

# Belfast Boys' Model School

## Internal Assessment Policy



### Policy Details

<b>Operational Date</b>	September 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	September 2026
<b>Date last reviewed &amp; approved by Board of Governors.</b>	November 2025

## Rationale

The Northern Ireland Curriculum views assessment as the "cornerstone of good learning and teaching. It can make a vital contribution to improving educational outcomes for all pupils. It's about collecting, interpreting, and using information to give a deeper appreciation of what pupils know and understand, their skills and capabilities, and what their learning experiences enable them to do." [NICCEA]

## Definitions

The Northern Ireland Curriculum defines assessment as the process by which schools facilitate the monitoring of standards over time to inform the development of policy and practice leading to better pupil outcomes. Assessment should:

- be complementary to, and supportive of, the key aims of the NI Curriculum
- be fit for purpose
- be manageable
- be supported by teacher professional judgements that are consistent and reliable
- be appropriate at all levels for system-wide accountability

[The Big Picture of Assessment and Reporting NICCEA last updated 12/03/2020]

## Aims

The aim of assessment, as described by CCEA, is 'to facilitate the monitoring of standards over time, in order to inform the development of policy and practice leading to better pupil outcomes'.

Assessment should:

- complement and support the key aims of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
- be fit for purpose.
- be manageable; and
- be supported by teacher professional judgements that are consistent and reliable.

## Types of Assessment

**SUMMATIVE** is Assessment **OF** Learning. It is used mainly to measure performance and clearly identifies a standard of pupil attainment. It is carried out at the end of a period of learning.

### Examples

- External Examinations
- Internal School Examinations
- End of Topic/Unit Tests
- Standardised Tests

**FORMATIVE** is Assessment **FOR** Learning. It is ongoing and provides evidence of and for progression in learning. It supports learning through identifying difficulties, providing feedback and diagnosing future learning priorities.

#### **Examples**

- Classwork
- Homework
- Questioning
- Presentation
- Practical Project
- Research

**SELF ASSESSMENT** encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning by:

- Evaluating their own achievement against shared learning outcomes.
- Identifying their own strengths and areas for improvement.
- Encouraging individual learning goals and action plans for future progression.
- Fostering a self-reflective learning culture.
- Encouraging independence in learning.

#### **Examples**

- Pupil Personal Statement
- Internal Reports
- UCAS/Higher and Further Education Applications
- Target Setting materials

#### **Indicators of Effective Practice**

Teachers' assessment of the pupils' work can be considered effective when:

- Assessment is an integral part of planning, teaching and learning; the teachers use suitable forms of assessment, based on expectations which are clear, realistic and understood by pupils.
- the pupils receive, understand and apply appropriate verbal and written feedback from teachers on their progress in learning, including on their self-management and persistence, which leads to improvement.
- Assessment, and other data, is used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement.
- the school assessment policy reflects statutory requirements and whole school understanding about the purpose of effective assessment, the methods to be used, the range and type of evidence to be retained, and the uses made of the assessment information.

**The most effective assessment practices:**

- Promote a shared learning culture
- Provide clear and regular feedback
- Diagnose learning difficulties
- Measure pupil performance
- Identify clear and shared targets for pupil progress
- Promote differentiation by outcome
- Inform subject choice and career decision making
- Provide effective and progressive pupil records
- Inform regular reporting to parents
- Support pupils to assess their own work and to identify to good effect strengths and areas for improvement
- Enable the pupils act on high quality feedback to improve their work

[Evaluating Schools DENI]

### **Good Practice in Assessment**

Assessment should:

#### **1. Promote and Support Learning by**

- Identifying what pupils know, understand and can do
- Enabling consistent monitoring of each pupil's progress
- Identifying individual learning strengths and weaknesses
- Encouraging progression in learning

#### **2. Inform Teaching by:**

- Assisting future lesson planning
- Informing the review cycle of content and skills
- Promoting a variety of teaching strategies
- Enabling a consistent monitoring of teaching progress
- Encouraging self-reflection

#### **3. Be fair and accessible to all by ensuring:**

- All text is written in clear and consistent language.
- All text is readable, legible and valid in relation to the question assessment objectives.
- All text and language used has been checked to minimise the possibility of misinterpretation.
- Text is free from ambiguity, hidden expectations or unnecessary material that could present obstacles to particular groups or people with shared protected characteristics.
- The needs of all groups have been considered.

- No offence is caused with respect to any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 and Northern Ireland equality law through inappropriate subject matter or language.
- Equality is promoted in the design and review of the assessment
- The rubric is clear and easily distinguished from the questions.
- Only essential and relevant source material is included.
- All pictorial, tabular and graphic material is presented in a clear, uncluttered and logical way that conforms to best accessibility practices.
- The presentation and layout of assessment materials is checked for compatibility with assistive technology (such as Word Processor)
- All materials associated with a particular task are kept close together and presented in a logical manner.
- A variety of response modes have been specified or are shown as acceptable.
- Any assessment criteria that may present an obstacle to particular groups or people with shared protected characteristics are justified.
- The assessment allows learners to demonstrate their skills using assistive technology
- The mark scheme is clear and can be easily and consistently understood and applied.
- The mark scheme reflects the diverse ways in which learners can demonstrate attainment and includes an indication of the nature and range of responses likely to be worthy of credit.
- The mark scheme has been standardised.

*'Fair Access by Design' CCEA*

#### **4. Use appropriate and diverse strategies:**

- Is both formal and informal
- Accommodates a variety of learning styles
- Tests a range of skills
- Encourages effective and standardised marking procedures
- Is both quantitative and qualitative
- Is carried out in a range of contexts

#### **5. Recognise ALL pupil progress and achievement**

- Rewards progress, effort and achievement
- Fosters motivation and promotes a commitment to learning
- Creates opportunities for self-direction
- Fosters self-esteem and social development

#### **6. Develop the capacity for Self-Assessment by:**

- Sharing learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- Giving sensitive and constructive feedback
- Supporting pupils in self and peer assessment activities
- Engaging pupils in realistic target setting

#### **7. Foster a shared involvement and responsibility between School and Home**

## 8. Be standardised by:

- Teachers, working in departments, gaining a shared understanding of the mark scheme
- Making use of cross- marking and sampling of teacher assessments to ensure consistency across the department.

## 9. Reflect external examination conditions:

High control conditions will be maintained for class tests:

- Mobile phones must be switched off and in school bags
- Watches must be taken off and stored in school bag
- Labels must be removed from water bottles.

## 10. Resilience Guidance (CCEA) August 2024

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the cancellation of public examinations in 2020 and 2021. As a result, alternative arrangements were put in place to enable grades to be awarded to students. This involved using alternative evidence of student performance in the absence of formal examinations.

Whilst it is unlikely that such an event will happen again, it is important that the system is prepared for such a possibility and has in place measures to ensure the resilience of qualifications and the grades awarded to students.

### Assessment material:

The range, style and demand of questions in an assessment should reflect what would be found in an examination paper for that subject. Questions from previous examination papers can be used in whole or in part. This should also help students in their preparation for their examinations.

Assessment evidence collected should be retained in either original form or as a copy.

**Student work can be stored in hard copy or digitally to help alleviate any pressure on centre resources and space.**

At Belfast Boy's Model School we:

- Identify a range of meaningful tasks which facilitate progression in learning
- Identify a variety of tasks which assess a range of subject skills
- Ensure all assessments are accessible in design
- Establish a range of standard homework tasks
- Integrate homework tasks with lesson planning and learning outcomes
- Share learning intentions with pupils
- Provide timely and constructive feedback which sustains pupil motivation and facilitates progression

Key Stage 3 pupils will sit the GL Assessments tests in English and Maths: Progress Test in English and Progress Test in Maths. Pupils' cognitive ability is also tested at the beginning of Year 8 and Year 11 using the CAT 4 test from the GL Testing for Schools package. These tests will give us a robust and reliable grade because they have been standardised against a national sample of pupils. These tests will give us a norm-referenced measure of our pupils. That is, it will tell us how they are doing compared to other pupils of the same age.

CCEA Adaptive Testing in Literacy and Numeracy will also be conducted to provide additional data.

A Homework Timetable is drawn up at the beginning of the academic year and shared with parents bi-termly, encouraging pupils to take responsibility for planning their work at home.

Homework is set in all subjects in Years 8-14, the amount and frequency is related to timetabled time allocated.

In Years 13 and 14 pupils are encouraged to take much more responsibility for their own learning and homework is linked to individual research/ the use of departmental/ private study preparation and planning. It is expected that pupils engage in independent study for 12 – 15 hours per week outside of School Time.

Pupils are encouraged to use appropriate ICT skills to research and present their homework.

### **Use of Artificial Intelligence in Assessment**

Belfast Boys' Model School recognises the potential of Artificial Intelligence to support learning and teaching. In line with the school's AI Policy, AI tools may be used to enhance understanding and provide feedback, but they must **not** replace authentic pupil work or human judgment in assessment. All assessed work submitted by pupils must be their own, and any use of AI must be transparent and appropriately referenced. The school adheres to JCQ guidelines to maintain the integrity of qualifications and prevent malpractice.

### **Marking**

The marking of pupils' work is an important assessment tool which is essential for both progression in pupil learning and effective teaching.

Good practice is promoted through regular, accurate and consistent marking by all teachers within a department and a whole school approach.

Positive marking and feedback strategies which recognise pupil achievement, highlight both strengths and weaknesses and provide clear guidance for improvement are to be encouraged.

Effective marking helps to:

- Recognise pupil achievement
- Monitor pupil progress
- Diagnose problems in learning

- Provide feedback with regards to progress
- Provide clear guidance for improvement
- Motivate and encourage pupils
- Record and report pupil attainment
- Assist in evaluation and planning.

In summary our aim should be that work is marked:

- Promptly, regularly and consistently
- According to agreed and shared learning outcomes
- According to agreed and shared assessment criteria
- Using both quantitative and qualitative criteria
- For improvement, using constructive commentary.
- Using mark schemes that have been standardised.
- moderated.

### **Recording and Reporting**

**RECORDING** and **REPORTING** ensures regular and relevant communication of progress to pupils, teachers, parents and other appropriate external audiences. It is linked to both formative and summative methods of assessment and the recording of individual pupil assessment outcomes, measured against agreed and shared assessment criteria. This communication is the responsibility of each teacher, within the context of agreed departmental and whole school assessment policies.

#### **Recording**

Consistent record keeping by all teachers allows the effective monitoring of pupil progress and the regular evaluation of teaching content/styles/methods:

Good practice includes:

- Homework marks recorded in Teacher Mark Books/Departmental Tracking Marksheets
- Internal Exams/Tests recorded in Teacher Mark Books/ Departmental Tracking Marksheets/SIMS
- Data drops in October, December, February and May/June

Teacher records can then be used to inform reporting, both formal and informal, to pupils, parents, Heads of Department, Heads of Year and the Senior Leadership Team.

#### **Reporting**

Reporting can take many different forms including:

- **Formal Reports – Years 8 to 14.**

Single page computer generated reports given to parents following data drops.

- KS3 December and June.
- KS4 and Post 16 November, December and May/June.

These reports will have a grade for each subject. These will be issued on Parent App for most pupils, rather than in print form

- **Full written reports** are given to parents of pupils in Years 8-14 after the school exams in February. These reports will have a grade for each subject and a teacher comment reflecting on exam performance, with suggestions on how to improve.
- **Parent Meetings** – Key year groups (8, 10, 12 and Senior School) will have one annual Parents’ Meeting. Subject teachers have the opportunity to discuss with parents the pupil’s progress/achievement/homework/class work/effort/attitude/ targets for improvement
- **Target Setting Meetings** – annually January. Provides parents and pupils the opportunity to meet and discuss targets for February exams out of tracking reports
- **UCAS - completion of references**
- **Individual References** – for pupils and outside agencies such as employers and further education colleges are reported as requested
- **External Examinations** – reports are available on results day for each exam season

Reporting Criteria - Descriptors

### Key Stage 3

#### Attainment

COLOUR	GRADE	EXPLANATION
	A	<i>Far exceeding the level expected</i>
	B	<i>Exceeding the level expected</i>
	C	<i>Achieving the level expected</i>
	D	<i>Below the level expected</i>
	E	<i>Considerably below the level expected</i>
	NS	<i>NOT SUBMITTED- The pupil was given more than one opportunity to complete the Assessment task in this subject, but failed to do so, on this occasion</i>

#### Key Stage 4

GCSE Grade	Equivalent Qualification Result	Colour Coding	
Grade A*	Level 2 Distinction*	Working at or above the expected standard.	If your son is studying a “short course” GCSE, this is equal to half a GCSE.
Grade A	Level 2 Distinction		
Grade B	Level 2 Merit		
Grade C	Level 2 Pass	Just below the expected standard	
Grade D	Level 1 Distinction		
Grade E	Level 1 Merit		

Grade F	Level 1 Pass	Well below the expected standard	
Grade G	No equivalent result		
Ungraded	Fail		

*Post 16*

GCE Grade	Equivalent Qualification Result	Colour Coding	Note:
Grade A*	Level 3 Distinction*	Working at or above the expected standard.	Single Award (SA) – equivalent to 1 A-Level at A* - U Double Award (DA) – equivalent to 2 A- Levels at A*- U
Grade A	Level 3 Distinction		
Grade B	No equivalent result		
Grade C	Level 3 Merit		
Grade D	No equivalent result	Just below the expected standard	
Grade E	Level 3 Pass	Well below the expected standard	
Grade F	No equivalent result		
Grade G	No equivalent result		
Ungraded	Fail		

*CT= Class Test*

*The school Winter Exam result is recorded as:*

*Key Stage 3 – Class Test 2 (CT2)*

*Key Stage 4 – Class Test 3 (CT3)*

*Key Stage 5 – Class Test 3 (CT3)*

**Key to other performance descriptions:**

*Attendance*

*Punctuality*

COLOUR	EXPLANATION	COLOUR	EXPLANATION
	<i>Excellent - 95% or more</i>		<i>Excellent – no more than 2 days late</i>
	<i>Satisfactory 90- 94.9%</i>		<i>Satisfactory</i>
	<i>Unsatisfactory – less than 90%</i>		<i>Unsatisfactory more than 10 days late</i>

*Effort*

*Behaviour*

GRADE	EXPLANATION	GRADE	EXPLANATION
A	Excellent	A	Excellent
B	Good	B	Good
C	Generally good	C	Generally good
D	Inconsistent	D	Occasionally Unsettled
E	Area of Concern	E	Area of Concern

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Assessment Policy and its implementation within and across departments is monitored and evaluated by:

- Principal
- Vice Principal (Curriculum)
- Curriculum Leaders

## **SLT**

It is the responsibility of the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and the Senior Leader (Learning, Teaching and Assessment) to review, monitor and evaluate all aspects of the Assessment Policy within the context of the School Development Planning and Self Evaluation.

## **Curriculum Leaders**

It is the responsibility of Curriculum Leaders to apply and embed the principles of the School Assessment Policy within their own departmental practice. They should formulate and maintain a departmental policy on Assessment – which may be the whole school policy or one tailored to a particular subject.

In all departmental policies good practice will be clearly identified through:

1. Consistent departmental planning.
2. Assessment tasks fully integrated with the Schemes of Work.
3. Shared learning outcomes.
4. Standardised marking.
5. Constructive feedback.
6. Assessment data used to inform teaching and learning.
7. Assessment data regularly and consistently recorded.
8. Assessment data used regularly for reporting.
9. Regular self-assessment by pupils and staff.
10. Liaison with Head of Year/Subject teacher re individual pupil performance as required.
11. Liaison with Examinations Officers re-entries for all examinations.
12. Effective organisation re setting/ marking internal examinations.
13. Monitoring and evaluation of all departmental assessment practice and outcomes.

## **Subject Teachers**

It is the responsibility of Subject Teachers to:

1. Implement departmental/whole policies on Assessment.
2. Mark in accordance with departmental policy in a positive, accurate, meaningful and diagnostic way.
3. Compile and maintain individual pupil records.

4. Report to pupils, parents and staff on individual and group progress.
5. Liaise with the Head of Department/Year re individual pupil support as required.

### **Heads of Year**

It is the responsibility of Heads of Year to:

1. Liaise with Heads of Department/Senior Staff/Subject Teachers concerning individual pupil progress
2. Report to parents as required re: individual pupil progress
3. Produce Overview statements for Reports in June

### **Examinations Officers**

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officers to liaise with appropriate staff/pupils/parents/exam boards regarding all aspects of all Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 Examinations.

### **Pupils**

Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in their learning and to:

1. Participate and contribute to discussions involving learning intentions and success criteria
2. Participate in the techniques of self/peer assessment and evaluation
3. Act on feedback provided by teachers and peers
4. Help foster a positive learning environment through positive behaviour
5. Set personal goals and targets through self-management
6. Value their learning
7. Accept responsibility for their learning
8. Understand that everyone has the potential to learn and succeed.
9. Ensure they do not breach malpractice guidelines and will be advised on these by their teachers

Reference should be made to the following:

The Curriculum Policy  
Data Protection Policy  
Access to Fair Assessment Policy  
AI Policy  
Appeals Policy  
Assessment Appeals Policy  
Assessment Malpractice Policy  
BTEC Assessment Policy  
Complaints Policy  
Data Protection Policy  
External Examinations and Assessment Policy  
Non-Examination Assessment Policy including Controlled Assessment and Coursework  
Internal Assessment Policy  
Internal Verification Policy

CCEA Documentation – Fair Access by Design Guidance

<https://ccea.org.uk/downloads/docs/regulation-asset/Compliance/Fair%20Access%20by%20Design%3A%20Guidance%20for%20awarding%20organisations%20on%20designing%20high-quality%20and%20inclusive%20qualifications.pdf>