



Gracehill Primary School

Assessment Policy

April 2016

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Rational and purpose:

Through a broad and balanced curriculum our pupils participate in a progression of learning experiences that are carefully structured to suit their needs. Assessment is an integral part of this learning and teaching process. Continuous monitoring of each child's progress gives a clear picture of each child's needs, achievements and abilities – enabling planning and delivery to be more effective, thereby raising attainment for every child.

At Gracehill Primary School the key purpose of assessment is to move children on in their learning, helping them to become involved in raising their own expectations, celebrating their own achievements and increasing their self- motivation. We believe in using assessment as a tool to inform our planning, track pupil progress and raise standards.

Good assessment practice in our school aims to –

- Be part of everyday teaching and support the teacher in the planning and delivery of the curriculum, enabling them to adjust teaching to take account of assessment information
- Provide information which can be used by teachers/Principal/Co-ordinators/SENCO as they plan for individual pupils and cohorts
- Track pupil performance and in particular identify those pupils at risk of underachievement and/or with special educational needs at both ends of the spectrum
- Evaluate children's levels of understanding, confirm judgements and help to identify strengths and weaknesses for individual children
- Provide each child, the teacher and parents with an indication of achievement and progress in relation to ability
- Provide information on which to base future curriculum planning and resource decisions
- Raise standards of attainment and behaviour and improve pupil attitudes and responses
- Promote pupil self-esteem through a shared understanding and a more active involvement in their own learning
- Provide information which can be used to evaluate Gracehill Primary School's performance against it's own previous attainment and against NI standards
- Fulfil statutory requirements relating to assessment

Forms of Assessment:

Diagnostic – identify strengths and areas for improvement and to inform next steps

Formative – to use assessment information to make specific improvements in learning

Summative – to acknowledge, record and report pupil's overall performance and achievement at a point in time

Evaluative – to inform curricular planning and provide information for monitoring and accountability

There are 2 distinct types of assessment used in our school –

Assessment for Learning (AFL) and Assessment of Learning (AOF)

Assessment for Learning

This helps us to identify the next steps needed to make progress. It takes account of pupils' strengths as well as weaknesses. AFL essentially promotes future learning. In Gracehill Primary School a variety of AFL strategies are employed to enhance learning, use of these will vary from class to class.

- Sharing learning intentions (WALT)
- Sharing success criteria (WILF)
- Effective questioning
- Observation
- Interaction (listening)
- Self-assessment and peer assessment
- Feedback and marking
- Setting goals
- Plan/do/review

Assessment of Learning

Assessment of learning is more associated with judgements based on scores or levels for statutory or summative purposes. Assessment of learning describes and labels past learning. It is often called Summative assessment and takes place after the learning. It focuses on pupils' achievements and is used to provide feedback to parents based on performance evidence.

Summative assessments help us to decide what a child can do at a given point in time. These assessments are given periodically during the school year and can be used to assist teachers with setting criteria and target setting. In Gracehill Primary School we conduct a variety of summative assessments –

- School based assessment for a specific task – weekly test/end of topic
- End of key stage results
- Standardised tests
- Annual report to parents – summer term

These assessments are used for planning and help us to answer questions such as –

At teacher level –

1. What level are my pupils now?
2. Where do they need to be next?
3. What are the best strategies to help pupils reach the next steps in their learning?

At Co-ordinator level –

1. How is my area of responsibility performing compared with recent trends?
2. How is my area of responsibility performing compared with other curriculum areas?
3. What are the priorities for improving provision within my area of responsibility?

At whole school level –

1. How is our school performing compared with recent trends?
2. How is our school performing compared with other schools in similar circumstances?
3. What are our whole school priorities for improving pupil outcomes, especially in Literacy and Numeracy?

Overview of assessment within the Foundation Stage

In Foundation Stage we view learning, teaching and assessment as a continuous cycle, where assessment is not the end product, but feeds back into the process to help establish teaching content/approaches and hence improve overall learning.

On entry to Primary one, our pupils participate in a baseline assessment. This enables Primary one teachers to:

- realise an individual pupil's skills and competences on entry to school.
- identify pupil learning needs and therefore establish effective planning.

Throughout Primary one and two, pupils are regularly assessed by the class teacher and classroom assistant. These assessments are made by observing the pupils in spontaneous as well as planned classroom activities. Pupils are observed regularly in all Areas of Learning with a particular focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Play Based Learning. Assessment in Literacy can include phonic sound tests, word building e.g. early spelling tests and high frequency word tests. Assessment in Numeracy includes understanding of early numeracy skills. It should be noted the latter are not standardised tests rather teacher produced. Within Play Based Learning we value the importance of regular planned as well as spontaneous observations as these provide information on all aspects of the child's development e.g. social, emotional, physical and intellectual. Observations help staff to shape future planning. Written observations are maintained for each pupil highlighting skills/ competences and next steps in learning. Class teachers share the findings of observations/assessments during parental interviews and also use this information as the basis for the end of year written report.

Overview of assessment within Key Stages 1 & 2

Class Tests/Assessments – these are carried out periodically to monitor children's progress and to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum delivery. Egs include weekly spelling, table, numeracy facts tests and end of topic tests. Examinations encompassing core curricular areas are also undertaken twice a year. Class teachers keep their own records of these assessments.

End of Key Stage Assessments – all years 3 – 7 carry out a range of class work activities which enable teachers to assess the children's attainment by the end of the year and ultimately at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. Only in Years 4 and 7 are the levels reported to parents and to CCEA. The remaining year groups use the information for tracking and monitoring progress of pupils. All appropriate data is stored on SIMS.

Standardised tests – Key Stages 1 & 2 – evidence is gathered and analysed from the results of standardised tests in Literacy and Numeracy from years 3 to 7 (PTE/PTM) – administered in May of each year. This data is used alongside the results of CAT tests (sat in Years 4 and 6) and NINA and NILA to identify those children who are high achievers/low achievers and under achievers in every class. All data is stored in SIMS.

Other non-statutory tests – various other tests are carried out to aid teaching eg. Sound tests, phonic checks, dyslexia screener

Target setting, tracking progress and bench marking

Target setting fits into the annual cycle of school review, planning and action.

Tracking is used to identify patterns or progress of different children as they pass through the school. Performance of specific groups of children is also monitored.

Each school year the following cycle takes place –

- Teachers meet to discuss children with their previous teacher and pass on relevant information
- All teachers get to know the children in their care. Targets are set for children in Years 4 and 7. DENI benchmarking statistics are used
- Teachers share opinions with subject Co-ordinators and other staff colleagues to clarify judgements. Internal standardisation takes place in school with all staff using various samples of pupil's work in Literacy and Numeracy.
- End of Key Stage summaries of targets are considered against DENI bench-marking statistics by staff and by governors.
- Teachers and Governors evaluate results against targets and benchmarking statistics
- Teachers analyse standardised test scores to identify pupils within their class requiring additional support eg low achievers/high achievers/under achievers.

Reporting

Reporting not only fulfils legal requirements but is also an important part of the school's relationship with parents and the wider community. Reporting is a whole school process and all staff work to communicate with relevant audiences serving to support and promote children's learning.

- Reporting to pupils is by means of verbal and written feedback and individual reward schemes (see marking policy appendix)
- Reporting to parents is by means of –
 - Governors’ Annual Report to Parents
 - Parent/teacher meetings twice a year to discuss their child’s progress
 - Bi-Annual Review for children on SEN register
 - Comments on written work, including homework
 - Transfer report meeting
 - Key Stage transition meetings for parents of children who are moving from P2 to P3 and from P4 to P5
- Reporting to Governors –
 - The Principal will report to Governors on a regular basis

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff will have corporate ownership of this policy –

- Pupil assessment is the responsibility of the class teacher
- Co-Ordinators, SENCO, Senior Leadership team will support each teacher
- Each teacher will ensure that they make proper provision for appropriate recording and for the effective monitoring of each pupil’s progress
- Each teacher will endeavour to apply the school assessment and marking policy consistently
- The Principal will have overall responsibility for Assessment throughout the school

Equal Opportunities and Special Needs

We will ensure that all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social circumstances, have access to the curriculum and achieve the best progress possible.

Timetable for assessment arrangements

Month	Assessment
August	Teachers meet to discuss new class intake in respect of curriculum coverage and attainment
September	P1 Baseline testing P4-P7 – NINA and NILA
October	Teachers analyse scores from NINA/NILA Teachers report to parents re CBAs P1 – P7 parent/teacher interviews
November	P1-P7 evidence collection
December	P1-P7 evidence collection
January	P4-P6 class exams
February	P1-P7 evidence collection P1-P6 parent/teacher interviews P7 transfer interview
March	P4 and P7 end of KS assessments – recording levels P1-P7 evidence collection
April	As for March
May	P3-P7 standardised tests PTE/PTM CAT – P4 and P6 Staff analyse results
June	P1-P7 evidence collection Annual pupil reports prepared and distributed to parents

Marking/Feedback Policy

At Gracehill Primary School, we believe that marking is about responding appropriately to pupil's work. Some of this is found in books and on presented work, but much of pupils' practical work and their learning experiences, results in *verbal* feedback. Verbal feedback is at the heart of what teachers do the whole time. Whether it is to refocus or stretch pupils, all lessons contain a substantial amount of teacher and /or support staff talk. It is therefore important to focus on feedback as a whole rather than on written annotations and comments only.

Purposes

- Aid future learning
- Indicate areas of success in work
- Indicate areas for future improvement
- Scaffold pupils' efforts towards such improvements
- Help inform parents of their child's progress

Principles

- Be manageable for staff
- Be carried out regularly
- Be carried out as soon as possible after the completion of a task/activity
- Be clearly understood by the children
- Be as positive as possible
- Whenever possible relate to the learning intention for the activity
- Inform future planning for learning activities

Key Stage Approaches

Foundation Stage

The following strategies can be used to mark, assess and provide feedback –

1. Verbal feedback - This involves discussion of a piece of work and/or activity with the child. In Foundation Stage we feel verbal feedback is essential as many of the activities pupils are participating in are of a practical nature. In relation to pieces of written work we feel a verbal comment is more valuable than a written comment which a child is often unable to read. The verbal comment should be positive but also include ideas for future improvement. For written work, staff in Foundation Stage use a common marking code which consists of a 'T' indicating the teacher/classroom assistant has discussed the work with the child. Also a 'C' can be used to highlight the pupil has been asked to correct a piece of work and has done so successfully.
2. Stampers or stickers – These may be used by the teacher to motivate pupils or celebrate a particular achievement as part of a class reward system.

Key Stage 1 and 2

The following strategies can be used to mark, assess and provide feedback –

1. Verbal feedback – This means the discussion of work and direct contact with the child/children. The discussion should be followed by the appropriate marking code on the child's work. In some cases it may be helpful to add a record of the time taken and context in which the work was done.
2. Success Criteria Checklists – These can be used where appropriate and may include columns for self/peer assessment and teacher assessment. These should be differentiated if necessary.

Success Criteria Checklist
Learning Objective: To practice writing a formal letter
a) First paragraph: explain what your letter is about
b) Use at least 2 different connectives
c) Include no more than 2 rhetorical questions
d) In the last paragraph, summarise your main points and demand compensation

3. Peer marking – In P4 – P7 children are encouraged to support each other and feedback on learning and achievement. Children should be given the opportunity to

mark each other's work. They should be trained to do this and ground rules set, such as listening, respect, confidentiality etc. Peer marking will only apply to certain types of work such as spellings, tables, mental maths or simple one word type answers and will be checked by the teacher regularly.

4. Quality Feedback Comments – Personalised quality feedback comments should be used frequently in all subject areas to extend learning. The emphasis when marking should be on both success and areas for development. A focussed comment should help the child in 'closing the gap' between what they have achieved and what they could have achieved.
5. Stampers/stickers/other incentives – These may be used by the teacher to both motivate pupils and to ensure that marking is as efficient as possible a process for the teacher. They will usually form part of a class reward system.

Written marking code

Key Stage 1

The following code is used when marking written work in Key Stage 1 –

Literacy

C	comprehension
G	Grammar
H	Handwriting
I	Independent writing
Pu	Punctuation
Pr	Presentation
R	Reading
S	Spelling
T	Teacher discussed/verbal

Numeracy

	correct
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	needs corrected
C	corrections

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, teachers make greater use of written feedback comments as the children are capable of reading more. They continue to use the T for teacher discussed/verbal feedback and the C for corrections. In Numeracy ticks and crosses are used to denote correct and incorrect work.

- ***This policy will be reviewed in the Autumn term of 2018.***