



Assessment for Learning

September 2015

Aim and Purpose

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Assessment serves three main purposes by providing information that can be:

- 'formative' i.e. providing information for the teacher and/or the child to plan the next steps in learning.
- 'diagnostic' i.e. informing the teacher of what a child can and cannot do.
- 'summative' i.e. a snap shot of a child's achievements.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of *formative assessment* at Maple Grove Primary School.

The purpose of our formative assessment policy is to promote learning. The aim of the policy is to ensure that formative assessment includes the following characteristics which promote learning:

- it is embedded in a view of teaching and learning of which it is an essential part;
- it involves sharing learning goals with pupils;
- it aims to help pupils know and to recognise the standards they are aiming for;
- it involves pupils in self assessment;
- it provides feedback which leads to pupils recognising their next steps and how to take them;
- it is underpinned by confidence that every student can improve;
- it involves both teachers and pupils reviewing and reflecting on assessment data.

Formative assessment is most effective when the key elements are put together. This will differ in each classroom context depending on age, educational needs and other factors. This policy sets out the key elements to be applied across the school.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND LEARNING CULTURE

*'Formative assessment is increasingly linked with the **constructivist** model, in which the **learner** is responsible for the learning and the construction of knowledge, through cooperative situations, open ended questioning, discussion and discovery learning set in meaningful contexts.'*
(Enriching Feedback, Shirley Clarke 2003)

Formative assessment is dependent on an appropriate classroom environment and learning culture. More details of our ethos on this can be found in our Learning and Teaching policy.

In each class children have 'learning partners' to share ideas with and to provide feedback. At the earliest stages of development, children need to have exposure to many different ideas and opinions so therefore these partners will not be fixed, but flexibly selected. Sometimes the teacher will define these partnerships through use of lolly sticks or deliberate choice.

Learning displays are used to outline the learning that is taking place and support it through the use of working walls and scaffolded examples of expectations. Our expectation is that these walls are regularly updated and reflect the areas of current learning that are taking place in the class.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

'Feedback – needs to be based on clear understanding about the learning objectives of the task and related success criteria.'

(Enriching Feedback, Shirley Clarke 2003)

Key Principles:

- Delivery and coverage with poor understanding are pointless and even harmful.
- There are two main types of learning intentions: knowledge, concepts and skills (taught specifics) and applications.
- Alternating the two types of learning intentions furthers the learning.
- Learning intentions need to be explicitly separated from the context of the activity, except for knowledge, where the context is part of the learning intention.
- It is useful for children to know how the learning intentions for a unit of study or topic fit together.
- Sharing learning intentions in a simple way so that children see the purpose enhances their learning.
- It is useful for children to know the real – life rationale for their learning.

We have agreed that the sharing and clarification of the learning intentions is central to our policy for formative assessment. The clear identification and sharing of the learning intentions for each learning experience will enhance and empower each child's learning along with making planning and teaching more focused and effective.

Our policy is to apply the following procedures:

- When planning each term's work teachers will first identify the key learning intentions to be covered (taken from the schools long term curriculum planning as well as formative assessment data) and will plan lessons/activities to match them.
- Teachers are encouraged to share the key learning intentions for a topic with the class as part of helping children to see the 'big picture'.
- Teachers will list the learning intentions for each session when producing weekly planning.
- Teachers will share the learning intention for each session with the class. This will be communicated orally and/or visually displayed dependent on the learning environment.
- Learning intentions need to be communicated in language which children can understand. Any unfamiliar or challenging words need to be explained. Teachers need to check children's understanding of the learning intention.
- Learning Support Assistants should remind children of the learning intention for an activity and check their understanding of it before starting work with an individual or a group.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Key Principles:

- **Process** success criteria are more powerful than **product** success criteria
- Success criteria should be generic for all children regardless of their task, as long as they all have access to the same learning intention
- Quality comes from the teaching and feedback, not the success criteria

Our policy is to apply the following procedures:

- Success criteria will be attached to a learning intention and will provide a check list of skills based criteria for both child and adult to use.
- Learning Support Assistants should remind children of success criteria when working with an individual or a group.

FEEDBACK PRINCIPLES

'Learners need information and guidance in order to plan next steps in their learning. Teachers should: pinpoint the learner's strengths and advise on how to develop them; be clear and constructive about any weaknesses and how they might be addressed; provide opportunities for learners to improve upon their work.'

(Assessment Reform Group, 2002)

Key Principles:

- Feedback needs to be focused on the learning intention of the task and not on comparisons with other children
- Verbal and non verbal language from the teacher gives powerful messages to the child about his or her ability.
- Grading every piece of work leads to demoralisation for lower achievers and complacency for higher achievers
- We need to give specific feedback focusing on success and improvement, rather than correction
- Children **need opportunities** to make improvements on their work.

Verbal Feedback

Key Principles:

- A level of challenge is a necessary pre requisite for new learning
- Presenting difficulty as a necessary and exciting aspect of new learning, when communicated to children, leads to greater confidence and self-efficacy
- Teachers' oral feedback needs to be focused mainly around the learning intention of the task or success criteria.
- Learning intentions need to be focused to be useful for feedback

Our policy is to apply the following procedures (this is expanded in our **Marking and Feedback Policy**)

- Teachers need to say explicitly what the child has done well, identifying successes in relation to the learning intention
- Teachers need to say explicitly what the child could do to improve the work in relation to the learning intention

Written Feedback

Written feedback should be used regularly as a way of explicitly showing children the way to develop their learning. Where a child may have difficulty accessing the written feedback, time should be made to orally share this with them.

Key Principles:

- Success and improvement marking enhances achievement
- When giving written feedback for writing, it is essential to keep a specific focus on the learning criteria and success criteria that has been shared.
- Children should be progressively trained to mark their own work, making improvements as part of their learning. They are encouraged to use a green pencil to edit and improve their work.

Peer and Self Assessment

‘Peer- and self-assessment help teachers make the criteria for evaluating any learning achievements transparent to students, so enabling them to develop a clear overview both of the aims of the work and of what it means to complete it successfully’

Pupils need to be taught the habits and skills of collaboration in peer assessment. Both because these are of intrinsic value and because peer-assessment can help develop the objectivity required for effective self assessment.’

Black et al. 2003

Key Principles

- Peer and self assessment is a key part of the formative assessment process.
- It will be valued as an equally important step alongside teacher assessment.
- There need to be ground rules around peer assessment in order to avoid anxiety.
- These principles will only be applied once children are confident in the processes of formative assessment.

Our policy is to apply the following procedures in order to maximise pupil involvement and quality assure the peer and self assessment that is taking place.

- Teachers will model the assessment process for children as part of their direct teaching.

- Children will be taught, in stages, to mark their own and each others' work according to their age and stage of development.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is monitored robustly by members of the schools leadership team (including governors) as well as the school assessment leader.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Learning and Teaching** and **Marking and Feedback** policy.