



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Assessment Policy

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Rationale

In line with the ethos and philosophy of the school, our Assessment Policy is an essential document which is intended to assist teachers in their task of ensuring that a range of assessment strategies are carried out regularly and consistently for every pupil throughout the school. Secure and meaningful assessment of pupils' work, behaviour and attitudes, enables the school to fulfil one of its central aims; to encourage every pupil to achieve her or his full potential throughout their time at Sparken Hill Academy.

At this point, it should be made clear that this document does not address the assessment of pupils' attitudes. The assessment of these important aspects of pupils' education will be incorporated in the school's policies on *Behaviour* and *Personal, Social and Health Education*.

The Aims of Assessment

The central aim of assessment is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn effectively. Useful assessment enables teaching staff to plan for the future and therefore improve the quality of learning *and* teaching throughout school.

Teachers and support staff are assessing three different but inter-related aspects of

learning: **Attainment:** pupils NC 'ARE' of attainment according to national criteria, tests

and related data **Achievement:** pupils 'ARE' of attainment based on their own abilities, capabilities etc

Progress: a measurement of pupils' achievement and attainment based on their initial 'starting point'

In our view individual and group 'Progress' is the most important of the three because it demonstrates how effectively that particular child has learned and developed over a period of time.

There are three main types of assessment: formative, diagnostic and summative. Combined, these forms of assessment should contribute significantly towards *improving the quality of learning and teaching*.

Formative assessment (*How well am I doing...?*) is carried out for the following reasons:

- to indicate where a pupil is in her/his learning
- to assist the teacher in planning for the future development of each pupil
- to assist the teacher in planning for progress for each pupil

Diagnostic assessment helps teachers to:

- identify individual strengths and difficulties in order to provide appropriate support/ challenge (at Sparken Hill Academy this form of assessment is generally used to identify a particular Special Educational Need)

Summative (How well have I done...?) assessment enables teachers to:

- enable the accurate recording of pupils' overall attainments in order to give information to the pupil, parents and carers, teaching staff and colleagues at other schools on transfer

Our assessment strategy aims to provide *all* pupils with the opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. Assessment should also inform the future development of the curriculum with its clearly stated learning goals. Finally, assessment provides vital information about our pupils' experience and attainment, which will guide the direction of future learning. Our approach to assessment is based on the fundamental principles of *Assessment for Learning* (AfL) and assessing pupil progress using a variety of tools.

In order to fulfil these aims we will:

- integrate assessment into our long, medium and short-term planning
- share learning objectives for the lesson. The children will use this for each piece of work. Sharing the criteria for assessment and setting challenging targets for improvement ensure that pupil progress is promoted and expected with pupils
- use a variety of assessment styles and techniques, agreed by all staff
- use assessment to help us track each pupil's progress throughout school so that we can plan effectively for her/his further development
- ensure that there is consistency of assessment practice and judgements throughout school
- give children opportunities to discuss their work, assess their own performance and set future targets
- use a whole-school marking system allowing opportunities for the children to respond
- keep evidence of our assessments in order to meet the requirements of external scrutiny
- undertake regular work analysis in order to monitor consistency of approach and evaluate teaching methods
- analyse assessment outcomes in order to contribute to the process of school target setting

Methods of Assessment

We use a range of strategies in assessing pupils, including:

- the school's own Entry Profile (based on EYFS 2020 criteria), in conjunction with the new Early Excellence baseline.
- Published materials such as Twinkl, ZPD scores in Accelerated Reader Reading assessments in FFT
- Teacher's ongoing assessment (continuous teacher assessment, both formal and informal through questioning, plenary discussions, marking etc.)
- Power Maths Assessments
- Testbase
- end of Key Stage Tests (Years 2 and 6).

Assessment Records

All teachers are required to formally 'track' pupil progress in Writing, Reading and

Mathematics and Spag using National Curriculum Criteria and this is stored electronically.

The Leadership Team tracks all pupils attainment and progress (using all available data) and produces EAZMAG writer tracking reports. EAZMAG deadlines are due on the penultimate Thursday of each Term.

Teaching staff use the EAZMAG online tracking system which indicates every pupils' ARE of attainment at various key points in their school careers. The tracking document also allows teachers to regularly set targets for **every** pupil in school.

Planning for Assessment

Apart from ongoing assessments, which each teacher undertakes on a daily, routine basis, there are key times during the year when more formal or statutory assessments take place.

Baseline assessment takes place shortly (within seven weeks) after first admission pupils arrive at school.

Assessments that inform pupil progress meetings on a termly basis.

National Tests take place annually, in May.

End-of-module assessments are carried out towards the end of each study unit or as deemed appropriate by the class teacher.

Assessment of English

Apart from the regular marking of books, key questioning and the ongoing assessments, which are part of effective teaching, a range of other assessment strategies are used by teachers at Sparken Hill Academy.

Reading assessment includes:

- a key word check list with target words for future progress
- a reading planner for each pupil
- pupil self-assessment strategies which can be completed in pairs
- AR assessments incorporating ZPD reading ages and comprehension
- phonics tracking using phonicstracker.com

Assessment of Writing

When pupils begin to be able to write a short, connected story or account, we start to assess story writing. Each pupil's writing is assessed at three points during the year, against National Curriculum assessment criteria. Pupils' work is assessed against given sets of key performance indicators. These indicators are shared with pupils prior to any given tasks or activities.

Spelling

There are many strategies that teachers use in order to assess spelling, including:

- marking pupils work for spelling errors (focusing on *key words* or *target words*)
 - using spelling games
 - spelling tests, as and when appropriate (preferably as assessment of recently learned words or rules)
 - encouraging pupils to self-assess and self-correct using a variety of strategies (e.g. word families, mnemonics, over-articulation, spelling rules, words within words etc.)
- When a child is secure on phonics, they start spelling strategies and assessments based on the Plan-it resources.

Punctuation

The assessment of punctuation is based upon the criteria and key objectives as set out in the National Curriculum for English.

When assessing punctuation, over-marking and over-correcting can cause confusion to the pupil. We therefore employ targeted marking of pupils work, that is, where the teacher focuses on that aspect of punctuation, which has been given or agreed upon, as being the learning intention for the particular task being marked.

Mathematics

Assessment in mathematics is generally carried out by continuous teacher assessment, based on the teacher's marking, questioning, discussion and observations. Teachers also use the Power Maths Scheme assessments, Test Base, Rising Stars and NFER to support teacher assessment in mathematics.

Similar tracking systems are used to record pupil attainment and progress in Mathematics as with English.

Other Subjects

Teacher assessment and marking is used to track all other curriculum subjects based on ongoing teacher assessment strategies.

Ongoing Teacher Assessment

Continuous assessment by a pupil's teacher is the *most* powerful and valuable form of assessment and is frequently carried out by:

- effective questioning
- marking work effectively
- effective verbal responses to pupils work
- encouraging pupils to pose their own questions
- encouraging self-assessment

Everyday assessment is promoted

by:

- sharing learning intentions with pupils
- effective, learning-led feedback (verbal or written)
- enabling pupils to engage in self-assessment
- key questioning
- effective use of plenary sessions
- discussing pupil attainment and progress with the teaching assistant team and other colleagues
- effective marking based on the learning intention

Consistency of Assessment

Consistency of assessment is essential and is achieved by:

- using national curriculum or Foundation Stage attainment criteria
- agreement on a common pattern, techniques and checklists for assessment
- staff monitoring meetings to ensure reliable, accurate assessment judgements are being made consistently across school
- a common marking policy .

Marking Policy Statement

We view our marking policy as an essential element of the school's overall assessment strategy.

Rationale

We mark to assure pupils that we value their work and in order to motivate them to progress further. We also mark pupils' work in order to assess each child's progress, identifying problems or misconceptions *and* indicating targets for further improvement. Our marking strategies are in line with the principles of AfL. Research indicates that sharing criteria for assessment with pupils and setting targets for improvement helps to ensure a greater degree of success. These ideals remain a goal for each teacher but teachers cannot be expected to carry out a detailed analysis of every piece of work a pupil produces. Common sense needs to prevail and the frequency of use of this technique must remain in the remit of the class teacher and her/his professional judgement. As an encouragement to independence and self-motivation, *we also encourage pupils to share in objectives and targets and to check their own work against given criteria.* Pupils are also encouraged to assess each others' work using methods based on the teachers' marking strategies. Supply teachers / PPA cover also are required to mark all work delivered. This is denoted by [Supply] or [PPA]. This should be indicated on the piece of work. Teachers mark in green and TAs blue. We should remember that:

- the degree of maturity and ability of the child will affect the form and extent of marking
- we mark not only to correct error but to indicate and celebrate success *and* to indicate further improvement

Oral Responses to Pupils' Work

Teachers' oral responses to pupils' work (including pupils' answers to questions, suggestions in discussions etc.) represent a powerful form of marking. We need to feedback evaluative comments to our pupils on how they are tackling problems and tasks, not simply on whether their answers are 'right or wrong'. A crucial part of the teacher's role is to encourage 'fear-free' thinking and that getting things wrong or making mistakes is an essential part of learning. Positive, constructive comments by teachers can have a profound impact on pupils' confidence and willingness to persevere with tasks and re-assess their own thinking.

Assessment at the Foundation Stage

Assessment of our youngest pupils is based on criteria set out in the *Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum* and is carried out by the pupils' class teacher and/or the teaching assistant. Details of the range and methods of assessment can be found in FSP documentation and other related guidance.

Keeping Pupils' Assessed Work

In Foundation Stage and KS1, the Class teacher retains examples of assessed work by all pupils in their classes. In Key Stage 2, a group of pupils work is kept by the class teacher. Our aim is not to gather a bulky, meaningless compendium, but to provide an ongoing and up-to-date example of the pupil's work and progress which can be shared in a meaningful way with all members of the partnership.

School Records

- Teachers keep their own records on pupil progress, Special Needs, abilities and talents or medical issues of significance. These records are essentially working documents and are confidential.
- The pupil records (see previous section) are kept centrally, although available to pupils, parents and staff as and when requested.
- The following record files are kept in the office in a lockable cabinet:
 - Entry and Baseline records (Foundation Stage Profile data)
 - Records of Optional SAT/SATs assessments
 - 'Tracking Progress' documents are available electronically.
 - Copies of Reports to Parents
 - Medical notes
 - Special Needs Records and master copies of structured conversations and agreed targets
 - Attendance record available electronically.

A whole-school Assessment Folder, containing data from FFT, IDSR SATs, Teacher Assessment etc. is held in the Principal's office.

This information is used by teaching staff and the Governing Body in order to analyse how well pupils are learning and progressing and in order to develop and improve the school's provision. The information is also used to inform parents and carers of this aspect of the school's performance.

Reporting to Parents

Parents are always welcome at Sparken Hill Academy. We are rightly proud of our close liaison with parents and carers. Much reporting goes on in an informal way in parent-teacher discussions.

When parents or carers wish to discuss an issue in depth, a more formal arrangement is made with the Principal or class teacher.

We hold two formal Parents and Carers Consultation Evenings each year; one in Autumn Term, one in the Spring and a more informal arrangement in July where an end of year report is issued. The first meeting concerns each pupil's general progress, both academic and pastoral, and also highlights any identified targets. We also attempt to share mid term reviews with parents to ensure that parents are aware at any one time how well their child is performing and how they may help.

The Annual Report also contains a detailed breakdown of the end of Key Stage Test results for the appropriate pupils as well as highlighting further targets for improvement and progress for all pupils in school. This partnership approach is a powerful strategy in demonstrating the school's commitment to working with parents and pupils.

Parents and Carers are welcome, of course, to arrange a meeting with their child's class teacher or indeed with the Principal at any time during the year.

Special Educational Needs Targets and Consultation on Special Needs

Targets are updated regularly, in consultation with parents during structured conversations. All issues relating to pupils with Special Needs are overseen by the Inclusion Manager and records are held centrally. Each child will have a copy of their own child friendly targets.

Data Analysis and Target-Setting

Data for analysis and target setting is available from a number of sources:

- The school's own Foundation Stage entry or 'baseline' assessment
- Foundation Stage Profiles
- Tracking data
- end of Key Stage data
- Optional test data
- data on SEN, Free School Meals, gender balance, socio-economic information etc, held by the school (now collated by the LA and Ofsted) benchmarking data, including ASP data and other information issued by DfE, or Ofsted as well as data in the LA's online *Primary School Performance Handbook*
- teacher assessment data

The school uses all available data in setting whole-school KS 2 SAT targets, staff working closely with the Governing Body, throughout this process.

Pupils are encouraged to take part in setting their own personal targets, working with their class teacher and, when appropriate, with their parents/carers. Sharing objectives and targets with pupils can be a powerful motivator in enabling pupils to achieve their goals.

Responsibility for Assessment

Although all members of staff make an important contribution to assessment throughout school, direct responsibility for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the systems and processes rests with the Assessment Coordinator, the Principal, Deputy Principal or any member of the leadership team makes reports to the Strategic Development Committee or to the full Governing Body (as appropriate) on different occasions through the year.