

John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School

Assessment for Learning Policy

Assessment for Learning is the process of identifying what the learner has or has not achieved in order for teachers to plan the next steps in the teaching or learning.

It involves using assessment in the classroom to raise children's achievements and is based on the idea that children will make the most progress if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve that aim.

By implementing a workable, explicit whole school assessment for learning practice and policy, we are moving towards our goal of maximising every child's achievement.

Aims

At John of Gaunt we aim to:

- Make judgements about a child's attainment based on knowledge gained through techniques such as observation, questioning, marking and testing
- Provide assessment information for use with the whole class, groups within the class and individuals to secure the most effective teaching and learning
- Help children to develop positive attitudes to their work and achievement
- Provide an accurate picture of every child's attainment and progress
- Show children how they are going to take the next steps to improve their learning

Principles of Assessment for Learning

Effective assessment for learning involves:

- The sharing of learning goals with children
- Helping children to know and recognise the criteria for success
- Providing feedback and marking that helps children identify how to improve
- Children learning self-assessment techniques to discover areas they need to improve
- The use of effective questioning to assess progress
- Both the teacher and the children reviewing and reflecting on children's performance and progress and setting targets for improvement
- Recognising that both motivation and self-esteem are essential for effective assessment techniques

Formative and Summative Assessments

We recognise that:

- Assessment for learning is formative assessment
- Assessment of learning is summative assessment and involves judging children's performance against national standards (level descriptors)

Key Characteristics of Assessment for Learning

1. Sharing Learning Goals

Explain clearly the reasons for the lesson or activity in terms of the learning objectives

Share the specific assessment criteria with the children verbally

Help children to understand what they have done well and what they need to develop

Acknowledging other pupils' responses to a task will help them to understand how to use the assessment criteria to assess their own learning

2. Clear success criteria written or verbal

Success criteria may be evident in planning, written in a child's book, in a visual form on a whiteboard, as a verbal explanation to class/group/individual

Success criteria will link directly to the learning goal, it relates to the skills, concepts and knowledge of an activity.

3. **Using consistent feedback and marking strategies**

Children benefit from opportunities for formal feedback through group and plenary sessions

Giving feedback involves:

- Making time to talk to pupils and teaching them to be reflective about the learning objectives and about their work and responses
- Self marking – children will be encouraged to see for themselves what they need to do to improve and discuss with their teacher
- Peer assessment – focusing on the learning intention of the task

Feedback enables children to understand the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated in their work. Marking and/or oral feedback explain what the next steps are.

Children make progress by building on previous performance

Characteristics of effective feedback

- Feedback is most effective when it confirms that children are on the right track and when it stimulates improvement of a piece of work
- Suggestions for improvement should act as “scaffolding” i.e. children should be given as much help as they need to use their knowledge. They should not be given the complete solutions as soon as they get stuck and should learn to think things through for themselves.
- Children should be helped to find alternative solutions if, repeating an explanation, leads to failure
- Feedback on progress over a number of attempts is more effective than feedback on one attempt treated in isolation
- The quality of dialogue in feedback is important
- Teachers and support staff will encourage children to ask for help and the ethos of the school will encourage them to do so

Teachers and support staff will mark work according to the school Marking Policy

4. **Pupil self assessment and peer self assessment**

Self Assessment

Opportunities for self assessment and evaluation may be evident in planning or may be used during lessons when relevant. Once children understand how to assess their current knowledge and the gaps in it, they will have a clearer idea of how they can help themselves to progress.

Children will be taught what they need to learn and why and then actively assess their understanding, gaps in their knowledge and areas they need to work on.

Peer Assessment

Peer assessment will be used as often as possible through partner work. Children will be encouraged to clarify their own ideas and understanding of both the learning intention and the assessment criteria.

5. **Using effective questioning**

Teachers may:

- Use questions to find out what children know, understand and can do
- Analyse children’s responses and their questions in order to find out what they know, understand and can do
- Use questions to find out what children’s specific misconceptions are in order to target teaching more effectively

6. **Target setting**

Teachers and children may set targets relating to specific goals.

Children will be encouraged to guide their own learning, with the teacher providing help where necessary or appropriate.

Children will be given opportunities to:

- Reflect on their own work
- Be supported to admit problems without risk to self-esteem
- Be given time to work problems out

Children may look at examples of other children's work that does meet the assessment criteria as this can help them understand what was required from a task and to assess the next steps they might need to take and therefore set new targets. Looking at different responses may be used to help children understand the different approaches they could have taken to a task.



Formal Assessments

Through the use of formal assessments, we aim to:

- Direct teacher judgements that are valid and as reliable as possible, consistent both within a school and with NC/EYFS standards
- Promote a common interpretation of the NC grade descriptors/EYFS statements
- Give teachers confidence in their professional judgement
- Make formal assessments accessible and fair for children

Formal assessments are made from a combination of methods:

Formative – to help children progress

Diagnostic - to help identify specific strengths and weaknesses

Summative – to summarise children's abilities, attainment and progress

Evaluative – to help planning for future needs

Our assessment records:

- Assess pupils progress against NC and EYFS criteria
- Are easy to interpret, useful, manageable and not administratively burdensome
- Encourage confidence between teachers through a moderation process
- Opportunities are taken to record significant points in a child's development, such as:

A moment of breathtaking understanding

Surprise and unusual reactions

Interesting examples of strategies for problem-solving

Difficulties encountered and possible reasons for them

Specified assessments at specific times during the academic year

Marking

Teachers and teaching assistants use a common policy for marking work which is fully understood by all staff

Assessment Data

Key Stage 1 tracking is completed 4 times a year and is analysed by Literacy and Maths subject leaders and Head teacher; this information is shared with staff and governors.

EYFS data is tracked termly using Development Matters Grid and the school's in-house tracking system which records smaller steps of progress.

Examples of Assessment that may be used:

- Observations
- Interaction
- Listening
- Questioning
- Analysing errors
- Testing using diagnostic materials
- Collecting evidence from book sampling
- Pupil Tracking
- Problem solving activities
- Analysis of written work

Planning as a result of Assessment

Teacher's planning may be informed by assessments carried out and they are important for:

- Identification of intervention groups
- Succinct summative hand over records
- Discussion with receiving teachers at the point of transition

School assessment and tracking systems indicate the progress made term on term and year to year and times when there has been rapid improvement and at other times when a plateau of learning has occurred. Teacher expectation has a profound effect on children's attainment. Assessment and differentiation are two key elements that help the teacher to know about a child's progress and potential and to set expectations which are achievable and challenging. Accurate assessment of children's current strengths may stretch over several NC levels and in order for more able children to be challenged and less able children to be supported, differentiation is essential.

Equal Access and Outcome

All children require their learning to be assessed and there needs to be opportunities for them to contribute to their own assessment by making judgments about their own performance and what targets they set for personal improvement.

Recording and Reporting

Reporting is the process of informing others, including Parents, Head teacher, Governors, the child and the child's next teacher or school. Records of children's attainment and achievement are used when preparing the annual report for parents and for parent consultation. Recording of assessment can take many forms but it is essential to ensure that curriculum planning includes actions needed to address the findings.

Records also develop a comprehensive picture of the children and their learning needs and this information is then shared with the children, the child's parents and colleagues.

A full report is provided for parents and carers once a year for each child. The report contains details about progress, attainment and achievement as well as targets for improvement. Reports are also sent with results of national assessments, including Key Stage 1 Statutory Assessment, Year 1 phonic screening check and EYFS, along with an explanatory letter about the assessments.

Parents and Carers have the opportunity to meet with the class teacher each term to discuss their child's progress. Parents also know that the teachers are available at the beginning/end of each school day should they wish to discuss their child at any time. Parents are advised to make an appointment if they need a longer chat.

Equality Impact Statement

We have considered the positive or negative impact this policy may have and its potential to cause unlawful or indirect discrimination, or whether any opportunities to promote equality have been missed.

September 2013