



Ark Elvin
Academy

ASSESSMENT: RATIONALE AND PRINCIPLES

Version 1.0 July 2019

Mastery Curriculum/Assessment Document 1a

1 OUR CONTEXT

Our school motto, Magna Aude, means ‘We dare for greatness’. Our mission is ambitious because it needs to be: our attainment on entry is significantly below the national average – around 40% of our pupils do not have Key Stage Two data. 78% of our pupils do not have English as their first language.

The school Ofsted Report from June 2017 brought the school out of Special Measures but confirmed the school’s own view that there were clear areas for development with regards to assessment. The report noted that: ‘Teachers do not sufficiently check how well pupils have understood what they have been learning. In some cases, teachers move on too quickly to the next activity when pupils have not demonstrated a deep enough understanding of the topic.’

However, there was a recognition that there were some improving assessment practices that have continued to be embedded – particularly at a summative network-wide level: ‘Leaders have decided to use unseen assessments from the Ark central network team in different subject areas. These are then moderated within the Ark group to ensure that assessment is accurate.’ The report noted that this increasingly accurate information about pupil progress was: ‘being used increasingly effectively to help make decisions about teaching and learning.’

Leaders throughout the school have worked hard over the two years since the report to build on the strengths of already present and focus on improving the quality of formative assessment. Leaders recognise that the quality of assessment is connected with the curriculum approach at Elvin, as well as the effectiveness of coaching and whole school Professional Development (PD). The development of all of these factors has led to continued improvement in assessment.

The school’s most recent monitoring visit from June 2019 identified that, ‘Teachers regularly assess pupils summatively in line with Ark approaches and use question-level analysis of the responses to inform future planning.’ The report also notes that, ‘teachers ask searching questions’, and that there is consistency across subjects in the ‘checking of pupils’ recall of subject-specific facts.’ Finally, the report recognises that, ‘strong verbal feedback is given in lessons, which aids immediate progress.’

This document aims to detail the rationale and principles behind the different types of assessment used at Ark Elvin Academy.

2 THE ELVIN WAY

The Elvin way sets out our mission and our six pillars – our vision of what makes a great school.

2.1 OUR MISSION

To ensure that every pupil leave Elvin confident, articulate and culturally aware; able to pursue careers they are passionate about, contribute to society and live happy, healthy and fulfilled lives.

2.2 OUR SIX PILLARS

Describe our vision for a great school...

Strong Discipline – Calm, purpose and order are established through the consistency of expectations and explicit teaching of discipline.

High Quality Teaching – Teachers are subject experts with an excellent understanding of the intellectual journey they are taking their pupils on and have mastery in effective teaching skills.

Mastery Curriculum – Our curriculum design enables pupils to make rapid progress and develop a framework of knowledge and understanding in each subject area that provides a solid foundation for further study.

Raising Aspirations and Enrichment – Pupils understand the opportunities that a school and university education will afford. Pupils develop their passions and interests through an in-day enrichment programme.

Character Development – Pupils develop the characteristics that support their academic achievement, create thoughtful citizens and allow them to make reflective choices over their personal lives.

Development of Educational Leaders – All members see themselves as leaders within an aligned community of professionals and are systemically trained in best practice. We create high performing teams to drive out school improvement.

2.3 MASTERY CURRICULUM PILLAR

Behind each pillar is further depth detailing our vision for a great school. The Mastery Curriculum Pillar and the High Quality Teaching Pillar set out the vision for assessment, which this document expands upon. Elements in bold are particularly relevant for an understanding of our vision for assessment at Elvin.

Mastery Curriculum – depth before breadth

Our curriculum design enables pupils to develop a framework of knowledge and understanding in each subject area that provides a solid foundation for further study.

Our curriculum is planned backwards from university in each subject area, ensuring pupils master key learning before moving on. It is a knowledge rich curriculum where what pupils are learning about is as important as the skills they are developing. Our children join us at very different starting points, we assess them on entry and ensure that our curriculum meets their needs whilst holding the same high expectations for every child. We have designed a rapid EAL catch up programme and **track the progress of students on this forensically so that they can access the full curriculum as soon as their language ability allows them to.** We provide more time for English and maths for all pupils to ensure they develop literacy and numeracy skills to a very high level.

Assessments test mastery of the content by requiring pupils to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and application independently and in unseen contexts. Exam weeks are held three times a year. End of year exams test mastery of the whole year's learning. Revision is built into the curriculum because new problems are designed to draw upon and utilise prior learning. The focus on developing depth of understanding and mastery means that pupils experience the deep satisfaction derived from grappling with and grasping challenging content, which in turn supports the development of a growth mindset. It also means that they are developing a solid framework of understanding and set of skills that support all future learning in that subject area. The rigour of the curriculum is reflected in the curriculum planning documents, high quality teaching, pupil work and the feedback that pupils receive.

High Quality Teaching

Teachers are subject experts with an excellent understanding of the intellectual journey they are taking their pupils on and master the teaching skills to support this. Teachers use the school routines to create an excellent climate for learning and to ensure that pupils make exceptional progress. Lessons are never task driven; they are planned using the most effective methods to engage with the content. They are underpinned by high expectations, from the use of academic language, grammatical precision and level of rigour expected in pupil responses, to the great thinkers and scholars they introduce the pupils to along the way. The atmosphere is scholarly and teachers display and elicit a passion for their subject and for learning more generally. Our teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their understanding of the curriculum is detailed, meaning that they recognise how the learning fits into the pupils' broader development within the subject. **They engage with the knowledge being developed and understand the crux of the lesson. This allows them to be very responsive in the classroom, always able to ask the most important questions, pick out the most important points, identify the underlying misconceptions that are holding pupils back and give meaningful feedback that moves pupils forward.** Our teachers ensure all pupils master the key concepts and skills required for each unit before moving on. Errors are opportunities and emphasis is placed on growth rather than attainment. All classrooms and all teaching is a team effort, with each individual practitioner delivering planning that is the result of a collaborative process and developing facilitation skills that are part of our collective approach as a school.

3 ARK ELVIN ACADEMY CURRICULUM INTENT - ASSESSMENT

As part of Ark Elvin Academy's codified curriculum intent statement, the aims for assessment are set out.

3.1 ELVIN CURRICULUM INTENT STATEMENT

How our school's curriculum is designed to meet the needs of Elvin pupils in our context to ensure that no pupil's future is dictated by their past.

3.2 ELVIN CURRICULUM INTENT

Mastery: Pupils build knowledge of the key learning in a particular subject in a coherent and carefully sequenced way to develop a mental model towards expertise. We have a three-year key stage three to allow pupils time to build knowledge in all subjects.

Planned backwards: We want our pupils to have a choice to attend the best universities in the country, so we plan back from this aim. Each subject discipline will aim for pupils to develop a mental model of carefully organised knowledge by the time they leave Elvin, to be developed in the next phase of study. This is planned by subject experts as a narrative structured over time.

Knowledge-rich: Subject experts chose the powerful knowledge for their disciplines to take pupils beyond their own experiences, giving them an education founded on academic excellence. The key learning is carefully codified and structured over time, allowing pupils to establish effective mental models that they can continue to develop beyond their time at Elvin. A curriculum full of powerful knowledge is a hugely powerful tool of social justice, aiming to create socially mobile young people by giving them the opportunities to pursue careers they are passionate about.

Assessment: Formatively assessing our pupils throughout the year allows for responsive teaching – using the mastery approach teachers are confident when re-teaching and revisiting knowledge to develop pupils' mental models.

Departments coordinate their formative assessment at the end of Autumn and Spring terms across year groups to infer where pupils are in relation to where they should be – and to be responsive with teaching as a consequence.

Accurate summative assessment sampling the work completed over a year – with reference to work completed in previous years – allows inferences about attainment and progress to be made, which are shared with parents.

Revision built-in: Our mastery approach means that we regularly revisit knowledge before adding new knowledge to build up pupils' mental models. Opportunities for revision are built into the curriculum. The mastery approach also benefits pupils joining the school as they need support to begin developing their mental models in different subject disciplines.

Reading: We recognise that the success of our mission rests on pupils' ability to become proficient and fluent readers. Pupils' capacity to build subject-specific mental models is bound inexorably to their capacity to read. Alongside our mastery approach to knowledge

we use different techniques to support pupils in reading more challenging texts, including decoding strategies when necessary. We explicitly teach subject-specific vocabulary to enrich pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world.

Wider curriculum: Our pupil's entitlement to a rich and varied curriculum isn't limited to subjects. We know our pupils' context means they do not have access to the same wider development opportunities as their peers so our curriculum includes enrichment – academic, sporting, and personal development. They are also formally taught character and PSHE, as well as current affairs so that they are able to understand, and play an active role in, the world around them.

4 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AT ELVIN

4.1 ASSESSMENT – CURRICULUM INTENT STATEMENT

Formatively assessing our pupils throughout the year allows for responsive teaching – using the mastery approach teachers are confident when re-teaching and revisiting knowledge to develop pupils’ mental models. Departments coordinate their formative assessment at the end of Autumn and Spring terms across year groups to infer where pupils are in relation to where they should be – and to be responsive with teaching as a consequence. Accurate summative assessment sampling the work completed over a year – with reference to work completed in previous years – allows inferences about attainment and progress to be made, which are shared with parents.

4.2 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

This intent statement identifies three different types of assessment that are used at Elvin:

1. Formative assessment/responsive teaching
2. Coordinated formative assessment – hinge points
3. Summative assessment – End of Year Assessments

Different types of assessment are used at different times and with different purposes – this will vary depending on the year group. The outcome/reporting will also vary depending on the particular group.

5 FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT/RESPONSIVE TEACHING

5.1 WHAT IS FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT/RESPONSIVE TEACHING?

Formative assessment is like a pilot constantly taking readings about their position as they fly, to check they are on course. It's too late if the pilot flies somewhere and finds that they're at the wrong place.

Formative assessment – which Dylan Wiliam said might have better described as responsive teaching – is using information to adapt teaching to adapt the work of pupils to put it back on track; making sure that learning is proceeding in the right direction to support that learning. (Black and Wiliam, 1998). Feedback improves learning by changing pupils' knowledge, understanding or behaviour – but only if they act on it. (Fletcher-Wood, 2019).

Formative assessment/responsive teaching does not involve marks, levels or grades, but it 'focuses on what the next steps are' for pupils. (Booth 2017). Knowing what the pupils know and understand means the teacher can adapt their teaching as a consequence to enable the pupils to build subject-specific mental models.

5.2 WHY IS FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT/RESPONSIVE TEACHING USED?

Formative assessment is used by individual teachers. Schemes of Learning will include guidance for teachers about the most appropriate time and the most appropriate method of assessment to use at any particular time. There are a number of different reasons behind the use of formative assessment/responsive teaching:

1. Checking what pupils know and understand allows teachers to amend/adapt what they are doing to address any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions that they have identified. Planning at Elvin facilitates this
2. Giving feedback to pupils allows them to change their knowledge, understanding or behaviour. However, 'information about the gap between actual and reference [desired] levels is considered as feedback only when it is used to alter the gap'. (Sadler, 1989). Therefore, pupils need to do something in response to the feedback – ask 'what did the pupils learn from the feedback?' rather than 'What feedback did pupils get?'
3. Getting the pupils to recall what they know and understand helps to secure knowledge in long-term memory. Teaching is about consolidating connections, not just forging them. (McCrae, 2018). Techniques like retrieval practice and elaboration are used across different subjects at Elvin. In the process of trying 'to retrieve it from memory', the pupils 'will build a far stronger memory of it in the long term.' (Henrick, 2018).
4. Formative assessment/responsive teaching is also important in building relationships between the teacher and pupils. This comes from teachers being genuinely attentive to the ways that pupils are developing their mental models. This attentiveness shows that the teacher believes in the pupils, is aware of what they are doing and that they will help them succeed.

5.3 WHEN IS FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT/RESPONSIVE TEACHING USED?

Formative assessment/responsive teaching should be used every lesson – continual checking of pupil understanding and the addressing of misconceptions facilitates the development of subject-specific mental models.

Rosenshine identified different points within a lesson when formative assessment/responsive teaching should be used:

- Beginning of the lesson – a short review of previous learning to strengthen previous learning and lead to fluent recall. This could include things like:
 - Going over homework and correcting it
 - Review elements of the encapsulating task/exit ticket from the previous lesson and address any errors made
 - Reviewing previously learnt material that needs to be revisited – that is necessary for new knowledge to connect to it and develop the pupils' mental models
- Questions after introducing new material – help pupils practice new information and connect new material to their prior learning. Teachers should follow the presentation of new material with lots of questions in order to get pupils thinking and participating. This also gives feedback to the teacher to see which pupils go it right – and whether it is necessary to re-teach specific elements. Sometimes choral elements may be more appropriate
- Checking for understanding throughout the lesson – checking for pupil understanding at each point can help pupils learn new material with fewer errors. Teachers should frequently check to see if all pupils have learnt new materials. This serves two purposes:
 - Answering questions causes pupils to elaborate on material they have learnt and make connections – developing mental models
 - It alerts the teachers to when parts of the model need to be re-taught
- Independent practice – independent practice allows pupils to review and elaborate, leading to fluency. Research found that when the teacher circulated and monitored the work, pupils were more engaged. The optimal time for teacher-pupil contact was around 30 seconds or less
- Weekly and monthly reviews – pupils need to be involved in extensive practice to develop well-connected and automatic knowledge. The more the pupils rehearse and review information the stronger the connections in the mental model become

5.4 HOW IS IT RECORDED?

Formative assessment is responsive teaching. No grade is reported. The information is used to achieve a particular purpose (usually informing the teacher of pupil of an action). The aim of the assessment is to improve/develop the pupils' mental model in some way.

6 COORDINATED FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT – HINGE POINTS

6.1 WHAT IS COORDINATED FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT – HINGE POINTS?

Coordinated formative assessment is a type of formative assessment that is planned and coordinated by the lead planner. The information is still used for the same purpose as other formative assessments – but it is standardised across the particular subject discipline. This allows for inference to be made about the pupil's achievement in relation to the point they are aiming to get to.

Hinge points are formative assessments that the lead planner for a particular section of work includes on the scheme of learning. They will be completed by all pupils for that particular unit, allowing leaders to look at the different work produced by different pupils. Individual pupils will be given feedback by their teacher and will amend subsequent work, in order to apply the feedback. Four hinge points will be completed by pupils across a term (there will be three in the summer term and an End of Year Assessment).

Departments have planned their assessment maps carefully, identifying the work that allows that to provide the highest-leverage feedback. The assessments may be standardised and moderated within the department.

Inferences will be made about whether pupils are on track to achieve their target grade for a particular subject at the end of the academic year. More than one hinge point can be used to make these inferences.

Some departments have assessments that are set across the network. These are used as interim assessments.

6.2 WHY IS COORDINATED FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT USED?

Coordinated formative assessment is used to allow comparisons of pupils across a bigger group than an individual class. By comparing the knowledge and understanding of pupils across a year group in individual subjects, leaders can make more inferences. It allows them to:

- Make inferences about whether individual pupils are in line to achieve their final end of year target grade (based on their record when they joined Ark Elvin Academy)
- Amend teaching can be amended to address any gaps identified in pupil knowledge
- Amend the scheme of learning just completed to address any issues that were noticed in the End of Term assessment (e.g. pupil misconceptions not addressed fully)

Most importantly, pupils are still given feedback on the completed work, which they then use to alter what they do to improve the quality of their next piece of work (or re-do a piece of work already completed).

6.3 WHEN IS COORDINATED FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT USED?

Coordinated formative assessment is used four times a term for each year group in Key Stage Three, known as hinge points. The End of Year assessment is summative (see next section).

Year 10 follows the same pattern. The End of Year assessment is seen as the beginning of Year 11 assessment and is used to predicted grades (see next section).

Year 11 also have the same hinge points built into schemes of learning, but English and Maths have a (summative) mock paper in Autumn 2, as well as a final (summative) mock paper in Spring 1. Formative inferences are also made from specific sections of these papers.

6.4 HOW IS IT RECORDED?

Details of what the hinge points are to be completed will be recorded on Schemes of Learning and on Assessment maps by the Head of Department.

Hinge points are not recorded centrally – they are formative assessments designed to give the teacher data and elicit a response from the pupil that improves their work.

Hinge points vary depending on the departments. There is no central record of the raw mark/grade. It is not appropriate to award marks to assessments mid-year, that may not look like the final assessment.

Departments will instead decide whether a pupil is in one of the following categories:

- Below
- On Track
- Above

This decision will be based on using exemplars of the particular hinge point across the range of possible answers. Teachers will then compare pupils' work to those exemplars to see whether they are working at a level in line with their end of year target grade.

In some departments the category may be awarded on the raw mark determined from a number of shorter-answer questions. This does not need to be converted into a grade – the purpose is to identify whether pupils are on track, in line with the high expectations that we have of them. Action can then be taken as a consequence.

7 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

7.1 WHAT IS SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT?

Summative assessment is a type of assessment that is used to identify current pupil attainment and progress. Summative assessments sample from the domain that has been studied, selecting elements that represent the wider knowledge that has been taught.

Summative assessment is designed to produce a grade/outcome that can be used to make inferences about how much the pupils knows and understands. By using summative assessments across time, the amount of progress a pupil is making can be identified.

7.2 WHY IS SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT USED?

Summative assessment is used to sample the work completed over a year to derive a shared meaning from it – an age-related grade.

Our mastery approach means that pupils should understand everything that has been taught as part of a coherent and cumulative sequence. The purpose of summative assessment is to check what has been retained and therefore learnt.

Summative assessments are cumulative – they sample from the knowledge that has been taught across the year, with reference to work that has been completed in previous years. Ark Elvin Academy always aims to work with the largest sample size possible, therefore utilising Ark Common Assessments where possible. We do not use GCSE papers at Key Stage Three, but will do so at Key Stage Four. GCSE papers are designed to sample from the domain being studied at GCSE, and are therefore not appropriate for use at Key Stage Three (when the pupils haven't been directly taught this content).

7.3 WHEN IS SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT USED?

For Key Stage Three (Years 7-9) summative assessment is used at the end of each year in each subject studied as part of the End of Year Assessment. This occurs in Summer 2 so that the work completed across the academic year can be sampled. The pupils have developed their mental models over the year. Reference can be made to knowledge from previous years. Where possible, Elvin aligns with the shared assessments used across the Ark Network. This allows data to be collected from different schools and facilitates the setting of more accurate grade boundaries.

For Year 10, summative assessment is used at the end of the academic year. This is an important part of the pupils' preparation for GCSE – the pupils have experience of completing GCSE papers in exam conditions. It also allows teachers to make inferences about how far the pupils know and understand the curriculum.

For Year 11, two different summative assessments are used. There is an English and Maths Mock held during Autumn 2, using past GCSE papers. This is whilst the course is almost completed, allowing inferences to be made about how far the pupils know and understand the curriculum. A grade is awarded, based on standardisation across the Ark Network.

Finally, pupils complete a Year 11 mock exam in Spring 1. Almost all courses will have completed teaching. This allows an inference to be made about how far the pupils know and understand the curriculum. The results are standardised and moderated across the Ark Network. It also allows teachers to finalise their plans for the period of revision up until the GCSEs begin.

The GCSE exams themselves take place during May and June, along with the standardisation of BTEC material.

7.4 HOW IS RECORDED?

End of Year Assessments are the only assessments that are given a grade. This grade is an age-related grade. This means that this is the grade that a pupil producing that work in that particular year would be most likely to receive at the end of Year 11. The grades awarded range from 1 (the lowest) to 9 (the highest). For example, a pupil receiving a grade 5 in French in Year 8 is producing work of a quality that indicates they would receive a grade 5 at the end of Year 11 in their final GCSE examinations.

These grades can be compared to the target that pupils have, which has been set based on their Key Stage Two results or benchmarking that took place when they arrived at Elvin. Pupils who joined in Year 7 or have Key Stage Two data are expected to make more than nationally expected progress – so they are expected to make 1 grade more progress over the 5 years they are at Elvin. Pupils with a base grade of 2 or below are expected to make more than 1 grade of additional progress.

The grades awarded can also be compared over years, allowing inferences about progress to be made.

End of Year Assessment data is shared with the Ark Network, allowing network-wide inferences to be made.

8 REFERENCES

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