



Nettlesworth Primary School ASSESSMENT POLICY

The Purposes and Principles of Assessment

The overriding principle of good assessment is that it should be clearly tied to its intended purpose. There are three main forms of assessment: in-school formative assessment, which is used by teachers to evaluate pupils' knowledge and understanding on a day-to-day basis and to tailor teaching accordingly; in-school summative assessment, which enables schools to evaluate how much a pupil has learned at the end of a teaching period; and nationally standardised summative assessment, which is used by the Government to hold schools to account. Good formative assessment ranges from the probing question put to a pupil as they think something through; quick recap questions at the opening of a lesson; scrutiny of the natural work of pupils; right through to formal tests, (Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015).

Assessment without Levels

Following the introduction of a new National Curriculum framework from September 2014, the government has decided to remove level descriptors.

'From September 2015, national curriculum levels will no longer be used for statutory assessments', (Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015).

With levels removed and the focus now on raising the achievement of every pupil, Nettlesworth Primary School has chosen a new way to measure pupil attainment and progress.

During the academic year 2015-16, the school will adopt new assessment descriptors as they are released by the Department for Education (DfE), except in nursery and reception where assessments are not changing in school or nationally.

"Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by evaluating the extent to which the school's engagement with parents, carers and employers helps them to understand how children and learners are doing in relation to the standards expected and what they need to do to improve."

OfSTED Handbook, 2015.

Why are we Assessing Pupils?

For parents:

When effectively communicated by teachers, in-school formative assessments provide parents with a broad picture of where their children's strengths and weaknesses lie and what they need to do to improve. This reinforces the partnership between parents and schools in supporting children's education.

For teachers:

In-school formative assessment should be an integral part of teaching and learning. It allows teachers to understand pupil performance on a continuing basis. It enables teachers to identify when pupils are struggling, when they have consolidated learning and when they are ready to progress. In this way, it supports teachers to provide appropriate support or extension as necessary. It also enables teachers to evaluate their own teaching of particular topics or concepts and to plan future lessons accordingly.

For school leaders:

In-school formative assessment provides a level of assurance for school leaders. If school leaders are confident their staff is carrying out effective formative assessment, they can be assured that problems will be identified at the individual level and that every child will be appropriately supported to make progress and meet expectations.

For the Government:

The Commission believes that the Government should not intervene at the level of formative assessment, which should serve the needs of pupils and teachers.

For OfSTED:

Ofsted will want to be assured that teachers are making effective use of formative assessment to support teaching and learning. It forms part of OfSTED's wider judgements about the quality of teaching in schools, 'Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015'.

Our new assessment system

The old and new curriculums have different subject content. Many of the objectives in the old curriculum have shifted to lower year groups in the new, more challenging curriculum - this means it is not possible to compare the new curriculum to the old levels system. It requires a new assessment system to be used from years 1 to 6.

The principles that underpin our new assessment system are:

- • -Every child can achieve - teachers and staff at Nettlesworth Primary School work on the philosophy of, 'What do I need to do next to enable a child in my class to achieve?'
- • -The new National Curriculum objectives will be used as the expectations for all children.
- • -Children will be expected to make age appropriate progress. More than this will be seen as outstanding progress and less will be below expected.
- • -Some formal tests will be used to gauge the level children are working at, but there will be a reliance on seeing progress 'in books' across an academic year.

Our assessment and reporting system includes:

- • - Ongoing assessment by the class teacher throughout each lesson, through effective questioning, observation and dialogue.
- • - Children knowing what they are being asked to learn and more importantly, why.
- • - Success criteria that are discussed and agreed with, or formulated by the children

during each lesson, the work is then assessed against the success criteria.

- • - Clear feedback, with identified next steps – this could be written or verbal feedback, always bearing in mind that the most effective feedback is verbal and during a lesson (where teachers intervene throughout a lesson).
- • - Regular scrutiny of the pupils' work by senior leaders as well as discussions with children.

All of the above will feed into our half-termly assessments of the children in our school. Children will need to be secure in non-negotiable objectives for reading, writing and maths. From here we will decide on a pupil's individual stage and set them challenging targets for the following term.

Good Practice for Pupil Feedback

Pupils should be given high quality feedback to support and involve them properly in their learning. The Commission recognises that engaging pupils with significant learning difficulties in feedback can sometimes be more challenging. Approaches that encourage self-assessment and self-reflection need to be adequately adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils, including for those who use alternative or augmentative methods of communication, 'Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015'.

Mastery and the New National Curriculum

The new national curriculum is premised on mastery, as something which every child can aspire to and every teacher should promote. It is about deep, secure learning for all, with extension of able students (more things on the same topic) rather than acceleration (rapidly moving on to new content), 'Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015'.

Good Practice example of Mastery

In mathematics lessons, teachers can assess mastery through formative questions that focus on the different aspects of the concept being assessed. The questions can be used to uncover a pupil's reasoning behind the answers. It can sometimes be helpful for teachers to focus on the wrong answers, which can be used to explore the concept in greater depth and to identify and address any misconceptions, 'Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015'.

Tracking Progress over Time

Nettlesworth Primary School will continue to use summative assessment processes based on tests, but this will be in partnership with teachers'

judgements for pupils in their class. Progress will first and foremost be shown in books and our new assessment protocols will reflect this.

The new curriculum sets out clearly what is expected from children in a particular year group – this is our starting point. For various reasons, we as a school, have decided to adopt the words 'age related expectations', so that children will be working on particular age related expectations (ARE) in Reading, Writing, EPGS (English, Punctuation, Grammar and Spelling), as well as Mathematics throughout the year. These ARE refer to the corresponding year group in the new national curriculum. A child working at ARE for Year 2 is accessing the Year 2 curriculum, a child working at ARE for Year 5 is working within the Year 5 curriculum, and so on.

Within the ARE for each year group, we have further broken these down into four discrete sections, we will call stages:

- • - Emerging
- • - Developing
- • - Secure
- • - Mastery

The assessment given will reflect these four stages, so that a child may be at an 'emerging' stage in reading for Year 1, showing that they are currently accessing the Year 1 curriculum but at a very early stage. A child working at 'secure' stage for reading in Year 1 is also working within the Year 1 curriculum but they are at a stage which is the standard level we would like all year one children to be working at by the end of the year. To keep expectations high it has been decided that no pupil can achieve the standard level within their year group unless they are secure in the objectives.

Assessment should be inclusive of all abilities. It should be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of children and young people's special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention, (Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015).

Some children will be working below their ARE; this is only to be expected as children develop at different times. These children may be accessing the ARE below, so a Year 5 pupil may be accessing learning from the Year 4 curriculum showing that they are working a year behind ARE. These pupils may be identified as having special educational needs (SEN) if they continue to work below ARE for their year group after the transitional period from levels to assessment without levels.

High expectations should apply equally to pupils with SEN and disabilities as to all other pupils. However, this should account for the amount of effort the pupil puts in as well as the outcomes achieved. Assessment methods may need to be adapted for some pupils with SEN and disabilities, for example by using visual stimuli and alternative means of communication, (Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015).

Key Objectives

Each year group has its own set of objectives.

To achieve the standard stage in a year group a child must have met all of the key objectives. For children working below ARE (eg if a Year 4 pupil is accessing the ARE for Year 3) they must be rapidly taught the key objectives and then advanced to the next year group expectations as quickly as possible. By doing so Nettlesworth Primary School is promoting rapid progress and setting high expectations for all its pupils.

More Able Children

For children who have securely met the end of year objectives they will be assessed as exceeding or have a deep understanding of the objectives for their age group. Rather than moving onto the next year's curriculum these children will work on 'deepening' their knowledge through the application of skills in different contexts. In exceptional circumstances a pupil may access learning from the next year group's objectives.

Early Years - Reception

Children in Reception will continue to be assessed against the prime and specific areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile.

Assessments will be based on observation of daily activities and events. At the end of Reception for each early learning goal, teachers will judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the Reception year:

- • - Emerging, not yet reached the expected level of development
- • - Expected
- • - Exceeding, beyond the expected level of development for their age

Reporting to Parents

We will continue to report, at least termly, to parents via a 'Pupil Progress Report'. This will tell parents whether their child is working at a below, emerging, developing, secure exceeding or deep level within a particular year group/ARE.

Discussions at parent, teacher consultation meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms will be based on the stage a child is working at. An end of year report to parents for all pupils will refer to the stage a child is at within a particular year group.

Assessment Collection Periods

As a school we will collect baseline data for Early Years pupils during their first six weeks at school. Data collected for Nursery and Reception each September is submitted to EExBa, Early Excellence Baseline which is accredited by the DfE. Judgements are also made according to 'development matters' which identifies whether children enter school in line with ARE. Further assessments are made termly and progress is measured from each individual child's starting points as children progress through the developmental age bands.

Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 will complete short tests (half-termly initially) alongside on-going assessments in class. Pupils will be at the heart of their own assessments; they will be able to offer insights into their own learning and respond to teacher feedback.

The assessment information will be analysed and used to carefully plan the next steps in a pupil's learning journey. Quick interventions, good questioning and other strategies will be used to identify misconceptions and help pupil's catch-up.

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:

- Teachers' plans
- Children's books
- Teachers' notes eg significant outcomes
- Co-hort Tracking - half termly analysis reading, writing, maths ,EPGS, Science and PE
- Pupil progress meeting records that includes a review of children in cohort tracking

Targets for Pupils

Pupil improvement targets

Teachers provide children with improvement targets:

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- EPGS – English, Punctuation, Grammar and Spelling
- Science

These should be reviewed, as required, with new targets being set following the review. Some teachers may give a group of pupils the same improvement target. Others may decide that everyone has individual targets. Pupils need to be aware of exactly what their targets are. As far as possible, pupils should be involved in this review process. Nettlesworth Primary School has its own bank of targets which are frequently reviewed.

Reminding Pupils, Parents and Teachers of a Pupil's Target

When parents engage with their children's education, achievement levels rise. If there was any doubt, recent research has shown that parental engagement is a decisive factor in determining learner achievement at any age, but the younger the children are the more impact this has. What really matters is that learners feel their parents are paying attention, engaged in the child's learning and care about their performance.