

Bellaghy Primary School

Assessment for Learning Policy

Rationale

Assessment for learning (formative assessment) is the process of identifying what the learner has or has not achieved in order to plan the next steps in the teaching or learning. It involves using assessment strategies in the classroom to raise pupils' achievement.

Assessment for learning is based on the idea that pupils will improve most if they understand the purpose of their learning, where they are in relation to learning intentions and how they can be successful in achieving the learning intention.

Our Aims through Assessment for Learning

At Bellaghy Primary we aim to:

- Make a judgement about a child's attainment based on knowledge gained through observation, questioning, marking and testing
- Help children develop positive attitudes to work
- Provide an accurate picture of every child's achievement and progress
- Show children how they are going to make the next steps to greater attainment
- Provide assessment information for use with the whole class, groups within the class and individuals

Principles of Assessment for learning

Effective assessment for learning involves:

- The sharing of learning intentions with pupils – can be verbal or written
- Establishing success criteria with the pupils – can be verbal or written
- Providing consistent and effective feedback and marking that helps pupils to identify how to improve their learning (see marking policy)
- Pupils learning self-assessment techniques to discover areas they need to improve
- The use of effective peer assessment
- The use of effective questioning
- The use of a plenary session to ascertain if learning intentions have been met
- Both the teacher and pupils reviewing and reflecting on pupils' performance and progress and setting targets for improvement
- Recognising that both motivation and self-esteem, crucial for effective learning and progress, can be increased by effective assessment techniques

1. Sharing of learning intentions

Pupils will be taught to recognise the difference between a task and its learning intention (separating what they have to do from what they will learn).

To involve pupils fully in understanding learning intentions, teachers may:-

- explain clearly the reasons for the lesson or activity in terms of the learning objectives
- share the specific success criteria with pupils-verbally or written
- help pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to develop.

Looking at a range of other pupils' responses to the task set can help pupils understand how to use the success criteria to assess their own learning.

2. Clear success criteria-written or verbal

Success criteria may be evident in: -

- planning
- written form in a pupils book-copied or stuck in
- visual form on a teachers whiteboard
- a verbal explanation to a class/group/individual

Success criteria will link directly to the learning intention - it is separate from the lesson content or activity, it relates more to the skills, concepts, knowledge of an activity.

3. Feedback and Marking

Pupils benefit from opportunities for formal feedback through group and plenary sessions.

Giving feedback involves: -

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

Feedback enables pupils to understand the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated in their work. Marking or oral feedback explain what the next steps should be.

Pupils make achievements by building on previous performance.

Characteristics of effective feedback

- Feedback is most effective when it confirms that pupils are on the right track and when it stimulates correction or improvement of a piece of work.
- Suggestions for improvement should act as 'scaffolding', ie pupils 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.
- The quality of dialogue in feedback is important - oral feedback is as effective as written feedback. A T is written on children's work if oral feedback has been given
- 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 according to the school Marking Policy

4 Self assessment and evaluation

Opportunities for self assessment and evaluation may be evident in planning or may be used during lessons when relevant. Once pupils 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.

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

Peer assessment

Peer assessment will be used when relevant. Pupils will be encouraged to clarify their own ideas and understanding of both the learning intention and the success criteria while marking other pupils' work.

5. Using effective questioning

In order for teaching staff to assess children's understanding effective questioning is vital.

A range of questions, including open questions, need to be used and children need to be given 'thinking time' before putting their hand up.

Teachers may;

- use questions to find out what pupils know, understand and can do
- analyse pupils' responses and their questions in order to find out what they know, understand and can do
- use questions to find out what pupils' specific misconceptions are in order to target teaching more effectively

Types of questions may include;

- how can we be sure that...?
- what is the same and what is different about...?
- is it ever/always true/false that...?
- how do you...?
- how would you explain...?
- what does that tell us about...?
- what is wrong with...?
- why is...true?

In each class, there is a display of question words to assist/prompt the teacher to ask more open-ended questions.

6.Target Setting

Teachers and pupils may set targets relating to specific goals.

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

Pupils 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.

Pupils may look at examples of other pupils' work that does and does not meet the assessment criteria as this can help them to 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 pupils understand the different approaches they could have taken to a task.

7. Plenary Session

A plenary session will take place at the conclusion of some lessons to ascertain progress in learning. During this plenary, children will be given the opportunity to talk about what they have learnt and what they need to do to improve their learning. This will then be reflected in teachers' planning notes / evaluation notes.