GENEVA ENGLISH SCHOOL

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING POLICY
(SECONDARY)

INTRODUCTION

This document aims to set out how and why we use assessment at GES.

We use <u>formative assessment</u> to check understanding and help determine pupils' strengths and weaknesses in order to plan future learning.
We have listed best practice for using a number of forms of formative assessment, in order to:
- share effective approaches to assessment;
- ensure that teachers use these approaches consistently.

We use <u>summative assessment</u> to measure pupils' attainment.
We have designed a system of summative assessment in order to allow pupils, their parents and teachers:
- to compare their performance in different subjects;
- to compare their performance year-on-year;
- in Year 9 and above, to give pupils and parents an idea of how they might perform in future external exams.

Finally, this document contains information about how we report to parents. In doing so, we aim to communicate both formative and summative information, with the focus firmly on the formative.

This reflects our general belief that the vast majority of assessment should be formative.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

At GES, teachers use formative assessment:
- to determine pupils' prior learning;
- to check on pupils' understanding;
- as a form of retrieval practice to improve memory;
- to correct factual and literacy errors / poor effort;
- to modify teaching and decide whether or not to move on.

In order to achieve these aims, they may use the following forms of formative assessment. Individual teachers should think about which of these approaches are most appropriate for their subject.

Verbal Feedback

Verbal feedback is specific and positive ('do this', rather than 'don't do that') and ensures that the responsibility to improve the work remains with the pupil. Teachers spend only a brief amount of time giving feedback to a pupil; if feedback takes longer, then further instruction is needed and the teacher considers whether a re-teach of the topic/concept is required.

Questioning

Questioning has two main purposes:
1) sharing knowledge around the class;
2) checking on the knowledge of the class.

In the first case, teachers may accept 'hands up' but the majority of the time, teachers use questions targeted at named individuals. This enables teachers to assess whether pupils have understood the topic they are teaching, rather than just hearing from the highest-attaining pupils. Teachers ask a question, give the class time to think, then target the question towards an individual. This encourages all pupils to engage in thinking.

Critiquing Work

Teachers show a piece of work from current or previous classes, or a teacher model containing common misconceptions or exemplifying excellence. Two or more pieces of work might be compared (e.g. good vs. weak, good vs. excellent, excellent vs. excellent). In performing a technique or skill, pupil or teacher demonstrations might be analysed.

The class discusses the strengths of the piece(s) of work or demonstration and how it can be improved. All pupils then improve their work or performance as a result of the discussion. This helps to develop success criteria and guide continuous improvement throughout a unit, as well as improve final outcomes.

Critiquing Presentations

Pupils give individual or group presentations on a specific subject/question/project. Teachers explain which aspects of the presentation are being assessed. Peers are encouraged to ask open questions, directed afterwards to clarify understanding and encourage elaboration to greater depth.

Mini Whiteboards

Teachers ask questions and pupils write their responses on mini-whiteboards which they hold up for the teacher to see. Pupils are taught to wait to show their answers at the same time, so that they are not encouraged to rush.

Mini whiteboards can also be used to assess progress in groups.

Complex tasks are broken down into smaller steps for this form of assessment.

Multiple-Choice Questions

Teachers present a multiple-choice question and pupils hold up a number of fingers to indicate their answer. The wrong answers should ideally contain common misconceptions.

Higher-attaining pupils are encouraged to think through what misconceptions might lead to the other answers given.

Self and Peer Assessment

When addressing misconceptions, self-assessment is often more effective than peer assessment, as pupils learn from their own mistakes more readily than from the mistakes of others.

Peer assessment gives pupils the opportunity to learn from the ideas of others, but this is usually better managed through the strategy of 'critiquing good work'.

Tests

Tests are an effective way to encourage pupils to retrieve information and test their understanding. Studies show that pupils learn most from such tests if they are low-stakes: self-marked, no or few negative consequences for poor performance, or even no-stakes: the teacher doesn't even find out the score.

Such tests are not assigned a percentage, grade or traffic light. The focus is on what the test tells the pupil and teacher about the next steps required for the pupils to improve. Short, specific tasks provide better formative information than complex tasks, because they help to highlight the exact misconceptions of a pupil.

Whole Class Feedback

Teachers look through all homework, make brief notes and give 'whole class feedback' in the following lesson. They should make notes about common errors and add them to the schemes of learning in order to address these potential pitfalls when the topic is delivered in the future.

Written Feedback

Teachers may give individual written feedback on homework. If they choose to do so, they do not assign a grade or numerical score, but instead comment on what is specifically good about the work and give one or two suggestions for improvement.

These suggestions may come in the form of follow up tasks (possibly one of the 5R's: see Appendix 1.) Ideally, the teacher checks that these follow-up tasks have been completed, but we do not want to encourage an endless cycle which burdens teachers with an unmanageable workload; the follow-up tasks should represent more work for the pupil than for the teacher. Teachers encourage pupils to look back on previous feedback before completing future tasks.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Summative assessment should be <u>reliable</u> and <u>valid</u>, and should communicate <u>shared meaning</u>.

Reliability

A twenty-minute test will not give a reliable picture of a pupil's knowledge and understanding of an entire subject. Homework is not a reliable indicator of performance, as the time, effort and assistance sought/given can vary significantly. In order to be as reliable as possible, tests should be long and ideally set over several days to allow for pupils having a 'bad day'.

Validity

A test on the conditional tense in Spanish will probably not be a valid indicator of how well a pupil will perform in GCSE Spanish. Similarly, the quality of a long-term project will not be a valid indicator for a subject that is assessed by examination.

Tests can be valid if they sample from a large and wide-ranging proportion of the expected knowledge and understanding for a pupil of a particular age.

Shared meaning
A raw score (e.g. 21/30) or percentage (e.g. 53%) does not communicate shared meaning because there is no common basis of understanding. It is not clear to pupils or parents, and to some extent even teachers, whether 21/30 or 53% is a 'good' score, nor what 'good' even means in this context. In order to communicate shared meaning, summative assessment results should be scaled appropriately.

How do we apply these principles at GES?
Pupils who are new to the school take aptitude tests produced by the University of Durham Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) and all pupils in Year 7 take UK national comparative judgement assessments in English and Maths. The results of these tests are delivered in scaled form, which provides shared meaning to the staff of the School.

We use the data in two main ways:
Firstly, it gives teachers an idea of the pupils underlying aptitude of their students. The results can indicate if a pupil has greater underlying talent that may not have been noticed, or show where a pupil is working particularly hard to overcome difficulties.
Secondly, we compare end of year exam results with this data to get a vague sense of whether pupils are progressing as expected. In doing so, we understand that only large changes are significant.

Each year group takes part in an extended period of exams towards the end of the academic year.
In Year 7 and 8, these exams are taken in classrooms, within the normal school timetable.
In Year 9 and above, the exams are taken in an exam hall over the course of one week.
Where a department feels that written examination is not the most valid predictor of GCSE success, flexibility will be given as to the method of assessment used.

Each subject is tested at least twice, with the length of exam being related to the number of lessons taught in each subject and the age of the pupils.
Pupils in Years 7 and 8 can expect at least two hours of exams in Maths, English and Science.
Pupils in Year 9 and above can expect to take at least three hours of exams in these subjects.
The length of these tests help to make them a reliable indicator of a pupil's performance.

The exams will aim to cover as much as possible of the material taught up to the time of the exam, in order to make them a valid summary of performance.

Results for each subject will be provided as a standardised score, such that the average score for the year group in each subject is 100 and the standard deviation is 20. This helps us to compare pupils' performance between subjects and from year to year. See Appendix 2 for more detail on this process.

There will also be an indication of what a score of 70, 100 and 130 might mean in terms of a 'working towards' GCSE grade. These will be produced using CEM data, alongside further comparative judgement assessments in English and Maths. This will help to communicate shared meaning to parents, without giving the false impression that we can accurately predict grades at this stage.

In Year 11, mock exams will be sat in February and the grades will be reported to parents, alongside that term's progress report from teachers.

We only use summative assessment once per year because, in order to be reliable and valid, the exams take up a significant amount of potential teaching time. Moreover, marking the exams and reporting the data reduces the amount of time teachers can spend on planning lessons.

We believe that formative assessment is more important for pupils' leaning; summative tests are not easy to use formatively as they include complex tasks which require a variety of knowledge and skills, making it less clear to the teacher what needs to be tackled and improved.

Teachers should therefore not use summative assessment at other times of the year.

We do not use teacher assessment of attainment (report grades) because it:
- lacks reliablity (research shows that it is often biased against pupils with learning difficulties and pupils from ethnic minorities).
- lacks validity (it is less accurate at predicting external exam performance than other assessment results).
- fails to communicate shared meaning, as it is not uniform across teachers.

REPORTING TO PUPILS AND PARENTS

Assessment of Effort
We use the following effort descriptors:
- Listens carefully during whole-class discourse
- Works hard during individual tasks in class
- Collaborates well with peers
- Completes homework carefully and on time
- Asks questions to clarify or probe as appropriate

For each of these descriptors we report as follows:
- Almost always
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely.

November
Pupils self-assess their effort before teachers assess it.
Teachers meet with parents and pupils. They discuss the effort assessments and agree upon one or two targets for the pupil to work on.
Pupils create a Google document with their targets and share it with their tutor, who makes sure they know what they need to do in order to meet their targets.

February
Teachers write brief comments on how each pupil is working towards the targets they set in the Autumn term. These comments should be aimed at the pupils and hence written in the second person.
Tutors discuss the teachers' comments with the pupils, and they are sent to pupils and parents.

Early May
Pupils self-assess their effort before teachers assess it.

Teachers meet with pupils and parents to discuss the effort assessments and progress towards their targets. During this meeting, targets are revised if appropriate.

Pupils update their target sheet and discuss this with their tutors, particularly focussing on targets that have remained from the Autumn term.

Late June

Teachers mark the end of year assessments and submit the results to the Head of Assessment, who will standardise the scores. These are then reported to parents.

Teachers have the option to add a comment.

Luke Pearce, Head of Assessment
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Appendix 1

The 5 R's of 'action' feedback

R1

Redraft or Re-do

Go back to edit and improve certain areas of your work.

R2

Rehearse or Repeat

Go back and practise again and again to master specific skills.

R3

Revisit & Respond

Go back and practise by answering more similar questions.

R4

Re-learn & Re-test

Go back and make sure you understand previous learning.

R5

Research & Record

Go back and develop your work with deeper insight and wider references.

@cio_teach / @teacherhead

Appendix 2

Let's say Jamie scores 75% on an English test and 60% on a Science test. At first it appears that's he's doing better in English, but this does not take account of the difficulty of the test.

It could be that the class average in English was 80% and the average in Science was 50%. Jamie is then below average for English and above average for Science. Pupils intuitively know the importance of the class average, which is why they want to ask their peers how they did after results of a test are delivered.

There is also a more subtle issue, which is that the results of different tests may be more spread out than others.

To account for differing averages and spread, we can standardise the scores in the following way:

$$\text{Standardised Score} = \frac{\text{Raw Score} - \text{Average}}{\text{Standard Deviation}} \times 20 + 100$$

The standardised score in every test will have an average of 100 and a 'spread' of 20. In the example of Jamie's test results above, his English grade might, depending on the spread of results, be standardised to 93 and his Science grade might be standardised to 120.

This will allow his tutor and parents to compare these results fairly: he can't use the classic excuse "but everyone did badly in English".

Next year, he will receive another Science grade on the same standardised measure. Let's say this is 115. In this case, we should be careful not to assume that he has done worse this year than last, or made less than average progress in Science. If however, his score is 90 in Science in the second year, this significant drop is probably worth investigating.

This system is not perfect:
It does not allow us to compare the performance of departments or teachers but we don't believe that we should use test results to do this.

It doesn't give students an idea of how they're doing nationally. This issue is tackled in the feedback policy by relating standardised scores to GCSE grades.

Note that we are only talking about summative tests here, in which the aim is to "track pupils' attainment and progress, to give them, their teachers and parents an idea of how they might perform in future external exams."

Formative tests, which form the vast majority of testing, should not be analysed in this way and pupils should be discouraged from comparing their performance with each other.