



The Poplar Adolescent Unit  
Therapeutic Education Department

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## ASSESSMENT POLICY

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**Poplar Education Provision (PEP)**  
**Assessment Policy**

**Overall the purpose of assessment is to improve standards, not merely to measure them.  
(Ofsted 1998)**

**The quality of assessment has a significant impact on attitudes to learning and on attainment in schools by stimulating and challenging students to work hard and by encouraging teachers to focus on how to improve the learning of individual students. (Ofsted: Good assessment in secondary schools 2003)**

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## **Section 1 - Introduction**

**1.1** Assessment is the range of activities through which we come to know about the abilities and achievements of our students and the extent of the knowledge, skills and understanding that they have developed. It is the vehicle by which we can advise students (and others) of their progress, their targets and how to close the gap that might exist between their targets and level of attainment. It is an integral part of effective learning and teaching. This policy, which sets out the rationale for assessment arrangements in PEP, has been based on consideration of statutory responsibilities placed on schools, current practice and evidence from research that is commonly accepted. This policy applies across all Key Stages taught within the unit, including KS5.

### **1.2 Related Documents**

- Subject Assessment Policies (see Sections 8 – 11)
- Subject Policies

## **Section 2 - Rationale**

**2.1** Assessment serves three fundamental purposes: -

1. To help students learn.
2. To help teachers teach more effectively and to adopt a more personalised approach to the needs of their students.
3. To provide relevant and accurate information about attainment for students, parents, teachers and others.

**2.2** It is more helpful to regard the nature of assessment in two ways:-

- Assessment **for** learning (formative assessment, serving purposes 1 and 2): this involves the continuous use of classroom assessments to improve learning.
- Assessment **of** learning (summative assessment, serving purpose 3): measures what learners know or can do at a particular point in time.

**We recognise the great importance that formative assessment has on motivation, self-esteem and learning.**

**2.3** This Policy provides the framework for all school assessment practice, whilst recognising that different assessment strategies will be appropriate at different times in various areas of the curriculum. Individual daily plans for subjects will specify appropriate assessment opportunities and methods.

## **Section 3 - Assessment for Learning**

**3.1** Lesson planning will identify opportunities for assessment during individual lessons.

**3.2** To ensure that assessment is used to help students learn effectively, the following features will be evident in classroom practice.

- **Involving students in their learning**

Teachers will:

- Set targets which should be aspirational but attainable. They should be discussed with students and noted by teacher.
- Explain the reasons for the lesson or activity and share the learning objectives and learning outcomes.
- Share the specific assessment criteria with students; making sure that these criteria can be easily understood by all.
- Help students to understand what they have done well and what they need to develop.
- Show students how to use assessment criteria to assess their own work.
- Provide regular opportunities for self and peer assessment.

- Use effective questioning techniques to encourage discussion which give vital feedback on the current level of understanding.
- **Modelling quality**  
Teachers will:
  - Share examples of work with students so that they can see the standards they are aiming for.
  - Use examples of work to highlight the ways that assessment criteria are met.
  - Encourage students to review examples of work that do not meet the assessment criteria.
  - Include in their teaching, activities designed to model the necessary skills.

## **Section 4 - Assessment of Learning**

### **4.1 Assessment Opportunities**

The School will create formal summative assessment opportunities, such as initial baseline assessments and Care Plan Approach (CPA) review assessments, at appropriate times for individual students. Other summative assessments will be identified in lesson planning. The attainment data will be used as the basis for monitoring student progress.

### **4.2 Methods**

Different kinds of assessment within lessons will be used by subject teachers, which will fit the purpose of the assessment and provide data which is valid, precise and reliable. The initial assessment phase (first two weeks in education) will use a range of assessment tools to provide baseline data to inform future assessments and for comparison with previous achievements at home school.

### **4.3 Levels**

In KS3 and KS4, attainment will refer to GCSE grades in most cases. Assessments in Years 12 and 13 will relate directly to the requirements and methodologies of the relevant awarding bodies. It is important that students have the opportunity to develop their understanding of the different levels and how to progress to the next one.

### **4.4 Records**

The School will keep a record of progress of each student, including a record of prior attainment from home schools. Individual teachers will record student achievement using SIMS and other recording methods to keep evidence of assessed work, as appropriate.

### **4.5 Monitoring and Reporting Progress**

All staff will follow the School system of assessment, recording and reporting progress to parents and home schools in CPA review documentation.

### **4.6 Standardised Work**

Subject Leaders and Co-ordinators are encouraged to keep portfolios of student work as exemplars of agreed assessment standards. It is also useful evidence of procedures for Subject Reviews and Ofsted and will aid the completion of the Subject SEF.

## **Section 5: Good Practice**

### **5.1 As good practice in **assessment for learning**, teachers will: -**

- Have confidence that every student can improve; it is good practice to set aspirational targets as well as minimum targets for some students. (See 3.2)
- Decide how and when to assess students' attainment at the same time as they plan the work.
- Relate assessment to learning objectives which are shared with students.
- Develop students' understanding of success criteria within each subject area.

- Use a range of assessment techniques in the classroom, including observation and the use of appropriate questioning.
- Put the emphasis on feedback (both oral and written) rather than grading work.
- Give students the confidence and opportunities to take the action needed to improve.
- Record the progress of individual students.
- Adjust teaching to take account of the results of assessment.
- Involve students in developing the skills required for peer and self assessment.

## **Section 6: Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **6.1 Each student has a responsibility to:**

- Record or be aware of their targets for each subject.
- Read and take note of feedback given by teachers.
- To address the suggestions for improvement.
- To ask for clarification where necessary.
- To participate in self-evaluation; this includes noting down any instructions / guidance given.

### **6.2 Parents have a responsibility to:**

- Discuss targets with their son/daughter.
- Ask for support for their son/daughter as necessary.
- Keep the school informed if there are any particular reasons why their son/ daughter is finding tasks difficult.

### **6.3 Each teacher has a responsibility to:**

- Keep clear records, updating information regularly.
- Use the data to plan for the different needs of the students they teach.
- Share learning objectives for every lesson in a language that is accessible for students.
- Use plenary sessions (and mini-reviews during lessons) to enable students to know what they have learnt and what they need to do next.
- Ensure that students are aware of the criteria for assessment and to help students to develop the necessary skills to review their performance in their subject.
- Mark and return work promptly after completion.
- Make oral and / or written comments which should help students identify the strengths of their responses and show how the work could have been improved to achieve the criteria for a higher level.
- Participate in the standardisation of assessment and work scrutinies within Subject Areas.
- Base the assessment of current working levels on identified milestone tasks or assessments.
- Praise students who are meeting or exceeding their target grade.
- Implement intervention strategies within the classroom context to help address any difficulties (if necessary in conjunction with other colleagues), and to inform parents, if appropriate.

### **6.4 Subject Leaders**

Subject leaders have a responsibility to:

- Provide appropriate work which clearly illustrates the range of assessment opportunities and allows students to develop a critical approach to their own learning.
- Making sure that departmental policy is clearly stated and available for all staff.
- Monitor the implementation of the assessment policy by subject teachers by:
  - Checking data is recorded.
  - Monitoring the regular marking of work.
  - Ensuring that data is used to differentiate work for each student.
  - Monitor the policy through classroom observation, work scrutinies and student questionnaires/discussions.

- Provide training and support for staff in assessment, recording and reporting practices which affect their particular area.
- Produce student friendly levels and grades and develop systems for sharing these with students and parents.
- Develop assessment for learning strategies which are embedded in the good practice of their area and to disseminate these across the school.
- Evaluate assessment tasks and strategies across their Subject area on a regular basis.

## **6.5 Head of Education**

Head of Education has a responsibility to:

- Keep an overview of assessment and marking via random sampling / work scrutiny, report findings, line management meetings and subject reviews.
- Record their monitoring activities on the SEF.
- Identify students who persistently fail to achieve their potential across a number of subjects and support and advise staff on strategies to raise achievement.
- Evaluate and review the assessment policy in line with the schedule for policy review.
- Support the development of assessment for learning strategies through the Continuing Professional Development programme.
- Ensure that the assessment policy is consistent with good practice and with other policies.

## **Section 7: Other Considerations**

- 7.1** Upon admission, home school assessments and working grades are requested and referred to by Teachers. These assessments are considered with the understanding that:
- Many pupils are unlikely to be meeting age-related expectations due to mental health difficulties, trauma, missed school, learning difficulties etc.
  - Assessment data provided by schools is not always up to date or accurate.
- 7.2** Baseline assessments are conducted using a range of assessment tools which are broad enough to allow young people to access the assessments.
- 7.3** As well as assessing academic progress, social and emotional development are also assessed. Their Mental Health Functioning in Education (MHFiE) is assessed daily, weekly (CRM) and 6 weekly (CPA) by Key Teachers. For many, progress may be visible through improved social and relationship skills which is reflected in reports.
- 7.4** Where young people are too ill to be able to cope with a full curriculum, Key Teachers identify the most important subjects to concentrate on. English, Maths and Science being priorities.

# English Assessment Policy

## PEP seeks to implement assessment of English which:

- Is closely linked with teaching and learning;
- Involves sharing goals with students;
- Aims to show students the standards they are aiming for and how to recognise them;
- Involves students in self and peer assessment;
- Provides feedback which helps students to take their next steps;
- Is underpinned by the assumption that every student can improve;
- Involves shared information with schools;
- Involves teacher and student reviewing and reflecting on assessment data.

## What does this mean in practice?

- At the start of the initial assessment phase after admission to Poplar Adolescent Unit (PAU), all students will be given a target for the following 6 week cycle working towards the Care Programme Approach (CPA) meeting. This target will be based on the objective data gained from the working level provided by the student's school, and PEP baseline assessment data completed during the two week initial assessment phase. These targets must be shared with students.
- Most work will not have a numerical mark or grade on it. Rather, it will have a comment which will identify areas for improvement and suggest what can be done to improve.
- Coursework and assessment tasks, set for each assessment phase of work or relating to school-based work, will be awarded a realistic achievement grade, if appropriate. This should clearly reflect the AOs for the task and should also include an effort grade, where applicable.
- Short tests, i.e. spelling, will be awarded a straightforward mark out of 10 for example.
- When marking work, we will not correct every single spelling or punctuation error. Where we do identify mistakes, we will identify and correct them, and expect students to copy the correct spellings. At GCSE level, we will identify errors but NOT correct them.
- We will not expect to mark every piece of work. At GCSE and A Level, for example, we would not expect to check notes. We will see and mark every student's book or file at least once a week to observe progress.
- At A Level, it is useful to check student files on occasion to ensure detailed notes and annotation are taking place.
- Self and peer assessment will also take place where possible and health allowing.
- Commendations will be frequently given. Displays of good work are also encouraged.
- At GCSE and A Level, we will make use of the mark schemes in the specifications. We must ensure that we communicate these clearly to the students using the level descriptors in the draft coursework stage to help students to make progress.
- At GCSE, coursework should be completed in two stages; a rough draft, and a final draft. It should (with very few exceptions) be handwritten and should not exceed 4 sides in length. Criteria for assessments set by home schools are adhered to.

- On Phase Two and CPA documentation, we seek to be as informative as possible, identifying strengths and giving advice or targets for improvement, based on AFs or grade descriptors. They will also show the current Assessment Grade, where applicable.

### **Assessment weeks:**

- In order for us to pass on the data required, assessments will be carried out in the week preceding CPAs. These will be marked and levelled and the information passed to the Key Teacher to add to the CPA notes.
- The levels awarded in the assessment week will reflect any formal assessment or classwork, as appropriate.

## **Maths Assessment Policy**

When a young person starts at Poplar Education they undertake a number of assessments; one of which is a Numeracy WRAT (wide range achievement test). This is levelled according to the National Curriculum. Once this has been completed another assessment, more specific to a particular Numeracy strand, is taken and levelled. This will be instrumental in starting to identify areas of the curriculum that the particular young person needs to work on and also areas where their achievement is above required National Curriculum age related levels.

Once the baseline assessment is complete an Individual Learning Plan is produced in discussion with each young person with their Key Teacher. This can follow one of two routes:

1. If the young person has been admitted from a mainstream school, the school is contacted by the key teacher and schemes of work obtained. This will enable Poplar to continue with the particular Numeracy strand that the young person would have been studying at school. In discussion with the Poplar maths co-ordinator a half termly individualised programme of study for the young person will be structured by the key teacher.

2. If the young person is admitted with no mainstream school background the Poplar scheme of work is used. The KS3 program uses Key Maths, KS4/5 Edexcel. Once again using the assessment material produced on induction into the unit and discussion with the Poplar maths co-ordinator, the key teacher will agree a half termly individualised programme of study for the young person.

### **Assessment is carried out at three levels.**

*Short-term assessments* are a part of every lesson and are closely matched to the teaching objectives for that lesson. They are formally recorded on the young person's daily report and are used to inform the planning for the next session.

*Medium term assessments* are carried out using Key Maths assessment activities in KS 3. These will occur at the end of each particular module. Young people accessing work from the mainstream schools will use assessment activities particular to the maths syllabus the mainstream school is using. In KS4/5 assessments are undertaken using end of module levelling tests.

*Long-term assessments* are made using KS3 QDCA papers. KS4/5 assessments are made using GCSE/A level practice papers and various levelling text books.

The MyMaths interactive scheme is also used as a form of assessment tool.



# Science Assessment Policy

## Assessment and recording in Science

- Baseline assessments are completed by KS3 and KS4 students to allow us to assess progress
- Current and expected levels are obtained from the young person's 'home' school. This knowledge is used to inform our teaching.
- We mark each piece of work positively, making it clear, verbally, or on paper, where the work is good, and how it could be further improved. Pupils are actively encouraged to self-assess using information given to them or where appropriate peer assessment.
- Daily progress recording and internal recording are used to record lesson outcomes and progress.
- Reports are submitted to each young person's CPA which is an opportunity for parents, carers, professionals and the young person to celebrate and discuss progress.

## Accreditation

- Young people's work will be accredited wherever possible and appropriate.
- This science policy will be reviewed by the Science Co-ordinator.

## Art and Design Assessment Policy

Art and Design is not a core subject in secondary education – rather, it is a general subject offered at KS3, with an option to study at KS4, GCSE level, when a student enters year 10.

At Poplar, we recognise the academic, recreational and holistic value of Art and Design as part of our curriculum, and deliver it as a timetabled subject activity with opportunities for outside accreditation from ASDAN and Trinity College, London.

We have a wide range of interests and abilities across our cohort, therefore we aim to

- Set common tasks that are open ended and can have a variety of results
- Provide differentiation by task level and expectation, and by level of support
- Offer resources that encourage the young person to work in mixed media
- Raise self-esteem by realising outcomes that are structured, aesthetically pleasing and where possible resulting in accreditation

If the student studies Art as a GCSE or A Level subject we will follow the scheme of work set by their home school, using resources provided by that school that are appropriate and current.

If a student is at KS3 level, has not taken Art as an option, or is currently not in education or training, they can access our options to study towards one or 2 national certificates.

### **Assessment points –**

On induction, the student will have a discussion with the tutor based around previous experience in art, hobbies and interests that can be used for inspiration. The student is asked to produce an A4 pencil drawing for their initial task, giving us an idea of baseline levels and support likely to be needed.

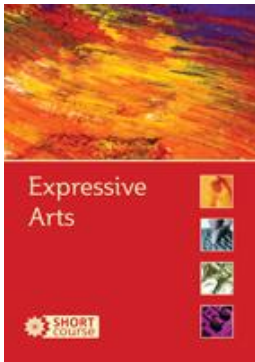
The student is shown a range of options from past students' project books. These cover a range of outcomes in Art, Craft and Design and can be found in the course file. The books lay down a pro forma for the student to work within, ensuring

that all areas of the design and make methodology are covered as advised in National curriculum guidelines. During this 2-week (approx.) period the student would be expected to produce research and annotate this, analysing their choices. They would research an artist of their choice and move on to initial design work.

We work with the student to develop the designs into a piece of artwork/product design, which they evaluate. The resulting body of work will lead to an ASDAN Expressive Arts short course award worth 1 credit.

If the student wishes to make further progress, and they are likely to stay with us for a further period of time, they move through to a Level 1 Arts Award Bronze accredited by Trinity College London. This is an approx. 40 hour course achieved by compiling a detailed body of work, a final item and evidence of skill sharing with others.

Assessment is undertaken through lesson observation and critique of work. Discussing the work with the student on an ongoing basis enhances their evaluative skills and challenges them to raise their levels and their aspirations. The lead teacher for Art and Design will set levels periodically, and also assist other staff in delivery of Art and Design across the curriculum, diverging into other subject areas.



## **Extracts from 'School inspection handbook' September 2018 No. 150066**

### **Outcomes for pupils**

184. The CIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging outcomes.

185. Inspectors will take account of current standards and progress, including the school's own performance information, and make a relevant judgement on academic and other learning outcomes for pupils by evaluating the extent to which all pupils:

- progress well from their different starting points and achieve or exceed standards expected for their age nationally (at the end of a key stage), or within the school's own curriculum
- attain relevant qualifications so that they can and do progress to the next stage of their education into courses that lead to higher level qualifications or into jobs that meet local and national needs.

186. To judge outcomes, inspectors will evaluate pupils' academic and vocational achievement across the curriculum.

187. In judging achievement, inspectors will give most weight to pupils' progress. They will take account of pupils' starting points in terms of their prior attainment and age when evaluating progress. Within this, they will give most weight to the progress of pupils currently in the school, taking account of how this compares with the progress of recent cohorts, where there are any. Inspectors will consider the progress

of pupils in **all** year groups, not just those who have taken or are about to take examinations or national tests. As part of pupils' progress, inspectors will consider the growth in pupils' security, breadth and depth of knowledge, understanding and skills.

### **Sources of evidence**

188. Inspectors will gather evidence about the progress of current pupils through:

- observations in lessons
- discussions with pupils about their understanding of things they have been learning about
- scrutiny of pupils' acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills over time as shown in their work, including that in their books
- the school's own information, taking account of the quality and rigour of the assessment on which it is based.

189. Inspectors will recognise that published data for small groups of children **must** be treated with caution. Whilst inspectors will analyse all pupil-level and group-level data, there will be some groups that are too small for group-level reporting to be meaningful. Only if groups are large enough will inspectors be able to draw valid inferences from group-level performance. This is to avoid forming unfair judgements about a school. For example, it will not be possible to draw conclusions about trends in relation to small groups. Equally, it will be misleading to compare national rates of progress and attainment with progress and attainment rates for small groups or for groups that have high proportions of pupils with special educational needs arising from their low cognitive abilities.

190. When considering the school's records for the progress of current pupils, inspectors will recognise that schools are at different points in their move towards adopting a system of assessment without national curriculum levels.

191. In scrutinising pupils' work, inspectors will consider how well:

- pupils are making good progress towards meeting or exceeding the expected attainment for their age, as set out in the school's own curriculum and assessment policies
- pupils are set challenging goals, given their starting points, and are making good progress towards meeting or exceeding these
- pupils are gaining and consolidating knowledge, understanding and skills
- pupils do work that deepens their knowledge, understanding and skills, rather than simply undertaking more work of the same difficulty or going on to study different content.

### **Disadvantaged pupils**

192. Inspectors will take particular account of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils from their starting points. They will consider the progress made by the end of the key stage compared with that made nationally by other pupils with similar starting points. Inspectors must review carefully what data is meaningful and avoid focusing on the performance of small groups where assessment information is less reliable.

193. For current pupils, inspectors will consider the impact of what a school is doing to reduce any differences in progress and attainment between disadvantaged and other pupils with the same starting points. Where performance information is limited due to small group size, inspectors should gather a wide range of other evidence to ensure the school is providing effectively for disadvantaged pupils, including reviewing pupils' work, and talking to pupils and teachers.

194. Inspectors should talk to leaders about the quality of teaching, behaviour and the design and delivery of the curriculum to examine why there may be underperformance for some pupils. Where there is an identifiable shortfall in progress or attainment of disadvantaged children or in wider evidence, inspectors should consider:

- the adequacy of the core provision and approaches that have an impact on all children
- identified needs of the child, e.g. SEND, and how these are met, and
- any additional provision that may appropriately be made on the basis of family economic or social disadvantage.

### **Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities**

198. Inspectors will consider the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in relation to the progress of all pupils nationally with similar starting points. Inspectors will examine the impact of funded support for them on removing any differences in progress and attainment. The expectation is that the identification of special educational needs leads to additional or different arrangements being made and a consequent improvement in progress.

199. Inspectors will consider whether any differences exist between the progress and attainment of pupils in resource-based provision and those with similar starting points who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the main school. Inspectors are likely to report on any differences and the reasons. When considering any whole-school published data on progress and attainment, inspectors will take into account the impact that a large number of pupils in resource-based provision might have on these figures.

200. For groups of pupils whose cognitive ability is such that their attainment is unlikely ever to rise above 'low', the judgement on outcomes will be based on an evaluation of the pupils' learning and progress relative to their starting points at particular ages and any assessment measures the school holds. Evaluations should not take account of their attainment compared with that of all other pupils.