

Assessment

A guide to good practice based on recent ISI inspection reports of HMC schools

data can be used by senior management, departments and tutors

Nationally recognised benchmarking tests (MidYIS) administered on entry ... teachers sometimes use a mark, sometimes a grade.

Screening tests exist for those with English as an additional language on their entry to the College

pupils periodically make assessments of their own progress... compared with their teacher's assessments

and a common

The school computer network has the potential to record subject marks and use them to track and monitor individual pupils over time, in addition to the present use of added-value data

A system for central storage and retrieval of assessment data

whole-school marking policy and a common grading system

This guide identifies the main features of good practice and of areas needing improvement identified in ISI reports on HMC schools between the summer term of 2001 and the spring term of 2002. It does not make any overall judgements of quality. It is produced by HMC for its purposes and is not an ISI evaluation.

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introduction

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), in an overview of the inspection reports of 2000-1¹, noted that the strengths of the large majority of schools inspected outweighed the weaknesses, often comfortably so. But, the Digest continued, of the weaknesses identified, one of the most common was the assessment of pupils.

This document therefore offers a guide to good practice in assessment based on the comments in ISI reports of the 53 HMC schools inspected during the twelve months from the summer term of 2001 to the spring term of 2002. It also draws on discussions with the Director of the ISI, Tony Hubbard, and with five schools who very kindly agreed to provide more detailed information about features of their assessment arrangements mentioned in the reports. The help and co-operation of the ISI and those schools are gratefully acknowledged. The schools are:

Ampleforth College

Bablake School

Birkenhead Preparatory School and Senior School

Canford School

Colet Court Preparatory School.

Throughout the document, the left-hand margin displays extracts from the inspection reports which illustrate the points made in the text.

¹ *Digest of Reports 2000-1*, ISI, March 2002.

assessment

Assessment in schools includes a wide variety of activities. It ranges from the moment-by-moment evaluations a teacher makes in the course of a class discussion to the set piece drama of the examination hall. It includes the teacher's routine marking of pupils' work, a form tutor's conversation with a pupil and reports to parents.

Generally, the assessment seeks to establish what skills, knowledge and understanding a pupil possesses. Sometimes, it will be concerned not so much with what pupils have achieved but with what their native abilities and potential might be. Some assessments are about the pupil as a person: what their interests and ambitions might be, whether they are enjoying school and making good progress.

Assessment has various purposes. It might be to make decisions about whether the school is suitable for a particular child, which class sets would be appropriate and what additional help or special provision might be needed. Its purpose might be, as part of routine teaching, to help the teacher gauge how well the pupils have grasped what they have been taught, and therefore what they should learn next and how it might best be taught. The purpose might be, as in the case of public examinations, to sum up authoritatively what the pupil has achieved, for the benefit of others such as universities and employers.

Beyond these immediate purposes, assessment also has other uses. It can be used to motivate students to work hard, and to give them confidence in their abilities and recognition for their efforts. And since assessment always reveals something not only about the pupil, but also about the teacher or the experiences and opportunities to which the pupil has been exposed, assessment can also be used to judge the effectiveness of the teacher and the school.

The challenge for the school is to employ the appropriate types of assessment in the most effective way and exploit to full the information that they provide.

the assessment system

A recurrent theme of the inspection reports is that assessment in the school needs to constitute a coherent system, involving common standards and procedures, in which appropriate assessment data is not only collected but is also made available to those who need it and is used to its full potential. An example of such a system is displayed in the diagram overleaf.

"... staff lack a common approach ... despite a considerable range of standardised tests, end of term examinations, and regular tests in English and mathematics, no systematic use is made of information from them across the curriculum. Planning does not routinely draw on information from week-to-week tests to plan further work for individual pupils, and heads of department do not use information from assessment to review the effectiveness of teaching."

A Coherent System

The diagram below offers an example of how the different assessments in a school can form a coherent system in the sense that:

- appropriate assessment are made
- there are common standards and procedures
- assessment data is available to all those who need it
- the data is used to its full potential.

The example is that of a senior school, but the same principles would apply to a junior school.

The rectangle outlined in black shows the various assessments which take place as the pupils progress through the school. The dotted arrows (·····▶) show which assessment data is stored centrally, so that it is available for all those who need it. The solid arrows (—▶) show how that data is used.

The data is used for four main purposes. At entry to the school, it provides an **initial analysis** of the pupils to inform decisions on entry, setting, streaming and special provision. Beyond the entry phase, assessment is used for **teaching, monitoring target-setting and curriculum planning**. External examination results are used for a **final evaluation** of both the pupils' and the staff's achievements. Throughout the pupils' school career, assessment data is used for **reporting to parents** in various ways at different times.

Common standards and procedures for assessment are established by whole-school policies and in departmental policies derived from them.

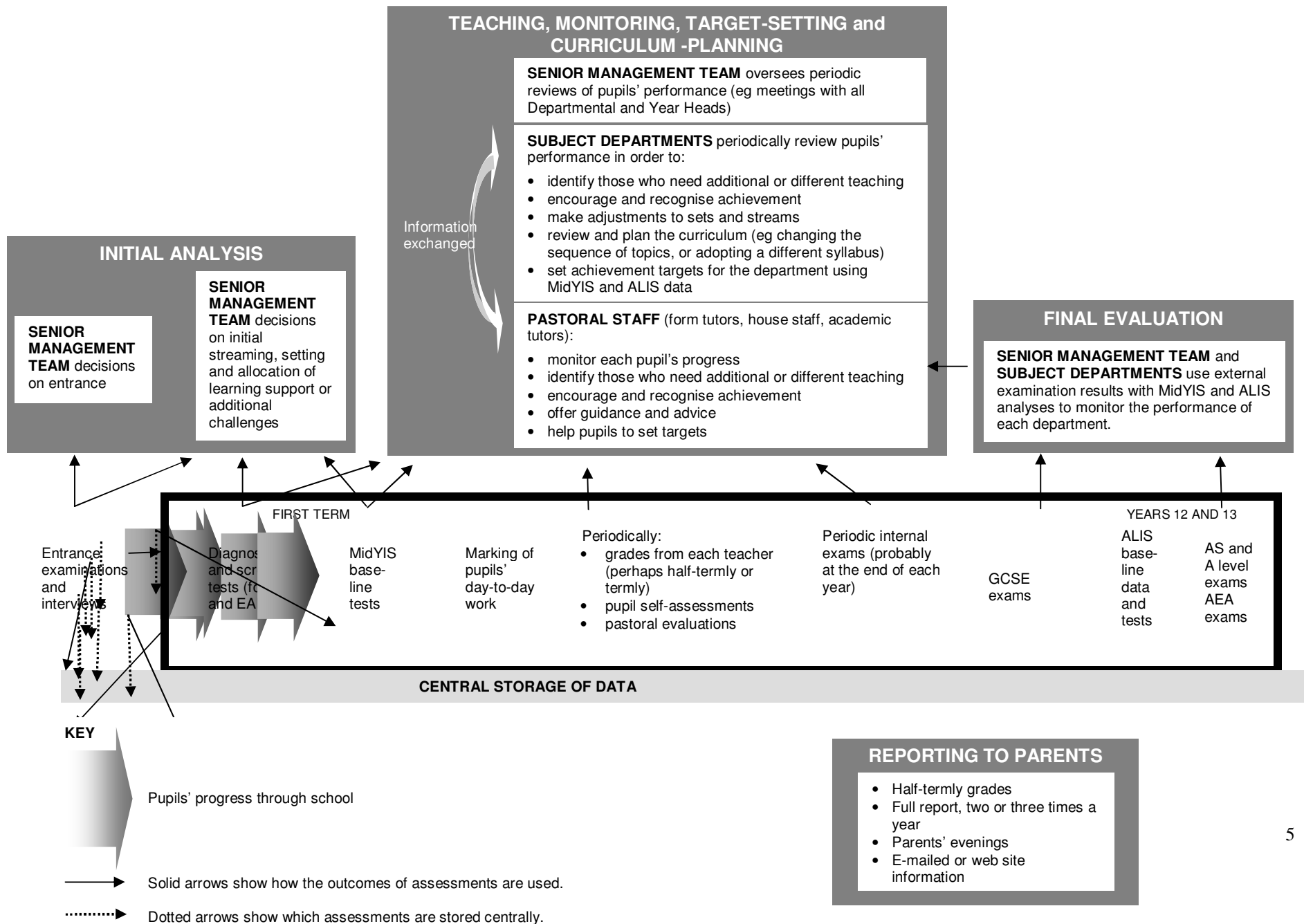
COMMON STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM establishes:

- whole-school policies on assessment
 - standard procedures and schedules (eg for departments' monitoring and target-setting)
- to ensure consistency and standards.

SUBJECT DEPARTMENTS

- Departments establish departmental policies derived from the whole-school policies.
- Each Head of Department monitors the quality of marking by regularly scrutinising pupils' marked work.



Many aspects of the system are self-evident from the diagram and require no explanation. Some aspects, particularly ones mentioned frequently in inspection reports, are worth considering in more detail and they are dealt with in separate sections below.

common standards and procedures: assessment policies

“A whole-school assessment policy offers general advice and provides an appropriate framework for each department to devise and implement its own marking, assessment and homework policy.”

“A system of grade periods produces half-termly grades, completed by teachers... Form tutors complete work record cards each half term, which are sent home, signed by parents, and returned. At the end of the year, completed work record cards are sent home, and a copy placed on file, held by section heads. The staff handbook contains general instructions about the terminology to be used, and the inferences for interpretation. The system works efficiently and the information is understood by both parents and pupils.”

If there is to be a coherent overall system of assessment, it may be helpful for it to be formally specified, with its aims, procedures, schedules and deadlines set out in writing, so that its purposes and functioning are understood by everyone involved. This is the case for assessment policies. They indicate what teachers, pastoral staff, subject departments and managers are expected to do, in what ways and by when. They define common standards and procedures for such matters as marking, monitoring pupils' progress, the production of reports, curriculum-planning and evaluating the performance of teaching and subject departments. They can stipulate, for example, not only that departmental meetings should take place, but that they should have a formal agenda and minutes, and consider, at specified intervals, not just pupils' progress but also departmental target-setting and curriculum reviews.

Relevant parts of a school's assessment policy can be published in handbooks for staff and pupils and in the school prospectus so that pupils and parents, as well as the staff, understand the assessment processes.

A school's assessment policy can specify in detail how procedures will be carried out, or it can set out a general framework of principles and timescales, within which individual departments create their own policies. Some schools deliberately decide against detailed school-wide policies in areas such as marking. They consider that uniformity might prevent individual departments from devising the most appropriate system for their purposes. Of course, they then have to ensure that a diversity of practice does not lead to confusion. Inspectors tend to recommend assessment policies if they perceive there to be confusing inconsistencies: if, for example, they find pupils puzzled by having their work marked with a variety of different systems and symbols by different teachers.

“Some (departments) use the marks in order to improve the planning of their future teaching programme. Others make little such use of the data ... The school records annually the MidYIS value-added scores for the pupils, but makes little practical use of these potentially valuable, predictive statistics to set targets and fine-tune programmes of work”

teaching, monitoring, target-setting and curriculum-planning

Most assessment in a school is concerned with day-to-day teaching and monitoring: marking and periodic reports. There is a danger that these very familiar and long-established functions come to be seen as ends in themselves, and the wider uses of assessment information may be overlooked.

So far as the individual teacher is concerned, assessment can do more than confirm whether pupils have learnt what they have been taught. For example, one inspection noticed that a pupil, asked to complete the expression:

$$2 + \square = 5$$

had entered $2\frac{1}{2}$ in the box. The teacher had simply marked the answer as wrong, but had not, apparently, paused to consider why the pupil should have produced that particular, intriguingly wrong, answer. A moment's reflection of course suggests that the pupil was well able to perform the arithmetic required, but was confused about the difference between addition and multiplication, or the signs used. This assessment therefore indicates what should be taught, or revisited, next. It might also reveal something about the way the topic had been taught. Assessment can inform teaching as well as confirm learning.

Similarly, departmental meetings and pastoral reviews might not only note progress made, but also set targets. The targets can be for pupils: for example, what grades they should aim to get in their marked work and in their examinations. The targets can also be for the department: for example, the examination results it hopes to achieve. Target-setting can be informed not only by previous grades and examination, but also by national bench-marked data from the value-added systems discussed below. Pupils can be involved in setting their targets and in assessing themselves, particularly in pastoral reviews.

Assessment information can be used to review and plan the curriculum. For example, patterns in GCSE results could inform decisions about whether certain types of pupil should study double award GCSE science or the separate GCSE sciences. Patterns in pupils' grades might suggest that topics should be taught in a different order. For example, one school decided to begin its six-unit A level history course with unit 5, even though this unit is normally taught in the second year of A level studies. Unit 5 provides a 100 year overview, whereas the other units deal with 10 to 15 year periods.

“... teachers sometimes use a mark, sometimes a grade. Pupils are not clear about the reasons for this.”

“Variation in totals and grade systems were evident in files and books.”

“In most cases work is marked thoroughly, but marking often lacks consistency from one teacher to another, and does not always offer comments or indicate where errors in pupils’ work have occurred.”

“... the standard of detail and correction amongst staff is inconsistent and not all homework is regularly marked by the teacher and returned by the next lesson.”

“There is a whole-school marking policy and a common grading system. A copy of the grade descriptors is in homework diaries. Staff are also encouraged to use a common symbol system when marking ...”

“Marking is up-to-date, although some comments are too brief to provide useful feedback to pupils. Missing work is not always followed up quickly enough.”

marking

a marking policy?

A marking policy can help to promote consistent standards of marking and common methods from one teacher to another, and from one department to another. The policy can be very specific or simply set down general principles from which each department draws up a specific policy to suit its own needs. However, if the policy is no more than a requirement for each department to have its own marking policy it is not likely to promote consistency throughout the school. Similarly, a department’s policy could consist of general guidance and recommendations, or very specific requirements for standardisation such as a common mark scheme.

A detailed marking policy, for the school or a department, could address all the issues listed in the **Marking Practice** section below. A less detailed one might at least include the areas where variations of practice are most problematic, namely:

- a common mark scheme, which indicates the criteria against which the work is marked;
- a common system of grading, which determines whether letter grades or numerical grades are used and what the grades mean;
- a common approach to marking English, particularly spelling, in all subjects.

If there is a marking policy, it should be adhered to. If heads of department regularly inspect examples of marking within their departments, they can check that a policy is being followed, or ensure that marking is satisfactory where a policy does not exist. An alternative, or an adjunct, to a marking policy is the sharing of good practice between teachers and departments.

marking practice

Whether or not there is a marking policy, the marking of pupils’ work needs to take account of the following issues.

- Most, if not all, of pupils’ work should be marked. Inspection reports sometimes judged the proportion marked to be too low.
- Marking needs to be regular, kept up-to-date, and promptly returned to pupils.
- Pupils need to understand marking systems, both the criteria for marking as well as the comments and grades or marks awarded. This information might take the form of cover sheets attached to a project.

“...Pupils are not always alert to the need to work to assessment criteria identified on the relevant assessment matrix, even though they are always given copies of the criteria...”

“Some marking is cursory, however, with errors noted but not always explained..”

“Some of the marking is very good, showing a combination of correction and advice to pupils.”

“Some work was marked only with a series of ticks. The comment with some numerical mark was confusing.”

“... requests to complete missing work are not always followed ..”

“In Years 12 and 13, pupils periodically make assessments of their own progress. These are compared with their teacher's assessments, and the comparisons provide a valuable basis for discussion.”

- Pupils' work in preparation for external examinations should be marked using the marking criteria of the examinations.
- Internal moderation may be needed to produce consistent standards between different teachers or departments.
- Marking should include comments, not just ticks. The comments should not be too cursory. They need to be encouraging, but not merely congratulatory. **It is particularly important that the comments tell pupils how to improve their work**; this is one of the most frequent criticisms made in inspection reports. Written comments are needed, even where verbal comments are given to pupils when their work is returned to them.
- Errors should be corrected. There may be a case for not correcting every error; where for example to do so might discourage a pupil. But important and significant errors should not be left uncorrected.
- Marking in all subjects may need to include the pupils' use of English, particularly spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Late or copied work should be identified.
- Marking should include giving the work a grade or numerical mark.
- Marking may include instructions to pupils, such as asking them to re-draft work or correct mistakes. When pupils are asked to correct or repeat their work, it is important to check that they do so, and to mark their corrections or repeated work.
- Marking might include house points, or a system of credits. Such systems can be a considerable incentive for pupils to do well.
- Marks should be recorded.
- Practical, project-based subjects need to have regular marking, even if a whole project may extend over a lengthy period of time.
- Marking may include various forms of self-assessment by the pupil.

the central storage of assessment data

The data generated by assessments needs to be readily available to all who need it. Academic and pastoral staff, managers, pupils and parents may all, at different times and in different ways, need access to such data.

“A system for central storage and retrieval of assessment data should be developed so that data can be used by senior management, departments and tutors to support pupils’ progress and to monitor attainment generally.”

“The school computer network has the potential to record subject marks and use them to track and monitor individual pupils over time, in addition to the present use of MidYIS added-value data ...”

Traditional systems that rely on paper records, filing cabinets and photocopying are familiar and require no staff training or expensive equipment, but they are cumbersome. Computer systems offer clear advantages. For example, in one school’s system, when teachers type in comments for pupils’ reports the names of pupils with special needs are automatically highlighted on the screen so that teachers cannot fail to take account of those needs in writing their comments. In another school, the computer system allows each teacher to save in a personal comment bank the comments they frequently use in writing reports. The teacher can then create a paragraph of report comments appropriate to a particular pupil simply by entering the comment numbers. The system even inserts the name of the pupil automatically in appropriate places in the various sentences. The teacher can make as much or as little use of their own standard comments and phrases as they wish, exactly as teachers always do in writing reports. The saving in time and effort is considerable.²

Ideally, everyone needing access to the assessment data would be able to reach it easily through a school’s computer network, with the software allowing different levels of access depending on the status of the user. Pupils, and even parents at home accessing the data via a password on the school website, might be able to obtain data relevant to them.

In practice, computerising assessment data is not a straightforward matter for schools, and the following points may be worth bearing in mind.

computer software

If possible, it is best to avoid a proliferation of different software applications which duplicate data. Entering and processing data more than once is inefficient and may complicate the retrieval of information. On the other hand, the assessment software needs to be suitable for the school’s needs, which differ from school to school. Many schools already have commercially produced MIS (management information systems) software for keeping pupil records and financial information. Some of these software systems have additional modules available for storing assessment data, but they may

² The disadvantages as well as the advantages of using computers to produce reports for parents are discussed further in the *Reports to Parents* section below.

not always suit the school's needs. Consequently, schools often face difficult decisions about whether to extend existing systems, add different ones, or start again from scratch with a comprehensive new system which replaces their existing software.

To find out what commercially available software systems exist and what functions they offer, visit the Government's BECTA³ website: www.becta.org.uk/slict/software/index.cfm. Another good source of information is the annual BETT⁴ exhibition on ICT in education. It displays all the main educational software systems and provides an opportunity to discuss them with the manufacturers.

The alternative to commercially produced software is for a school to create its own. The advantage of this approach is that the software can be exactly tailored to the needs of the school. The disadvantages are that creating the software may be a lengthy process, and expensive in terms of the time spent by the person creating it. Furthermore, that person may well be the only one who understands the software and knows how to deal with any problems. It is therefore important that the person who creates the software documents the design in detail so that if they leave the school, someone else will be able to manage the system.

value-added information systems

Public examinations such as GCSE and A level demonstrate the academic outcome of a pupil's schooling, but they take no account of the pupil's starting point. They do not show how much progress has been made or how academically effective the school has been. Value-added systems measure how much a pupil's academic attainment has increased – how much “value” has been added to it.

An example is ALIS, the A level Information System, which is one of several systems provided by Durham University. By comparing the GCSE and A level results of large numbers of pupils across the country, ALIS is able to establish what A level subject grade is generally obtained by pupils with different average GCSE scores at the start of their A level studies.⁵ If pupils with a particular average GCSE score obtain better A level grades in a subject than are usually obtained by pupils with that score, then the

³ British Educational Communications Technology Agency. Tel: 024 7641 6994.

⁴ British Education and Teaching with Technology: <http://www.bettshow.co.uk>

⁵ The method is, in essence, extremely simple. On a graph in which one axis represents average GCSE score and the other the A level grade in a subject, each pupil can be shown as a single point. When many pupils are shown on the graph, there is a cluster of points sloping upwards, with low GCSE scores associated with low A level grades at one end and high scores and grades at the other end. Drawing a “best-fit” line through these points shows the progress which most pupils make between GCSE and A level: for any given average GCSE score it is possible to read off from the line the usual A level grade achieved in the subject.

department has increased the pupils' academic attainment, has added more "value" to it, than most departments in that subject across the country.⁶ Conversely, less than typical grades would indicate a poor performance by the department.

Of course, a school might consider that it has a good idea of how well its departments compare with those of similar schools and knows, from its entrance examinations and its day-to-day teaching, what its pupils are capable of achieving. However, the school can only obtain precise information about its own pupils; it cannot know exactly what progress is made by other pupils in similar schools. Even if the school periodically sets its pupils standard tests to monitor their progress, it will only be able to draw conclusions about how well each department has performed against the department's own previous performance. Value-added information systems draw on exact data from large national samples of pupils and produce information about a school's departmental performance which the school cannot generate on its own.

ALIS measures the value added between GCSE and A level. Other systems offered by Durham University measure the progress made at earlier ages, but they are based on the same principles.

- **MidYIS, the Middle Years Information System**, measures progress made between the start of senior school at ages 11, 12 or 13 and GCSE.
- **YELLIS, the Year Eleven Information System**, measures progress made in years 10 and 11 (ages 15 -16) leading up to GCSE.
- **PIPS, Performance Indicators in Primary Schools**, measures progress between ages 5 and 11.
- **ASPECTS, the Assessment Profile for early years Children and Toddlers**, covers ages 3 to 4.

GCSE provides the baseline measurement for ALIS. The systems for younger pupils use baseline tests provided by Durham University, which assess such things as vocabulary, mathematics, non-verbal abilities and various skills. In the case of PIPS and ASPECTS, Durham also provides the end-point tests.

Durham University presents the information to schools in simple graphs and charts which can easily be understood without any knowledge of statistics or mathematics. The information produced by these systems can be used in a number of ways, as follows.

- **Evaluating school and departmental performance**
The information shows the extent to which each subject department in the school is performing above or below the typical performance of schools across the country, or, in the case of MidYIS, the typical performance of other independent schools

⁶ This is a simplified description of the term "value-added". Strictly speaking, ALIS uses the term "value-added", or its preferred term "residual", to refer to the extent to which pupils' achievements are above or below the typical achievement.

“Nationally recognised benchmarking tests (MidYIS) administered on entry in 1997 suggested a potential average GCSE grade of B in the 2000 examinations, and this was the average grade achieved. A more detailed analysis of the 2000 GCSE performance in the light of the 1997 benchmarks indicates that 68% of girls exceeded expectations and that 55% of boys underachieved. The school has subsequently identified strategies intended to correct shortcomings in the boys’ performance ...”

across the country.⁷ The information can be used to monitor the performance of each department and to set targets for future performance.

- **Monitoring and target-setting with pupils**

Some schools consider that value-added information is primarily for senior managers and is not be routinely shared with pupils and parents. Those schools fear that, if they informed pupils of the value-added predictions of their likely examination grades, lower-achievers might become discouraged and high-achievers complacent. Nonetheless, the predicted grades can still be used by staff to monitor the pupils’ performance and targets can still be set, for example in the form of the grades expected of each pupil in their marked work, even if the value-added basis of the target-setting is not revealed to the pupils.

However, some of the Durham value-added documents are designed to be shared with pupils, particularly the “Chances Graphs” which show that the prediction is *not* a statistical certainty. They show, for example, that whilst a lower-achieving pupil might have a 26% chance of getting a D grade in a particular A level subject, the pupil also has a 10% chance of getting a B and 4% chance of getting an A. Conversely, someone with a 30% chance of an A also has a 21% of a C. Chances Graphs can be used to demonstrate to lower-achievers that some lower-achievers manage to obtain very high results so they should aim high, and to persuade high achievers that they cannot afford to be complacent.

- **Informing decisions on streaming, subject choice and syllabuses**

The results of the baseline tests can inform decisions on streaming and setting. Those results and the predictions of future performance in each subject can inform advice to pupils about their choice of subjects at GCSE and A level: pupils will get better results in some subjects than in others. Since ALIS information shows the normal achievement of pupils not only in each subject but now also in each syllabus at A level, the information – which in effect shows which syllabuses are slightly easier or slightly harder - can be used to help decide which syllabus a department should use to get the best results.

- **To help assess the quality of the teaching and the school environment**

Durham University’s value-added systems also provide other information, based on additional questionnaires to pupils, which show how the pupils’ experiences compare with those of pupils in other schools. For example, the information might show how often pupils work in pairs or use computers in a particular subject, or the proportion of pupils who get on well with most of their teachers.

Further details about Durham’s value-added systems are available from the Curriculum, Evaluation and Management Centre at the University of Durham.⁸

⁷ In ALIS, comparisons with the typical performance of other independent schools *generally* can be provided at an extra cost. At no extra cost, a school can compare its performance with that of other *individual* schools in the independent sector; the other schools are identified only by anonymous codes.

reports to parents

“Departments decide report-writing strategies. Although procedures for reports are clearly outlined in the staff handbook, no guidance is provided on elements to be covered or techniques of writing informative and helpful comments.”

“The school is planning to bring in computer-based report system for both internal and end-of-term reports. Reports will be stored electronically, retrieved easily, made more consistent in presentation and made available (via a password) to parents on the Internet.”

“The reports are thorough, with input from academic staff, the tutor, the head of section, house staff and the headmaster. They are also well produced with high quality modern technology”

Whether or not there is a school or departmental policy specifying how they are prepared, reports to parents need to take account of the following issues.

- Reports need to be made at regular intervals. In most schools, parents are sent reports two or three times a year. A few schools send reports six times a year: for example, brief subject-based reports in the middle of each term and fuller reports including extra-curricular activities and pastoral information at the end of each term.
- In all schools, reports are supplemented with parents evening or other events at which parents can discuss their children's progress with the school staff. Most schools have one or two such events each year, as well as providing opportunities for parents to make appointments to meet staff at any time of the year.
- Reports may present information in various ways, including the use of booklets, record sheets, profiles and charts. General information may also be presented in regular information letters, news sheets, homework diaries, in a school magazine and on the school website. Information can also be reported to parents via telephone and e-mail contact.
- Computers can be used for various aspects of reports:
 - providing the information, particularly to report on marks and grades which have already been entered into the computer system;
 - offering a standard structure or template for the word-processing of the document, or even comment banks to speed up the writing process;
 - enabling reports to be very smartly printed and presented if appropriate software and printing technology are used;
 - providing convenient storage and retrieval of the reports;
 - allowing reports to be viewed by parents using a password on the Internet.

There can also be disadvantages to using computers: they might undermine parents' confidence in the reports. For example, parents might expect teachers' comments to be handwritten, both because it is traditional and to reassure them that the comments are the teacher's own thoughts on the pupil, not merely standard phrases produced by a computer. Similarly, where computer comment banks are used to save typing out frequently used sentences, it is important to ensure that contradictory or inconsistent phrases have not been selected in error.

⁸ CEM Centre, Mountjoy Research Centre 4, University of Durham, Stockton Road, Durham, DH1 3UZ. Tel: 0191 374 4506; fax: 0191 374 1900; <http://cem.dur.ac.uk>.

“A significant number of reports, however, concentrate too much on application and attitude and lack precision, especially in indicating the standards of work achieved and the progress being made.”

“A distinctive feature is a feedback section on which parents are invited to respond to the school.”

“...on occasion too much time can elapse between the writing of the reports and their receipt by parents.”

“Reports are supplemented by pupil profiles, drawn up by pupil and form tutor, which contain a self-assessment section. A system of computer generated reports for Year 7 has been implemented recently”

- Reports can include information on:
 - academic progress;
 - application and attitude;
 - extra-curriculum activities;
 - pastoral aspects.
- The information should be precise. For example, standards of work being achieved should be related to GCSE, AS or A-level examination standards or to school base-line data. Otherwise parents might feel they had been misled if the eventual examination results were out of line with the information in the reports.
- Reports can also include:
 - targets for pupil achievement, for example grades to be achieved in external examinations;
 - recommendations, advice and suggested strategies for improvement;
 - pupil self-assessment;
 - space, or opportunity, for parents to respond to the report.
- Reports might benefit from proof-reading and error-checking processes before they are sent to parents.
- Reports need to be promptly sent to parents, before the information becomes out of date.

further reading

Some recent publications related to the issues in this guide are as follows.

- ***Inside the Black Box*** Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam (available from the School of Education, King's College, University of London, Franklin-Wilkins Building, 150 Stamford Street, London SE1 8WA, price £2.00).
- ***Assessment for Learning: Beyond the Black Box*** Assessment Reform Group (available as a down-loadable PDF file from <http://www.assessment-reform-group.org.uk>).
- ***Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles. Research-based Principles to Guide Classroom Practice*** Assessment Reform Group (a free poster, available at <http://www.assessment-reform-group.org.uk>).
- ***Curriculum Management and Assessment Manual*** Garwood and Dowden, Pearson Education.

abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this guide.

| | |
|---------|---|
| AEA | Advanced Extension Awards |
| ALIS | A level Information System (see the <i>Value-Added Information Systems</i> section) |
| AS | the GCE Advanced Subsidiary (the first half of an A level) |
| ASPECTS | Assessment Profile for early years Children and Toddlers (see the <i>Value-Added Information Systems</i> section) |
| EAL | English as an additional language |
| ISI | Independent Schools Inspectorate |
| MidYIS | Middle Years Information System (see the <i>Value-Added Information Systems</i> section) |
| NFER | National Foundation for Educational Research |
| PIPS | Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (see the <i>Value-Added Information Systems</i> section) |
| SEN | Special Educational Needs |
| YELLIS | Year Eleven Information System (see the <i>Value-Added Information Systems</i> section) |
