



Assessment Policy

September 2023

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Approved by: Chair of Trustees

Principal: Neil Bain

Contents

1. Aims.....	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Principles of assessment.....	3
4. Assessment approaches.....	4
5. Collecting and using data.....	5
6. Reporting to parents	6
7. Inclusion.....	6
8. Training.....	6
9. Roles and responsibilities.....	7
10. Monitoring	7

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidelines on our approach to formative and summative assessment
- Establish a consistent and coherent approach to recording summative assessment outcomes and reporting to parents
- Clearly set out how and when assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated

2. Legislation and guidance

Since the removal of National Curriculum levels in 2014, schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment.

This policy refers to the recommendations in the Final Report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels.

It also refers to statutory reporting requirements set out in the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005: schedule 1.

3. Principles of assessment

We aim to support students throughout assessment sessions by:

- Making adjustments where appropriate to time, approach and scaffolding
- Introducing assessments in different formats to support students who are anxious about formal assessments
- Offer practical support and guidance around assessments including additional supported revision for all examination students

At Wemms, our policy is to enter students for external exams when they are ready to take them and so we consider each pupil on their own merits each year and a decision is made as to whether to enter the pupil for external examinations based on their ability/readiness to take the examinations rather than due to their current school year.

4. Assessment approaches

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

Part of our holistic approach to educating our students is to ensure they are comfortable handling assessment including external exams and non-examination assessments. Throughout the year, teachers will be marking their work in front of them, giving pertinent advice on how to extend and enrich their answers and helping them grow.

We use three broad overarching forms of assessment:

- day-to-day in-school formative assessment
- in-school summative assessment
- nationally standardised summative assessment.

In February, depending on the subjects, the entire school will undertake a revision week followed by an open-book, guided exam week. Teachers sit beside them, ensuring they are interpreting the questions correctly, helping them plan their answers and then evaluating their work with them to show them how to maximise their success.

Assessment Testing:

Once a year students undergo testing which benchmarks skills and knowledge against national standards and offers a detailed evaluation of each student's progress and potential. This usually takes the form of a computerised CAT test. In February students experience mock exams in which they undergo exam conditions and are able to receive support whilst practicing their exam techniques. Other tests for ability in reading, writing and comprehension occur throughout the year. DASH and YARC test are commonly used and are administered by specially trained staff. Selected students will also undertake the various assessments necessary to demonstrate entitlement to additional support in public exams.

We aim to ensure that all pupils are ready to take external and internal examinations whilst understanding the needs of the pupils we teach, many of whom have SEMH needs which can be aggravated by assessments.

All students with an EHCP automatically receive 25% extra time allocation but many, depending upon their processing speed and hand-eye coordination, are also eligible for scribes and readers. In June, the school will once again suspend the timetable and organise a revision week, ensuring the students learn how to organise their notes, make mind maps, revision posters, card-sorts and short videos to help them recall facts. The following week will be formal exam week in which the students will work under the conditions they will personally have for public exams. These papers will be marked and returned to the students before the end of June.

4.1 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

Types of formative assessment will include:

- Effective questioning
- Use of whiteboards, hands-up, quizzes, small tests, puzzles, exit cards and other formative devices
- In-lesson tasks

4.2 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 At Wemms, we undertake in-school summative assessment at various times as needed throughout the year including:

- end-of-year exams
- end-of-topic or unit text
- reviews for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (CAT tests, dyslexia screening etc)

Tests are validated by other appropriate members of the department and there are book checks throughout the year by the HOF to ensure quality and consistency.

Where there is a cause for concern, this will be picked up by the teacher of HOF and an intervention plan will be put in place. This can include catch-up lessons, additional revision sessions, homework or other program as deemed appropriate to the needs of the student.

4.3 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 take the form of GCSEs and vocational qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4, and AS levels, A-levels and other post-16 qualifications in Key Stage 5.

At Wemms, our policy is to enter students for external exams when they are ready to take them and so we consider each pupil on their own merits each year and a decision is made as to whether to enter the pupil for external examinations based on their ability/readiness to take the examinations rather than due to their current school year.

5. Collecting and using data

Assessment data is collected by the teachers on a daily basis and recorded in books such as marking and lesson outcomes. We use learning ladders to record how the students have responded to each lesson and these are stuck in the student's books to monitor progress.

Teachers can also keep assessment data on their students in their own personal files.

Departments have tracking systems online on SharePoint which are shared with Teachers to aid in their planning and monitoring of students. Due to the varied nature of the departments and tasks set in departments, they are able to record their formative and summative data in their departments and this can be discussed at weekly departmental meetings to identify potential high achievers or students falling behind.

After each lesson, teachers record a short summary of what was achieved in the lesson in the pupils' bi-weekly reports. These are sent to parents on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to help them monitor their students progress.

Teachers are also required to assist the SENCo and report annually to the SENCo on how pupils have managed their EHCP targets. This assists with updating EHCPs at the Annual Review.

6. Reporting to parents

There are two Academic Review Days scheduled each year for standardised examination students and up to 2 Academic Review Days for students not taken external examinations. Parents are invited into the school to discuss their progress with each teacher and are allocated time with each department to discuss their child's progress and any concerns they have.

Parents are also able to contact their children's teachers at any time and to discuss progress with them or the HOF or Principal by appointment.

Parents receive termly report which includes comments from each of their child's teacher, to help them monitor their student's progress. This takes the form of one report with each teacher/department reporting briefly on individual lessons.

Results of external examinations are published to students/parents on the day there are legally allowed to be published. Students and parents are invited into the school (if appropriate) to receive results and discuss future options.

Pupils of compulsory school age will have their attendance reported at regular intervals and are able to request data from the Attendance Officer who monitors attendance. (see Attendance Policy)

7. Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities.

At Wemms, we are fully aware of the issues of assessment faced by many of our students and use a variety of assessment methods and strategies as mentioned above to ensure inclusion.

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 account for the amount of 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.

8. Training

Teachers will be trained to assess pupils in the following ways:

At induction

- Through mentoring
- Through weekly department meetings
- External moderation/marking/assessment courses as needed

- External courses such as Invigilator, Scribe, Prompt and Reader training
- Annual conference and continued CPD

HOF are responsible for training staff in assessment methods within their departments. The Principal and any other person designated by the Principal may offer additional CPD and training throughout the year.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for:

- Being familiar with statutory assessment systems as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all pupils
- Advising school leaders on how to improve pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data

9.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is adhered to
- Monitoring standards in core and foundation subjects
- Analysing pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement
- Reporting to governors on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years

9.3 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy

10. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and Academic Deputy Head. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Trustees.

All teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy. HOFs are responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed.

The Principal, Exams Officer and Teacher Training Lead will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the school, through:

- Moderation practices
- Lesson observations
- Book checks
- Pupil progress meetings.
- EHCP reviews