

Assessment for learning and feedback policy 2016

“an ongoing process conducted both formally and informally, by which information and evidence about a child’s learning is absorbed and used to plan the next step”

(Ruth Sutton, Assessment a framework for teachers 1991)

Introduction

At St Mary’s Primary School we want all children to achieve their full potential and develop positive attitudes to their learning. ‘Assessment for Learning’ is central to children recognising and achieving their potential.

Assessment for Learning is concerned with both the learner and the teacher being aware of where learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there.

The following policy outlines the key issues that ensure the teachers and the children at St Mary’s Primary School achieves high standards and has ownership over the learning and teaching that takes place within the school.

Aims

The intention is for Assessment for Learning (AfL) to occur in everyday lessons. AfL improves learning and raises standards. The way teachers mark and give feedback to pupils is central to the process.

The key characteristics of Assessment for Learning

- 1. Explicit Learning Objectives.**
- 2. Success Criteria.**
- 3. Questioning.**
- 4. Feedback.**
- 5. Marking**
- 6. Adjusting teaching to take account of results.**

1. Explicit Learning Objectives

Effective learning takes place when learners understand what they are trying to achieve and why it is important – ‘the bigger picture’. It is therefore important that pupils know the learning objective to the lesson as this gives a focus, enabling pupils to review their own progress and to see if they have achieved the objective.

Teacher demonstration and modelling will closely relate to the learning objective as will the subsequent activities. Together these will support and guide children to achieve the lesson intention. **The learning objectives will focus on learning not activities.** Helpful learning objective stems include ‘to know, to be able to’

2. Success Criteria

Developing success criteria to achieve the learning objective will help provide children with a framework against which they can focus their efforts, evaluate their progress and discuss issues. Success criteria can be generated by the teacher, but it has been recognised that where children together generate their own success criteria to meet a learning objective they gain more ownership over the learning with positive results.

3. Questioning

We use questioning in a variety of ways. Our key purpose is to develop learning and extend thinking. Asking questions raises issues; from this the teacher builds up knowledge and information about the children's understanding and misconceptions. Time needs to be invested in framing key questions to use during the demonstration and modelling part of the lesson to ensure learning progresses. Questioning is used by the class teacher to help develop children's higher order thinking skills. **Wait or 'thinking' time is essential** to give all children the opportunity to think and respond.

This enables more children to contribute to discussion and misconceptions can be dealt with more effectively. The use of **'talk partners'** where children can rehearse and scaffold their answers will lead to greater responses from the children and therefore provide much more information for the teacher about the extent to which children have understood the new learning.

4. Feedback

The purpose of AfL is to provide feedback in such a way that learning will improve as a result. Teachers need to identify the next steps to learning as well as responding appropriately to the mistakes that they make. Teacher's feedback will provide pupils with the information they need to achieve the next step and make better progress. Feedback will always be constructive and sensitive because **any assessment has an emotional impact**. Feedback that comments on the work rather than the child are more constructive for both learning and motivation. The following are a number of ways feedback can be given:

Oral

- Most regular and interactive form of feedback.
- Focus on being constructive and informative to help pupils take the next steps in their learning
- Can be direct (targeted at pupils/individuals) or indirect (whole class can listen and reflect on what is said)
- Whole class or group marking of one piece of work can be useful as the teacher invites children's contributions so that the piece is marked through a process of discussion, analysis and modelling
- Opportunity to model the language pupils can use when responding or giving feedback to others
- Developmental feedback- recognise pupils' efforts and achievements and offer specific details of a way forward.
- Emphasise the learner's progress and achievement rather than failure.

Self assessment

We will encourage pupils where possible to self-assess their work. This can be by recording traffic lights in their books or through thumbs up and to avoid peer pressure this can be carried out with eyes closed.

Peer assessment

Children can mark their own work against success criteria and on occasions can be involved in shared marking. This is not meant to replace teacher marking and feedback but is important for encouraging children to become more independent and responsible for their own learning. Time needs to be built into the lesson for this to be possible and allow children to reflect in structured ways as follows:

- Find one word you are really proud of and underline it. Tell the person next to you.
- Decide with your 'talk partner' which of the success criteria you have been most successful with and which one needs help or could be taken further.
- You have 3 minutes to identify two places where you think you have done this well and read them to your partner.
- You have 5 minutes to note down one thing you could do to improve this piece of work next time.

5. Marking

We aim to ensure that all children have their work marked in such a way that it will lead to improved learning, develop self-confidence, raise self-esteem and provide opportunities for assessment – including self-assessment. Marking will encourage learners to be aware of how and what they are learning. The emphasis in marking will be on a child's achievement and what the next steps need to be in order for the child to further improve. These improvements will link to targets set for individuals, groups or the whole class. Marking will encourage the learners to be equally aware of '**how**' and '**what**' they are learning.

See Marking policy for guidance on how work should be marked.

6. Adjusting teaching to take account of results

Pupil feedback and marking will be used to inform future planning. Annotations on plans will be used to record assessments made in accordance with 'Assessing Pupil Progress' guidance.

7. Response to marking

All pupils to be taught to respond to marking and initial.