HEREFORDSHIRE PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE

HPRS

ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Overview

At Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service (HPRS) we will ensure that pupils get the maximum benefit from their education through regular assessment and high-quality feedback from staff. This will enable all pupils to understand their progress and achievement and apprise them of what they need to do to improve.

Principles

At HPRS we provide positive and constructive assessment information in line with the ethos of the school. We strive to ensure pupils understand their strengths and understand how to improve and develop their future work:
- assessment is regular and consistent
- assessment is easily understood by pupils and their parents/carers
- baseline information is gathered upon admission from their host school and through class assessment external, multi-agency assessment is sought, as appropriate
- achievements of pupils are appropriately recorded
- behaviour and classroom success are recorded, reported and celebrated through the reward system
- pastoral needs of pupils are assessed collaboratively with pupil, parent and key teachers and through reviews, briefings and staff meetings, which is shared with relevant staff

Purpose

Assessment at HPRS:
- is used to help teachers monitor pupils' progress
- is used to inform what has and has not been understood by pupils to inform future planning
- allows us to recognise achievements and to give encouragement to build confidence
- informs target setting and next steps in learning (involving support as and when necessary)
- is used to motivate pupils'
- is integrated into the planning and processes of teaching and learning
- forms the basis of regular discussion with the pupils

- helps pupils to be constructively self-critical and improves their motivation and self-esteem
- leads to further detailed exploration of areas presenting difficulties
- informs decisions about future learning activities to be undertaken
- takes place in the context of full recognition of the wider achievement of pupils
- leads to judgements about pupil achievement which are consistent and reliable
- is established within a manageable framework

Assessment Approaches at HPRS

At HPRS we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

We use three broad overarching forms of assessment: day-to-day in-school formative assessment, in-school summative assessment and nationally standardised summative assessment. Summative assessment outcomes are captured via the HPRS MIS – Arbor.

In-school formative assessment

Effective in-school formative assessment enables:
- Teachers to identify how pupils are performing on a continuing basis and to use this information to provide appropriate support or extension, evaluate teaching and plan future lessons.
- Pupils to measure their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives and identify areas in which they need to improve.
- Parents to gain a broad picture of where their child's strengths and weaknesses lie, and what they need to do to improve.

In-school summative assessment

Effective in-school summative assessment enables:
- School leaders to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment.
- Teachers to evaluate learning at the end of a unit or period and the impact of their own teaching.
- Pupils to understand how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time. It should be used to provide feedback on how they can improve.
- Parents to stay informed about the achievement, progress and wider outcomes of their child across a period.

Nationally standardised summative assessment

Nationally standardised summative assessment enables:
- School leaders to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment.
- Teachers to understand national expectations and assess their own performance in the broader national context.
- Pupils and parents to understand how pupils are performing in comparison to pupils nationally.

Nationally standardised summative assessments at HPRS take the form of GCSEs and vocational qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4 (end of Year 11).

Reporting at HPRS

- Reporting will be carried out in line with any national or local guidelines, at the direction of the Heads of Centre at HPRS.
- Formal written reporting to parents/carers takes place once a year (Parents/Carers will be issued with an Annual Report for their child), and through the annual EHC Plan, where appropriate.
- Reporting of results publicly will be carried out in line with statutory requirements.

Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of pupils' special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all pupils. However, this should also consider the effort the pupil puts in as well as the outcomes achieved.

For pupils working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to pupil starting points and take this into account alongside the nature of pupils' learning difficulties.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Senior leaders will monitor this policy and the effectiveness of assessment practices across HPRS, through:

- Regular review of subject assessment records and progress data;
- Regular work scrutiny windows;
- Evidence from learning walks and lesson observations;
- Monitoring of individual pupil reports;
- Attendance at mentoring/review sessions;
- Review of assessment data spreadsheets and monitoring and evaluation of individual pupil progress against baseline assessment data.

Baseline Assessment (Entry level assessment)

Upon entry to HPRS, pupils are assessed across several key subjects, skills and competencies. An overall assessment is made based upon the outcomes of these assessments alongside data from the home or previous school.

For further guidance on baseline assessment approaches please see **Appendix 1**.

Formative (ongoing) Assessment

Staff undertake individual assessments relating to the learning objectives set for each lesson or unit of work. The method allows teachers to frequently check their learners' progress and the effectiveness of their own practice, allowing for self-assessment of their pupils.

For further guidance on marking and formative assessment approaches please see **Appendix 2.**

Summative Assessment

A summative assessment of pupil progress and achievements is completed at the end of each half term or unit of work in each curriculum area. This supports reporting to parents, assessing pupil progress and informs, in KS4, considerations around entry for GCSE, Functional Skills, BTEC, ASDAN and LIBF qualifications.

For further guidance on summative assessment approaches please see **Appendix 3.**

Target Setting

Target setting is an essential component for growth and development in our pupils for several reasons:
- It personalises the learning process based on their needs.
- It creates intention and motivation that empowers pupils.
- It establishes accountability to shift responsibility to pupils.

For further guidance on target setting approaches please see **Appendix 4.**

Appendix 1 Baseline Testing Guidance

The goal of baseline testing is to assess incoming pupils' academic skills and knowledge in key areas like mathematics, reading, writing, and science. This helps in identifying pupils' strengths and areas that may need further support or development.

1. Objectives of Baseline Testing

- **Assess Academic Readiness:** To understand where students stand in terms of foundational knowledge and skills.
- **Guide Curriculum and Teaching:** To inform teachers about the needs of their pupils, enabling tailored teaching.
- **Track Academic Progress:** To serve as a reference point for tracking academic growth over the course of a key stage(s).
- **Identify Support Needs:** To identify pupils who may require additional resources, such as tutoring or academic interventions.

2. Testing Areas and Subjects

- **Mathematics:** Test pupils on basic arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and problem-solving. This will provide insight into their mathematical understanding and readiness for Functional Skills and GCSE courses.
- **Reading:** Assess reading comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking. The aim is to gauge how well pupils understand and analyse text.
- **Writing:** Evaluate pupils' ability to write clearly and coherently, with attention to grammar, punctuation, and organisation. A short essay or written response to a prompt could be used.
- **Science:** Assess pupils' understanding of basic scientific principles in biology, chemistry, and physics.

3. Develop or Select the Assessment Tools

- **Standardised and Diagnostic Tests:** The use of BKSB, NGRT and GL Assessment tools are all acceptable and worthwhile in assessing academic standards and ability on entry. Consider tools that provide detailed insights into specific areas of weakness or strength (e.g., reading fluency assessments, diagnostic maths tests).
- **Teacher-Developed Assessments:** Develop your own assessments tailored to specific curriculum expectations. Consider student self-marking assessments to capture what they already know or can do within a subject area.

4. Administer the Tests

- **Timing:** Plan for the baseline tests to be administered within the first few days of a pupil joining. It may be useful to break the assessments up into more manageable chunks. For annual re-testing purposes, the first weeks of the school year would be a good time for testing, so that the results can be used to guide teaching early on.
- **Test Environment:** Ensure a quiet, distraction-free environment to help pupils perform to the best of their ability.
- **Test Instructions:** Provide clear instructions on how to complete the tests and what is expected of them. Try to encourage pupils to do their best so that the test outcome is an accurate representation of ability.
- **Time Allocation:** Be mindful of time limits—while you want to gather useful data, ensure the testing period is not overwhelming for the pupils.

5. Interpret the Results

- **Data Analysis:** Look for trends in pupil performance—identify areas of strength and areas that may require additional attention.
- **Group vs. Individual Results:** If applicable, consider analysing results on both a group level (to understand general trends) and an individual level (to identify specific needs).
- **Incorporate Multiple Data Points:** Combine baseline testing with other pupil data (home school grades, teacher observations, etc.) to form a comprehensive understanding of each pupil's academic level.

6. Provide Feedback and Follow-Up

- **Communicate Results:** Consider sharing results with pupils in a supportive, constructive manner – if this is deemed appropriate. Focus on development opportunities rather than just areas where the pupil has struggled.
- **Create Individual Learning Plans:** Based on the test results, develop plans that address pupils' unique academic needs. Offer personalised strategies, resources, and support.
- **Monitor Progress:** Periodically reassess pupils' progress throughout the school year to ensure they're on track, using both formative and summative assessments.

7. Foster a Positive Testing Environment

- **Reduce Anxiety:** Emphasise that the baseline test is a tool to help pupils succeed, not a judgment of their abilities. Encourage a growth mindset.
- **Student Engagement:** Consider using interactive formats (e.g., digital tools or gamified assessments) to make the experience more engaging and less stressful.

This guidance will help create a clear and effective baseline testing strategy for incoming pupils to HPRS, ensuring that their academic needs are identified and addressed right from the start.

Appendix 2 Marking and Formative Feedback Guidance

1. Meaningful Feedback:
- **Clear Learning Objectives:** Ensure that each assessment is tied to specific learning objectives. When providing feedback, reference these objectives to show pupils how their work aligns with the expected outcomes and goals.
- **Actionable Comments:** Provide feedback that helps pupils understand *why* they received a particular grade and how they can improve. Use What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI). Pupils should respond to teacher feedback using purple pen (staff mark in green pen). It is recognised that some pupils will find using alternative pen colours difficult – therefore identifying pupil responses using a yellow highlighter pen is also acceptable.
- **Focus on Progress:** Highlight areas of improvement, not just what needs work. Celebrate what they've done well alongside what they can improve. Utilise DIRT where possible – perhaps use questions to elicit responses from pupils.
- **Depth over Quantity:** Prioritise deeper, more thoughtful feedback on key areas of the pupil's work instead of commenting on every minor detail.
- **Verbal Feedback:** Most pupils respond positively to verbal feedback – you can clarify and elaborate immediately. Studies show (Education Endowment Foundation) that verbal feedback can improve pupil progress significantly. You might wish to include an indicator in the pupil's book or folder to show that verbal feedback has been given.

2. Manageable Marking:

- **Use Rubrics:** Provide pupils with clear rubrics or marking criteria before they submit their work. This sets expectations and streamlines the marking process, as you can simply align their work with the rubric's criteria.
- **Consistency:** Mark in blocks or batches. For instance, mark all pupils' introductions or conclusion sections first, before moving on to the next part of the work. This can help reduce marking fatigue and ensure consistency in feedback.
- **Prioritise Key Areas:** Focus on the key aspects of the assignment that align with learning objectives. For example, if the task is about writing skills, focus on clarity, structure, and coherence, rather than minor grammatical errors.
- **Peer Marking and Self-Assessment:** Use peer reviews or self-assessments to reduce marking workload. This also encourages pupils to take ownership of their learning and engage with assessment criteria more deeply.

3. Motivating Students:
- **Encourage Growth Mindset:** Frame your feedback in a way that encourages pupils to see challenges as opportunities for growth. Use phrases like "I can see you're making progress in your critical thinking, and with more practice, this can become even stronger."
- **Praise Effort and Improvement:** Acknowledge the effort they put in and the progress they've made, not just the final product. Positive reinforcement can build their confidence and encourage further engagement.
- **Goal Setting:** Help pupils set specific goals for improvement based on feedback. This makes the process more personalised and gives pupils a clear direction for their next steps.

- **Celebrate Successes:** Include positive reinforcement and celebrate milestones, even small ones. Positive feedback motivates continued effort and demonstrates that progress is recognised.

Marking should be a tool for learning, not just an evaluation. When feedback is meaningful, manageable, and motivating, it can significantly boost pupil engagement, learning outcomes, and overall academic progress.

Appendix 3 Summative Assessment Guidance

Summative assessments are important tools for evaluating pupils' overall understanding and mastery of a particular subject at the end of a set teaching topic or period. The information below is guidance for staff so that they may effectively approach summative assessments. Summative assessment data is collected via Arbor marksheets every half term.

Assessment timing:
- Consider carefully the timing of assessments. Do they coincide with the end of topics and do they support the collection of performance data – i.e. half termly assessment points.
- Try to ensure that assessments support reporting to parents in written form or parent's evenings.
- Assessments that support transitions between key stages or settings are valuable and should be timed accordingly.
- Baseline assessments are vital and should be undertaken as soon as is possible on entry to the service. Considerations should be made to the pupil context and how testing will affect them (see baseline testing guidance).

Clearly Define Learning Outcomes:

- Make sure that the summative assessment aligns with the learning objectives you've set for the unit or piece of set work.
- Provide pupils with a rubric or clear criteria for how their work will be evaluated.

Varied Assessment Types:

- Consider using a variety of assessment formats (e.g., multiple-choice, short-answer, essays, projects, presentations) to assess a range of skills and competencies.
- This will help accommodate different learning styles and abilities.

Provide Revision Resources:

- If applicable, offer pupils resources like study guides, practice tests, or review sessions before the assessment to ensure they are adequately prepared.

Encourage Academic Integrity:

- Clearly communicate your expectations for academic honesty, including policies around cheating and plagiarism.
- Create an environment that fosters trust and fairness in the assessment process.

Offer Timely Feedback:

- After the assessment, provide feedback to help students understand their strengths and areas for improvement.
- If possible, allow for reflection and follow-up to help pupils learn from their mistakes.

Accommodate Diverse Needs:

- Ensure that accommodations for pupils with specific learning needs, such as extended time or alternative formats are implemented.

Review and Reflect:

- After marking, take time to review the assessment results to see if there were common areas where pupils struggled. This can help guide future planning and improve your teaching methods.

This guidance should ensure that both pupils and staff can utilise summative assessments in a meaningful and fair way to evaluate pupils learning to date, while providing valuable insights for future learning and teaching.

Appendix 4 Academic target Setting Guidance

Setting academic targets is an essential practice in fostering pupils progress, motivation, and achievement. It's important to approach target-setting with clear strategies that are both challenging and supportive. The guidance below supports setting effective and meaningful academic targets for pupils:

1. Understand the Purpose of Setting Targets

- **Motivation and Focus**: Targets provide pupils with clear goals, which can boost motivation and direct their efforts.
- **Personal Growth**: Targets are an opportunity for pupils to identify their strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Accountability**: Setting targets helps pupils take responsibility for their learning while allowing teachers to track and guide progress.

2. Ensure Targets Are SMART

- **Specific**: Targets should clearly outline what the pupil needs to achieve. Avoid vague goals like "do better in class." Instead, focus on specific actions or outcomes (e.g., "Increase maths test scores by 10%").
- **Measurable**: There should be a way to track progress toward the target (e.g., "Submit 90% of homework assignments on time").
- **Achievable**: The target should be realistic and within the pupil's reach, considering their current abilities and resources.
- **Relevant**: Ensure the target aligns with the pupil's academic needs and personal aspirations. It should be meaningful to them.
- **Time-bound**: Set a clear timeframe for achieving the target, whether it's a short-term goal (e.g., one month) or a longer-term goal (e.g., by the end of the semester).

3. Incorporate Student Input

- **Collaborative Goal Setting**: Engage pupils in the process of setting their own targets. This increases their investment in their learning and helps them feel empowered.
- **Self-Reflection**: Ask pupils to reflect on their current academic performance, strengths, and areas for improvement before setting goals. This can be done through discussions, surveys, or self-assessment tools.

4. Differentiate Targets Based on Individual Needs

- **Personalization**: Recognise that pupils have unique strengths and challenges. Differentiating targets based on pupils' individual needs helps ensure they are motivated and set up for success.
- **Stretch Goals**: Some pupils may need more challenging targets to stretch their abilities, while others might need goals that focus on reinforcing foundational skills.

5. Break Large Goals into Smaller Milestones

- **Sub-Goals**: Help pupils break down their larger academic goals into smaller, manageable milestones. For example, if the overall goal is to improve writing skills, sub-goals might include "complete a first draft" or "revise one paragraph per week."
- **Trackable Progress**: Regularly check on progress toward these milestones to keep pupils focused and allow for adjustments when necessary.

6. Use Data to Inform Target-Setting

- **Analyse Performance Data**: Review past performance, assessments, and pupil work to identify trends and areas of improvement. This will help in setting realistic yet challenging targets.
- **Formative Assessments**: Use quizzes, assignments, and class activities to gauge where pupils stand and adjust targets accordingly.
- **Provide Baseline Measurements**: Before setting targets, ensure pupils know where they currently stand academically, so they can better understand the steps needed to improve.

7. Encourage a Growth Mindset

- **Emphasise Effort and Progress**: Reinforce the idea that intelligence and skills can be developed through hard work and perseverance. Encourage pupils to view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles.
- **Feedback and Reflection**: Provide constructive feedback that focuses on how pupils can improve. Regularly check in with pupils to reflect on their progress and make necessary adjustments to their targets.

8. Incorporate Multiple Stakeholders

- **Parental Involvement**: Keep parents informed about their child's academic targets. They can offer support and encouragement outside of the classroom.
- **Peer Support**: Encourage collaborative learning. Peer groups can help motivate pupils, share strategies, and keep each other accountable.

9. Monitor and Adjust Targets as Needed

- **Frequent Check-ins**: Regularly assess pupils' progress toward their targets and adjust when necessary. If pupils are falling short of their targets, reassess whether the goals were realistic or if more support is needed.
- **Celebrate Achievements**: Acknowledge pupils' successes, whether big or small. Celebrating progress helps reinforce the importance of goal setting and builds confidence.

10. Foster a Positive and Supportive Environment

- **Encouragement and Praise**: Provide positive reinforcement and celebrate small wins. Recognising effort helps motivate pupils to continue working toward their targets.
- **Support Resources**: Make sure pupils know what resources are available to help them achieve their targets, whether it's tutoring, online resources, or office hours.

By following these guidelines, teachers can set academic targets that are clear, motivating, and achievable for pupils. This process helps pupils take ownership of their learning, provides structure for success, and fosters a positive classroom environment that emphasises growth and improvement.