be used and when creating "in-house" examination papers, a selection of questions from at least three years is included in any particular section of a paper. Please note that a past SQA paper used in its entirety, or specimen papers, would not be accepted as evidence to support an Appeal.

Subject related guidance can be found on the SQA website and in the document Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements, which is available in the Senior Staff Room. Please consult with the Vice-Principal [Director of Studies and Pastoral Care] for guidance in this regard.

Candidate Enquiries and Appeals

In internal School examinations an individual pupil should, in the first instance, seek guidance from his/her subject teacher, usually at the point at which the examination is being reviewed by the teacher with the class. If there is no satisfactory result to the enquiry, then the individual should consult with the relevant Principal Teacher.

Once the results of national examinations are published Principal Teachers, in consultation with senior management, review their subject results and automatically submit appeals for those candidates who have not attained the expected grade and for whom there is evidence, covering the entire course at the required standard. Appeals are designed for candidates who have inexplicably under-performed on the day of the examination, and not for those who have narrowly missed a grade or who had expectations of performing to a standard above that which the evidence the School holds would support.



There is no need for individuals to approach the School and ask for an appeal to be submitted although the Principal, Senior Vice-Principal and Vice-Principal [Director of Studies & Pastoral Care] are available to pupils and their parents in the immediate aftermath of the publication of results each August. The result of any appeal will be passed on to the individual pupil by the School as soon as it is known.

Pupil-Tracking/Value-Added

The School makes use of Cognitive Abilities Tests [CAT Tests] for entrance testing and assessment of pupils' abilities from Junior 4 upwards and is developing procedures for tracking pupil progress against this baseline.

Assessment in the Junior School

Assessment is an important part of everyday teaching and allows the teacher to evaluate how well each child or group or class is progressing. It will show whether teaching is effective and quality learning is taking place. Assessment is crucial to the planning of the 'next steps' and should involve the pupil in self-assessment. It is also the basis for reporting to parents on the progress their child is making. Pupils are also encouraged through class activities to peer-evaluate and learn the value of accepting constructive criticism and how to give this appropriately.

Assessment is continuous in all areas of the curriculum. Formal assessment begins in Junior 1 when all pupils are given a Baseline Assessment using the GL Assessment *Reasoning Test* and *Early Mathematics Concepts*. During the final term, all pupils are tested in Language and Maths using the *Progress in English* and *Progress in Mathematics* standardised tests. The results of these tests are used as management tool to inform grouping and setting and allows teachers and the school to closely follow the progress of each individual and be able to compare that progress with their Cognitive Ability.

Each teacher will keep an up-to-date record of assessments in their Assessment Folders. These will include CAT Scores (after J4), Standardised Test results, National Assessment results, Support for Learning assessment information as well as records of weekly spelling and mental maths tests, Check-Ups and End of Unit Assessments, assessed writing scripts, reading assessments, etc. At the end of each academic session, these records should be filed in a poly pocket and passed to the next teacher so that a year-on-year record is kept of pupils' attainments.

- **Methods of assessment**

A variety of methods are used throughout the Junior School, taking into account the age and stage of the children. Typically the following would be used;

- Day to day class activities
- Evidence from pupils' talk
- Evidence from pupils' written work
- Evidence from pupils' practical activities
- Projects and assignments
- Listening tasks
- Setting and achieving short-term targets
- End of topic tests
- Self and Peer evaluation

- **National Assessments**



When a pupil or group of pupils is working comfortably within a given National Assessment Level they will sit the appropriate National Assessment. Teachers will administer the tests at any point in the session if the pupil is ready. These tests allow the performance of individual pupils to be assessed in relation to the nationally agreed attainment targets in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

At Belmont House we also have our own internal targets achievements, which are as follows:

- Most of our pupils by the end of J2 should attain Level A. Some should attain Level A earlier in J2.
- Some of our pupils by the end of J3 should attain Level B. A few will attain Level B earlier in J3 and a very few pupils of high attainment potential should attain Level B in J2.
- A large proportion of our pupils by the end of J5 should attain Level C. A significant number should attain Level C earlier in J5 and a few pupils of high attainment potential should attain Level C in J4.
- Many of our pupils in J6 should attain Level D and a few pupils of high attainment potential should attain Level D in J5.
- A very few pupils of very high attainment potential may attain Level E in J6.

All pupils in Junior 4 will also be given a CAT test, which will be used to monitor their progress throughout the school. This will be repeated in Transitus and again in Senior 2.

All pupils entering the school will be given a CAT test and this will be used alongside regular class tests and assessments to track their progress throughout the school thus showing 'Value added'.

- **Target Setting**

Target-setting is an integral part of raising the attainment and monitoring the progress of pupils. In the Junior School, teachers will set long-term and short-term targets for their classes and pupils. Individual targets are set in consultation with each child and these are reviewed weekly. These targets take into consideration the needs of the individual, available assessment information and in negotiation with parents when necessary. Termly target setting meetings will take place with the Head of Junior School as part of tracking pupils' progress and attainment. Teachers' Assessment Folders provide the hard evidence for these termly meetings and the subsequent targets set for groups and individuals.

- **Recording**

The recording of pupils' progress is a regular process and should be updated at the end of a topic, after a test or exam, at the end of each term. Each class teacher holds a combination of records, which are kept in a folder for each child. These are kept in a locked cupboard but can be easily accessed to show evidence. These folders contain checklists, check-ups, samples of exceptional work, National Tests, assessment sheets, reports from any outside agencies, class tests, teachers' notes. Reports sent to parents are held on the main school server and can be accessed by the class teacher and members of the SMT via the school intranet. In addition each child and each class have a record of the levels attained in the National Tests.

- **Reporting**

In the Junior School there are four formal reports to parents over the course of the session. There are two written reports per session showing work that has been covered, the progress

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being made and the perceived next steps in English, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Expressive Arts, French and IT where appropriate. There is also a general progress report and a Head of Junior School report. In addition to these written assessments, there two parent interview sessions one in October and again in March which give the opportunity to discuss the child's progress and/or difficulties.