

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning is not a new concept. Over ten years ago eminent educationalists were stating that learners must be ultimately responsible for their own learning. Assessment for Learning is the term used for practices that enable learners to set targets and build on their strengths as well as correct their weaknesses. The ability of students to direct their own learning is of primary importance if they are to become independent learners.

Much research has occurred in the field of Assessment for Learning. There is strong evidence to suggest that if a pupil is just given a mark or grade they have an indication of what they are achieving but no idea of how to improve. When comments are placed alongside the mark or grade very few students look at them, let alone act on them. The most effective approach to marking is seen to be providing formative comments alone. Suitable comments provide students with guidance on how to develop their work. In the absence of a formal grade or mark students do act on the advice given.

At Queen Margaret's we are working with the principles of Assessment for Learning with respect to the marking of pupils' work in YI-III. Comments are placed on each girl's work which will help her identify strategies for improvement. Grades and marks will be awarded for key assessments each term so that every girl is aware of her level of achievement but these will not appear routinely on every assignment.

We review regularly the effects of our changed marking practice. Current feedback is that the girls are responding to this change and that they are taking responsibility for their own learning and acting on the advice offered by their teachers.