

Garrowhill Primary

Assessing Progress and Achievement

Draft Policy Statement

Rationale

The experiences and outcomes described in Building the Curriculum 1 provides a framework for developing a curriculum within which meaningful learning opportunities can be provided for our children. These experiences and outcomes sum up our aspirations for children and young people without prescribing content. They place emphasis on knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities. Alongside these learning experiences and to ensure effective and coherent planning, our learners must be provided with opportunities to show that their learning across levels of the curriculum is secure. Arrangements for assessment should enable and motivate all learners to develop to their fullest across this curriculum, help them show their progress and enable them to demonstrate their achievements in a range of ways which are appropriate to learning.

In order to gather good quality evidence of learners' progress through relevant experiences, we implement a range of approaches that reflect the breadth, challenge, and application of learning and the wide range of skills being developed. Our assessment approaches are used flexibly to meet the needs of all learners, regardless of where planned learning takes place. Everyone working with our children and young people must collaborate to provide appropriate experiences and support in order to 'get it right for every child'.

Aims

As with all aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*, assessment practices should be seen from the perspective of the learner. Learners should be engaged in all aspects of assessment processes and be afforded an element of choice and personalisation in showing that they have achieved the intended outcomes. As learners move through the curriculum, they will experience a range of approaches to assessment. From the learner's perspective, assessment will begin in pre-school by focusing on personal development and feedback with experiences built around the developing child. As children grow and develop they need opportunity to show that they have achieved a breadth of learning across experiences and outcomes, can respond to challenges and apply their learning to new and unfamiliar situations.

With this in mind our assessment approaches aim to :

- support learning that develops knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities across a range of contexts
- provide learning experiences which develop our children as confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors and successful learners
- give assurance to parents, learners themselves, and others, that children and young people are progressing in their learning and developing in line with expectations
- provide a summary of what learners have achieved
- contribute to planning the next stages of learning and to help learners progress to further education, higher education and employment
- to inform future improvements in learning and teaching

Methodology:

Children will be given the opportunity to take part in a range of tasks which provide evidence of their ability to think and solve problems as well as being successful with summative checks on attainment. Teachers will use varied approaches to gather this evidence of learning and achievement including:

- dialogue and discussion with children
- professional dialogue with colleagues
- observation of children
- practical investigations
- oral presentations
- written presentations
- peer assessment
- summative tests and examinations

At all times teachers will engage and offer appropriate support to learners to allow them to demonstrate what they have achieved and how well they are progressing. Assessment activity should aim to reflect the breadth and depth of learning and should have at its core high quality interactions with and feedback to learners.

What we assess

Learning involves our children having experiences which enable them to achieve the outcomes described in all curriculum areas and across all levels. Evidence of learning and the depth of our children's understanding and skills will therefore be gathered across these levels, in all areas.

However, to ensure they are making progress across all aspects of planned learning, assessment will take place against significant aspects of learning across the curriculum and not at the level of individual outcomes.

To enable our children to develop to their fullest across the curriculum, our teachers will be able to provide robust assessment information on children's knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities in these areas and the application of acquired skills at all stages within a full range of learning contexts.

This approach will promote greater breadth and depth of learning, including a greater focus on the secure development of skills and knowledge to equip children and young people with the skills for learning, life and work required for the 21st century.

Our standards and expectations for progression through the curriculum levels are shown below:

Early Level: The pre-school years and P1

First Level: To the end of P4

Second Level: To the end of P7

Third, Fourth: S1 to S3

Assessment activity should allow children to show that they are secure and have met expectations and achieved a level either in part of a curriculum area or in a whole curriculum area. To do this children must show a breadth of learning across bundles of identified experiences and outcomes and be able to respond to challenges by applying learning to unfamiliar situations.

When we assess

Assessment activity is part of the daily on-going work in all of our classrooms. Teacher observation and dialogue with pupils allows them to build up profiles of learners and plan learning experiences which meet the needs of all children. By watching and listening to learners carrying out tasks, by looking at what they write and make and by considering how they answer questions teachers are able to identify strengths and areas for development and plan next steps with children. Throughout this assessment activity, teachers will keep clear records of pupil activity and responses, their understanding of new concepts and ability to apply skills across areas. (see planning policy)

Each week children will take part in literacy and numeracy focused assessment tasks to enable teachers to track progress in acquisition of number, reading and writing skills. This will include all or some of the following:

- Guided reading sessions including cloze, sequencing and prediction tasks
- Group and class discussion
- Spelling tests/challenges
- Oral reports
- Personal, functional and imaginative writing tasks(including stocking filler oral interactive work)
- Handwriting
- Oral interactive class mental agility sessions
- Check up tasks
- Problem solving and enquiry
- Investigative and collaborative tasks in social studies, science or technology

In addition to this on-going assessment activity, children will take part in planned summative assessment activity to allow teachers to take stock of achievements, plan and report on progress. To gather this information teachers design their own materials and use the following resources:

- National Assessment Resource
- Heinemann Assessments in Maths
- PM Benchmarking
- Hodder Reading Test
- MALT Maths Tests
- Interdisciplinary Assessment tasks in Social Studies, Science and Technology
- Big Writing Assessment Criteria

Robust tracking of progress and achievement is essential for effective teaching and learning and planning which meets needs. As part of our quality assurance process we will carry out diagnostic assessment of reading, writing and maths for all children at the following points in the year:

- May : Hodder Reading Tests
- September: Baseline writing assessment
- January: Writing Assessment
- May: MALT (maths) assessment
- March: Writing Assessment

PM Benchmarking will be used by teachers between January and June of each year to gather further information on reading skills acquisition.

How we assess

Teachers use formative assessment approaches on a daily basis to promote engagement, allow tracking of progress and enable early intervention for children in difficulty. These include:

- quality questioning and feedback (oral and written)
- self and peer assessment
- no hands up
- promotion of thinking skills

The cross curricular and interdisciplinary approach used to build and develop our curriculum allows assessment activity to be designed and planned in such a way that learning in multiple areas can be assessed together. In gathering evidence of learning in reading for example, teachers will also be able to take stock of a child's understanding in another curricular area. Assessing learning in 'bundles' of outcomes builds a clear profile of individual learners and is the mechanism which allows teachers to gather evidence from a broad range of contexts.

At the start of each block of planned work the teaching focus and long term outcomes for learners will be identified alongside individual, group or class activity which enables children to demonstrate learning. At this planning stage the success criteria for the assessment task will also be identified and shared with children at the time of the activity.

Assessment tasks must be reliable and the judgements teachers make as a result dependable. Different forms of assessment may be used at different stages of the school and activity will vary depending on learning styles and context. The range of approaches described above allows teachers to assess different types of achievement from across the curriculum. Across all stages of the school and across all levels of the curriculum, children can demonstrate their learning through what they say, write, make and do.

At all times however, the assessment task itself will not place a burden on learners and teachers or divert time from learning and teaching.

Partnership working

As learning takes place in many settings and the experiences children have are supported by a range of adults in the school as well as external partners including parents, collaborative planning and recording of achievement is necessary. Within the school all staff work collegiately to ensure evidence of learning is shared and recorded appropriately. Visiting specialists will provide an overview of learning outcomes they plan to cover and update school staff with any relevant observations of children at the end of planned work. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback to staff on children's achievements outside of school and through home school learning tasks and formal meetings with school staff.

Throughout the school year the HT and DHT will gather the views of staff and children about learning and teaching at all stages. This information will also be used to inform approaches to planning, teaching and learning and assessment.

Quality Assurance and Moderation

Our quality assurance process includes a range of activity which is aimed at ensuring our children have the highest quality learning and teaching experience and include the following:

- termly observations in class by SMT
- termly learning conversations
- termly sampling of learners work and evidence of learning
- termly moderation meetings with stage partners focused on significant aspects of learning
- twice termly tracking meetings to discuss individual actions and learner progress
- robust CPD procedures

Moderation of assessment and learning experiences and the judgements made as a result enable us to achieve a shared understanding of standards and expectations for our children.

As well as on-going participation in moderation activities such as discussion of standards and observation of teaching, staff will formally moderate literacy and numeracy assessments across stages in term 2 and term 3 each session and provide feedback on judgements to colleagues.

Next Steps

To help us achieve a better shared understanding staff will work together to check assessment tasks, sample evidence, provide feedback on judgements and agree next steps. This is a priority for development within the school and across the learning community this session.

Full details of our systems for assuring quality are outlined in our Quality Assurance & Moderation Policy.