

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL
MAGHERAFELT



ASSESSMENT

POLICY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

In Holy Family Primary School we understand that assessment lies fundamentally at the heart of the learning and teaching process. As a school we recognise that teaching and assessment need to be planned as complementary aspects of one activity – assessment information will be used to inform the planning process. We use it not just to measure the standards of our work and pupils work but to enhance achievement and improve how our pupils learn. This in turn allows the school to set meaningful and challenging targets in our School Development Plan.

Assessment is the cornerstone of good learning. It makes a vital contribution to improving educational outcomes for all pupils. 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, analysing and interpreting evidence for use by both pupils and teachers to enable the review, planning and improvement of learning. It is fully integrated with the delivery of the curriculum and is an essential component of effective classroom practice.

Purpose:

- To promote children's self-esteem, their self confidence and their understanding of themselves.
- To develop children's responsibility and appreciation of own learning.
- To enable the school to provide regular and detailed information to parents/guardians about their child's progress and development.
- To monitor and evaluate children's progress so that we can effectively improve future teaching and learning.
- To encourage professional dialogue among staff, thus promoting reflective practice among each individual.
- To enable more meaningful transition from year to year, school to school.
- To monitor each child's progress through the Northern Ireland Curriculum and their acquisition of skills.

FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

The development of our children's skills, knowledge, understanding and approach to learning is central to our work. They will be assessed in a range of contexts, for different purposes. Children's contributions will be encouraged and valued within the assessment policy.

Formative:

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 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 ongoing cycle. Thus 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 daily 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. It may also inspire new directions for learning.

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, their parents and carers;
- 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. Recorded as WALT... “We are learning to”
- Plan for and develop success criteria which will provide a framework for a dialogue with the children. Recorded as WILF.... “What I am looking for.”

These two elements will be made very salient 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 reflection (plenary sessions), to afford pupils 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 and shared with the NEELB.

- Set whole-school targets in Literacy and Numeracy based upon analysis of PIE & PIM results.
- Set year group targets in Literacy and Numeracy based upon analysis of PIE & PIM results.
- Set differentiated targets for pupils scoring less than a standardised score of 90 in both or either Literacy or Numeracy.
- Use NEELB benchmarking statistics to set end of key stage targets for the Cross -Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT.
- In accordance to DENI requirements, children complete end of key stage assessment in Year 4 and Year 7. Data from the analysis of this is utilised to benchmark our performance against schools that have a similar number of children on free school meals (FSM). Analysis of this data also informs planning and target setting for improvement in Literacy and Numeracy.
- 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, if appropriate.
- Teachers and children review progress against targets.
- SMT and Co-ordinators analyse whole school performance.

Sharing Learning Objectives and Success Criteria WALT & WILF

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 or concept 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 on working walls 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 practitioners focus on the fact that challenge means that new learning is taking place. Mistakes are treated as opportunities for improvement and a 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 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. Time is built into lessons for reflection in structured ways.

Marking:

Marking will be 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 (see Marking for Improvement Policy).

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.

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. conducting recall tests, introducing brief review checks that draw upon what has been taught previously.
- 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:

- End of Key Stage target setting & Bench Marking
- Standardised Scores
- Tracking Records including Key Stage Results
- CBA – NILA & NINA
- Pupil Reports
- Pupil Progress summaries
- Assessment & Marking Policies
- Literacy pupil target sheets
- Tracking grids
- Literacy & Numeracy Levels of attainment
- Numeracy Tracking Sheets
- Numeracy and Literacy assessment data from the previous year(s)
CEFR levels for all Newcomer Pupils

At the end of each school year, copies of the completed tracking sheets for Literacy, Numeracy and ICT are maintained.

Formal Tests/Assessments Used:

- Nursery – Baseline Assessment/Record of Progression
- P1 - Baseline Assessment.
- P2 - Baseline Assessment.
- P3 - NRIT, GL online Progress in Maths (PIM), Progress in English (PIE), half term Literacy & Numeracy class test.
- P4 - GL online Progress in Maths (PIM), Progress in English (PIE), half term Literacy & Numeracy class test, assessment of Cross- Curricular skills, ICT Accreditation, CBA – NILA & NINA.
- P5 - GL online Progress in Maths (PIM), Progress in English (PIE), half term Literacy & Numeracy class test, CBA – NILA & NINA.
- P6 - NRIT, GL online Progress in Maths (PIM), Progress in English (PIE), half term Literacy & Numeracy class test, CBA – NILA & NINA.
- P7 - GL online Progress in Maths (PIM), Progress in English (PIE), half term Literacy & Numeracy class test, assessment of Cross- Curricular skills, ICT Accreditation, CBA – NILA & NINA

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

Informal Testing/Assessment Strategies:

NURSERY

Observations – planned & spontaneous
Analysis of learning styles
Group screening for wellbeing and involvement

FOUNDATION STAGE

For Reading Readiness
Phonic Test
Spelling Tests
Observations – planned & spontaneous
AFL Strategies

KEY STAGE 1

Observations – planned & spontaneous
AFL Strategies
Half term tests (P3&P4)
Spelling Tests

KEY STAGE 2

Observations – planned & spontaneous
AFL Strategies
Half term tests
Spelling Tests

REPORTING TO PARENTS

According to DENI requirements (Circular 2009/15) Holy Family Primary School and Nursery Unit 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.

The Nursery Unit uses the Pre-School Transition Record provided by CCEA and presents parents with an assessment of their child's progress in relation to:

Personal Social and Emotional Development
Physical Development and Movement
Language Development
The Arts
Early mathematical Experiences
The World Around Us
Areas for Further Development and Support

The template produced by C2k compatible with SIMS is utilised by P1 to P7 teachers. 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.
- Interests and strengths.
- Focus for development.

Reporting at the End of Key Stage 1 and 2 in the Cross-Curricular Skills are in accordance to Department Regulations and will be revised according to Department guidelines.

Reporting Summative Information at the End of Key Stage 2:

Each Primary 7 child receives a Record of Achievement which in addition to information contained in the annual profile report, includes the following information:

- Any qualification, award or certificate gained by a pupil,
- Brief particulars of any school societies, clubs or activities in which the pupil was involved, including at another school; and
- Any positions of responsibility held by the pupil in the school or any of the above school clubs or activities.

MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

All aspects of assessment are monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis. Support is given in the implementation of assessment procedures through regular INSET and individual consultations. 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.