



North London Grammar School

Assessment Policy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidelines on our approach to formative and summative assessment
- Establish a consistent and coherent approach to recording summative assessment outcomes and reporting to parents
- Clearly set out how and when assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated

2. Legislation and Guidance

Since the removal of National Curriculum levels in 2014, schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment.

This policy refers to the recommendations in the [Final Report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels](#).

It also refers to statutory reporting requirements set out in [the Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005: schedule 1](#).

3. Principles of Assessment

At NLGS, we use a number of different types of assessments, these include:

Formative

Definition: Formative assessment is the use of day-to-day, often informal, assessments to explore pupils' understanding.

It enables the teacher to decide how best to help pupils develop that understanding.

Any assessment can be used formatively and it's important to distinguish between the process of formative assessment and the actual assessments used by teachers. Making this distinction is crucial because a common misinterpretation of formative assessment is that a series of summative assessments constitutes formative assessment.

This is very much **not** the case; what makes an assessment formative is what the teacher does with the information it generates. Unless the result of the assessment is used to change something in the teaching or learning, there is nothing formative taking place. It should be noted that assessments can often be used for both formative and summative purposes.

Formative and summative are not labels for different types or forms of assessment but describe how assessments are used. For example, a task or activity is not formative unless the information it provides is actually used to progress learning.



Formative assessment: assessment for learning

Formative assessment is often referred to synonymously with Assessment for Learning (AfL). However, AfL refers specifically to the collection of approaches and techniques associated with the practice of formative assessment.

AfL involves the feedback loop of teachers gathering evidence about pupils' learning by:

- observing;
- listening;
- questioning;
- discussing; and
- reviewing their work in progress.

It's often immediate and intended to inform changes the teacher can make to the sequence of instruction so that their lessons are more effective. At the same time, teachers provide feedback to the pupils to identify progress and gaps in learning (including individual support needs).

Assessment for Learning takes place during day-to-day classroom practice and while pupils are engaged in learning. It also gives pupils an active role in the assessment process. Pupils work with the teacher to determine what is being learned and to identify the next steps.

Both parties then use the feedback to improve the learning. The feedback includes information on:

- how the pupils are learning;
- their progress;
- the nature of their understanding; and
- the difficulties they are having.

In Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam's study *Inside the Black Box*, they explain assessment is only formative when:

- it is an integral part of the learning and teaching process; and
- assessment evidence is actually used to:
 - modify teaching to meet the needs of pupils; and
 - improve learning.

Formative assessment – evidence based

Developments from the mid-1990s onwards, such as the work of the Assessment Reform Group and Black and Wiliam's pamphlet *Inside the Black Box* (1998), have transformed the ways in which assessment is understood and used in education.



Black and Wiliam were among the first to argue for an evidence-based approach to education. Recognition of the value of using evidence-based approaches to educational interventions has resulted in a steady shift in emphasis towards using formative assessment to improve pupils' outcomes.

Since the publication of *Inside the Black Box*, considerable attention has been given to formative assessment in educational research. John Hattie, Professor of Education and Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute, is one of the most well-known proponents of evidence-based education and formative assessment.

Hattie's extensive meta-analysis of educational research was published as *Visible Learning* in 2008. In *Visible Learning*, he identifies which educational interventions are worth using in terms of their effect size. The research shows that approaches associated with formative assessment are among the techniques that have the largest effect size; they make the most difference to pupils' outcomes.

Formative assessment – Assessment in practice

The following are concepts and pedagogical techniques associated with formative assessment.

- Setting and sharing learning intentions and success criteria that match with the current readiness of pupils.
- Pitching activities at a degree of demand just beyond what pupils would find too easy, but not so difficult that the activities demotivate them.
- Effective questioning to check for understanding and to distribute requests for responses evenly among the class.
- Providing feedback that has a genuinely formative function by giving details of how to make further progress.
- Helping pupils to reflect on and take ownership of their learning.

Using formative assessment can be challenging to implement effectively, particularly when considering the progress of an activity that is already underway. For example, the teacher might decide that part of the lesson should be put on hold if they discover through formative assessment that:

- pupils have not understood;
- they are struggling with a concept; or
- a discussion has veered off-topic.

Discovering that a lesson is not going to plan and needing to alter an approach mid-lesson can be daunting for teachers and it requires real confidence to change course. The alternative, to continue when pupils aren't following, can only result in them disengaging. It's far better to recognise when to change direction and use a remedial course of action to get learning back on track.



Summative

Definition: Summative assessment usually takes place after pupils have completed units of work or modules at the end of each term and/or year.

- The information it gives indicates progress and achievement usually in grade-related or numerical terms.
- It's the more formal summing-up of a pupil's progress.
- This information can then be provided to parents or used for certification as part of a formal examination course.

Summative assessment gives pupils, parents and teachers valuable information about a pupil's overall performance at a specific point in their learning. It provides information about their progress in:

- subject knowledge;
- understanding; and
- skills and capabilities.

A grade or percentage can indicate a pupil's rank in the class, year group or performance in a qualification such as a GCSE. However, without additional information this grade is of little value in improving the pupil's learning and will remain only a record of a point in time.

The key to improving learning is for teachers to share with pupils what these grades or numbers mean in terms of what the pupil has demonstrated they can do and what the next steps to improve their learning will be. Therefore, to be genuinely worthwhile, it is helpful to the pupil if summative assessments are also interpreted formatively before moving on.

Use of summative assessment

Subject teachers and school managers can use the outcomes of summative assessment for a range of purposes, including:

- benchmarking;
- monitoring progress;
- target setting;
- placing pupils in subject classes; and
- helping pupils to make informed decisions about subject choices at post-primary.

The quality of summative assessment relies on a teacher's professional ability to use a range of assessment methods that generate dependable results. Teachers, pupils and parents need to be confident that the information provided by teacher-based assessment is dependable. The information should also be an accurate reflection of the standard the pupil is working at. This is



particularly important in the Cross-Curricular Skills, where teachers summatively assess pupils at the end of each key stage.

Comparisons between summative and formative approaches and intentions (adapted from the Teaching and Learning Research Programme 2010).

| Characteristic Differences between Formative and Summative Assessment | |
|--|--|
| Summative Assessment | Formative Assessment |
| Comes at the end of learning episodes. | Is built into the learning process. |
| Aims to assess knowledge and understanding at a given point in time. | Aims to develop knowledge and understanding. |
| Is static and one-way (usually the teacher or examiner judges the pupil). | Is ongoing and dynamic (feedback can be given both to the pupil and the teacher). |
| Follows a set of predefined questions. | Follows the flow of spontaneous dialogue and interaction, where one action builds on (is contingent on) an earlier one |

Summative assessment in practice

To be effective, quality summative assessment should:

Take account of all the objectives or outcomes of the study programme (this is why summative tests from part of the study programme are not necessarily valid);

Be used to indicate a pupil’s progress at the end of a period of learning, for example a unit of work or a module;

Take account of formative assessments throughout the year; and

Be formative in its own right, giving:

- teachers insights into what pupils have and have not learned, enabling them to adapt their practices; and
- feedback on what pupils did or did not do well.

Research suggests that teachers should make greater use of summative assessment to support learning by:

Giving pupils opportunities to review their work before the assessment to:

- familiarise themselves with the type of assessment set; and
- identify areas where understanding is not secure;



Involving pupils in developing assessments and setting assessment criteria to:

- help develop their understanding of assessment; and
- focus on areas for improvement;

Involving pupils in marking and discussing their assessment performance, including the use of peer and self-evaluation; and providing quality feedback that focuses on the pupil's performance and how they can improve their learning

Diagnostic

Diagnostic assessment is closely related to formative assessment. However, unlike formative assessment, which looks forward to consider next steps, diagnostic assessment looks back to understand the pupil's current position.

It often takes place at the beginning of a learning programme and can be used to identify pupils' strengths and areas for improvement.

It can also be used to identify the nature of a pupil's learning difficulties and form the basis for interventions to address the learning difficulties identified.

This information should be shared with the pupil to plan the next steps to improve their learning.

Evaluative

The main purpose of evaluative assessment is to ensure that there is appropriate accountability at all levels for the performance of our school system.

It is used to inform curriculum planning and provide information for monitoring and accountability.

Evaluative assessment refers to those measures designed to ensure that an education system is functioning well, including concerns about school and system performance.

4.2 In-school summative assessment

Effective in-school summative assessment enables:

- **School leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment
- **Teachers** to evaluate learning at the end of a unit or period and the impact of their own teaching
- **Pupils** to understand how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time. It should be used to provide feedback on how they can improve



- **Parents** to stay informed about the achievement, progress and wider outcomes of their child across a period

At NLGS, we achieve our assessment aims without adding unnecessarily to teachers' workload considering planning, preparation and assessment time in each teacher's timetable as well as considering other whole school responsibilities one may have. We also ensure that assessments are meaningful, purposeful and delivered as part of tool integrated teaching and learning.

We know about best practice in assessment in similar schools as we have undertaken meetings, moderations and developed a teaching and learning community to share best practices across similar schools and partnerships. We have also referred to the Governing Body for advice on assessments and their impacts. From this, we have considered the impact on pupils and how assessments will be used to review and improve learning.

We ensured that assessment is for all pupils by considering and applying policies and structures to support learners in accordance of the Equality Act, Public Exam Allowances and our SEN policy.

4. Assessment Approaches

At North London Grammar School we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

We use three broad overarching forms of assessment: day-to-day in-school formative assessment, in-school summative assessment and nationally standardised summative assessment.

4.1 In-school formative assessment

Effective in-school formative assessment enables:

- **Teachers** to identify how pupils are performing on a continuing basis and to use this information to provide appropriate support or extension, evaluate teaching and plan future lessons
- **Pupils** to measure their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives, and identify areas in which they need to improve
- **Parents** to gain a broad picture of where their child's strengths and weaknesses lie, and what they need to do to improve

4.1 Marking:

Rationale: It is important to provide constructive feedback to pupils, focusing on success and improvement needs against learning intentions. This enables pupils to become reflective learners and helps them to close the gap between what they can currently do and what we would like them to be able to do. The ultimate aim is to ensure that the marking and assessment process aids pupils in their quest to make progress over time.



4.1.1 What are the principles that guide the school's approach to marking?

Marking and feedback should:

- be manageable for teachers and accessible to pupils;
- relate to the learning objectives and success criteria;
- give recognition, praise and rewards for achievement, effort and presentation
- offer clear strategies for improvement;
- be regular and returned to pupils promptly in order for the feedback to be relevant;
- allow specific time for pupils to read, reflect and respond to marking;
- inform future planning;
- use consistent codes across the school, particularly for literacy and numeracy where appropriate;
- ultimately, be seen by pupils as a positive approach to improving their learning.

4.1.2 Marking Codes

Abbreviations and codes are used by teachers when marking.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| P | Punctuation. Check which punctuation marks are missing |
| SA | Self-assess |
| CL | Capital letter. Check if you need a capital letter or not |
| PA | Peer assess |
| VF | Verbal feedback |
| SP | Spelling, If a word is circled, you need to learn its spelling |
| GR | Grammar, tense, plural, etc. |
| WO | Word order |
| RW | Rewrite/re do correcting mistakes |
| NC | Not completed |
| ? | Doesn't make sense |
| ^ | Missed out word(s) |
| PR | Presentation |
| // | Start a new paragraph here |



In addition to the marking codes, a marking sticker is available to staff. It includes effort grade, number of achievement points earned, grade or level (if appropriate), what went well, even better if, and a space for pupils to make a response.

DIRT: (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time)

WWW (What Went Well)

EBI (Even Better If)

Action Steps

1. Firstly I will _____

2. Secondly I will _____



Another general progress sticker is placed on the front of the pupils’ work books. It includes their target levels for each term, a space to fill in if they are on track to achieve their targets and most importantly, a space to write down a focused target for improvement.

We use ‘subject specific action points’ to give formal feedback to pupils. Teachers must give pupils **2 positive comment focused on what they have learnt**, and **a subject specific action point** based on the following durations and key stages:

| Key Stage | Core Subjects (English Language, Maths, and Science) | Non-Core Subjects |
|-----------|--|-------------------|
| 3 | Fortnightly | Every Three Weeks |
| 4 & 5 | Fortnightly | Fortnightly |

More informal marking should occur every **two weeks** and should show pupils their work is valued. This is where praise would be recorded.

Pupils **must be given the opportunity to act on this in order to demonstrate their progress**. Thus teachers must build in and adapt lessons to allow for this. Action points could be based on subject concepts or processes, exam criteria or on any progression model the teachers using their professional judgment deems appropriate.



4.1.3 How do we mark pupils' work?

Pupils' work needs to be marked in a colour that can be clearly seen. The school makes use of two forms of marking/feedback:

- 1. Formative feedback/marking** – Not all work needs to be graded. Formative marking is marking that helps pupils to improve. Assessment for learning best practice recommends comment only marking as one of the best ways to encourage pupils to engage with the assessment dialogue between teacher and pupil. When 'quality marking' teachers should: highlight examples of where the pupil has met the learning intention; highlight areas of the work which could be improved; provide a focused comment which should help the pupil to 'diminish the difference' between what they have achieved and what they could have achieved. In order for the marking to be formative, the information must be used and acted on by the pupils. When work has been 'quality marked', time should be given during the following lesson for pupils to read and then make focused improvement(s) based on the improvement suggestion.
- 2. Summative feedback/marking** – is associated with work where grades, levels or scores can be given. This can also be marked by the pupils, as a class or in groups. Pupils should be given information on their progress compared to their targets at least once per half term.

4.1.4 What other styles of marking do teachers use?

- Self-assessment (code SA) - pupils are sometimes encouraged to self-evaluate by identifying their own successes and looking for an improvement point based on the objectives and success criteria.
- Peer-assessment (code = PA) - once a marking process has been modelled with the class pupils sometimes mark the work of their peers. This allows them to develop their own critical capacity.
- Verbal feedback (code – VF) - It is important for pupils to have verbal feedback from the teacher working with them. The member of staff might initially talk to the pupil about how they have met the learning intention and then question the pupil about a specific part of the work. This may be to correct a pupil's understanding or to extend the pupil's learning.

4.1.5 Assessing knowledge, skills and understanding

Each unit of work will outline the skills, knowledge and understandings through the expected learning objectives tiered to support all learners. Teachers will integrate assessment to identify and support its development. Tracker sheets on books will be used to monitor the progress and next steps. Teachers will identify gaps and misconceptions by reviewing teaching as an ongoing basis and also by evaluating any term-based strategies through completing and evaluating action plans.

4.1.6 Pupil's expectations for assessments

Pupils are expected to do their best in assessments and adhere to all the classroom and exam conditions. Pupils are expected to revise and prepare well for lessons by pre-reading the units of



work, researching the topics and enquiring about topics, practicing for assessments and ensuring all deadlines are met.

4.1.7 Summative and formative assessments at NLGS

Summative assessments will identify gaps and misconceptions by reviewing tracking sheets of unit objectives, reviewing content that requires revisiting, reviewing strategies for pupil/class centered approach and developing interventions to support learning.

Summative and formative assessment outcomes as well as the next steps will be shared with pupils and parents. Results will be recorded on KSM/subject trackers and pupils' books.

We will also make use of external exams such as CATS, 11+, 13+, GCSE, A-Levels and other external/ commercial exams to standardise assessments and outcomes to match local and national trends. This will ensure pupils at NLGS are making the expected level of progress similar to pupils in other schools.

Our teachers are expected to use NC, GCSE, A-Level based assessments to support learners with preparation to external summative examinations.

Non-core subjects will conduct assessments every three weeks and core subjects every two weeks to support the development of continued pupil progress and outcomes.

4.2 Nationally standardised summative assessment

Nationally standardised summative assessment enables:

- **school leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment.
- **teachers** to understand national expectations and assess their own performance in the broader national context.
- **pupils and parents** to understand how pupils are performing in comparison to pupils nationally.

For our nationally standardised summative assessments take the form of GCSEs and vocational qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4, and AS levels, A-levels and other post-16 qualifications in Key Stage 5.

6. Reporting to Parents

NLGS has 5 reporting cycles across the academic year to support reporting to parents the outcomes and progress of their child. These reporting cycles are in October, December, February, April, and June.



We also hold parent's consultation evenings for each year group as outlined in the school calendar along with any information evenings.

Our report to parents must include:

- Brief details of achievements in all subjects and activities forming part of the school curriculum, highlighting strengths and areas for development
- Comments on general progress
- The pupil's attendance record;
 - The total number of possible attendances for that pupil, and
 - The total number of unauthorised absences for that pupil, expressed as a percentage of the possible attendances
- The results of any public examinations taken, by subject and grade
- Details of any vocational qualifications or credits towards any such qualifications gained

7. Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities.

Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of pupils' special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication and social skills, physical development, as well as resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all pupils. However, this should account for the amount of effort the pupil puts in as well as the outcomes achieved.

For pupils working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to pupils' starting points, and take this into account alongside the nature of pupils' learning difficulties.

8. Training

All our teachers gain training and updates from INSET, CPD, professional exam board training, internal and external moderation, as well as reviews and the next steps from book looks and lesson walks.

Line managers will support their appraisal teams and individuals. SLT links and the lead for Teaching and Learning have the overall responsibility to ensure training and support is provisioned for teachers in relation to assessment.

We will share best practices through review meetings of book looks, lesson walks, staff meetings, and staff notice/achievement board.



9. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- Being familiar with statutory assessment systems as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all pupils
- Holding school leaders to account for improving pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data

9.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is adhered to
- Monitoring standards in core and foundation subjects
- Analysing pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement
- Reporting to governors on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years

9.3 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy.

10. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

All teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed.

SLT will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the school, through:

- Moderation
- Lesson observations
- Book scrutinies
- Pupil progress meetings
- Lesson walkthroughs



11. Links with Other Policies

This assessment policy is linked to the following policies:

- Curriculum policy
- Assessment without Levels
- Non-examination assessment policy
- Examination contingency plan