

Assessment Policy

The OFSTED inspection framework states:

The quality of education

1. Inspectors will take a rounded view of the quality of education that a school provides to all its pupils, including the most disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils and pupils with SEND. Inspectors will consider the school's curriculum, which is the substance of what is taught, with a specific plan of what pupils need to know in total and in each subject.
2. Inspectors will consider the extent to which the school's curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills that pupils will gain at each stage (**intent**). They will also consider the way that the curriculum developed or adopted by the school is taught and assessed in order to support pupils to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills (**implementation**). Finally, inspectors will consider the outcomes that pupils achieve as a result of the education they have received (**impact**).

Schools with a specialist curriculum

3. Some non-association independent schools offer a specialist curriculum and Ofsted recognises their autonomy to do so. For example, some schools offer a specialist faith-based curriculum, while others offer a specialist education in the performing arts.¹ Other independent schools, such as Steiner schools, take a distinct approach to the curriculum, even though the majority of the subjects on offer do not differ significantly from other schools.
4. Alongside any specialist education provided, it is important that pupils study a broad, rich curriculum. This is supported by Ofsted's research, and is a requirement of paragraph 2(2)(a) of the independent school standards.
5. Inspectors will assess a school's entire provision, including any specialist provision offered, when assessing compliance with the independent school standards² and when reaching judgements in the following areas: overall effectiveness; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management.
6. When reaching a judgement under the quality of education judgement area, inspectors will work with school leaders to understand how the curriculum as a whole is structured, and where they can find evidence that the quality of education criteria are met. We expect that, in most schools, much of the evidence in support of the criteria will be drawn from the non-specialist curriculum, as most schools structure their curriculum such that the specialist curriculum supplements rather than directly delivers the academic core of subjects.

¹ This section of the handbook is not primarily for independent special schools, which often provide a highly specialised education designed to meet SEND pupils' needs. Independent special schools should refer to pages 84–85 of the handbook for further information on how the EIF will apply in independent special schools and to SEND provision.

² Ofsted expects the school to provide all policies, schemes of work and plans and all other documents required by the independent school standards in English.

7. However, we will judge fairly those schools that take radically different approaches to the curriculum, including, for example, schools that teach a range of academic subjects through a faith-based curriculum. Inspectors will assess any school's curriculum favourably when leaders have built a curriculum with appropriate coverage, content, structure and sequencing and implemented it effectively. They are, however, likely to assess it negatively where the specialist curriculum is being delivered in a way that limits pupils' opportunities to study a broad range of subjects, or which fails to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Intent

8. In evaluating the school's educational intent, inspectors will primarily consider the curriculum leadership provided by school, and subject and curriculum leaders.
9. All pupils in independent schools are entitled to receive a broad, rich curriculum – this is a requirement of paragraph 2(2)(a) of the independent school standards. Schools should therefore provide inspectors with evidence that the minimum requirements for the intended coverage and ambition of an independent school's curriculum are met.
10. The judgement focuses on factors that both research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to an effective education. These factors are listed below.
 - The school's curriculum is rooted in the solid consensus of the school's leaders about the knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to take advantage of the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In this way, it can powerfully address social disadvantage.
 - It is clear what end points the curriculum is building towards, and what pupils will need to know and be able to do at those end points.
 - The school's curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before, and build towards its defined end points.
 - The curriculum reflects the school's local context by addressing typical gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
 - The curriculum remains as broad as possible for as long as possible. Pupils are able to study a strong academic core of subjects.
 - There is high academic ambition for all pupils, and the school does not offer disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND a reduced curriculum.

Curriculum flexibility

11. The curriculum sets out the aims of a programme of education. It also sets out the structure for those aims to be implemented, including the knowledge and skills to be gained at each stage. It enables the evaluation of pupils' knowledge and skills against those expectations.
12. Schools taking radically different approaches to the curriculum will be judged fairly. The inspectorate recognises the importance of schools' autonomy to choose their own curriculum approaches. If leaders are able to show that they have thought carefully, and built a curriculum with appropriate coverage, content, structure and sequencing, and are able to show that it has been implemented effectively, then inspectors will assess the school's curriculum favourably.

Curriculum narrowing

13. Our research into the curriculum has shown that some schools narrow the curriculum available to pupils, particularly in key stages 2 and 3. Our research also shows that this has a disproportionately negative effect on the most disadvantaged pupils.³ In key stage 1, inspectors need to check that pupils are able to read, write and master mathematical knowledge, ideas and operations so that they are able to access a broad curriculum at key stage 2. Where early reading is delayed owing to an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS), the expectation would be that pupils are able to read and write fluently by Years 5 to 6 (see page 82).
14. In secondary education, inspectors will expect to see a broad, rich curriculum. Inspectors will be particularly alert to signs of narrowing in the key stage 2 and 3 curriculums. If a school has shortened key stage 3, inspectors will look for evidence that the school has made provision to ensure that pupils still have the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects in Years 7 to 9.

Cultural capital

15. As part of making the judgement about the quality of education, inspectors will consider the extent to which schools are equipping pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Our understanding of 'knowledge and cultural capital' is derived from the following wording in the national curriculum:⁴

'It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.'

Sources of evidence specific to curriculum intent

16. Inspectors will draw evidence about leaders' curriculum intent principally from discussion with senior and subject leaders. Inspectors will explore:
 - how carefully leaders have thought about what end points the curriculum is building towards, what pupils will be able to know and do at those end points, and how leaders have planned the curriculum accordingly. This includes considering how the intended curriculum will address social disadvantage by addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills
 - how leaders have sequenced the curriculum to enable pupils to build their knowledge and skills towards the agreed end points
 - how leaders have ensured that the subject curriculum areas contain content that has been identified as most useful, and ensured that this content is taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly enough for all pupils to acquire the intended knowledge and skills
 - how the curriculum has been designed and taught so that pupils read at an age-appropriate level.

³ See our curriculum commentary phase 1: www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmcis-commentary-october-2017.

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4/the-national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4.

17. Inspectors will bear in mind that developing and embedding an effective curriculum takes time, and that leaders may only be partway through the process of adopting or redeveloping a curriculum. Where leaders have an accurate evaluative understanding of current curriculum practice in their school and have identified appropriate next steps to improve curriculum quality and develop curriculum expertise across the school, inspectors will evaluate 'intent' favourably when reaching the holistic quality of education judgement. They will recognise that the criteria for a judgement of good are the best fit.
18. Inspectors will also consider any documents that leaders normally use in their curriculum planning, but will not ask them to produce materials for the inspection or provide them in any specific format.

Implementation

19. In evaluating the implementation of the curriculum, inspectors will primarily evaluate how the curriculum is taught at subject and classroom level.
20. Research and inspection evidence suggest that the most important factors in how, and how effectively, the curriculum is taught and assessed are the following.
 - Teachers have expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach. If they do not, they are supported to address these gaps so that pupils are not disadvantaged by ineffective teaching.
 - Teachers enable pupils to understand key concepts, presenting information clearly and promoting appropriate discussion.
 - Teachers check pupils' understanding effectively, and identify and correct misunderstandings.
 - Teachers ensure that pupils embed key concepts in their long-term memory and apply them fluently.
 - The subject curriculum that classes follow is designed and delivered in a way that allows pupils to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory. It is sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and pupils can work towards defined end points.
 - Teachers use assessment to check pupils' understanding in order to inform teaching.
 - Teachers use assessment to help pupils embed and use knowledge fluently, and develop their understanding, and not simply memorise disconnected facts.

Developing understanding, not memorising disconnected facts

21. Learning can be defined as an alteration in long-term memory. If nothing has altered in long-term memory, nothing has been learned. However, transfer to long-term memory depends on the rich processes described above. In order to develop understanding, pupils will connect new knowledge with existing knowledge. Pupils will also need to develop fluency and unconsciously apply their knowledge as skills. **This must not be reduced to, or confused with, simply memorising facts.** Inspectors will therefore be alert to unnecessary or excessive attempts to simply prompt pupils to learn glossaries or long lists of disconnected facts.

The school's use of assessment

22. When used effectively, assessment helps pupils to embed knowledge and use it fluently, and assists teachers in producing clear next steps for pupils. However, assessment is too often carried out in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for both staff and pupils. It is therefore important that leaders and teachers understand its limitations and avoid misuse and overuse.
23. Inspectors will therefore evaluate how assessment is used in the school to support the teaching of the curriculum, but not substantially increase teachers' workloads by necessitating too much one-to-one teaching or overly demanding programmes that are almost impossible to deliver without lowering the expectations of some pupils.
24. The collection of data can also create an additional workload for leaders and staff. Inspectors will look at whether schools' collections of attainment or progress data are proportionate and represent an efficient use of school resources and are sustainable for staff. The report of the Teacher Workload Advisory Group's report, 'Making data work',⁵ recommends that school leaders should not have more than two or three attainment data collection points a year, and that these should be used to inform clear actions.
25. Schools choosing to use more than two or three data collection points a year should have clear reasoning for what interpretations and actions are informed by the frequency of collection; the time taken to set assessments, collate, analyse and interpret the data; and the time taken to then act on the findings. If a school's system for data collection is disproportionate, inefficient or unsustainable for staff, inspectors will reflect this in their reporting on the school.

Sources of evidence specific to curriculum implementation

26. The following activities will provide inspectors with evidence about the school's implementation of its curriculum:
 - discussions with curriculum and subject leaders and teachers about the programmes of study that classes are following for particular subjects or topics, the intended end points towards which those pupils are working, and their view of how those pupils are progressing through the curriculum
 - discussions with subject specialists and leaders about the content and pedagogical content knowledge of teachers, and what is done to support them
 - discussions with classroom teachers about how often they are expected to record, upload and review data
 - observations of and interviews with a sample of pupils or classes who are following this curriculum in lessons, including scrutiny of the pupils' work
 - reviews of schemes of work or other long-term planning (in whatever form subject leaders normally use them), usually in discussion with curriculum leaders.
27. Inspectors should refer to the 'Lesson observation and work scrutiny' section in Part 1 of the handbook for guidance about what makes up an appropriate sample of pupils.

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-advisory-group-report-and-government-response.

28. In order to triangulate evidence, inspectors will ensure that they gather a variety of these types of evidence in relation to the same sample of pupils. Inspectors will also ensure that the samples of pupils they choose are sufficient to allow them to reach a valid and sufficiently reliable judgement on the quality of education offered by the school overall. Guidance on how to ensure that this evidence is both sufficiently valid and reliable is set out under ‘Overarching approach to inspection’ in Part 1 of this document.

Impact

29. When inspectors evaluate the impact of the education provided by the school, their focus will primarily be on what pupils have learned.
30. Inspection experience and research show that the most important factors to consider are the following.
- A well-constructed, well-taught curriculum will lead to good results because those results will reflect what pupils have learned. There need be no conflict between teaching a broad, rich curriculum and achieving success in examinations and tests.
 - Disadvantaged pupils⁶ and pupils with SEND acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
 - National assessments and examinations are useful indicators of pupils’ outcomes, but they only represent a sample of what pupils have learned. Inspectors will balance outcomes with their first-hand assessment of pupils’ work.
 - All learning builds towards an end point. At each stage of their learning, pupils are being prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Inspectors will consider whether pupils are ready for the next stage by the point they leave the school or provision that they attend.
 - Pupils at sixth form are ready for the next stage and are going to appropriate, high-quality destinations.
 - If pupils are not able to read to an age-appropriate level and fluency, they will be incapable of accessing the rest of the curriculum, and they will rapidly fall behind their peers (see page 82).

Inspectors will not use schools’ internal assessment data as evidence

31. Inspectors will not analyse schools’ internal progress and attainment data⁷ during an inspection.⁸ This does not mean that schools cannot use data where they consider it appropriate. Inspectors will, however, focus more on the curriculum and less on schools’ generation, analysis and interpretation of data. Teachers have told us that they believe this will help us play our part in reducing unnecessary workload. Inspectors will be interested in the conclusions drawn and actions taken from any internal assessment information, but they will not examine or verify that the

⁶ In line with government policy, pupils who face educational disadvantage may include those who are children in need of help and protection and are receiving statutory support from local authority social care; www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-children-in-need.

⁷ This does not include relevant assessment information (such as photographs, video and records of observations) made by teachers and teaching assistants for pupils who have profound or multiple learning difficulties.

⁸ Inspectors will consider the school’s use of assessment (see paragraphs 170–173).

information first hand. Where it is available, inspectors will still use published national performance data as a starting point on inspection.

32. Inspectors will, however, ask schools to explain why they have decided to collect whatever assessment data they collect, what they are drawing from their data and how that informs their curriculum and teaching.

Sources of evidence specific to curriculum impact

33. Inspectors will gather evidence of the impact of the quality of education offered by the school from the following sources:
- the progress that pupils are making in terms of knowing more, remembering more and being able to do more
 - first-hand evidence of how pupils are doing, drawing together evidence from the interviews, observations, work scrutinies and documentary review described above (see 'Implementation – sources of evidence')
 - any information provided by the school about the destinations to which their pupils progress when they leave the school
 - in primary schools, listening to a range of pupils read
 - discussions with pupils about what they have remembered about the content they have studied
 - how well pupils with SEND are prepared for the next stage of education and their adult lives.⁹

Reaching a single quality of education judgement, drawing together intent, implementation and impact

34. Inspectors will **not** grade intent, implementation and impact separately. Instead, they will reach a single graded judgement for the quality of education, drawing on all of the evidence they have gathered, using their professional judgement.
35. In making their judgements, inspectors will take into account any exemption a school has from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.

⁹ 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', DfE and Department of Health, January 2015, section 8, preparing for adulthood from the earliest years.

Fundamental principles

Feedback and marking are important aspects to support a pupil's learning and progression. Teachers spend a large proportion of their time assessing and marking pupils' work; it is therefore essential that comments made are relevant to learning objectives and have substance and direction.

The Aims and Purpose of marking and feedback at Elm House School are:

- To provide appropriate information for pupils to enable learning and ensure progress for all.
- To enable teachers to show how they are fulfilling their aims and meeting Elm House School requirements.
- To assess work to inform future planning for achievement of targets by all pupils.

Agreed marking procedures

- SECTION 1: Frequency of marking and feedback, roles and responsibilities
- SECTION 2: Quality of feedback – Assessment
- SECTION 3: Presentation of Work
- SECTION 4: Tracking of progress, use of levels and grades and target setting
- SECTION 5: Marking for Communication Skills

SECTION 1: Frequency of marking and feedback, roles and responsibilities.

Marking of work should take place as soon as possible following completion in order to ensure impact and provide time for the pupil to respond.

- Marking should be completed for every pupil at least weekly in each subject taught and in core subject areas daily. This should be linked clearly to learning objectives and targets for the pupil. This may relate to levels or grades as appropriate.
- Detailed feedback with curricular targets set for the subject, related to levels or grades should be completed each half term by the teacher and inform the Elm House School assessment calendar.
- Pupils should, at times, mark their own work or their peers' work in class. This should be checked by the teacher and acknowledged and included in mark books as appropriate.
- Feedback from oral or practical work should be logged in the pupil's book and school tracking documents /electronic mark books if appropriate.
- Mark books may be paper based or electronic and the central recording system should be used to collate this.

- There is an expectation that pupils will respond to marking by improving or repeating work as instructed in the feedback. This should be monitored by the class teacher and intervention should take place if a pupil causes concern.

Marking and feedback will be subject to regular monitoring by the Head Of Education and Executive Headteacher.

SECTION 2: Quality of feedback - Assessment

Elm House School believes that effective feedback should incorporate;

Regular, prompt and clear guidance, either spoken or written, clear statements on whether the learning objectives have been met and what part of their work needs to be improved, comments on how the pupil is to attain higher grades and levels and curricular targets which are manageable and achievable.

- A whole school system to denote Achievement and Presentation must be used for ongoing marking of work for all Key Stages.
- Achievement should be assessed using 'What Went Well' and 'Even Better If' as the minimum structures used for offering pupils feedback on how well they are doing and how they can be improved.
- Presentation should be scored 1-4 using the criteria below.
- The criteria for grades/levels and for presentation must be displayed in classrooms and used alongside levels or grades if this is appropriate for a class or homework task.
- Encouragement marking should be used. Using praise and identification of positives in work to pupils, followed by a target for improvement.
- Smiley faces, stamps and / or stickers should be used to comment about effort and linked to the Class Dojo rewards system, giving reward points to pupils where applicable.
- Detailed, summative comments related to end of unit or assessment performance should be justified with an example to show how pupils can attain a higher level or grade.
- Effective questioning should be used in response to pupils' work to prompt reflection and action for improvement.
- Oral feedback and modelling could be used to support pupils to make progress and identify next steps in learning.
- We recognise that in some subject areas the majority of marking is given verbally but a summative record in written form should be stored to support this.
- Pupils' work should be showcased to peers and other staff as appropriate, through class activities and display.

Pupils are helped most where the quality of the written or spoken comment on their work gives a clear evaluation and constructive advice that leaves them with action points they are able to work on, in relation to their curricular target.

Section 3: Presentation of Work

Pupils should take pride in their work.

Elm House School expectations about the presentation of work are:

- Writing should be upon lines and well presented.
- Lesson objectives/titles and the date should be underlined with a ruler.
- Where a diagram is drawn a ruler or other equipment should be used so that the diagram is well presented and legible.
- Graffiti and doodles are not acceptable on exercise book covers or in pupil work. Pupil work will be used for assessments and checked/read by adults and must therefore demonstrate a business-like approach.
- Writing should be completed in blue/black ink (or pencil if appropriate) and if a mistake is made it should be neatly crossed out with a single line.
- Large gaps must not be left between pieces of work in exercise books and both sides of the paper should be used in exercise books. Work that is completed on paper should be stuck into the exercise book or stored safely in an appropriate folder.

Presentation Grades for marking:

<p>1. Outstanding</p>	<p>The pupil's work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates excellent presentation, titles are underlined, writing is well presented and any diagrams etc are well presented. • Demonstrates real pride and effort in the appearance of all work completed.
<p>2. Good</p>	<p>The pupil's work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates good presentation following the school expectations. Writing is presented neatly and class work is presented in a clear, legible way. • Demonstrates a pride in the appearance of most work completed
<p>3. Requires Improvement</p>	<p>The pupil's work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates reasonable presentation in most work but there are areas where improvements could be made. • Does not always demonstrate pride and is inconsistent in the way it is presented, although some work shows that when effort is made presentation can be good.
<p>4. Inadequate</p>	<p>The pupil's work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is poorly presented and work can messy and rarely follows school expectations • Show a disappointing level of pride and does not match the values of 'a fantastic future for all'.

SECTION 4: Tracking of progress, use of levels and grades and target setting.

Marking and feedback to pupils should be tracked across the year and key stage / stages to ensure continuity and progression as pupils move through different phases of Elm House School .

- Teacher marking should feed into school tracking materials which link to the Elm House School assessment system and highlight performance using the recording of progress data. Half termly assessments should be used to assess how pupils' work and pupils' use of feedback is informing improvements in pupil progress.
- Levels and grades should be used half termly for Assessment Weeks, derived from class work information and formal half termly assessments.
- Target levels and grades should be discussed and agreed with pupils and referred to in feedback and marking of class work as appropriate. Pupil Target grades should be displayed in exercise books, as stickers or on school tracking materials which prompt pupils to write in their current levels, assessments and targets for improvement.
- Assessment grids should be used in subjects to clarify expectations for levels and grades and to support the target setting process. Exemplar pieces of work could be available to pupils and on the school website to show pupils what to aim for and to help with moderation.
- Target setting, related to assessment information and ongoing marking and feedback, should be reviewed half termly by teachers and as part of the Curriculum Review process to adjust targets as necessary and identify intervention needs.

The Head Of Education and Executive Headteacher will monitor the tracking and progress information regularly as part of the monitoring and evaluation cycle. This should be reviewed through school meetings.

SECTION 5: Marking for Communication Skills

Marking for literacy and numeracy is essential for developing communication skills for pupils at Elm House School . All subjects should contribute to the teaching of communication skills and the prompts below should be used.

- Evidence of marking Literacy should be present in written work. Errors could include; spelling errors, capital letters, punctuation, poor grammar or a missing word.
- Marking of spelling should look for no more than 5 examples in a piece of work, to be identified by highlighting the word/s.
- Subject specific vocabulary should be supported in classrooms and the use of key words should be planned for in lesson planning.
- Formal English and appropriate grammar must be used in all written work and marked as such. The use of different types of writing should be encouraged and common forms and conventions used.
- The use of word walls, writing frames, spelling mats etc should be encouraged and schools should provide support materials for literacy in their subject area as appropriate.
- Individual approaches, support for EAL pupils and those with special educational needs should be used where applicable.
- Where graphs/diagrams are drawn a ruler should be used and labelling should be tidy and clear.
- Graphs should clearly have scales written near them to ensure the information they present to accessible.
- Where mathematical calculations are part of a piece of work the member of staff should check the accuracy of the numeracy and correct if necessary. Number work should be laid out in an orderly manner so that units, tens etc are clearly aligned if necessary for the completion of a sum.

School policies should reflect the whole school marking and feedback policy and include examples of level / grade information, pupil tracking materials across each key stage as well as materials to support and develop literacy skills.

Policy review

This policy document will be reviewed by the Head Of Education and Executive Headteacher on an annual basis to ensure it is up to date with current legislation and best practice.

Date approved: April 2014

Date last reviewed: September 2022

Next review (or before): September 2023

Signed: 

Position: Education Director

Staff Acknowledgement

In signing this document I am confirming I have read the information and have an understanding of the procedures outlined within the information provided.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this document with a Senior Leadership member of staff to gain further clarity.

I also know that if I feel I need further guidance I know I can access through the Head of Education.

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date: