

Ponteland High School

A framework of assessment – our approach

Ambition

When Ponteland High School students finish each stage of their education, whether this be at the end of Key Stage 4 or 5, we want them to have learnt and mastered the prescribed subject knowledge, understanding and skills set out within each subject curriculum plan so they are able to think, talk, and write confidently about their learning.

Purpose

We see the purpose of assessment as having two main elements, if you will; Assessment and assessment:

1. Assessment: Informal assessment opportunities
 - 1.1. Formative assessment activities used by the teacher to gauge learning, identify misconceptions and errors, and respond to this either within a lesson or using the assessment information to inform future lessons
2. Assessment: Formal assessment opportunities
 - 2.1. To assess the extent to which students have learned and mastered the taught curriculum through summative tests and exams
 - 2.2. To use summative data to inform teacher assessments and provide feedback to students/parents about progress and attainment against personal targets

In summary, assessment activities should be carefully designed to capture the knowledge and understanding students have at identified end points, and subsequent assessment design should imaginatively enable students to demonstrate progress and understanding in each curriculum topic or unit of work.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment takes many forms but is primarily used to inform teaching by identifying what is known and has been remembered. It can also highlight common misconceptions or misunderstandings that teachers can respond to constructively. Formative assessment strategies consistently identify the key stages of:

- **What a student knows, understands and can do about a particular topic/concept or content**
- **Where gaps exist in the learning and possible reasons for these**
- **What the next steps in learning are both for the teacher and student**
- **The sharing and development of the criteria to progress through those next steps**

An important component of formative assessment is that students are active participants in the process; this includes opportunities for monitoring and assessment of their own learning. We see value in providing opportunities for students to assess their own work

(self-assessment) or provide feedback and targets for improvement of their classmates (peer-assessment).

The way formative assessment strategies are used prompts teacher reflection on classroom practice and helps identify useful information about student understanding. This ensures that teachers and students are responsive to 'live' assessment information in order to respond quickly to refine pedagogical content to make learning secure. Key assessment strategies include:

- 1. Effective questioning strategies that enable an assessment and demonstration of knowledge and understanding**
 - 1.1. Highly effective questioning, for assessment purposes, is characterised by teachers providing wait/think time to establish an opportunity for every student to actively engage in the activity, which leads to longer responses and more in-depth discussion.
 - 1.2. We encourage:
 - 1.2.1. Hinge-questioning, enabling teachers to quickly establish an assessment of understanding at key learning points
 - 1.2.2. Collaborative opportunities such as 'Think-Pair-Share' to enable students to learn from one another and broaden their understanding
- 2. Learning intentions are universally focused on Knowledge, Understanding and Skills**
 - 2.1. Formative assessment is most effective where students have a clear understanding of what is being taught and why
 - 2.2. Learning objectives clearly define these intentions by making it explicitly clear what the knowledge, understanding and skills will be in a lesson or series of lesson
 - 2.3. This format is used in all subjects without exception
- 3. Sharing and developing success criteria in assessment tasks**
 - 3.1. Success criteria expand on the learning intentions and specify a clear set of conditions that pupils must meet
 - 3.2. Success criteria clarify key information that can be used to assess where, or to what extent, the pupils have achieved the learning intentions
 - 3.3. We provide opportunities to enable students to actively use success criteria to develop an understanding of the key characteristics of successful work.
- 4. Effective written feedback**
 - 4.1. We have a whole-school approach to diagnostic assessment
 - 4.1.1. 'PENS' approach (Positives, Errors, Next Steps and Student Response).
 - 4.2. PENS is used at least half-termly to provide detailed feedback on an identified piece of work in each department area
 - 4.3. Students are given time to act on feedback, in order to make necessary improvements to their work

5. Peer and self-assessment opportunities

- 5.1. Peer and self-assessment strategies are used to activate students in the assessment process
- 5.2. This encourages greater responsibility and understanding in relation to their own learning, creating more resilient, motivated and independent learners in the longer term
- 5.3. Through peer and self-assessment activities, students can recognise and learn from previous mistakes and weaknesses in order to target them accordingly

Summative Assessment

It is important to understand that our curriculum drives and determines our assessment system; whilst important, assessment does not come before the intentions of the curriculum.

Summative assessment is any method of evaluation performed at the end of a series of lessons (unit of work) or time period (half term/term). This enables teachers to measure a student's understanding against standardised criteria.

Summative Assessment at Key Stage 3 – Our Assessment Steps

Our KS3 assessment system allows each curriculum area to provide a series of carefully planned, bespoke assessment steps to enable students (and their parents) to develop a more detailed understanding of their current standard and how to progress further. Students should be able to identify their achievements in each subject, and signpost the next stages for improvement.

Subject leaders have thought carefully about what a young geographer, musician or scientist should know, understand and be able to do at each stage in Key Stage 3, and this is used to plan summative assessment tasks that capture the curriculum content taught in a challenging and progressive way.

Students and parents have access to the assessment steps via the school website and summative information/data are shared with parents on a termly basis.

Assessment for examination success in KS 4 & 5

Assessments within Key Stage 4 & 5 are used to build the skills required to achieve examination success. Students use a variety of coordinated and planned assessment opportunities and exam practice techniques to further consolidate the key understanding and skills necessary to succeed in Level 2 & 3 qualifications.