



Assessment and Feedback Policy 2025

Introduction

Hope Tree School is a safe, secure school that supports children's individual needs. Staff work hard to ensure that a nurturing approach supports all children through their education providing a targeted approach to each child depending on their current needs.

All aspects of school life are designed to create a sense of safety, and inspire and engage children back into learning. This is supported by the provision of therapies as needed, e.g. occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, autism-adapted CBT and mindfulness. This is discussed further in the Teaching and Learning policy.

We recognise that on any given day, each student's academic ability is impacted by their social, emotional, and mental wellbeing. As a result, our assessment methods must be mindful of the impact of our students' needs, and data collection is therefore continuous and ongoing to ensure that over time, we can identify what they know, what they need to know, and what they can do to further learn, develop, and progress.

Hope Tree School's Philosophy on Assessment

Assessment at Hope Tree School is used as a supportive measure that allows all progress, no matter how small, to be demonstrated and for each student to keep moving forward in their learning in accordance with their individual needs.

Assessment systems support measuring the progress of students within a familiar environment that is stable and secure. The use of teacher assessment within normal classroom activities will be used where possible to enhance students' ability to engage in learning and self development.

In order for our students to engage with academics, they must feel safe and familiar with their environment, staff, and peers. As students typically display a high-level of anxiety when first joining the school, formalised baseline examinations (for example, the use of standardised tests) are not suitable for the students at Hope Tree School. Once the student has begun attending the school, opportunities to demonstrate their existing knowledge, understanding and skills will be provided and judged through teacher assessment. This information will be used to identify gaps in their learning and inform planning (see the Teaching and Learning policy for further details).

- Assessment is integral to high quality teaching and learning. It helps us to ensure that teaching is appropriate and that learners are making expected progress.

- All staff are regularly trained in the approach to assessment.
- We have a senior leader who is responsible for assessment, currently the Head of Learning.

Assessment Methods at Hope Tree School

- Our assessment system has been developed carefully to meet DfE guidance and our philosophy of assessment.
- The main purpose of assessment in our school is to help teachers, parents and students plan their next steps in learning.
- It assesses students' knowledge, skills and understanding, identifying strengths and highlighting misconceptions and gaps in knowledge.
- It identifies next steps in learning, highlights the need for support or intervention, and informs teacher planning and reporting.
- We also use the outcomes of assessment to check and support our teaching standards and help us improve.
- We predominantly use teacher judgement, supported by internally-developed tasks and activities, designed to minimise anxiety and maximise opportunities for success. These tasks and activities typically align with the National Curriculum.
- Teacher judgements are collected and monitored through the use of tracking spreadsheets.

Teacher Judgements

Teacher judgements may be based on a number of types of communication, and these are likely to vary depending on the student and their stage of transition. Forms of student communication used to form teacher judgements may include:

- Asking questions.
- Providing answers.
- Observational assessment.
- Short recap quizzes.
- Scanning work, from across the curriculum, for student attainment and development.
- Adult and peer feedback and responses.
- Child self-assessment, reflection on learning.

Communication might look different between different students. This might be verbal comments, written notes on whiteboards or post-it notes, or drawings.

The school has very high expectations for teaching and learning, and teachers are knowledgeable with regards to the standard for age related expectations for the age of the children they teach.

Tracking Spreadsheets

Tracking spreadsheets are the main form of assessment at Hope Tree School. They are

a form of ongoing, formative data collection, designed as a working document that is used in the moment, or immediately after lessons.

We recognise that our students are likely to have large knowledge gaps as a consequence of missing schooling, and we can use these spreadsheets to identify individual students' gaps in knowledge.

The spreadsheets record when a pupil achieves a lesson aim, along with insights relating to student behaviour, and progress. These insights determine which students are working at the anticipated level, and which students require additional support. Where additional support is needed, this may include post-teaching to reteach a concept, or a targeted short intervention in the following lesson.

Purposes of the tracking spreadsheets:

- Record student progress against a lesson aim.
- Identify how factors that contribute to engagement impact students' academic attainment.
- Identify patterns in behaviour that influence student performance.
- A form of assessment that is not anxiety inducing for the students.
- Tracks curriculum coverage and exposure.
- The system also helps inform what teachers tell parents about the progress their children are making.

Teachers have their own spreadsheets for each class. At the end of each half-term, individual student performance will be collated into an student spreadsheet for each individual (this is new for the 2024/2025 academic year).

Feedback

Feedback needs to be guided by what students are able to be receptive to in regards to where they are in their recovery from previous school-related trauma. A number of students have considerable anxiety regarding feelings of failure and are often initially unable to accept any form of feedback, including positive.

Due to their sensitivity to receiving feedback, how this is delivered will be discussed with individual students and classes to ensure it remains a productive experience.

As their recovery progresses and they are able to cope better with making mistakes, students become more receptive to constructive feedback and can tolerate suggestions to improve their work and eventually their work being marked.

Verbal feedback is the most commonly used form of feedback, particularly for students who are in Key Stages 1, 2, and 3.

Summative Assessment

Students at Hope Tree School are likely to find extended formal assessments anxiety inducing. However, in preparation for Key Stage 4 and beyond, each student will be

given opportunities to develop the key skills, anxiety management techniques and stamina necessary to facilitate access to this style of assessment. A sensitive and graduated approach will be utilised according to each student's individual needs. Examples of this might include smaller, more frequent quiz style assessments and internally-designed practical tasks which address the objectives to be assessed. Teachers should discuss student readiness with the head of key stage prior to formal summative assessment being undertaken.

Nationally standardised summative assessment

- The focus for our students at Hope Tree School is access to education, the development of key life skills, the promotion of good mental health and wellbeing and the enhancement of self esteem and confidence.
- Almost all students who attend Hope Tree School have gaps in their education due to previous experiences in education alongside the individual needs of each child.
- The school only supports the delivery of summative assessments that contribute towards qualifications which directly influence their future opportunities and end of KS4 outcomes.
- The suitability of the qualifications to be delivered at Key Stage 4 will be considered for each student, their individual needs, prior academic attainment, and their aspirations for the future. For example, in the 24/25 academic year, we have two Year 9 classes. The students have been placed into the classes based on their requirement for a different pace of teaching, in addition to an emphasis on core subjects, and priority given to vocational life skills.

Use of Assessment

- Teachers are kept up-to-date with developments in assessment practice through school staff meetings. Professional development opportunities are provided and accessed as necessary.
- Teachers use the outcomes of our assessments to summarise and analyse attainment and progress for their students and classes.
- Teachers use this data to plan the learning for every student to ensure they make progress. Teachers and leaders analyse the data across the school to identify children that may need specific intervention to help them make progress.
- The information from assessment is communicated to parents and students.
- Parents and students receive information on what has been achieved and guidance on what they need to do next.
- We celebrate all achievements across a broad and balanced curriculum, including sport, art and performance, behaviour, and social and emotional development.

Reporting

Written reports are provided for parents at the end of each term. Parents are invited to attend their student's annual review as part of their EHCP once a year. Interim reviews are held once a term or more frequently as needed.

As classes are small, teachers are in regular contact with parents during the year and updates can be given and plans adjust during these times.

Arrangements for the Governance, Management and Evaluation of Assessment

- The Head of Learning is responsible for ensuring that this policy is maintained and followed.
- Monitoring of the effectiveness of assessment practices will be carried out by senior leaders and will include, for example, student performance meetings, data analysis, tracking data and work scrutiny.
- Regular moderation will be undertaken both within school and collaboratively with other schools, to ensure consistency and accuracy of assessment judgements.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Learning

- Moderate teacher assessments and tests.
- Analyse data for school improvement and reporting.
- Lead and monitor whole school assessment practices.
- Provide training for teachers to ensure a good understanding of assessment and assessment practice.
- Present data to the Advisory Board.

Teachers

- Regularly use ongoing formative assessment.
- Make summative judgements at defined points in time.
- Provide feedback to students and set realistic targets for individual students.
- Provide assessment information to the senior leadership team, parents and students.
- Moderate alongside colleagues.

Teaching Assistants

- Provide feedback to teachers on student progress and attainment.

Parents and Carers

- Attend meetings with teachers to discuss their children's attainment and progress.
- Support children with their agreed out-of-school learning.

Students

- Take ownership of their learning, working hard to achieve their targets.
- Allow others to learn in a safe and settled environment.

Signed:



Head of Learning



Head of Pastoral Care

Date: October 2025

Review Date: October 2026