

St. Mary's Primary School



Assessment Policy

Aims of Assessment

Central to the process of assessment is the need to progress the child's learning. It is important that the teacher knows what has been remembered, what skills have been acquired and what concepts have been understood. This enables teachers to reflect on what children are doing and informs their future planning.

At St. Mary's Primary School we believe that the outcomes of assessments will help children become involved in raising their own expectations, celebrating their own achievement and increasing their self-motivation. To this end we use assessment to:

- evaluate levels of learning and provide information on which to base future curriculum planning and resource decisions.
- identify strengths and weaknesses for individual children including children with special educational needs at both ends of the ability spectrum;
- involve pupils in their own learning and target-setting;
- provide each child, the teacher and parents with an indication of achievement and progress in relation to ability;
- benchmark performance and achievement across the school in comparison to national standards;
- set targets for future achievement;
- provide information to ensure continuity when a child changes class or school;
- provide relevant information to other agencies who work with the child;
- fulfil statutory requirements relating to assessment.

Forms of Assessment

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning (AfL) focuses on the learning process rather than the end product and is used to IMPROVE rather than PROVE learning. It is by nature formative.

We use AfL as a tool to improve pupils' learning by:

Promoting an ethos that values the views of pupils

We constantly seek and act on the views of our pupils in many aspects of school life so it is natural that we value the view of our pupils when assessing progress and planning future work.

Sharing learning objectives with pupils

The teacher explains to the pupils what they are trying to learn in the coming lesson or unit of work and these intentions are discussed and displayed for reference throughout the learning.

Helping pupils to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for

Criteria for success is negotiated and agreed with the pupils at the outset so that they understand what is expected of them and how they will know if they have achieved the intended learning. Pupils may be presented with samples of work which meet the criteria to help with this understanding.

Enabling pupils to know what they are learning and how it fits into the bigger picture

Each new area of learning is prefaced with activities to illicit pupils existing knowledge and skills. Learning is constantly linked to previous experiences and is set also in the context of where it will be useful in the future.

Recognising that mistakes are an important part of learning and an opportunity to take learning further so encouraging risk taking

Pupils are encouraged to take risks in their learning, safe in the knowledge that we value the “have-a-go” approach as a means of teasing out learning and clarifying mis-conceptions. We encourage our pupils to believe that it is not wrong to make a mistake but it is wrong not to learn from it.

Involving pupils in peer and self assessment

Pupils are given opportunities to talk about what they have learned, and what they have found difficult, using the learning objectives as a focus. Through reflection on their own work and that of other pupils they reach a greater understanding of their progress and the next steps they need to take for future improvement.

Providing feedback which leads to pupils recognising their next steps and how to take them

Feedback can be both oral and written as appropriate. Feedback is constructive as well as positive, identifying what the pupil has done well, what needs to be done to improve, and how to do it. Pupils are given time to reflect on feedback and respond to it during a lesson.

Promoting confidence that every pupil can improve

Pupils are assured of their potential to improve by identifying small steps to enable them to see their progress, thus every pupil can improve building confidence and self-esteem. They are encouraged to explain and clarify their thinking and reasoning within a secure classroom ethos.

Involving both teacher and pupil in setting targets for future progress

Teachers discuss work with pupils and together they agree targets for future achievement. Pupils are given time to reflect on their progress towards their targets and to identify strengths and weaknesses in their performance.

Assessment for Learning helps pupils to:

- Be involved in and responsible for their own learning;
- Expect to know what they are learning why they are learning it and how they will be expected to do the learning;

- Be able to explain what they are learning and talk about what a successful outcome will look like;
- Spend most of the lesson actively thinking about their learning;
- Use feedback from a peer or teacher to make improvements in their own work;
- Use success criteria to identify successes and next steps in their own work and that of their peers;
- Ask and answer questions about what they are learning;
- Identify an aspect of their work that could become a personal or group target;
- Think, learn and talk about how they learn and what helps them to learn;
- Identify aspects of their work that they find easy or difficult;

Assessment for Learning helps teachers to:

- Focus on clear objectives
- Share learning objectives and make clear criteria for success and what will make good quality work
- Plan for and ask quality questions which will develop and extend learning
- Develop peer and self assessment; by modelling, allowing risks to be taken and developing skills
- Use effective marking and feedback by; relating feedback to success criteria, giving next steps, scrutinising pupils work, changing planning.

Assessment of Learning

Diagnostic - *finding out what attitudes, knowledge, understanding or skills are not properly learned or acquired and therefore preventing pupils making expected progress, and highlighting the areas where pupils are achieving and the particular skills, experiences and aptitudes which lead to success for that pupil.*

The class teacher uses a selection of on-going assessment activities to continually explore a child's learning and progress and to diagnose the causes of difficulties that they may be experiencing.

Where a child is identified as needing support, the teacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) assess that child in more detail to help form a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) to meet their specific needs.

Ultimately, a child who requires support from an outside agency is referred to the Educational Psychologist who carries out an in-depth diagnostic assessment.

Formative - *the information gained "forms" or affects the next learning experience.*

Formative assessment identifies the strengths of the pupil's performance and areas that require improvement and provides the pupil with feedback on their progress during the learning process. The focus is on the needs of individual student, not in terms of pass or fail, but in terms of whether the learning outcome criteria have been met or not. The evidence from formative assessment may be used to adapt teaching in order to meet the learning needs.

Summative - *systematic recording of information which leads towards a summary of where the pupils have reached at a point in time.* This is an essential tool for identifying progress over time.

Summative assessments include:

- Class tests
- Projects
- Book Reports
- Standardised Tests
- End of Key Stage Assessments

Evaluative - *informing the strategic planning and direction of the whole school by evaluating the impact of planning, teaching and the curriculum on pupils' achievements.* All data collected from tests and from teacher assessment is collected and scrutinised at individual, group, class and school level to ensure that the standard of learning and teaching is consistently high. This data is used to benchmark the performance of our school against the levels of attainment of similar schools and to set targets to achieve the highest possible standards.

Marking & Feedback

Marking work and giving feedback to pupils is an essential part of the learning process. By marking and providing feedback to pupils we aim to:

- Improve the quality of pupils' work;
- Assess if a pupil has grasped the teaching point;
- Encourage and increase confidence;
- Give direction to unsatisfactory work;
- Raise standards;
- Provide parents and other interested parties with the necessary feedback.

To ensure that this is useful in progressing the learning of our pupils we have an agreed standard of marking and feedback:

- All written work, both classwork and homework is checked and marked on a regular basis;
- Work is set and marked only against the specific learning objectives, which have been shared and recorded by the pupils, and which may be specific to the lesson, child, group or whole class;
- The teacher actively promotes good practice by constructively highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' work;
- The teacher engages pupils in discussion of oral or written comments about their work and ways of using the comments to improve their work;
- The teacher selects the method of marking and feedback most appropriate to the activity from a range of strategies including:
 - Teacher marks work ;
 - Through discussion with teacher pupil marks own work;

- Oral feedback is given through dialogue with pupil;
- Marking and feedback can be carried out on an individual, group or whole class basis;
- Self assessment and peer assessment where pupils judge their own work or that of others against set criteria and supported by the teacher.

To ensure that pupils accurately interpret marking there is an agreed marking code throughout the school:

- Spelling – wiggly line underneath the mistake;
- Upper/lower case mistakes – forward slash through letter;
- Punctuation – circle
- Not a proper sentence – S circled
- New paragraph necessary - //
- Incorrect calculation – highlight appropriately

Pupils in P4 to P7 correct in blue pen. Teachers correct in red pen.

Standardised Tests

We use a range of Standardised Tests to ensure that our pupils are achieving at the expected standards. These tests are carried out in May of each year. We test achievement in Literacy using Progress in English, progress in Numeracy using Progress in Maths and we test ability using Reasoning Progress tests. The results of these tests are used to:

- track progress of individual children, groups and classes;
- identify pupils and target support at both ends of the ability spectrum;
- set targets for future progress at individual, class and school level;
- benchmark the school against national standards.

End of Key Stage Assessment

★ *Arrangements for end of Key Stage Assessment are currently being reviewed by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA)*

End of Key Stage assessment is carried out in Primary 4 and Primary 7. Pupils are assessed in three areas of learning in English – Talking & Listening, Reading and Writing and in five areas in Mathematics – Processes, Number, Shape & Space, Measure and Handling Data.

Work is judged against Level descriptors where the majority of P4 pupils will achieve Level 2 and P7 expected to achieve Level 4.

Results of End of Key Stage assessments are reported to parents. They are also submitted to the Department of Education. Results of End of Key Stage 2 (P7) are reported to the transfer schools.

Target Setting & Benchmarking

We use the results of standardised tests and of End of Key Stage assessments to judge the performance of our school against that of similar schools using data provided by DENI. As a small school we also consider trends over the previous years and take account of the past achievement of the particular classes.

Once this benchmarking process is complete we use all the information at our disposal to set targets for future achievement. We set targets on an individual as well as class and school basis.

To ensure that our pupils meet the targets we set for them we identify actions and support. Teachers frequently check that pupils are on target throughout the school year.

Record-keeping

Teachers keep a record of work for each pupil and this is passed on as the child progresses through the school. The record of work consists of:

- A baseline assessment record;
- A sample of ICT for each year;
- ICT Skills Record;
- 2 samples of writing for each year;
- Sample of Response to Reading for each year;
- Individual Pupil Reading Profile (Current and previous band)
- A sample each of Number, Measures, Shape & Space & Handling Data for each year;
- All standardised tests for current and previous year.
- All Pupil Profiles

For pupils with Special Educational Needs more detailed records are kept by the SENCO. These records consist of:

- Results of all assessments and tests carried out in school;
- PLPs;
- Record of support provided by the school;
- Annual Reviews;
- Educational Psychology Reports;
- Reports from relevant professionals;

Reporting

Parents receive a verbal report on their child's performance at the annual Parent/Teacher meeting in October.

A written End of Year Report detailing progress is sent to parents annually in June.

Parents of pupils with Special Educational Needs are called also to a half-yearly review in February to report progress and agree a new PLP.

Reports on achievement and progress are sent on request to DENI, NEELB, CCMS and other relevant bodies.

A report on achievement and other relevant data is given to schools when our pupils transfer.

Role of Assessment Co-ordinator

Assessment Coordinator is responsible for:

- Overseeing and monitoring all assessment processes and supporting staff;
- Consistency in assessment procedures across the school through moderation;
- Interrogating the data to support the progress of pupils and co-ordinating the setting and sharing of targets with all staff ;
- An annual review of assessment action plan and setting priorities out for new action plan;
- Ensuring that members of staff are kept fully up-to-date with the legal requirements, developments and research in primary school assessment;
- Liaison with external agencies such as CCEA as necessary;
- Reviewing the schools assessment policy and arrangements.

Review

This Assessment Policy has been prepared in consultation with the full school staff.

Adopted by the Board of Governors of St. Mary's Primary School at a meeting held on 28th June 2022 and reviewed on June 2024.

Signed:



(Chairperson) June 2024

Signed:



(Chairperson) June 2026

Next Review Date: June 2028