St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Ysgol Catholig Santes Fair

Assessment Policy

Our Mission Statement

As a Catholic family, we will do our best to live and learn as Christ taught us.

Our aims are designed to allow us to live out the Mission Statement.

School Aims

a. To create a community where love, peace and joy are present and to be true to the values of the Gospel and to make our Catholic faith alive by building such a community.

b. To develop a dynamic interaction between home, school and parish and provide a formation for each child to realise their full potential in all aspects of spiritual and moral development.

c. To develop a zest for life and an enjoyment of learning.

d. To allow children to respect all forms of life.

e. To achieve high standards in academic learning.

f. To develop creativity and a love of art, music and drama.

g. To encourage children to learn physical skills and a knowledge and control over their own bodies to compete against themselves and others in order to raise their performance.

h. To have experience of the Welsh Language and be introduced to Welsh culture and others from around the world to reflect the cosmopolitan nature of our school.

i. To make sense of the world around them scientifically and by understanding other people, their history and their environment.

j. To foster good attitudes and appropriate behaviour, manners and dress.

Introduction

The ultimate purpose of assessment at St. Mary's is for it to make a significant contribution towards ensuring that individual pupils make optimum progress in their learning and that standards across the school, as a whole, are excellent and as high as possible.

The high quality assessment practices described in this policy will allow teachers to have a clear picture of the learning development of every pupil under their tutelage and of the targets they have for improvement (this, in turn, will inform the planning of learning). Leaders and governors will also have a secure understanding and grasp of current performance and of priorities for the future.

Assessment will be summative, formative and ipsative in nature. We recognise that formative assessment has the greatest potential to raise standards. Black and William (1998) note that:

Innovations that include strengthening the practice of formative assessment produce significant and often substantial learning gains.

Each of these assessment forms are referenced, in turn, below:

Summative Assessment.

Summative assessment allows us to analyse how well pupils have attained at the conclusion of a period of learning (long or short term). It is also used to identify how well a particular year group or cohort of pupils have performed at a particular point in time. In addition, it allows leaders to quantify how well a particular teacher, phase or the whole school is performing. Practices in this area are as follows:

- *Assessment against the NBRIA levels at the conclusion of one Religious Education topic each term.*
- *An end of academic year level for Religious Education.*
- *A mid-year assessment in English and Mathematics against National Curriculum criteria.*
- *An end of year assessment in English and Mathematics against National Curriculum criteria.*
- *End of Key Stage assessment in the core subjects.*
- *National Tests for pupils in Y2-Y6, taken in May.*

Ipsative Assessment.

Ipsative assessment allows us to measure progress against a baseline. Teachers often take part in research activities, during which ipsative assessment has a significant role to play. In addition we conduct:

- *A baseline in relation to basic skills and knowledge in Religious Education in Nursery and Reception.*
- *The Foundation Phase Profile throughout the phase.*
- *Reading age assessment in the Autumn Term.*
- *Comparative Assessment in the Autumn and Summer Terms.*
- *First Steps to Reading assessment in the Autumn Term.*
- *Building Learning Power assessment in the Summer Term.*

Formative Assessment.

Formative assessment has the greatest potential to raise standards for pupils. We define it as:

Assessment carried out during the instructional process for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. What makes formative assessment formative is that it is immediately used to make adjustments so as to form new learning (Shepard, 2008).

Whilst conducting formative assessment, staff will keep the following key questions in mind:

- Who is and is not understanding the lesson?
- What are this pupil's strengths and needs?
- What misconceptions do I need to address?
- What feedback should I give pupils?
- What adjustments should I make to instruction?
- How should I group pupils?
- What differentiation do I need to prepare?

The use of the strategies noted below will be the focal points of the school's formative assessment, as they have been identified through research as yielding the largest achievement gains for pupils:

- Use of classroom discussions, classroom tasks, and home-learning to determine the current state of pupil learning/understanding, with action taken to improve learning/correct misunderstandings.
- Provision of descriptive feedback, with guidance on how to improve, during the learning (refer to marking policy, below, for detail).
- Development of pupil self and peer-assessment skills.

The use of high quality discussion , as referred to above, will focus not only on curriculum content but also on the skills of learning that are being developed, in line with the school's Building Learning Power philosophy.

Assessment for Learning (AfL) will play an essential formative assessment role. It will ensure that pupils are fully involved in the development of their learning in an age appropriate manner. To this end, three key questions for pupils to grapple with will be: *where am I going? Where am I now? and how can I close the gap?*   The following strategies for AfL will be employed:

Where Am I Going?
Strategy 1: Provide pupils with a clear and understandable vision of the learning target.
Strategy 2: Use examples and models of strong and weak work.

Where Am I Now?
Strategy 3: Offer regular descriptive feedback.
Strategy 4: Teach students to self-assess and set goals.

How Can I Close the Gap?
Strategy 5: Design lessons to focus on one learning target or aspect of quality at a time.
Strategy 6: Teach students focused revision.
Strategy 7: Engage students in self-reflection, and let them keep track of and share their learning.

We recognise that the quality of feedback (commentating) received by learners is an essential factor in creating rapid rates of pupil progress.

'Feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work [learning], with advice on what he or she can do to improve and should avoid comparisons with other pupils' (Dylan Wiliam).

Marking plays a key role in the formative assessment practice of the school. The **marking policy** is as follows:

The school's marking has the principle aim of furthering the learning of all pupils. The processes highlighted here have been agreed after consultation with staff and they aim to be *meaningful, manageable* and *motivating.* We recognise that approaches need to differ between the phases and therefore, practices are noted here that apply to both separately. The philosophy involved, however, is consistent. We refer here to the headings used by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) in their paper '*A Marked Improvement.*'

Foundation Phase

1 Grading

Grading does not form a significant part of teachers' assessment at St. Mary's, as we recognise that it can be demotivating and that it can cause pupils to ignore formative assessment comment. We do however make use of:

- regular spelling and mental Mathematics assessment which yield a score (Year 1 and Year 2) and
- assessment tasks in Religious Education using NBRIA levels at the end of each topic that are recorded on pupils' individual target sheets; a formal assessment task is also carried out termly.

2 Corrections

We distinguish between mistakes (made when a pupil does know a concept) and errors (caused by a pupil not understanding) through marking and/or comments. The former is likely to need no more than a 'nudge' whilst the latter is likely to need clarification or re-teaching. A common marking grid is used throughout the Phase. As Foundation Phase pupils learn in groups a lot of the marking is an on-going dialogue with children, errors and mistakes are highlighted during the activity verbally. This enables more in-depth questioning/understanding about their learning. When learning is marked at a later time the common marking grid is used.

3 Thoroughness

We believe that it is important for teachers or Learning Support Officers to acknowledge children's learning even when in-depth marking is not carried out, in order that children, parents and others know that it is valued. Learning can be ticked/include a Welsh phrase/star/smiley face/BLP comment. In-depth marking is linked to the WALT and BLP focus of the learning will be used for the following:
- focused tasks
- focused assessment tasks in Religious Education

4 Pupil Responses

Pupil responses are not expected for every piece of learning; rather, we encourage them for the tasks listed above (see point 3) which require in-depth marking. Children's responses take the following forms:

- Traffic Lights – these are inserted at the end of a piece of learning. (Year 1 and Year 2)

- Peer evaluation strategies – during the plenary children are given the opportunity to look at other children's learning and asked what they like about it/could it be improved? In the summer term in Year 2 a grid is used on other pupils' learning when appropriate to the task.
- Pupil responses linked to each R.E. topic are included on the 'I can' target and assessment sheet for each topic. Pupils include a written comment in the space provided on a RE theme or area (Year 2).

5 Creating a Dialogue

As a Building Learning Power and Advanced Thinking School, dialogue about pupils' learning enjoys a high profile during every lesson in the school day. The split-screen approach to lessons, in which the process of learning and the development of individuals' skills as learners are valued equally with curriculum content, ensures that teachers and pupils regularly discuss what and how they have learned. In addition to this verbal dialogue and feedback, teachers' in-depth comments indicate the way forward for selected pieces of learning (refer to point 3, above).

6 Targets

Teachers always set *specific* targets for learning in the following ways:

- Clear lesson objectives which are displayed at the start of each lesson, using the form of We Are Learning To (W.A.L.T.)
- Short term specific targets are noted in the in-depth marking and the next step is highlighted.
- Individual targets related to the Literacy and Numeracy framework – these are found in pupils' topic books. Current targets are highlighted and are ticked when achieved.
- 'I can' targets for the appropriate level(s) are inserted into R.E. books at the start of each topic.

7 Frequency and Speed

We appreciate the importance of quick, precise and frequent feedback to pupils' learning. To achieve this, teachers and LSOs will frequently give verbal comments during the learning process or at its completion, praising the skills used, the attainment of the pupil and/or indicating the way forward. The agreed policy on corrections and thoroughness (see points 2 and 3 above) set out the frequency of acknowledgement and in-depth marking to be used. Marking should be carried out as soon as is realistically achievable, in order for it to impact upon future planning and learning.

Key Stage Two

1 Grading

Grading does not form a significant part of teachers' assessment at St. Mary's, as we recognise that it can be demotivating and that it can cause pupils to ignore formative assessment comment. We do however make use of:

- regular spelling and mental Mathematics assessment which yield a score and
- assessment tasks in Religious Education using NBRIA levels at the end of each topic that are recorded on pupils' individual target sheets; a formal assessment task is also carried out termly.

2 Corrections

We distinguish between mistakes (made when a pupil does know a concept) and errors (caused by a pupil not understanding) through marking and/or comments. The former is likely to need no more than a 'nudge' whilst the latter is likely to need clarification or re-teaching. A common marking grid is used throughout the Key Stage and this grid is included in pupils' books as well as being displayed in classrooms to enable them to understand what the symbols mean. If a pupil makes a mistake (he/she usually understands the concept) it will be marked as incorrect without the correct answer being provided. If the pupil makes an error (he/she does not understand the concept involved) a note or reminder will be needed. Corrections are written underneath the piece of learning. In the case of multiple mistakes, we do not expect a child to correct every one of these; instead, teachers' discretion will be used to determine what is needed. Corrections may be done during the lesson itself or, in the few minutes before the start of a following session's learning; while registration is taking place, for example.

3 Thoroughness

We believe that it is important for teachers or Learning Support Officers to acknowledge children's learning even when in-depth marking is not carried out, in order that children, parents and others know that it is valued. For tasks such as grammar exercises, shorter pieces of writing or skills practice in Mathematics, a tick or short comment (often in Welsh) will be used. In-depth marking, linked to the WALT and BLP focus of the learning, will be used for the following:

- Extended writing (in any curriculum area)
- Focused assessment tasks in Religious Education.
- Extended problem-solving or investigative learning in Mathematics and Science.

4 Pupil Responses

We acknowledge that it is important for pupils to consider and respond to written comments. Again, this may be done at times such as during registration, during the few minutes at the start of a lesson or at its end, after the plenary. Pupil responses are not expected for every piece of learning; rather, we encourage them for the tasks listed above (see point 3) which require in-depth marking. Children's responses take the following forms:

- Traffic Lights – these are inserted at the end of a piece of learning (Lower KS2).
- Written comments at the end of a piece of learning – these are written in a different colour or in pencil, to distinguish them from the main task itself. (Upper KS2)
- Peer evaluation strategies such as using Post-It notes to comment on other pupils' learning are used across the Key Stage when appropriate to the task.
- Pupil responses linked to each R.E. topic are included on the 'I can' target and assessment sheet for each topic. Pupils include a written comment in the space provided on a RE theme or area.
- Strategies such as using de Bono's 'Thinking Hats' and ''Bloom's Taxonomy' stickers in workbooks are also used at regular intervals throughout the year by pupils to indicate the type of learning they have carried out and to encourage in-depth reflection on learning.

5 Creating a Dialogue

As a *Building Learning Power* and *Advanced Thinking* School, dialogue about pupils' learning enjoys a high profile during every lesson in the school day. The split-screen approach to lessons, in which the process of learning and the development of individuals' skills as learners are valued equally with curriculum content, ensures that teachers and pupils regularly discuss *what* and *how* they have learned. In addition to this verbal dialogue and feedback, teachers' in-depth comments indicate the way forward. Where appropriate, they may also seek to extend the learning further by asking a written question to which the pupil responds for selected pieces of learning (refer to point 3, above).

6 Targets

Teachers always set *specific* targets for learning in the following ways:

- Clear lesson objectives which are displayed at the start of each lesson, using the form of *We Are Learning To (W.A.L.T.)*
- Short term specific targets are noted in the in-depth marking and the next step is highlighted.

- Individual targets related to the Literacy and Numeracy framework – these are found in pupils' topic books. Current targets are highlighted and are ticked when achieved.
- 'I can' targets for the appropriate level(s) are inserted into R.E. books at the start of each topic.

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We appreciate the importance of quick, precise and frequent feedback to pupils' learning. To achieve this, teachers and LSOs will frequently give verbal comments during the learning process or at its completion, praising the skills used, the attainment of the pupil and/or indicating the way forward. The agreed policy on corrections and thoroughness (see points 2 and 3 above) set out the agreed frequency of acknowledgement and in-depth marking to be used. Marking should be carried out as soon as is realistically achievable, in order for it to impact upon future planning and learning.

The impact of this policy will form a regular part of the school's MER work. When pupils' learning is sampled, for example, the impact and effectiveness of assessment practices will be judged. This policy will be reviewed in 2023.

Appendix.

Agreed Symbols to be Used When marking:

The Target	Symbol	Action
Indicate a good point or correctness.	✓	Possible improvements could still be suggested
Indicate an incorrect point.	X	Discuss or write down correct answer.
Indicate that something doesn't make sense.	??	Write an explanation in the margin or at the end of the piece.
Indicate a spelling mistake.	Underline the word	Write the correct word, first three letters or just 'Sp' in line with school spelling policy
A word or phrase is missing.	∧ ∧	If possible put a few words in so the pupil can see where they have gone wrong.
Indicate a missing full stop.	⬭	If possible put in a few so the pupil can see where they have gone wrong
Indicate a missing capital letter or where it has been used incorrectly.	⬭	Help the pupil and put a few in so that they can see where they have gone wrong.
Indicate that a new paragraph is required.	**NP**	