

Fairview Primary School



Assessment Policy

Date Ratified: September 2019

Last Review Date: June 2026

To be Reviewed: June 2029

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Definition:

'...the term assessment refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged.'
(Black and William, 1998)

Aim:

The aim of this policy is to give a clear outline of all assessment techniques at Fairview, to ensure that assessment is used as a tool to inform planning, to track pupil progress and to raise standards.

In Fairview, we aim to promote assessment procedures that support teaching and learning in a manageable way. The primary purpose of our assessment arrangements is to provide this support.

Statutory assessment should be treated in accordance with the following principles.

It should be:

- in line with the policy framework for statutory assessment in Northern Ireland
- complimentary to, and supportive of, the key aims of the Northern Ireland Curriculum
- fit for purpose
- manageable
- supported by teacher professional judgements that are consistent and reliable
- appropriate at all levels for system wide accountability

Purpose of Assessment:

Learning, teaching and assessment should be viewed as a continuous cycle. Assessment is an integral part of the learning process. Careful planning and effective assessment are closely related. Since the purpose of teaching and assessment are the same - namely to help pupils learn – teaching and assessment need to be planned as complementary aspects of one activity. In turn, assessment information should be used to inform the planning process.

Assessment plays a key role in helping Fairview Primary School to improve outcomes. Knowing how each pupil is performing allows teachers to implement strategies to help individuals improve. This in turn promotes improvement at class level, then at school level, allowing us to set meaningful and challenging targets in our School Development Plan.

Summative assessment plays an equally important role. It allows us to monitor the progress of individual pupils, keeping parents and pupils informed about their progress, particularly at important key stage transitions.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum is undergoing a major review currently as part of TransformED. A central aim of the TransformED Strategy is to establish high, common attainment standards for pupils in Northern Ireland, underpinned by clearly defined learning outcomes that each child should meet at key stages in their education.

Objectives:

Good assessment practice in our school will:

- raise standards of attainment and behaviour, and improve pupil attitudes and response
- support high quality learning for every pupil by providing clear, dependable and curriculum aligned assessment information that helps teachers, parents and pupils understand progress and inform next steps in learning
- enable the active involvement of pupils in their own learning by providing effective feedback which closes the gap between present performance and future standards required
- draw upon as wide a range of evidence as possible using a variety of assessment activities
- strengthen core literacy, numeracy and science skills
- enable early and accurate identification of need
- provide information which can be used by teachers and the principal as they plan for individual pupils and cohorts
- provide information which can be used by parents or carers to understand their pupils' strengths, weaknesses and progress
- provide information which can be used by other interested parties
- provide information which can be used to evaluate Fairview's performance against its own previous attainment over time and against Northern Ireland standards through published system level data

Assessment for Learning (AFL)

In order to have a positive impact, assessment should enable both teachers and pupils to use feedback effectively to improve learning (resulting in decisions and actions for both the teacher and the learner). This is achieved in the short term through ongoing day-to-day interactions between pupils and teachers. In the medium and longer term, improved learning is achieved by taking stock at particular points that can draw on a full range of evidence to make reliable summative judgements.

Day to day interactions between teacher and pupil in our school can focus on observations made and/or recorded that day or on previous days in fortnightly planners. These observations, as well as underachiever observations, will form part of future planning for each teacher.

Ongoing day-to-day formative assessment can accumulate to provide the information teachers need to make summative judgements at particular points, for example at the end of a term or year.

Assessment for learning helps to identify the next steps needed to make progress. It takes account of pupils' strengths as well as weaknesses. Assessment for learning essentially promotes future learning.

Purposes

Assessment for learning will:

- Provide insight into pupils' learning for both pupils and teachers
- Promote success for all
- Support the target-setting process
- Enable continuous reflection on what pupils know now and what they need to know next
- Measure what is valued
- Promote immediate intervention and link judgements to learning intentions
- Raise standards by taking pupils to the 'edges of their capability'

Implications for teaching

The teacher will:

- Provide continuous oral and written feedback which identifies strengths and the next step for improvement
- Promote pupil involvement in self-assessment
- Act on insights gained to inform curricular targets
- Plan against what children know/can do/understand
- Make standards and objectives explicit to pupils
- Promote inclusion by attending to all pupils' learning needs, particularly for pupils who are at risk of underachievement
- Engage pupils in rich questioning allowing 'wait' time (time to think)
- Build in time for focused observation of teacher-directed and child-initiated activity

Impact on learning and the learner

The pupil will:

- Know what to do to improve
- Know what standards are required
- Know what has been achieved against known success criteria and what to do next
- Discuss, set and evaluate individual targets biannually with the teacher and display these prominently as a personal point of reference (e.g. on desk, class display)
- Gain confidence, motivation and self-esteem as a learner
- Increase their awareness and understanding of their own learning style(s) and of how they learn best
- Improve their own self-evaluation skills
- Make progress

Assessment of Learning

Purposes

Assessment of learning will:

- Provide a summary judgement about what has been learned at a specific point in time
- Establish benchmarks about what children can do and about school performance
- Show what pupils can do without support
- Inform the target setting process
- Promote subsequent intervention(s)

Implications for teaching

The teacher will:

- Provide a periodic summary through teacher assessment and tests
- Level pupils in September, January and June. A predicted level for each child to achieve in June will be made in September and reviewed in January
- Use Cross Curricular Tasks throughout the year in P3-P7 to confirm levels
- Identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding
- Identify weaknesses in the taught curriculum and in specific areas of learning through evaluations on weekly planners and collaboratively with year group on half termly planners. These will guide future planning
- Implement strategies to accelerate progress to meet expectations (narrowing the gap)
- Mark and measure against scores and levels

Impact on learning and the learner

The pupil will:

- Be able to gauge own performance in comparison to others and against previous performance
- Be able to measure own performance against externally agreed criteria and standards
- Have a measure of performance at specific milestones in life
- Know what standards and expectations are required

Summative Assessment Arrangements

The purpose of the new statutory assessment framework is to provide a modern, coherent and reliable system capable of supporting every learner, strengthening teaching and providing dependable system-level insight.

The framework, as part of the overall Fairview Primary School assessment policy, is designed to provide clear expectations, consistent processes and robust information that enables teachers to plan effectively, parents to understand their child's progress DE as a whole to monitor and improve educational outcomes.

FOUNDATION STAGE

Baseline Check

A Baseline Check will be introduced as part of the New Statutory Assessment Framework as part of TransformEd. This will provide early identification of literacy, numeracy, language, cognitive and social emotional needs. This will establish a starting point for value added measures. Although our own Baseline Assessment is no longer a statutory element of the Foundation Stage curriculum, it is considered by our Primary One teachers as a valued means of assessing the starting point for individual children as they begin formal education at Fairview. It also assists teachers in the establishment of good relations between teacher, child and parents. This will complement the statutory Baseline Check.

Main purposes of Baseline Check and Assessment are to:

- identify the children's strengths and individual learning needs
- enable programmes of learning to be planned which will meet the children's needs
- provide information that will inform parents about their child's skills and competences on entry to school

Baseline Assessment begins with an initial phonecall with the parents in late August / early September so that parents can provide information about their child. At this meeting parents are encouraged to share information which will assist the teacher is getting to know their child. It is also an opportunity for parents to share any concerns or medical information which is crucial to the child's health and safety in school.

Children are allowed a settling in period before formal observations and assessments are made by the class teacher and classroom assistant. These assessments are made by observing the children in normal planned classroom activities and in other everyday school situations. Children are observed as they work on their own, play, participate in group situations and relate to adults. Observations and records are kept of children's skills and competences in all Learning Areas.

Baseline Assessment observations are collated and a comment recorded on a Baseline Assessment Profile. These are shared and discussed with the parents at a second interview before October half term. They are also used as a means to plan effective teaching and learning opportunities for the individual needs within a Primary One class.

Observation

Play Based Learning is a fundamental element of the Foundation Stage curriculum. On a daily basis, children are given the opportunity to engage in a wide range of practical and exploratory experiences to promote learning in all of the Learning Areas. We value the importance of observing the children during Play Based Learning experiences and through our observations we aim to build an overall picture of each individual child. These daily observations provide us with information on all aspects of the child's development from social, emotional, physical and intellectual. Observations are used to evaluate, review and shape future planning. Children are observed in different situations including playing as individuals, in pairs or in groups.

Why we assess through play?

- It is a natural means of expression for most children
- It provides a natural and appealing setting for learning
- It allows children to experience a wide number of emotions and situations
- It is child initiated and is a child maintained activity
- It is a key tool for learning as it is natural to children
- It is flexible and should not be intrusive to the child's pre-school experience
- It helps adults to understand how children approach tasks thereby offering ways of improving their learning

A variety of methods of recording is used according to the teaching style and needs of each class. Observation notes will be made and may be focused, spontaneous or daily. These are recorded for each child under each Area of Learning. This information is used to inform future planning for whole class, groups and individual needs.

Observations are also made and recorded as necessary throughout the day during other areas of the curriculum and during informal social interactions. All observations assist in building a bigger picture of individual children.

Phonics Check

A new element of the Statutory Assessment Framework will be the introduction of a phonics check in Primary 2. This will ensure mastery of early decoding and identify pupils who require additional reading support.

This phonics check will complement Reading Records which take place in Primary 2 and a standardised Reading Now assessment which Primary 2 pupils complete in May each year.

KEY STAGE 1 AND 2

Standardised Tests

See assessment timetable

P3 – P7

Reading (appendix 6)

P3 – NGRT Form 1

P4 – NGRT Form 2A

P5 – NGRT Form 2B

P6 – NGRT Form 3A

P6 – NGRT Form 3D

P7 – NGRT Form 3B

**analysis in conjunction with Star Reader assessments (Accelerated Reader programme P4-P7)

English – Standardised Tests are administered in the summer term to P4 – P6 classes.

P4 – GL PTE 8

P5 – GL PTE 9

P6 – GL PTE 10

Maths – Standardised tests are administered in the summer term to P4 – P6 classes.

P4 – GL PTM 8

P5 – GL PTM 9

P6 – GL PTM 10

CCEA Computerised Adaptive Testing (CAT)

Adaptive testing completed on school devices for P4-P7

Spellings

SWST completed in September to provide confirmation of groupings P3-P7

SWST completed again in May as a summative assessment of progress made with spellings

PAAS (Pupil's Attitude About School)

P4-P7 - Administered in October – paper questionnaire

End of Key Stage Assessments:

Short, curriculum-aligned standardised tests provided by CCEA using scaled scores, providing diagnostic insight. Please note: Interim testing in Literacy and Numeracy is currently in place before full TransformED implementation in 2028.

Primary 4 – Literacy and Numeracy assessments

Primary 7 – Literacy, Numeracy and Science Assessment*

*Not currently in place

Examination / Tests:

Periodic assessments are used to monitor children's progress and to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum delivery. Such assessments include weekly spelling and table tests. Formal examinations, encompassing core curricular areas, are undertaken in January and June.

Records and Record Keeping

Teachers use records to review pupils' progress, set appropriate targets for the future and to form the basis of reports. All formal assessment results (NGRT, Standardised Tests...etc) are recorded onto the school's standardised database – Blue Book Recording Template (see appendix 2-4). These spreadsheets are stored electronically by staff in designated Staff Folders as part of the C2K system. Standardised results are also recorded onto Bromcom.

Each class in Fairview possesses an assessment box. This box contains all class assessments from the previous school year and current year. As the class moves through school, assessments prior to the previous year are safely destroyed. Standardised assessments (NGRT, SWST) are kept throughout a child's time in Fairview Primary School.

Target Setting and reviewing progress

Target setting fits into the annual cycle of school review, planning and action. Specific developments in target setting are found in the annual School Development Plan.

Tracking is used to identify patterns of progress of different children as they pass through the school. The evidence from Pupil Profiles and formal assessment scores are analysed to monitor children's expected progress. This data is used to identify patterns in progress throughout the school. Performance of specific groups of children is monitored.

Underachievers

(see also Policy for Underachievers)

As pupils are tracked through school, some will be identified as underachievers. Pupils will initially be identified based on NRIT score against standardised score. A differential of 10 or more (highlighted red in Assessment manager - standardised score – NRIT) would indicate a level of underachievement where specific focus from the teacher is required. Pupils may be identified as underachievers based on teacher judgement. This will be discussed with Key Stage Coordinator.

- Spelling underachiever's score is based on that year's September score

- Reading Score in January will be used to gauge progress for reading underachievers (P6 also complete NGRT in May). All other underachiever progress scores will be ascertained in May/June
 - Reading underachievers Feb – June will repeat their January NGRT
- Pupils may be removed in January based on teacher judgement (January assessments and assessments as part of the New Statutory Assessment Framework will assist with this)
- Similarly, based on class assessments and assessments as part of the New Statutory Assessment Framework, pupils may be added as an underachiever
- ***Pupils who are removed as an underachiever in January for spelling, literacy or maths will remain in statistics for June
- Primary 7 will not have underachievers after Term 1. Individual pupils will be targeted for End of Key Stage levelling and stanine promotion
- Primary 4 will have underachievers starting in January each year
- Data per year group will be analysed in June (January and June for Reading) as follows:
 - Amount of Underachievers
 - Starting Amount Difference >-10
 - % >-10
 - Finish Score Difference >-10
 - % >-10
 - % difference improved
 - Improved but difference still greater than -10
- Results will be shared with staff January and June

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 Parents

- Governors' Annual Report to parents
- Primary 1, Primary 6 and Primary 7 hold Parent Information Sessions, detailing what to expect in each respective year group at different points throughout the year
- Primary 2-6 hold Parent Information afternoons in September
- Each year group distributes a Parent Information Leaflet at the start of each term detailing literacy, numeracy and topic work to be covered and how parents can support with this
- Two interviews per academic year are provided for parents to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher
- Annual Pupil Profile to parents on their child's achievements with a further opportunity to discuss the contents
- P3 – P6 issue a result summary report in February and June, including the standardised score for PTE and PTM with a description of what these scores mean

- Children share achievements through SeeSaw and the newsletter which is emailed out to all parents fortnightly. Our Facebook page also seeks to report school events and achievements to our whole school community
- Discussion with parents is facilitated by an effective home / school liaison policy, where every effort is made to accommodate parents' requests for meetings with staff at the earliest opportunity

Reporting to Governors

- Mr McAllister reports to Governors
- Staff holding management positions report to Governors annually regarding their actions plans as detailed in the School Development Plan

Reporting to Outside Agencies

- Literacy and Numeracy assessments in P4 and P7 are sent directly to CCEA for marking and used as part of System Level Data reporting
- Additional testing as part of the New Statutory Assessment Framework to be introduced during current SDP cycle (2026-2029)
 - Phonics Check P2
 - Annual Reading Fluency Checks P3-P5
 - Multiplication Check P5
- Where appropriate, staff may be asked to report about the achievement of certain pupils to outside agencies such as reviews, case conferences and other such private matters when requested by the Principal
- The children's achievements and events and items of interest may be reported on the school's web site, Facebook page and occasionally in the local press. Photographs are only used with parental permission

Role of the Data Team

The Data team consists of the Principal, Senior School Leader, Learning Support Coordinator (SENCo) and Subject Leaders for Literacy and Numeracy

- Develop and manage a streamlined approach to data collection and analysis, ensuring all data is purposeful and the basis of future improvement
- Review the assessment policy regularly in the light of statutory requirements and the needs of the school
- Provide support and guidance with assessment and keep up to date with current information – (see appendix 2-4)
- Resource school with relevant tests and update assessment cycle
- Maintain accurate records through the 'Blue Book Recording' format and consult with all staff about the targets set
- Highlight and discuss with relevant staff pupils who have made limited progress or are working below expectations, ensuring appropriate intervention has been put in place
- Analyse results to identify attainment and progress made by pupils, including consultation with the Learning Support Coordinator
- Report to governors regarding the policy, statutory test results and cohort targets
- Monitor with subject leaders, changes made by teachers to formal assessment