

ST NICHOLAS CE (VA) JMI SCHOOL

POLICY FOR ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

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GENERAL STATEMENT

“....Promoting children’s learning is a principal aim of schools. Assessment lies at the heart of this process. It can provide a framework in which educational objectives may be set and pupils’ progress charted and expressed. It can yield a basis for planning the next educational steps in response to children’s needs By facilitating the dialogue between teachers, it can enhance professional skills and help the school as a whole to strengthen learning across the curriculum and throughout the age range.”

“Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Pupils’ Achievements in Hertfordshire Schools” (1990)

Assessment is an important link in the cycle of planned curricular experiences. Recording achievement in a positive way and identifying children’s particular strengths and weaknesses through sensitive assessment helps to ensure that progress is maintained and that continuity is enhanced.

It is important that all those involved in the education of young people have a clear set of principles to use as a yardstick against which to evaluate activities and plans for all children. This policy aims to provide such yardstick for St Nicholas School.

Assessment is a continually evolving process and needs to be viewed from several perspectives:

The learner’s perspective.

Children need to know:

- what is expected of them;
- short term, achievable targets;
- to feel involved and valued;
- to have their achievements recognised.

The school’s perspective

The school needs:

- to plan for assessment;
- to integrate, where possible, assessment and curricular planning;
- to set up recognisable and universally applied assessment procedures;
- to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information to parents and children.

Parent’s perspective

Parents need:

- to feel involved in and informed about their children’s progress;
- to feel confident in the procedures established by the school.

These perspectives are now overlaid with statutory obligations on assessment and reporting.

With these perspectives in mind, policy needs to differentiate between Assessment, Recording and Reporting and to outline procedures for ensuring that the requirements of each are met.

DEFINITIONS

The basic aim of assessment is to promote pupils' learning. Assessment takes place within the context of educational aims and philosophy and thus should reflect the aims school. Considerable amounts of jargon exist in this area and it is worth defining some common terms as a starting point:-

Assessment is an all-embracing term and refers to any of the situations in which some aspect of pupil's education is, in some sense, measured, whether this measurement is by a teacher, an examiner or indeed the pupil himself or herself. Broadly speaking, assessment is concerned with how well the pupil has done, what has been achieved, and whether it is was worth doing in the first place.

Assessment is often equated with tests and examinations - this is misleading since neither is essential to assessment.

A test is a particular situation set up for the purpose of making an assessment e.g. SATs.

An examination is simply a large-scale test.

Assessment can be either formative or summative.

Formative assessment is integral with learning, and takes place throughout learning. It provides "feedback" i.e. whether learning objectives are being reached. It is diagnostic, giving information on areas of weakness, also on strengths and potential. For pupils, it is a form of attention and encouragement, and an important ingredient of motivation. The more immediate the feedback, the more useful the information. It is important in the shaping of future learning experience.

Summative assessment is concerned with the final summing up. The judgements it makes are also for the benefit of people other than the learner. Usually the concern is to differentiate between pupils, so that selection can be made. It usually comes at the end of a course - but it is less to do with timing, more to do with the intention of the assessor. The danger is that the assessment tail may wag the curriculum dog: that summative assessments may determine rather than reflect the nature and methodology of the curriculum.

Comparisons and standards - This form of assessment is undertaken where the interest is in outcomes and standards. Comparisons may be within a class group, year group or nation-wide.

Norm-referenced assessment is where children are compared with what are understood to be the norms of performance for that age group.

Criterion referenced assessment is a comparison between the pupil's performance and criteria. For example National Curriculum Attainment Targets are based upon criterion referencing pupil performance.

PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

Assessment

Assessment occurs when judgements are made about achievement in relation to relevant criteria. It is an integral part of teaching and learning and is primarily used in a formative way to promote better learning.

Assessment should fulfil four main aims:

- to assist and support the pupil's learning;
- to assist pupil and teacher to identify strengths and weaknesses;
- to assist staff in evaluating their teaching and teaching programmes;
- to provide information about progress and achievement of individual pupils for themselves, parents, staff and any other interested parties.

Assessment of each pupil's learning should reflect the full range of activities in which the pupil is engaged (i.e. all curricular and extra-curricular activities engaged in by the pupil).

Where appropriate, assessment should be based on criteria which are known in advance to pupils and other interested parties. For this reason, assessment should be built into curriculum planning. However, we should not ignore the possibility of unexpected outcomes from exploratory learning situations being followed through, as this can enrich the child's experience and the quality of the curriculum greatly.

Assessment should take into account the differing needs of individual children including bilingualism and S.E.N.

Regular constructive discussion should take place between children and staff to review progress and identify strengths and weaknesses. The development of self-assessment activities should be fostered where possible to encourage each child's greater responsibility for his/her own learning. This is in line with the stated aims of the school.

Recording

Evidence of attainment needs to be retained in order to support judgements made and to inform future planning and learning. Through such a system continuity and progression can be assured. A high degree of trust and confidence is necessary between staff, children and parents for such a system to operate openly and well and we should aim to build on this at all times.

The recording of assessment outcomes should be constructive, should highlight positive achievement and give guidance for future development.

Formative records should be open and accessible to all staff and parents of individual pupils.

All pupils are entitled to their own formative record of progress which reflects all their achievements, both in and beyond school. Such a record may involve achievements identified by the child her/himself.

Reporting

Regular reporting of pupils achievements is both a right of individual pupils and parents and a statutory obligation. Such reports should be based upon on-going formative records.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Under the arrangements of the Education Reform Act, there are certain obligations relating to assessment, record keeping and reporting which have been laid down in statutory orders:

ASSESSMENT must be criterion-referenced and related to prescribed attainment targets.

RECORDS must be kept for each individual child on:

- academic achievements
- other skills and abilities
- individual progress

REPORTS must be made annually on all core and foundation subjects and, at the end of Key Stages, must include the results of Standard Assessment Tasks and Teacher Assessment where required.

Statutory orders on Reporting and published are available in school. These are updated from time to time and all staff should be familiar with them.

The school will comply with all minimum requirements laid down in statute referring to Assessment, Recording and Reporting.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

Procedures for the organisation and management of Assessment, Recording and Reporting at St. Nicholas School will be as follows:-

Baseline Assessment

It is important that staff have a sound understanding of a child's achievements and abilities when the child enters school. Such information will come from various sources, dependent upon the stage at which the child is admitted to school. Baseline assessments should be used to inform the initial planning of the child's curriculum and to assist in his/her swift integration into the new environment.

Entry to Nursery: Information will be obtained by home visits made by the nursery teacher. Such information will be transposed onto the NURSERY RECORD (see appendix A). Current practice also includes the use of the Hertfordshire Trial Baseline model in the Nursery during the child's first half term in Nursery, which is moderated through cluster meetings of school's arranged by the Herts Assessment team.

Entry to Reception: The Nursery Record and Nursery Baseline Assessment will be completed and passed to reception teacher who will use it as an baseline assessment for that child. This record will be retained in the child's record folder. During the child's first half term in the Reception Class, the

child will be assessed using the Hertfordshire Trial Baseline model which in turn will be moderated through the cluster moderation arrangement organised by the Herts Assessment Team.

This should enable staff to determine, with considerable accuracy, what a child can do and understands on entry to compulsory education.

Entry into Reception (not from Nursery) to Year 6: In line with statutory requirements a child's current records will be sought from his/her previous school and will serve as a baseline assessment to inform staff of his/her achievements and abilities.

Accurate baseline assessment on entry enables the school to:
 monitor the "value added" element in each child's education when summative assessment is undertaken at the end of the next key stage;
 set suitably challenging, but attainable targets for each year group/ individual.

Evidence of Achievement

As a child progresses through the school, it is important that appropriate evidence is available to confirm and inform assessment. Such evidence may come from a variety of sources:

Teacher 's observations of children:

We regard observation as extremely important. Staff should bear in mind the following points:-

- teachers should stand back and observe as often as possible;
- observation should be undertaken with specific objective in mind;
- both set tasks and free play-investigative situations should be observed;
- observation can at times be either passive or interactive - i.e. discussions of observations with children;
- use may be made of video or still camera where appropriate;
- we should aim to observe each child over a period of time engaged in:-
 - individual work;
 - small group/interactive situations;
 - whole class situations;
 - interaction with adults;
 - structured and unstructured activity;
 - situations covering a variety of curriculum activities.
- Such observations might result in written records. These may be kept as teacher's own informal records or entered as evidence in the child's National Curriculum Record Booklet;
- such observations are an integral part of improving our real understanding of each child's strengths, weaknesses and capabilities and should assist in planning for each child's future educational needs;
- school management policy should allow for frequent INSET in this important area. Such INSET might include paired observation and subsequent discussion and the provision of non-contact time for such activities.

Profiles of Children's work:

Each child should have a profile of their work which should be stored in their personal file which is kept in A3 hanging folders in their classroom. Such profiles should be added to an updated at will.

In the maintenance of these profiles, the following guide-lines should be adhered to:

- All examples of work should be dated and annotated where possible. A specimen proforma is given in Appendix B which may be completed and attached to each piece of work detailing date, level assessed and context within which work was completed;
- each child's portfolio should contain evidence of at least one piece of recent work relating to each core curriculum area and of foundation areas where appropriate;
- evidence may be a child's actual end-product, a photocopy or a photograph;
- as work in the profile is superseded and replaced, the original work should be offered to the child for their retention, including photographic evidence. Cameras, one of which automatically dates the photograph, are available in the main stock cupboard;
- work in the profile should as far as possible reflect the child's current level of achievement. It should be replaced when work of a significantly higher level in any area has been completed;
- the choice of evidence to be included in the profile should become increasingly a joint one between child and teacher as the child matures;
- on transfer to another primary school, the current profile should be transferred with other records;
- at the end of a child's primary schooling, the child's work in the profile should become the property of the child.

National Curriculum Record Books

The school has its own National Curriculum Record Booklet, which holds the teacher's latest assessment of the child's achievement when measured against National Curriculum Level Descriptions in the following areas of learning:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Design and Technology
- Information Technology
- History
- Geography

End of Key Stage Level Descriptors have been adapted for similar use in:

- Art
- Music
- PE

Assessment criteria have been adapted from the Hertfordshire Guidelines for the assessment of RE.

Each child's folder should contain the national Curriculum record booklet which should be updated and annotated on a regular basis, **BUT AT THE VERY LEAST TWICE PER YEAR.**

Where a child is judged to have achieved a level, the appropriate box should be dated and initialled by the member of staff concerned.

School portfolios of work

Assessing levels of attainment from children's work is not an easy task and requires practice and expertise in matching criteria against specific skills and understanding as evidenced in the work of individual children. With this in mind it is helpful, and, indeed, a reflection of good practice, for co-ordinators to build up their own portfolios of examples of children's work at different levels within their area of curriculum responsibility.

"The task of establishing consistent and accurate standards within a school is a very important part of managing the National Curriculum but it becomes devalued unless a similar exercise is conducted between schools".

Croner: Head's Bulletin

The above quotation illustrates the importance of the building of such portfolios. These should be compiled as the result of extensive agreement trailing amongst staff within school, staff in other schools and across phases.

Where possible, management policy at St. Nicholas will aim to facilities such agreement trailing on a regular basis.

Summative Assessment

Such assessments take the form of annual reports to parents. Such reports should, as concisely but informatively as possible, encapsulate the formative assessment materials as gathered by means outlined above.

Annual reports to parents.

It is a legal requirements that parents receive a written report at lease annually detailing the progress of each child in the national curriculum subjects plus RE General comments should also be made about the child's general progress and any other achievements both within and in addition to the Curriculum. All relevant personnel should be encouraged to contribute to these reports.

Such reports need to contain Teacher Assessment and Test levels achieved at the end of KS1 and KS2 according to current statutory requirements. Each report must also detail the number of unauthorised absences since the last reports.

At St Nicholas, annual reports are prepared and presented through the *Key Solutions Curriculum Manager* computer package. Each member of staff will check the comment banks available for their year group annually and agree any necessary changes with the Assessment Co-ordinator and the headteacher. Staff should add a personal, hand-written comment at the end of the report. A detailed profile of the child's attendance record, generated from the *SIMS Attendance School Management Module* will be attached to each child's report.

Reports will be distributed to parents in early July and staff will make themselves available to discuss the child's report at the parents' request. Parents are invited to make written comments about the reports on a separate slip to be returned to school for retention.

A copy of each child's report will be retained by the school in the child's report will be retained by the school in the child's file.

On Transfer to Secondary School

The agreed contents of the child's profile, all summative assessment materials, including National Curriculum Assessment results at Key Stages 1 and 2 and copies of past reports to parents are to be passed on to secondary schools. It is a statutory requirements that such documents should reach the child's new school within 15 working days of any request. It is our policy to sent **all** of the child's formative data to the new school **as well as** the summative reports required by statute.

Meetings between the Year 6 teacher and staff responsible for Year 7 at the various secondary schools are arranged during the summer term and children also meet the relevant secondary staff. At these meetings discussions centre around children's achievements and early decisions are made about setting and tutor groupings.

End of Key Stage Teacher Assessment and SATs

Given the school's commitment to the close link between Assessment and high quality curriculum planning it is important that when SATs are administered, they are done so with the least amount of disruption to the curriculum as possible. Such activities should reflect the developing Curriculum and not be the driving force behind it. All staff (including support staff) should, where possible, be involved in End of Key Stage Assessment, whether it be by assisting within the classroom on a support basis, or involvement in agreement trailing.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation of the Assessment policy is the responsibility of the Assessment Co-ordinator who is responsible to the Headteacher and the Governors for the development of Assessment throughout the school. This is to be achieved in a variety of ways:

- regular discussions with staff concerning progress of groups and individuals;
- ensuring that assessment opportunities are built into planning across the school;
- regular classroom observation and working alongside colleagues to help identify strengths and weaknesses and to provide support to individual staff as appropriate;
- reviewing of assessment outcomes and data to evaluate overall standards throughout the school;

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to legal requirements