



THE DORMSTON SCHOOL

Assessment and Monitoring Policy 2025-2026

Date	Review date	Lead	Nominated Governor or Committee
June 2025	June 2026	Deputy Headteacher for Curriculum	Resources Committee
			Ratified:
			Date: June 2025
			Website: Yes

Assessment and Monitoring Policy

1. Rationale

Assessment at Dormston is designed to support a **high-ambition, inclusive curriculum** and to ensure that **all pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points**. Assessment is used primarily to inform teaching, identify strengths and misconceptions, and help pupils to **secure knowledge and skills over time**.

Our approach ensures that assessment:

- Supports high expectations for all pupils
- Informs responsive teaching and curriculum planning
- Helps identify and close gaps in learning
- Enables disadvantaged pupils to make accelerated progress

Assessment information is used purposefully and proportionately, and is never an end in itself.

2. Prior Attainment Banding

On entry to the school, pupils are placed into one of three **Learning Potential Bands**, informed by KS2 SATs outcomes and transition information.

The three bands are:

- **Lower Prior Attainment (LPA – Orange)**
- **Middle Prior Attainment (MPA – Pink)**
- **Higher Prior Attainment (HPA – Purple)**

Banding is used to:

- Establish appropriate **curriculum expectations**
- Support planning, differentiation and challenge
- Provide a clear framework for assessment judgements

Banding reflects starting points and is not a fixed judgement of ability.

3. Curriculum Expectations and Assessment Judgements

At KS3 each subject defines **clear, curriculum-based expectations** for pupils in each attainment band. These expectations are:

- Ambitious and age-appropriate
- Aligned to the national curriculum
- Sequenced to build knowledge and understanding over time

- Allow students to build towards challenging but attainable outcomes at KS4

Pupils are assessed **at least three times per academic year** in every subject. Following each assessment window, teachers make a professional judgement using the following descriptors:

- **Approaching** – working towards the curriculum expectations for their band
- **Meeting** – securely meeting the curriculum expectations for their band
- **Exceeding** – consistently exceeding the curriculum expectations for their band

Judgements are based on a **range of evidence over time**, including assessments, classwork, homework and professional knowledge.

At Key Stage 4, assessment and reporting move from the **Approaching, Meeting and Exceeding** framework used in Key Stage 3 to a **GCSE outcomes-focused model**. This change reflects the different nature of external qualifications and provides pupils with clear, meaningful information about their progress towards final examination outcomes.

For each KS4 subject, pupils are reported using:

- A **Current Grade**, reflecting their present level of attainment
- A **Target Grade**, derived from their starting point and progress profile
- A **Final Predicted Grade**, indicating the grade staff believe the pupil is most likely to achieve if current progress continues

Target Grade Setting

Target grades are informed by a range of evidence, including (but not solely limited to) **FFT20 benchmark data**, prior attainment and professional judgement. Targets are set to be **challenging yet attainable**, ensuring they promote ambition without discouraging pupils.

Subject teachers may **boost target grades** where they believe that the initial target does not fully reflect a pupil's potential. This ensures that targets are not a ceiling and that high expectations remain central to teaching and learning. Teacher-adjusted targets are based on secure evidence such as progress over time, work ethic, engagement and subject-specific strengths.

Monitoring Progress at Key Stage 4

Progress at KS4 is measured through the relationship between:

- The **current grade**
- The **target grade**
- The **final predicted grade**

This allows staff to judge whether pupils are:

- On track to meet or exceed their target

- Making sufficient progress over time
- In need of additional support or challenge

This system ensures that assessment at KS4 remains purposeful, aspirational and focused on securing the strongest possible outcomes for every pupil, regardless of starting point.

4. Disadvantaged Pupils and the RADY Uplift

(Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters)

High Expectations for Disadvantaged Pupils

Dormston is committed to ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are supported through **high expectations rather than lowered ambition**. National evidence demonstrates that many disadvantaged pupils enter secondary education with an attainment gap. Addressing this requires **deliberate action and ambitious teaching**, not reduced expectations.

The RADY Uplift

Each disadvantaged pupil is allocated a **RADY uplift of 4 or 5 points**. This uplift reflects the average attainment gap on entry to secondary education and is used to:

- Raise curriculum expectations for disadvantaged pupils
- Inform assessment judgements and progress trajectories
- Ensure consistency of ambition across departments

The RADY uplift ensures that staff do not “teach to the deficit”. Teaching to lower starting points alone risks pupils remaining behind their peers throughout Key Stages 3 and 4.

Instead, disadvantaged pupils are expected to make **accelerated progress over time** in order to close historical gaps.

5. Identifying and Closing Gaps After Assessment

Identification of Misconceptions

After each major assessment point:

- Teachers and departments identify **common misconceptions and learning gaps**
- Analysis considers patterns across classes, attainment bands and pupil groups
- Particular attention is paid to disadvantaged pupils and those at risk of falling behind

This process ensures that assessment directly informs teaching and curriculum adaptation.

Strategies for Closing Gaps

Identified gaps are addressed through planned and deliberate strategies, including:

a) Post-Assessment Teaching

Departments may:

- Allocate specific post-assessment lessons
- Re-teach key concepts or methods
- Model correct thinking and responses

b) Ongoing Retrieval and Revisit (DIN – Do It Now)

Gap-closing may also be integrated into everyday practice through:

- Targeted **Do It Now (DIN)** activities
- Retrieval tasks focused on identified weaknesses
- Frequent low-stakes review of previously assessed content

Gap-closing is therefore continuous and embedded, rather than isolated.

Checking That Gaps Have Closed

Departments must ensure that:

- Subsequent assessments include questions or tasks linked to **previously identified misconceptions**
- Teachers evaluate whether gaps have reduced or been eliminated
- Curriculum planning is adapted where gaps persist

This cyclical approach ensures that interventions and teaching responses have clear impact.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment information is reviewed:

- At department level to support curriculum refinement
- By senior leaders to monitor consistency and impact
- As part of ongoing evaluation of disadvantaged pupil outcomes

Leaders consider not only attainment, but whether pupils are:

- Learning what was intended
- Securing knowledge over time

- Making progress that reflects raised expectations

7. Conclusion

This assessment policy ensures that:

- Assessment supports learning rather than driving it
- Expectations are high for all pupils, especially the disadvantaged
- Gaps and misconceptions are systematically identified and addressed
- Teaching remains ambitious, inclusive and responsive

Through this approach, Dormston is committed to improving outcomes for all pupils and ensuring that no group is limited by starting point or circumstance.