

Mercia School

Assessment Policy



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This policy has been approved by the Local Governing Body and has been signed by the Chair of Governors	
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Rationale

At Mercia School, assessment is not simply something that is completed at the end of a teaching sequence as an isolated event, but is an ongoing process, which informs teaching. Our explicit, well-defined curriculum allows for meaningful assessment and teachers at Mercia School have a detailed and concrete understanding of the curriculum content, which ensures that pupils can access, develop and master it. At Mercia School, great assessment enables both children and teachers to continuously focus on knowledge gaps and understand specific areas where misconceptions have occurred or where more practice is required. We track knowledge not data and to do this staff:

- Provide knowledge and facts as the basis of learning
- Encourage the application and rigorous understanding of this knowledge
- Connect this knowledge to prior or new learning
- Develop exam practice through meaningful summative assessment alongside the formative assessment completed in lessons.

Types of Assessment

Learning Zone v's Performance Zone

Eduardo Briceño, the cofounder of Mindset Works, introduced two key concepts that have important roles to play in improvement: the learning zone and the performance zone.

Learning Zone – developing and improving what we have not mastered yet

- Improvement is the focus
- Low stakes
- Deliberate practice takes place
- Expect mistakes and learn from them
- Maximises growth and future performance
- Frequent feedback and reflection
- Under guidance from an expert

Performance Zone – Doing something to the best of our ability

- Maximises immediate performance
- Try to minimise mistakes
- Performance under pressure
- Motivating
- What to focus on next when returning to the learning zone

Briceño advocates that the way to high performance is to alternate between building knowledge in the learning zone and applying it in the performance zone.

Formative Assessment – Learning Zone

Dylan William defines formative assessment, or Assessment for Learning (AfL) as using ‘evidence of pupil learning to adapt teaching and learning, or instruction, to meet pupil needs.’¹ The aim of formative assessment is to evaluate pupils’ knowledge and understanding on a day-to-day basis and to tailor teaching accordingly. At Mercia School, we use every interaction with pupils as a potential assessment opportunity and through effective formative assessment strategies; teachers provide feedback or opportunities for self-assessment to encourage pupils to become self-regulated, independent learners. Teachers at Mercia School use expert knowledge of their subject curriculum and effective formative assessment to elicit evidence of pupil knowledge and understanding using the following:

- Low stakes quizzes focusing on retrieval
- Cold call targeted questioning
- Repetition of facts and ideas through call and response
- Recital using high quality speech and language
- Reading
- Annotation for comprehension
- Live modelling of exemplar work
- Extended writing
- Live marking
- Practice and redraft opportunities
- Self-quizzing using knowledge organisers

Summative Assessment – Performance Zone

Summative assessment, or Assessment of Learning (AoL) enables teachers to evaluate how much a pupil has learned at the end of a unit of work and across previous units. An effective summative assessment is one that provides schools with information they can use to monitor and support pupils’ progress, attainment and wider outcomes.² Daisy Christodoulou, in her book *Making Good Progress?* highlights the need for summative assessments to provide a ‘shared meaning of pupil performance.’³ and explains that in order for these assessments to be reliable this should be done through standard tasks taken in standard conditions using a sample from a large domain of content. At Mercia School, we have three summative assessment points during each academic year.

As we strive for excellence at Mercia School, we want our pupils to understand and be rigorously prepared for high stakes assessments in the performance zone, having mastered the curriculum by developing and improving in the learning zone every lesson.

Baseline Assessment

Baseline tests allow us to establish a cohort profile and for year groups without Key Stage 2 SATS scores, allow us to monitor progress that our pupils are making and set appropriately challenging GCSE targets. Pupils in Year 7 complete Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) and a reading test (NGRT) during the first term. The reading test is repeated with pupils at the end of Year 8, 9 and 10. Pupils will complete an additional baseline assessment in Mathematics, as well as a Pupil Attitude to Self and School Survey (PASS) to ascertain pupils’ perceptions of school and themselves as learners.

Target Setting

Progress 8

In 2016, Progress 8 became the new headline measure for school performance. Before a Progress 8 figure can be calculated, a pupil's Attainment 8 score must be determined. Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across 8 qualifications separated into 4 different elements. The first two elements are mathematics (double weighted) and English (double weighted). The third element is the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) where the sum of the 3 highest grades achieved in French, History, Geography, Science and Computer Science is calculated. The final element is the open element, which includes the highest 3 grades from any further GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects if not included in the EBacc element), or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list. The Attainment 8 score is the sum of each individual grade a pupil achieves for all 8 subjects.

A Progress 8 score is calculated for each pupil by comparing their Attainment 8 score with the average Attainment 8 score of all pupils, in the same cohort, nationally who had a similar starting point (or 'Key Stage 2 score').

Part of the process of target setting at Mercia School is based on the outcome that would be required to achieve an individual Progress 8 score, which surpasses all other pupils across the country who entered secondary education at a similar starting point. The most current national data is used for this, which, in the absence of GCSE exams, is from 2019.

Progress Tests in English, maths and science

As part of the end of year exams in Year 9, all pupils sit the GL Assessment Progress Tests in the 3 core subjects. These tests provide a consistent attainment measure that show whether pupils at Mercia School are at, below or above the expected level; all tests and reports are set within the context of national benchmarks. Benchmarks are regularly verified using test results from other schools across the country, and are robust and reliable.

These tests also produce an expected GCSE grade for each subject, which is used as additional information when setting targets for all of our pupils.

These two pieces of key data, alongside our in depth knowledge of every pupil allows us to set personalised targets that are also ambitious and aspirational. These targets are set at the end of Year 9 and shared with parents at the end of Year 10.

Assessment Cycle

At Mercia School, we employ an assessment cycle, which outlines the key formative and summative assessment points throughout the year.

Week N ^o	Activity
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching week ➤ New booklet launched ➤ Year 7 Baseline Assessments (CATs, NGRT, Maths Baseline)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching week
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching week ➤ Feedback focus – Live marking/whole class feedback
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching week
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mid-Point Assessment (50 Knowledge Questions plus Extended Writing) ➤ No data input required – misconceptions and knowledge gaps considered in department meetings
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching week ➤ Feedback focus – Live marking/whole class feedback ➤ Targeted self-study sessions ➤ New booklet launched
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching week
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching week
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching week ➤ Feedback focus – Live marking/whole class feedback
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching week ➤ Revision focus – Subject specific strategies
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment Week ➤ End Point Summative Assessment ➤ Current topic interleaved with previous units completed
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Marking Week ➤ Two INSET days for marking, moderation and consolidation planning ➤ Consolidation Week ➤ Consolidation booklet launched – Knowledge gaps and misconceptions tackled
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consolidation Week ➤ Consolidation booklet continued – Knowledge gaps and misconceptions tackled ➤ Interleaved with gaps and misconceptions identified in previous assessments ➤ Retest considered for certain questions ➤ Self-study used for additional support
Assessment Cycle Repeats	

Summative Assessment Conditions

These are high quality assessments that:

- use the Mercia School End Point Assessment front page
- are proportionate to curriculum allocation on timetable
- are completed in the designated assessment week
- are completed in exam conditions
- consist of two sections: Section A - Knowledge and Section B - Application
- contain unseen questions which are never disclosed to pupils prior to the assessment
- are marked with high quality, subject specific written feedback to all pupils
- are followed with a high-quality feedback episode to allow pupils to respond to feedback and improve and adapt their answers using green pen
- pupils receive a raw score for on completion

Consolidation

When learning is consolidated, it not only becomes more permanent, but accessing it also becomes easier and quicker, demanding less conscious effort (Tham et al., 2015). Following summative assessment at Mercia School, a period of consolidation is included within the assessment cycle to ensure that knowledge gaps and misconceptions identified are revisited and retaught and that prior knowledge is mastered before moving on to new booklets.

Data Entry

Assessment Mark and Total %

A raw score for Section A Knowledge and Section B Application is entered onto SIMs for each pupil. This is the only data entry required by teachers at Mercia School, as SIMs will automatically calculate the **'Total %'** achieved using the total marks available for the assessment.

Class Average Percentage

A **'Class %'** is calculated using the mean of the **'Total %'** achieved each pupil in the class.

Year Group Average Percentage

A **'Year Group %'** is calculated using the mean of the **'Total %'** achieved each pupil in the year group.

Whole Cohort Ranking (Staff Only)

A **'Class Rank'** and **'Year Group Rank'** for each department to inform discussions about individual pupils who may be a cause for concern and to inform any class changes.

Reporting

Parents receive 3 reports per academic year (Appendix A). All reports up to the end of Year 9 will show the percentage achieved in each assessment compared with the average percentage for the class and for the year group. Attendance percentage and House Point totals are also published on the reports. At Mercia School we will maintain one Parents' Evening per year but will invite parents to attend a meeting if their child has been flagged as a concern.