



**Portrush Primary School  
Assessment Policy  
Last Review March 2018  
Reviewed January 2022  
Next Review January 2025**

## **Portrush Primary School**

### ***ASSESSMENT POLICY***

At Portrush Primary School our children have a wide range of abilities, preferred learning styles, experiences, personalities and interests.

Through a broad and balanced curriculum our pupils participate in a progression of learning experiences that are carefully structured to suit their needs. Assessment is an integral part of this learning and teaching process. Continuous monitoring of each child's progress gives a clear picture of each child's needs, achievements and abilities - enabling planning and delivery to be more effective, thereby raising attainment for every child. The outcomes of assessments will help children to become involved in raising their own expectations, celebrating their own achievements and increasing their self motivation.

The aim of this policy is to give a clear outline of assessment including all the important dimensions within it (recording, target setting, pupil progress, tracking and reporting techniques) that are used in Portrush Primary School and to ensure that assessment as a whole is used as a tool to inform planning, to track pupil progress and to raise standards.

#### **Aims of Assessment**

Good assessment practice in our school aims to:

- guide and support the teacher as planner, provider and evaluator;
- draw upon as wide a range of evidence as possible using a variety of assessment activities;
- evaluate children's levels of understanding, confirm judgements and help to identify strengths and weaknesses for individual children;
- enable the teacher to adjust teaching, to take account of assessment information and to focus on how pupils learn;
- provide each child, the teacher and parents with an indication of achievement and progress in relation to ability;
- provide information which can be used by parents or carers to understand their pupils' strengths, areas for focus or improvement and progress;
- provide information on which to base future curriculum planning and resource decisions;

- raise standards of attainment and behaviour and improve pupil attitudes and responses;
- 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;
- promote pupil self-esteem through a shared understanding of the learning processes and the routes to improvement;
- track pupil performance and in particular identify those pupils at risk of underachievement and/or with special educational needs at both ends of the ability spectrum;
- provide information which can be used by teachers, the principal and SENCO as they plan for individual pupils and cohorts;
- provide information which can be used to evaluate Portrush Primary School's performance against its own previous attainment over time and against Northern Ireland standards;
- provide information which can be used by other interested parties; and
- fulfil statutory requirements relating to assessment.

## **Purposes of Assessment**

### Diagnostic

To identify strengths and areas for improvement and to inform next steps.

### Formative

To use assessment information to make specific improvements in learning.

### Summative

To acknowledge, record and report pupil's overall performance and achievement at a point in time.

### Evaluative

To inform curricular planning and provide information for monitoring and accountability.

## **Principles of Assessment**

Assessment should:

1. Be complementary to and supportive of, the key aims of the NI Curriculum
2. Be fit for purpose
3. Be manageable
4. Be supported by teacher professional judgements that are consistent and reliable
5. Be appropriate for all levels of system wide accountability

Two distinct types of assessment are identified and used in our school. These are: *Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning.*

### **Assessment for Learning (AFL)**

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.

In Portrush Primary School, assessment for learning strategies are employed on a daily basis in every classroom to enhance learning for the pupils.

Assessment *for* Learning:

- Often called formative assessment
- Takes place *during* the learning
- Makes pupils active participants in their learning and focuses on *next steps* in learning
- Feeds forward to manage improvements
- Fosters responsibility for & ownership of learning
- Establishes where they *are*, where they need to *go* and *how* to get there

### **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***

Teachers will:

- Explain to pupils what they are about to learn and why; (share Learning Intentions)
- Explain how to be successful at attaining the new learning; (share Success Criteria) The teacher will provide continuous oral and written feedback which identifies strengths and the next step for improvement
- Promote pupil involvement in self assessment and peer assessment
- Act on insights gained to inform curricular targets
- Involve children in planning e.g. use of mind maps and effective questions
- 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
- Demonstrate to pupils how to ask, as well as answer, better questions to deepen their own learning. Use of questioning skills by teacher and pupils and allow 'wait' time (time to think)
- Be more focused on pupils' learning
- Be more concerned with the learning than activity or performance
- Be more reflective about own practice
- Pass more control to pupils
- Use techniques such as:

WWW

What Went Well?

EBI

Even Better If?

WAGOLL

What A Good One Looks Like

## ***Impact on learning and the learner***

Pupils will:

- Know what to do to improve
- Know what standards are required
- Know what has been achieved against known success criteria
- Know what to do next
- Gain confidence, perseverance, motivation, independence 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
- Improve in progress and attainment

## **Assessment of Learning (AoL)**

Assessment of learning is more associated with judgements based on scores or levels for statutory or summative purposes. Assessment of learning describes and labels past learning.

- Often called summative assessment
- Takes place *after* the learning
- Focuses on pupils' achievements
- Is used to provide feedback to parents based on performance evidence

### ***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***

Teachers will:

- Provide a periodic summary through teacher assessment and tests
- Identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding
- Identify weaknesses in the taught curriculum and in specific areas of learning through analysis of performance which guide future planning
- Implement strategies to accelerate progress to meet expectations
- Mark and measure against scores and levels

### ***Impact on learning and the learner***

Pupils will:

- Be able to gauge own performance in comparison against their 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

## **Assessment of Learning - Summative Assessment Arrangements**

Summative assessments are also used to help us to decide what a child can do at a particular time. These assessments are given periodically during the school year. Results of summative assessments should be used to assist teachers with setting criteria and target setting and thereby engage the children in the learning process creating clear expectations. Analysis of standardised tests should also be used as an essential part of pupil progress tracking - to inform future planning for classes, group and individuals. It can also provide essential information for identification of Special Educational Needs.

This is done through:

- school based assessment for specific tasks - at the end of a topic or after teaching a specific skill or concept
- end of key stage results
- standardised tests
- annual report to parents

In the use of formative and summative assessments, teachers must ensure a balance so that a clear picture of each pupil's abilities and needs can be established. This information will be used to inform planning and individual/group/class target settings. The information should also be used to engage the pupils in the learning process and move their learning forward.

### **Using Assessment Outcomes to Inform Next Steps in Planning**

#### ***At Classroom Level:***

1. What level are my pupils now?
2. Where do they need to be next ensuring an appropriate level of challenge?
3. What are the best strategies to help pupils reach the next steps in their learning?

#### ***At Co-ordinator Level (Literacy and Numeracy):***

1. How is my area of responsibility performing compared with recent trends?
2. How is my area of responsibility performing compared with other curriculum areas?
3. What are the priorities for improving provision within my area of responsibility?

### ***At Whole School Level (Literacy and Numeracy):***

1. How is our school performing compared with recent three year trends?
2. How is our school performing compared with other schools in similar circumstances?
3. What are our whole school priorities for improving pupil outcomes, especially in Literacy and Numeracy?

### **Overview to Assessment within the Foundation Stage**

#### ***Baseline Assessment***

Baseline Assessment is no longer a statutory element but our Foundation Stage teachers have taken the best practice from this assessment to assess the starting point for individual children as they begin formal education at Portrush Primary School. It also assists teachers in the establishment of good relations between teacher, child and parents.

The main purposes of this 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

Year 1 begins with an initial meeting with the parents in 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 in 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 spontaneous and planned classroom activities and 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.

During Years 1 and 2 on-going assessment will be based mainly on teacher observation which will inform the learning programme for each child. Observations are a natural and essential part of good practice for teachers and classroom assistants. Well-planned, regular and skilful observations help teachers gain information about children's progress over time which ensures that all children's needs are being met.

## ***Observation in Play***

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 regular 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 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 using *2 Build a Profile: 2 Simple* and may be focused, spontaneous or daily. 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.

## ***Observation and Levelling in Literacy and Numeracy***

In addition to the observation that takes place in play based learning, further observations are carried out in literacy and numeracy to assess progress. As already outlined, the primary method of assessment in the Foundation Stage is observation by the class teacher. However, in the Foundation Stage tests may also be used to consolidate activities e.g. phonic tests, simple spelling tests, numeracy tests. At the end of each year children will be assigned levels in the cross-curricular skills of Communication and Using Mathematics. These cross-curricular skills are assessed using the Levels of Progression which focus on skills as well as knowledge.

## **Overview to Assessment in Key Stages 1 & 2**

### ***Tests/Assessment***

Periodic assessments are used to monitor children's progress and to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum delivery. Such assessments include weekly spelling, table and numeracy facts tests and occasional end of topic tests.

### ***End of Key Stage Assessments***

All Years 3 - 7 classes carry out a range of class work activities which enable teachers to assess the children's attainment by the end of each year and ultimately at the end of Key Stages in Communication and Using Mathematics. Only in Years 4 & 7 are the levels reported to parents and to CCEA. The remaining year groups use the information for tracking and monitoring progress of pupils.

### ***Standardised Tests - Key Stages 1 & 2***

Evidence is gathered and analysed from the results of standardised tests in the core curricular areas of English and Mathematics from Years 3 -7:

Years 3-7	Progress in English (PTE)	May
Years 3-7	Progress in Numeracy (PTM)	May
Years 4-7	Single Word Spelling Test	May
Years 4-7	Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)	May
Years 4&6	Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (CAT4)	May

These tests are carried out digitally. Testing enables teachers to monitor children's individual progress and identify specific strengths and weaknesses and so plan for future teaching and learning. This evidence may also be used to provide information about the work of a particular pupil in order to ensure that sufficiently challenging goals are set or, conversely, to indicate that the pupil may require additional support by being placed on the Special Needs Register or targeted for underachievement. The PASS test is also carried out to assess attitudes to self and school that may assist teachers in planning for nurture provision or pastoral support where required.

## **Records and Record Keeping**

Records need to be relevant and record keeping needs to be ongoing, manageable and useful.

At Portrush Primary School, the purpose of recording is to:

- Help teachers use records to monitor pupils' progress
- Recognise achievement, note strengths and areas of focus and development
- Document evidence
- Inform planning and set appropriate targets for the future,
- Form a basis for reporting to children, parents, other schools, area board and DE
- Provide a summary for discussion and inform verbal and written reports

## **Target Setting and Progress Tracking**

Key Stage targets are set in September for P4 and P7 and these are reviewed in June of each school year.

Tracking is used to identify patterns of progress for children as they pass through the school. Literacy and Numeracy levels are tracked on specific grids and those children not deemed to be making appropriate progress are identified and supported either through Special Education Needs provision or by being targeted by the class teacher. Target children are monitored each half term with samples of work collected and commented on. A mid-year assessment is also completed and each child is reviewed at the end of the year to determine the effectiveness of the support that has been put in place.

## **Reporting**

### ***Reporting to Parents***

In accordance with statutory requirements, the school will send a written report to parents/ guardians by 30th June in every school year. This report will include information about:

- pupil's progress in every subject and activity which forms part of his/her curriculum; and
- areas for development for the pupil to focus on in the following school year.

Teachers will meet parents in October to discuss the year ahead and how the pupil is settling and in February to discuss the child's progress to date.

Portrush Primary School adopts an open door policy and parents are always welcome to make an appointment with their child's teacher at any time to discuss any worries or concerns relating to their child's education.

### ***Reporting to Governors***

- Mrs McNeill, as assessment co-ordinator will report to Governors
- Staff holding management positions will report to Governors regarding their areas of expertise.

### ***Reporting to secondary schools***

- Information relating to end of key stage levels
- Any necessary communication between teachers/principals from both sectors.

### ***Reporting to Outside Agencies***

- End of Key Stage levels are sent to CCEA for analysis against similar schools in Northern Ireland.
- 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, SeeSaw, Facebook and occasionally in the local press. Photographs will only be used with parental permission.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

In order for this policy to be effective all teaching staff must demonstrate corporate ownership of the policy. This will be demonstrated as follows:

- Pupil assessment is the responsibility of the class teacher
- The Assessment coordinator, Learning Support coordinator, specific curriculum coordinators and the principal will support each teacher
- Each teacher should ensure that they make proper provision for appropriate recording and for the effective monitoring of each pupil's progress
- Each teacher should retain a copy of this document and should familiarise themselves with this policy and specific procedures in each subject policy
- The principal will have overall responsibility for assessment throughout the school

## **Role of the Assessment Co-ordinator**

- Formulate the school's assessment policy in consultation with the principal, staff, parents, pupils and Governors
- Review the policy regularly in the light of statutory requirements and the needs of the school
- Provide support and guidance, keep up to date with current developments in assessment as laid down by CCEA and disseminate these to the staff
- Organise Key Stage target setting
- Organise the recording of literacy and numeracy data into class assessment tracking grids
- Organise implementation and recording of standardised tests
- Organise the format of the reporting system to be used within the school
- Analyse results to identify attainment and progress made by pupils
- Monitor and evaluate with subject co-ordinators and head of key stages
- Highlight pupils who have made no progress or are working below expectations

An assessment meeting will take place at the beginning of the school year when the agenda will include the following:

1. Tracking of KS1 and KS2 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Outcomes
2. Comparison of Literacy and Numeracy results for Particular Cohorts
3. Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Targets- *review of targets set in September*
4. Target Groups
  - Children reviewed in line with:*
    - *January Review Data, PTE and PTM Progress Discrepancy (with CAT Verbal and CAT Quantitative) and PTE and PTM progress from previous year*
5. Tracking Year Group Averages for PTE and PTM
6. P3-P6 Threads and Weaknesses in Curriculum Areas *as compared to National Average for literacy and numeracy*
7. Stanine Review Tracking Grids
8. PTE and PTM Discrepancies - *progress in relation to CAT Verbal and CAT Quantitative*
9. PTE and PTM Progress - *progress from previous year*
10. Individual Student Reports PTE and PTM

As a result of this class teachers will then complete an analysis of the standardized data for their class and in consultation with the previous teacher decide which children need to be placed in a target group for literacy and numeracy.

## **Internal Consistency**

In Portrush Primary School priority will be given to achieving internal consistency (focus on Communication, Using Mathematics and Using Information and Communications Technology) in a number of ways:

1. Through internal moderation, staff will develop a common understanding of assessment objectives, processes and levels
2. The relevant subject leaders will review and monitor samples of work and provide comment and recommendation in relation to content, style, quality, presentation and marking practice throughout the school.
3. Through the use of standardised tests
4. Levelling will take place termly in the three areas of the cross curricular skills and will include internal standardization and CCEA moderation
5. Samples of moderated work will be kept for future use

## **Continuous Monitoring**

Assessment must be seen as a continuous process and will incorporate a variety of strategies. It will be a regular feature, at times planned and formal and at times unplanned and informal. In addition to standardised tests and ongoing check-ups, teachers will also make focused and incidental observations. Importance will be placed on evaluating a pupil's performance in the context of normal classroom activities and in practical situations e.g. group discussions, topic work, art, drama, PE lessons etc.

## **Equal Opportunities and Special Needs**

It is policy in Portrush Primary School and indeed the responsibility of all staff to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social circumstances have access to the curriculum and achieve the best progress possible. Procedures which are specifically designed to access and identify special needs as well as teaching arrangements are outlined in the Special Educational Needs Policy.

## **Reviewing the Policy**

This review will take the form of staff, parents, pupils and Governors consultation and discussion, which in turn will contribute to the on-going development and ownership of the policy.





