



Mortimer



Feedback, assessment and reporting progress at Mortimer: a guide for parents and carers.



Feedback

What is feedback and why is it important?

Feedback fills the gap between what is understood and what needs to be understood. Research suggests that providing feedback is one of the most effective and cost-efficient ways of improving student learning. High quality feedback leads to significant progress over the course of a year.

Effective feedback answers three questions:

1. Where am I going?
2. How am I going?
3. Where to next?

How will my child receive feedback?

Feedback can take different forms: peer, self, group, teacher marking or verbal. Great feedback uses a combination of these, choosing the best form as appropriate to the learning needs.

The more immediate the feedback, the greater the impact. At Mortimer, the majority of feedback and improvements will take place during lessons. This is referred to as 'live feedback'. However, this does not necessarily need to be written or individual – teachers will also give whole class feedback, use visualisers, encourage self and peer- assessment etc. This means that if you look in your child's book, there will not always be obvious evidence that feedback has been given (e.g. the teacher may not have written comments on the work).

In addition to the above, your child will receive quality feedback on at least one formal piece of work per half-term, or once per term for subjects where they only have one lesson per week. All other classwork will not be marked, but teachers will regularly check the quality of the work and presentation.

Will this feedback be the same in every subject?

No. Different subjects have their own individual disciplinary demands, and therefore the feedback your child receives in each of these subjects will be different depending upon the needs of that subject. For example, practical subjects such as PE and Music will make much more use of verbal feedback than subjects like Maths or English where much of the work completed is written.

How can I help?

Parental engagement is of paramount importance in helping students make progress. You could help by discussing the feedback that your child has received and check their understanding of what they need to do to improve. These conversations should be positive and encourage your child to be receptive and open to feedback. They should see it as something to help them improve, rather than perceiving it as a criticism. Finally, you could also provide opportunities at home for students to practice.



Assessment

What is assessment?

Assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning – it is only through assessment that we can find out whether what has happened in the classroom has produced the learning we intended. It helps teachers find out what students know, understand and can do. Assessment is not just tests or exams. It is every question we ask, every task we set and every judgement we make about progress.

What is the purpose of assessment?

Assessment serves two purposes:

1. Provide information to students, teachers and others which helps to evaluate students' learning of our intended curriculum (assessment OF learning);
2. To reinforce learning through repeated retrieval of knowledge, understanding and skills from memory (assessment FOR learning).

How will my child be assessed?

In short, students will be assessed in many different ways. As a school, we carry out baseline testing of Year 7 students to identify areas for development. Individual departments may also carry out their own baseline assessments of students to find out what they do and do not already know.

Formative assessment – this is the ongoing assessment of students that takes place throughout each lesson. Students may not even realise that this is being done, but teachers are finding out what they can and cannot do and are responding to this by adapting their teaching.

Summative assessment – this is used to evaluate performance. This is done via the setting of formal assessments (e.g. exams). There are two progress checks per year, but some departments may do more. These will be cumulative, testing an increasing range of content, not just the most recent work. Summative assessments may not necessarily be exams (e.g. in Design Technology students might make a product).

Is this the same in every subject?

No. Each department will assess students in ways that are most appropriate for that subject. However, the fundamentals of assessment will be the same in every subject (e.g. regular low-stakes quizzes).

How will this assessment be used to support my child?

Assessment will help teachers to identify gaps in students' knowledge and find out what they can and cannot do. These 'actionable meanings' then can be acted on to close gaps and aid progress.

How can I help?

Students should be encouraged to carry out regular retrieval – for example by self-testing. This will help them to embed the learning into their long-term memory. You can also highlight the importance of assessments - such as exams - by ensuring your child prepares adequately to maximise their chances of success.



Monitoring attainment and progress

What is the difference between attainment and progress?

Attainment is a measure of the standards that students reach, often measured in assessment results, usually defined as grades or scores. Progress is about students knowing more, remembering more, and being able to do more. Progress is a measurement of a student's achievements over a period of time.

How is my child's attainment and progress measured?

At Mortimer, the curriculum is the progression model. As your child progresses through Mortimer, the curriculum expands both in terms of size (the amount of knowledge being taught) and depth (the increasing complexity of thinking taking place with this knowledge). If students are learning what the curriculum states they should learn then they are, by definition, making progress.

Subject leaders have thought carefully about what progress looks like in the subjects they are responsible for and have planned their curriculum accordingly.

However, you may also wish to have some form of indication of your child's attainment on their assessments to help understand how well they are doing. For this, departments will set two tests per year, and we will report how well your child has done compared to the cohort average.

At Key Stage 3, your child will be assessed against a series of Curriculum Constructs. These are the end points that we expect students to reach by the end of each stage of their journey through the curriculum. These end points will be used when assessing whether a student has successfully learned the intended curriculum.

At Key Stage 4, progress will be measured against GCSE exam board requirements and the progress students are making towards their potential (target) grades at the end of Year 11. This will be done by using GCSE style assessments to check their understanding.

What happens if my child does not make expected progress?

If your child falls below the required levels of progress, teachers will implement additional intervention to help close gaps. These interventions will vary depending upon the teacher and subject but could include additional in-class support, working with our Learning Support Assistants, small group work and additional support materials etc.

How can I help?

Have regular conversations with your child about their attainment and progress in lessons. Ask them how they are getting on, and what help they need to improve further. High aspirations will lead to better engagement with learning, and therefore better progress. Supporting teachers and your child with their preparations for assessments will be the best help you can give. In addition, encouraging students to engage with any additional intervention strategies will help to close any gaps that arise. Student progress also directly correlates with attendance – missed days at school means missed learning. Therefore, ensuring good attendance at school will help your child to make better progress.



Communicating with parents/carers

How often will I receive reports?

You will receive three reports per year. The timings of these reports are as follows:

- Autumn term. Students in Years 7-10 will receive an Attitude to Learning Report. Year 11 students will receive a Full Progress Report.
- Spring term. Students in Years 7-10 will receive an Interim Progress Report. Year 11 students will receive a Full Progress Report.
- Summer term (Years 7-10 only). This will be a Full Progress Report for all students.

What information will be included on the reports?

All reports will include the following information:

- Attendance
- Academic Effort and Behaviour for Learning. Students will be given a Barrier to Learning if necessary.

In addition, reports will also include the following information:

Key Stage 3 – reports in Spring and Summer will also include a measure of how well your child is doing in lessons. This will include a measure of their performance in their most recent assessment, with a comparison of the year group average, an attainment measure, and a progress measure. This will be explained in more detail when you receive your child's report.

Key Stage 4 (Year 10) – in the Spring term students will be judged on the progress they are making towards their target grade. This will be communicated by the use of a qualitative statement. In the Summer term, they will receive a forecast grade to assist them with their Post-16 applications during the new academic year.

Key Stage 4 (Year 11) – students will be awarded an updated forecast grade. This is to help make a judgement of progress and also to aid students in making Post-16 applications.

How often will I get an opportunity to talk to staff?

It goes without saying that if you ever need to speak to staff, you can contact the school at any time, either by telephone or email. Staff are always happy to discuss your child's progress, behaviour, well-being etc. Likewise, if staff have any praise or concerns regarding your child, then they will contact you at any point throughout the year.

As for formal discussions, you will have the opportunity to speak to staff on two separate occasions. Each year group will also have their own Parents' Evening, where you will have the chance to meet each of your child's subject teachers to discuss their progress and any other issues. Due to the success of the use of SchoolCloud, and the benefits that it brings, the school will continue to use this platform. The exact timing of these events will vary depending upon the year group and more information will be given closer to the time. Each year group will also have a Coffee Morning, held in school. This will allow you to meet with staff in a less formal setting to discuss your child's performance at school. Again, the exact timing will vary.

In the Autumn term, parents of Year 7 students will be able to book an appointment with their child's Form Tutor as part of our Year 7 Settling-in Information Evening. This is to discuss your child's pastoral needs, such as attendance and behaviour etc.