



ASSESSMENT POLICY

This policy will be kept up to date and will be reviewed once per year as part of the company's Quality Assurance arrangements.

Review Period
1 Year

Approved by
Directors/Governors

Review Carried Out By
Quality Team

Date of Approval
November 2020

Introduction

At Orion, we believe that the key aim of assessment is to **support student achievement and progress**.

Through our assessment and reporting practice, we aim to:

- Enable students to understand what they have to do to reach end of lesson, unit, topic, academic year and key stage expectations.
- Allow teachers to determine what a student can/cannot do and to help them plan future support to fill any gaps in knowledge and understanding.
- Help set targets and involve students in their own learning.
- Give parents a clear idea of what their child can do and what they need to do to progress.
- Provide information that can be used to evaluate teaching and learning practice.
- Give students effective feedback so they know what they have done well and what they need to improve.
- Enable all students, including students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to make good progress.

Principles

The principles that underpin assessment at Orion are:

- Every student can achieve: teachers are constantly evaluating: 'What do I need to do next, to enable all students in my class to achieve?'
- All students have the opportunity to access more challenging aspects of the curriculum.
- Assessment of student's attainment and progress is directly linked to the curriculum and evaluates students' knowledge and understanding of subject requirements.
- Assessment is used to ensure that all students make appropriate progress.
- All students need to understand the learning objective in each of their lessons and what they need to achieve it.
- Success Criteria's are shared, or formulated, at the start of each session and students' work is assessed against this criteria.
- Strategies are used to ensure that students have a secure understanding of key ideas and concepts before moving onto the next phase of learning.

Assessment Cycle

At the beginning of every assessment cycle baseline assessments are carried out to establish clear starting points for all students.

There are two main types of assessment used at Orion

Formative Assessment

This is used by our teachers to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding on a day-to-day basis and to tailor teaching accordingly. Marking and feedback is carried out every two weeks in accordance with Orion's Marking and Feedback Policy.

Summative Assessment

This is used to evaluate how much a student has learned at the end of a teaching period (end of a Unit/Topic, term or academic year). Students are tested (under exam conditions) formally at the end of each term and their grades are forward to the leadership team to monitor progress.

Standardisation and moderation of all formal assessments are carried out termly and all coursework/vocational portfolio work is moderated in line with awarding bodies' internal and external verification processes.

Procedures – Formative Assessment

Day-to-Day Formative Assessments

This type of assessment is embedded across all lessons – in all subjects (vocational as well as academic). Teachers assess students' understanding of individual learning objectives and identify where there are gaps. This tells the teacher what to focus on in future lessons and prompts them to adapt their teaching approach to improve students' understanding.

Strategies used will vary according to the subject and learning objective taught – these include:

- Use of rich question and answer sessions to evaluate student understanding and identify gaps or misconceptions.
- Use of whiteboards, flip charts to get instant feedback of understanding.
- Mini-plenary to determine understanding at regular intervals.
- Short re-cap quizzes or recall of facts.
- In mathematics lessons, teachers often focus on the wrong answers (which can be used to explore concepts in greater depth and to identify and address any misconceptions).
- Observational assessment.
- Scanning work for student attainment and progress.
- Self (or peer) assessment at the end of every lesson based on individual learning objectives and Success Criteria.
- 1:1 or group discussions with students.
- Next step marking and feedback (see Marking and Feedback Policy).

Formative assessment is used to show what students have learned well and what they still need to work on, and identifies specific 'corrective' activities to help them do this. After undertaking these corrective activities (or alternative enrichment or extension activities for those who have already achieved mastery), formative assessments are used to evaluate further progress.

Procedures – Summative Assessment

At the end of every half-term, a Test Week is held to enable us to establish whether students are working below, towards, meeting or exceeding end of year expectations.

This Test Week is followed by a Student Progress Meeting whereby each teacher meets with a member of the leadership team and Head of School to analyse the results and to plan appropriate targets and support. Assessment information is used to plan teaching and learning strategies, including the identification of students who are working below their target stage, falling behind in their learning or who need additional support, enabling students to make good progress and achieve well. When tracking assessment information the leadership team and Head of School carefully track the progress of different groups within the school. They also compare the progress rate of different groups. This information is then used to help plan to raise standards in any group identified as not make adequate progress.

Reporting

As part of our assessment policy parents receive a report about the academic achievements of their son/daughter three times a year. Reports provide a detailed summary of the progress that students have made and contain a subject specific target for improvement. These progress reports are linked to the both vocational and academic attainment and will be used to inform the dialogue between student and teacher with regards to their academic progress

Progress will also be reported to Governors at the end of each term through the Head of School Report and students will get feedback regularly e.g.

- Through formative assessment strategies to get instant feedback on a daily basis.
- Using next step marking which informs students of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Actively encouraging students to respond to teacher's comments, questions and commands in their marking, to self-evaluate their work and set their own targets based on a success criteria.
- Data-harvesting.

Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring

As part of Orion's quality assurance and performance monitoring processes, termly lesson observations by the leadership team are used to monitor the effectiveness of formative assessment strategies used in class. The leadership team also carries out termly work scrutiny's and learning walks to evaluate the effectiveness of marking and target setting.

At the end of every term, the leadership team analyses the attainment and progress made by all students in a formal student progress meeting (as mentioned above). The main aim of these meetings is to identify students who are underachieving and to put support in place to fill the gaps. Intervention includes adapting whole class planning, pre-learning, booster groups, catch-up programmes etc. Teachers are asked to bring copies of their ongoing assessments and to show the progress made by vulnerable groups.

