



International School São Lourenço

Assessment, Recording, Reporting and Tracking Pupil Progress

Summer 2008

Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER:

CATs	2
NFER: SATs	2
GCSEs and GCEs	2
Guidance and Counselling	3
Reporting	3
Homework	3
Tracking Progress	4

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process for every student. It is crucial that we all fully understand the nature and purpose of assessment and how accurate and effective assessment can support learning. As we are a British curriculum school, our programmes of study and assessment methods are defined by the National Curriculum of England and Wales and the relevant Examining Boards.

An easy way to understand our system of assessment is to think about a child's education in stages. We refer to them as **Key Stages**:

Early Years takes young children through Pre-school to Reception (ages 3-5)

Key Stage 1 takes a child through school years 1 and 2 (ages 5-7)

Key Stage 2 takes a child through school years 3 to 6 (ages 7-11)

Key Stage 3 takes a child through school years 7 to 9 (ages 11-14)

Key Stage 4 takes a young adult through school years 10 and 11 (ages 14-16)

Post 16 are the final years at Secondary School where young adults undertake Advanced Level Education (ages 16-18)

So there are four 'Key Stages' (plus Post 16) during your child's school career. Students are tested at the end of each Key

Stage i.e. at ages 7, 11, 14, 16 and 18. At each stage there are UK government defined minimum levels of ATTAINMENT indicated as 'levels':

- Key Stage 1 to level 1-3
- Key Stage 2 to level 2-5
- Key Stage 3 to level 3-8
- Key Stage 4 to GCSE (A* - G)
- Sixth Form to A Level (A-E)

At Key Stages 1 to 3, children sit **National Foundation for Educational Research Standardised Assessments** (explained in detail on page 2). Pupils do not pass or fail these assessments, they are designed to help teachers measure pupils' progress.



Assessment for Learning

Can assessment raise standards? Recent research has shown that the answer to this question is an unequivocal 'yes'. Assessment is one of the most powerful educational tools for promoting effective learning. But it must be used in the right way. There is no evidence that increasing the amount of testing will enhance learning. Instead, our focus is on helping teachers use assessment, as part of teaching and learning in ways

that will raise pupils' achievement. Research tells us that successful learning occurs when learners have ownership of their learning; when they understand the goals they are aiming for; when, crucially, they are motivated and have the skills to achieve success. Not only are these essential features of effective day-to-day learning in the classroom, they are key ingredients of successful lifelong learning.

Research also shows that improving learning through assessment depends on five key features:

- effective feedback;
- active involvement of pupils in their own learning;
- flexible teaching to take account of assessment information;
- an understanding of the profound influence assessment has on self esteem and motivation of pupils; and
- the need for pupils to be able to assess themselves and know how to improve.



CATs are used in the UK to establish skills and attributes that are not normally tested

It is a legal requirement for all children between the ages of five and sixteen in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, to study the National Curriculum



Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs)

The Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) is the most widely used test of reasoning ability employed in schools in the UK. Over one million pupils are assessed using CATs each year.

CATs measure *developed* rather than *innate* abilities. The development of these abilities begins at birth and continues through early adulthood. They are influenced by both in-school and out-of-school experiences. Although test

scores are based on experience, this does not negate the value of the test in helping to understand the child as he or she is at the present time. Because these abilities are closely related to children's success in school in virtually all subjects, CAT scores, together with other relevant information, can be used to devise all types of learning experience that will help pupils to improve their current level of performance.

It is important to understand that CAT data is a useful predictor of attainment but **not** a determinant of attainment. We use CAT data to assist us in setting challenging targets for our pupils.

We also use CATs to assess all new applicants in order to establish whether they can access the curriculum. Tests are carried out in Yr 4, Yr 6 and again in Yr 9.

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER): Standardised Assessments (SATs)

NFER Standardised Assessments take place at the end of each year in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. The tests establish the level that each child has reached, but there can be a considerable spread of marks within a level.

Within Key Stages 1 and 2 the children are tested on their ability in the following:

- Reading, Writing, Spelling

- Mathematics (calculator)
- Mathematics (non-calculator)
- Mental Mathematics

Pupils can achieve between Levels 1—5.

Within Key Stage 3 children are tested in the following areas:

- English (Reading, Writing, Shakespeare)
- Science
- Mathematics

Pupils can achieve between Levels 3—7 in English and Science and Level 8 in Mathematics.

We use these test results to advise on a number of teaching and learning strategies and to project potential outcomes for the end of the next Key Stage. In addition, the actual outcomes will inform us about the value we add to a pupil's education.

Non-core subjects are continually assessed by teachers and data is used to monitor progress.

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSEs) and General Certificate of Education (GCE)

At GCSE, Mathematics, English, ICT, Portuguese and either Combined or Separate Sciences are compulsory at the school. In addition students select from a range of other subjects including: Art and Design; Business Studies; Design and Technology; Drama; Geography; History; Languages; Music and Physical Education. Some subjects are assessed

by a combination of written examination and coursework.

GCSEs are taken in years 10 and 11 and are graded A*, A, B, C, D, E, F, G (in the UK the number of passes achieved at grades A*-C, including English and Mathematics, is a key benchmark.)

GCE Advanced Levels are taken in years 12 and 13.

They are split into two parts - AS and A2. Students are advised to take four AS subjects in Year 12 and reduce this to three full A Levels in Year 13.

Advanced courses are graded A–E. Entrance to top UK universities will normally require three good grades e.g. AAA, AAB etc.

Guidance is given to students when making choices about GCSEs and GCE A Levels.



Guidance and Counselling

range of curriculum activities and experiences that enable students to develop their skills, knowledge and attitude to make effective choices, engage with learning and achieve their full potential.

Our aim is to support students to become more self reliant and able to manage their own assessment, planning, implementation and review process. Information is offered through resources in the library, the internet, e-Learning, presentations and meetings with our Careers Advisor. Advice is offered individually and in groups to help with understanding information, signposts and provide

advice on options. Guidance helps young people to understand themselves and their needs. It helps them to confront barriers and is delivered by individual meetings with our Headteacher and Careers Advisor. Not all students require the full range of support; therefore assessments are made to offer support and guidance depending on individual needs.

Careers Education, Information and Guidance (CEIG) is a process whereby young people are enabled to make well informed and realistic choices about their future lives and careers. At International School São Lourenço we offer a



Reporting to Parents

Our reporting system is designed to raise the attainment of our pupils and students. It is a proactive strategy that is not designed to simply inform parents about progress throughout the period but is also intended to:

- motivate pupils to achieve better results;
- enable teachers to associate their teaching and assessment of learning more closely with National Curriculum standards;

- enable the school to monitor and track pupil progress and to intervene if underachievement is identified.

We will provide interim grade reports four times throughout the year. This will report on assessment information that teachers will have readily available and does not, therefore, add additional burden to their already busy lives.

At the end of the year pupils will be rewarded for the accumulation

of effort points (80%+ Platinum, 70%+ Gold, 60%+ Silver). In addition there will be awards for progress and academic achievement.

Our assessment, recording, tracking and reporting procedures ensure that parents, teachers, pupils and management are focused on the acknowledgement of effort, progress and attainment and on the impact that this focus can have on raising attainment at all levels.



Homework

Homework, however defined, will be meaningful, developmental, manageable and purposeful. The setting of homework will be considerate of the pressures placed on our students by the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and other factors e.g. workload, the climate etc.

The effort that students put into the completion of homework will be

acknowledged by some form of assessment and feedback. Marks, comments and targets for improvement are essential in every case.

Purpose of homework

- To enable students to achieve success in school - working at their own pace and independently
- To involve the home in the students' school work, and, therefore, in the curriculum
- To encourage independent learning

and develop learning techniques

- To develop self-discipline and motivation
- To provide the opportunity for further development of school activities, encouraging personal interests to be developed
- To assist in the diagnosis of students' strengths and weaknesses
- To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning taking place within the classroom situation

There should be no tears at bedtime!!!

Tracking progress from beginning to end!

Monitoring and tracking pupils' progress is fundamental to raising standards. We have developed whole-school pupil tracking procedures that will ensure that pupil progress is systematically monitored and reviewed and findings acted upon. In this way standards will be raised.

Setting appropriately challenging targets, through the analysis of pupil performance data, and establishing rigorous monitoring and tracking systems are the first critical step towards ensuring that the learning needs of all pupils are met.

Principles:

- Pupils' progress is monitored and tracked across time and across subjects using a range of performance measures including teacher assessments and test results.
- Data is collected and shared with the individual pupils and all staff involved in teaching the pupils.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss their own progress. Teachers actively involve pupils in setting their own targets, and annual and key stage targets are shared with all staff involved in teaching these pupils.
- Teaching, intervention and revision programmes are informed by regular monitoring of progress and adjusted in the light of pupils' needs.
- Parents are informed and involved in order to support pupils' achievements.
- Performance data is managed through a school-wide system and

teachers have ready access to the data they need. New data can be entered and processed easily.

- Underperformance is readily identified and any necessary intervention and support is immediately put into place.



"Targets give me an idea of what I can achieve if I try my hardest"
Debbie, Year 12



"I think my target in English is too low. I am going to prove my teacher wrong!"
Vincent, Year 10



"I find my targets really help me to motivate myself to achieve. If my teacher believes I can do it, then so do I"
Francesca, Year 12

"It's simple. Targets make me work harder"
Alicia, Year 6



"If your attainment level is bad then at least the column with the target looks better"
George, Year 8



"My A* target in History has really helped me to focus"
Philipp, Year 11

