



# **Dixons City Academy**

## **Policy Documentation**

### **Policy: Assessment for Learning (AfL)**

**Responsibility for Review: Principal**  
**Date of Last Review: November 2017**

# Assessment for Learning (including Marking and Feedback)

## Statement of policy:

The Academy strongly believes that excellent assessment for learning is the lynch-pin of successful learning and student progress. It is our moral purpose to do all we can to secure our vision that every child should be equally able to secure outstanding outcomes and reach their full potential. Our commitment to AfL is based on research by the EFA as well as our own experience. We are particularly committed to making a difference to those students who are classed as disadvantaged through excellent assessment and feedback.

AfL includes:

- All forms of written and oral assessment of students both verbal and written (teacher, self, peer)
- feedback about progress against specific criteria
- Involving students in the learning intention of lessons.

It can:

- motivate students
- help them to progress
- help them to understand what and how they are learning
- boost their self esteem through ownership of their learning and through recognition
- inform students and parents of student progress
- help the teacher to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching and identify skill and knowledge gaps
- ensure teachers are planning data driven lessons at the right pitch and challenge through using valid formative data

We wish to secure these benefits for students while keeping the time demands of marking and assessment reasonable for teachers.

## The aims of this policy are:

For students:

- motivate and encourage students and celebrate their effort and achievement
- give students feedback about their specific achievements and the way forward
- actively involve students in the learning process through use of reflection and peer and self assessment
- ensure that students are aware of their current and target grades and what they need to do to reach their full potential
- ensure all work meets the standard expected (ie Pride in Work)

For teachers:

- clarify the responsibilities of teachers with respect to marking and feedback including the Academy marking system
- allow teachers and departments to influence the style of marking and feedback in their subject within this system (see subject marking policy)
- encourage respect for students' work including reward and praise where appropriate
- encourage the use of constructive feedback about how to improve including praise for specific achievements
- encourage systematic dialogue with students about their learning
- encourage effective use of valuable teacher time to ensure that marking and assessment is reflected in future planning
- encourage the use of advanced questioning to assess and promote individual progress

For outside agencies:

- show parents that work is being monitored and is valued
- satisfy the requirements of the examination specifications

## **Procedures for AfL:**

All departments will maintain an AfL policy which includes guidelines on assessment of learning, AfL, marking and feedback. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Department.

Departmental AfL policies and procedures will ensure that:

Short and mid term targets are set and reviewed along with students' overall progress:

- targets are set during the identified calendar weeks ( typically last week of Term 1) in line with whole school policy
- students are given time on a regular basis to reflect on their progress and identify areas for development and this time is built into the Scheme of Learning
- students are set long and short term targets, both qualitative and quantitative, to improve the quality of their work
- time is identified within the SoL, at least 3 times a year, to discuss student's progress individually or in small groups
- students have a personal record of their progress – in terms of current grades and formative targets and use this to reflect on and plan for improvement (in the form of a flight path or progress tracker)

Assessment Arrangements:

- Long term plans provide opportunities for cycle testing three times a year
- Year 11, 12 and 13 also have an annual formal mock examination
- Academy marking systems are used in all year groups (see below) to provide formative assessment, including involving the student in planning for future learning

- For controlled assessment, learning is broken down into manageable sections; this will include the negotiation and advance notification of interim deadlines and direction about use of homework time.
- controlled assessment is carried out in the conditions required by the syllabus (eg level of control and hours allocated)
- students are aware of specific criteria for success prior to each assessment

Lessons maximise the use of formative and summative assessment to accelerate learning:

- learning objectives and AfL activities are built into our SOWs for each lesson or short series of lessons; these also include suggested learning activities for students of different abilities
- learning in lessons is made explicit so that students understand the intention and the success criteria to meet these
- directed differentiated questioning is used to build student confidence, assess individual understanding and move students on in their learning, especially any who are underachieving
- students are aware of the specific success criteria for each activity and can relate this to external benchmarks, namely levels or grades, where possible
- teacher planning enables students to demonstrate their progress at regular intervals within each lesson - and for teachers to intervene to provide additional support where formative assessment indicates an individual or group need
- students are actively involved in assessing learning by the co-creation of specific success criteria, the evaluation of their own work and progress and the assessment of each other's work
- regular timed work is carried out in test conditions is a key feature of all subjects and prepares students for content heavy summative GCSEs
- time in lessons is dedicated to allow students to respond to teacher feedback
- 'Stop the Clock' approaches are an embedded feature of learning. Teachers dedicate time to re-teaching and re-testing based on cycle summative assessment
- 'Walking Talking' mocks are encouraged particularly for KS4 in order to build confidence and increase understanding of assessment objectives and exam timing
- Teachers use formative and cycle 'summative' testing to ensure planning is appropriately data driven

In particular, policies will ensure that with reference to marking and feedback:

The Academy marking systems are at the centre of Department practice

- these are designed to provide consistent formative feedback across all subjects - ensuring that students are praised for a subject specific achievement, given a priority subject specific target for improvement and are involved in planning for future success

The Academy marking systems for KS3 and KS4/5 are as follows:

KS3

WWW – What Worked Well

EBI – Even Better If

MAP – My Action Points

The MAP is vital for student progress and this is where the student responds to teacher feedback in a variety of ways;

- By 'green-penning' the work to demonstrate an understanding of the teacher feedback
- By re-submitting the whole piece following the feedback, or a key paragraph to demonstrate progress
- By correcting key literacy points (SPaG)
- By committing to improving the points in the next piece of work and that is then demonstrated
- By carrying out specific learning activities as identified by the teacher in the EBI (i.e. Maths this takes the form of targeted practice questions)

*Departments choose how best to apply the policy and which form of MAP is most useful for the subject and class. Some departments use criteria prof ormas, others hand write. Some departments use stickers and stamps. This is professional judgement and owned by the department who are best placed to decide how the policy should be implemented for maximum impact on learning with minimum teacher workload. Long term plans are an absolute priority to ensure that the policy is being applied sensibly.*

- any Departmental feedback systems used to complement the Academy system are communicated systematically to students who understand how they are assessed and what they can expect from the teacher/
- **As a broad rule**, students receive specific formative feedback every 3 weeks. KS5 students should receive written feedback in each subject every 2-3 weeks.
- **Within a cycle**, students will expect 1 formal cold-cycle test marked to GCSE style criteria, set and fed back according to the calendar, and a minimum of 4 formative pieces and in many subjects regular cold low stake assessment marked by peers (eg topic tests in History, Geography, Science, maths, Grammar Hammer in English, Vocab tests in MFL)
- Heads of Department are expected to manage the expectations of marking so that staff workload is manageable
- students are given the opportunity to record oral feedback that is given for future reference
- marking and feedback can be comprehensive or focused on selected, critical pieces of student work
- marking annotation draws attention to the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of work in a way which shows respect yet corrects SPaG as appropriate
- controlled assessment is marked with strict adherence to exam board criteria – departments must be clear about the level of support for any controlled assessment that is acceptable in specific exam board guidelines and ensure that all guidance is appropriate
- Not all homework or classwork can be marked, particularly when the Academy has an increased emphasis on larger cycle summative testing and extended writing undertaken in test conditions. Departments must make clear in their own policy and schemes what they will mark with an emphasis on what makes the most impact on progress and learning

### Marking Supports Literacy Development

- general spelling, punctuation and grammar are marked sympathetically in order to improve students' general literacy and to encourage development of subject specific language
- When marking general spelling, punctuation and grammar teachers will prioritise the correction of selected subject specific vocabulary but also pay attention to general literacy as befits the student. Comments and corrections regarding general spelling, punctuation and grammar should be few and prioritised so as to have impact and use the following symbols so as to ensure a consistent approach.

SP - check spelling

P- check punctuation

// - new paragraph

~ - awkward expression / wrong word/grammar

### Marking and Feedback is regularly quality assured (see Monitoring Policy)

- the Head of Department / AHOD and SLT will monitor marking to:
  - ensure that Academy and Department policy is consistently followed to maximise student learning
  - share good practice
  - focus on progress gaps for vulnerable or under-performing groups
  - improve teacher effectiveness
  - ensure teacher work load is reasonable

To this effect Departments will carry out two un-notified marking scrutiny each Dixons term (usually combined with Learning Walks) and at least one qualitative work scrutiny per year. Work scrutinies can be carried out at the time of standardisation / internal verification as long as explicit qualitative evaluation of teaching and learning takes place too

- teachers will receive bi-termly feedback on the quality of their marking (grade)
- annual feedback on the overall quality of their marking and assessment – as part of the Appraisal process
- informal opportunities for feedback on the quality of marking include discussion at department meetings or one to one conversations as appropriate and planned by the HOD
- marking and feedback will also will be monitored in Learning Evaluations on an annual basis and by the Senior Team on a daily basis
- Where marking is deemed unsatisfactory or needing improvement an action plan will be drawn up – see Monitoring Policy