

**McKinney Primary School**

**Assessment Policy**

**June 2021**

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**INTRODUCTION**

This policy sets out the agreed key principles and practices for the promotion and development of Assessment throughout McKinney Primary School.

It clarifies the responsibilities for all stakeholders in ensuring effective Whole School Assessment.

It reflects classroom practice in relation to the statutory assessment procedures required within the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

At McKinney Primary School we embrace the definition of ‘Assessment’ as outlined by NI Curriculum: Guidance on Assessment in the Primary School (2013):

***‘Assessment is the systematic collection, interpretation and use of information to give a deeper appreciation of what pupils know and understand, their skills and personal capabilities, and what their learning experiences enable them to do.’***

**AIMS OF ASSESSMENT**

The stated vision of the Department of Education for N Ireland (DENI) is ‘To ensure that every learner fulfils his or her potential at each stage of his or her development.’ (DENI 2010).

The Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum states that, “Assessment is an integral part of the learning process. Through on-going integrated assessment, teachers build a comprehensive picture of the progress and learning needs of each child in order to plan future work and ultimately improve learning.

At McKinney Primary School the aim of assessment is as follows:

* to facilitate the monitoring of standards over time in order to inform the development of policy and practice leading to better pupil outcomes
* To identify strengths and areas for improvement and to inform next steps
* To use assessment information to make specific improvements in learning
* To acknowledge, record and report pupils’ overall performance and achievement at a point in time
* To inform curriculum planning and to provide information for monitoring and accountability

**CONTEXT / STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

The statutory content requirements for Assessment are set out in the NI Curriculum Guide to Assessment (2011) as follows, stating that schools must:

* Assess pupil progress in each of the Areas of Learning.
* Assess pupil progress in the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT with reference to the Levels of Progression.
* Assess pupil progress with reference to the Levels of Progression and report the numerical outcomes achieved in the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT.
* Assess pupil progress in the Other Skills (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities).
* Offer to meet parents to discuss their child’s progress.
* Provide an Annual Report to parents by 30 June.
* State the Level of Progression achieved by each pupil in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT in the Annual Report.
* The Annual Report for pupils in Years 4 and 7 must also include a statement of the percentage of pupils in Years 4 and 7 in the school who have:

-attained each level in that Cross-Curricular Skill

-attained the expected level or above in that Cross-Curricular Skill

-worked towards the level expected for a pupil at the end of Years 4 and 7, but who have not yet attained that level in that Cross-Curricular Skill; and

-been exempted from assessment in that Cross-Curricular Skill

**THE ROLE OF THE ASSESSMENT CO-ORDINATOR**

The Assessment Co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing whole-school assessment. This role involves:

* evaluating school assessment policy and practice and identifying areas for improvement as part of the school development plan;
* identifying staff training needs in assessment;
* leading school development in assessment;
* leading In Service Training (INSET) for continued professional development for teachers in assessment;
* liaising with co-ordinators;
* establishing clear, effective communication processes to keep teachers, co-ordinators, SMT, the principal, and the Board of Governors informed; and
* managing day-to-day issues related to assessment.

**PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT**

Assessment can serve different purposes according to how we use the information it provides. (For more information see Appendix 1: ‘The Big Picture of Assessment and Recording’.)

There are four main purposes of assessment:

1. **Diagnostic Assessment**: To identify strengths and areas for improvement and to inform next steps.
2. **Formative Assessment**: To use assessment information to make specific improvements in learning.
3. **Summative Assessment**: To acknowledge, record and report pupils’ overall achievement at a point in time.
4. **Evaluative Assessment**: To inform curriculum planning and to provide information for monitoring and accountability.

**Diagnostic Assessment**

Diagnostic assessment identifies strengths and areas for improvement and informs the next steps. It usually takes place either, at the end of the academic year or at the beginning of the academic year, to inform next steps. It may also take place at the beginning, or end of a specific topic / area of study. Teachers identify the nature of a pupil’s learning difficulties and use this information to plan interventions to address the issues discovered. They should then share this information with the pupil to plan the next steps to improve their learning. It involves the teacher working closely with the pupil to identify their strengths and learning needs.

Diagnostic Assessment Opportunities throughout McKinney Primary School are as follows:

Foundation Stage

* Nursery Transition Form / Focused Observations, e.g. 1:1 number correspondence
* Reading Recovery Tests / Reading Partnership
* Linguistic Phonics Assessments
* High Frequency Word Tests

Key Stage 1

* Reading Recovery Tests / Reading Partnership
* Linguistic Phonics Assessments
* High Frequency Word Tests
* Number Facts Assessments
* Class Assessments (Winter / Summer)
* Progress Tests in Maths (from previous year – as a diagnostic tool)
* Progress Tests in English (from previous year – as a diagnostic tool)

Key Stage 2

* Reading Recovery Tests / Reading Partnership
* Linguistic Phonics Assessments
* High Frequency Word Tests
* Number Facts Assessments
* Class Assessments (Winter / Summer)
* Progress Tests in Maths (from previous year – as a diagnostic tool)
* Progress Tests in English (from previous year – as a diagnostic tool)

Reading Partnership

The Reading Support Programme has been introduced in McKinney Primary School. It is a reading programme that is designed to give the pupils a boost with their reading by working alongside a trained classroom assistant or parent known as a Reading Partner. The class teacher in consultation with the literacy co-ordinator and the SENCO select the potential pupils to be tested by the Reading Partnership Co-ordinator. The Salford Sentence Reading Test is then used to establish a reading age which is then compared to their chronological age. Generally, pupils who are reading 6 months to 1 year below their chronological age are selected for the programme. Parent consent is sought before a child commences the programme. Each pupil receives 3 x 15 minute lessons per week for a period of 10 weeks. At the end of the programme the Salford Sentence Reading Test is administered and the pupil’s progress is recorded. The pupils who engage in the programme continue to take part in shared and guided reading within their class but on completion they may have to be moved up into a higher reading group depending on progress made.

**Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment, often referred to as **Assessment for Learning** (AfL), is part of the everyday teaching and learning process. Teachers gather evidence about a pupil’s learning, for example by observing, listening, questioning, discussing and reviewing pupil work. They can then use this evidence to:

-identify progress and gaps in learning (including individual support needs);

-set learning targets and success criteria; and

-provide feedback to pupils.

***‘Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.’*** *(Assessment Reform Group, 2002)*

Assessment for Learning encourages:

* the active involvement of children in their own learning
* the provision of effective feedback to children
* the development of children’s ability for peer and self assessment
* the use of outcomes of assessment to inform future teaching and learning.

Teachers use AfL to enable pupils to build on their learning. AfL focuses on how pupils can improve their learning. The continuous process of dialogue and interaction between teachers, pupils and peers is an essential part of AfL. It involves peer and self-assessment.

Assessment for Learning Strategies

Key AfL strategies used in class practice in McKinney include:

* Sharing learning intentions at the beginning of lessons.
* Sharing negotiated success criteria.
* Revisiting learning intention through the plenary at the end of the lesson.
* Effective questioning to encourage pupils to think about their learning.
* Quality formative feedback - allows teachers to identify pupils’ achievements, any gaps in their learning, and areas for further work (what learners have done well and what they should to do to perform better). Feedback is provided to the pupils orally throughout the lesson and also when the work is marked using a variety of methods, including the two stars and a wish technique (see Marking Policy).
* Scaffolding reflection, eg. teacher-assessment, self-assessment, peer-assessment; gives pupils time to reflect on their learning, allowing them to think about what and how they are learning and to adapt their approaches, if necessary, to achieve their goals.
* Teacher reflection on effectiveness of teaching and learning allows teachers to verify what their pupils have learned. This helps them decide what they may need to teach again in a different way, or how to focus future teaching plans.

A range of assessment opportunities are provided as part of the teaching and learning process and these may include:

* Observations – planned / spontaneous
* individual, group and class discussions
* oral, written and visual presentations
* independent or group tasks
* project work
* homework
* diagnostic and / or standardised tests

Observations

In Foundation Stage on-going assessment is based mainly on teacher observation of pupils to inform the next steps in their learning process.

As children move into Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teacher observations are still extremely important, however these observations can then be supported by summative assessments.

Observations are a natural and essential part of good practice for teachers and classroom assistants. Well-planned, regular and skilful observations help teachers gain information about pupil progress over time which ensures that all children’s needs are being met.

In McKinney the different types of observation that are employed include:

* Planned Observations – these can be set as a whole class activity so the teacher can identify whether children have achieved set learning intentions or they can be planned for a small group of children or individual child in order for the teacher to identify if a specific learning intention has been met.
* Spontaneous observations – these are unplanned observations of learning that has / has not taken place

In McKinney these observations take many forms:

* Written observations – observation files / books are kept for each child. These are recorded, either, under the six areas of learning (Personal, social and Emotional Development, Language Development, Mathematical Development, The Arts, Physical Development and the World Around Us) for each child, or in an individual child observation book. These may also be made linked to specific learning groups, eg. reading groups/ maths groups.
* Photographs / Video– photographic / video evidence is provided when required and is used to support written evidence
* Children’s work – children’s work is used as evidence that a specific learning intention has / has not been met
* Parental feedback – information provided by parents to identify a specific learning intention has / has not been met

**Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment gives pupils, parents and teachers valuable information about a pupil’s overall performance at a specific point in their learning. It provides information about a pupil’s progress in subject knowledge, understanding and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPC).

Summative assessment in McKinney can occur at different intervals such as weekly, on completion of a topic of work, at the end of each term, or at the end of the year. The information it gives indicates pupil progress and achievement in the knowledge and skills in a particular area of learning. Short summative assessments are relevant and valid when they are part of a wider range of assessment methods used to form a holistic picture of each pupil’s achievements.

Teachers can use this information to inform the next steps in their planning or to highlight gaps in pupil knowledge and identify areas that they may need to re-emphasise. The information gathered from summative assessment can also be analysed at whole-school level for benchmarking and target setting.

Statutory Assessment

The statutory assessment arrangements require summative assessment judgements to be made about pupil progress at the end of each school year. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the judgements for the Cross-Curricular Skills should be made with reference to the Levels of Progression. In Years 4 and 7 the levels achieved by pupils are also required to be reported in writing to parents and to CCEA.

Class work activities are completed by pupils along with a range of CCEA Tasks to assign a level for each of the Cross-Curricular Skills, for each child. A detailed breakdown and overall level is recorded, for each child, at the end of each year, in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT. Levelled samples of work, for each pupil, should be kept in class folders which are then passed on to the next teacher.

End of Key Stage Reporting (and Moderation)

At the end of each Key Stage (Years 4 and 7) an overall level, for each child, is reported to CCEA and to parents. A portfolio of children’s work, for specific levels in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT, is produced (if required) by CCEA for Moderation purposes.

Exemptions from Statutory Assessment

Newcomer pupils and pupils who have medical conditions or have had a traumatic experience may be registered ‘exempt’ from statutory assessment for a short period of time at the discretion of the principal. Details of the circumstances and procedures for making temporary exemptions are set out in Circular 1990/45 issued by DENI (available at [www.deni.gov.uk/circular\_1990\_45](http://www.deni.gov.uk/circular_1990_45))

Internal Standardisation

Internal Standardisation is carried out at least once a year for Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT. Teachers level individual pieces of work and then meet to view samples at each level. Teachers discuss and agree levels to ensure all teachers have a good understanding of the levels. A consensus is reached and an agreed level is assigned to each piece of work. We aim to ensure that assessment standards, as presented by CCEA, have been applied consistently and accurately. This process of internal standardisation is a valuable exercise which ensures staff are well familiarised with the range of levels which they may need to cater for within their year group.

Non-Statutory Assessment

Summative assessmentsused in McKinney Primary are as follows:

Foundation Stage

* Baseline Assessment (Sept / Oct of P1 year)
* Baseline Progress (May / June of P1 year)

Baseline Assessment is carried out during the first half-term in Primary 1 and this is followed by a Baseline Progress Test which is carried out during the final term, in May. This allows us to begin to track pupil progress. The teacher can use this data to look more closely at individual pupils to identify areas of strength and areas of development. However, we must remember that children are still very young at this age and scores can tend to be influenced by many other factors, e.g. first form of formal testing, ability and confidence in using ICT, administration difficulties, etc.

*\*These assessments have only recently been implemented and are currently under review.*

* Primary 1 Assessments - These are on-going tests throughout year, eg. Testing sound recognition, High Frequency Word Tests, Reading Book Word Tests, number recognition,Winter / Summer Tests.
* Primary 2 Assessments, eg. Spelling / Numeracy / Literacy as set by class teacher. These are on-going tests throughout year, eg. Friday Tests, High Frequency Word Tests, Reading Book Word Tests, Mental Maths Tests, Tests at end of a topic / Winter / Summer Tests.

Key Stage 1

* Progress Tests in English (P3 / P4 – May)
* Progress Tests in Maths (P3 / P4 – May)

The Progress Test in English / Maths (PTE / PTM) are carried out annually by the class teachers in term 3 with P3 – P4. These are sent off to be marked and analysed. The assessment co-ordinator and the numeracy co-ordinator then analyse the data when it returns to school. Whole school, class and individual targets are then developed.

* NRITAbility Test (P3 – April)
* CAT4 (Cognitive Abilities Test) (P4 – April)
* Class Assessments, eg. Spelling / Number facts / Numeracy / Literacy as set by class teacher(On-going tests throughout year, eg. Friday Tests, Mental Maths Tests, Tests at end of a topic / Winter / Summer Tests)

Key Stage 2

* Progress Tests in English (P5 / P6 / P7 – May)
* Progress Tests in Maths (P5 / P6 / P7 – May)

The Progress Test in English / Maths (PTE / PTM) are carried out annually by the class teachers in term 3 with P5 – P7. These are sent off to be marked and analysed. The assessment co-ordinator and the numeracy co-ordinator then analyse the data when it returns to school. Whole school, class and individual targets are then developed.

* NRIT Ability Test (P5 / P6 – April)
* CAT4 (Cognitive Abilities Test) (P6 – April)
* Class Assessments, eg. Spelling / Number facts / Numeracy / Literacy as set by class teacher (On-going tests throughout year, eg. Friday Tests, Mental Maths Tests, Tests at end of a topic / Winter / Summer Tests)

**Evaluative Assessment**

A key purpose of assessment is to ensure that there is appropriate accountability at all levels for the performance of our school system.

The Department of Education require information on end of key stage assessment outcomes for evaluative purposes.

Schools are required to provide end of key stage assessment outcomes to CCEA for Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT.

Schools can make use of evaluative data at a whole-school and co-ordinator level to evaluate achievement and aims, feeding into school development and action planning.

Teachers can also use classroom level data to identify targets for improving specific pupil outcomes.

At McKinney Primary we are committed to making the most effective use of available data from diagnostic and summative assessments.

***‘In the best practice: the provision (for learning) is informed by the effective use of a range of data, including standardised tests; underachievement is identified and addressed appropriately; and the children’s progress is tracked closely.’***

(Chief Inspectors Report 2012-2014 pg 46)

Whole School Analysis

Data from Standardised Tests (PTE / PTM) is analysed at whole school level and this allows us to identify strengths and areas for improvement within literacy / numeracy across the school. The Literacy / Numeracy Coordinator then meets with the Literacy / Numeracy Team to complete the Action Plan by setting specific targets to bring about whole school improvement. This information is then brought to the Senior Leadership Team and this feeds into the School Development Plan to bring about whole school improvements. Data is shared and discussed by all staff.

Class Analysis

Standardised Test (PTE / PTM) data for each class (P3 – P7) is disseminated to class teachers in June. Class scores are analysed by curriculum content category, comprehension category (literacy) and process category (numeracy). They also allow us to see trends with regards gender in each class. Teachers are allocated time to identify further areas of weakness from their own class results, suggest reasons for weakness and state actions to be taken. (Link to PRSD as / if required). Teachers carry out individual question analysis by identifying specific questions which are more than 10% below the standardised samples and recommendations are made. This enables us to identify areas of strength and areas of development within literacy / numeracy, in each year group. Once these are identified, targets are set in each class and strategies put in place to improve teaching and learning in these areas and to share good practice across the school.

Tracking of PTE / PTM

Year group averages are compared with previous years, in numeracy and literacy, in order to monitor progress and analyse trends, as classes move throughout the school. Any rises or dips are analysed and practices put in place, where necessary to raise standards.

Individual Pupil Analysis

Data analysis enables us to track pupils’ progress in literacy / numeracy, year on year.

Comparisons are made between Baseline and Baseline Progress (P1), PTE / PTM and NRIT (P3 – P7) / CAT4 (P4 – P7), and between PTM and PTE (P2 – P7) to identify low achievers, pupils who are under-achieving, over-achieving or on-target. Factors such as attendance, illness, and teacher judgements are taken into account when prioritising these. Following discussions between class teachers (incoming/outgoing) and SENCO, in June, specific pupils requiring extra support are targeted and provision is made for them.

Evidence of target setting will also be evident on teachers’ planners where applicable.

Underachievement

Underachievement is identified quickly and systematically during the data analysis process and reviewed both during the year by establishing Individual Pupil Target Plans and at the end of the academic year when new PTE / PTM score is compared.

Staff Training

After analysis of the data, areas for development are selected for the whole school. If further training is required, in a certain aspect of literacy / numeracy to improve the teaching staff’s confidence or teaching skills, training is either provided by the subject co-ordinator, literacy / numeracy team or from an external source.

Self-evaluation

Teachers monitor and evaluate their teaching and the pupils’ understanding on an ongoing daily basis. Whether the pupils have achieved the expected learning outcomes will determine future planning of what will be taught. Self-evaluation is a vital and continuous process which is necessary to bring about improvement in teaching and learning. Medium and short term planners are evaluated at the end of the half term and at the end of the week respectively.

Assessment for Special Educational Needs

The school follow a five stage approach to Special Educational Needs (SEN), within which responsibility for pupils within Stages 1-3 lies at school level, and with both Boards and schools at Stages 4 and 5 (see Special Educational Needs Policy).

The code of Practice states that ‘children with special educational needs require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education, including the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

To assist in early identification, use should be made of all available indicators, including formative as well as summative assessment.’

During the child’s Nursery school year the ‘Early Intervention and Transformation Programme’ provides opportunity for early identification of SEN. The Nursery school is assigned a link Health Visitor who liaises closely with the teacher, parents and child to identify any concerns. Parents will complete a detailed questionnaire about their child’s development and both parent and child will have opportunity to meet with Health Visitor in a consultation interview. If there is an issue or concern it is reported to the SENCO and appropriate steps are taken to address these needs.

Throughout the school there are several ways of assessing a child for Special Educational Needs. These may include:

* Observations (by class teacher, SENCO, outside agencies, eg Educational Psychologist, Health Visitor)
* Information supplied by parents and other outside agencies
* Summative Assessments and Data Analysis, eg. Standardised Tests such as PTE, PTM, NRIT, CAT4, GRTII, Salford Reading
* Diagnostic Assessments, eg. Linguistic Phonics Assessments, Reading Recovery Tests

In consultation with the SENCO, class teacher, parent and pupil, a child may be placed on the SEN Register based on outcomes from these assessments / observations.

Depending on the needs of the child teachers may complete a Record of Concern, Stage 1 Action Plan or Stage 2 / 3 Individual Education Plan. Where appropriate these will set out the needs of each child, the aim and targets of the plan and the strategies taken by the class teacher / school to meet these needs.

Marking

Effective marking of pupil’s work is part of our on-going assessment of pupil’s progress and achievement (see Marking Policy)

Homework

Homework is used to reinforce work carried out in class and to encourage parental involvement in their child’s learning (see Homework Policy).

Reporting to Parents

* Parents receive an Annual Report in June which allows them to see the progress that has been made in all cross-curricular subjects.
* Parent – Teacher Consultations will take place in October and in February in each school year, for P1-P7 and in November and June, for Nursery.
* Interviews / Reviews are held with parents of children who have Special Educational Needs on a termly basis.
* Annual Reviews are held for children who are at Stage 5 of the Code of Practice.
* Transfer Interviews take place for Primary 7 pupils in February.
* Appointments can be made at any time to discuss concerns / progress with any class teacher, SENCO or the Principal.

Record Keeping

The following records are kept for each pupil:

* Nursery Transition Form
* Copy of Annual Report
* Standardised Test Scores
* CAT4 / NRIT Scores
* Class Tests as appropriate
* SEN paperwork, eg. IEPs, Reviews, Stage 5 Annual Reviews
* Child Protection Records
* Medical Records

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY**

This Assessment Policy is in line with other school policies, including:

Special Educational Needs Policy

Marking Policy

Homework Policy

This Assessment Policy will be reviewed regularly and updated in consultation with staff, particularly SLT and SENCO. It will then be ratified by the Board of Governors.

The policy will also be shared with parents.

The policy was last reviewed in June 2021.

It is due for review in June 2023.

Signature …………………………………. Date ……………………

Assessment Co-ordinator

Signature …………………………………. Date ……………………

Principal

**Appendix 1**

**List of Standardised Tests**

Standardised Tests

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year Group | Numeracy | Literacy | Non-Verbal | Pass |
| P1 | Baseline  Baseline Progress |  |  |  |
| P2 |  | Reading NOW |  |  |
| P3 | PTM 7 | PTE 7 | NRIT | Pass 1 |
| P4 | PTM 8 | PTE 8 | CAT 4A | Pass 2 |
| P5 | PTM 9 | PTE 9 | NRIT | Pass 2 |
| P6 | PTM10 | PTE 10 | CAT 4B | Pass 2 |
| P7 | PTM 11 | PTE 11 |  | Pass 2 |