Assessment Policy

Nominated Lead Member of Staff: Jen Evans

Date of Policy: September 2020

Status & Review Cycle: Annual Review

Next Review Date: September 2021

We believe that effective assessment, combined with forensic diagnosis of performance leading to an informed response, is at the heart of good teaching and learning. By diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses on a regular basis, we can provide accurate intervention to allow all students to make progression regardless of their starting point.

Our curriculum is built around the notion of mastery of knowledge. We believe that students not only need deep knowledge of a curriculum, but also that they have to be able to demonstrate their mastery in a formal exam situation as this is how they are ultimately judged at the end of KS4. Like most students nationally, our students have traditionally performed better in Controlled Assessments than exams. To address this, we have a full assessment regime stretching across all key stages.

Our assessment regime consists of Show It Assessments and Big Tests / Progress Exams.

Show It Assessments

Show It Tests are formative assessments designed to check understanding and to inform next steps in learning. They identify what students have / have not learned, and identify the students needing further therapy. These assessments take place fortnightly in core subjects and regularly in all other subjects. The content of these is often informed by previous performance in (and analysis of) a Big Test.

After these tests have been completed, and where appropriate, departments may wish to set 'pass' marks. The purpose of this is to require students scoring below that boundary to take part in some therapy or intervention so that they could re-take the test at a later date and achieve the 'pass' mark. A range of strategies are being developed to deliver this for students, remembering our key principles with regard to assessment: namely that students must acquire knowledge before they can apply it, that proficiency requires practice and that knowledge must make its way into the long-term memory to improve a student's academic ability. This is closely connected to the new independent study policy.

When writing 'Show its', teachers should consider different ways that assessments can be designed, for example:

- The demand of the questions asked.
- Support given to students to assist in showing their knowledge (e.g. sentence starters, timings etc.).
- The mark scheme applied.

'Show It' marks may be recorded in SIMs, or in shared documents on SharePoint, depending on curriculum area preference. However, these scores are for internal use, and do not feed into student reviews or the judgement of progress over time.

Big Tests

On a termly basis, Big Tests take place for all years with a Progress Exam at the end of the year (from summer in Y10, students have Progress Exams only, no Big Tests). The purpose of Big Tests is to assess how well students have acquired knowledge and how effectively they can apply this knowledge. They are also designed to make marking as manageable as possible.

The design of Big Tests varies between subjects, and develops as students move from KS3 into KS4. There are some key elements that are present, and key principles that underpin all Big Test design.

At KS3, all big tests contain a multiple choice section, that tests key knowledge and the recall of that knowledge. The knowledge tested is what can be found in the Knowledge Organiser for that subject. As already mentioned, we believe that knowledge must be acquired and retained before it can be used, so this multiple choice section is designed to check that retention of knowledge. The rest of the Big Test is designed to suit the subject in question. However, it should test students' ability to use and apply their knowledge, and develop the skills needed to succeed in the given subject.

Foundation subjects that are taught on the Carousel have a different assessment regime. Their assessments still test the acquisition and retention of knowledge and the development of skills, but they are structured in the most appropriate way for the subject – some are project or assessment objective based, others have multiple choice quizzes throughout the unit plan.

At KS4, curriculum areas develop the structure of their Big Tests to best test the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills needed to succeed in their subject as students' progress towards and into their GCSE studies.

Assessing student progress

All students are assigned a target grade at the start of Year 7, using their KS2 attainment and FFT20 baseline targets. In Years 7, 8 and 9, there are standardised scores expected in all subjects for students at each target grade (see table below) which are then colour coded for reporting. Curriculum leaders are expected to use their understanding of their subject and progression maps to design assessments with the right degree of difficulty, progression, range of skills and knowledge and so on for students across the ability range.

Target scores and colour coding for Year 7, 8 and 9:

Red – well below target	Amber – just below target	Year 11 FFT20 Target Grade	Suggested Target Score	Green – on target	Dark Green – well above target
N/A	0 – 4	U	5	5 – 15	16+
N/A	0 – 15	1	16	16 – 25	26 +
15 and below	16 – 25	2	26	26 – 39	40 +
25 and below	26 – 39	3	40	40 – 49	50 +
39 and below	40 – 49	4	50	50 – 59	60 +
49 and below	50 – 59	5	60	60 – 69	70 +
54 and below	55 – 64	6	70	65 – 79	80 +
64 and below	65 – 74	7	80	75 – 84	85 +
74 and below	75 – 79	8	90	80 – 91	92 +
74 and below	75 – 84	9	95	85 – 95	96 +

At KS4, as the design and style of assessments becomes more subject specific, curriculum leaders set grade boundaries for individual tests, enabling outcomes to be reported to parents.

Use of data

A key feature of the curriculum and assessment processes at MEA is the way data from Big Tests is used. For all year groups, Question Level Analysis data is collected in our bespoke software 'EDDI Assessor'. This software automatically generates analysis at class level, broken down by cohort as well as student. This information enables a teacher to rapidly complete a class analysis and ensure that they address identified weaknesses in lessons quickly and effectively. Curriculum Leaders can also use this data, as well as class and whole year group level data, to review the performance of the whole year group and plan any actions or interventions needed. This process is summarised in the Curriculum Impact Cycle [Appendix 1].

<u>Curriculum Impact Cycle</u>

The following summarises the way valid data is generated and used to impact on pupil progress across the assessment cycle:

Preparation activities:
Test design finalised.
Revision materials distributed.

Big Test week:
Students complete assessment in exam conditions.
Mark schemes distributed to teachers and teachers mark tests. Support for teachers to ensure consistent use of mark schemes.

Admin period:
Moderation/ discussion/ collaborative working to ensure consistency.
Data entered in QLA.
Class feedback sheet completed.

Initial follow up:
Class feedforward lesson completed, and teachers tweak their medium term planning.
Data AVP produces assessment window analysis with key themes.
Curriculum leader uses AVP report, QLA, EDDI analytics and class feedback sheets to analyse data and identify questions/issues.
Initial analysis shared with line manager.

Identify actions:
Disucss analysis with curriclum team.
Identify specific actions to address areas of weakness or areas of underperformance.
Write up action plan and submit to LM.

Complete actions
May include:
Reviewing curriculum model or scheme of work; reviewing lesson planning or mini tests; small group interventions; support for specific staff etc.

Evaluate impact:
Identify impact of actions through AfL or mini tests...
and/or...
Review next Big Test to ensure it measures for impact of actions