



Sir James Smith's School

Assessment POLICY

Date policy approved:

Date policy becomes effective: September 2025

Review date: July 2026

Person responsible for Implementation and Monitoring: Assistant Headteacher – RSL

Dissemination: Website, Staff Sharepoint

Links to other relevant policies: Curriculum Policy, Home Learning Policy

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of assessment is, ultimately, to help students to learn more and remember more. Assessment achieves this by:

1. Providing information to teachers about what students know, understand and can do, so that teachers can systematically plan the next stages of teaching and learning
2. Provide information to Subject Leaders about the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching, so that adaptations can be made where needed, to improve learning
3. Assist students to embed their knowledge and use it fluently
4. Provide information to students (and home) about the progress that has been made and about the next steps for learning.

Fundamentally, assessment enables us to understand if children are learning what we planned to teach them. Assessment evidences how well students have learnt knowledge which has been taught recently, and how well knowledge has been remembered from previous units, years or phases.

Our approaches to assessment draw on practice which has been shown to be effective and includes evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation. Our approach to assessment is also in-line with the other secondary schools across Westcountry Schools Trust. All subjects implement our Assessment Policy, adapting pedagogical approaches to align with their subject curriculum and 'what works best'.

Our common principles for assessment are:

1. It must be frequent and timely
2. It must be aligned with the curriculum, and must relate to the intended learning objectives
3. It must be time-efficient and purposeful so that precious learning time is used productively
4. It must be time-efficient for teachers so that their work time is used productively

5. It must be used to inform curriculum review, future teaching, and to repair student misconceptions.
6. It must be integrated with our wider approaches to teaching (e.g. metacognition, retrieval and home learning)
7. It must be fair and accessible to all students.

Section 2: Assessment Strategies

Our selected assessment strategies can be separated into four strands:

Strand 1: 'Live' Assessment

Assessment which happens as an integral part of teaching is termed 'Live Assessment'. Our live assessments happen in-class and provides instant feedback to teachers (and students) about what students know, understand and can do. Live assessment provides instant feedback to the teacher and student about the success of instruction and informs the next steps within the lesson, or sequence of lessons. We use the following approaches which have been shown to be effective through secure educational research:

1. **The Ten Zone tasks** are used to begin every lesson. These are pre-planned and structured to elicit understanding and recall of learning from previous lessons (last lesson, last week, last year) and always include a question which checks knowledge and understanding of building blocks for the lesson to come.
2. **Verbal Questioning:**
 - Providing 'think time' for all questions so that students have an opportunity to develop their answers and to consider how to explain this in their response.
 - No opt out: using strategies such as Cold Calling and mini-white boards to ensure all students participate and there is no 'opt out'.
 - Extending answers by asking for more detail, examples, key words or by bouncing questions to other students to expand on.
3. **Circulating during the lesson:**
 - Teachers actively and frequently monitor and review students' work, check understanding and advise on next steps during the lesson.
 - Where appropriate, teachers will use this as an opportunity to 'live mark' students' work or provide verbal live feedback.
 - Teachers prioritise spending time with disadvantaged students, and those with SEND as part of our wider strategies to raise achievement.
4. **Check Zone:**
 - Check Zone Questions are low-stakes in nature but are an important tool in assessment, both for teacher understanding of what has been learnt, and to assist students to be able to memorise and use key facts and knowledge.
 - Check Zone Questions are characterised by targeted questions closely matched to the learning objectives and acquisition of key knowledge and facts, so that teachers can diagnose specific misconceptions or problems.
 - Teachers use low-stakes language, "I want to find out how successful my teaching has been" which relieves unnecessary anxiety for students and creates a climate in which students are able to participate without fear of failure.
 - Check Zone Questions are done in silence so that teachers understand what each student can do and understand independently.

- Check Zone Questions are commonly used at ‘hinge points’ within lessons and at the end of a lesson.

Strand 2: Marking

Marking students’ work plays an important role in a teacher understanding what learning is taking place, and what students have understood. For further details about the school’s approaches see ‘Feedback and Response’ (Appendix 1).

Strand 3: Common Assessments

Key Stage 3

Students in Years 7 to 9 complete structured assessments at two points throughout the academic year in Maths, English, Science, Geography, History, MFL and Computer Science. These Common Assessments are in-line, where appropriate, with the other secondary schools across the Westcountry Schools Trust. This is to ensure shared planning, feedback, strengths and common misconceptions can be addressed collaboratively.

These Common Assessments are based on the following:

- Knowledge and skills from current units.
- Knowledge and skills from past learning from the wider curriculum.

These Common Assessments are carefully designed to support teachers to be able to identify misconceptions and direct repair and intervention.

Preparation for Common Assessments is standardised as follows:

1. Students (and home) are given notice of the date of their Common Assessment, to support point 2 below.
2. The use of pre-test material (manifesto). This material is designed to give revision practice of key topic areas within the Common Assessments. Pre-test material is broader than that within the assessments themselves. The use of pre-test material supports teachers to diagnose gaps and misunderstandings before the assessments, and to be able to correct these before the assessment is completed. Pre-test material is typically provided for students during a lesson which is around 1 week before the test.
3. Supported preparation of revision notes, in a suitable format. Students are taught how to summarise their learning.
4. Knowledge Organisers are available for each Unit and used as a key resource to support revision. Our Knowledge Organisers summarise the key facts and knowledge which students need to memorise for each Unit.
5. Revision tasks via homework: students will be expected, via their homework, to undertake appropriate revision for an appropriate time period prior to the Common Assessments. The quantity of revision expected shall be in line with the expectations of the ‘Home Learning’ policy. Revision will take place for a number of weeks which aligns with the age and stage of the students: For years 7 and 8, one week; for year 9, two weeks.

Teachers will not expect students in Key Stage 3 to take formal assessments more frequently than twice per academic year. To do so would create unnecessary workload and pressure for both students and teachers and does not represent good value in terms of the investment of lesson time in preparing for, taking and reviewing the assessment.

Students with special educational needs will be supported to be able to access these Common Assessments in line with their Pupil Profiles.

Common Assessments will be made up of different styles of questions: short answer, multiple choice, structured answer and longer answer/essay-type questions as appropriate to the topics being assessed.

Common Assessments are marked by teachers outside of lesson time following a set mark-scheme. Where more than one teacher is delivering a subject, the subject team will standardise a sample of assessments, selecting questions where answers are more likely to vary and require teacher judgement.

Teachers will provide class feedback on these Common Assessments, identifying misconceptions and re-teaching topics where students have not yet understood the key knowledge. Where appropriate, teachers will adapt future plans (e.g. by including target topics in **Ten Zone** tasks or Home Learning tasks).

Students' marks will be collated and recorded within department systems so that they can be used to inform the following:

- Curriculum review: adapting teaching plans where topics have been challenging for students to learn.
- Reporting (e.g. progress reviews, targeted parents' evenings)
- Planning for teacher training including training for developing subject knowledge

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will complete a structured 'End of Term' Practical Assessment in Art, DT, Catering, PE, Drama and Music. This will demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired by students across the academic year.

NB. Students do not do Common Assessments in PSHE. Their progress in this subject is assessed using an assessment grid, best suited to the subject. For further details about assessment in this subject, please contact the Subject Leader.

Key Stage 4

Students in Year 10 will follow the same process as Key Stage 3 above, with the addition of their End of Year 10 Assessments. These will take place at the end of the Summer Term. The purpose of these assessments is to provide Subject Leaders, Subject Teachers, and the Senior Leadership Team with a clear understanding of where students are ahead of their final year of their GCSE courses. These End of Year 10 Assessments are aligned with the other secondary schools across Westcountry Schools Trust.

Students in Year 11 take Mock examinations at the end of the Autumn Term and again in the Spring Term. These are aligned with the other secondary schools across Westcountry Schools Trust. Ahead of these examinations, students (and home) will receive an 'Examination Series Manifesto' which outlines the content of each exam paper and key details on how students can revise.

Where students have been granted Access Arrangements (from Year 10 onwards), teachers will make every effort to provide this support for formal assessments. This may include, for example, extra time, a reader or scribe, rest breaks, access to a laptop.



Assessment Policy APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

Feedback and Response

Sir James Smith's School: Effective Feedback and Response

This document aims to ensure a systemic, robust and consistent approach to feedback as a key strand of our whole school assessment policy. Our approach to teacher feedback and student response is one that adopts a blended and sustainable model: it acts to offer clear and meaningful guidance for our learners to support their learning and mastery of the curriculum, whilst also balancing this with the workload of staff.

Evidence shows that good quality feedback has a strong positive impact on student progress. In order for feedback to have a significant **impact on learning**, it must be an integral part of our teaching, ensuring students - as successful reflective learners - know how to 'bridge the gap' between where they are and where they need to be. Students must respond appropriately and in a sustained way to the feedback given using their **red pen** to enhance and improve their performance. It is essential that this is revisited by the teacher to enhance the impact on learning.

Guidance in this document represents the minimum expectation to ensure progress is supported and to inform effective future planning. Subject areas and teachers (in agreement with the Subject Leaders and Line Managers) may use their professional judgement to develop feedback practice in order to accelerate student progress where there is a need and for an appropriate period of time. This will be reflected in the subject assessment protocol.

As part of our blended approach, when reviewing and assessing students' work, teachers are expected to ensure the following:

1. Maximise and exploit opportunities for responsive and immediate 'live' feedback within the lesson

Within the lesson, live feedback is a powerful tool that enables the teacher to support the deepening of students' understanding and thinking, addressing any misconceptions that arise, whilst also monitoring standards and providing any further scaffolding that may be required. It enables the teacher to engage in dialogue with the individual student, check their understanding and review their progress. In addition, the teacher can respond to misconceptions quickly and to act immediately if it is identified that the misconception is more

widespread; this enables the teacher to adjust their teaching accordingly, addressing on a whole class basis, and to review the small-step development for the class.

- It is expected that all students will receive live feedback *once – as a minimum - across a series of seven lessons*. However, *disadvantaged and SEND students will be prioritised* in line with each Subject’s PP and SEND plans.

2. Consistent and effective use of whole class feedback

- As a minimum requirement, it is expected that one whole-class feedback sheet will be used by the teacher for each class* per half term after reviewing a set of books/student work, including home learning. The details of this for each subject will be outlined in the subject assessment protocol to ensure consistency.
- The Whole Class Feedback lesson is expected to be evidenced in the student’s book or folder, and it is expected that this is tailored to the class. The ‘Next Steps’ tasks should be prepopulated, and students will then be directed to which task(s) they are expected to complete in line with their learning needs.

** For those subjects with lower contact time, there is not the expectation for a whole class feedback sheet, although they may choose to do so. This applies to those subjects who are timetabled with classes once per week, including Core PE.*

- This is our whole-class feedback template below:

Whole Class Feedback		Date:	Class:
Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••	Misconceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••		
SPaG Matters Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	



- If there is a shared class, the responsibility for Whole Class Feedback should be made clear by the Subject Leader.
- Clear and ambitious steps for improvement in learning should be set through the ‘Next Steps’ tasks. These tasks must be learning focused and ambitious; they must be designed to move the students’ learning forward, deepening their understanding and supporting their mastery of the curriculum through their degree of complexity. Each task is allocated to relevant students in the lesson.
- The feedback to students will include a review of home learning for those subjects where home learning applies (please refer to the Home Learning Policy for more information).

3. Regular and effective use of self and peer assessment

- All other independently completed work will be assessed in some way. For example, an extended piece of writing completed in lesson or for homework. It should take the form of self or peer-assessment.
- Our expectation is that peer and self-assessment is clearly evidenced in students' books and work **within each lesson** as it is an important learning tool. This will be closely linked to success criteria and students may require some scaffolding to ensure that this is completed purposefully and meaningfully, appropriate to the stage and age of the students.
- Teachers will mark in **GREEN** pen. Students will use **RED** pen for self/peer assessment as well as when addressing the 'Next Steps' tasks.
- Sufficient time must be planned in each lesson for high-quality and sustained student responses to take place in light of feedback to further deepen and extend students' understanding and/or to address any misconceptions and to correct literacy errors.
- Visualisers are also an effective way of sharing student work and for providing feedback, which supports our whole-school metacognition focus.

4. Consistent use of whole-school expectations

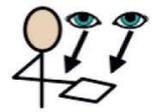
- The following SPaG corrections are to be used to ensure consistency for self and peer assessment:

Code	Meaning
Sp	Spelling
C	Capital letter
G	Grammar
P	Punctuation
H	Handwriting
^	Missing word
BW	Better word
WW	Wrong word
?	Meaning unclear
//	New paragraph needed

- Our 'P-R-O-U-D' strategy supports students in demonstrating a strong sense of pride in their work:

Be **PROUD** of your work

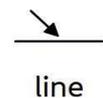
P Presentation



R Ruler to underline



O On the line or squares
when writing



line

U Use a black/blue pen
when writing



D Draw in pencil

