

LEICESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL TRUST

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Assessment, Marking & Homework Policy

This policy concerns Assessment, Marking and Homework at LGS. It is one of the policies concerned with the curriculum. It should be read in conjunction with the policies on the curriculum, special educational needs and equal opportunities.

Rationale and aims

This policy outlines the requirements for marking and assessment throughout all years of Leicester Grammar School. Its purpose is to establish common standards and procedures for assessment and monitoring and appropriate consistency in the regularity and type of feedback provided. It is not considered practical or productive for every subject to use identical marking procedures; it is expected that departments will build upon this policy in developing their own marking policies to suit their own assessment needs.

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Amongst other aspects, it includes:

- a) The evaluation of classwork - oral, written and practical
- b) The marking of homework and project work
- c) The results of tests and examinations

It is policy that the marking and assessment procedures should form a consistent scheme involving common standards and procedures that are understood by pupils, parents and staff. Information collected will be available to those who need it via the school database and in the form of reports to parents and pupils. As part of this process, pupils will be involved in self-assessment and baseline assessments will be used to monitor progress against potential.

The purposes and value of marking

The key purpose of assessment must be to enable the students to be continually aware of where they are now in their learning, where they can or need to get to, and most importantly how best to get there.

Marking can also serve a number of different purposes in different contexts:

- To recognise and praise positive aspects of school work;
- To be a means of encouraging students to produce work at a higher level;
- To ensure progression and to check for standards, individually, and within the class;
- To acknowledge that work has been completed to an acceptable standard;
- To recognise where a student has tried hard;
- To set specific targets for improvement;
- To foster good relationships and encourage dialogue (assessment for learning);
- To check on understanding to inform future lesson planning.

It is important that all students have their work marked in such a way that it is likely to improve their learning, develop their self-confidence, raise self-esteem and provide opportunities for self-reflection. As such it is a vital tool in their development as learners.

Principles of good marking and assessment

- Work should be marked as accurately and as thoroughly as possible and returned to the pupils in a timely fashion;
- Marking should be positive in tone, refer to what has been achieved and always look to encourage;
- Clear and specific targets should be set for improvement; and in a way that enables the student to remind themselves of them at a later date;
- Comments should relate clearly to the mark given as well as the learning objectives of the piece of work;
- Comments in the margin are useful in demonstrating engagement with the work set. Very often they are diagnostic in nature, but can also be used to praise specific sections of work;
- Sharing objectives, success criteria and the nature of the assessment with the pupils before work is set will help them know what they are trying to achieve;
- Responding to effort as well as attainment will provide rewards to those who are less able and/or less confident;
- Make the pupils 'active partners' in their own learning by encouraging self and peer assessment, reflection and opportunities to discuss their work;
- Promote confidence by encouraging students to realise that making mistakes is a part of learning to make them more resilient and prepared to take risks.

Types of marking

It may not be possible or necessary to mark all the work that students produce, but it is important that the majority of work is monitored in some way and that either written or verbal feedback is provided. In any given subject, students will produce an array of different types of work and departments should decide which areas of work require marking. This may also depend on the age of the students: we may wish to mark all of the notes from a particular year group but not others. We also recognise that not all work will be marked in the same way and in the same detail. In practical terms, teachers should ensure that they undertake suitable and reasonable amounts of marking from within three levels of marking: checking, responding and advising. Departments should ensure that all pupils understand, and have knowledge of, the marking and assessment schemes used within the individual subject areas (including an appreciation of what facets and characteristics they need to include in order to achieve various levels).

Level 1: Checking.

This is simply the checking of work to ensure that it has been completed to a reasonable standard. Whilst this level of marking is not formative and is unlikely to yield high learning outcomes, it is revealing of effort and attitude and is a way of the teacher ensuring that pupils are working to expected standards. ***Checking might involve a tick and an effort grade only.***

Level 2: Responding.

This will also incorporate a ***supportive comment alongside a grade*** (e.g. 'Well done,' 'Good research') that will reflect the quality of the work and the effort invested. This is useful for nurturing good pupil-teacher relationships but, like checking, will not necessarily yield high learning outcomes.

Level 3: Advising.

Formative marking is the most valuable form of marking. This level of marking will consist chiefly of ***formative comments that underscore the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of work and offer clear, identifiable targets for the student to build on.*** A mark might not always be included. This can also be seen as assessment for learning.

Peer assessment marking is also to be encouraged and valued within the framework of marking and assessment.

Baseline Assessment

Baseline assessments take place at significant points through a pupil's school career. Entrance examinations provide the first baseline for years 6-11, with GCSE providing a baseline at sixth form entry. MidYIS, YELLIS and ALIS tests are also used to provide additional objective data on ability in years 7, 10 and lower-sixth respectively. These assessments are available to all teaching staff via the school database, to inform their own judgments as to whether pupils are working up to their full potential.

Formal Assessment Methods

- Entry to the lower and middle school is by examination and, in some cases, by interview
- Entry to the sixth form is usually on the basis of an interview which may lead to an offer of a place which will be conditional on GCSE results attained.
- School examinations are held in June for Years 6-10 and 12
- Trial examinations are held in January for Years 11 and 13
- December Assessments are held in the latter part of the Advent Term in Year 12
- GCSE, or GCSE equivalent (such as IGCSE) examinations are normally held at the end of Y11
- A-Level, or A-level equivalent (such as Pre-U) examinations are normally held at the end of Y11
- Internal formative assessment is a continuous process but assessment grades are recorded at regular intervals. Assessments are recorded on the database and copies of the grades are sometimes sent home to parents (in line with each academic year's 'Reports & Assessments Timetable').

Homework

Homework is given to all pupils in the belief that it is important to establish a pattern of regular personal study. Although the homework is intended to increase the knowledge and skills of the pupil and in that light should be treated seriously, it should not take up so much time that other activities outside the school are rendered impossible. Such contacts with the local community and other social groups are held by the school to be very important to the personal and social development of the individual.

With this in mind, each department has developed a homework policy. The following are general guidelines throughout the school:

- Each pupil below the sixth form shall be given a daily homework timetable detailing the duration for each subject;
- Homework shall be set regularly;
- Homework tasks shall be varied;
- Homework shall be capable of being achieved by most pupils within the allotted times.

Recording

Homework marks and test marks are recorded and stored in line with departmental policy.

Consistency is achieved through a common marking policy within each department.

Marks are recorded accurately and regularly in such a way that the progress of a pupil can be easily followed.

Marks obtained in school examinations and internal assessments are recorded by the subject teacher and held on the school database by the assessment co-ordinator. Detailing of these procedures is issued by the assessment co-ordinator.

Reporting To Parents

At the start of the academic year parents will receive a calendar of reporting dates including the dates of parents' evenings and the points when written reports will be sent out. They will also be notified of the times when internal assessments will be formally given to pupils.

Parents' evenings will occur at least once a year and permit a two-way flow of information

Formal reports will include written comment based on classwork, information on attitude, progress, attainment and, if appropriate, the Trinity Term examination results or the results of trial examinations.

The Form Tutor collects and processes the individual reports and writes a summative comment which may be inclusive of extra-curricular involvement.

Reports are to be read by the Headmaster or Head of Section, who adds his/her own comment.

Copies of the report will be stored in the pupil's personal file.

Any pupil who causes serious concern should be discussed with the Head of Section as soon as the problem arises, and, if appropriate the parents should be informed immediately. The purpose of the report is to inform parents of progress (or lack of progress) regarding ability, effort and behaviour. There should be no surprises.

Subject Departments

Subject departments must include information about their marking procedures in the department handbook.

Marking procedures should be applied consistently within departments.

It is for departments to decide upon the regularity of each of the levels of marking (checking, responding and advising). It is clearly important that a sufficient degree of Level 3 marking takes place to enable students to make progress, but how much this happens may vary depending on the frequency of lessons, the Key Stage concerned and the nature of the work undertaken. Opportunities for such marking should be integrated into schemes of work and referenced in the departmental marking policy. Heads of Department will, on request, keep the Deputy Head (Academic) apprised of the amount of Level 3 marking that takes place.

Departments are free to choose their own mark schemes and symbols for annotation, although it is important that these are shared with the pupils and are consistent within the subject. It may be useful for students to be given access to level and/or grade descriptors and for these to be displayed in the front of their exercise books along with a glossary of the annotations used in a particular department. Marks given should provide pupils with a clear sense of their progress, alongside their formal assessments and reports. In public examination years it will be appropriate to make use of mark schemes published by the examination board.

Marking Scrutiny

Heads of Department should arrange a marking scrutiny at least twice in an academic year using different year groups within each scrutiny. This should be done in such a way as to ensure a robust and realistic appraisal of the marking of all members of their department, and should be assessed against subject specific criteria decided within the department. These criteria should be crafted to take account of progression towards the likely expectations of awarding bodies. The departmental marking policy should outline what these are and action should be taken if marking is deemed to be below an acceptable standard when measured against these criteria. Written records of this scrutiny should be made available to the Deputy Head (Academic) once completed and retained by the Head of Department subsequently in line with retention policy.

The Deputy Head (Academic) will carry out work sampling twice a year where the books of individual pupils across subjects in a particular year group will be scrutinised. This will be done on a 'no-notice' basis and will target different year groups in each sampling session. Heads of Department will be notified should any issues arise or where marking is worthy of especial recognition.