



Policy Title: Assessment

School/Campus	Whole School
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Related Policies and/or Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Guidelines for Assessment & Reporting• Teaching and Learning Policy• Individualised Learning Policy

ASSESSMENT POLICY

STATEMENT

The primary purpose of assessment at Woodleigh School is to improve student learning. We see assessment as the ongoing process of gathering, analysing and reflecting on evidence to make informed and consistent judgements in pursuit of this goal. We recognise that effective assessment monitors the progress of student learning and achievement; produces coherent feedback for students, parents and external institutions; and informs curriculum and assessment reviews. We believe that teaching, learning and assessment of student learning are fundamentally interdependent.

Assessment forms a key element of the School's strategic plan and is subject to regular processes of review. It is monitored by the Teaching and Learning Committee to ensure that it is responsive to external and internal requirements.

RATIONALE

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning at Woodleigh School. It is central to our goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding students through the key elements of the learning process. Essential within this practice is the identification of what students know, feel, can do and understand at different stages in the learning process. The school acknowledges the importance of improving student outcomes across the essential elements of learning: the understanding of concepts, the acquisition of knowledge, the mastery of skills, the development of productive attitudes, and the ability to perform meaningful tasks in real world settings.

BELIEFS

At Woodleigh, we believe that:

Formative assessment is the most powerful approach for driving student growth.

Assessment for improved student learning and deep understanding requires a range of assessment practices to be used with three overarching purposes:

- Assessment FOR learning – occurs when teachers use inferences, observations and data for student progress to inform their teaching (formative assessment).
- Assessment AS learning – occurs when students reflect on and monitor their progress to inform their future learning goals (formative assessment).
- Assessment OF learning – occurs when teachers use evidence of student learning to make judgements on student achievement against goals and standards (summative assessment).

Good assessment sets out to measure what matters most.

Assessment should be based on an understanding of how students learn. Assessment should be an integral component of course design and not something to add afterwards.

Assessment is most effective when it reflects the fact that learning is a complex process that is multi-dimensional, integrated and is revealed in student performance over time. The teaching and learning elements of each program should be designed in full knowledge of the sorts of assessment students will undertake, and vice versa, so that students can demonstrate what they have learned and see the results of their efforts.

Good assessment provides useful information to report credibly to parents on student achievement.

A variety of assessment methods provide teachers with evidence of what students know and can do, and their particular strengths and weaknesses. Teachers can then report to parents on how far their child has progressed during the year, where they are compared to the relevant standards, and what the student, the parent and the teacher need to do to improve the student's performance.

Good assessment requires clarity of purpose, goals, standards and criteria.

Assessment works best when it is based on clear statements of purpose and goals for the course, the standards which students are expected to achieve, and the criteria against which we measure success. Assessment criteria need to be understandable and explicit so students know what is expected of them from each assessment they encounter. Staff, students, parents and the community should all be able to see why assessment is being used, and the reasons for choosing each individual form of assessment in its particular context.

Good assessment requires a variety of measures.

In general, a single assessment instrument will not tell us all we need to know about student achievement and how it can be improved. Therefore, we need to be familiar with a variety of assessment tools so we can match them closely to the type of information we seek.

Assessment methods used should be valid, reliable and consistent.

Assessment instruments and processes should directly measure what they are intended to measure. They should include the possibility of moderation between teachers where practical and appropriate to enhance objectivity and contribute to a shared understanding of the judgments that are made. Assessment requires attention to outcomes and processes. Information about the outcomes students have achieved is very important to know where each student ends up, but so too is knowing about their experiences along the way and, in particular, the kind of effort that led to these outcomes.

Assessment works best when it is ongoing rather than episodic.

Student learning is best fostered when assessment involves a linked series of activities undertaken over time, so that progress is monitored towards the intended course goals and the achievement of relevant standards. Assessment for improved performance involves

feedback and reflection. All assessment methods should allow students to receive feedback on their learning and performance so assessment serves as a developmental process.

Assessment is learning oriented when it is integrated into an instructional model that is relevant, engaging and helps students understand what success looks like through modelling and the provision of examples. Assessment should generate information that can be interpreted in terms of learning progression and focus attention on academic growth and skill acquisition.

There are 5 key strategies:

1. Clarifying, understanding and sharing learning intentions
2. Engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence/data
3. Providing feedback that moves learners forward
4. Activating students as learning resources for each other
5. Activating students as owners of their learning (metacognition)

ASSESSMENT MODEL

The Assessment Model in use at Woodleigh School is based on the belief that no single test or point of data should be used to make important educational judgements or decisions about a student's learning. The school is committed to using a variety of data, including national assessments, teacher observations, standardised testing, peer and self-assessment, learning journals and student reflections. The use of a range of data is seen as offering a more complete, holistic and multi-faceted insight into student learning than can be afforded through the prioritisation of a single type of data. This collection of evidence – when added to the information provided by parents, past teachers and the students themselves – is seen to provide a strong foundation for future action in the areas of teaching and learning.

The **Principle of Triangulation** is central to the assessment model used at the school. Triangulation refers to the process of using multiple points of data when making significant educational decisions and conclusions. The three different types of assessment data gathered and used within the school are:

Assessment of Personal Mastery – the use of standardized testing and measures to provide insight into a student's mastery of specific sets of skills and knowledge. Examples in use in the school include unit quizzes, NAPLAN, and PAT testing.

Assessment of Growth Over Time – the use of approaches to assessment that provide insight into changes in student understanding over time, including insights into the learning process. Examples in use in the school include learning journals, three-way conferences and continuum-based tracking.

Assessment of Applied Understanding – the use of authentic, performance and real-life tasks that provide insight into the depth of student understanding of a given concept, along with their ability to transfer and apply their knowledge to challenging situations. Examples in use in the school include projects, student exhibitions, presentations and performances.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

The following information outlines some of the strategies that teachers may use when gathering information about a student's learning at Woodleigh School.

Formative assessment: takes place during the learning process. It provides students with regular and frequent feedback, opportunities to improve, engage in thoughtful reflection and deepen their learning. Examples of formative assessment include questioning, goal setting, self and peer assessment, analysing exemplars and sharing learning expectations.

Summative assessment: Summative assessment occurs at the end of a sequence of lessons or unit. It is typically used to evaluate student learning by comparison against a standard or benchmark. Examples of summative assessments can include exams, final projects and standardised tests.

Diagnostic assessment: An individualised performance assessment that primarily gives teachers information about how to better plan and target teaching to meet students' needs. It is particularly important in considering the complex learning needs of students who may experience barriers in these programs, with implications for the design and delivery of individual learning programs.

Peer Assessment: A strategy where students comment upon and evaluate each other's work. It is an approach that is most useful as a formative assessment and for helping students develop the ability to make judgements about their own and other's work.

Self-Assessment: A strategy that acknowledges the importance of reflection and the promotion of student ownership of the learning process. The development of skills in relation to self-assessment is central to the goal of supporting students to become life-long learners.

Performance Assessments: These are assessments of goal-directed tasks with established criteria, which ask students to transfer their skills and knowledge to authentic challenging contexts. The emphasis is on determining the depth of a student's understanding – a performance of understanding.

REFERENCES

- 'Woodleigh: An Alternative Design for Secondary Schooling', Michael Norman, 1982
- 'Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment', Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam, 1998
- Assessment Handbook, Australian International School, Singapore, 2013