

# ***Raising Achievement (incl. Homework) Policy***

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# Policy for Raising Achievement

## School Aims

At St Leonard's we...

- Pursue excellence in all and for all
- Take Christ as the model for life
- Strive to create community

## Introduction

One of the fundamental aims of the school is to ensure that every child reaches his/her full potential.

From an academic point of view, this means helping each individual to make maximum progress in every subject. In order to meet this aim, teachers must regularly assess pupils' work in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons.

The term "assessment", for the purposes of this policy, covers all the processes by which teachers gain information about pupils' abilities and the uses to which this information is put.

## How we assess?

Different departments will adopt different strategies and practices in their assessment of pupils' work. These will include:

- Written comments on work
- Written Grades, marks or levels.
- Assessment for Learning strategies
- Practical work
- Tests
- Exams
- Self-assessment
- Peer assessment guided by the teacher
- Oral comments and feedback.
- Pupil response boxes on work
- Cover sheets indicating criteria and outcomes needed for certain grades/levels

## Why assess?

- 1) To check that learning is taking place.
- 2) To recognise and reward the achievements of all pupils.
- 3) To value the work pupils do.
- 4) To gain information which informs the planning of teaching and learning.
- 5) To provide feedback to pupils on what they have done and how they can progress.
- 6) To drive improvement in subsequent work ( = pupil response to feedback )

- 7) To motivate pupils and create a positive learning atmosphere.
- 8) To identify underperformance or underachievement of pupils.
- 9) To inform parents about pupils' attainment and progress.
- 10) To fulfil statutory duties through reporting.

## **Marking of Written Work**

There will clearly be differences in the approach to marking in different subjects and at different stages in development. However, we also need a clearly understood basic expectation which applies to all pupils and all teachers.

- 1) Every pupil must have a mark, grade or level indicating attainment for a piece of work in every subject at least every two weeks.**
- 2) Every pupil in every subject with written work, will receive constructive written feedback on a piece of work either once every two weeks or every three lessons (whichever is the longer period) (When pupils are preparing coursework they will receive written and verbal feedback to help them as permitted by the exam board).**

**We recognise that this is a minimum expectation and practice is that many colleagues mark more regularly. We also recognise that occasionally a longer piece of coursework or project work is undertaken and not formally marked until it is finished.**

Written comments need not be long but must indicate:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Ways to improve

**It is not essential that every piece of written work is marked like this; notes may be simply ticked to acknowledge they are complete and accurate.**

## **Assessment during lessons**

Lesson planning should build in regular opportunities for teachers and pupils to assess what they have learned. Exactly how this is done will depend on the subject, lesson, age and level of pupils, preferred learning styles etc. Good practice currently in use around the school includes:

- Individual whiteboards for pupils to show responses
- Thumbs up/down/horizontal to indicate confidence with learning
- Written tests
- Verbal tests
- Paired work with peer assessment
- Assessment of work against criteria
- Modelling improvements to work

- Articulating answers, instructions, information for a different audience
- Pupil use of 'active-board'
- Heads and tails
- Card sorts/matching

### **Literacy and Numeracy**

It has long been established that every teacher has a role to play in raising standards of literacy and numeracy. All teachers must therefore identify misspellings, indicate problems with punctuation or grammar and ensure that numerical work is correctly set-out. The latter may include giving units where appropriate, labelling graphs... Teachers are expected to use their professional judgement in marking the work of the least able so that not every mistake is marked.

### **Recording**

Records of pupils' marks, grades or levels must be clearly kept in the teacher's planner available for monitoring by Head of Department or senior staff. This record is vital for use on parents' evenings, at report times and if a parent asks for evidence about child's work and progress. It is also vital for the Head of Department to use in the case of a long-term absence or change of teacher mid-course. Teachers must follow the departmental policy in keeping this record.

### **Reporting**

The reports produced on each pupil must be readily accessible to parents, written in a language that will make sense to them. They must provide personalised information about progress and specific advice on how to improve. All staff must follow the school policy on the writing of reports as indicated in the Staff handbook and the booklet (Guidance on writing Reports).

It is the professional responsibility of each teacher to ensure that reports are accurate.

### **Target-setting**

Pupil targets are set for each subject and progress towards these is gathered and reported to parents at regular intervals. This data is analysed so that Heads of Department and Heads of Year can work with their teams to address any underachievement identified.

### **Homework**

#### **PRINCIPLES**

We believe that homework makes a valuable contribution to the progress and attitude to learning of all pupils. We will regularly set homework including opportunities to:

- reinforce learning from lessons
- practise skills and techniques
- revise and prepare for internal and external exams
- develop research and independent learning skills
- memorise information

- deepen understanding of a topic
- develop skills including literacy, numeracy, ICT, creative and physical skills

Part of the reason for homework is to continually develop the individual as a lifelong learner with resilience and study habits which develop as the person develops. With this in mind, the quantity and level of homework will increase through the school.

### **POLICY TO PRACTICE**

Setting homework regularly with all classes is essential so that it is embedded with every pupil throughout their school life.

All teachers must establish and maintain the routines of homework being clearly titled “Homework” in addition to any other title, and dated and underlined neatly.

It is important to give sufficient time in a lesson for homework to be explained, written on the board, copied into planners (or exercise book if necessary) and for questions to be answered.

### **Key Stage 3 (Years 7 – 9)**

HW will be set in proportion to the number of lessons taught in each subject per week.

3 lessons of the subject per week	1 hour weekly (could be split across two HWs)
2 lessons of the subject per week	40 minutes
1 lesson of the subject per week	40 minutes fortnightly

### **Key Stage 4**

Homework will be set at least weekly in all subjects except non-examined PE. The amount of HW will be proportionate to the number of lessons in the subject.

Maths and English	90 minutes per week (could be split across two HWs)
Science Double	40 minutes per subject per week (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
Science Triple	1 hour per subject per week (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
All other courses	1 hour per week
Total approx.	10 hours per week

### **Sixth Form**

In Year 12 and 13 students should have homework from each subject teacher each week. There will be more variation in the time taken for different tasks and teachers are asked to give students guidelines as to how long to spend on a homework task. On average students should be getting 5 – 6 hours of work per A level subject per week or 15 hours for a level 3 BTEC course.

### **Ensuring Consistency and Progress**

Homework arrangements and timetables will be communicated through Pupil Planners, including deadlines for the return of work. The school actively welcomes feedback from parents through planners and will respond to concerns. Where there

are issues with the management of homework the school will work with the pupil to put in strategies to assist pupils to manage their workload. If a pupil has not completed homework on time it is vital that the teacher addresses this immediately in order to deal with any issues and reach a satisfactory resolution quickly.

### **Special Educational Needs (SEND)**

In setting homework for these pupils it is important to balance the right of pupils to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks, with their individual learning needs. These needs may include consolidation and reinforcement of specific skills. The SEN Department has put specific strategies and arrangements in place for those pupils with specific learning difficulties. Teachers are expected to pay attention to the Pupil Profile when deciding on the type and extent of HW set.