

# ASSESSMENT POLICY & RECORD KEEPING

January 2019



## Mossgrove Primary School

‘Learning, Caring, Achieving’

This policy was agreed in September 2017, and amended in January 2019. All added amendments are highlighted throughout the policy.

<b>Agree Date</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Full Review</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
September 2017	<b>January 2019</b>	September 2020	A Wenlock

## **Introduction**

Mossgrove Primary School and Nursery Unit understands assessment to lie at the heart of the learning and teaching process. As a school we recognise that teaching and assessment are complementary aspects of one activity – assessment data being used to inform the planning process. Such data is used to measure the standards of our performance and that of the pupils, and also to improve achievement and pupils’ learning. Furthermore, this in turn permits the setting of 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.

‘Research, together with the outcomes of inspection, indicates that there is an acknowledged set of characteristics for successful schools... the use of available information and assessment and other data to focus on outcomes and promote improvement... the effective use of available information and assessment data to focus on the quality of outcomes and promote improvement.’ (Every School a Good School, p19)

## **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.

## **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to give a clear outline of the valued assessment techniques applied at Mossgrove Primary School in informing planning, tracking pupil progress and raising standards.

## **Objectives**

Good assessment practice in our school will:

- Raise standards of attainment and behaviour, and improve pupil attitudes and response.
- Enable the active involvement of pupils in their own learning by providing effective feedback which closes the gap between present performance and future standards required.
- Promote pupil self-esteem through a shared understanding of the learning processes and the routes to improvement.
- Guide and support the teacher as planner, provider and evaluator.
- Enable the teacher to adjust teaching, to take account of assessment information and to focus on how pupils learn.
- Draw upon as wide a range of evidence as possible using a variety of assessment activities.
- Track pupil performance and in particular identify those pupils at risk of underachievement.
- Provide information which can be used by teachers and the Principal as they plan for individual pupils and cohorts.
- Provide information which can be used by parents or carers to understand their pupils' strengths, weaknesses and progress.
- Provide information which can be used by other interested parties
- Provide information which can be used to evaluate Mossgrove's performance against its own previous attainment over time and against Northern Ireland standards.

## **Forms of Assessment**

The development of our children's skills, knowledge, understanding and approach to learning is central to our work. Children are assessed in a range of contexts, and for different (but complementary) purposes. Children's contributions are 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 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.

### ***Summative***

Assessment **of** learning is associated with judgments of achievement 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 (particularly in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT). 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 (AFL)**

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.

## ***Purposes***

Assessment for learning will:

- Provide insight into pupils' learning for both pupils and teachers.
- Promote success for all.
- Support the target-setting process.
- Enable continuous reflection on what pupils know now and what they need to know next.
- Measure what is valued.
- Promotes immediate intervention and link judgements to learning intentions.
- Raise standards by taking pupils to the 'edges of their capability'.

## ***Implications for teaching***

The teacher will:

- Provide continuous oral and written feedback which identifies strengths and the next step for improvement.
- Promote pupil involvement in self-assessment.
- Act on insights gained to inform curricular targets.

- Plan against what children know/can do/understand.
- Make standards and objectives explicit to pupils.
- Promote inclusion by attending to all pupils' learning needs, particularly for pupils who are at risk of underachievement.
- Engage pupils in rich questioning allowing 'wait' time (time to think).
- Build in time for focused observation of teacher-directed and child-initiated activity.

### ***Impact on learning and the learner***

The pupil will:

- Know what to do to improve.
- Know what standards are required.
- Know what has been achieved against known success criteria and what to do next.
- Gain confidence, motivation and self-esteem as a learner.
- Increase their awareness and understanding of their own learning style(s) and of how they learn best.
- Improve their own self-evaluation skills.
- Make progress **in their 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 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 a two monthly period. When planning, the following factors will be considered:

- ⇒ Analysis of data, test papers, summative outcomes, work scrutiny and discussions with previous teachers/parents used to identify whole school curricular targets.
- ⇒ Whole-school curricular targets layered to year groups.
- ⇒ Planning needs to cover statutory requirements of the Assessment of the Cross Curricular Skills.
- ⇒ Provision of focused teaching to enable children to achieve their individual targets.
- ⇒ Meaningful 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. 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.

*\*Teachers have the freedom to make each lesson's learning clear in ways appropriate to them. For example, some teachers prefer to record a WALT... "We are learning to"... in the children's books, whereas others prefer to display the learning on a learning board. Regardless, children will know the expected learning for each lesson.\**

- ⇒ Plan for and develop success criteria which will provide a framework for a dialogue with the children. Recorded as WILF.... "What I'm looking for."

These two elements will be made very salient and visual throughout lessons.

An emphasis will be on planning 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.

### **Sharing Learning Objectives**

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**

**\*A separate marking policy has been identified as a school need which Mr Wenlock has agreed to address with the staff by September 2019.\***

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.

### **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.

### ***Purposes***

Assessment of learning will:

- Provide a summary judgement about what has been learned at a specific point in time
- Establish benchmarks about what children can do and about school performance
- Show what pupils can do without support
- Inform the target setting process
- Promote subsequent intervention(s)

### ***Implications for teaching***

The teacher will:

- Provide a periodic summary through teacher assessment and tests
- Identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding

- Identify weaknesses in the taught curriculum and in specific areas of learning through analysis of performance which guide future planning
- Implement strategies to accelerate progress to meet expectations (narrowing the gap)
- Mark and measure against scores and levels

### ***Impact on learning and the learner***

The pupil will:

- Be able to gauge own performance in comparison to others and against previous performance
- Be able to measure own performance against externally agreed criteria and standards
- Have a measure of performance at specific milestones in life
- Know what standards and expectations are required

### **Record Keeping**

Each teacher has access to the SIMS data recording sheets. Each teacher has also access to Assessment, Literacy, Numeracy and ICT data and an assessment and tracking file(s) which contain:

- ⇒ End of Key Stage target setting & Bench Marking
- ⇒ Standardised Scores (Progress Tests in Maths and English)
- ⇒ Tracking Data including Key Stage Results
- ⇒ Pupil Reports
- ⇒ Assessment & Record Keeping Policy
- ⇒ Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT Levels of Progression
- ⇒ Numeracy and Literacy assessment data from the previous year(s)

- ⇒ Parent feedback sheets sent home with each child's written work in Literacy and Numeracy prior to Parent – Teacher Meetings.

## Nursery

- ⇒ Nursery baseline
- ⇒ Observations – planned & spontaneous

**\*Mr Wenlock will liaise with Mrs Elliott (Nursery), Mrs Gillespie (P1 and Head of Foundation Stage), Miss Smyth (P2), Mrs Poots (P2/3) and Mrs Wilson (P2/3) to establish sound baselining data at Nursery / Foundation Stage). These will be reported in this policy's review date.\***

## Foundation Stage

- ⇒ Running Records
- ⇒ Key Words (1<sup>st</sup> 100 and 2<sup>nd</sup> 100 Words)
- ⇒ Spelling Tests
- ⇒ Observations – planned & spontaneous
- ⇒ AFL Strategies

## Key Stage 1

- ⇒ Planned Assessment Opportunities (Using Mathematics, Communication and Using ICT)
- ⇒ AFL Strategies
- ⇒ CAT4
- ⇒ PTE and PTM Standardised Scores

## Key Stage 2

- ⇒ Planned Assessment Opportunities (Using Mathematics, Communication and Using ICT)
- ⇒ AFL Strategies
- ⇒ CAT4
- ⇒ PTE and PTM Standardised Scores

### **Baseline Assessment**

Although Baseline Assessment in Foundation Stage is considered by our Foundation Stage teachers as a valued means of assessing the starting point for individual children as they begin formal education at Mossgrove PS. It also assists teachers in the establishment of good relations between teacher, child and parents.

#### ***Main purposes of Baseline Assessment are to:***

- Identify the children's strengths and individual learning needs
- Enable programmes of learning to be planned which will meet the children's needs
- Provide information that will inform parents about their child's skills and competences on entry to school

Baseline Assessment involves formally recording the P1 children's strengths and needs observed during normal classroom activity during the first 2 months of the new year. Moreover, on-going assessments (AfL) are made by observing the children in normal planned classroom activities and in other everyday school situations throughout the school year. Children are observed as they work on their own, play, participate in group situations and relate to adults. Initial Baseline Assessment may be added to, amended or simply confirmed Observations and records are kept of children's skills and competences in all Learning Areas.

Observations data is shared and discussed with the parents during parent-teacher interviews. They are also used as a means to plan effective teaching and learning opportunities for the individual needs within the Primary One class. Finally, they provide

evidence for end of year reporting, levelling and passing information onto the next class teacher.

### **Observation**

Play Based Learning is a fundamental element of the Foundation Stage curriculum. On a daily basis, children are given the opportunity to engage in a wide range of practical and exploratory experiences to promote learning in all of the Learning Areas. We value the importance of observing the children during Play Based Learning experiences and through teacher-led observations we aim to build an overall picture of each individual child. These regular observations provide us with information on all aspects of the child's development from social, emotional, physical and intellectual. Observations are used to evaluate, review and shape future planning. Children are observed in different situations including playing as individuals, in pairs or in groups.

### **Why do we assess through play?**

- It is a natural means of expression for most children
- It provides a natural and appealing setting or learning
- It allows children to experience a wide number of emotions and situations
- It is child initiated and is a child maintained activity
- It is a key tool for learning as it is natural to children
- It is flexible and should not be intrusive to the child's pre-school experience
- It helps adults to understand how children approach tasks thereby offering ways of improving their learning

A variety of methods of recording is used according to the teaching style and needs of each class. Observation notes will be made and may be focused and/or spontaneous. These are recorded for each child under each Area of Learning. This information is used to inform future planning for whole class, groups and individual needs.

Observations are also made and recorded as necessary throughout the day during other areas of the curriculum and during informal social interactions. All observations assist in building a bigger picture of individual children.

## **Standardised Testing**

*P3 - P7*

Standardised Tests are administered throughout the school year in Mathematics and English: ***Progress Test in English and Progress Test in Maths.***

### **Assessing the Cross Curricular Skills:**

Statutory assessment of the Cross-Curricular Skills (Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT) at Key Stages 1 and 2 will take the form of teacher assessment / teacher judgement judged against the statutory requirements in all 3 Cross Curricular Skills. Internal standardisation and external moderation by CCEA play an important role in sharpening and improving whole-school judgements with regards the Levels of Progression. Assessment results for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are reported to CCEA and to parents.

### ***Foundation Stage***

There is no statutory obligation to assess the Cross-Curricular Skills with reference to the Levels of Progression in Foundation Stage. In Mossgrove PS observations help transition to more formal summative assessment from P3 onwards (see above). Primary 1 and 2 do make summative judgements about their pupils' competence in the Cross-Curricular Skills thus starting the formal process of tracking pupil progress.

### ***Primary 3, 5 and 6***

Teachers make summative judgements based upon normal classwork and judged against the statutory requirements. Assessment of pupil achievements in the Cross-Curricular Skills is made using the Levels of Progression.

### ***Primary 4 and 7***

At the end of each Key Stage summative judgements about the level each pupil has achieved in each Cross-Curricular Skill are recorded and reported to parents/guardians in pupil reports at the end of Years 4 and 7 and to DE via CCEA. Judgements are supported by our internal processes of tracking individual pupil progress and collaboration with all involved staff.

Reporting of pupil progress to parents/carers will reference an overall level as well as referencing the Levels of Progression statements. Assessment and reporting on each Area of Learning – Language and Literacy and Mathematics and Numeracy is included within Communication and Using Mathematics.

### **Internal Standardisation**

Internal standardisation will take place once in a school year, and often parallels the area external moderation chosen by CCEA for the school, such as Using ICT, or a major area of school development, such as writing. Every effort will be made through these meetings to ensure that assessment standards, as presented by CCEA, have been applied consistently and accurately. In this way, samples required for external moderation will be an accurate reflection of assessment judgements and standards within the school. Teachers from all year groups will be involved in collaborative discussions about standards and progression within the school. Conducted by the Assessment Coordinator, these meetings will:

- Use exemplification material provided by CCEA to ensure a common understanding of the standards
- Seek to confirm the assessment judgements of P3-P7 teachers as evidenced in the Pupil Portfolios.
- Support the P4 and P7 teachers in levelling a submission of evidence to CCEA for external moderation purposes.

### **External Moderation**

External moderation is the natural next step to confirm internal standardisation. In 2016-17 Mossgrove PS's assessment judgements in Using Mathematics were confirmed by CCEA moderators. In 2018-19 the school has been selected to participate in external moderation in Communication. It is our intention to engage in this process short of submission due to ongoing industrial action.

### **Records and Record Keeping**

Teachers use records to review pupil's progress, set appropriate targets for the future and to form the basis of reports. All formal assessment results (CAT4, PTE, PTM and Levels of



Progression) are recorded onto the school's SIMS database. In order to summarise all evidence of achievement, grades and levels across the curricular subjects, are issued from P3 upwards. This information is carefully monitored by the Principal and subject co-ordinators.

### **Target Setting and reviewing progress**

Target setting fits into the annual cycle of school review, planning and action. Specific developments in target setting are found in the annual School Development Plan.

*Tracking* is used to identify patterns of progress of different children as they pass through the school. The evidence from Pupil Profiles, formal assessment scores, grades and end of Key Stage Levels are analysed to monitor children's expected progress. This data is used to identify patterns in progress throughout the school. Performance of 'target groups' of children is monitored and referenced in teacher planners.

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. We will:

- ⇒ Set whole-school targets in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT Action Plans.
- ⇒ Set differentiated targets for pupils identified as performing significantly behind their peers in both or either Literacy or Numeracy. This analysis is tracked comparing CAT4 and PTE/PTM data.
- ⇒ 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
- ⇒ SLT and Co-ordinators analyse whole school performance.

### **Reporting**

Reporting not only fulfils legal requirements but it also plays an important part of the school's relationship with parents and the wider community. Reporting is a whole school process and all staff work to communicate with relevant audiences serving to support and promote children's learning.

### ***Report to Parents***

- Annual interviews for parents to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher
- Annual Pupil Profile to parents on their child's achievements with a further opportunity to discuss the contents
- Numeracy and Literacy books are sent home for parental comments
- P7 issue a 'Record of Achievement' containing end of Key Stage levels in English and Maths in June
- Children share achievements through the school's web site, facebook page and school newsletter which is sent out to all parents
- Discussion with parents is facilitated by an effective home/school liaison policy, where every effort is made to accommodate parents' requests for meetings with staff at the earliest opportunity.

### ***Reporting to Governors***

- Mrs Sinton and Mr Wenlock report to Governors
- Staff holding management positions may report to Governors regarding their areas of expertise.

### ***Reporting to Outside Agencies***

- End of Key Stage levels are sent to CCEA for analysis against similar schools in Northern Ireland
- An annual portfolio of effectively levelled work in Communication, Using Mathematics or Using ICT is sent to CCEA to ensure consistency in the interpretation and applications of Levels of Progression throughout Mossgrove Primary School.

- Where appropriate staff may be asked to report about the achievement of certain pupils to outside agencies such as reviews, case conferences and other such private matters when requested by the Principal.
- The children's achievements and events and items of interest may be reported on the school's web site and occasionally in the local press. Photographs are only used with parental permission.

### **Role of the Assessment Co-ordinator**

- Formulate the school's assessment policy in consultation with the principal, staff and governors
- Review the policy regularly in the light of statutory requirements and the needs of the school
- Provide support and guidance with assessment and keep up to date with current information
- Resource school with relevant tests and update assessment cycle
- Highlight pupils who have made no progress or are working below expectations
- Analyse results to identify attainment and progress made by pupils
- Report to governors regarding the policy, statutory test results and cohort targets
- Monitor with subject co-ordinators, changes made by teachers to formal assessment

### **Reporting to Parents**

Parent feedback sheets sent home with each child's written work in Literacy and Numeracy prior to Parent – Teacher Meetings.

Parents will receive a formal written report in the summer term summarising their child's progress over the academic year.

Reports are sent home to parents a minimum of three days before the end of the summer term. This will allow parents time to arrange interviews with members of staff to discuss the report if they so wish.