

# **Assessment Policy**

Document Control Table	
Version no:	2
Date of last revision:	February 2025
Approval Required By: (Adoption and full 5 Year Review)	Board of Trustees
Date last approved:	ESC 6 <sup>th</sup> Feb 25
Policy owner:	Chief Executive Officer
Frequency of revision:	2 years
Next review date:	February 2027
Revision approval required by:	ESC
Policy family:	Education
Policy status:	Approved

Applies to (Mark as appropriate)				
Staff	Pupils / Students / Adult Learners	Parents / Carers / Guardians	Contractors	
✓	✓	✓	✓	
Volunteers	Students on placement	Trustees / LGC / Members	Visitors	
	✓	✓		
Agency Staff	Other	a	a	
<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>			

Published Locations				
Trust Website	Academy Website	Aldridge Intranet	Student/Parent planners	On-request
	✓	✓		✓



Consultation (Complete as appropriate in line with master policy document)			
With	Reason for Consultation	Final Consultation Date	Version No

Version	Version History (please note below if a policy has been replaced)					
Version	Reviewer	Revision Date	Nature of Change	Adopted/ Approved by	Approval Date	
VI	JF	February 2023	New Trust Policy	Chair of BOT	February 2023	
VI		No revision	Approved by Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees	March 2023	
V2	JF	Feb 25	Two yearly review – minor terminology and role title changes in sections 8 and 10  Sign off	CEO	7/1/25	
			Approval	ESC	6/2/25	



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All policies within the Trust must serve to further our Vision and Ambitions, summarised below.

#### I. Our Vision

• To offer all Aldridge learners the chance to have agency over their futures and transform their lives through a stimulating, enriching and enjoyable education, including the hardest to reach.

#### 2. Our Ambitions

- All our schools and learning providers have a strong and inclusive culture where every individual can
  thrive and where every individual feels safe. The culture described in documentation is exactly what you
  see in every corridor and every classroom (100%)
- Staff are able to work smartly through the creation of high-quality and relevant curriculum materials that
  meet the Aldridge standard. As a result, they can focus in on data-informed instruction, on responsive
  teaching and on adaptation of resources to meet both the learning needs and the specific gaps of
  individuals and groups of learners.
- That every learner will discover things that interest them through our curriculum opportunities and leave with clarity about their desired place in our world, with the qualities of character to be successful and with great outcomes all of which lead them to sector-best destinations in which they

#### 3. Introduction

This is a non-statutory policy that accompanies the Aldridge academy curriculum policy. This policy applies to all Aldridge Academies. The appendices to this policy are specific to each academy. The academy specific content found in the appendices is appropriate to the nature of the academy's individual provision and reflects the needs of its local community.

#### The Aldridge academy curriculum policy:

#### **CURRICULUM INTENT, IMPLEMENTATION, IMPACT**

The curriculum is a framework for setting out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge, and understanding, to be gained at each stage (intent); for translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative, within an institutional context (implementation) and for evaluating what knowledge and understanding pupils or students have gained against expectations (impact).

#### The Aldridge academy assessment policy:

#### ASSESSMENT INTENT, IMPLEMENTATION, IMPACT

Assessment is a vital part of the learning and teaching process at all ages. This Aldridge policy and associated procedures provide a framework to ensure the highest quality in assessment that meets the needs of all learners, in all settings. The policy recognises the importance of giving constructive feedback that is appropriate, timely, adequate, and shared with the learner, enabling them to be fully involved in their learning. It places priority on responsive teaching and regular, granular, formative assessment.

## 4. Legislation and guidance

Since the removal of National Curriculum levels in 2014, academies have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment.

This policy refers to the recommendations in the:

Final Report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels.

It also refers to statutory reporting requirements set out in:

The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005: schedule 1.



# This policy has also drawn from the following guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

- The National Curriculum (2013)
- The <u>Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014</u> and <u>Equality Act 2010</u>, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of Board of Trustees set out in the Department for Education's <u>Governance Handbook (updated 2020)</u>
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework (updated 2021)
- KCSiE September 2023, the Independent Schools Standards (2019), and the Academies Act 2010
- This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association

#### Further information and support can be found at:

Standards and Testing Agency - GOV.UK

Guidance for schools and local authorities involved in the administration and moderation of statutory key stage 1 & 2 (KS1) teacher assessment.....

Exams, testing and assessment - detailed information - GOV.UK

List of information about Exams, testing and assessment.....

The national curriculum: Overview - GOV.UK

Year 6, KS2, National tests in English reading, maths, and grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Teacher assessments in English writing and science; Year 7, KS3.....

Guide for schools and colleges 2022: GCSEs, AS and A levels

Students entering GCSEs, AS or A levels in 2022 will take exams in the summer and complete any non-exam assessments throughout the year.....

**UK Quality Code for Higher Education** 

The Quality Code is a key reference point for UK higher education, protecting the public and student interest..... Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

Arrangements must be processed and approved before an examination or assessment.....

#### 5. Who was consulted?

Aldridge Education worked with school leaders to develop this policy. Local protocols found in the appendices to this policy have been determined in consultation with parents, pupils and staff. This policy applies to all academies and learning providers across the Aldridge Education Trust whereas the appendices to this policy are specific to each school. The appendices set out how each school specifically implements the policy practically at a local level. This content is appropriate to the nature of each school and learning provider's provision and reflects the needs of their local community.

# 6. Scope, aims and publication

This policy is available to all parents, pupils and staff. The policy is provided to staff on the Trust's intranet; it is available on the Trust and school websites and upon request. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

This policy seeks to:

- Provide clear guidelines on our approach to formative and summative assessment, both internal and external
- Establish a consistent and coherent approach to recording summative assessment outcomes and reporting to parents
- Clearly set out how and when assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated

# 7. Assessment priorities

Aldridge Education holds the following priorities for its assessment work across all of its sites:



- We prioritise responsive teaching which knows gaps will exist, seeks to find them and then rapidly closes them for both groups of learners and individual students.
- We believe an equitable culture ensures that no-one is left behind and that a mindset of checking for understanding is key to providing this equity for all.
- We believe that assessment has components which are long-term, medium-term and short-term and these are all found in our playbook under our data-driven instruction lever.
- We prioritise formative assessment at a granular level as it is here that the work of addressing
  misconceptions and improving learning takes place, not at the point of summative assessment.
- We want to know what our students know and don't know; not a grade, level or number.
- Assessment should be done at individual teacher/classroom level and should be shared in the easiest, quickest way. It is done primarily to be used swiftly and easily by staff; upward sharing of such information should not take precedent over using simple information to shift learning.
- Summative (or interim) assessment should be used with a clear purpose in a proportionate way and should relate directly to the intent of the curriculum, never using grades and levels that have little meaning or value and which cannot be evidenced, justified or standardized in some way
- External testing will be used annually for all cohorts up to Year 9, always using credible and nationally standardized tests which show us how cohorts and individuals are progressing both from starting points and against national distribution curves
- Writing assessments takes great skill and requires a unique set of grade boundaries. Within the
  regulatory framework in which we operate, using past papers and other exam board testing options
  provides the most secure way to assess older learners against an appropriate framework when preparing
  for national examinations.

### 8. Four key areas of assessment

- I Internal formative assessment (data-driven instruction (DDI))
- 2 Internal summative assessment (DDI)
- 3 Nationally standardised summative assessment
- 4 Specialist standardised assessment completed for pupils or students with a range of additional needs

#### **Data-driven instruction:**

The Aldridge Education playbook clearly sets out our work around data-driven instruction, which is the heart of our in-house formative and summative (interim) assessment. It covers long-term, medium-term and short-term activity:

Long-term: unit planning includes working from end of unit assessment requirements, predicting performance and adapting unit planning to meet the known and predicted needs of learners and groups of learners

Medium-term: using know show charts and teacher exemplars to determine crucial knowledge and skills and determine mid-unit checkpoints from these. For years 11 and 13, an agreed checkpoint is shared biweekly for all subjects across Aldridge schools. Schools locally determine the frequency of these shared checkpoints in other year groups across all subjects. These are used to spot trending and precise gaps in learning for cohorts and individuals and planning adapted along with intentional reteach on highest impact learning gaps through either a think aloud model or a guided discourse approach.

Short-term: A range of strategies are used in our CFU (checking for understanding) culture. These include exit tickets, academic monitoring (acmo) and polling the room. Information collected through these strategies is swiftly reviewed straight after the lesson (and before the next one) and then used to adapt



planning and/or plan moments of reteach. Responsive teaching in each lesson sees Aldridge staff constantly CFU, address misconceptions and close gaps as typical and daily practice in their classrooms and teaching groups.

#### Internal formative assessment:

Aldridge schools and learning providers use the playbook practice set out above to adopt a culture of regular checking for understanding – assessment – as daily practice. It would be typical to see an Aldridge teacher jotting things down regularly throughout lessons as they note who knows what and what the gaps are – enabling them to remember and close those gaps. This is sometimes done through academic monitoring, as appropriate.

Co-planning meeting schedules are used to ensure that all components of formative assessment and related curriculum work are done collaboratively within departments and that work is managed efficiently, with appropriate support for those who are developing their teaching practice still.

Shared checkpoint data is collected by school leaders and used to inform learning walk-throughs and support/development required. It is never used as a performance tool for staff. Leaders share the stance that every class can be successful in learning. They display professional curiosity to help them collaborate with their teams, exploring where the gap lies if a group is currently failing to thrive with their learning – and then they support the closing of gaps found.

Data collected through internal formative work is always focused on what a student knows and can apply; it is never converted into exam grades or levels. We simply seek to find out whether students have learned the work covered and where gaps lie.

#### Marking of books and student work:

Student work should be seen, reviewed and receive feedback which signposts what should happen next on a student's learning journey.

Feedback should be as immediate as possible as its purpose is to build belief, confirm success and signpost what is required next. This has limited value when done days or weeks after the teaching and learning schedule has moved on.

Formative feedback in an Aldridge school is best done 'live' or straight after a lesson through a review of exit tickets or other assessment activity – which is then used to adapt and plan for reteach in the following lesson (or very soon after this). This may include written feedback, but this may not always be the case. Live marking will usually be to an academic monitoring (acmo) code adopted by the school. This will entail very simple mark-making in student books which is also recorded by the teacher on their seating plan (or similar). The code will be pre-known to all, and students will therefore know whether the work is correct, needs reviewing etc. Where exit tickets and other simple assessment processes are used to review learning prior to reteach in the next lesson, these may be marked and are always stuck into books. Schools adopt a system for signaling work that is done post-reteach so that students can clearly see how they progressed from an identified gap. This may include strategies such as purple or green pen, highlighted boxes, coloured paper etc.

Aldridge schools also use learning platforms such as Century Tech, Hegarty Maths and others where marking is often done by the software itself. Where this is used, teachers always review this feedback and share it with students in a way that clearly identifies success and builds self-belief, alongside making clear what the next gaps are to close and how to do that.

We believe this approach to feedback has dual benefits, for both students and staff, namely:

- Students receive fast feedback which enables them to move smoothly on with their learning. Their work
  feels valuable because it is reviewed regularly by staff and this review is used to help them with next
  learning. Students can clearly see where they have made progress and can use this to review their
  learning over time.
- 2. Staff workload is reasonable with this approach with the majority of day-to-day feedback given 'live' or through swift review of simple assessment approaches which have been planned and agreed through coplanning meetings and/or PPA time. This means that deeper marking is done at agreed key points where the team agree there is genuine gain for students from a deep mark and/or detailed written feedback.



It must always be clear what the feedback and marking policy is in an Aldridge school and be clearly evidenced in students' books because it is followed consistently by all staff.

Appendix I sets out this school's specific approach to feedback and marking.

#### Internal summative assessment:

At Key Stages 4 and 5, summative assessment is undertaken internally through a series of mock examinations which are sat under strict exam board regulations. These are addressed at a Trust-wide level and agreed examinations are sat to an agreed schedule. Curriculum Trust Leads drive this work in partnership with the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and key leaders in each academy. Standardisation is regularly delivered and moderation undertaken before results are agreed.

In Year 6, regular practice papers are conducted to support pupils in understanding what the SATs tests will be like, to build their self-belief and to ensure that pupils can be supported to close any gaps required prior to these external tests. Aldridge primary settings also use practice assessments for Year 2 SATs, Year I Phonics and Year 4 maths assessment tests.

In all other year groups, formative assessment is considered to be of more importance than summative assessments or awarding of grades/levels. We need to know what our students know related to key learning as this is what enables us to support ongoing progress.

In some subjects, students may undertake end of unit assessments or tests. Whilst it can be debated whether these represent formative or summative assessment practice, more important is our approach to such assessment opportunities.

Aldridge schools do not create grading systems that have low levels of meaning or value, nor do they use language that has no evidence base to it. Some schools may choose to use the information gained from our nationally standardized testing to align internal student attainment data to a nationally evidenced distribution curve to create an indicative age-related grade. Others prefer to stick to a clear commentary on whether required learning has been achieved or not.

As with our formative assessment approach, actionable feedback is given on summative assessment.

All mock results are shared with Trust leaders.

Summative assessments for all years except 6 and 10-13 are mapped into the long-term curriculum planning and should ensure that they test a representative sample of the work covered by relevant units, as well as ensuring opportunities for building on previous knowledge, revisiting work done to date and demonstrating the successful application of knowledge.

Appendix 2 sets out this school's approach to the awarding of summative judgements across the school, in line with Trust practice.

#### Reporting to parents:

All Aldridge schools send a minimum of one formal written report home to parents per school year and host a minimum of one parent evening per year. Aldridge Education seeks to balance a parent's right to be well-informed about their child's education with the aim of reducing teacher workload. Technology often provides a mechanism to achieve this and we enable parents to see key information about their child's education through our Bromcom management information system. Through this, parents are able to see:

- Key school announcements
- Assessment module which permits a detailed view of assessment throughout the year, parents can see
  a comparative view of their child's progress/performance for any subject.
- Attendance data
- Behaviour overview including details of students on report
- Detentions
- Terminal results
- Exam timetables and mock exam timetables
- Homework details
- Ability to book parents evenings
- To view any reports or documents the school has sent.



- · See their child's timetable
- Agree Parental consents
- View and update data collection forms for information relating to their child or themselves.

Appendix 3 sets out this school's arrangements for reporting to parents.

#### Nationally-standardised summative assessment:

Aldridge Education uses summative assessments which are recognized by DfE performance tables including GCSEs, BTECs, T levels, apprenticeships and vocational qualifications such as City and Guilds and NCFE.

Our primary students sit the national assessments and tests required throughout their primary journey, including Key Stage 2 Standardised Assessment Tests.

In addition to this, Aldridge Education schools deploy a range of annual, nationally-standardised tests. At primary level, this involves using the Rising Stars suite of PUMA (progress in maths assessment) and PIRA (progress in reading assessment) tests. At secondary level, Aldridge Education uses the GL suite of assessments including:

- Progress Test series years 7-9 English, Maths and Science (compulsory)
- New Group Reading Test (compulsory)
- CAT4 (optional)
- PASS (used selectively for identified groups of learners)

These nationally-standardised tests are used to:

- Assess whether our cohorts are on track to perform at national standard or above in terminal exams in due course
- · Identify students who are failing to thrive in their learning
- Use this analysis to target appropriate intervention
- Assess both cohort-wide and individual reading deficits
- Use this analysis to determine where further diagnostic assessment is required and shape intervention planning
- Provide a unique distribution curve for individual cohorts, which schools can choose to use to inform their internal summative assessment, if required

# Specialist standardised assessment completed for pupils or students with a range of additional needs:

There will be pupils or students of all ages in Aldridge Education academies, who, for a wide variety of reasons, are unable to achieve/progress (in some/all areas) at the rate of same-age peers.

This may be due to:

- Reading and writing, for example because they have dyslexia
- Ability to understand things
- Concentration levels, for example because they have ADHD
- Physical ability
- Behaviour or ability to socialize, for example they struggle to make friends

Standardised assessments and reports may be available for these pupils or students. For example, Educational Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services. Consultant or specialist health reports may be available relating to physical disabilities including mobility, vision, hearing etc.



The principles of this assessment policy apply to all pupils or students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. If a pupil or student has been assessed to have an additional need, they may be allowed to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding by completing the assessment using a specific "access arrangement" that meets their need but does not undermine the integrity of the assessment. A pupil or student may be eligible to "access" an assessment using a reader, or a scribe, or a computer for example but there is no duty to make any adjustments to the assessment objectives being tested.

The academy SENDCO will gather information on pupils or students with additional needs and share it (where needed) with their colleagues. This may require commissioning reports from external professionals. Staff concerns should be directed to the academy SENDCO.

It should be remembered that for any "access arrangement" requested for any pupil in an assessment it must be evidenced that it is their "normal" way of accessing the curriculum in the classroom.

#### **Training:**

Through our range of national and local inset days alongside our Growing Together training offer, Aldridge Education staff have access to a rigorous and wide-ranging PD (professional development) programme across the academic year. At primary phase, engagement with the local authority can be beneficial for SATs at Key Stages I and 2.

This programme includes keeping staff up to date with best practice in data-driven instruction and developments in assessment practice through internal sessions including practice labs, briefings, co-planning meetings and Trust inset provision.

Alongside this, standardisation and moderation are facilitated by the Chief Academic Officer and our team of Aldridge Subject Network Leads. Aldridge Education also strongly advocates the use of exam board resources, Chief Examiner reports, exam board training and experience as an exam marker.

### 9. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees & Chief Executive Officer will assess the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

The Board of Trustees & Chief Executive Officer will:

- Be familiar with statutory assessment systems as well as how the academy's localised system of nonstatutory assessment aligns to the Trust's school improvement model and captures the attainment and progress of all pupils or students
- Hold academy leaders to account for improving pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment information

#### The CEO and CAO will:

- Lead the relevant Aldridge Education officers in supporting schools to use assessment information well
  including to direct and lead learning walk-throughs and support teaching practice through coaching and
  real time feedback
- The CAO will review mock results in detail with school leaders and review the robustness of
  intervention plans with a particular focus on students with special educational needs and those in receipt
  of additional funding from the government, known as pupil premium funding
- The CAO will review the appropriateness and impact of allocated intervention funding such as NTP,
   Virtual Aldridge and locally funded intervention routes and will advise the CEO on whether sufficient impact is evident

#### The Principal will:

 Determine the local application of this policy and set this out formally in the appendices to this policy, fully in line with the Aldridge Education school improvement model



- Ensure that the policy is adhered to by all staff members, all of the time
- Monitor standards in classes, subjects, and courses
- Analyse pupil or student progress and attainment, including individual pupils or students, and specific groups
- Prioritise key actions to address underachievement
- Ensure that gaps are closed for individuals and cohorts at the earliest point possible
- Monitor and measure the impact of local interventions and local use of NTP funding, ensuring that no
  intervention is used where high impact is not evident
- Report to their LGC on all key aspects of pupil or student progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years
- Ensure that there are recorded, routine, procedures in place for reviewing and approving the appendices to this policy

#### Curriculum leaders and faculty leads will:

- Ensure that the policy is adhered to across their department and/or area of responsibility
- Use the co-planning meeting cycle to ensure there is a schedule of recorded formative, summative and nationally standardised summative assessment within their area of responsibility
- Agree with the department the check-point assessments that will be done and shared to the school's schedule and ensure these have value, are accurately marked and outcomes shared to schedule
- Ensure that data-driven instruction and responsive teaching are at the heart of the teaching, learning and assessment done within the department
- Ensure that the needs of pupils or students with additional needs are catered for within their area of responsibility.
- Monitor student learning in classes, subjects and courses
- Direct learning walk-throughs and work scrutinies to the places highlighted as having the weakest learning for students, find the appropriate gaps and support the team to close these swiftly
- Prioritise key actions to address underachievement within their area of responsibility
- Report to the Principal on all key aspects of pupil or student progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years within their area of responsibility.

The SENDCO is responsible for ensuring that information relating to the needs of pupils or students with additional needs is gathered, known, shared and acted upon; leading to strong learning for these students. Monitoring the learning experience for these students and working with other key leaders to address learning gaps where required.

This will include (where necessary):

- Historical notes and data (and knowledge of previous access arrangements if any)
- Relevant baseline data gathered since enrolment at the academy
- Concerns raised by teachers and evidence of adapted practice in the classroom
- The obtaining, and collation, of external specialist reports, data, and recommendations. Including the dissemination of this information to staff where required.
- Requesting and evidencing "access arrangement" applications for nationally standardised summative assessments. (The assessment data for this application may be completed/provided by an external specialist)

The SENDCO will review the performance of individuals and groups of students and work with other school leaders where assessments at any level suggest that these students are making less progress than their peers.

Teachers will take responsibility for following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy

Parents will get involved with their child's learning outside of the classroom, including understanding homework set. Parental knowledge of assessment procedures and outcomes creates a more positive experience for pupils or students and helps pupils or students perform better when they are in academy. It is essential for parents to support the learning that happens in academy.



### 10. Monitoring arrangements

#### The Board of Trustees & Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Trustees & Chief Executive officer monitor whether the academy is complying with the requirements of this policy through:

- Chief Executive Officer academy visits and formal reviews
- Education team visits, reviews and feedback from work done with schools, including Reviewing Together visits
- DeskTop Review information

#### The Principal

The Principal ensures regular and recorded monitoring is undertaken across the school and in line with the Aldridge Education playbook and school improvement model.

The principal ensures that all departments work in alignment with Aldridge Education agreements including around mock exams, standardization and moderation requirements.

Monitoring may include:

- Termly reporting including reference to formative and summative assessment
- Assessment scrutiny
- Learning walk-throughs
- Work scrutiny
- The way in which assessments are planned, managed, and recorded for those pupils or students with additional needs.

#### **Curriculum leaders / faculty leaders**

The curriculum leaders/faculty leaders ensure regular, and recorded, monitoring of formative, and scheduled summative assessment within the areas of their responsibility.

Monitoring may include (around their responsibility):

- Learning walk-throughs to review responsive teaching
- Ensuring that all check-point assessments are done and shared in a timely way
- Moderation of summative assessments
- · Learning walks during assessments
- Work scrutiny

#### **Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy.

# 11. Links to other policies

This Policy is linked to the following academy policies:

- The Curriculum Policy
- The SEND Code of Practice, SEND policy and SEN Information Report
- Improving reading protocol
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Policy

# 12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the CEO in consultation with leaders across the Trust. Following the review, the policy will be ratified by the Board of Trustees.



The principal will review the policy's appendices every 2 years and submit them to the LGC for review and discussion prior to local sign-off.



# 13. Appendix 1: School specific arrangements for feedback and marking



14. Appendix 2: School specific approach to the awarding of summative judgements across the school, in line with Trust practice



# 15. Appendix 3: School specific arrangements for reporting to parents

