



Gulf British Academy

Assessment, Data and Reporting at GBA

Whole School

1. Introduction and Aims

At Gulf British Academy (GBA), we believe that assessment is not an 'event', it is not a test at the end of a unit but rather a continuous process, a dialogue between the teacher and student that provides students with the tools to address their weakness and encourages them to assume responsibility for their own learning. At GBA, 'data' is collected on a daily basis with the belief that each interaction we have with students provides 'data' that can be used to improve teaching, planning, curriculum design and inform feedback that supports student learning. However, we recognise that progress in learning is not linear; therefore, interleaving, spacing and retrieval practice is used to ensure that the curriculum is constantly revisited and assessed appropriately. The aforementioned is part of our commitment to the belief that: **The curriculum is the progression model** (Counsell, 2018).

The policy that follows:

- Will provide clear guidelines on our approach to formative and summative assessment.
- Outline our approach to recording summative assessment outcomes and reporting to parents.
- Outline how and when assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated.

The policy should also be read in conjunction with the **Feedback, Reflection and Marking Policy**.

1.1 Aims

We have agreed on the following aims underpin our approach to assessment:

- All forms of assessment should be used to improve teaching and learning.
- Assessment informs planning and the delivery of the curriculum.
- Assessments assess the knowledge and skills that have been taught: **The curriculum is the progression model**.
- Assessment provides information for target setting for individuals, groups and cohorts.
- Where possible, we operate a feedback only approach, as research has shown that tailored feedback improves student outcomes more when no grade/level is attached to the student's work.
- Testing should be rigorous and reliable if used.

- Assessment helps a child to recognise the next steps in their learning.
- Provides reliable information to parents about how their child is doing.
- Assessment data is used as part of self, year group/department and whole school evaluation.
- Assessment practice is reviewed to ensure that GBA is keeping up with international best practice.

2. Legislation and Guidance

Since the removal of National Curriculum levels in 2014, schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment. At GBA we operate a feedback only approach; however, when we do report grades, most specifically on report cards, we use a 1 to 4 system from EYFS to KS3 with exam board grades (A*-U or 1-9) being used at KS4 and KS5.

3. Principles of Assessment

At GBA, we assess both formatively and summatively. What follows is an outline of our understanding of both formative and summative assessment.

3.1 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is the use of day-to-day, often informal, assessments to explore pupils' understanding. It enables the teacher to decide how best to help pupils develop that understanding. Any assessment can be used formatively and it's important to distinguish between the process of formative assessment and the actual assessments used by teachers. Making this distinction is crucial because a common misinterpretation of formative assessment is that a series of summative assessments constitutes formative assessment. This is very much not the case; what makes an assessment formative is what the teacher does with the information it generates. Unless the result of the assessment is used to change something in the teaching or learning, there is nothing formative taking place. It should be noted that assessments can often be used for both formative and summative purposes.

'Formative and summative are not labels for different types or forms of assessment but describe how assessments are used. For example, a task or activity is not formative unless the information it provides is actually used to progress learning.'

In Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam's study *Inside the Black Box*, they explain assessment is only formative when it is an integral part of the learning and teaching process, and the assessment evidence is actually used to modify teaching to meet the needs of students and improve learning. Since the publication of *Inside the Black Box*, considerable attention has been given to formative assessment in educational research. John Hattie, Professor of Education and Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute, is one of the most well-known proponents of evidence-based education and formative assessment. Hattie's extensive meta-analysis of educational research was published as *Visible Learning* in 2008. In *Visible Learning*, he identifies

which educational interventions are worth using in terms of their effect size. The research shows that approaches associated with formative assessment are among the techniques that have the largest effect size; they make the most difference to pupils' outcomes.

3.1.1 Formative Assessment in Practice

The following are concepts and pedagogical techniques associated with formative assessment.

- Setting and sharing learning intentions and success criteria that match with the current readiness of pupils.
- Pitching activities at a degree of demand that adheres to the principles outlined in Vygotsky's *Zone of Proximal* development.
- Effective questioning to check for understanding and to distribute requests for responses evenly among the class.
- Providing feedback that has a genuinely formative function by giving details of how to make further progress.
- Helping pupils to reflect on and take ownership of their learning.

3.1.2 Formative Assessment: Assessment for Learning

Formative assessment is often referred to synonymously with **Assessment for Learning** (AfL). However, AfL refers specifically to the collection of approaches and techniques associated with the practice of formative assessment. AfL involves the feedback loop of teachers gathering evidence about students' learning by:

- Observing
- Listening
- Questioning
- Discussing
- Reviewing their work in progress.

Assessment for Learning takes place during day-to-day classroom practice and while students are engaged in learning. It also gives students an active role in the assessment process. Students work with the teacher to determine what is being learned and to identify the next steps. Both parties then use the feedback to improve the learning. The feedback includes information on: how the students are learning; their progress; the nature of their understanding; and the difficulties they are having.

3.2 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment usually takes place after students have completed units of work or modules at the end of each term and/or year. The information it gives indicates progress and achievement usually in grade-related or numerical terms, although, at GBA, for the most part, we

operate a feedback only policy. Summative assessment is the more formal summing-up of a students' progress. This information can then be provided to parents or used for certification as part of a formal examination course.

Summative assessment gives students, parents and teachers valuable information about a student's overall performance at a specific point in their learning. It provides information about their progress in: subject knowledge; understanding; and skills and capabilities. A grade or percentage can indicate a student's rank in the class, year group or performance in a qualification such as an IGCSE. However, without additional information this grade is of little value in improving the student's learning and will remain only a record of a point in time. The key to improving learning is for teachers to share with students what these grades or numbers mean in terms of what the student has demonstrated they can do and **what the next steps to improve their learning will be**, which is why we place an emphasis on feedback only. Therefore, to be genuinely worthwhile, it is helpful to the student if summative assessments are also interpreted formatively before moving on.

3.2.1 Use of summative assessment

Subject teachers and school managers can use the outcomes of summative assessment for a range of purposes, including:

- Benchmarking
- Monitoring progress
- Target setting
- Placing students in subject classes; and
- To help students make informed decisions about subject choices at post-primary.

3.2.2 Summative assessment in practice

To be effective, quality summative assessment should:

- Take account of all the objectives or outcomes of the study programme (this is why summative tests from part of the study programme are not necessarily valid).
- Be used to indicate a student's progress at the end of a period of learning, for example a unit of work or a module.
- Take account of formative assessments throughout the year.
- Be formative in its own right, giving teachers insights into what students have and have not learned, enabling them to adapt their practices and feedback on what students did or did not do well.

Research suggests that teachers should make greater use of summative assessment to support learning by:

- Giving pupils opportunities to review their work before the assessment.

- To familiarise themselves with the type of assessment set.
- To identify areas where understanding is not secure.
- Involve students in the development of the assessments and the setting of assessment criteria to help develop their understanding of the assessment.
- Focus on areas for improvement.
- Involve students in marking and discussing their assessment performance, including the use of peer and self-evaluation.
- Also include quality feedback that focuses on the student's performance and how they can improve their learning.

3.3 Assessment in EYFS

Assessment in EYFS adopts formative and summative strategies. Class teachers and teaching assistants are both responsible for conducting ongoing formative assessments of the pupils. They will do this through discussions, small group work, assessing pieces of independent work against the EYFS curriculum and outcomes. Class teachers are ultimately responsible for ensuring these are accurate and the Year Leader is responsible for ensuring moderations between the team are regular to achieve consistency.

Staff in EYFS will use observations as their main means of collating assessments. These observations will be put onto 'Tapestry' and as the year progresses. This online tracker will document the progress of each child. Staff will use these observations to inform their future planning, including challenges, adult led lessons and continuous provision resources.

4. Moderation

Moderation is a vital part of our approach to assessment at GBA. Moderation should take place **at least three times per year, as outlined on the Academic Calendar**; however, in reality, it will take place much more often during professional conversations with our colleagues.

5. External Baselines

At GBA, external baselines are done at the beginning of each academic year. We use CEM INCAS for Years 1 to 6 and GL Cat4 tests for Year 7 onwards. The data is analysed by SLT and by year groups/departments with the aim of improving teaching and learning to meet the individual needs of our students.

6. Assessment Schedule and Reporting

At GBA, we believe that assessment is an ongoing progress, and we **do not advocate 'testing' for the purpose of reports**. Consequently, the assessment calendar outlines specific times for the 5 data collections we have each year (2 internal data captures and 3 data captures) rather than the

times of specific assessments, bar the end of year exams that take place in May/June each academic year. This is to place an emphasis on the use of data with each period of data collection followed by a period of year group/departmental analysis and review, culminating in five pupil progress/intervention meetings.

After data capture 2 in December (usually), an interim report (data only) is sent home to parents. The first Parent Teacher Conference (PTCs) of the year is held shortly after this report is issued. There are two further PTCs during the year and a final written report issued at the end of the year. **GBA feels that PTCs provide a better opportunity to discuss student progress; thus, justifying the balance of PTCs and reports.**

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The senior leadership and middle leadership are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is adhered to.
- Monitoring standards in core and foundation subjects (Primary), subjects (secondary).
- Analysing pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups.
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement.

Middle Leadership Only

- Reporting to SLT on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years

Teachers

- Teachers are responsible for following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy.

8. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every year by the SLT and Middle Leadership. All teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy. SLT will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the school, through:

- Moderation
- Lesson observations
- Book scrutinies
- Pupil progress meetings
- Lesson walkthroughs