Elementary School Assessment Policy

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Introduction

This Policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of assessment, evaluation and reporting at Dubai American Academy's Elementary (ES) School. Assessment complements and assists teaching and learning; it plays an integral part in each teacher's planning and enables the evaluation of current practice as well as student achievement. High quality formative assessment is an essential part of teaching and learning. Quality assessment ensures a whole school approach to the provision of an excellent education for all children in the ES, and it enables teachers to deliver education that best suits the needs of their pupils. Evaluation occurs at the end of each reporting period (trimester), and formal reporting occurs through three standardized report cards, one in each trimester.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to provide a clear outline of all assessment, evaluation and reporting techniques at the ES School, to ensure that assessment is used as a tool to inform planning, to track pupil progress and to raise standards.

It is the right of every child at the ES to be given an education that builds on their strengths, addresses their individual needs, and ensures progression. Assessment is an essential tool in the delivery of this right.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning (AFL) is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how best to get there.

AFL is a key part of our approach to teaching and learning at DAA. Staff use success criteria, timely and specific feedback, and peer and self assessment to involve pupils in their learning and to inform them of their next steps. AFL opportunities are identified in planning. Marking is conducted with reference to the Learning Intention and should identify successes and areas for improvement, based on previously establish Success Criteria (SC). Effective questioning, observations and conversations are also used to inform assessments.

Roles and Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for assessment belongs with the teachers. Homeroom teachers are responsible for regular quality assessment of the children in their care, and the leadership team

is responsible for monitoring assessment. Students play a role in the assessment process as well. They integrate the feedback they receive from their teachers to improve their work and provide feedback to their peers, based on assignment success criteria. Students also regularly self-assess and reflect on their achievement and progress.

Implementation

Assessment is a daily part of life at school. Descriptive feedback is used by students to ensure that children know their next steps and what they need to do to improve. Teachers use the products of assessment to inform their teaching; specifically, not monitor the acquisition of knowledge and skills and to make corrections to programming, based on student need. More formal methods of assessment provide feedback on pupil attainment and progress and ensure a rigorous approach to curriculum delivery.

The purposes of assessment are:
● to be formative, providing information for the teacher to plan the next steps in the children's learning and support children with identifying their own next steps;
● to be diagnostic, providing more detailed information about individual children's strengths and needs;
● to be summative, providing a snapshot of each child's achievement – these can be reported to parents;
● to be evaluative, allowing the school and individual teachers to evaluate how effective their teaching is;
● to inform the children to enable them to develop their learning.
●

Specific learning intentions, success criteria, and assessment opportunities are identified in trimester, unit and lesson plans. All assessment outcomes, including standardised test results, are used to evaluate current practice and to inform future planning.

Forms of Assessment

Day-to-day Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is carried out by teachers every day in every lesson. It allows teachers to understand pupil performance on a continuing basis.

This type of assessment is used to assess knowledge, skills and understanding, and is used to identify gaps and misconceptions. It enables teachers to identify when pupils are struggling, when they have consolidated learning, and when they are ready to progress. Formative assessment also enables teachers to identify whether children are working at greater depth and may require additional challenge, allowing them to provide appropriate support or extension, as necessary. The methods of formative assessment include the use of pertinent questioning, marking of pupils' work, one-on-one and small group conversations or conferring, and

observational assessment. Formative assessment enables teachers to evaluate how well students have mastered specific curriculum standards and helps them plan future instruction. For students, formative assessment helps them to measure their knowledge and understanding against the learning intention and success criteria, and the feedback they receive helps them understand how they can improve.

Common formative assessments are planned and administered by grade teams, to ensure consistency of conceptual understandings at different stages of learning. Teachers meet to moderate assessment results, to inform future planning, and to provide collaborative opportunities to identify evidence-based practices.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments enable teachers to evaluate both student learning and the impact of their teaching at the end of a period of time. Summative assessments provide evidence of achievement against the learning intentions of the curricular standards. Summative assessments are useful in informing teaching and learning in subsequent lessons. This type of assessment is shared with parents at parent/teacher conferences and enables families to support their child's future learning.

Elementary School Achievement

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT: Students in the Elementary School receive descriptive feedback on their attainment of grade-level achievement standards, as outlined below.

We believe a child's achievement is more than a number and have created a Proficiency Scale that identifies a student's learning as:

Mastering	A child who demonstrates evidence of knowledge and skills with greater depth and breadth than standard achievement.
Achieving	A child who demonstrates grade level application of their learning.
Approaching	A child who is requires further focus and practice to demonstrate grade level application of their learning.
Developing	A child who is beginning to demonstrate grade level application of their learning.

We trust that through the use of Achievement Levels, our students will continue to have a strong sense of their strengths and areas for development. In creating these proficiencies, we have aligned with the Middle School reporting to a provide seamless transition between our divisions.

MASTERING Learner provides compelling evidence demonstrating the transfer of concepts, knowledge, and skills as indicated by the stated learning outcome (standard). Observable evidence of this level will include skills such as evaluating, justifying, synthesizing, proposing,

defending and creating.

ACHIEVING Learner provides sufficient evidence to securely demonstrate the concepts, knowledge, and skills as indicated by the stated learning outcome (standard). Observable evidence of this level will include skills such as applying, analyzing, explaining, comparing, contrasting, organizing, and connecting.

APPROACHING Learner provides partial evidence to demonstrate the concepts, knowledge, and skills as indicated by the stated learning outcome (standard). Additional focus and practice are needed to develop and solidify the learning outcome. Observable evidence of this level will include skills such as identifying, using/employing, classifying, completing, re-phrasing, summarizing, and describing.

DEVELOPING Evidence provided by the learner has just begun to demonstrate the concepts, knowledge, and skills as indicated by the stated learning outcome (standard). Observable evidence of this level will include skills such as recalling, identifying, and repeating.
NOT ASSESSED Learner was not assessed on a particular learning outcome (standard).

Elementary School Grade Conversion Chart

Number Grade	Percent Grade	Corresponding Letter Grade
4 (Mastering)	90-100	A- to A+
3 (Achieving)	75-89	C to B+
2 (Approaching)	65-74	D to C-
1 (Developing)	Below 65	D- to F

Students in the Elementary School achieve grades on a 1 to 4 scale, as follows:
- 4 when they achieve above 90-100 percent, which converts to a letter grade range of A- to A+
- 3 when they achieve 75-89 percent, which converts to a letter grade range of C through B+
- 2 when they achieve 65-74 percent, which converts to a letter grade range of D through C-
- 1 when they achieve below 65 percent, which converts to a letter grade range of D- through F

Standardised Summative Assessment

Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Testing

This test is administered internally three times each academic year in reading, language usage, mathematics and science to students in Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The results are then reported to the local authority (KHDA and DSIB) and to parents. The purpose of these assessments is

diagnostic, and the data derived is used to determine learning intentions for students and inform teacher planning.

MAP tests are used to monitor children's progress and to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum delivery. The ES Leadership Team, in conjunction with core homeroom teachers, analyse MAP results and consider the implications for the content and delivery of the curriculum in each grade level. This information is shared with staff and parents. Staff are expected to analyse the results in preparation for Pupil Progress Meetings (PPM) which take place with a representative from the ES Leadership after each batch of assessments have taken place.

Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessment (F&P)

The F&P is a standardized reading test used to determine a student's instructional level in reading. The F&P is administered individually to students by teachers who use the results, along with the results of other assessments, to determine whether students are reading on, above, or below grade level. By knowing student F&P levels, teachers can plan for small group, guided reading instruction, including targeted interventions and supplemental support. Teachers select materials that match students' instructional levels and provide appropriate instruction to challenge them. Using the standard F&P continuum, students' reading levels can be compared to the norm as well.

Primary Spelling Inventory (PSI) or Elementary Spelling Inventory (ESI)

The PSI or ESI is used in kindergarten through fifth grade. The words are ordered by difficulty to sample features of the letter name - alphabetic to within word pattern stages. Using the standard PSI or ESI helps teachers group students and also compare their levels of word study and analysis as compared to the norm.

Marking

While marking work, teachers are assessing children's achievements and noting areas of difficulty, in order to inform their planning of future lessons. The DAA Assessment Policy ensures a consistent approach to evaluation throughout the school, including opportunities for children to self assess and peer assess their learning. Rubrics are used to support a common understanding of expectations that align to performance standards.

All data is stored on a shared drive and an online student tracker for staff to access.

Accuracy and Consistency of Judgements

Moderation is necessary to ensure accuracy and consistency of teachers' judgements about standards. It is important to agree on judgements, if decisions are to be considered valid and reliable.

Teachers will often share opinions informally with subject leaders and other colleagues to clarify 'best fit' judgements or for statutory teacher assessments. Professional development meetings and Teacher development days are arranged for teachers to compare judgements and agree upon standards.

Staff training is arranged when there are changes to assessment processes, to ensure all staff have a good understanding of assessment. Staff members attend training and subject committee meetings for their subject, to ensure they stay abreast of good practice. Feedback from this training is shared with staff so that all DAA educators continue to develop and improve their practice.

Records

Records of end of unit assessments, formative assessments, MAP and CAT4 results, and teacher assessments are stored on the school's drive and on the student online data trackers.
Online student data tracker documents are used as an aid to effective planning. The progress of children receiving extra support is monitored by the member of staff delivering the support.
The above records enable classroom teachers to assess the progress made by each child and are an important part of the formative assessment needed for future planning. The pupil end-of-year report is filed on the server and is available for future reference.

Equal Opportunities

As outlined above, assessment plays an integral part in identifying the individual needs of all children. It enables children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), children who excel, Emirate students, and children for whom English is an additional language to be given a differentiated curriculum which meets their needs. In addition, the assessment policy at DAA's Elementary School ensures that identification of these children is systematic and effective.

Special Educational Needs

When assessment indicates a child may have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, the Director of Special Education Needs is informed, and the child's progress is carefully monitored. Further assessment then takes place, as outlined in the SEND policy. For all children at the appropriate Tier stage, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is developed and implemented. When teachers assess a child with SEND, they will draw upon ongoing formative and summative assessment. Where necessary, they will gain insights from parents, the student and any external specialists or assessments involved in their child's care.

Reporting to Parents

Parents receive a written report during each academic year. In the ES, report cards document the child's academic progress in the core and foundation subjects and on their learning skills and abilities in all areas of the curriculum. The reporting period is defined by the end of each

trimester. In addition, parents are offered the opportunity to discuss their child's report with the homeroom teacher.

Parent/Teacher (P/T) conferences take place twice a year, in the Fall and Spring trimesters. During these meetings, teachers share the pupils' age-related attainment, as measured against school expectations, their next step targets, and the progress pupils have made to date. An open door policy is offered for any parents who would like to come in and have an informal discussion about their child, at any point during the school year.

Staff are prepared to make themselves available at the beginning or end of the school day to discuss parents' questions or concerns. If it is not possible to speak to a parent immediately, a prompt appointment will be made. If a member of staff has concerns about a child, s/he will contact the parents. Parents of children with ILPs may require additional opportunities to meet with staff.

Transition Folders to the next grade level

- Class assessments are passed on to the next class teacher via a portfolio.
- Formal test results are kept on the online data tracker system.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities plans and folders are shared.
- Lists of under-achieving, high-achieving and gifted and talented children are shared with the next grade level team.