

St Joseph's Primary School

Assessment Policy

September 2016



"Assessment which is explicitly designed to promote learning is the simple, most powerful tool we have for both raising standards and empowering lifelong learners."

Vision Statement

'A school at the heart of the community. Community at the heart of the school'

Mission Statement

St Joseph's Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring, happy and stimulating environment for each and every one of the children in our care. We set very high yet realistic expectations for all our pupils and we encourage them to work hard and achieve their full potential.

Our parents are key partners in laying the foundations for future learning in our school. As a Catholic school the Board of Governors and Staff are firmly committed to promoting the spiritual, moral, academic, social, physical, and aesthetic development of all our children.

School Aims We aim to:

develop and strengthen each pupil's understanding and love of Catholic values by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;

create a safe, enjoyable learning environment, in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;

implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;

help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;

value, respect and nurture every child in our care;

encourage pupils to respect themselves and others and to support and care for one another;

equip our children with the necessary life skills to enable them to participate in a fast changing society; and

involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school and in the development of the children in our care.

Assessment

Traditionally assessment has been thought of as an end product, which is separate from the learning and teaching process. This, however, is only one type of assessment.

This is assessment of learning or summative assessment. It takes place after the learning and tells us what has been achieved.

In St Joseph's Primary School, summative assessments are used regularly, to provide information for teachers, pupils and parents about what has been learned. The results of summative assessments are used to inform future planning.

Traditional assessment methods and Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches are not contradictory practices. The use of AfL in the classroom does not mean we will suddenly stop marking pupils' work; summative assessment will always have a place in our school. Instead, they are complementary approaches, as the use of AfL can help pupils to perform better in school.

Key elements

- A focus on the learning (clarity about and sharing of learning intentions and what counts as success);
- Effective questioning (significance of questioning to improve learning);
- Formative feedback (feedback that moves learning forward);and
- Scaffolding reflection (developing self-critical, reflective learners).

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go next and how best to get there. Assessment for Learning is also known as formative assessment and it happens at various stages throughout the lesson in an informal, positive and constructive manner to ensure continuous self-improvement.

Through appropriate assessment for learning strategies being employed in our daily classroom practice we aim to ensure

- Pupils are more confident and more willing and able to talk about their learning.
- Teachers are more tuned into pupils' learning needs and that they are developing a greater understanding of learning and teaching based on authentic evidence.

This includes:

Sharing Learning Intentions and agreeing Success Criteria - The children will understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them;

Effective questioning - The children will engage with the teacher in high quality questioning sessions and discussions, which will lead to deeper learning;

Quality feedback - The children are given feedback about the quality of their work and what they can do to make it better based on specific Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.

Self and peer assessment - The children are able to recognise success in their own and others' work.

Assessment for Learning (AfL) focuses on the learning process rather than the end product and attempts not to prove learning, but rather to improve it. It is formative assessment. It is a way for us to take stock during the learning process and can help to inform us of how the learning is progressing.

In St Joseph's Primary School we have developed the following aspects of Assessment for Learning:

- Effective Questioning;
- Sharing Learning Intentions;
- Sharing Success Criteria;
- Formative Feedback
- Peer and Self Assessment.

- Pupils' Traffic Light cards to gauge understanding (P3-P7)

Strategies like compiling and using a 'stuck board' can be useful. These provide support so that pupils "know what to do when they don't know what to do" (*Piaget*).

All teachers will use 'Tickled Pink- Green for Growth' to mark for improvement. This was agreed upon by all teaching staff, during a Book Monitoring Session which focused on Marking for Improvement (May 2016).

The teacher's role when assessing pupils' work is to engage with them to: value, influence, inform, challenge, scaffold

As part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, teachers will make use of Assessment for Learning to increase pupils' motivation and confidence and to raise achievement.

Purposes of Assessment

To monitor progress.

To facilitate realistic target setting.

To assist planning by informing the teacher of what a child can already do;
assess prior learning

To indicate learning successes and identify weaknesses.

Summative Assessment

This is the formal testing of what has been learned in order to produce marks, grades or assessment results, which will be used to inform future planning. It helps to ensure continuity and progression across year groups and key stages. It helps teachers to monitor children's rates of progress.

It allows the teacher to review the range of attainments of children at different stages.

Summative Assessment

- Baseline Literacy assessment- Vernon word spelling test and Salford reading test September P3-P7
- Use of Salford Reading test termly to track progress P3-P7
- Sight vocab test of HFWs in Foundation stage
- Revised version of baseline assessment for P1 (October)
- Marie Clay Observation Survey (Canberra Word Test and Letter Identification)
- Number recognition and counting assessment
- Letter and sound recognition assessment

- Reading Running Records throughout the year to ensure texts are suitably challenging and suited to individual pupils/groups of pupils.
- PERA/GL PHaB 2 Phonological assessment P2/P3
- Mental Maths assessment
- NNRIT Assessment P3/P5/P6 January
- NILA / NINA Assessments P4-P7 Autumn Term
- PTM/PTE administered annually for all P3-P7 pupils in May
- Weekly Spelling and Mental Maths assessments
- Monthly Maths assessments P2-P7
- End of Key Stage Two Assessment KS1/2 UICT, Communication and Mathematics

Formative Assessment

This is informal and the emphasis is on on-going assessments of different types which are used to judge how best to help pupils learn further.

Formative Assessments in P1 - P7

- Observations
- Evaluations
- TS & PC tasks
- Questioning
- Work in books
- Discussions
- Displays
- Collegiate Book Monitoring sessions

- Quality Oral feedback
- Practical work
- Working with individual pupils
- Marking for Improvement * focus Tickled Pink and Green for Growth
- Comments on achievements
- Stickers to indicate success and / or how to improve work
- Children commenting on each other's work (Peer Assessment)
- Marking work with a child and indicating areas for improvement
- Sharing learning intentions and success criteria
- Self Assessment

*Quality Oral Feedback

- If you give feedback by *praising ability* - such as 'You are a very clever girl' - you are actually reinforcing a *fixed mindset*. Success will be seen as a measure of intelligence, and from the pupil's point of view it will be important to prove this intelligence to look good all the time. This person-centred type of praise is counter-productive, and there is much to lose. It can make pupils interpret difficulty or failure as personal weakness and fear that they might be exposed as lacking ability and not so clever after all.
- On the other hand, *praising the process* the pupils have used, or the *effort* they have put in - for example 'You have used resources well' or 'You have worked really hard' - tends to foster a *growth mindset*. This kind of praise endorses positive beliefs about effort leading to success; it's not about the pupils proving themselves. Giving feedback on the effort pupils have put in or the strategies they've used in a task helps them to develop a more robust self-efficacy, believing that they can, with effort, achieve their goals.

Formative Feedback

Special Educational Needs Regular reviews of all children on the Special Educational Needs Register, enable staff to monitor the progression of children and to plan accordingly. We adopted our own format for IEPs in the Autumn Term of 2015-2016. Individual Education Plans (IEPs), set specific targets for individual children and help teachers and pupils to monitor progress and identify further needs. These are reviewed on a half-termly basis with pupils and parents. We strive to ensure all pupils are aware of their individual targets and know how they can work together with the teacher to achieve them.

Professional Development of Staff

The Governors, Principal and staff within the school acknowledge the importance of developing all members of staff and addressing curricular changes. As a staff we recognise the need to be well informed about educational changes and good practice. Our long - term aim is to develop each and every member of staff, so as to empower them to implement and realise our Mission Statement and to further develop our school through rigorous self-evaluation and close monitoring. St Joseph's Primary School actively seeks and promotes the professional development of all its members of staff; teaching and non-teaching.

Training is delivered "in house", using our own internal expertise within collegiate book monitoring sessions and curricular meetings. We value the advice and support provided by colleagues, outside agencies and support services.

Signed: Mrs Laura Fitzsimons (Principal)

Mr Fred McStay (Chairperson of BOG)

