



## Assessment and Feedback Policy

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## ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

1. Thomas Tallis School Plan 2023 -24 has six aims.

1	A powerful curriculum
2	The best teaching and learning
3	Great achievement and progress
4	Excellent personal development
5	Behaviour for a strong community
6	A model for a better world

As part of aim 6 Thomas Tallis School has adopted the *Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education*. This means that we try to behave in a principled and correct manner in everything we do.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. We therefore behave with **selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership**. We demonstrate **trust, wisdom, kindness, justice, service, courage and optimism**.

## 1. Principles of assessment and feedback

We understand assessment as a 'procedure for drawing inferences' (Cronbach, 1971). We ask students to do things and then make inferences about their learning based on the outcomes. These inferences can be summative or formative, but they involve teachers making qualitative judgements about student work and where it could be improved. Research on effective assessment is inconclusive (Dann, 2018). What we do know is that giving students access to powerful disciplinary knowledge is most likely to be achieved by experts within those fields. We therefore resist generic approaches that tightly prescribe how specialised disciplines deliver feedback. Instead, we use four guiding principles that inform our practice. Assessment should be:

- I. **Disciplinary:** assessments aim to test understanding within specific domains of knowledge. Therefore, there needs to be agreement on what kind of knowledge is embodied within the subject. We would expect assessments to look different (both in terms of their content and methods of pooling teacher judgement) in different subject areas.
- II. **Authentic:** Rooted in the curriculum and not driven by national tests
- III. **Reliable:** Consistently applied, widely understood, generating useful data that can help uncover problems and raise achievement
- IV. **Purposeful:** Assessment should be timely and meaningful. It should focus on moving learning forward and supporting student understanding

## 2. Tallis Tiers of Achievement

At KS3, there are five tiers of achievement that refer to a student's achievement in relation to expectations for their age range. They set out the knowledge, skills and concepts taught within each subject across years 7-9, building year on year to increase the level of challenge. Our focus is on ensuring a high-quality curriculum so that students develop a broad range of capabilities. Each subject has a clear vision and a sequenced curriculum that allows access to powerful knowledge over time. Assessment is, therefore, best conceived of as a tool to infer how successfully students have learnt and accessed the curriculum. When reporting attainment, students will be assigned one of five tiers – Approaching, Developing, Securing, Excelling, Exceeding. At KS4 and 5, attainment grades reflect the national 9-1 and A\*-E grading system respectively.

## 3. Formative assessment

By formative assessment we mean using evidence from teaching and learning to adapt our practice and improve students' achievement. Effective formative feedback needs to focus on moving learning forward, considering how the student will receive and act on it. It is usually given during the teaching of a unit of work with the intention of diagnosing areas of strength and weakness. It will involve a mixture of personal and whole class approaches and will focus specifically on addressing misconceptions and identifying excellence. It won't result in a grade but rather generates concrete ways to achieve success in the future.

Feedback is only meaningful when built on a strong foundation of high-quality teaching by subject specialists. Therefore, all subject areas have devised their own marking and

feedback policies. We do this to avoid a generic approach that dictates when and what is assessed, and the specific methods used. This is in line with research from the EEF that states 'There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach in terms of choosing the appropriate method or time for delivering feedback. These decisions are best made by teachers in the classroom in response to specific circumstances as they arise' (EEF *Teacher feedback to improve student learning*).

Our expectations for formative assessment across the curriculum are:

- I. **Actively Engage** - students actively do something with feedback, either redrafting or applying to new work
- II. **Receive** - students receive a combination of individual and whole class feedback each half-term, depending on the subject and unit of work
- III. **Require** - all departments specify, in collaboration with AHT teaching and learning and DHT curriculum, how and when formative assessment takes place and what it looks like in the subject area. This is part of the development of faculty handbooks and our wider commitment to subject specific teaching and learning

Formative assessment will include, but not be limited to, a combination of the below:

- Whole class feedback – use of a generic template that addresses common misconceptions, areas for development, and excellence; use of DIRT lessons to respond to feedback, group modelling, use of student and teacher exemplars
- Live assessment and feedback – use of retrieval activities, mini-whiteboards, peer assessment, teacher circulation to find areas of excellence and common misconceptions, use of visualisers and other live modelling techniques, frequent and targeted no hands up questioning
- Individual feedback – use of feedback stickers/stamps, feedback on work in books (this may be best delivered through one-to-one discussion in the classroom), individual conversations with students about their work

#### 4. **Summative assessment**

The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate students' learning at the end of a unit of work. Depending on the nature of the assessment, students will be given a mark, grade, or tier of achievement. At KS3, where appropriate, subjects use assessments with a numerical outcome to generate an internal ranking of the cohort. This ensures summative assessment gives an objective picture of the cohort, allowing comparisons across subjects to be made. The boundaries of each tier are then created using a combination of our own historic performance and national data. Some subjects are, in their nature, better suited to portfolio and project-based assessment and will therefore use this as their main assessment methodology.

#### 5. **External assessment**

As well as external assessments which are taken as part of externally awarded qualifications, most usually GCSEs and A-levels, we also assess students using GL assessments. When children join us in Year 7, we already have their SATs scores in English

and maths but they also undertake a GL assessment in English, maths and science to determine their attainment levels compared to national averages achieved and also where they sit in comparison to their cohort. This also gives us a greater understanding of prior ability for those students where we do not have KS2 data. In most cases we also compare this data with their SATs to see where there are any obvious anomalies which may need to be investigated with support or challenge interventions put in place. It also allows us to identify particular groups such as PP and EL for intervention or monitoring. We also run the NGRT twice each year with Year 7-10 to monitor children's reading ages. This allows us to target specific interventions with students but also evaluate where interventions have taken place. All of this data is available to teachers as soon as we have it so they can compare achievement with prior attainment through their electronic mark books on Bromcom.

## **6. Reporting on student progress and achievement**

At Tallis we believe that developing a 'growth mindset' - a love of learning coupled with resilience - is essential for great achievement. We therefore do not give students target grades based on KS2 achievement. Instead, we prioritise how students are currently doing and how they can improve.

We also emphasise the importance of students' effort and behaviour. Getting this right is the best way to guarantee success academically. We therefore give effort and behaviour concrete illustration rooted in our Tallis Habits and Tallis Character. In year 7 and 8 students receive two reports over the year, the first focuses on effort, behaviour and homework using a 1-5 scale. This allows us to monitor and track the attitudes and dispositions students are taking towards their work. At the same time, teachers will identify students where there is a concern about underperformance, but this is used internally rather than reported home.

The second report gives an end of year Tallis Tier as well as updating the effort, behaviour and homework. Tallis tiers of achievement are arrived at in each subject through evaluating student performance in either end of year exams or ongoing portfolio assessment. In year 9, the system is the same but with attainment given in both reports. The first before Christmas informs the option process.

At KS4, students receive four reports across the two-year GCSE cycle. The first, like year 7, reflects the fact that students are beginning a new phase of their education and therefore gives grades for effort, behaviour and homework. The remaining three (one at the end of year 10 and two in year 11) will give attainment, most likely outcome, effort, behaviour and homework. This follows the 9-1 GCSE scale. At KS5, the four reports all give attainment, most likely outcome, effort, organisation and attitude.

## **7. Ensuring consistency**

It is imperative that departments are engaged in a regular process of standardisation, so that we can ensure that different teachers reach similar judgments about the quality of student work. In order that this can be most effective, we need to ensure that this is a process focused on standardisation rather than moderation: quality assurance rather than

quality control. The focus of standardisation should therefore be on teachers meeting together regularly to talk about quality in student work, not simply on making sure the scores for a particular student are 'right'. Instead, the focus should be on aligning teachers' judgements about quality, coming to a shared set ideas about quality, so the benefit is lasting (Wiliam, 2000). Ultimately, all departments generate their own systems for ensuring consistency which may involve seeding and sampling, group standardising, and comparative judgement. End of year assessment is anonymised to mitigate unconscious bias and ensure fairness.

## **8. Teacher workload**

By reducing the amount of summative assessment, we are hoping to reduce workload and empower teachers to focus on the most crucial elements of assessment – the day-to-day, ongoing formative assessment that happens in the classroom. With formative assessment we place most emphasis on the feedback that can be given in the classroom itself so that it is both manageable in terms of workload but also most powerful for the students.

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