



St Ives School

Assessment Policy



Date policy approved by Governors: April 2022

Date policy becomes effective: Immediately

Review date: April 2024

Person responsible for Implementation and Monitoring: Head of School

Links to other relevant policies: Curriculum Policy, Marking and Feedback policy, Homework Policy

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of assessment is, ultimately, to help students to learn more and remember more. Assessment achieves this by:

1. Providing information to teachers about what students know, understand and can do, so that teachers can systematically plan the next stages of teaching and learning
2. Provide information to curriculum leaders about the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching, so that adaptations can be made where needed, to improve learning
3. Assist students to embed their knowledge and use it fluently
4. Provide information to students (and parents) about the progress that has been made and about the next steps for learning.

Fundamentally, assessment enables us to understand if children are learning what we planned to teach them. Assessment evidences how well students have learnt knowledge which has been taught recently, and how well knowledge has been remembered from previous units, years or phases.

Our approaches to assessment draw on practice which has been shown to be effective and includes evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation. In doing so, we aim to be clear about what is effective assessment and its limitations,

and to avoid both misuse and overuse. All subjects implement our Assessment Policy, adapting pedagogical approaches to align with their subject curriculum and 'what works best'.

Our common principles for assessment are:

1. It must be frequent and timely.
2. It must be aligned with the curriculum, and must relate to the intended learning objectives.
3. It must be time-efficient and purposeful so that precious learning time is used productively.
4. It must be time-efficient for teachers: so that their precious work time is used productively.
5. It must be used: to inform curriculum review, future teaching, and to repair student misconceptions.
6. It must be integrated with our wider approaches to teaching e.g., metacognition, retrieval and homework
7. It must be fair and accessible to all students.

Section 2: Assessment Strategies

Our selected assessment strategies can be separated into four strands:

Strand 1: 'Live' assessment

Assessment which happens as an integral part of teaching is termed 'Live Assessment'. Our live assessments happen in-class and provides instant feedback to teachers (and students) about what students know, understand and can do. Live assessment provides instant feedback to the teacher and student about the success of instruction and informs the next steps within the lesson, or sequence of lessons. We use the following approaches which have been shown to be effective through secure educational research:

1. **Bell Tasks** are used to begin every lesson. These are pre-planned and structured to elicit understanding and recall of learning from previous lessons (last lesson, last week, last year) and always include a question which checks knowledge and understanding of building blocks for the lesson to come.

2. **Verbal Questioning:** Our preferred strategies are
 - Providing 'think time' for all questions so that students have an opportunity to develop their answers and to consider how to explain this in their response.
 - No opt out: using either strategies such as Cold Calling and mini white boards to ensure all students participate and there is no 'opt out'.
 - Extending answers by asking for more detail, examples, key words etc. or by bouncing questions to other students to expand on.

3. **Circulating during the lesson.** Teachers actively and frequently monitor and review students' work, check understanding and advise on next steps during the lesson. Where appropriate, teachers will use this as an opportunity to 'live mark' students' work. Teachers prioritise spending time with disadvantaged students, and those with SEND as part of our wider strategies to raise achievement.

4. **Low-stakes Quizzing.** Low-stakes quizzes are an important tool in assessment, both for teacher understanding of what has been learnt, and to assist students to be able to memorise and use key facts and knowledge. Low –stakes quizzes are characterised by:
 - Targeted questions closely matched to the learning objectives and acquisition of key knowledge and facts, so that teacher can diagnose specific misconceptions or problems.
 - Low-stakes language "I want to find out how successful my teaching has been" which relieves unnecessary anxiety for students and creates a climate in which students are able to participate without fear of failure
 - Short: making maximum use of precious learning time and designed to be both quick to answer, and quick to mark.
 - Done in silence so that teachers understand what each student can do, and understand independently.

Low-stakes quizzing is commonly used for plenaries both at 'hinge points' within lessons and at the end of a lesson.

Strand 2: Marking

Marking students' work plays an important role in a teacher understanding what learning is taking place, and what students have understood. For further details about the school's approaches see Marking Policy (Appendix 1).

Strand 3: Twice Yearly Assessments

Students in Years 7-10* complete a structured assessment twice-a-year in Maths, English, Science, Geography, History, and MFL, except in Year 7 Autumn term*. The TAs taken at the end of the summer term will be adapted into an end of year assessment.

These TAs contain questions

- From within the current unit (approx. 60%).
- From past learning from the wider curriculum with a focus on knowledge associated with repeat concepts (high impact knowledge, approx. 40%).
- Of a range of difficulty, typically building in complexity as students progress through the test. Where appropriate, end of unit assessments are tiered (F and H) to ensure students are not over-faced by questions which are too complex for them, nor wasting time on questions which are overly simplistic and do not therefore assess their ability to respond to challenging concepts
- Are carefully designed to support teachers to be able to identify misconceptions and direct repair and intervention.

Preparation for TAs is standardised as follows:

1. Students (and parents) are given notice of the date of the Unit Assessment, to support point 2 below.

2. The use of pre-test material. This material is designed to give revision practice of key topic areas within the unit assessment, both recent ones, and those which are being assessed at 'distance'. Pre-test material is broader than that within the TA. The use of pre-test material supports teachers to diagnose gaps and misunderstandings before the unit assessment, and to be able to correct these before the unit assessment is done. Pre-test material is typically provided for students during a lesson which is around 1 week before the test.
3. Supported preparation of revision notes, in a suitable format. Students are taught how to summarise their learning in the form of revision notes using dual coding and wider strategies such as flash cards. Students are supported to build up their own bank of revision resources, and provided with the resources to do this e.g., coloured card, highlighters etc. as needed.
4. Revision tasks via homework: students will be expected, via their homework, to undertake appropriate revision for an appropriate time period prior to the TA. The quantity of revision expected shall be in line with the expectations of the homework policy. Revision will take place for a number of weeks which aligns with the age and stage of the students: For years 7 and 8, one week; for year 9, two weeks, for years 10 and 11, three weeks.

Teachers will not expect students to take formal assessments more frequently than twice-a-year. To do so would create unnecessary workload and pressure for both students and teachers and does not represent good value in terms of the investment of lesson time in preparing for, taking and reviewing the assessment.

Students with special educational needs will be supported to be able to access TAs in line with their IEPs (Passports). Where students have been granted Access Arrangements (from Year 10 onwards), teachers will make every effort to provide this support for TAs. This may include, for example, extra time, a reader or scribe, rest breaks, a laptop.

TAs increase in length and complexity as students progress through the Key Stages. In Years 7 and 8 termly assessments are typically 45 minutes. In Year 9 assessments may be up to 60 minutes. In Years 10 and 11 unit assessments may increase in length, in line with the written assessment structure for the subject's qualification.

TAs in core subjects will be made up of different styles of questions: short answer, multiple choice, structured answer and longer answer/ essay-type questions as

appropriate to the topics being assessed. Questions may be created by teachers or be drawn from past GCSE papers.

TAs are marked by teachers outside of lesson time following a set mark-scheme. Where more than one teacher is delivering a subject, the subject team will standardise a sample of assessments, selecting questions where answers are more likely to vary and require teacher judgement.

Teachers will provide feedback on the TA: identifying misconceptions and re-teaching topics where students have not yet understood the key knowledge. Where appropriate, teachers will adapt future plans e.g., by including target topics in Do Now or homework tasks.

Student's marks will be collated and recorded within department systems so that they can be used to inform

- Curriculum review: adapting teaching plans where topics have been challenging for students to learn e.g. by adapting the modelling, examples used or length of time dedicated to teaching
- Reporting e.g., mid- year or end of year reports
- Predicted grades for students in Year 11
- Planning for teacher training including training for developing subject knowledge

NB Students do not do TAs in PE, Global Citizens or in KS3 in Art, Drama, Music, Computing, DT or Food Technology. Their progress in these subjects is assessed in other ways, best suited to the subjects. For further details about assessment in these subjects, see Subject Assessment Protocols.

**Students in Year 11 take mock exams at the end of the Autumn Term that replace the TA. Additional mock exams take place during the Spring Term depending on the subject. For more details, see Subject Assessment Protocols.*

** Students in Year 7 Autumn term will only complete structured assessments in English, Maths and Science. This decision has carefully considered the proportion of curriculum and learning time when students start at our school. It also provides support with transition.*

Each subject adopts these general assessment principles and clarifies its approach to assessment in a Subject Assessment Protocol.