

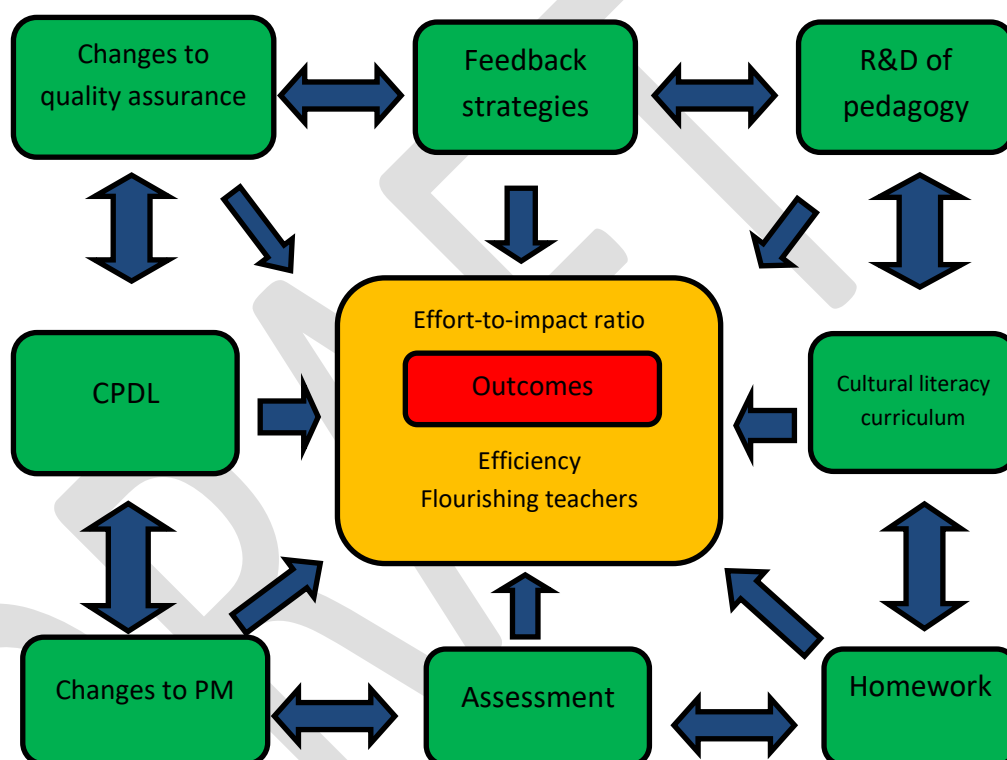
Assessment and Curriculum: Two Year Strategy

First Principles

The guiding principle in all decisions regarding assessment and curriculum is positive student outcomes, understood in a broad sense.

Gains will not be made by teachers working harder. Rather, gains must come from more efficient working practices both in and outside of the classroom.

Assessment and curriculum developments must be viewed through the lens of effort-to-impact ratio: will they mean that teachers can have a greater impact on students' outcomes for the same amount of effort. They must also be assessed to ensure they are consistent with other strategic goals of the Trust:



Assessment and curriculum will be developed so that they are mutually supportive, with assessment requiring and providing opportunities for a curriculum that promotes mastery, where this is understood as knowledge and skills being entrenched in long term memory and, therefore, automated.

Summative Assessment

The purpose of summative assessment is to give a reliable and valid indicator of students' ability in a subject. This implies that a summative assessment:

- Must assess a sample of all material studied so far: otherwise the fact that a child has forgotten something will not be captured.
- Grades should only be issued when a sufficiently broad domain of the subject has been studied. This will occur no sooner than the end of Year 9 in the case of GCSE study.
- Summative assessment is too broad to effectively diagnose mistakes. Therefore, the use of personalised targets based on summative assessments is inefficient and will not be used.
- Summative assessment will be conducted thrice yearly.

No Stakes Testing

The aim of a no stakes test (NST) is to give clarity about gaps in learning quickly enough to allow an immediate response on the part of teacher and student. This implies that:

- No stakes tests should assess the individual building blocks of knowledge and skill at a level where precise diagnosis of misunderstandings is possible. A past paper question will often be too broad to allow for this precision.
- No stakes tests must be conducted in such a way that assessment can be completed as soon as possible, and no later than the very next lesson.
- There is no requirement for no stakes tests to take a particular format and they need not be written.
- Waiting for a set 'no stakes test point' would be ineffective. Rather, teachers will use no stakes tests whenever they will help children learn, which is likely to be frequently.
- A 'grade' is invalid and no grades will be recorded. The teacher will instead, and where necessary, make a record of outcomes that will then inform their practice.

Common Assessment and Common Curriculum

Trust-wide assessments yield significant advantages to children, including:

- The possibility of ranking a larger number of students, thereby generating accurate projected grades.
- Sharing of expertise and facilitation of teachers working in multiple sites.
- Less time spent on assessment design.
- Valuable insight into performance that can steer individual school improvement.
- Reassurance for parents.

Common assessments imply a common curriculum, and this too yields significant advantages to children, including:

- Sharing of expertise and facilitation of teachers working in multiple sites.
- Less time spent on resource design, yet a greater bank of shared resources.

A common curriculum is a core aim of these developments. If one curriculum is genuinely better than others then we are morally obligated to deliver it to all students; if multiple curriculums are equally efficacious then sharing one presents no costs and yields significant benefits as detailed above.

Key Stage Three Curriculum Content

The curriculum should be designed with a moral purpose, aiming to ensure students are ready for their adult lives, understanding that this requires success in their qualifications. In particular, a moral school will tackle gaps in achievement caused by deprivation. The best way to achieve these aims is to see Key Stage Three as an opportunity to develop cultural literacy. That is, the ability to understand and participate fluently in a given culture.

Cultural literacy will close the deprivation gap which can be understood as a gap in cultural literacy. Consider a deprived student who has worked well in English and is on course to be successful. When that student struggles in a GCSE examination responding to an unseen text on glaciers, or Greek myths, or political parties, this is not caused by a deficit in their literacy, but by a deficit in their knowledge of culture. Indeed, one way of approaching cultural literacy is by asking questions such as, 'what do we expect every adult to know?' or, 'what would it be embarrassing to admit to not knowing?'

A focus on cultural literacy will improve results because it requires a mastery of domain knowledge and threshold concepts. Research has consistently shown that uptake of topic knowledge is strongly affected by pre-existing domain knowledge. A student will struggle to learn about a case study of tourism in Belize if their working memory is overwhelmed by trying to remember that Central America is hot, relatively deprived, and the location of coral reefs.

To be clear, although cultural literacy will support with GCSE study a cultural literacy curriculum is not designed with reference to a particular GCSE. Nor is a cultural literacy curriculum limited to a list of simple facts: mastery of complex concepts and skills may be a prerequisite for full participation in particular culture.

We will refer to those things we expect students to know in order to be culturally literate as the **Fundamentals** of a subject. Every subject within the Trust will agree a shared set of Fundamentals for each term of Key Stage Three study. This set is not intended to be a limit on learning: where students, or classes, are proficient in these fundamentals teachers can stretch students and deepen learning according to their professional judgement.

Key Stage Three Assessments and Reporting

No stakes tests are directed at the individual building blocks of fluency and mastery in a specific subject area. Therefore, where fundamentals involve complex skills it is important that these skills are analysed, or broken down, into their constituent parts. For example, in mathematics adding fractions requires knowledge of times tables and equivalent fractions; in English, effective writing requires knowledge of the components of a sentence; in history, effective source analysis requires specific knowledge concerning the source's context; in PE, kicking a ball effectively requires knowledge of which part of the foot should be used to strike a ball. This level of detailed understanding of the fundamental building blocks facilitates effective no stakes tests.

At each common assessment point Trust Moderation and Assessment Leads will design an assessment that includes a sample of all Fundamentals studied so far. At Christmas of Year 7 the first term of Fundamentals will be included in the assessment, in Spring of Year 7 the first two terms of Fundamentals will be included. This pattern will continue until the end of Year 8 examination, which will include all Fundamentals. This pattern of assessment will require constant interleaving and revisiting of past learning, therefore forcing teachers and students to adopt a pattern of learning that has consistently been shown to be highly effective.

Reporting will be against the Fundamentals. We have the capacity, already, to report to families whether or not their child has achieved the Fundamentals of a subject, which is to be understood as scoring 80% or higher in an assessment. We are also able to report to governors what proportion of students, and of key groups of students, have achieved the Fundamentals. The long term goal for reporting is to perform question level analysis so that families have clarity about which Fundamentals are missing, so they know how to support their children. Similarly, an understanding of where particular groups have particular gaps will help support learning.

A Mastery Curriculum?

Mastery learning is a particular way of delivering material where learners do not progress onto the next block of learning until they have mastered the previous material, as opposed to starting a new block on a fixed schedule. As such, it is neutral with respect to curriculum. That said, given the significant research support for the efficacy of mastery learning, this curriculum and assessment schedule has been designed explicitly to facilitate mastery learning. Regular interleaving is characteristic of mastery learning, as is the use of clearly specified objectives that are delivered in a series of sequential steps.

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Timeline of Trust-wide changes

Time period	Key outcomes
Summer 2017	Meetings throughout Trust to build shared vision regarding assessment and curriculum Launch of online research presence via blog
September 2017	
<u>Inset Day 1</u> Agreed long term, topic-level, curriculum map for the whole of Key Stage Three. This will be used from September 2018.	
October – November 2017	Replacement of FA with no stakes tests Summative assessments marked without comments. No stakes tests to henceforth be part of QA process (supported by HSJ) Revised TG 1-9 grades Cycle of pilots for more efficient marking, including comparative marking and automated marking, commences.
<u>Inset Day 2</u> Moderation of Y11 mocks; presentation of ways to access and share no stakes test resources to individual departments	
Spring Term 2018	Summative assessments are cumulative, including material from whole academic year Access to shared no stakes tests resources
<u>Inset Day 3</u> Agreed examination boards for Y9 and Y12. Agreement on topics to be assessed at key points.	
Summer Term 2018	Resources created in anticipation of new curriculum Any department able to opt into a final pilot test of comparative assessment Use of external assessments to quality assure internal assessments.
<u>Inset Day 4</u> KS3 focus: Shared list of fundamentals for Years 7 and 9.	

Autumn Term 2018	<p>Years 7, 9, 12, and key years in primary, in alignment and making use of new curriculum.</p> <p>Comparative assessment is standard (assuming pilot studies are successful)</p> <p>Teachers able to access shared no stakes testing resources on a regular basis</p> <p>Consistent use of Trust-wide tracking of assessments</p>
Spring-Summer 2018	
Autumn Term 2019	<p>Years 7-10, 12-13, and twice as many years in primary, in alignment and making use of new curriculum</p>

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