



'Growing, loving and learning in the arms of Mary'

Assessment Policy



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Rationale

At St Mary's RC Primary School we believe assessment is fundamental to being able to extend and challenge children's learning so that they can fulfil their potential.

Assessment should be incorporated systematically into teaching strategies in order to assess progress and diagnose any needed developments, whether on an individual, group, class or whole school basis.

Assessment is only effective if there is a regular review, communicated and acted upon at all levels. Our assessment procedures are free from bias, stereotyping and generalisation in respect of gender, class, race and stage on the SEND Code of Practice. However, we do analyse the progress of different groups in order to ensure that we meet individual and group needs.

Aims of the new National Curriculum

Following the announcement, by the Department for Education, of the removal of levels for the attainment and progress of children (2013) and the relaxation of restrictions on centrally led reporting requirements (Department for Education and Gibb, 2015 and Ofsted, 2015), schools have now been given the opportunity to conduct more 'assessment of the right kind', to offer task specific, personalised feedback and to become 'Assessment Professionals' by creating an assessment system that supports the learning of the individual children in their school. (Tim Oates, Chair of the expert panel for NC review).

Ofsted has stated the following:

Ofsted recognises that marking and feedback to pupils, both written and oral, are important aspects of assessment. However, Ofsted does not expect to see any specific frequency, type or volume of marking and feedback; these are for the school to decide through its assessment policy. Marking and feedback should be consistent with that policy, which may cater for different subjects and different age groups of pupils in different ways, in order to be effective and efficient in promoting learning.

Ofsted does not expect performance and pupil-tracking data to be presented in a particular format. Such data should be provided to inspectors in the format that the school would ordinarily use to track and monitor the progress of pupils in that school.

Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning at our school:

- Assessment provides evidence to guide teaching and learning.
- Assessment provides the opportunity for children to demonstrate and review their progress

Assessment is fair

- Assessment is inclusive of all abilities
- Assessment is free from bias towards factors that are not relevant to what the assessment intends to address

Assessment is honest

- Assessment outcomes are used in ways that minimise undesirable effects.
- Assessment outcomes are conveyed in an open, honest and transparent way to assist children with their learning

Assessment is consistent

- Judgements are formed according to common principles
- The results are readily understandable by third parties
- A school's results are compared with other schools, collaboratively, locally and nationally

Assessment is ambitious

- Assessment places achievement in context against nationally standardised criteria and expected standards
- Assessment embodies, through objective criteria, a pathway of progress and development for every child
- Assessment objectives set high expectations for learners

Assessment is appropriate

- The purpose of any assessment process is clearly stated
- Conclusions regarding children's achievement are valid when the assessment method is appropriate (to age, to the task and to the desired feedback information).
- Assessments consistently draw on a wide range of evidence to provide a complete picture of each child's achievement.
- Assessment demands no more procedures or records than are practically required to allow children, their parents and teachers to plan future learning.

Assessment outcomes provide meaningful and understandable information for:

- pupils in developing their learning;
- parents in supporting children with their learning;
- teachers in planning teaching and learning which develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of key concepts to a deep level;
- assessment produces recordable measures which can demonstrate comparison against expected standards and reflect progress over time;
- assessment feedback should inspire greater effort and a belief that, through hard work and practice, more can be achieved.

Objectives

The objectives of assessment in our school are:

- to enable our children to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in their work;
- to help our children recognise the standards to aim for, and to understand what they need to do next to improve their work;
- to allow teachers to plan work that accurately reflects the needs of each child;
- to provide regular information for parents and carers that enables them to support their child's learning;
- to provide the headteacher and governors with information that allows them to make judgements about the effectiveness of the school.

Our Approach to Assessment

- Assessment is integral to high quality teaching and learning. It helps us to ensure that our teaching is appropriate and that learners are making at least expected progress and indeed beyond.
- All staff are regularly supported in our approach to assessment.
- Our staff are continually seeking to develop their formative assessment skills to enable them to make secure judgments as to the progress the children make.

Early Years Learning Journals

Staff in reception and nursery will informally monitor development and keep detailed records in the form of an electronic learning journal called **Tapestry**.

Staff will work with parents to show them how to upload information from home which builds a holistic picture of what our reception children can do.

Foundation Stage Profile

Children continue to be assessed in the early years where staff will add information to an assessment profile for each individual. The team make a summative judgement 3 times a year, based on information they gather from learning journals and small group and individual assessments. This information is based on same three categories as nursery - emerging, developing or securing within the appropriate 'Age and Stage' band for each individual child. Most reception age children are working within the 40-60 month stage. These are kept on an Early Years Foundation Stage tracker. Insights will be shared at parent consultation meetings. Staff will continue to complete a learning journey book of photos and comments. Parents and carers are able to contribute to this document.

Year One Phonics Check

All children in Year 1 will participate in a phonics check. This assessment will be administered by the Year 1 teacher. Results are included within the Year 1 end of term report.

Children who don't meet the required standard in Year 1 are reassessed in Year 2.

National Curriculum Tests

Children in Year 2 and Year 6 are assessed during May. The results of these assessments are reported annually to the parents by the governing body. We now have new standards which the children are expected to meet. In addition, teachers across the school assess regularly and use this information to inform their planning and teaching.

Our method of assessment:

- Assessment serves many purposes, but the main purpose of assessment in our school is to help teachers, parents and children plan their next steps in learning.
- We also use the outcomes of assessment to check and support our teaching standards and help us improve.
- Through working with other schools in our collaborative and across the Local Authority, and using external tests and assessments, we compare our performance with that of other schools.
- In Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science, we assess children against statements which are short, discrete, qualitative and concrete descriptions of what a child is expected to know and be able to do.
- Statements are derived from the school programmes of study and the National Curriculum.

In the summer term 2015 we made the transition from levels to assessing the children using the terminology of:

- Below the National Standard (Working below the age related expectation)
- Towards the National Standard - on track (Growing ability and independence - prompting needed)

- Meeting the National Standard (Child exhibits skills knowledge and understanding independently and the children meet the vast majority of the key objectives of the National Curriculum)
- Working in greater depth within the National Standard (Exhibits skill spontaneously and with confidence)
- For those children developing and meeting the expected standards, he or she will begin on a path of enrichment activities that correspond to and build upon the original objective allowing them to immerse themselves in mastering the current topic, adding real depth of understanding and allowing them to apply their skills.
- Assessment judgements are recorded and backed by a body of evidence created using on-going observations, records of work and testing.
- Termly in-house moderation takes place in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science and RE and assessment judgements are moderated by colleagues in school and by colleagues in other schools across the collaborative and the Local Authority to make sure our assessments are fair, reliable and valid.
- On-going assessment is carried out by teachers both formally and informally during a topic / strands / genre. The results of these formative assessments have a direct impact on the teaching materials and strategies employed immediately following the assessment.
- To ensure that children have ownership of their next steps, differentiated success criteria are used in writing and mathematics, which the pupils use to self-assess and peer-assess against.
- Marking, questioning and feedback given by the teacher is carefully planned and recorded to ensure the child knows how to progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use a variety of strategies to inform them about their pupils' current level of understanding and progress in a lesson.

These strategies may be used at the outset of the lesson, during and within it and at the end of the lesson or topic.

Strategies may include:

- Mini whiteboard work
- Traffic light progress
- Targeted questioning
- Use of random questioning
- Feedback that links to the success criteria
- Talk / Learning partners
- Peer and self-evaluation

The results of assessment for learning are used to adapt and modify teaching to ensure children are challenged and supported in their on-going progress and acquisition of key skills and concepts.

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry to the school in Reception the children will be assessed to provide a baseline for their knowledge and skills.

Baseline assessments will be completed within two weeks after the children have arrived in the school. The results are used to inform planning, set targets and aid the early identification of special needs. Children will be assessed regularly to ensure that the next steps in learning are appropriately planned in order to help children make progress.

Pupils will be assessed using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) which is based on the teacher's ongoing observations and assessments in the following areas:

The prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Each child's developments and achievements are recorded in the Profile on the School Pupil Tracker and in **Tapestry**. In EY these judgements are made against the age specific criteria from Development Matters. In EY there are 17 ELG (Early learning Goal) descriptors, together with a short narrative describing the child's three characteristics of effective learning. For each ELG practitioners must judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of Reception Year (expected), exceeding this level (exceeding) or not yet reaching this level (emerging).

Records and Record Keeping

Teachers use records to review pupils' progress, set appropriate targets for the future and to form the basis of reports to parents. Records are kept in many ways. These include:

- Teacher's planning
- Children's work / books
- Teacher's observations
- Teacher's notes e.g. evaluations on planning

We use the Primary Progress Toolkit to record our assessments for all subjects.

It is important that the children acquire a number of **non negotiables** within the appropriate year group expectations. e.g. in writing, a child may have met all handwriting, spelling and composition and effect and use powerful language but is still unable to use basic punctuation. Therefore, that child has not met year group expectations.

The target for all children who are NOT SEND and so not have a Specific Learning Difficulty will be 'MEETING YEAR GROUP EXPECTATIONS'.

This is regardless of whether they have met the previous year's expectations. We aim to close any achievement gap.

Foundation Subjects

Staff assess pupil's work regularly and at the end of the year make a judgement as to whether a child is meeting, developing or exceeding in relation to the objectives for their year group.

Feedback

- Feedback should follow the school's accepted codes. Feedback is instrumental in ensuring a personalised learning journey for all children is realised.
- Feedback should directly relate to the learning objective and success criteria. Its primary aim is to ensure that a pupil can move forward in their learning and teachers know what the gaps are so that they can be supported in the planning process.
- Time should be given in lessons for the pupils to review and respond to the marking ahead of the next session.
- Feedback can take a variety of forms depending on the intention, age and activity. Our aim is for pupils to have full ownership of their work and be able to identify and review their own next steps (with guidance from the teacher).

Strategies for feedback may include:

- Talking with the teacher and sharing feedback verbally
- Teacher's focused questioning
- Peer marking and editing that directly link to the success criteria
- Pupil questions and comments that link directly to the success criteria
- Pupil review of success criteria
- Teacher in-depth marking and feedback

An appropriate and manageable number of spellings will be corrected. Teachers will make a judgment based on the age and ability of the child. It is important that as a school we promote the Basic Skills in all areas of the curriculum. A pupil's next steps or development points should be commented on in most pieces of work. Children should be given the opportunity to read, comment on and react to any marking. For younger or SEND pupils this may require an adult to talk to them. There are codes to show how feedback is given to the younger children.

Standardisation / Moderation

The process of moderation is an essential part of any assessment system. Teachers are involved in the moderation process to ensure agreement on criteria for making judgements about work in the following ways:

- With colleagues in school
- With colleagues from other schools within the Deanery Partnership
- By attending LA sessions to ensure our judgements are in line with national expectations

Reporting

- Reports promote and provide:
- Good home / school relationships
- Information to parents
- An opportunity for discussion with parents
- In some cases, information with outside agencies
- Targets for the children

A written report for each child is sent to parents once a year at the end of the summer term. The reports are sufficiently personalised to ensure the parents receive a clear picture of their child's progress and attainment.

For children in Reception, Year 1 and at the end of Key Stages 1 & 2 additional information, including the results from national assessments will also be provided.

Parents are invited to attend Parents' Information Meetings at the start of the school year. Teachers share details about the year group's curriculum, homework, trips and routines. Parents are also provided with advice on how they can support their child at home.

Parents are invited to attend formal Parents' Evenings during the autumn and spring terms. Should the need arise; parents are welcome to discuss the progress of their child with the teacher or head teacher at other times.

Target setting and reviewing progress**Our Use of Assessment**

- Teachers use the outcomes of our assessments to summarise and analyse attainment and progress for their children and classes.
- Teachers use this data to plan the learning for every child to ensure they meet or exceed expectations. Teachers and leaders analyse the data across the school to ensure that children

identified as vulnerable or at particular risk in this school are making appropriate progress and that all children are suitably stretched.

- Termly 'Pupil Progress and Review of Learning' meetings are held between the Head Teacher, SLT, subject leaders and all members of teaching staff to discuss particular concerns and as a result targeted intervention groups are planned to support those children 'at risk' of not achieving their targets.
- The information from assessment is communicated to parents and children on a termly basis through a structured conversation at Parents' Evening and a final summer report.
- Parents and children receive rich, qualitative profiles of what has been achieved and indications of what they need to do next.
- We celebrate all achievements across a broad and balanced curriculum, including sport, art and performance, behaviour, and social and emotional development.

Inclusion

St Mary's RC Primary School is an inclusive school and we work hard to meet the needs of all our children. Class teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class. High quality teaching is available to all children, including those with additional needs. We work hard as a school to ensure that all additional support in the classroom is deployed effectively. Where a child is not making the expected progress the class teacher will work alongside the SENDCO, parents and external agencies (where appropriate) to plan tailored support.

We follow the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle to ensure all children are monitored closely and make progress. We use Individual Support Plans, where appropriate, which are reviewed with the child and parents termly.

Mrs Roddy & Mrs Collingwood, SENDCO, is available to provide advice to staff and families. We also maintain a list of children who we monitor closely following any issues or concerns alerted by staff or parents. We do not label any child by so called 'ability'. All children are encouraged to achieve their best and become confident individuals living fulfilling lives. See separate SEND policy for more information.

As we are in a new era of "Assessing without Levels" this policy will be updated further once more work has been done and more information available to us.