

Assessment at Cutnall Green First School

Love, Learn, Live.

“At Cutnall Green our goal is that all learners will love learning for life. We aim to develop a deep understanding of concepts and a fluency of essential skills leading to confidence, flair and mastery; ultimately these pupils achieve high standards.”

Effective teachers assess children regularly to inform teaching, provide regular feedback for learning to pupils and communicate next steps to both pupils and parents/carers.

In light of the revised National Curriculum and the removal of levels, we have harnessed this opportunity to develop a system that ensures we focus on **every individual child as a learner, rather than a number.**

There has been a shift in culture, as teachers are now focusing upon depth and mastery, rather than accelerated learning, and all staff are engaging with self-directed learning and CPD sessions to develop their subject knowledge in light of the high standard of expectations.

Rigorous baseline assessments for all children in reading, writing and maths were completed in December 2014, providing teachers and Leaders with revised judgments on all children's current attainment in alignment with revised National Curriculum expectations. Baseline assessments were informed by both teacher assessment and the results of baseline tests taken from the summative testing. This process has identified the gaps in learning in the transition from old to revised curriculum, which has in turn informed gap analysis planning.

We are using a range of summative assessments; these enable teachers to use the information diagnostically, planning well matched next steps in learning. They are also used to inform lesson design, as we are able to use formative and summative assessments to design learning experiences to challenge and extend all learners, ensuring they are making progress towards age related standards.

We are focusing on children's next steps in learning, successes and challenges, **rather than placing numbers on the children's attainment;** keeping every child at the centre of our assessment approach is ensuring we are staying true to our core principles as a Multi-Academy Trust and the principles for change as laid out by the Government.

We are continually reviewing our approach to assessment and use a variety of key documents and reports to check our systems are fit for purpose and ensure all children achieve age related expectations.

What is assessment for?

- To ensure that all children are on track to meet Age Related Expectations.
- To ensure all children make progress and reach their full potential.
- To ensure that accountability is fair and transparent.
- To ensure parents and the wider public know how their children and the school are performing.

What are our principles for assessment?

1. Assessment is at the core of teaching and learning.

- a. Assessment provides evidence to guide teaching and learning.
- b. Assessment provides the opportunity for pupils to demonstrate and review their progress, identifying strengths and challenges.

2. Assessment is fair.

- a. Assessment is inclusive of all abilities.
- b. Assessment is free from bias towards factors that are not relevant to what the assessment intends to address.

3. Assessment is honest.

- a. Assessment outcomes are used in ways that minimise undesirable effects.
- b. Assessment outcomes are conveyed in an open, honest and transparent way to assist pupils with their learning.
- c. Assessment judgements are moderated by experienced professionals to ensure their accuracy.

4. Assessment is ambitious.

- a. Assessment places achievement in context against nationally standardised criteria and expected standards.
- b. Assessment embodies, through objective criteria, a pathway of progress and development for every child.
- c. Assessment objectives set high expectations for learners.

5. Assessment is appropriate.

- a. The purpose of any assessment process should be clearly stated.
- b. Conclusions regarding pupil achievement are valid when the assessment method is appropriate (to age, to the task and to the desired feedback information).
- c. Assessment should draw on a wide range of evidence to provide a complete picture of pupil achievement.
- d. Assessment should demand no more procedures or records than are practically required to allow pupils, their parents and teachers to plan future learning.

6. Assessment is consistent.

- a. Judgements are formed according to common principles.
- b. The results are readily understandable by third parties.
- c. A school's results are capable of comparison with other schools, both locally and nationally.

7. Assessment outcomes provide meaningful and understandable information for:

- a. pupils in developing their learning;
- b. parents in supporting children with their learning;
- c. teachers in planning teaching and learning. Assessment must provide information that justifies the time spent;
- d. school leaders and governors in planning and allocating resources; and
- e. government and agents of government.

8. Assessment feedback should inspire greater effort and a belief that, through hard work and practice, deeper knowledge, skills or understanding can be acquired or new learning can be achieved.

How do we assess children?

“At Cutnall Green we are passionate about developing the head (knowledge), hand (skills) and heart (attitude) of our learners. We aim to develop pupils as subject experts: we focus on developing effective writers, mathematicians, scientists etc, as opposed to children that write, do sums and do fair tests and so on.”

- Assessment serves many purposes, but the *main* purpose of assessment in our school is to help teachers, pupils and parents plan their next steps in learning.
- We also use the outcomes of assessment to check and support our teaching standards and help us improve.
- Through working with other schools and using external tests and assessments, we will compare our performance with that of other schools.
- We assess pupils against assessment criteria, which are short, discrete, qualitative and concrete descriptions of what a pupil is expected to know and be able to do and are age related.
- Assessment criteria are derived from the school curriculum, which is composed of the National Curriculum and our own local design.
- Assessment criteria for periodic assessment are arranged into a hierarchy, setting out what children are normally expected to have mastered by the end of each year.
- The achievement of each pupil is assessed against all the relevant criteria at appropriate times of the school year.
- Each pupil is assessed according to whether they are on track to meet ARE (age related expectations), and if not, how far away they are from this. Children who are showing a greater depth of mastery are shown as exceeding ARE, and demonstrate the ability to apply their knowledge and skills in complex tasks.
- Where a pupil is assessed as demonstrating mastery against their age related expectations, we do not accelerate them onwards to the next year group's expectations. These children are challenged through increasingly complex tasks, which enable them to show a greater depth of mastery.
- Where a pupil is not on track to meet ARE (age related expectations), teachers initially address this through quality first teaching in the classroom to enable the child to catch up. If further support is required, small group or 1:1 interventions may be planned as required.
 - Assessment judgements are recorded and backed by a body of evidence created using observations, records of work, diagnostic and summative testing.
 - Assessment judgements are moderated by colleagues in school and by colleagues in other schools to make sure our assessments are fair, reliable and valid.

How do we use assessments?

- Teachers use the outcomes of our assessments to summarise and analyse attainment and progress for their pupils and classes.
- Teachers use this data to plan the learning for every pupil to ensure all children meet age related expectations and demonstrate mastery of these skills. Teachers and leaders analyse the data across the school to ensure that pupils identified as vulnerable or at particular risk in this school are making appropriate progress and that all pupils are suitably challenged.
- The information from assessment is communicated to parents and pupils on a termly basis through a structured conversation. Parents and pupils receive rich, qualitative profiles of what has been achieved and indications of what they need to do next.
- We celebrate all achievements across a broad and balanced curriculum, including sport, art and performance, behaviour, and social and emotional development.

National Assessments (from Sept 2015)

We will have national assessments at key points in children's primary education. These have two aims – to provide standard information to parents and to give a picture of school performance. There will be different approaches to assessment through a child's education and development, using the most appropriate approach for capturing children's learning at each stage and to complement on-going teacher assessment:

- a short **reception baseline** that will sit within the assessments that teachers make of children during reception;
- a **phonics check** near the end of year 1;
- a **teacher assessment at the end of key stage 1** in mathematics; reading; writing; and spelling punctuation and grammar, informed by pupils' scores in externally-set but internally-marked tests (writing will be partly informed by the grammar, punctuation and spelling test); and teacher assessment of speaking and listening and science;

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