

BLACKFRIARS ACADEMY

ASSESSMENT RATIONALE AND POLICY

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ASSESSMENT RATIONALE AND POLICY

Context

In 2013, the Government freed schools from the compulsion to use National Curriculum levels of progress and devolved the responsibility for finding an assessment solution that works for each school driven by the need to recognise the achievements and potential of every young person in that establishment.

On the removal of levels, the DfE stated that, ‘By removing levels we will allow teachers greater flexibility in the way that they plan and assess students’ learning ... The curriculum must include an assessment system which enables schools to check what students have learned and whether they are on track to meet expectations at the end of the key stage, and to report regularly to parents.’

‘Ofsted do not have any predetermined view as to what specific assessment system a school should use. Inspectors’ main interest will be whether the approach adopted by a school is effective. They will be looking to see that it provides accurate information showing the progress students are making. The information should be meaningful for students, parents and governors.’

This document is in response to those new freedoms and forms a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for Assessment, Recording and Reporting at Blackfriars Academy.

In devising this policy, we have been greatly influenced by the work of Dylan William and Paul Black whose ideas have informed our approach to learning, teaching and assessment for learning.

“THE GREATEST IMPACT ON LEARNING IS THE DAILY LIVED EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS IN CLASSROOMS, AND THAT IS DETERMINED MUCH MORE BY HOW TEACHERS TEACH THAN BY WHAT THEY TEACH.”

DYLAN WILIAM, EMBEDDED FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Throughout this document, specific educational terminology terms is used, our understanding of the terms are:

Attainment: the standard of academic attainment, typically shown by test and examination results.

Achievement: the extent to which students have progressed in their learning from their different starting points and capabilities.

Summative: describes learning achieved at a certain time for the purposes of reporting to parents, other teachers, the students themselves and, in summary form, to other interested parties such as Academy Councillors or the local authority

Formative assessment: describes the focus on monitoring student response to and progress with teaching. The process provides immediate feedback to both the teacher and student regarding the learning process and indicates the next step to be taken in order to promote learning. In the context of our academy, this can be particularly challenging.

This policy aims to clarify how the Academy will:

- ensure that every student is provided with opportunities to make as much progress as they are able
- make every effort to ensure that the very individual needs of students are met
- give reliable information to parents about how their child and the Academy is performing.
- track students' progress giving early recognition of students who are falling behind and those who are excelling.
- put in place a range of interventions to support and stretch students who are either falling behind on or exceeding their targets

The Blackfriars Assessment Context

Our challenge as a generic special academy within a group of other special academies has been to develop a data driven assessment system that can be used across a range of academies with students with the full range of ability levels and needs. Currently, there is no one single, standardised assessment system on the commercial market that meets the needs of all of our students and therefore we have worked collaboratively to develop our own.

So far...

Pupils not working at GCSE level		GCSE/equivalent	
Points 1-6	Limited understanding and knowledge of skills	Band 0 (U)	Not accessing the skills for GCSE or equivalent qualification
Points 7, 8, 9	Developing understanding and knowledge of skills	Band 1 (G) 16-21	Limited ability in achieving skills, regularly needing support (teacher, TA)
Entry Level 1 10 and 11	Developed understanding and knowledge of skills (use and apply)	Band 2 (F) 22-27	Growing confidence in achieving skills
Entry Level 2 12 and 13	Deeper knowledge and understanding of skills and ability to use and apply information across some contexts	Band 3 (E) 28-33	Shows competency, but not always secure in all skills
Entry Level 3 14 and 15	Deep knowledge and understanding of skills and ability to use and apply information across a range of contexts	Band 4 (D) 34-39	Competent in all of the skills
		Band 5 (C) 40-45	Proficient in all of the skills, but not always across a range of contexts
		Band 6 (B) 46-51	Proficient in all of the skills across a range of contexts
		Band 7 (A) 52-57	Expert in half of the skills
		Band 8 (A*) 58-63	Expert in all of the skills
		(A* dist.) 63-	Exceptional performance across all skills

Objectives

In our academy, we believe that assessment practice should:

- Contribute to raising students' progress and self-esteem
- Challenge each student to achieve their best
- Include a process based approach of baselining, tracking and triangulation
- Celebrate the achievement and progress of each student
- Be purposeful and useful
- Be easy to understand and clear to follow

- Be meaningful to students, teachers, parents/carers and external stakeholders such as Academy Councillors
- Inform planning and teaching
- Give students a key role in evaluating their own achievements and progress
- Contribute to raising students' literacy and numeracy levels
- Be used at whole academy level to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning for all students.

Method

These aims will be achieved through:

- Assessment of student learning and progress carried out during lessons
- Termly teacher assessments of students' progress and achievement
- The annual review process
- Target setting and monitoring of progress towards them
- Monitoring and evaluation of student progress to identify areas for improvement
- Strategic planning, informed by assessment outcomes, to improve resourcing, curriculum and professional development.

Assessment to inform Curriculum Planning

The process of assessment and teaching and learning is intertwined - the Skills Descriptors which are used as the basis of the assessment system are derived from curriculum content informed by the National Curriculum and / or external accreditation routes.

- Rigorous baseline testing on joining the school. Every subject area uses their Skills Descriptors to help them to arrive at the baseline score - students receive a point score from which is calculated an aspirational target point score for the end of the key stage (for Key Stage Three students, this will be end of Key Stage Four; Key Stage Five students, this will be end of Key Stage 5)
- Every half-term, students are assessed against the skills descriptors (an example for Reading is given below) and a new point score is given. This diagnostic process enables the teacher to very quickly see where students are falling behind or excelling in certain skills and where adjustments need to be made in their schemes of work to revise or extend skill development and knowledge acquisition
- At Key Stage 5, students are assessed against external accreditation and its accompanying assessment criteria / learning outcomes. This is based on KS4 results, information gathered via transition, and our own assessment, students will follow qualification pathways based upon ability, need, strengths, and interests.
- Due to the spikey profile nature of our learners, more than one pathway may be followed. At Blackfriars FE we strive for progress - pathways are selected to ensure that learners are given breadth, depth and challenge. Students are encouraged to acquire knowledge/skills at higher levels, whereas others may need more time at a particular level so that skills can be fully explored in a range of meaningful contexts.

READING	Show perceptive, critical and coherent interpretation of texts using inference and deduction of apt textual reference	Understand and analyse how structure and organisation contributes to meaning	Make detailed critical and comparative evaluation of writers' purpose and viewpoints
1 (16-21)	Offering simple opinions on a text, moving towards identifying simple quotations independently	Recognise simple structures in text, for example the beginning and end of a text	Make simple comments about two texts, but comparison not always accurate
2 (22-27)	Beginning to use inference to construct interpretation. Beginning to use textual reference to support (e.g. paraphrasing)	Shows some understanding of structure and attempts to comment on structural and organisational features	Some attempt to identify writer's purpose and viewpoints across two texts, references not always supporting, some attempt at PQA, CONNECTIVE, PQA
3 (28-33)	Clearly explains interpretations of the text, selects a range of relevant quotations	Clearly explains the effects of the writer's choice of structure and organisation	Clear personal evaluation of at least two texts, focusing on writer's purpose and viewpoints and exploring the effect on the reader
4 (34-39)	A coherent and at times analytical response to the text, fully supported by apt textual reference	Competently analyses writer's choice of structure and organisation, and how this aids meaning	Begins to critically understand writer's purpose and viewpoints across a range of texts
5 (40-45)	A detailed, coherent and analytical response to the text, fully supported by apt textual reference	Consistently analyses and interprets writer's choice of structure and organisation, and how this aids meaning	Critically understands and analyses writer's purpose and viewpoints across a range of texts
6 (46-51)	A precise, coherent and analytical response to the text, fully supported by precise textual reference	Personal and proficient analysis and interpretations of writer's choice of structure and organisation, and how this influences meaning	Precise, personal and critical evaluation of writer's purpose and viewpoints across a range of texts

The Process of Collecting and Reporting Data

The process of collecting, recording and reporting data is cyclical. It begins with baselining. Many of our students do not come with nationally recognised scores therefore primary school records are used in conjunction with reading and writing test scores and assessed work that is undertaken in the initial weeks. Student progress is analysed against the individual subject skills descriptor (see above) these scores are averaged and their ‘working at’ level is recorded on a matrix (see below)

	Surname	Forename	Year 7 entry point	Key Stage 4/5 TARGET	Skills					
					Plan Science Investigations	Make & record measurements	Draw results tables	Draw graphs	Analyse Data	Interpret graphs
Pupil 1										
Pupil 2										
Pupil 3										
Pupil 4										
Pupil 5										

This provides the baseline point score and from this the end of Key stage 4 or 5 target is derived based on an equivalency of the Progression Guidance. Rates of progress in a special academy are ‘spiky’, students rarely make consistent progress across the key stages but our aspiration is to help them to make the following points progress:-

Once the baseline has been attained, teachers differentiate their lessons accordingly and teach their curriculum based upon the skills contained within the descriptor. Formative assessment will provide data about progress and teachers adjust their lessons accordingly. At the end of the term, the students are assessed against the skills descriptors again and their average score is recorded and reported to parents and carers, informing them whether their child is on, exceeding or working below the level expected and what interventions have been put in place to support them. The diagram below illustrates this cycle:

Insert diagram

Moderation Processes

We are confident of the rigour of our assessment system because of our robust moderation procedures. The moderation process begins initially within the academy as staff meet to discuss standards, progress and quality of learning, assessed pieces of students' work are moderated.

As members of a multi-academy trust, we are able to meet with other teachers in the MAT to moderate student work and from this derive a consistent view of what the skills look like at the different point scores. Visits from external moderators (eg, English Functional Skills assessor, BTEC QRD Assessor visits etc), the submission of coursework for external verification and GCSE examiner reports ensure that the judgements we come to are sustainable in a context beyond our MAT.

Assessment Strategies

Teachers use a range of strategies to assess student progress, which include:

Observing Students

All teachers assess students' knowledge, understanding and skills through:

- Asking questions and listening to students
- Observing them in practical tasks
- Allowing time for reflection in which to talk to them about their learning and progress.
- Checking and evaluating students' progress against learning objectives/outcomes shared at start of each lesson
- Checking students' understanding of key words for each lesson.
- Sharing evaluation of progress and achievement with students during lesson.

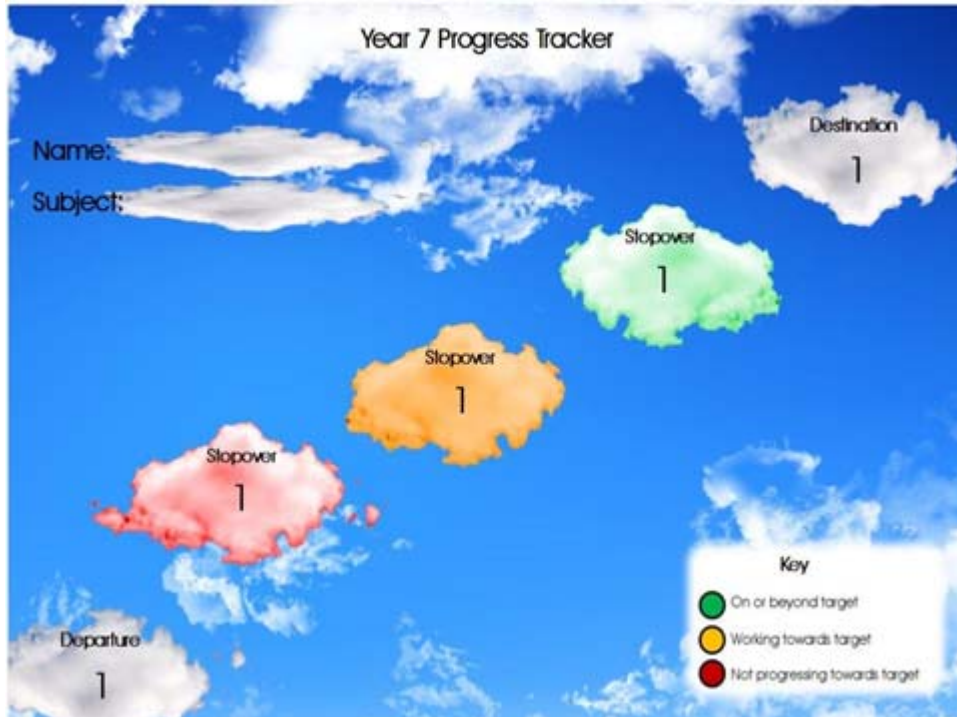
Sharing Targets with Students

Students have their 'Flight Path' shared with them helping them to understand where they are currently and where we would like them to be by the end of the year.

Their flight path is reviewed termly and subject based targets are developed to break down the journey into achievable steps

For KS3-KS4 students, their tracker is kept in their exercise book / folder and shared with parents and carers at Progress Review evening. The 'Stopover' point score is the average point score from the Skills Descriptor.

For KS5 students, learners will too have a tracker in place showing their 'Flight Path' and current stage towards achieving accredited outcomes and, in turn, external qualifications.



Marking of Work

See separate Marking Policy.

Students' Self-Assessment and Responses to Teachers' Comments

At all times, students who are able are encouraged to reflect upon their achievements in order to recognise where they have been successful, boost their self-esteem and know how to move forward.

Specific strategies include:

- Self-assessment of tasks with teacher providing the criteria
- Time in lesson for students to read, respond to and question teacher's marking comments
- Students making their own responses underneath marking
- Students setting their own targets for next time
- Students making changes to their work in light of marking
- Peer/student involvement in completion of flight path.

Statutory Assessment Requirements and Reporting

The Principal ensures that statutory requirements in assessment are being met in liaison with the Data Manager, Key Stage Leaders and Subject Leaders.

In Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, Assessment takes place according to external accreditation requirements.

Annual Review

All parents/carers are invited to attend annual reviews and receive annual reports of their child's progress and achievement through the Annual Review, in accordance with the 2014 SEN Code of Practice.

Reporting to External Agencies

Evidence from the Annual Review process and from formative and summative assessment strategies are used as appropriate in discussion with educational psychologists and other learning support agencies.

Leadership and Monitoring of Whole School Assessment Process

The assessment, recording and reporting process is led and monitored across key stages by the Achievement Leaders and within departments by Subject Leaders, with the full involvement and support of all staff.

Principal

The Principal (and Senior Leadership Team) meets regularly with the Data Manager and Key Stage Leaders to review the effective use of the assessment framework, in order to plan appropriate action with regard to assessment policy and practice.

The Principal reviews student progress data provided by the Data Manager and Key Stage Leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of planning, teaching and resourcing.

Data is scrutinised by the Academy Council Management Committee and reported to the full Academy Council.

Data Manager

The Data Manager meets regularly with the Principal to review and monitor data and targets. Targets are provided annually at the start of each academic year and are continuously reviewed and monitored.

Key Stage Leaders

The Key Stage Leaders are responsible for the data management within their key stage and of monitoring, reviewing and discussing student progress. Key Stage Leaders oversee the implementation of necessary interventions as and when appropriate and feedback to the Principal at twice monthly Middle Leaders meetings.

Marking Policy (Blackfriars Newcastle)

Purpose/Rationale

Marking of work should be reviewed as a constructive process, celebrating success. The explicit aim of the Blackfriars Academy marking policy is to:

- Students should feel taught in an atmosphere of recognition.
- To create a consistent approach across the academy in order to allow teachers to plan effectively and where able students understand what stage they are working at and how to make progress.
- Improve 'quality' of marking
- Raise achievement
- Include a variety of marking methods
- Ensure understanding of learning
- Meet the needs of every student at Blackfriars Academy
- Support parental involvement and understanding (increased involvement, possible exemplars of student's own work sent home)
- Ensure all students are aware of the policy
- Accelerate learning outcomes
- Support a framework in line with whole school vision
- Enable subject leaders and teachers to plan effectively for the next stage of teaching and learning
- Ensure students are aware of current achievements and future targets.

The characteristics of assessment that promote learning:

- It is embedded as an essential part of teaching and learning.
- It involves sharing learning goals with students.
- It helps students to know and to recognise the standards they are aiming for.
- It involves students in self-assessment.
- It provides feedback which leads to students recognising their next steps and how to take them.
- It is underpinned by confidence that every student can improve.
- It involves both teachers and students reviewing and reflecting on assessment data.

(Inside The Black Box 1999 Black and William)

General Principles:


- Whenever possible, marking should be done in the presence of the pupil, allowing for a discussion, further explanations and positive encouragement.

- For a significant number of students at Blackfriars Academy - given the wide range of ages, abilities and sensory impairments—there will be little, if any, written work available for “marking” in the traditional sense. For these students, verbal feedback will be used.
- If corrections are necessary, then these should reflect the students’ abilities and age.
- Stampers, stickers, verbal praise and group celebration of achievements in the class are all important elements of “marking” students’ work.
- Teachers will use a range of assessment methods in their lessons including; teacher assessment, peer assessment and self-assessment.


Students in Key Stages 3 and 4







- Where possible discuss and mark work together with pupil.
- Mark in a different colour from pupil’s work preferably not red.
- Mark on the agreed criteria set for that piece of work. (Have students met the learning objectives?)
- Mark for a common pattern of mistakes and not necessarily every single error.
- If appropriate write a comment containing some positive feedback, and a target for improvement. (*see marking grid*)
- Award marks or numbers if relevant to the age and or developmental stage of the students or if relevant to the piece of work.
- If marking is done in the absence of the student, carry it out and return the work within a short period of time.
- Not every piece of work will require written feedback but at least two pieces of work per half term should include a written comment.

Marking Grid

Code	Meaning
O	Circle around a punctuation mark or missing punctuation mark. You need to put a comma, semi colon, colon, full stop, question mark or exclamation mark needs to be put here.
Sp and or  under the word	Spelling mistake
//	New paragraph

Stamper Code

Code	Meaning
	Self Assessment guide to be used at the teacher’s discretion but does not need to be used on every piece of work. Suggested use end of unit or topic.

	For use on peer assessed work.
	For use on self assessed work.
	Verbal feedback given, you may attach a comment to this.
	Your next step – what needs to be achieved in the next piece of work.
	Target achieved or objective met.
	WOW – what a great piece of work. Or we like this because and then complete the sentence.

Support Codes

In order to support students' learning and record the learning experience, the following support codes are used.

Code	Meaning
SE	Sensory experience
P	Physical Help
S	Scribe
GH	Gestured Help
E	Experienced
P	Prompted
AI	Achieved Independently

Feedback and Marking:

At Blackfriars Academy Feedback and Marking go hand in hand and we strive to use forms of feedback that are accessible for all students across the full range, from PMLD to SLD to MLD, and respond where appropriate to individual needs. Our marking codes are very accessible to all levels of ability and record also where work is supported or independent.

Feedback is given in the following ways:

In Depth Marking

- Detailed feedback linked to students' individual targets
- Completed and shared with students on at least a half-termly basis
- Show evidence of student's response to in depth marking, e.g. student's initials/setting own targets/asking a question

During class marking

- Written/SPaG feedback
- Peer-marking
- Self-marking/self assessment
- Marking for a specific lesson focus

Monitoring student responses to feedback and marking: Ofsted Criteria

In developing this policy, we have taken cognisance of the 2015 Common Inspection Framework. Inspectors use four main ways to check how students respond to feedback and can be used when monitoring and evaluation the quality of teaching:

- Talking to students
- Checking corrections
- Checking against written and verbal advice
- Checking against targets