THE SYDNEY RUSSELL SCHOOL

Assessment Strategy 2020-21

Principles of Assessment at *SRS*

1. Assessment, in whatever form, is designed to check that students' understanding of the knowledge and proficiency in the skills needed for that point in their school career, as outlined by the PoS and curriculum overviews.

2. Assessment is used to inform and guide teaching to ensure that all students are secure in their grasp of key knowledge, concepts and skills. It identifies weaknesses and misconceptions in students' knowledge and skills in order to inform planning and future teaching and learning.

The research behind our model

Black, P and Wiliam, D (1998). *Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment.* **London: Department of Education & Professional Studies, Kings College London:**
"assessment' refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers, *and by their students in assessing themselves*, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" 2

Herbert, G. "Practical Assessment and Testing in a Secondary School" pp. 142-157:

"The outcomes of the assessment must then be fed back into the programme of learning… In this way, assessment is part of the learning process itself and does not detract from teaching and learning" 142

Butler, S.M and McMunn, N.D (2006). A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Assessment: Understanding and Using Assessment to Improve Student Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass:

"Classroom assessment is of vital importance to student learning. Research demonstrates that student achievement is increased (particularly for low student achievers) by the use of classroom assessment when such assessment features good feedback to students about their performance, sets clear standards for learning, is ongoing so it can be used to monitor student growth and progress, and is used to modify instruction to meet the needs of the student" xxv

Our Assessment Practice

Deepening Thinking

We use the principle of Enough Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (EDIRT) in the way we feedback on any student work that has been assessed to allow students time to reflect on how to improve their work and to deepen their thinking in terms of how to develop the knowledge and skills required of them. As part of this process, students will be given clear success criteria for the knowledge and skills they are expected to include in their work, which will be referenced through the use of pink and green pen to direct students towards the areas they need to consider more deeply in order to improve their work. We train students in the use of peer/self-assessment to deepen their understanding of the "what" and "how" they need to further their learning and retention.

Role Modelling Learning

Just as we deliberately model learning processes within our teaching, we give students frequent model or exemplar responses to allow them to see the standard expected of them and to role model for students the way we expect them to employ their knowledge and skills. We take time to train our students in peer/self-assessment, modelling for them how the use the relevant success criteria to help them develop their ability to become more self-reflective in terms of how improve in their work.

Impact on Learning

Assessment is at its most effective in terms of its impact on learning when the quality of feedback is high and is used to feed into future teaching and learning practice. Through a variety of different forms, we give clear feedback to students on how they need to respond (this ranges from the use of success criteria coupled with pink and green pen, to teacher comment, to whole class feedback). Feedback is clear, succinct and makes explicit for students what they need to do to improve – all students should understand this from whatever form of feedback they are given. Crucially, we use the common areas of misconception and weaknesses in student understanding and application gathered from marking and providing feedback to inform future teaching priorities and approaches – this ensures that our assessment has an immediate impact on the learning of our students in our classrooms.

Challenging Expectations

Across the year, all students will undertake regular formalised assessments (TAs, VIMAs, data drops). These are designed to challenge students and their expectations of what they should know and be able to do. These assessments are cumulative and are sat in exam conditions – they build towards final End of Year or Mock exams, where we test students against our curriculum intent for that point in their school career (what they should know/be able to do). Whilst designed to be challenging and robust, to develop students' resilience and embed the necessary skills and knowledge over the long-term, these formalised assessments are a central part to guiding future teaching by staff through the weaknesses and misconceptions in key knowledge and content they expose.

Engaging in Learning

Our approach to assessment is designed to engage students in their learning, making them take ownership of their personal areas for improvement. It is built around the model of a growth mind-set, with students using the feedback they receive on whatever they to do guide their future learning and work. We engage students through consistent use of peer and self-assessment, where, having modelled the required approaches, students engage in a critical and self-reflective manner with relevant success criteria, models and standards to guide their learning in how to improve. This, coupled with the use of EDIRT and the use of assessment to guide teaching, engages our students in the cycle of continual improvement we wish to instil in them.

In summary:

- Teachers identify misconceptions and weaknesses on a regular basis and use this to inform teaching
- EDIRT is given and structured to allow students to reflect and act on improvements
- Students have clear success criteria, with pink and green pen to cross-reference against
- Peer and self-assessment is used regularly - effective peer/self-assessment is modelled in lessons
- Feedback is clear, so that students understand what to do to improve and can act upon it
- Rigorous and challenging formalised assessments are used at timetabled intervals throughout the year to assess student progress against the knowledge and skills of our curriculum intent and to guide further teaching
- **Feedback Strategies:**
- Our "Principles of Assessment at *SRS"* identifies that effective "feedback is clear, so that students understand what to do to improve and can act upon it". Below are some suggested strategies that can be used in combination over a period of teaching to give students effective feedback. The list is not prescriptive and can be used in line with department assessment and other alternate strategies.

N.B – for all feedback, teachers' responses should be written in red pen. Students' response to feedback, including peer and self-assessment, should be written in green pen.

Strategies:

1. Highlighting in pink and green

- Highlight in green parts of the student's work to show where the strengths of their responses are. Highlight in pink parts of the student's work to show where the areas for improvement in their response are.
- *Student response – students might annotate where you have highlighted to identify the strengths and areas for improvement that are being shown to them. Students may re-write certain parts in pink, including skills and knowledge discussed during whole class feedback or through another feedback strategy.*

2. Checklist/success criteria

- Indicate, either by highlighting or annotating, on a checklist/success criteria what students have or haven't done or achieved in their work.
- *Student response – students re-write a section to include an item missed from the success criteria, or they add in additional elements at the bottom of the response.*

3. Verbal feedback

- Share with students 'What Went Well/Even Better If'. Ask students what they could have done to improve their work, or where their work has met the criteria required of them in the task.
- *Student response – students may respond verbally, or in writing.*

4. Marking Code Grids

- Write key targets or key points of feedback onto a grid or document for the whole of your class, using numbers/letters next to each target/point of feedback. On the student's work, write the most relevant codes that apply to them (using 2/3 most relevant codes is normally about right). Print the whole class feedback sheet, or put it onto the board for all to see.
- *Student response – students match up the codes on their work with the targets on the whole class feedback sheet, creating their own personal targets. When they improve their work, they can tick off the targets they have met from the whole class feedback sheet.*

5. Post it Notes

- Write pieces of feedback onto different post-it notes.
- *Student response – students then stick the post-it notes onto the part of the work that the feedback applies to most.*

6. Highlighting in a number of colours

- Use different colour highlighters to demark different skills or knowledge in a student's work. You may wish to use these colours to highlight different assessment objectives (one for each AO for example), or to highlight the key skills or knowledge expected in the response.
- *Student response – you may wish to ask students to figure out what each colour stands for, or, once they have this, to identify which colours they are missing and therefore which of the assessment objectives, or which of the necessary skills or knowledge, the response is not demonstrating.*

7. Example answers/example responses

- Provide students with an example piece of work. This may be a piece of work demonstrating a particular grade, or demonstrating a particular skill. You may wish to use an example you have written yourself, or use the work of one of your students. The example may be used to demonstrate what is required of a response, or it may be used to demonstrate common misconceptions to get students to think about what the response should have done. You could colour code the example piece of work, either using highlighters, or on a computer, to show the key skills, knowledge or AOs (as in point 5).
- *Student response – students may identify the strengths and weaknesses of an example response. They may identify where the example response has met the success criteria for the task. They may identify what the colour-coding on the example response stands for. Regardless of the approach taken, they need to be clear what they are taking from their work on the example response in order to improve their own work (you may wish to get them to write this down explicitly).*

8. Questions as marking

- Ask students questions in your comments on their work, rather than giving a target for how to improve. I.e Why would this increase Easyjet's profits?
- *Student response – students need to answer the questions at the end of their response*

9. Annotate

- Write comments in the margin, or around the student's work to show their areas of strength or areas for improvement.
- *Student response – students could use annotations to write their own targets for how to improve their work. They could colour code the annotations against strengths or weaknesses, or they could colour code them against the key skills, knowledge or assessment objectives required.*

10. Marking Snapshot

- 1. Choose a specific piece of work to mark that will give you an insight into the class' progress
- 2. Set a time limit to look at the class' work – 30-45 minutes is about right, as too long spent will mean you lose the picture of how the whole class have done
- 3. As you look through the work, don't write anything in the students' books – instead, write down what you see on a separate sheet to spot trends of strengths, misconceptions and areas for improvement
- 4. Use these ideas gathered to create a task for the class aimed at addressing any misconceptions or areas for improvement (a task that is not just a repeat of the original). Use the areas identified to also guide your further teaching.
- 5. Feed back to the whole class, discussing the strengths and areas for improvement seen. Teach the key learning points around the misconceptions or areas for improvement identified and give the class the task created to consolidate their learning.
- *Student response – students should complete the task given, using the feedback you have given to the class as a whole.*