



# St Benedict's Catholic School

*The Catholic Secondary School for West Suffolk*

'Test me Lord and try me, examine my  
heart and my mind'  
Psalm 26:2

# Assessment and Recording Policy

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## 1. Introduction and the Purpose of Assessment

Assessment is the process of obtaining and interpreting evidence in order to enable the review, planning and improvement of learning. Assessment is fully integrated into the delivery of our curriculum and is an essential component of effective classroom practice. It is an essential part of everyday teaching and core to our philosophy of developing Wisdom, Compassion and Resilience in our learners.

Assessment supports each pupil in development of the skills, knowledge and understanding offered by the school curriculum. Regular and meaningful assessment allows us to track pupil progress effectively. It allows pupils to be clear about where they are in their learning journey and to identify the next steps that need to be taken to ensure progression and to become life-long learners.

Reformed A levels, the 9-1 GCSE's and the Key Stage 3 curriculum require the gradual accumulation of a wealth of knowledge. Good assessment practice can help pupils build up this knowledge over the course of their study and allow both students and teachers to monitor this. A key feature of assessment at St Benedict's is for our formal assessments to encourage students to revisit regularly previous knowledge over a course of study. This regular retrieval and revision of both recent and previously stored knowledge enables pupils to move this knowledge from their working memories into their long-term memory and supports them to move easily onto more demanding concepts and knowledge that they will meet in the next stage of learning.

The purposes of assessment include:

- Provide information about a pupil's academic attainment and progress.
- Reinforce desirable, effective, and successful learning practices and strategies.
- Enhance the long-term memory of students.
- Foster self-esteem and personal responsibility in every pupil.
- Produce data and information to report to parents and carers on their child's academic progress and development of skills.
- Produce data and information to enable the school to monitor the progress of each child
- Produce data and information which enables the school to assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Motivate pupils to become life-long learners.

## 2. Policy Summary.

The key purpose of assessment at St Benedict's Catholic School is to ensure that students are able to retain and apply information and content that they have been taught. The use of regular, low stakes, informal testing gives pupils practice in learning previously taught material and then applying it. When this is done often enough, the material gradually moves into a student's long-term memory and this knowledge is then much easier to recall and apply when it is needed in the more formal setting of an exam or an end of year assessment.

Students should be exposed to plenty of these short, low stake, informal assessments and they should take place every two or three weeks in each subject. These low stakes assessments should never be graded and are normally marked straight away by the student themselves or a peer. They should give a student an idea of what might need to be done to improve on the area of the curriculum that the assessment covers.

More formal summative and end of year assessments also have an important place, but these should be much rarer in frequency. These assessments are formal and must result in the student knowing the grade they have achieved and what needs to be done to either improve or to achieve a higher grade. They should be marked by the teacher and should be sat by the whole cohort doing that subject, with marks being submitted to the head of department. Some moderation of student work would also be expected where large cohorts of pupils are involved. These assessments will inform the key assessment points at which data is entered onto the school management system.

Note that these assessments, both informal and formal, are not designed to increase workload. The amount of written, diagnostic feedback required by staff is covered in the Marking and Feedback Policy. This currently requires two pieces of feedback per half term in most subjects. It is entirely up to the teacher to choose which two pieces of work result in this feedback. It may include these assessments, or it may be other work, such as homework, or an assignment set in class. This is at the professional discretion of the individual teacher.

The data entered from these formal assessment points will be used for reporting progress to parents and will also be analysed so that the progress and attainment of key groups of pupils can be monitored for the purpose of school accountability.

### 3. Scope and key terms

This policy relates to formal periodic assessments of pupil learning. It relates to how we make these assessments and how we record these and report them to parents. Much is made by educational professionals on the different types of assessment and for clarity they are listed here:

**Diagnostic assessment** – An assessment made at the start of a course to determine the best strategy to use for the course.

**Formative assessment** – An assessment made during the course to see if any adjustments to the strategy are needed.

**Interim assessment** – An assessment given to all students to check that material is being learned.

**Summative assessment** – An assessment taken at the end of the course. Assessment like this, might still be used to review performance and decide a strategy for the next stage of learning.

The important feature of all these types of assessment is that they can inform future learning and it is not the intention of this policy to either define or limit these types of assessment. As teachers we will use all of the above types of assessment at appropriate times, and it is not necessary to dwell on the exact categorization of an assessment type.

**Recording** is the process by which teachers and heads of department follow agreed protocols for recording the data needed for Assessment. This includes the recording of data on prior attainment of students, school target levels and grades, test results, and the results of in-school and public examinations. It includes the requirement to regularly assess the learning of students, and to submit the records of those results for incorporation in the school's database of student attainment.

**Retrieval practice** – the strategy in which the regular and repeated bringing of information to mind brings material into the long-term memory.

**Reporting** refers to the requirement to summarise the achievement of each student periodically in a report to parents. Reporting will need to observe agreed protocols and standards to meet statutory requirements, to provide useful feedback to parents and students, and to reflect the high professional standards of the teacher.

**Working Memory** – our cognitive system with a limited capacity that can only hold information temporarily. This type of memory is important for reasoning and decision making.

**Long Term Memory** – our storage system that lasts over an extended period. It has a high capacity and can be enhanced by regular retrieval practice.

**Cognitive Load Theory** – a theory that is built on the idea that there is a limit on the amount of new information the brain can process at one time, but that there is no known limit to how much stored information that can be processed at one time. This theory assumes that knowledge is stored in long-term memory in the form of schemas, which organise information according to how it will be used. An important process in schema construction is automation, whereby information is processed with minimum conscious effort. Automation occurs after extensive practice.

## 4 . Related Policies.

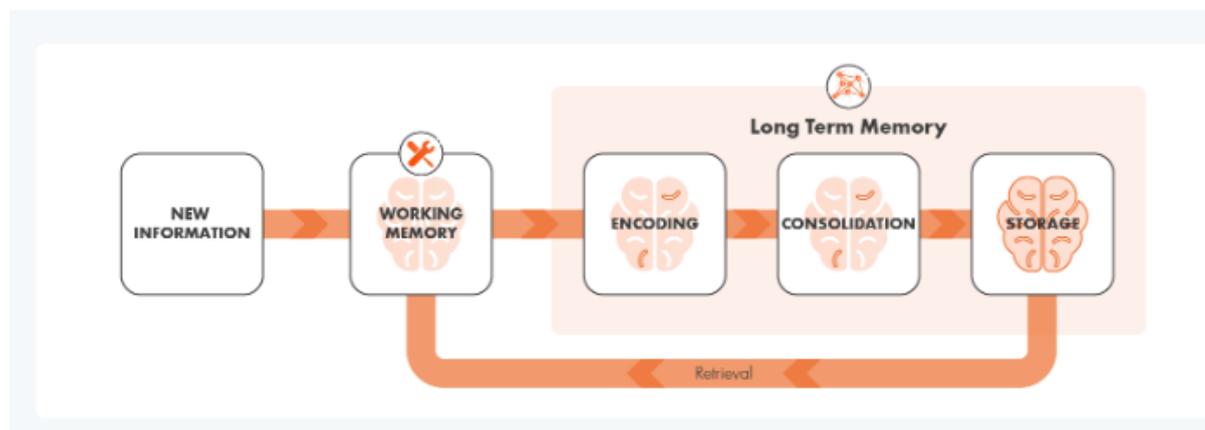
All types of assessment necessitate some type of feedback from teacher to the student. This is not covered by this policy but is dealt with in the **St Benedict's Catholic School Feedback Policy**.

Homework is covered in the **St Benedict's Catholic School Homework Policy**.

The most formal type of assessments are naturally public examinations, and these are covered in the **St Benedict's Catholic School Examination Policy**.

## 5. Assessment of learning

Assessments are used for a number of purposes. One such purpose is to make visible the learning of a given student or set of students. The simple act of asking a student a question is in itself an assessment in that it reveals to us something of what the student has learnt previously. This can then lead to the identification of next steps in learning, either going back over something or moving onto a related but newer concept. It is also important to realise that this simple act, of asking a student either to recall something or to work something out, can explicitly help them to embed knowledge. We sometimes call this retrieval practice and it is illustrated below.



The deep embedding of knowledge, understanding and skill is not something that occurs in a single instance. Repeated practice, and in different situations, will enable this knowledge to become embedded. Just as you may know how to drive – but repeated practice in different conditions and terrain will make you a better driver.

The sheer act of answering a question can be enough to have a positive impact on learning. Repeated low stakes testing, another form of retrieval practice, is a powerful way to help students embed knowledge into their long-term memories.

A key aim of assessment at St Benedict's Catholic school is to expose our students to lots of regular low stakes retrieval practice. For the purposes of this policy, we will refer to these as informal assessments. These should aim to cover not only work that has been covered recently but should also go back over topics covered some time ago, something known as interleaved practice. Teachers should make frequent use of low stakes retrieval practice as it is a key tool in the build up of stored knowledge.

Key features of informal assessments at St Benedict's are:

- Short in duration.
- A regular feature of the student experience i.e. every few weeks.
- Low stakes – results for the student use only – never reported formally to parents.
- Marks may or may not be collected by teachers.
- Marked by the students or their peers.
- Focus on a relatively small part of the content only such as a single topic.
- Should feature a mix of recall and application.

- Topics assessed should be both recent and from the start of the course.
- Results used by students to assess strengths and weaknesses.
- Results used by teachers to determine next steps in learning.

The use of regular low stakes testing is of course not enough in itself to prepare students for the larger, more formal assessment that they will inevitably face at the end of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Teachers will therefore also expose students to longer assessments that are more closely aligned with type of summative assessments that will be used at the end of a course. For the purposes of this policy, we will call these formal assessments.

Key features of **formal assessments** at St Benedict's are:

- Longer in duration.
- Will cover all material that has been taught over the key stage up to that point.
- Will expose students to the assessment style and model used at the end of the course.
- Will be the same assessment for the whole cohort as far as possible.
- Will be a rarer experience – a recommendation of two formal assessments per subject per year and no more than once every term.
- At Key Stage 4 and 5 will feature mock examinations in a formal setting where possible.
- Marked by the teacher so that each student received individual or collective feedback and should inform the future learning of students through individual target setting.
- Marked according to an agreed mark scheme based on exam board material for Key Stages 4 and 5.
- Results recorded by the classroom teacher.
- Marks passed onto the Head of Department who will record marks and decide grade boundaries for the whole cohort.
- Results used as a basis for reporting purposes – see section on Reporting and Recording of Assessment information.
- Students and parents must be given at least two weeks' notice of a formal assessment via the school electronic homework portal (currently Arbor.)
- Behaviour of pupils is expected to be the same as in a public exam. Any instances of malpractice should be recorded and dealt with in consultation with the head of department. Examples of malpractice include having access to a phone or attempting to distribute information about an assessment to another student.
- Sanctions applied to misconduct in a formal assessment should also be applied and recorded with a view to preparing students for public examinations.
- Teachers should where possible make access arrangements for SEND students who the Director of Inclusive Education has identified.

## 6. Recording assessments of learning

The purpose of recording student assessments is to allow each student's learning to be monitored by class teachers and Heads of Department. This in turn allows essential information to be passed onto tutors, year heads, senior leadership and parents when required. Effective recording of assessments can also inform report writing, reference writing and information for other agencies, e.g. careers advisors.

Classroom teachers must keep an assessment mark book for each class that they teach, which may be either electronic or paper based. This will contain sufficient assessment records to allow the teacher to monitor how well the pupil is performing academically. It should also enable them to comment on a student's current attitude to learning. It should also contain enough information to enable the teacher to enter key information required on Attitude to Learning and academic progress at the key assessment points required for each year group. Teachers are encouraged to use their own professional judgement on the amount of information collected, but two pieces of information recorded per half term would be a sensible minimum to allow both progress and attitude to learning to be monitored effectively.

### Key Actions and Procedures:

1. Class teachers must have access (via the school MIS) to the Assessment Data Marksheet for each class. This contains records of subject target grades and key pupil characteristic data such as prior ability, ethnicity, gender, SEN status and eligibility for the Pupil Premium.
2. Class teachers must keep a mark book for each class that can be electronic, or paper based.
3. Class teachers must enter key assessment information onto the School MIS as specified by the current school assessment calendar and assessment handbook. The frequency of data collection may vary depending on circumstances but will be no greater than half termly per year group.
4. Assessment point analysis of data entered will be provided to teachers, Heads of Department, Director of Inclusive Education, Pupil Premium coordinator, and Heads of Year by the senior leadership team.
5. The Head of Department, Head of Year, Director of Inclusive Education, or Pupil Premium Co-ordinator should collect and hold centrally the analysis reports of all their areas summary reports.
6. Analysis of the above assessment records will be the subject of Senior Leadership one to one meetings with the Head of Department, Head of Year, Director of Inclusive Education, and Pupil Premium Coordinator.
7. Heads of department must use their analysis reports as a tool to identify groups of pupils or individuals who are not making sufficient progress and/or whose attitude to learning is not as it should be.
8. Heads of Department and Heads of Year must put into place effective interventions for pupils and/or groups of pupils identified above. Departmental and pastoral intervention flow charts should be used for this purpose.
8. Teachers must keep **their own records** of the results of any formally assessed pieces including practice exam questions, end of unit tests, mock or end of year examinations and any other significant assessments of learning.
9. Checks of homework completion and marks awarded must also be recorded.
10. This information should be kept in a secure and confidential storage system so that pupils cannot access this information.
11. Attendance data in the form of a class register should be kept using the school MIS.

## 7. Reporting to Parents

The purpose of reporting to parents is to provide regular and relevant information that will inform parents how much progress a student is making in each academic subject. It will also indicate the overall attitude to learning in each subject. A full annual written tutor report will be used to supplement this information in an individualised and personal manner.

### Key Actions and Procedures

1. Class teachers will provide information for parental reports via the School MIS.
2. Information will be provided punctually according to a timetable published in the school assessment calendar.
3. Form tutors will produce one written report per student according to the published schedule for all the students in their tutor group. In the case of jointly tutored form groups, teachers may produce a joint report or divide the group up as they see fit.
4. Reports should be written in accordance with whatever instructions and guidance are in use at that time. Instructions and guidance may change over time, and the most recent should always be used. This will always be published at the start of the year in the assessment handbook.
5. The reporting of attainment must be specific and supported by evidence from exams or other work.
6. Every written tutor report should contain information that is personal to the individual student.
7. Comments should highlight major strengths and weaknesses, give concrete improvement targets, offer praise and encouragement, and provide parents with sufficient information for them to gain an impression of how well the student is doing according to our expectations. Comparisons with other students, or with siblings, should never be included.
8. As with pupil feedback the use of specific short-term or long-term targets should be used.
9. Critical comment should always focus on the work or behaviour and never on the person.

## 8. Useful Further Reading.

Useful Further Reading:

Cognitive Load Theory: Research that teachers really need to understand (September 2017)  
New South Wales (Australia) Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation.

Strengthening the Teacher Toolkit – Dunlofsky (Autumn 2013)



**Assessment and Recording Policy**  
**Owned by:** J D'Mello (Assistant Head)