

PLYMOUTH COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING Including Early Years Foundation Stage

Assessment is a complex process: it is therefore important to be clear why we do it. Curriculum-led assessment requires teachers to address four questions:

- * What do you want the pupils to learn?
- * Do they know what you want them to learn?
- * What activities and experiences promote these intentions?
- * How is the evidence of learning revealed?

Assessment is the process by which pupils and teachers gain insight into learning. It is distinct from **recording** which involves selecting and retaining what is significant in learning and **reporting** which involves informing others about the learning.

Good assessment practice will:

- * assist the **pupil** as learner;
- * help the **teacher** as guide and evaluator;
- * give information to **third parties**.

It has a number of specific functions:

- * to focus on what a pupil can or cannot do (**diagnostic**);
- * to decide what a pupil needs to do next (**formative**);
- * to sum up a pupil's progress so far, in order to inform all interested parties (**summative**).

Good teaching practice will involve:

- * **peer-referencing**: measuring a pupil's performance against that of other pupils. e.g. top of the class...; This can be helpful when reporting to parents
- * **criterion-referencing** where performance is related to specific attainment targets, as in the National Curriculum; age-standardised scores; or the EYFS profile
- * **self-referencing over a period of time**: helping pupils to compare their performance with previous ones so as to set targets. E.g. Stephen has reduced his cross country time by seven minutes.
- * **observation**; watching the children on task.

Principles for Good Practice

Good assessment practice:

- * is based upon clear curriculum intentions and lesson planning;
- * plays an integral part in classroom activities;
- * is appropriate to the task;
- * focuses on learning processes as well as learning outcomes;
- * allows for unexpected as well as intended outcomes;
- * draws upon a wide range of evidence;
- * places achievement in context;
- * indicates strengths and identifies weaknesses;
- * involves pupils in reflection and review;
- * informs about individual progress.

Clear Curriculum Intentions

Clear intentions for learning provide the first reference point for assessment. The purpose of any activity needs to be explained to pupils in language they can understand. The class organisation and the teaching strategies employed should bear a close, clear relation to this explanation. At the planning stage teachers need to identify the knowledge, concepts, values, skills and processes which may be involved.

An Integral Part of Classroom Activities

Assessment involves on-the-spot interpretation and analysis of what is happening in the classroom and how learning is taking place; it is therefore part of the dynamics of the classroom. In the formative sense, assessment is inextricably linked to work in progress. The more pupils are involved directly in assessing what they have learnt and how, the more responsible they will become for their own learning.

Appropriate to the Task

There is a clear relationship between intentions for learning, teaching styles and the evidence that becomes available for assessment. How pupils perform is influenced by the strategies used, materials and activities provided and the forms of evidence sought. Pupils may well demonstrate understanding in one context and not another.

To have the best chance of showing what they know, understand and can do, pupils need a wide range of contexts in which to operate. It is important that the assessment strategies used by the teacher reflect the nature of the activity the pupils are engaged in and are fit for the purpose of assessment. The use of only one strategy can act as a constraint and should be avoided; for example, pupils' ability to write French might be very different to spoken skills. In Maths some pupils struggle with the language questions are written in but are far more proficient at calculation etc. Differentiation of curriculum content should be matched by differentiation of assessment style.

Learning Processes and Learning Outcomes

Evidence of learning is revealed in a pupil's verbal response, written work and test performance. To plan for future activities and to interpret pupils' responses, teachers need to be aware of the cognitive processes involved in learning, such as recollecting, problem-

solving, interpreting and empathy. The teacher's own assessment will depend upon knowing what to look for in a pupil's response to the task in hand.

Sometimes pupils are engaged in learning which enables them to reach for new understandings but do not necessarily lead to a finished product; this does not lessen the importance for assessment purposes. The comments and actions of pupils can help reveal their learning, although they provide only ephemeral evidence for assessment. Assessment of the outcomes of pupils' work, particularly the ephemeral, requires skilled observation, thoughtful listening and perceptive questioning. We should seek to assess what is important rather than make the important what which is easily assessable.

Unexpected as well as Intended Outcomes

Learning is unique to every individual and often unpredictable. The teacher's day to day assessment should be prepared to take account of the unanticipated as well as the planned outcomes. Check-lists of possible pupil performance can be useful but they can never be exclusive. It is worth remembering that the real curriculum is not what we intend our pupils to learn but what they actually take away; that is the challenge for assessment.

A Wide Range of Evidence

Tests can provide important evidence of learning, but internal classroom based assessment offers teachers wider opportunities for judging pupil performance. Teachers need to consider the range of evidence for assessment available to them from observation, listening, asking questions, setting tasks and viewing the product outcomes of their pupils' work.

The wider the range of evidence we seek, the greater the opportunities for pupils to reveal the full extent of their achievements. Pupils' comments also offer valuable insights on learning and their perceptions have an important part to play in assessment.

In the Early Years the pupils' learning journeys provide good evidence of achievement. From Year 1 the Director of Studies will collate standardised test results on all pupils which will help create an overview of pupil progress which will assist the teacher in setting targets and have a critical role to play at **times of transfer**. However, it is expected that all teachers will keep an accurate record of pupils' attainment to allow for individual target-setting and inform planning. All this data may also be used as supporting evidence during parent interviews, statementing procedures or to **standardise** or **moderate** Teachers' Assessments.

Achievements Placed in Context

A number, percentage or letter grade gives little insight into learning unless accompanied by recommendations or context. Assessment results should be reported in such a way as to be meaningful in terms of the pupil's performance as measured against national standards, year group averages, class averages and personal targets.

Recognition of Strengths and Identification of Weaknesses

Assessment should be positive, focusing first and foremost on what pupils have shown they can do – and how well they have done it. The skills pupils have developed and the

concepts and attitudes they have formed should all be clearly identified, as should the knowledge they have acquired.

The strengths of individual pupils can variously be recognised through Records of Achievement, work on display, presentations in assemblies and so forth. Whenever possible, pupils should be given opportunities to share their successes with a wider audience. Such recognition increases pupils' confidence and motivates them to learn more.

Identification of learning difficulties which all pupils have is important if they are to make progress. Assessment should focus on the pupil's performance in the classroom and take into account what the pupil can do as well as those aspects which require further help. It is as important to identify strategies that will lead to improvement as it is to identify the weaknesses in the first place. Even the most able should be set targets for improvement.

Tracking and Target Setting

Targets in English and mathematics should be clearly recorded and reviewed each half term to ascertain if the children are 'on track' to achieve them.

Pupil Involvement in Reflection and Review

Thoughtful reflection and review are at the heart of any successful teacher-pupil relationship. Increasingly, pupils should be involved in the assessment process itself, taking responsibility for their own learning as they become critical evaluators of their own needs and discuss intentions for future learning with their teachers; for example, they should become involved in target-setting and selecting work for display in the classroom or public performance.

Tests and Examinations

Pupils take GL Assessment Progress Test in English and Maths and other assessments as set out in the assessment timetable (appendix 2) and many teachers use tests that they have devised themselves or that have been produced commercially. However, testing alone does not improve learning and tests should not be used as the sole mechanism for assessment.

The most appropriate use of tests is for diagnostic purposes where the results lead to consequential action. Before setting a test a teacher should consider the key purpose of the test; whether the test will reveal evidence of the pupil's strengths and weaknesses that the teacher was not already aware of from professional judgement, and whether the results of tests fairly reflect the ability of the pupil in the subject. After the test has been marked the teacher should analyse the results to draw conclusions about how successful it has been in informing learning and accurately measuring progress. The Director of Studies along with subject leaders in literacy and numeracy will review the results to assess their accuracy in measuring value-added.

Most of our pupils sit the 11+ and/or the Plymouth College Entrance Examinations. Assessment in Years 5 and 6 should help pupils direct their efforts and act as guidance to help parents make decisions about the suitability of the 11+ / Scholarship exams for their child / children. Assessment can also play a crucial role in honing examination technique.

Miss J Newnham
Director of Studies

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Appendix 1

Monitoring of Progress and Standards

Role	Monitoring Responsibility	Main Focus
Headteacher with Senior Management Team	Whole school performance	Analysis of performance data and pupils' work; the quality of teaching; key skills
Heads of Department Curriculum Leaders	Performance in specific subjects	Subject performance data, pupils' work and the effectiveness of the curriculum; the quality of teaching; key skills ; analysis of standards attained; and cross curriculum elements
Classroom Teachers	Performance of class	Individual pupil performance and key skills

Appendix 2

PLYMOUTH COLLEGE ASSESSMENT TIMETABLE

'Progress Check at Two' – all pupils should bring this from their nursery/ health visitor but in the rare case they have not had this assessment the school carry out the check as soon as possible. This will provide a baseline assessment.

Year Group	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Kindergarten	Foundation Stage Profile Continuous Teacher Assessment (Learning Journey)	Foundation Stage Profile Continuous Teacher Assessment (Learning Journey)	Foundation Stage Profile Continuous Teacher Assessment (Learning Journey)
Reception	Early Learning Goals Continuous Teacher Assessment (Learning Journey)	Early Learning Goals Continuous Teacher Assessment (Learning Journey)	Early Learning Goals Continuous Teacher Assessment (Learning Journey)
Year 1	Measuring Success in Science Maths Assessment Spelling ages Reading ages Continuous Teacher Assessment	Measuring Success in Science Maths Assessment Continuous Teacher Assessment	Measuring Success in Science GL Assessment Progress Test in Maths, English Reading ages Continuous Teacher Assessment
Year 2	GL Assessment Reading GL Assessment Spelling Maths Assessment Rising Stars Science Assessment	Rising Stars Science Assessment Maths Assessment	GL Assessment Reading, GL Assessment Spelling, GL Assessment Progress Test in Maths, English Rising Stars Science Assessment
Year 3	Spelling and Reading ages	Maths and English Assessments	Science Assessment GL Assessment Progress Test in Maths, English Spelling and Reading ages
Year 4	Spelling and Reading ages	Maths and English Assessments	Science Assessment GL Assessment Non Verbal Reasoning (8 and 9) GL Assessment Progress Test in Maths, English Spelling and Reading ages
Year 5	GL Assessment Verbal Reasoning (8 and 9) Spelling and Reading ages	Maths and English Assessments	Science, French, Geography, History and Spanish Assessments GL Assessment Non Verbal Reasoning (10 and 11) GL Assessment Progress Test in Maths, English Spelling and Reading ages
Year 6	Maths, English Assessments GL Assessment Verbal Reasoning (10 and 11) Spelling and Reading ages	Main School entrance and Scholarship Examination.	Science, French, Geography, History and Spanish Assessments GL Assessment Progress Test in Maths, English