

OLCHS Science Department Assessment

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment for years 9, 10 and 11 consist of exam questions taken from Exampro. There are higher and foundation tiers and questions are chosen to reflect the same ramping and overlap structure as the GCSE examinations. Summative assessments are completed to enable staff to assess learning and track progress following an extended period of study and they take place at the end of each topic. They are also used to inform future planning and to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding. In order to ensure consistency across the department, all summative assessments are teacher marked against the respective Exampro explicit mark schemes. Following this, pupils then receive a dedicated improvement and reflection time lesson. Additionally, one area per topic targeting an important skill or concept has been identified and this will be 'deep marked' within that assessment. This means pupils receive written feedback on this question and have the opportunity to improve their work.

Summative assessments for year 7 and 8 consist of carefully chosen exam style questions taken from Kerboodle. Each assessment has an extended question focusing on a specific skill. This ensures that pupils are assessed on both their substantive and disciplinary knowledge. Assessments follow the ramping style of the GCSE exams in order to reduce exam fatigue. These assessments take place at the end of each topic or combined sub-topics, which for most topics is after about 12 lessons. All summative assessments are teacher marked against explicit mark schemes taken from Kerboodle. Following this, pupils then receive a dedicated improvement and reflection time lesson. Additionally, the question that focuses on the topic's latter skill is 'deep marked' within that assessment. This means pupils receive written feedback on this question and have the opportunity to improve their work.

Additionally in year 7 and 8, at an appropriate mid-point in each topic, there is a task focusing on the first skill for the topic which is completed in class with minimal teacher intervention. The task is then 'deep marked'. This means pupils receive written feedback on this question and have the opportunity to improve their work during dedicated improvement and reflection time.

Formative Assessment

Assessment forms a pivotal part of all lessons within the science department, and we use a range of approaches. These include strategic questioning, self-assessment, peer-assessment, mini whiteboards, quizzes, groupwork etc. This enables teachers to monitor the progress of all pupils during the course of the lesson, evaluate pupils' understanding and identify misconceptions. Teachers then adapt the learning within the lesson to suit the needs of all pupils. Staff regularly use retrieval practice starter activities to recap and review learning from previous lessons and this informs future planning and need for revision.

Feedback and Acting on Feedback

Written feedback is provided to pupils in line with the school marking policy and as such includes a specific comment on strengths of the work and explicit direction (action) on how to improve work. Pupils may also receive literacy actions and or targets for future work. Pupils are then given time to respond to this, extending and deepening their understanding and answers. "Deep marking", which provides detailed feedback on pupils' work, is provided on average every six lessons by teachers. Immediate feedback is given verbally throughout the lessons and is an expectation of all staff. All feedback is used in conjunction with the school reward system of "green writing". Pupils are also directed to use self and peer-assessment as a method of assessing work during lessons. Good practice is shared during development time and as a result of work scrutiny, to ensure that feedback is effective in enabling pupils to improve.

Monitoring Progress

Assessment marks for all year groups are tracked using in-house spreadsheets which are closely monitored throughout the year. Monitoring of progress happens within classes, across cohorts and for individual pupils, ensuring that staff are aware of any pupils failing to meet their progress targets and ensuring that swift and timely intervention occurs to address any shortcomings. This is done by both the class teacher and the subject management, using the SISRA and SIMS systems after data has been collected at the appropriate times as indicated on the school calendar.

The internal tracking systems are used to identify any variation between subjects, classes or individual teachers, enabling the principal teacher to identify areas of strength and areas of improvement within the department. This also enables swift action to take place to ensure the best teaching occurs at all times.

Intervention

After the interim data drops, the Curriculum Area meets to discuss outcomes, identify gaps, compare pupil groups, gauge the quality of the schemes of work and subsequent resources, and plan interventions. Teachers then use this to inform their own data analysis and interventions. Students who are a concern will then be spoken to by the class teacher. Where appropriate, phone calls home are also made regarding pupil progress.

Home Learning

All year 7* and 8 pupils currently follow a sequence of online quizzes that relate to the learning that is taking place in lessons. (* starts after pupils move into academic groupings, prior to this home learning is set by individual teachers in line with the school policy).

Home learning for pupils in years 8, 9, 10 and 11 is set by individual teachers in line with the school policy. The nature of these tasks is determined by the individual teacher allowing for flexibility and individuality of the tasks set to classes. Homework usually relates to a topic that has been recently taught, or is based on revision work in preparation for an assessment.

Rewards

Rewards are given in line with the school policies. This is mainly “green writing” although verbal praise and in-book acknowledgement are widely used by all teachers.