Assessment Policy

Approved by:	Headteacher & SLT
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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

> Provide clear guidelines on our approach to formative and summative assessment.

> Establish a consistent and coherent approach to recording the summative assessment outcomes and the reporting to parents/carers.

> Clearly set out how and when the assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated.

2. Legislation and guidance

Schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment since the National Curriculum levels were removed in 2014.

This policy refers to:

> The recommendations in the final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels

> Statutory reporting requirements set out in the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005: schedule 1

3. Principles of assessment

We believe in the statement that **all forms of assessment should be used to improve teaching and learning.** At Gaskell Primary School, we believe that the best form of assessment results from the ongoing dialogue and the interactions with the children. Daily interactions provide the soundest judgements of pupil progress and are what should inform planning and teaching. We recognise that the progress in learning is not linear and therefore the children should not be judged solely on the basis of a test.

Where the data is gathered, it should also be used as a means to support those children who are underachieving or to extend the most able.

We have agreed on the following principles as the basis of our assessment system:

● All forms of assessment should be used to improve the teaching and learning.

● The system is simple to use and understand.

● Testing should be rigorous and reliable.

● Assessment is underpinned by a knowledge of the curriculum.

● Informs planning and the delivery of the curriculum.

● Helps a child to recognise the next steps in their learning.

● There is no unnecessary paperwork that does not contribute to the teaching and learning.

● Provides reliable information to the parents about how their child is performing.

● Ensures that Gaskell Primary School is keeping up with external best practice.

4. Assessment approaches

At Gaskell Primary School, we see assessment as an integral part of our teaching and learning and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

We use three broad overarching forms of assessment: day-to-day in-school formative assessment, in-school summative assessment and nationally standardised summative assessment.

4.1 In-school formative assessment

Effective in-school formative assessment enables:

> **Teachers** to identify how the pupils are performing on a continuing basis and to use this information to provide the appropriate support or extension, evaluate their teaching and to plan future lessons.

> **Pupils** to measure their knowledge and understanding against the learning objectives and to identify the areas in which they need to improve.

> **Parents/carers** will gain a broad picture of where their child's strengths and weaknesses lie and what they need to do to improve.

Our comprehensive formative assessment approach involves a continuous cycle of assessment, feedback and adjustment, with the ultimate goal of promoting the children's growth, understanding and metacognition. It is tailored to the specific needs of our children and subject matter, creating a dynamic and supportive learning environment.

Marking and Feedback:

- Teachers regularly review and provide constructive feedback on the children's work, emphasising areas of strength and improvement. This feedback is specific, actionable and focused on the learning objectives.

- Questioning: Teachers ask probing questions during the lessons to gauge the children's understanding. They encourage both verbal and written responses, fostering critical thinking and class participation.

- Regular Short Recap Quizzes: Periodic quizzes or mini-assessments are administered to review and consolidate their learning. These quizzes help the children and the teachers to identify areas where further attention is needed.

- Self and Peer Assessment: Children assess their own work and that of their peers against established criteria or rubrics. This helps them to develop metacognitive skills and a deeper understanding of the assessment criteria.

- Observations: Teachers observe the children in various contexts, such as group work, presentations, or practical exercises, to assess their skills and understanding. These observations provide a holistic view of the children's abilities.

Assessing Knowledge, Skills and Understanding:

- Formative assessment is used to assess a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding. This includes evaluating the children's grasp of factual information, their ability to apply concepts and their deeper comprehension of the subject matter.

Identifying Gaps and Misconceptions:

- Formative assessment helps to identify the gaps in the children's knowledge and misconceptions they may hold. For example, if a quiz reveals that a significant portion of the class struggles with a specific concept, the teacher can address it promptly.

- Ongoing feedback allows for the immediate correction of misunderstandings, preventing misconceptions from becoming ingrained.

Role of Pupils in Their Assessment:

- Children play an active role in their assessment through self-assessment and reflection. They are encouraged to evaluate their own work against established criteria and set their goals for improvement.

- Peer assessment also empowers the children to evaluate the work of their classmates, fostering a deeper understanding of the assessment criteria and promoting collaborative learning.

- Children are encouraged to ask questions, seek clarification and take ownership of their learning journey. They should understand the learning objectives and actively engage in the learning process.

4.2 In-school summative assessment

Effective in-school summative assessment enables:

> **School leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required and to work with the teachers to ensure the children are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment.

> **Teachers** to evaluate the learning at the end of a unit or period and the impact of their own teaching.

> **Pupils** to understand how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time. It should be used to provide feedback on how they can improve.

> **Parents/carers** to stay informed about the achievement, progress and wider outcomes of their child across a period of time.

Summative assessments serve as a valuable tool for evaluating the children's achievement, informing instructional decisions and demonstrating progress over time.

Types of In-School Summative Assessments:

- **End-of-Year Assessments:** These are comprehensive assessments and are given at the end of an academic year or term. They aim to evaluate the children's overall understanding of the material covered during the entire year.

    - NFER assessments are used from Year 1 to Year 5 and the Year 6 children will sit the KS2 SATs.

    - Reception children will sit an on entry base line assessment in the first 6 weeks of being at our school.

    - Year 1 children will sit a Phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 and any children who do not meet this standard at the end of Year 1 will resit the test at the end of Year 2.

    - Year 4 children will sit a times table screening check at the end of Year 4 to check their multiplication knowledge.

- **End-of-Topic or Unit Tests:** These assessments are administered at the end of a specific unit or topic within a subject. They assess how well the children have grasped the content and skills related to that particular segment.

- **Reviews for Pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND):** Specialised assessments may be used for the children with SEND to accommodate their unique learning needs. These assessments are designed to provide a fair evaluation of their progress and understanding.

Improving Future Learning:

> Summative assessments at Gaskell Primary School does not just serve as a measure of past performance but also provides valuable insights for improving future learning. This is achieved through Pupil Progress Meetings conducted by Phase Leaders and the SENDCO. The following discussions take place:

- **Analysis of Results:** Teachers analyse the results of summative assessments to identify areas where the children performed well and where they struggled. This data guides instructional planning.
- **Curriculum Adjustments:** Based on the outcomes of summative assessments, we may make adjustments to the curriculum, pacing, or the teaching methods to better address children's needs.
- **Individualised Support:** Summative assessments may also identify the children who need additional support or enrichment. We can then provide tailored interventions accordingly.

Demonstrating Improvement Over Time:

> To demonstrate improvement over a longer period, we use INSIGHT to track the children's performance over multiple years and across the various assessments. This longitudinal data can show trends in the children's growth and development.

External Commercial Tests:

> At Gaskell Primary School, we use external commercial tests, such as the standardised tests like Reception Baseline, SATs, Phonics Screening, Multiplication Screening and NFER, to assess the children's skills and knowledge. These tests are chosen because they are well-established, widely recognised and can provide benchmark data that allows schools to compare the children's performance with national norms.

5. Standardisation and Validation:

> Standardising and validating assessments are essential to ensure their reliability and fairness. This involves:

- **Setting Clear Assessment Criteria:** Ensuring that assessment criteria and rubrics are well-defined and consistently applied.
- **Training Assessors:** Providing training to the teachers or evaluators who will administer and score the assessments to ensure consistency.
- **Pilot Testing:** Before implementing the new assessments, we may conduct pilot tests to identify and address any issues with the assessment's validity and reliability.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Using statistical methods to compare the results across different assessments and ensure that they align with the intended learning outcomes.

4.3 Nationally standardised summative assessment

Nationally standardised summative assessment enables:

> **School leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where the interventions may be required and to work with the teachers to ensure the children are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment.

> **Teachers** to understand the national expectations and to assess their own performance in the broader national context.

> **Pupils and parents/carers** to understand how the children are performing in comparison to children nationally.

Nationally standardised summative assessments include:

> Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile at the end of Reception.

> Phonics Screening Check in Year 1.

> Multiplication Screening Test at the end of Year 4.

> National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments at the end of KS2 (Year 6).

5. Collecting and using data

Recording Assessment Data:

Assessment data is recorded consistently for all the children at predetermined intervals throughout the academic year. These intervals may include formative assessments (e.g., quizzes, homework, class activities), summative assessments (e.g., exams, projects) and behavioural observations.

Data Collection and Use:

Assessment data is collected through a combination of digital tools, teacher evaluations and standardised tests. The purpose of the data collection is to track the children's progress, identify areas of strength and improvement and to inform instructional decisions.

Data will be used to adjust the teaching strategies, develop personalised learning plans and to make informed decisions about curriculum and resource allocation.

Sharing of Assessment Data:

Assessment data is shared with the following stakeholders:

- Teachers: Teachers have access to their children's assessment data to inform their teaching practices and to provide targeted support.

- Parents or Carers: Assessment data is shared with the parents or carers regularly through report cards, parent-teacher conferences and online portals.

- Children: Encourage the children to engage with their own assessment data, setting goals and monitoring their progress.

- School Leaders: Will use the assessment data to make strategic decisions about the curriculum, professional development and resource allocation.

Effective Data Communication:

Assessment data is communicated effectively to achieve its purpose. This includes:

- Providing clear and concise reports that highlight the key areas of achievement and the areas for improvement.

- Offering opportunities for parent-teacher conferences to discuss the assessment data in-depth.

- Using the data visualisation tools to present information in an easily understandable format.

Minimising Teacher Workload:

Efforts are made to minimise the burden on the teachers. This includes:

- Automating the data entry processes where possible to reduce the administrative tasks.

- Providing training and support to the teachers on efficient data collection and analysis.

- Aligning the assessment data collection with the curriculum to ensure that the assessments serve a dual purpose of evaluation and instruction.

Data Privacy and Security:

Strict protocols are in place to safeguard the children's data, ensuring compliance with the relevant data protection laws and regulations.

Continuous Improvement:

The school continually reviews its data collection and reporting processes to identify the areas for improvement. Feedback from the teachers, parents and children is used to refine these processes.

Differentiated Data Use:

Recognising that the assessment data can serve multiple purposes, the school differentiates its use. Some data may be primarily for instructional purposes, while others are used for reporting to the parents and for broader school improvement efforts.

Data-Informed Decision Making:

The school promotes a culture of data-informed decision making, where assessments play a vital role in shaping instructional strategies, interventions and resource allocation.

6. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, children and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as, ChatGPT and Google Bard. Gaskell Primary School recognises that AI has many uses to help the children learn, but may also lend itself to cheating and plagiarism.

Pupils **may not** use AI tools:

> During assessments, including internal and external assessments.

> To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work.

Pupils **may** use AI tools:

> As a research tool to help them to find out about new topics and ideas.

See our Online Safety Policy and AI Parent Guide for more information on how students can and cannot use AI for their assignments.

7. Reporting to parents/carers

As a school, we will provide assessment data to the parents/carers through Parents' Evenings, assessment letters (Rocket Letters) and an annual report. The annual report will include:

> Brief details of the achievements in all of the subjects and activities forming part of the school curriculum, highlighting strengths and areas for development.

> Comments on the general progress.

> Arrangements for discussing the report with the child's teacher.

> The child's attendance record, except where they are in EYFS.

Where the attendance is reported, it will include:

- The total number of possible attendances for that child.
- The total number of unauthorised absences for that child, expressed as a percentage of the possible attendances.

> The results of the end of year assessments taken (Year 1 – Year 5), by subject and grade

> At the end of KS2:

- Outcomes of the statutory National Curriculum teacher assessments.

- Comparative information about the attainment of children of the same age in the school and children of the same age nationally.
- The results of any National Curriculum tests taken, including the child's scaled score, and whether or not they meet the 'expected standard'.

8. Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all of the children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of their special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all the children. However, this should account for the amount of effort the child puts in, as well as the outcomes achieved.

For children working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider the progress relative to pupil starting points and take this into account alongside the nature of their learning difficulties.

9. Training

The school places a strong emphasis on building a solid foundation in the assessment practices for all of the teachers, including new employees. This includes orientation and training programs to ensure that the teachers have a good understanding of the assessment principles and practices.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1 Governors

Governors are responsible for:

> Being familiar with statutory assessment systems, as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all of the pupils.

> Holding school leaders to account for improving the pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing the assessment data.

> Monitoring that the school staff are receiving the appropriate support and training on pupil assessment, to ensure the consistent application and good practice across the school.

10.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

> Ensuring that the policy is adhered to.

> Monitoring the standards in the core and foundation subjects.

> Analysing the pupil progress and attainment, including the individual pupils and specific groups.

> Prioritising the key actions to address underachievement.

> Reporting to the governors on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including the current standards and trends over previous years.

> Making sure the arrangements are in place so the teachers can conduct their assessment competently and confidently, including training and moderation opportunities.

10.3 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

> Following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy.

> Being familiar with the standards for the subjects they teach.

> Keeping up to date with the developments in assessment practice.

11. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by J. Cranage (Deputy Headteacher). At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

All of the teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy. Phase Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed.

The Deputy Headteacher will monitor the effectiveness of the assessment practices across the school through:

- Moderation.
- Learning Walks.
- Lesson Observations.
- Book Looks.
- Pupil Progress Meetings.
- Learning Environments.
- Pupil Conferencing.

12. Links with other policies

This assessment policy is linked to:

> Curriculum policy.

> EYFS Offer.

> Feedback to Learners policy.

> Online Safety Policy.

> Homework Policy.