



Ballymacward Primary School

Assessment for Learning Policy

Rationale

Assessment for learning is the process of identifying what the learner has or has not achieved in order to plan the next steps in the teaching and learning. It involves using assessment in the classroom to raise pupils' achievement and is based on the idea that pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim.

Purpose and Principles

All children's work must be assessed in a sensitive and thoughtful way and must be relevant and appropriate to the age, stage of development and progress of the children. A consistent approach throughout the school is important to help children in their learning.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to identify and value the child's achievements;
- to help 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's future learning;
- to provide regular information for parents that enables them to support their child's learning;
- to provide the head teacher and governors with information that allows them to make judgements about the effectiveness of the school.

Types of Assessment

At Ballymacward Primary School we recognise and use four forms of assessment:

- **Formative assessment** is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures used by teachers during the learning process so they can modify teaching and learning activities to improve pupil attainment.
- **Summative assessment** comes at the end of a learning sequence and is used to acknowledge, record and report on pupils' overall achievement at a given point.
- **Diagnostic assessment** is used to identify individual strengths, areas for improvement and to inform next steps.
- **Evaluative assessment** is concerned with the overarching performance of arrangements in a department, school or system.

Assessment and the Northern Ireland Curriculum

We assess pupils with regard to the Northern Ireland Curriculum. This includes the Areas of Learning, Cross-Curricular Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. Reference to assessment for learning specific to these areas / skills is made in corresponding curriculum policies.

Cross-Curricular Skills *Statutory Assessment*

Communication
Using Mathematics
Using ICT

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

Managing Information
Thinking, Problem-Solving
and Decision-Making
Being Creative
Working with Others
Self-Management

The Areas of Learning

Language and Literacy
Mathematics and Numeracy
The Arts
The World Around Us
Personal Development and
Mutual Understanding
Physical Development and
Movement/Education
(Religious Education)



Key Characteristics of Assessment for learning

- Clear planning as a result of assessment
- Sharing learning intentions
- Clear success criteria - written or verbal
- Using consistent feedback and marking strategies
- Pupil self assessment and peer self assessment
- Using effective questioning
- Target setting

Planning and Assessment

We use our school's long term plan to guide our teaching. This plan provides details of what is taught to each year group. Teacher's planning is informed by the assessments they carry out and these are important for:

- Identification of intervention groups
- Succinct summative hand over records.
- Discussion with receiving teachers at the point of transition.

School assessment and tracking systems indicate the progress made term on term and year to year and times when there has been rapid improvement and other times when a plateau of learning has occurred. Teachers' planning includes assessment opportunities and ideas for assessment based on the age of the children, the area of learning, the module of work and the time of year.

Learning Intentions / Success Criteria

We plan our lessons with clear learning intentions. We base these upon the teacher's detailed knowledge of each child. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's ability. Our plans clearly state the learning intentions.

Teachers always share the lesson's learning intention with the children as the lesson begins. This takes the form of 'We Are Learning To' (WALT). Teachers also indicate the success criteria, which are linked directly to the learning intention, against which the work will be judged (WILF 'What I'm Looking For) and these are normally generated in discussion with the children. The level of detail varies in ways appropriate to the age of the pupils, their abilities and the area of learning.

Success criteria may be

- written in a pupils book - copied or stuck in
- in a visual form on a teacher's whiteboard/working wall
- a verbal explanation to a class/group/individual

The success criteria indicate the skills, concepts and knowledge it is hoped the pupils will acquire as a result of the lesson. At the end of each lesson, a plenary session is held. This is an opportunity to round off and summarise the lesson and to underline what has been accomplished. It helps pupils to focus on the most important rather than the most recent points they have learned and the progress they have made. It refocuses pupils on the success criteria that have featured in the lesson. It is also a time to look back and look forward and to relate work in the lesson to other work. For the teacher, the plenary is an opportunity to assess learning and to plan ahead accordingly.

Marking for Improvement and Other Forms of Feedback

This section of the Assessment for Learning Policy makes explicit how teachers mark children's work and provide feedback. It also helps to promote consistent standards of marking among all staff at Ballymacward P.S. All members of staff are expected to be familiar with the marking process and to apply it consistently.

Marking for improvement is a vital part of raising pupil achievement. Purposeful feedback encourages children to focus on improving their work as recommended by the teacher's comments. Comments on presentation also encourage children take pride in how their work is laid out and presented.

Constructive feedback to children relates to the learning intentions of the lesson / task and its success criteria. It focuses on celebrating their successes, whilst also sign posting ways to make improvements. This enables children to become reflective learners and helps them to close the gap between what they can currently do and what we would like them to be able to do.

- Marking indicates teacher satisfaction and expectations (positive reinforcement).
- Marking indicates strengths and weaknesses (diagnostic) and how the child can improve performance.
- Marking is an effective way of keeping the child focused on agreed targets and encourages self and peer-assessment and self-correction.
- Marking demonstrates the value and respect teachers have toward children’s efforts.
- Marking provides an indication to parents about their child’s progress.
- Marking focuses attention on how well children have accomplished the learning intention for each lesson.

At Ballymacward Primary School we have agreed upon the following approaches to marking:

- Strategies to be used:
 - ‘**Tickled Pink**’ and ‘**Green for Growth,**’ whereby successful elements of the WILF are highlighted in **PINK** and areas that fall short are highlighted in **GREEN**.
 - A tick for a correct answer and a dot for an incorrect answer,
 - Comment-only marking which provides prompts for improvement.
 - Written feedback does not always need to be given as verbal feedback is also useful in all Key Stages, especially Foundation and Key Stage One.
- Marking needs to be completed regularly, kept up-to-date and promptly returned to pupils.
- Pupils need to understand marking codes, the criteria for marking and the written comments.
- The amount of marking should be manageable for teachers. We are aiming for quality not quantity, so not all pieces of marked work may not receive a written comment.

Marking codes which may be used:

	ICON			ICON
Spelling Mistake	Sp		Self -Assessed	SA
Grammar	G		Peer- Assessed	PA
Punctuation	P		Oral/Verbal Feedback given	OF
New paragraph needed	NP in margin		One to one adult support	Ⓐ
Something missing	^		Tickled Pink	
Smiley faces			Green for Growth	

Feedback enables pupils to understand the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated in their work. Marking or oral feedback explains what the next steps should be.

Characteristics of effective feedback:

- Feedback is most effective when it confirms that pupils are on the right track and when it stimulates correction or improvement of a piece of work.
- Suggestions for improvement should act as 'scaffolding', i.e. pupils should only be given as much help as they need. They should not be given the complete solution as soon as they get stuck and should learn to think things through for themselves. Pupils make achievements by building on previous performance.

- Pupils should be helped to find alternative solutions if repeating an explanation leads to failure.
- Feedback on progress over a number of attempts is more effective than feedback on one attempt treated in isolation.
- The quality of dialogue in feedback is important - oral feedback can be as effective as written feedback.
- Children are encouraged to take risks with their learning and to see errors as on a positive light as a step on the road to successful learning.
- Teachers and support staff will support children to admit problems without risk to self-esteem.

We believe that verbal feedback to pupils is very important. We usually do this when the children are working during the lesson, although we sometimes give feedback on a particular lesson at the beginning of the next one. This verbal feedback informs the child how well they have done, confirms if they are on the right track and encourages them to make an improvement. Teachers give pupils suggestions as guidance but they recognise that pupils gain most when they think things through for themselves.

When lesson time does not allow for verbal feedback, we write comments on the children's work during marking. Quite often we write something that is useful to both parents and teachers and we relate our comments to the learning objective for the lesson, making it clear whether the objective has been met. If we consider that the objective has not been met, we would indicate what could be done next time in order for the child to meet the learning objective.

We allow time for the children to absorb any comments written on their work, to answer any questions written on it by the teacher, and also to ask any questions of their own. There may also be improvements they can work on during this time. We do this in order to ensure that the time our teachers spend on marking really has an impact. We believe that learning is maximised when children enter into a dialogue about their work.

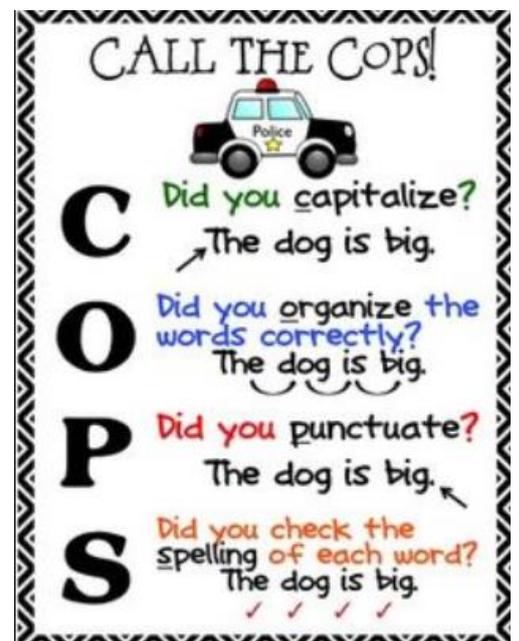
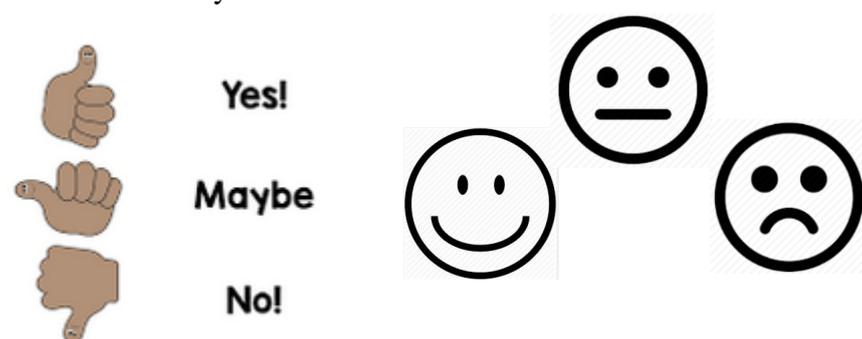
Self Assessment (SA) and Peer Assessment (PA)

All teachers use self and peer assessment across the curriculum areas and, over time, pupils will gain experience and skill at checking their own work, or a fellow pupil's, against a lesson's success criteria (WILF).. Having children assess their own or each other's work can be very effective because it enables them to clarify their ideas on progressing to the next level.

Assessing other pupils' responses to the task can help pupils gain a clearer understanding of the assessment criteria in relation to their own performance. However, this must be carefully managed to avoid unhelpful comparisons. Looking at different responses may be used to help pupils understand the different approaches they could have taken to a task.

For written tasks, and in addition to the success criteria specific to a lesson, the children use the 'COPS' mnemonic which is displayed in each classroom, when self-assessing and peer assessing.

Pupils may also indicate their level of confidence in a topic by using thumbs or smiley faces.



Using Effective Questioning

Teachers ask well-phrased questions and analyse pupils' responses to find out what they know, understand and can do, and to reveal their misconceptions.

Teachers may:

- use questions to find out what pupils know, understand and can do;
- analyse pupils' responses and their questions in order to find out what they know, understand and can do;
- use questions to find out what pupils' specific misconceptions are in order to target teaching more effectively;
- use pupils' questions to assess understanding.

Consideration of how a question is phrased will be based on:

- the age of pupil/cohort of children
- the thought processes pupils need to go through
- the language demands made on pupils
- the extent to which pupils reveal their understanding
- the number of questions needed to make an assessment of pupils' current understanding.

Types of questions may include;

- how can we be sure that...?
- what is the same and what is different about...?
- is it ever/always true/false that...?
- how do you...?
- how would you explain...?
- what does that tell us about...?
- what is wrong with...?
- why is...true?

Target Setting

Each pupil will, in conjunction with the teacher, agree set targets relating to specific areas where knowledge and skills can realistically be improved. Pupils will be encouraged to guide their own learning, with the teacher providing help where appropriate.

Targets may also be set for group or class improvements or as part of a whole school improvement focus.

Targets will be generated with regard to class work, PIE & PIM, NILA & NINA, NNRIT and teacher-generated assessments

Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are created for pupil at Stages 1 – 5 of the SEN Code of Practice.

SMART targets are set and input is given by the teacher, SENCO, classroom assistant, pupil and parents.

Recording and Evidence

Records of children's achievements are made in the following way:

Maths and English are assessed on an annual basis in May using the NFER PIE (Progress in English) and PIM (Progress in Mathematics) assessments that are appropriate to each year group (P2 – P7). This data is analysed with the aid of SIMS Assessment Manager and the SEELB Spreadsheets.

The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) is used in P.2.

The New Group Reading Test (NGRIT) is used in P.3 and P.6, as is the New Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT).

NILA (Literacy) and NINA (Numeracy) computer-based assessment continues to be in a pilot phase and is carried out in September each year in P.4 – P.7. Diagnostic information is used in planning and target setting and is reported to parents in face to face interviews during the first term.

End of Key Stage One (Year 4) and Key Stage Two (Year 7) formal assessments are carried out*.

IEP's are completed regularly for children who have specific learning or behavioural needs.

Reporting to Parents

We have a range of strategies that keep parents fully informed of their child's progress in school. We encourage parents to contact the class teacher if they have concerns about any aspect of their child's work.

At the start of each year, the class teachers will provide parents with a long term curriculum plan that identifies the main areas of study for that particular class. This normally coincides with the Curriculum Evening.

At Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2 we offer parents the opportunity to meet their child's teacher, by appointment on Tuesday afternoons between 3pm and 4pm and we provide a written report in the final term.

At the end of October, parent - teacher meetings are held for all pupils.

During the summer term we give all parents a written report of their child's progress and achievements during the year. We write individual comments about attainment in the Areas of Learning, Cross Curricular Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and parents have the opportunity to question us about the reports. Reports for pupils in Year 4 and Year 7 include levels achieved at the end of key stages*.

Transfer and Transition

Between schools

On transfer, present legislation requires that up-to-date records are sent to the receiving school within 15 days of the pupil ceasing to be registered at the old school, or within 15 days of receiving a request from the new school.

To secondary school

In addition to transfer during the school year, the transfer of information to Post Primary Schools consists of the information contained in the Common Transfer File (CTF): Basic Details (Next of kin, address, etc), SEN Information, Attendance, Free School Meals History, Looked After information (if relevant), School History, and Assessment Data. A copy of the P.7 Pupil Profile Report is also available to Post Primary Schools and we welcome the opportunity to discuss the needs of transferring pupils with Post Primary staff.

From class to class

From class to class we transfer: English and Maths Assessment data for the whole class, a copy of the latest written report, samples of work and IEP's for that cohort of children.

Using Assessment for Learning Information

The Language & Literacy and Mathematics & Numeracy Co-ordinators use the data from PIE & PIM, NILA & NINA, NNRIT and teacher-generated assessments to look at, evaluate and identify any areas for improvement to ensure that all children across the whole school are on track to meet their end of Key Stage predicted results*. The Assessment Co-ordinator and the Principal will analyse these results and liaise with the Area of Learning co-ordinators to identify any areas for improvement.

Pupils are also tracked using the C2k SIMS system which is helpful in relating pupils' Literacy and Numeracy outcomes (PIE & PIM) to a measure of their intellectual ability (NNRIT). This is key in identifying not only the low and high achievers, but also those children who may be underachieving and who require specific interventions.

Managing and Monitoring Assessment for Learning

The Class Teacher will:

- Discuss pupil progress with previous teacher and use information for planning/tracking.
- Plan with clear learning objectives and success criteria involving pupils.
- Use assessment information to inform and evaluate planning.
- Provide effective feedback for pupils – dialogue/written comments.
- Actively involve pupils in their learning (peer and self-assessment).
- Analyse test outcomes to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Agree targets for improvement with individual pupils.
- Involve other adults, e.g. classroom assistant or volunteer helper, in gathering evidence for achievement.
- Carry out school based and/or statutory tests/tasks.
- Track pupil progress throughout the year using PIE & PIM, NILA & NINA, NNRIT and teacher-generated assessments.
- Record significant progress.
- Use agreed range of assessment methods and techniques to gather and use information in line with the school's policies.
- Ensure information is transferred to the next teacher/school.
- Identify pupils in need of support and develop IEP's where appropriate.
- Liaise with Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).
- Report to parents/carers – pupil progress, attainment, next steps.

The Assessment Co-ordinator will:

- Ensure that statutory requirements are met.
- Ensure that policies are up to date and regularly reviewed.
- Ensure that methods and procedures are clear to all co-ordinators and that they are followed and used consistently.
- Ensure systems for recording assessment outcomes are manageable.
- Support colleagues.
- Provide staff development opportunities and inform staff of new CCEA / DE developments.
- Generate an action plan, as necessary, in line with the School Development Plan
- Link with other co-ordinators and senior managers to ensure coherence.
- Set timetables clearly describing range of events and activities associated with the assessment cycle.
- Determine means of agreeing standards throughout the school (liaising with co-ordinators).
- Support colleagues in identifying assessment opportunities and in using assessment information.
- Collate and evaluate assessment – teacher assessment to inform the setting of school targets.
- Monitor and evaluate assessment procedures and practices.
- Report to the Governing Body.

The Principal will ensure:

- The school meets statutory requirements.
- Statutory targets are agreed (whole school).
- Information is disseminated to Assessment for Learning co-ordinator.
- Implementation of assessment is reviewed.
- Effective tracking systems are in place.
- Data is monitored and analysed to identify trends.
- Assessment priorities are included in the school development plan.
- Quality of procedures/practices are monitored.
- Roles and responsibilities of co-ordinators are defined.
- Response to specific staff development issues.
- Reports are sent to parents and governors on standards and quality.

Evaluation and Review of Assessment for Learning as part of School Improvement

Continued Professional Development

The development and improvement of assessment is one of our school priorities as outlined in the School Development Plan. The principles of Assessment for Learning are continually being embedded and adapted to ensure they are appropriate for this school.

Careful and rigorous analysis of all assessment data and its application to teaching and learning is an essential ingredient in raising standards and this is highlighted in our School Development Plan.

The Assessment for Learning Policy is a working document and will be reviewed annually and as deemed appropriate.

** End of Key Stage Assessment is not currently being carried out due to concerns about its fitness for purpose. A teaching union directive boycotting the arrangements is currently in place. The governors are aware of this and have accepted the situation, subject to review.*

Links to Assessment for Learning on the CCEA website:

- <http://ccea.org.uk/training>
- http://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/assessment/guidance_on_assessment_primary.pdf
- http://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/assessment/assessing_cross_curricular_skills/fs_nonstat_guidance_learning-teaching-assessment.pdf
- http://ccea.org.uk/curriculum/sen_inclusion/assessment/q_skills
- http://ccea.org.uk/curriculum/assess_progress/statutory_arrangements/assessment_arrangements/key_stages_1_and_2
- http://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/assess_progress/assessment_arrangements/KS1_2/Assessment_Arrangements_KS1_2_2016-17.pdf

Ratified by the Governing body on 7 May 2015

Reviewed and amended in October 2016.