

St. Michael's Primary School

Dunnamanagh



Assessment Policy

Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

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Review Due: June 2022

ASSESSMENT POLICY

St. Michael's Primary School, Dunnamanagh

Introduction

In St. Michael's Primary School we understand that assessment is at the heart of the learning and teaching process. As a school we recognise that teaching and assessment go hand in hand; assessment information will be used to inform the planning process. It is used to not only measure the standard of pupils' work but to improve achievement and how our pupils learn. This in turn allows the school to set meaningful and challenging targets.

The Department of Education's 'Every School a Good School' and the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's Teacher Competences both point to the importance of using assessment effectively to inform and improve teaching and learning.

Definition

Assessment is the process of obtaining and analysing evidence for use by both pupils and teachers to enable the review, planning and improvement of learning. Assessment is at the core of every lesson and is essential in effective classroom practice.

Purpose

- To promote children's self-esteem and self-confidence
- To encourage children's responsibility and appreciation of their own learning
- To enable the school to provide regular and detailed information to parents about their child's progress
- To monitor and evaluate children's progress so that we can effectively improve future teaching and learning
- To enable more meaningful transition from class to class and school to school
- To monitor each child's progress through the Northern Ireland Curriculum

Forms of assessment

Children's skills, knowledge, understanding and approach to learning will be assessed in a range of contexts and for different purposes. Children's contributions will be encouraged and valued within the assessment policy.

Formative Assessment

Assessment for learning helps to identify the next steps needed to make progress. It takes account of pupils' strengths as well as weaknesses. Assessment for learning essentially promotes future learning. It 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 and how best to get there." (Primary Framework, 2007.)

Summative Assessment

Assessment of learning is more associated with judgments based on scores or levels for statutory or summative purposes. Assessment of learning describes and labels past learning. The statutory assessment arrangements require summative assessment judgements to be made about pupil progress at the end of each school year. It allows our school to monitor the progress of individual pupils and to keep parents and pupils informed of both individual and school outcomes.

Diagnostic

All assessments can provide diagnostic evidence; however, certain assessment tools can be particularly useful in providing more detailed data. These outcomes will enable teachers to identify strengths and difficulties pupils may be experiencing and to target help and support in areas where remediation is required to support learning and teaching.

Evaluative

This data is used to identify patterns in progress throughout the school. Evaluative data will be used at a whole-school level, at co-ordinators level and at class teacher level to analyse and evaluate achievement and aims and thus determining school development and action planning. Benchmarking data is used effectively to make comparisons and monitor children's expected progress. Teachers will use evaluative data to identify areas for development and set realistic targets for improving specific pupil outcomes.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

The assessment of pupil's progress is an integral part of the cycle of learning and teaching in every class. Assessment, both formal and informal, contributes to this on-going cycle. Assessment for Learning is fundamentally integrated with learning and teaching. Its core principles of sharing learning intentions, sharing and negotiating success criteria, giving feedback to pupils, effective questioning and encouraging pupils to assess and evaluate their own and other's work will be used and developed to allow pupils, with the guidance of the teacher, to determine what is being learned and to identify what the next steps should be.

Assessment for Learning will enable teachers to evaluate the quality of learning against success criteria and to evaluate the need for further support, reinforcement or extension.

PLANNING for LEARNING, TEACHING and ASSESSMENT

Focusing on learning at the planning stage means:

- Being clear about the learning and teaching objectives in planning and sharing them with the children
- Planning the key focus points for the teaching and the learning and a clear understanding of the success criteria;

- Making sure that the context is designed to enable the learning objective to be fulfilled;
- Being confident to adapt the planning and teaching at any time if the learning objective, based on assessment in the lesson, is not being fulfilled.

Medium-term Planning:

Medium term planning for any subject will provide teachers with a planned route for covering key objectives across half a term or term. When planning the following factors will be considered:

- Analysis of data, test papers, summative outcomes, work scrutiny and discussions with children used to identify whole school curricular targets.
- Whole-school curricular targets layered to year groups.
- Planning needs to be adapted so that each year group is covering statutory requirements of the Assessment of the Cross Curricular Skills.
- Provision of focused teaching to enable children to achieve their individual targets.
- Cross curricular links are made where applicable.

Short-term Planning:

At the short term planning level, the focus will be on the development of AFL strategies and learning. Planning will incorporate activities that will scaffold the learning.

At the beginning of new learning, the teacher will:

- Plan and share the learning intention of the lesson. (We Are Learning to (WALT) or Learning Intention (LI.)
- Plan for and develop success criteria which will provide a framework for a dialogue with the children. What I'm Looking For (WILF) or Success Criteria (SC.)
- These two elements will be made very clear and visual throughout lessons.
- Plan for more effective questioning and encourage greater pupil questioning.
- Plan for more effective feedback - peer and self-assessment as well as teacher assessment.
- Plan for plenary sessions, where children can reflect on their work and feedback and are afforded the opportunity to discuss their learning, to share their understanding and to see mistakes as learning opportunities.

TARGET SETTING & BENCHMARKING

Targets are based on learning intentions. They are informed and identified by analysis of children's work, discussions with children, teacher's assessment information and test performance. They identify whole-school priorities and areas for improvement. Whole-school and year group Literacy targets and Numeracy targets are agreed annually.

- Set whole-school targets in Literacy and Numeracy based upon analysis of benchmarking expectations.
- Set year group targets in Literacy and Numeracy based upon analysis of PTE & PTM results.
- Set differentiated targets for pupils scoring + or – 10 of their CAT4 score.
- Professional dialogue/development at staff meetings provides support and direction including uniformity of practice.
- Teachers identify opportunities to teach the targets set for their year group in their planning.
- Targets are shared with the children, where appropriate.
- Teachers and children review progress against targets. This will be reflected upon in ‘Check-ups’ and end of topic/teaching assessments.
- Co-ordinators analyse whole school performance.

Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria (WALT & WILF)

The feedback children receive about their learning should be specific and should help them to understand how they can reflect on and improve their learning. This provides the focus for feedback from teachers and other children, and for children’s self-evaluation. There are two elements to sharing learning objectives:

- Sharing all the learning intentions across a unit of work as a way of keeping connections clear as the unit progresses. This may include discussing what the children already know at the beginning of a topic, creating mind maps, providing a visual display which is referred to throughout the unit, presenting the unit as a list of questions to be explored.
- Sharing learning intentions and success criteria enables the teacher to focus on the learning rather than the activity. Learning objectives and the success criteria for meeting those objectives are displayed in the classroom as a point of reference for self/peer assessment.

Oral Feedback:

The language used in the classroom reflects the ethos of a learning culture within the school. Teachers and classroom assistants focus on the fact that challenge means that new learning is taking place. Mistakes are treated as opportunities for improvement and focus for support.

Written Feedback:

When appropriate, marking focuses on identifying elements of success and one or two areas to improve. It is specifically linked to the learning objective and success criteria. Children are given time to read feedback and carry out improvements on the piece of work in question. Teacher modelling and whole class marking (where appropriate) are used to train children to identify their own successes and improvement needs, individually or in pairs.

Peer and Self -Assessment:

Peer and self- assessment are important ways in which children are engaged in becoming self-critical and independent learners. Time is built into lessons for reflection in structured ways by means of a plenary.

Marking:

Marking will be consistent, meaningful, informative and positive; providing an indication of a pupil's achievement for both pupil and parent. The marking feedback pupils receive about their learning should be specific and should help them to understand how they can reflect on and improve their learning.

Day-to-Day Assessment Strategies:

Day-to-day assessment involves the teacher focusing on how learning is progressing during the lesson, determining where improvements can be made and identifying the next steps. Strategies employed during the lesson to develop this are:

Questioning: Asking effective questions to assess students starting points in order to be able to adapt the learning to their needs, asking a range of questions from literal to high order, using thinking time and talk partners.

Observing: e.g. watching children and listening to their discussions to assess their learning as it is happening, making planned observations of particular children to support their learning in the classroom. The use of spontaneous observations in Foundation Stage is particularly important.

Discussing: e.g. holding brief impromptu discussions with children to follow up any surprises at their responses during the lesson, discussing misunderstandings or misconceptions, holding informed discussions to follow up on earlier assessments.

- Analysing e.g. marking and assessing written work with children.
- Checking children's understanding e.g. carry out check-up tests.
- Engaging children in reviewing progress e.g. developing self and peer assessment, review lessons during which teachers carry out sustained feedback with individuals or groups of children in order to identify the progress that has been made, targets achieved and to plan future learning.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING:

Assessment of learning is any assessment which summarises where learners are at a given point in time – it provides a snapshot of what has been learned (in terms of both attainment and achievement.)

RECORD KEEPING

Sharing Information:

Each teacher has access to the SIMS Assessment Manager. Each teacher has also access to Assessment, Literacy, Numeracy and ICT folders and pupil files which contain:

- Bench Marking Data
- Standardised Scores
- Tracking Records
- Pupil Reports
- Target setting sheets
- Numeracy and Literacy assessment data from previous years

Formal Tests/Assessments Used:

- P1 – BPVS (Oct and May)
- P2 – BPVS (Oct and May)
- P3 – Single Word Spelling test (SWST), Progress test in Maths (PTM), Progress test in English (PTE), Mental Maths Test
- P4 – CAT 4 Intelligence Test, Single Word Spelling test (SWST), Progress test in Maths (PTM), Progress test in English (PTE), Mental Maths Test
- P5 - Single Word Spelling test (SWST), Progress test in Maths (PTM), Progress test in English (PTE), Mental Maths Test
- P6 – CAT 4 intelligence test, Progress test in Maths (PTM), Progress test in English (PTE), Mental Maths Test
- P7 - Single Word Spelling test (SWST), Progress test in Maths (PTM), Progress test in English (PTE), Mental Maths Test

All data is stored on SIMS ASSESSMENT MANAGER. Staff will have received INSET training in the use of Assessment Manager which enables them to interrogate data, set targets, predict scores, to compare scores with Northern Ireland averages, track progress, identify needs and inform planning.

Informal Testing/Assessment Strategies:

Foundation Stage

Phonics Test

Key Words Test

Spelling Tests

Observations – planned & spontaneous

AFL Strategies

Key Stage 1

Observations – planned & spontaneous

AFL Strategies

End of topic check-ups and assessments

Spelling Tests

Key Stage 2

Observations – planned & spontaneous
AFL Strategies
End of topic check-ups and assessments
Spelling Tests

REPORTING TO PARENTS

According to DENI requirements St. Michael's Primary School provides an annual profile report to parents. This is completed and presented to parents in the summer term by the 30th June. In line with the requirements of legislation, our school reports provide clear and meaningful information for parents about their child's progress.

Each report presents parents with an assessment of their child's progress in relation to:

- Communication (taking account of their achievement in the Language & Literacy area of learning).
- Using Mathematics (taking account of their achievement in the Mathematics and Numeracy area of learning.)
- Using ICT
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
- The Arts
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- Physical Education
- The World Around Us
- Religious Education
- Focus for development
- General Comment

MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

All aspects of assessment are monitored and evaluated on an on-going basis. Support is given in the implementation of assessment procedures through regular INSET and at staff meetings/general discussions. Medium and short term planning, work levelling and work samples are monitored periodically to ensure consistency in assessment procedures.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and up-dated in consultation with the Principal, teaching staff and Governors.