

# **AN ASSESSMENT POLICY: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE IN LURGAN COLLEGE**



## 1. AIMS

Lurgan College believes that assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and an important element in the professional responsibility of teachers. The main aims are listed below:

- Assessment should help pupils to develop fully their academic abilities and self-confidence, to develop skills which they need for reflective and independent study and to establish shared understanding by pupils and teachers of clear and explicit study goals;
- Assessment, both formal and informal, should complement and reinforce the delivery of the curriculum. It should enable the learning needs of individual pupils to be identified and allow future teaching strategies to be determined;
- Assessment should recognise individual progress and achievement and provide pupils with meaningful information which will allow them to participate in self-evaluation;
- Assessment should involve a range of techniques both formal and informal - carried out in a variety of contexts which will allow individual pupils to show what they know, understand and can do;
- Assessment and reporting are an integral part of the link between the school and parents and should provide parents with meaningful information.

## 2. METHODS AND RANGE OF ASSESSMENT

### 2.1 OVERVIEW

A wide variety of assessment methods are used in school, including **formal assessment** by examination (public and internal), through coursework/controlled assessment, homework, practical work, oral work and class tests. Teachers are also involved in the **continuous assessment** of pupils' work during class activities, monitoring not only academic attainment but other skills such as co-operation and teamwork. These skills are also assessed in an informal way through the programme of extra-curricular activities.

### 2.2 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Summative assessment, or the assessment *of* learning, is used mainly to measure performance, clearly identifies the standard of a pupil's attainment and is carried out at the end of a period of learning. The main examples are formal measures of assessment including public and internal examinations (See Table 1) and end of topic and unit tests.

<b>INTERNAL EXAMINATIONS</b>	<b>PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS</b>
Year 11 January and June	Year 11 GCSE Unit in Mathematics
Year 12 January	Year 12 GCSE Examinations in May/June
Year 13 January	Year 13 AS Examinations in May/June
Year 14 November	Year 14 AS/A2 Examinations in Jan & May/ June

Table 1 Internal and External Examinations

However, it also involves **portfolios of evidence** (for example in Key Skills, CoPE and the Certificate of Business Enterprise), **coursework/ controlled assessment**, which are used to assess those aspects of a subject which cannot be readily assessed by an external examination. More information on how Controlled Assessment operates in the College can be found in the College's **Controlled Assessment Policy**. There is also a Guide Controlled Assessment for Parents, including a Yearly Planner, available on the school website and a **Coursework /Internal Appeals policy** available on request.

### **2.3 ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING**

Assessment *for* Learning (also known as Formative Assessment) has been a major feature of both the Revised Curriculum in general and the development of teaching and learning in the College in particular in recent years. It may be defined as the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. More specifically, departments in the College, through PRSD, staff development (both external and in-house), shared good practice seminars and meetings of the Heads of Department Forum, have been encouraged to engage in the following elements:

- Sharing learning objectives with pupils;
- Effective questioning;
- Sharing Success Criteria;
- Effective feedback including marking for improvement
- Self and peer evaluation.

### **2.4 HOMEWORK**

Good practice is promoted through homework which is set regularly across all departments according to:

- The needs of the pupils;
- The differing demands of each GCSE subject and the associated coursework/controlled assessment requirements;
- The context of agreed departmental policies.

All departments make use of the AfL principles stated above in relation to homeworks, where appropriate. They also encourage pupils to make use of Homework Diaries. In Sixth Form, pupils are encouraged to take much more responsibility for their own learning, partly as a preparation for future life at university, and homework may be linked to individual research, the use of departmental/Library resources, Private Study, preparation and planning. Pupils are encouraged to use appropriate ICT skills to research and present their homework.

### 3. REPORTING

Reporting, which is carried out electronically through the SIMS System, will be based on assessment of individual pupil performance and involves two main types:

- **Examination reports** on pupils will be issued to parents following each internal examination (See Table 1 above). These reports include grade and class place, along with a teacher comment. There will also be a House Teacher's pastoral report and a Headmaster's comment;
- **Progress Reports** are issued three times per year, twice in the Autumn Term and once in the Summer Term. These have a grade for both effort and achievement from each teacher and a House Teacher's Academic Comment.

Guidance on reporting has been provided by the College's Academic Tutor, Miss Carberry, including help-sheets on standardisation/proof reading, grade boundaries and technical advice on accessing reports, all available on the RM Staff Section of Sims.

The school holds Parents' Evenings, when parents are invited to discuss their child's performance and achievements with individual subject teachers. These are held in November (Year 14) and February/ March (Year 11-13). Parents may contact the school at any time to make an appointment to see any member of staff.

Finally, **Progress Files** produced in line with statutory guidance are and presented pupils at Speech Day in the Autumn term.

### 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**The Senior Leadership Team** will monitor and evaluate the Assessment Policy in line with school practice. The policy is updated by the Curriculum Vice Principal.

**The Academic Tutor** has responsibility for:

- Administering the electronic reporting system (with the kind assistance of Mr Patterson who volunteered to help);
- Monitoring the progress of pupils throughout the year, and liaising closely with pupils, parents, subject teachers, Year Teachers and senior members of staff, regarding pupils who are underperforming;
- Putting in place appropriate strategies (including daily and weekly report) where pupils are identified as underperforming.

**Heads of Department/Subject Co-ordinators** are to:

- Oversee the monitoring of progress of pupils in their subject and liaise with pupils, parents, the Academic Tutor and Year Teachers, offering subject-specific support where necessary;
- Apply and embed the principles of the School Assessment Policy within their own departmental practice;
- Formulate and maintain a departmental policy on Assessment (for example, methods and frequency of testing, departmental homework policy, the marking of pupils' work, recording

of pupils' results and the use of Assessment for Learning strategies), which should involve reference to the whole school policy;

- Liaise with the Examinations Officer and Assistant Examinations Officer regarding all aspects of the management of public examinations.
- Organise the internal formal assessment of their subject regarding the setting of examinations for internal examinations;
- Monitor and evaluate agreed schemes of work and teaching strategies in the light of assessment outcomes (including internal value added data) and information from DENI and CCEA;
- Be responsible for departmental record keeping.

**Subject Teachers** are to:

- Monitor the progress of pupils in their subject and liaise with the Head of Department, pupils, parents, the Academic Tutor and Year Teachers, offering subject-specific support where necessary;
- Implement departmental/whole School policies on Assessment;
- Mark in accordance with departmental policy.
- Mark and comment on all assessment tasks in a positive, meaningful and diagnostic manner, returning assessment tasks to pupils in an appropriate period of time.

**The Examinations Officer (Also Pastoral Vice Principal)** will liaise with appropriate staff/pupils/parents/exam boards and regarding all aspects of public public examinations. She will also liaise with the Assistant Examinations Officer regarding certain duties.

**The Assistant Examinations Officer (Also a Senior Leader)** will liaise with appropriate staff/pupils/parents/regarding the overseeing of the internal examinations, including timetable and supervision rota. She will also assist with certain aspects of external examinations in agreement with the Examinations Officer.

## **5. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Clearly, assessment makes an invaluable contribution to teaching and learning in Lurgan College and hopefully this policy has provided a reasonable overview of principle and practice as they stand at present; however, the College exists in a state of dynamic equilibrium and undoubtedly there will be interesting developments ahead, not least involving its current efforts to develop a more thoroughgoing approach to pupil tracking.