

# **Blacklaw Primary School**



## **Assessment Guidelines**

**September 2015**

*Guidelines to be reviewed by September 2018*

When assessment was used effectively to support pupils' learning, schools went beyond collecting information, keeping examples of pupils' work and administering tests. Schools using assessment effectively made sure that they:

- Identified what pupils had already achieved and what they needed to learn;
- Shared task criteria with pupils, provided constructive feedback on their next steps in learning, and involved them in improving their own work; had a comprehensive and reliable system for monitoring pupils' progress;
- Identified and put in place strategies for meeting pupils' specific needs; tracked the progress of all pupils;
- Revised courses to ensure that pupils' progress was not constrained by gaps in coverage;
- Formed and reconfigured classes and groupings as necessary to avoid limiting pupils' progress by inflexible pace or organization;
- Provided parents with informative reports on standards their children had achieved and what they needed to do next in order to make progress.

### ***Improving Achievement ..... HMle 2003***

*Curriculum for Excellence* focuses on a broader range of knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities that children and young people develop in a range of contexts. This means that assessment in *Curriculum for Excellence* will involve a broad range of approaches that allow children and young people to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. Assessment will support learning and promote learner engagement resulting in greater breadth and depth in learning, including a greater focus on the secure development of knowledge, understanding and skills. To ensure children and young people are making progress across all aspects of planned learning, assessment will place a greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, health and wellbeing, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and higher order skills, including creativity.

### ***Building the Curriculum 5 (2011)***

Our classroom assessment involves high quality interactions, based on thoughtful questions, careful listening and reflective responses.

### ***What is an AifL School?***

## Rationale

Assessment in Blacklaw Primary will always be integrated into the Teaching and Learning process. The teaching cycle; Planning, Teaching, Recording, Reporting, Assessing and Evaluating are interdependent. Effective learning cannot happen unless planning is informed by assessment; teaching cannot be effective if the teacher does not evaluate the quality of the teaching process. The purpose of assessment is to help learners learn more effectively.

## Aims

- To use assessment to ensure all pupils are progressing well, and to support learning.
- To carefully monitor every individual's progress and offer appropriate support when it is required.

## Context and Content

Staff in Blacklaw Primary use two main forms of assessment.

Summative assessment is mainly concerned with the performance of pupils. Assessment, which provides information which “sums up” attainment, is in this category. This data will be used for providing information, which will be needed when reporting to parents or the Authority, such as attainment in standardised tests, which provide a national comparative score. Teachers may use assessments at the end of a topic block to check knowledge and understanding, as this is also a form of summative assessment.

Formative assessment is the main focus of teaching as it is concerned with the progress a pupil is making. Day to day informal assessment is formative as it provides information on what is being learned. Teachers checking scores in a spelling test, or maths exercise are able to “form a picture” of how a learner is progressing. Both teachers and pupils can see what progress is being made towards achieving goals, and it is easy to see what has still to be learned, or what is not yet understood. Learners need to know where they are, and understand not only their current position, but also where the gaps in their learning are and how to fill the gaps. Teachers need to adjust their plans for learning in response to formative assessment. If pupils are not progressing, teachers must re-evaluate their teaching strategies and plan another approach. Both the teacher and the pupil are involved in reflecting on the learning taking place, and when teachers provide quality feedback, pupils are more able to take the appropriate action to improve their learning.

## Responsibilities

### Planning

- **Assessment will be planned at the start of the learning process.** Teachers in response to formative assessment information will adapt planned learning.
- **Opportunities for learners to apply their learning and skills in unfamiliar contexts must be planned in advance.**
- Pupils will be informed of what they are expected to learn at the start of the lesson.

- Learners will agree how they will show that they have learned what is expected at the start of the lesson
- Plans will identify formative and summative assessment opportunities.

### Teaching and Learning

In the course of teaching there will be frequent assessment of:

- The pupil's progress towards meeting stated learning outcomes;
- Any previous learning, and starting points for learning;
- Teaching approaches used, taking into account the various learning styles of pupils;
- Any unplanned learning successes.

Most assessment will be informal and formative in nature involving;

- Observation;
- Questioning;
- Peer/self assessment;
- Discussion/ providing feedback.

It will also involve pupils in thinking about progress they, and their peers have made. Assessment evidence will help improve learning through highlighting success and progress and providing practical advice to indicate the next steps in learning.

Summative assessment opportunities may be used at the end of a block to ascertain progress in knowledge and understanding.

### **Resources**

As most assessment is formative, assessment material will be teacher led.

National Assessment Resources (NAR): Offers examples and advice when compiling evidence of secure learning at specific transition points, i.e., when CfE Levels are complete. Learners should be able to apply their skills and understanding in unfamiliar contexts.

Standardised tests in reading and spelling will be used as part of the school agreement.

Further specific tests may be available for use as recommended by the Specialist Support Teacher, Learning Support Coordinator or staff from other agencies.

### **Record Keeping**

Summaries of progress will be made as part of the Planning and Assessment review dialogue with the Head Teacher at agreed points in the school session. Each class teacher will meet with the Head teacher bi-annually to discuss the tracking of pupil attainment.

## **Reporting**

The appropriate use of praise when offering feedback is vital. Pupils should always be reminded of the progress they have made, before they are offered practical suggestions for improving their learning.

Feedback to pupils will include:

- regular discussions in the course of teaching;
- a bi-annual discussion with each pupil to review progress;
- written comments on classwork which will identify success and partial success as a basis for progress.

Feedback to parents will include:

- annual written reports;
- a verbal report in October focusing on the 'next steps' section of the final report from the previous class;
- a verbal report in March outlining strengths, progress made and expected attainment;
- opportunities throughout the school session to view pupils' learning through jotters home.

## **Evaluation**

Assessment should continue to:

- be purposeful;
- be employed to provide evidence of progress and/or attainment;
- be shared with pupils, parents and other agencies as appropriate;
- confirm teachers' judgements;
- be moderated by peers to build teacher capacity in agreeing a standard of secure learning;
- be used by teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their practice.

## **Review**

These guidelines should be reviewed as part of the school's cycle of self-evaluation, or in line with National or South Lanarkshire Council advice. These guidelines have been reviewed to ensure no person from a protected group will be disadvantaged in any way, and to ensure it complies with Equalities legislation.