



ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Assessment Policy

Our Mission Statement

"Do everything with love."

(St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians 16:14)

This means that we will...

- *Show our love for Jesus in everything we say and do*
- *Respect everyone by recognising that God made us all different but equally valued.*
- *Strive for excellence and find ways to share, develop and celebrate our talents.*
- *Promote a safe, happy and enjoyable environment.*
- *Actively support our school, parish and the wider community.*

Rationale

Assessment is fundamental to be able to extend and challenge all pupils learning so that they can achieve their potential.

Assessment is inclusive of all abilities, and outcomes are conveyed in an open, honest and transparent way to assist pupils with their learning.

Aims

Assessment outcomes provide meaningful and understandable information for:

- pupils in developing their learning
- parents in supporting children with their learning
- teachers in planning high quality teaching and learning to ensure sustained progress in learning over time
- school leaders and governors in planning and allocating resources.

Assessment should inspire greater effort and a belief that, through hard work and practice, more can be achieved.

Methods of Assessment

A range of assessments are used to provide a complete picture of pupil achievement. These include:

- diagnostic assessment
- formative assessment
- summative assessment
- evaluative assessment

(see Appendix 1)

Effective feedback strategies promote high levels of attainment and progress.

Planning and teaching adapted to meet the needs of all learners.

Rich dialogue (to include questioning) to promote effective assessment.

Continuous monitoring, moderation and standardisation of assessment both within and across schools.

Assessment judgements taken from a range of evidential sources (observations, records of work, pupil discussion and testing)

Use of Assessment

Teachers use the outcomes of assessments to summarise and analyse attainment and progress for their pupils and classes.

Teachers use this data to plan their learning for every pupil to ensure they meet or exceed expectations.

Teachers and leaders analyse the data across the school to ensure that pupils identified as vulnerable or at particular risk are making appropriate progress and all pupils are suitably challenged.

Information from assessment is communicated to parents and pupils on a termly

basis through a structured conversation.

All achievements are celebrated across a broad and balanced curriculum.

Appendix 1

1. Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment identifies strengths and areas for improvement and informs the next steps. It normally takes place at the beginning of a learning programme. It involves the teacher working closely with the pupil to identify their strengths and learning needs. Teachers identify the nature of a pupil's learning difficulties and use this information to plan interventions to address the issues discovered. They should then share this information with the pupil to plan the next steps to improve their learning.

2. Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning or AfL)

Formative assessment, often referred to as Assessment for Learning (AfL), is part of the everyday teaching and learning process. Teachers gather evidence about a pupil's learning, for example by observing, listening, questioning, discussing and reviewing pupil work. They can then use this evidence to:

- identify progress and gaps in learning (including individual support needs)
- set learning goals and success criteria; and
- provide feedback to pupils.

Teachers use AfL to enable pupils to build on their learning. AfL focuses on how pupils can improve their learning. The continuous process of dialogue and interaction between teachers, pupils, and peers is an essential part of AfL. It involves peer and self-assessment (ARG, 2008; Black and Wiliam, 2009). Ten guiding principles underpin AfL. It should:

- be part of effective planning;
- focus on how pupils learn;
- be central to classroom practice;
- be a key professional skill;
- be sensitive and constructive;
- foster motivation;
- promote understanding of goals and criteria;
- help learners know how to improve;
- develop the capacity for self-assessment; and
- recognise all educational achievement.

ARG, 2002

Five key AfL strategies support these ten principles in classroom practice:

- **Focus on learning** by sharing learning intentions and success criteria with pupils.
- **Effective questioning** encourages pupils to think about their learning.
- **Quality formative feedback** allows teachers to identify pupils' achievements, any gaps in their learning, and areas for further work (what learners have done well and what they should do to perform better).
- **Scaffolding reflection** gives pupils time to reflect on their learning, allowing them to think about what and how they are learning and to adapt their approaches, if necessary, to achieve their goals.
- **Teacher reflection** on effectiveness of teaching and learning allows teachers to verify what their pupils have learned. This helps them decide what they may need to teach again in a different way, or how to focus future teaching plans.

3. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment gives pupils, parents and teachers valuable information about a pupil's overall performance at a specific point in their learning. It provides information about a pupil's progress in subject knowledge, understanding and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPC).

Summative assessment in the primary school can occur at different intervals such as weekly, on completion of a topic of work, at the end of each term, or at the end of the year. The information it gives indicates pupil progress and achievement in the knowledge and skills in a particular area of learning, sometimes in grade-related or numerical terms. Short summative assessments can be relevant and valid when they are part of a wider range of assessment methods used to form a holistic picture of each pupil's achievements.

Summative assessment should:

- take account of all the objectives or outcomes of the programme of study/topic (this is why summative tests of part of the programme of study are not necessarily valid);
- make use of several short assessments rather than the 'big test' at the end of the year;
- take account of formative assessments throughout the year, or at the very least in the last term;
- be formative in its own right;
- provide feedback on what learners did or did not do well; and
- provide teachers with insights into what pupils have and have not learned in order to adjust and refine their teaching.

Teachers can use this information to inform the next steps in their planning or to highlight gaps in pupil knowledge and identify areas that they may need to re-emphasise. The information gathered from summative assessment can also be analysed at whole-school level for benchmarking and target setting.

4. Evaluative Assessment

The main purpose of evaluative assessment is to ensure that there is appropriate accountability at all levels for the performance of our school system (CCEA, 2011).

Evaluative assessment informs curriculum planning and provides information for monitoring and accountability. For evaluative purposes, the Department of Education requires information on end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessment outcomes for the Cross-Curricular Skills. Schools can use this data for school development and action planning. Teachers can also use this data to set class targets to improve specific pupil outcomes.

The Relationship between Formative and Summative Assessment

Formative assessment and summative assessment have been seen as serving two separate purposes. Formative assessment focuses on improving learning. Summative assessment summarises learning at the end of a period of study. Recently, however, formative and summative assessments have been recognised as interrelated and complementary. They can serve both purposes, depending on how teachers use assessment information and feedback (Black et al, 2003; Harlen, 2005; Taras, 2005). Research suggests that teachers could make better use of assessment by taking this interrelationship into account (ARG, 2008).

'The information from formative assessment, supplemented by valid class tests or tasks, helps to ensure dependable summative assessment'.

Harlen, 2005

Teachers can use the information generated from summative assessments as feedback to support and help pupils to improve their learning. Teachers should 'report not only the pupils' final performance, but also what processes pupils need to improve in order to raise their performance'.

(Harlen, 2005)