

## Assessment Case Study – Transforming Assessment, Grading and Reporting at Archway School, Stroud

### Background

Following its inspection in 2012 the school was judged good and taken out of category. Of the areas for improvement identified, the hardest to shift was ensuring consistency in high quality feedback from marking. The national change to curriculum and assessment was wisely seen as an opportunity to re-think assessment for learning and improve practice across the school.

### Curriculum

- The school carried out a major review of the curriculum in 2013 and involved all stakeholders in designing a curriculum fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century catering for all interests, abilities and aspirations.
- Schemes of work were rewritten to a new format to ensure:
  - a better match to student needs
  - alignment to the new national curriculum and GCSEs (ongoing)
  - progression from one key stage to the next.



### Assessment

Assessment is not seen as separate to the curriculum. Review and revision of the school's curriculum was also rightly seen as the appropriate moment to regenerate developmental assessment.

The proposals were that:

- Grades would be used at all key stages, but should not be seen as drivers. The language sitting behind each grade would be used to inform learning outcomes or success criteria and both verbal and written feedback
- Assessment language should focus on competences ie the ability to apply learning.
- Learning and assessment should be personalised so that all learners (regardless of ability) are challenged to make progress from their particular starting point.
- Learners should have an active role in their own assessment.

### The task for middle leaders

- To work with their teams to map backwards from the GCSE grade criteria for their subject/s, written standards for every year group at every grade from Y7 - 11.
- Based on best practice, to agree with teams how criteria will be shared with students at the beginning of a unit of work.
- To devise a system of self/peer assessment for students against the same criteria.
- To agree how written feedback will be given to students by their teacher at regular intervals.
- To agree strategies for getting students to engage with the feedback.

### Two years on

- The school has developed and is now implementing a range of assessment tools designed in accordance with agreed principles.
- The flight path of every student is entered into the system based on their starting point and national **progress** trajectory for the top 25% of students. When student grades are entered their progress is measured and a comment based on a four-point scale (*Insufficient, moderate, good or excellent*) is automatically generated.

### Impact

Evidence from monitoring shows:

- Greater accuracy in measuring students' learning particularly at KS3.
- Improved consistency in the quality of feedback from marking as staff have ownership and 'buy into' the process.
- Learners' clearer knowledge of the criteria for success means they are motivated to push themselves to higher levels of achievement.
- Learners with SEN are achieving at higher than expected levels in some areas of the curriculum with significantly positive VA scores. This has been a key reason behind the school being only the second school in the South West of England to be awarded 'Quality Lead Status' by the Achievement for All organization.
- Parents report the value of the more meaningful conversations about learning that they are having with their children, now that outcomes are linked to GCSE grades.
- Predictions to 2015 and beyond suggest good and better progress is maintained or improved, particularly for targeted groups, indicating marking is having a greater impact on progress.