

Thurnham C E Infant School



Assessment Policy

Member of Staff Responsible	Mrs E Pateman
Position	Deputy Head / Assessment Coordinator
Dated	October 2015
Date of next review	October 2016

1). The Principles and aims of our Assessments

At Thurnham Church of England Infant School we believe assessment is fundamental to being able to extend and challenge children's learning so that they can fulfil their potential.

We believe assessment should be incorporated systematically into teaching strategies in order to assess progress and diagnose any needed developments, whether on an individual, group, class or whole school basis.

We believe assessment is only effective if there is a regular review, communicated and acted upon at all levels.

Our assessment procedures are free from bias, stereotyping and generalisation in respect of gender, class, race and special educational needs. However, we do analyse the progress of all our different groups in order to ensure that we meet individual and group needs.

Our AIMS of Assessment:

- To identify and monitor children's progress.
- To provide teachers with useful information which they can use to plan further work targets for each child.
- To highlight strengths and weaknesses so that teaching can be targeted to individual needs.
- To celebrate children's achievements in a broad range of curriculum areas.
- To provide continuity and progression of learning between classes and year groups, and between infant and junior schools.
- To identify difficulties shared by children, including pupils who have SEN needs, so that help and support can be focused and effective.
- To provide parents with information about their child's progress at school.
- To comply with statutory requirements.
- To track a child's development throughout his/her time at Infant School.
- To have cohesive procedures throughout the school.

Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning at our school:

- Assessment provides evidence to guide teaching and learning.
- Assessment provides the opportunity for children to demonstrate and review their Progress.

Assessment is fair.

- Assessment is inclusive of all abilities.
- Assessment is free from bias towards factors that are not relevant to what the assessment intends to address.

Assessment is honest.

- Assessment outcomes are used in ways that minimise undesirable effects.
- Assessment outcomes are conveyed in an open, honest and transparent way to assist children with their learning.

Assessment is consistent.

- Judgements are formed according to common principles.
- The results are readily understandable by third parties.

A school's results are compared with other schools, collaboratively, locally and nationally.

Assessment is ambitious.

- Assessment places achievement in context against nationally standardised criteria and expected standards.
- Assessment embodies, through objective criteria, a pathway of progress and development for every child.
- Assessment objectives set high expectations for learners.

Assessment is appropriate.

- The purpose of any assessment process is clearly stated.
- Conclusions regarding children's achievement are valid when the assessment method is appropriate (to age, to the task and to the desired feedback information).
- Assessments consistently draw on a wide range of evidence to provide a complete picture of each child's achievement.
- Assessment demands no more procedures or records than are practically required to allow children, their parents and teachers to plan future learning.

2). Arrangements for the governance, management and evaluation of assessment at Thurnham CE Infant School.

- It is the responsibility of the Assessment lead (Deputy Head) and Head Teacher to ensure that the assessment policy is maintained and followed by all members of the school staff.
- The Head and Deputy Head teacher will monitor regularly the effectiveness of our assessment practices throughout the school. This will take place through lesson observations, work and planning scrutiny and Pupil Progress Meetings. Year Group Leaders are responsible for ensuring that their team members are following school procedures and supporting them with this as necessary. They too will undertake work scrutiny, lesson observations, planning scrutiny and data tracking activities.
- The effectiveness of this policy and practices will be judged by the ease and confidence with which staff are able to assess the children within their classes. How they are able to use these assessments to develop appropriate outcomes for all children and how well they are able to monitor and track the progress of all the children. Staff should have a confidence to be able to talk about the children within their classes and an understanding of their barriers to learning and of the next steps children need to take.
- The members of the Senior Leadership take into consideration our Raise on Line data and Making Figures Speak.

Governance

- The Evaluation Committee meets three times a year and considers our termly progress and outcomes.

- Presentations are held by members of the senior teaching staff for the governors to ensure that their knowledge and understanding is kept up to date.
- Governors visit the school during the working day to see how it all looks in practice and thus to concrete their understanding.
- All governors are informed as to how the school compares locally and nationally to that of similar aged children.
- Governors have a copy of our Ofsted Dashboard so they are aware of any areas of concern or weakness.

3) Information about how assessment outcomes will be collected and used.

- At Thurnham CE Infant school we use the terms :
Working Towards, Emerging, Expected and Exceeded when we are assessing and reporting on the children's current progress within in Key Stage 1. These terms are relative to each of the year groups and relate to the child's progress within that particular year.
- For our own internal tracking system enter data numerically into SIMS. This also enables us to break each of the aspects of Emerging Expected and Exceeded into lower and higher. In effect this gives us a 6 point range for the children. When we discuss the children with their parents and report at the end of the year we use the terms Working Towards Emerging Expected Exceeding against the National Standards set for that year group.
- At the end of Year 2 the terminology that is reported is slightly different:
Working towards the Expected Standard
Working at the Expected Standard
Working at a greater depth within the Expected standard.
- For tracking purposes we use the numerical system which enables us to look at progress across the school. This begins with on entry data in Reception and continues to the end of Year 2. This system tallies with our chosen terms.
- As a school we have embraced the concept of **not levelling** the children as levels can be seen as thresholds and progress become linked to moving onto the next level. We feel that our children should be offered a far wider and deeper understanding and curriculum. We seek to consolidate their understanding. We also found that parents and staff became very concerned about moving to the next level. Thus we have adopted the key terms as they are the ones chosen by Kent to help schools when moderating and on their Draft Tracking statements. These statements will be used by schools when moderating together and will become a common language.
- A further reason we chose to use these terms was in the progression from our Early Years. These are the terms used to describe children in relation to the Development Matters.
- It is the aim of all the staff within our school to get **all** our children to **Expected**. Many of our children go onto to greater levels of mastery and are able to **Exceed**.
- **Writing:** Six times a year we assess and moderate our children's writing. This is a summative assessment and information is entered onto our SIMS tracking system. This gives our teachers a chance to see how well the children are progressing and whether any additional support or changes need to be made. This information is then used to see whether there are any noticeable gaps in

children's outcomes. We consider all our vulnerable groups, boys and girls and Summer born children.

- **Reading and Maths** are bench marked during our term 1 target setting meetings and then at three other points in the year. This information is also entered into SIMS for the same purposes as the writing.
- Year 2 teachers make reported judgements about their children's progress at the end of every term - 6 times a year.
- **Science** and the other subjects are assessed at the end of the year and a judgement made as to whether they have met the Expected Standard.
- Parents are informed as to how well their children are progressing towards the national Expected standard at parent evening meetings. Targets are set with the children and parents to help the children understand their next steps.
- To help teachers inform their decisions they highlight the Kent Draft Statements in Maths and Writing throughout the year. These help when looking to see what gaps there are in the children's understanding and whether they have met or Exceeded the national expectations.
- Every child in Key Stage 1 has an English assessment pack. Progress is recorded on the front sheet of this pack and can be tracked across the Key Stage.
- Science sheets are also highlighted at the end of each topic area.
- Assessments are also made in Religious Information and shared with the RE lead.
- In reading teachers made formative assessments based on each guided reading session. These sheets match the statements in the Kent Draft Reading Statements.
- All highlighted sheets are passed onto the new teacher at the end of the school year in preparation for the next one.

Moderation

- **Moderation** will take place across the school in reading, writing and mathematics three times a year. Year Groups will be continually monitoring and moderating their outcomes to adapt the short and medium terms appropriately.
- These moderation sessions help ensure there is consistency and accuracy within our judgements.
- External cross school moderation takes place at least once a year with all the local schools. These are run for different year groups at different times.
- English, Maths and Science leaders also attend county moderation sessions to ensure we have the correct understanding and accuracy in our judgements.
- We also moderate when possible with our junior school so that they can see how our judgements and assessments are undertaken.
Further moderation takes place when our two external moderators visit other schools in terms 5 and 6. This helps develop and secure their own knowledge and gives them a further clarity to what judgements are made within our school

4) Arrangements for ensuring that teachers are able to conduct assessments competently and confidently

- Staff will be involved in any changes to the way we assess, or the methods which we use to gain information and how judgements are made. Through staff meetings and PPA sessions staff will be able to discuss and be made aware of

any changes to procedure. They way in which we are changing and the rationale behind it.

- As a school we work well together as part of a year group team and then as part of the whole school staff. We have very strong middle leaders who keep themselves informed of what is happening not just in our school but in schools in the local area. All our middle leaders are responsible for a core curriculum area. Through networking and meetings they are made aware of the national agenda in their specific areas. They then inform their team and the staff of these changes.
- The senior leadership team meet once a month and discuss any issues or changes. Assessment and monitoring is always on the agenda.
- As a staff we always share good practice we have seen or heard about from other schools.
- The Head and the Deputy keep informed of the local and national scene and share this with their leadership team, staff and governors.
- **Pupil Progress Meetings** are held four times a year. The autumn term meeting is designed to discuss the children who staff feel may not meet to Expected standard at the end of year. Discussions are also held as to ways to support the children who will Exceed the standard. The other meetings are to track the progress of all children and discuss those who are not for various reasons making the progress they should. Interventions and support are discussed. All vulnerable groups are considered and the teaching staff are supported with any needs that have arisen within their classes.

5) Details of the approaches we use to different forms of assessment at Thurnham CE Infant School.

Day to day in school formative assessment:

At Thurnham CE Infant school we understand that assessment of children's achievement leads to our teachers asking, "What does this child/these children need to learn now in order to make improvements and progress?"

Or

"How can I extend/ enrich them further?"

- Assessment for Learning is pivotal and underpins Thurnham CE Infant's approach to Teaching and Learning. Staff use Learning Objectives, Success Criteria, effective marking and peer and self-assessment to engage pupils in their own learning journey and to inform them of their next steps.
- Assessment opportunities are identified in our planning. Marking is in line with the Marking Policy and will identify successes and areas for improvements.
- We use a range of **mixed ability** sessions to help support and extend all the children. In writing sessions we have found it is better for the children to sit at mixed ability tables. It provides opportunity for all.
- In some sessions, particularly maths, the children work in **ability groupings**. This is so the tasks may be specifically aimed at the ability of the children. Whether it is enrichment or supporting tasks.
- As detailed in our marking policy we assess/deep mark the children who are in our guided groups for that session. We extend and support at the time of working. Green marking shows what has been really successful and Pink is an aspect the child needs

to develop or revisit. There is then a response from the child at the time. The information gained during these sessions is then used to plan the next steps.

- Teachers use Lolly sticks to randomly select pupils to answer questions when on the carpet. This provides opportunity for all and ensures all children remain engaged.
- Talk partners are widely used to help peer to peer assessment and support.
- All staff use open ended and higher order questions when investigating understanding.
- Teaching Assistants and other helpers will often Scribe or make observation notes during carpet sessions. This gives the teachers invaluable insight and response to the children's understanding
- **Photographs** are used to capture practical activities. These then get added to the child's book and are annotated.
- Children show their understanding through responses on the carpet. **Fans** are used by the children with three different coloured faces on them. Those who have shown and orange or red face then have the task /activity reinforced before they begin or leave the carpet.
- **Mini plenaries** are used by the teachers to check understanding. Often a session will be paused to check in on the children's understanding and to provide feedback to the teacher to gauge how well the session has been pitched.
- All children are aware of their **success criteria** before they begin each session. These are shared and often negotiated.
- Children use **peer assessment** to mark work on whiteboards or to give feedback during the plenary at the end. Staff use a range of methods including Three Stars and a Wish.
- Once the task has been completed through talking to the children and looking at the books staff are very quick to become aware of those who did not grasp the activity. These children will then be supported either by the class teacher or teaching assistant with a quick boost or recap session so they are ready for the next session.
- Once an activity has been completed the children respond in their books as to how well it went. We use a **smiley face system** - When the work is marked the adult also responds with a face so that the child can see.

SEN:

Our pupils who are identified as having SEN are also involved in the assessments process in the same way as their peers.

Assessments made on these pupils will be based on the curriculum they are following. In some cases if they finished the previous year at working towards then they will be continuing with that curriculum the next year. For example a pupil who ended Year 1 as Working Towards the Year 1 curriculum will begin Year 2 still working to achieve the Year 1 curriculum. They will still be covering aspects of Year 2 but assessments will be made against the previous year until their teacher is confident they have grasped it.

The process and support for children with Special Educational Needs is detailed in the school's *Special Educational Needs Policy and SEN Information Report* which can be found on our website.

Day to Day in school summative assessment:

As a school we have chosen NOT to purchase any commercial packages or assessments. We use a range of methods to help us decide we are confident that the children have demonstrated the skills and competencies to reach Expected and beyond. Our highlighter sheets help us to confirm and cement our judgements along with our moderation sessions.

- Summative assessment at Thurnham CE Infant School is used to inform parents of their child's development and progress. This is shared not only during Parent's evenings but at any other time they wish to talk to the teacher about their child.
- Home work goes home on a weekly basis and this helps parents to see how well their children are progressing. They can get an understanding from how well they were independently able to attempt a task or how much support they needed.
- Contact books go home daily and comments are added by parents about reading attainment or anything they wish to share with the school. Staff also comment about the children's progress and achievements within the contact book.
- The children in Reception have home learning books which go home every week with a task or challenge in them. The Learning Journeys also go home and parents are encouraged to celebrate achievements and fun adventures within them. These give our parents a chance to discuss the learning within school and to add their own photos and events.
- Children in Years 1 and 2 have weekly spellings and Maths homework - these are then checked in school and the outcomes sent home each week.
- Year 2 also have a homework challenge set.
- End of term Moderated Writing - see above
- For most tasks that require recording a shared success criteria is stuck in with the task. These are in the form of a must /should and could statement. The **must** is aimed at the Expected Statement. The 'should and could' are aimed at exceeding and beyond by demonstrating a wider and deeper understanding.
- During the marking process the adult who has been working with the child will highlight whether they achieved the MUST SHOULD or COULD statement. This helps form an overall picture of the child's successes over a period of sessions.
- Children who are working at closing the gap from the year below will have an individual or adapted success criteria. So they too feel that they are able to achieve.

Nationally standardised Summative assessment:

At Thurnham CE Infant school we strive to achieve the very best for all our children. To do this we keep abreast of all current initiatives. We invest in our teachers attending training and networking sessions. This ensures that staff are confident that all statutory assessments are undertaken correctly and successfully. That they are aware of the content of these assessments and that the children are well prepared when they encounter them.

The national assessments which are reported nationally that our children undertake during their time at our school are:

Reception Year:

Early Excellence Baseline assessment
End of Foundation Stage assessments against the early learning goals.

Year 1:

Phonics Screener Assessment

Year 2:

End of key stage 1 teacher assessments in Reading, Writing, Spelling Punctuation and Grammar, Maths and Science.
End of Key Stage 1 national standardised assessment tests in Reading, Writing, Spelling Punctuation and Grammar, Maths and Science

At the end of Year 2 the terminology that is reported is slightly different:

Working towards the Expected Standard

Working at the Expected Standard

Working at a greater depth within the Expected standard.

6) Implementation

As a school we are keen to ensure that all stakeholders are kept fully involved and fully informed of our policy. We strive to ensure that they can see the links between assessment and teaching and learning: How one informs the other in a cyclical manner.

We aim to achieve this through a range of methods including (but not exhaustively)

- Parental information evenings
- Governor information sessions
- Staff meetings
- Staff training
- Information shared with parents
- Links with our preschools and Junior School

We encourage our pupils to understand that the purposes and practices of assessment are an important way of helping them to begin to take responsibility for their own learning and progression. We also hope that by ensuring that parents understand they ways, and purposes for which their children will be assessed, it will enable them to support their children effectively and avoid placing unnecessary pressure on them.