



Cranborne Middle School

Assessment Policy

Rationale

Effective assessment deployed creatively, purposefully and in partnership with children enhances a positive attitude to learning among pupils and develops metacognition. It is essential to quality teaching and learning that raises attainment and ensures progress in learning.

Good assessment practice ensures lesson planning is relevant and is based on sound knowledge of pupils' interests, achievements, progress and the next steps in their learning. Regular discussion with children about their learning and feedback to them encourages them to learn further and deeper and helps them to understand how to be successful, what they have achieved and how they could next develop their learning.

Detailed analysis of assessment information plays a crucial role in school self-evaluation by identifying areas of strength and weakness at individual, group, class, year-group and whole-school levels. This information then guides strategic planning at these levels. This analysis is also essential in enabling the governors to have a clear understanding of the performance of the school.

Reporting to parents ensures that they are fully informed of their children's achievements and progress and of the next key steps in their learning. It affords parents an opportunity to work with teachers to celebrate children's achievements, develop a positive growth mindset among pupils and support children to extend and deepen their learning.

Principles for Assessment at CMS

The purpose of assessment is to inform the next steps for each child's learning for him/her, parents and teachers.

Assessment is the basis for celebration of children's achievements.

Assessment is most meaningful to children when it enables them to self-assess, set their own targets and monitor their own progress.

Assessment reflects ambition. It should indicate further opportunities for learning rather than imply ceilings that might restrict learning.

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Assessment informs teaching and learning that facilitates mastery and deepening of knowledge, skills and understanding, not necessarily rapid progress through them.

Assessment eases transition between schools, year-groups and different stages in children's education by providing teachers with useful information about their learning.

Assessment must be fair and consistent.

Assessment Practice at CMS Overview

There is a whole-school system of assessment that operates for all children, in all subjects from year five to year eight. Assessment is based on broad learning objectives that are set as part of long-term and medium-term plans for teaching and learning, relate to the National Curriculum and reflect expectations of progress from one year to the next. Assessment plans are created for each unit of work that describe assessment standards for each objective:

- **Developing:** children are working towards the standard expected for their stage of learning.
- **Secure:** children are secure in specified knowledge, skills and understanding.
- **Mastery:** children have demonstrated deeper knowledge, skill and understanding, for instance by making connections with other learning or independently applying knowledge and skills in different contexts.

Children who are working below the *Developing* standard are assessed as **Emerging**.

A few children who are able, gifted and talented may be assessed as **Beyond**, i.e. they are working beyond the expectations of their stage of learning, for instance a child in year eight might be addressing objectives from the year nine curriculum. This should apply to only an extraordinary few children; ordinarily, children will not be expected to progress beyond the expectations of their current stage of learning – instead, they will be encouraged and supported to develop mastery.

This language of assessment links to the methods and records of assessment used in many first schools, in other middle schools within the Wimborne Pyramid and in QE Upper School, Wimborne.

These terms (*Emerging, Secure, Developing, Mastery, Beyond*) are used within school, among staff only; they are not shared with children or parents. Through the objectives and success criteria shared with them, the feedback given to them and through reports, children and parents are supported to understand the progress each pupil has made in terms of the significant learning that has taken place and the next steps to take in order to make further progress.

Through the *Assessment For All* system of Individual Passports and Learning Passports parents are informed if their son/daughter is regularly working below the expectations for his/her stage of learning; however, *Emerging, Developing, Secure* labels are not shared with them. Similarly, the parents of high performing children who are regularly working beyond *Secure* or *Mastery* standards are informed of this – without reference to the *Beyond* label. Otherwise, parents are supported to understand that their children are learning age-appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding.

Within school, among staff, assessments are recorded and tracked using the assessment standards outlined above. The primacy of formative assessment at CMS means that these assessments are made and recorded on a day-to-day basis – not just at the end of a unit of work or period of learning. These day-to-day formative assessments combine to provide an overall assessment for teachers (*Emerging, Developing, Secure, Mastery, Beyond*) at the end of a unit of work or period of learning.

Assessment standards relate to the expectations of the children's current year-group. Therefore, children are making expected progress if they maintain the standard achieved from one year to the next, for example, a child assessed as *Secure* in a subject at the end of year five is expected to achieve the same *Secure* standard throughout year six. A child assessed as *Developing* at the end of year five and *Secure* at the end of year six is considered to have made better than expected progress. A child assessed as *Mastery* at the end of year five and *Secure* at the end of year six is considered to have made less than expected progress.

Children who regularly make less than expected progress are referred to the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for *Achievement For All* for assessment of their support needs.

The school's recording and tracking spreadsheets incorporate a method of scoring that indicates the extent of each child's progress and provides a means of comparing the progress made by different children and summarising the progress made by different groups and cohorts. These scores are not shared with children or reported to parents.

Methods of formative assessment (day-to-day assessments of children's learning based on lesson-specific objectives) are the main means of assessing children's progress and attainment.

Summative assessment (i.e. tasks or tests designed to sum up children's learning at the end of a period of learning) is used to inform and confirm teachers' judgements but is not the sole judgement recorded and/or reported to children/parents.

Moderation of assessments both internally and by external moderators help to confirm teachers' judgements and ensure fairness and consistency.

Assessment tasks are timely and appropriate with feedback given to children that helps them to understand the next steps in their learning, recognises effort, promotes a *Growth Mindset*, inspires ambition and motivates them to achieve more.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is the main means of assessing children's attainment and progress. It is securely rooted in the school's curriculum, day-to-day teaching and learning, long-term and medium term plans and assessment plans. It is based on well-designed and differentiated activities and tasks that give children opportunities to demonstrate their learning, consolidate it, apply it and extend it; it does not require specific assessment tasks or tests. It incorporates:

- discussing learning objectives and success criteria with children;
- questioning and discussion throughout lessons in order to judge, develop, consolidate and extend pupils' understanding;
- opportunities to review learning against the learning objectives and success criteria;

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- engaging children in peer-assessment and self-assessment;
- discussing and agreeing individual targets for learning;
- planning appropriate activities and tasks;
- celebrating and sharing achievement and progress;
- providing children with verbal and written feedback that celebrates success, helps them to understand the next steps in their learning, recognises effort, promotes a *Growth Mindset*, inspires ambition and motivates them to achieve more;
- sharing and discussing examples of children's work among pupils
- and adapting planned lessons in order to provide children with the opportunities they need to make the next steps in their learning.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments sum up children's learning at the end of a unit of work or period of learning. They are not always necessary; formative assessment can be sufficient. Nonetheless, they can inform and confirm teachers' judgements. They take the form of a test or task specifically designed for children to demonstrate their knowledge, skill or understanding against specific learning objectives.

Summative assessment that routinely takes place at CMS includes:

- baseline tests on entry to year five (effectively assessing children's learning to the end of year four);
- Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) on entry;
- SATs towards the end of year six;
- and tests toward the end of year eight.

Data Analysis

Assessment data is provided through

- the school's own recording and tracking spreadsheets;
- baseline tests on entry to year five;
- CATs;
- SATs results at the end of year six;
- tests toward the end of year eight;
- packs of data provided by the local authority based on SATs results;
- key stage three benchmarking undertaken by the National Middle Schools Federation;
- information provided by the Fischer Family Trust;
- and RAISE.

This data is used by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers and Subject Leaders to inform the *Achievement For All* programme (Passports), school self-evaluation, reports to Governors concerning the achievement and standards of learning of children and the School Development Plan.

Meetings take place each term involving members of SLT, relevant Subject Leaders and Heads of Year as appropriate in order to share findings from data analysis, identify trends, celebrate the successes of children and the school, identify any issues arising from analysis

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of the data and plan any actions required to either maintain or improve standards of achievement or progress.

Marking and Feedback

Verbal and written feedback is given to children that identifies their successes, helps them to understand the next steps in their learning, recognises effort, promotes a *Growth Mindset*, inspires ambition and motivates them to achieve more.

It helps children to reflect on their own learning, set targets for themselves and better understand their targets.

See the Marking Policy for further detail.

Moderation

The purpose of moderation is to ensure all teachers have a good understanding of effective assessment practice and are meeting the requirements of this policy. It also ensures consistency and fairness in the assessment of children's learning and progress.

Subject Leaders arrange moderation activities within their subject teams.

Occasionally, Subject Leaders and teachers also engage in moderation activities with colleagues from other schools or from the local authority.

Feedback to Parents

Feedback is given to parents verbally at parents' evenings twice each year, providing them with an opportunity to discuss their child's progress with his/her teachers. In addition, meetings with parents to discuss their children's progress can be arranged at other mutually convenient times.

Parents also receive an annual report, which is written in a clear, straightforward manner and is personal to the child. It informs parents about

- their child's progress – the significant learning in which he/she has been successful and the next steps to take in order to make further progress;
- their child's attitude to learning and his/her mindset;
- their child's strengths and any particular achievements he/she has made;
- how they can help their child to make further progress;
- their child's wider participation in and contributions to school life;
- their child's behaviour
- and their child's relationships with other children and how happy and settled he/she is.

Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable children are those at risk of not making progress in their learning and include those with special educational needs, disadvantaged children in receipt of the Pupil Premium and high performing children.

Early identification of these vulnerable children ensures they are provided with the challenge and support they need in order to make further progress.

The school's *Achievement For All* Policy gives details of the procedures for identification and assessment of vulnerable children.

Transition and Transfer

Assessment information, both academic and social, is transferred between professionals at each stage of the child's schooling (between classes, year groups and schools). This ensures that children have appropriate opportunities, support and challenge to make progress in their learning.

Transition meetings are held between the Heads of Years Five and Eight with colleagues at first schools and upper schools respectively.

When children move schools, relevant assessment information is sent and expected through the CTF (common transfer file).

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure this policy is implemented consistently throughout the school using strategies such as discussion with teachers, pupils and parents/carers, sampling pupils' books and reports, lesson observations, learning walks and sampling teachers' planning.

Subject Leaders will carry out monitoring and will carry out assessment moderation, book scrutiny and planning scrutiny as part of this process.

Equal Opportunities

Equality of opportunity is a fundamental right for all children regardless of race, culture, gender or special educational needs. This policy is written for all and recognises that every child has equal opportunities:

- We have high expectations of all pupils and of all groups of pupils.
- We carry out data analysis of pupil performance identifying areas of development for all pupils and groups of pupils, comparing their progress with national expectations and are committed to taking action where underachievement is identified.
- We recognise and value all forms of achievement.

Responsibilities

Headteacher

- To maintain an overview of assessment in the school.
- To ensure that statutory requirements are met.
- To be regularly updated by the Deputy Headteacher (responsible for assessment), Assistant Headteacher (responsible for *Achievement For All*) and Subject Leaders.

Deputy Headteacher

- To maintain an overview of assessment in the school.
- To monitor and develop consistency across the school.

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- To collate and analyse assessment data and utilise the information to develop a clear and detailed understanding of the school's performance and to support school improvement.
- To regularly report analysis findings to the SLT.
- To ensure that statutory requirements are met.
- To monitor and evaluate the policy in practice.
- To review and update the policy.
- To manage the whole school data systems.
- To keep up-to-date, inform staff on latest information and requirements.
- To provide CPD to develop an effective assessment ethos and good practice.
- To regularly inform Governors about the school's performance.
- To organise the reporting of children's progress to parents.

Assistant Headteacher (*Achievement For All*)

- To analyse the performance of all vulnerable groups of children, including SEN, disadvantaged (Pupil Premium) and high performing children.
- To provide reports to SLT and Governors regarding the achievement and progress of vulnerable groups of children.
- To utilize assessment data to identify children requiring support.
- To engage children, parents, teachers and educational support adults (ESAs) in developing appropriate passports (individual, learning or high performance) for individual learners.
- To assess the support needed by individual children referred to her and ensure the delivery of that support.
- To ensure relevant and specific assessments are made by the teachers and educational support adults (ESAs) responsible for delivering support to children and that appropriate records are maintained.
- To monitor and evaluate the impact of the support provided to children.
- To ensure that statutory requirements relating to vulnerable children are met.

Subject Leaders

- To ensure assessment plans include clear learning objectives and well-defined descriptions of *Developing*, *Secure* and *Mastery* standards.
- To ensure teachers have sound understanding of the curriculum they are delivering and the standards against which they are making assessments.
- To suggest appropriate formative and summative opportunities for assessment both within day-to-day teaching and learning and as specific assessment tasks or tests.
- To promote formative assessment.
- To ensure that assessments are recorded and tracked, providing advice and support where required.
- To work with teachers to ensure that children are identified as requiring further support or as high performers and that appropriate action or intervention is taken.
- To monitor the feedback given to children and parents, ensuring that it helps them to understand the next steps in their learning, recognises effort, promotes a *Growth Mindset*, inspires ambition and motivates them to achieve more.
- To utilise assessment information to inform them of the effectiveness of practice within their subject area and raise standards.

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- Provide opportunities for moderation of assessments within subject teams and engage in moderation activities with colleagues within school and from outside of school.
- To provide reports to SLT and Governors concerning standards within their subject as required.

Class Teachers

- Ensure familiarity with assessment standards.
- Discuss lesson-specific learning objectives and success criteria with children.
- Discuss and agree individual targets with children, ensuring they understand them.
- Provide appropriate opportunities, encouragement and support for children to achieve their learning objectives and targets.
- Ensure that children's work and other records provide evidence to support assessments
- Provide opportunities for children to reflect on their own learning.
- Carry out on-going formative assessment in accordance with this policy, recording assessments as *Emerging*, *Developing*, *Secure*, *Mastery* or *Beyond* (but not using those terms with children or parents).
- Record, update and track assessments on a day-to-day basis.
- Ensure the standard achieved by children at the end of a unit of study is a fair reflection of their achievement.
- Utilise assessment information to identify children requiring further support or as high performers, provide further support or challenge and make referrals to Subject Leaders or the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for *Assessment For All* as appropriate.
- Provide feedback to children and parents that helps them to understand the next steps in their learning, recognises effort, promotes a *Growth Mindset*, inspires ambition and motivates them to achieve more.
- Engage with colleagues within school and from outside of school in moderation activities.
- Prepare and write reports for parents, colleagues and other agencies as required.