"Firm Foundations for the Future"

Assessment for Learning & Marking Policy

September 2012
RAVENSWORTH C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSESSMENT POLICY

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What is assessment?

Helping children to develop as confident, enthusiastic and effective learners is a central purpose of Ravensworth C of E Primary School, providing opportunities for all children to fulfil their potential through a commitment to high standards and excellence with in an engaging, broad and rich curriculum, ensuring children are engaged by learning that develops and challenges them and excites their imagination. "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)

There are two main purposes of assessment:

• **Assessment of learning** (also known as summative assessment) is any assessment which summarises where learners are at a given point in time - it provides a snapshot of what has been learned in terms of both attainment and achievement. Summative assessment is concerned with the final summing up. At Ravensworth, as well as the statutory end of key stage assessments, summative assessments are conducted for pupils on entry to school (EYFSP) and in Y2-Y6 we use optional SATs papers and 'Big Write' assessments.

• **Assessment for learning** (AfL, also known as formative assessment) is any assessment activity which directly informs the next steps to learning. The key message is that AfL depends crucially on actually using the information gained. AfL essentially promotes future learning whereas assessment of learning describes historical attainment.

Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) combines summative and formative assessment practices. We are increasingly using the Assessing Pupil Progress materials - a structured approach to periodically assessing mathematics and reading and writing so teachers can not only make accurate level judgements and track pupils' progress through EYFS, Key Stages 1 and 2 but also use diagnostic information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses to inform teaching and learning. The materials are made up of two elements: assessment guideline sheets for assessing pupils' work in relation to National Curriculum levels and standards files - exemplars of pupils' performance at National Curriculum levels of attainment. APP is a complete assessment system, a unified, clear and consistent approach to whole school assessment practice. Once the staff are confident in using APP, it is expected that there will be a gradual phasing out of the use of summative assessments such as optional SATs.

The importance of assessment for learning

The core principles for teaching and learning are:

- Set high expectations and give every learner confidence they can succeed;
- Establish what learners already know and build on it;
- Structure and pace the learning experience to make it challenging and enjoyable;
- Inspire learning through a passion for the subject;
- Make individuals active partners in their learning;
- Develop learning skills and personal qualities.

Assessment for learning is a key element of these core principles for learning and teaching. It is a powerful means of helping all staff to tailor their teaching to get the best improvement for each child. Through Assessment for Learning (AfL), teachers involve each child in order to motivate and
help them to take their next steps in learning.

There are seven key characteristics of AfL:

- It is embedded in a view of learning and teaching of which it is an essential part.
- It involves sharing learning goals with learners.
- It aims to help learners to know and to recognise the standards for which they are aiming.
- It involves learners in peer and self-assessment.
- It provides verbal and written feedback which leads to learners recognising their next steps and how to take them.
- It is underpinned by the confidence that every learner can improve.
- It involves both learner and teacher reviewing and reflecting on assessment data.

There are five key factors that improve learning through assessment:

- Providing effective feedback to children;
- Actively involving children in their own learning;
- Adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment;
- Recognising the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of children, both of which are crucial to learning;
- Considering the need for children to be able to assess themselves and to understand how to improve.

Creating an environment for cultivating the best conditions for learning in the classroom

- Sharing objectives and reviewing learning
- Learning objectives displayed and discussed
- Key questions displayed and used in lesson starters and plenaries
- Key questions and prompts available to support children's talking and thinking about learning
- Use of key questions to trigger prior knowledge
- Curriculum displays include statements and questions to highlight key learning points
- Curricular targets
- Key literacy and numeracy learning targets are displayed
- Classroom displays, visual prompts and resources support key curricular target focuses
- Layout of classroom, organisation of the outdoor learning environment and provision of resources support inclusive, interactive teaching approaches and collaborative learning
- Display reflects the learning process in all areas of learning, e.g. poster of rules for children marking with response partners
- The teacher actively fosters positive attitudes and behaviours
- Successes are celebrated

What are curricular targets?

Curricular targets are based on learning objectives. They are informed and identified by analysis of children's work, discussions with children, teachers' assessment information and test performance. They identify whole-school priorities and areas for improvement. These priorities are included in the school development plan and linked to performance management. Curricular targets are translated into year-group targets based on age-related expectations; they guide teaching and set the focus for future assessments. Curricular targets for year groups also set out targets for groups and individual children, where appropriate.

Using curricular targets.
An example of layering curricular targets for mathematics

1. Set whole-school curricular target in mathematics from NNS key objectives (based on analysis of NAA (QCA) tests, work scrutiny, discussions with children). For example: Children need to develop their abilities to: identify and use appropriate number operations and choose efficient ways of calculating when solving problems; organise and interpret numerical evidence so they can express generalised statements in words and symbols; and present their ideas and a clear explanation of their methods and reasoning, orally and in writing.

2. Assign year-group curricular target in mathematics (based on the objectives in the Framework for teaching mathematics). For example, for Year 3: Solve one- and two-step word problems that are set in a real-life context and involve the organisation and interpretation of numerical data, and use simple diagrams to support their written explanations.

3. Differentiate the year-group target into targets for different groups using language accessible for children (based on the teacher's specific knowledge of the class and individuals). For example, for Year 3:

   'I can interpret scales on graphs and charts, I can record all my calculations when I solve problems and I can write about my methods' (above age-related Year 3).

   'I can read numbers from tables and bar charts, I can write down the number calculation I need to do when I solve a word problem, and I can talk about and write down how I solve a problem' (age-related Year 3).

   'I can make lists, tables and draw pictograms and describe them, I know how to solve add and subtract problems and I can talk about how I solve them' (below age-related Year 3).

4. Link curricular target to learning and teaching

   Teachers identify subject-specific knowledge related to that target. Input in staff meetings identifies progression through the school in this aspect of subject specific knowledge.

   Teachers identify when, in their half-termly plans, they will:
   - focus on teaching the target;
   - focus on assessing progress towards the target.

5. Review progress against targets

   Teachers and children assess and record progress against the targets. Teachers and the subject leaders review individual progress against targets and record information on the school tracking system.

**Day-to-day assessment**

Day-to-day assessment is an essential aspect of effective teaching. It involves the teacher focusing on how learning is progressing during the lesson, determining where improvements can be made and identifying the next steps. During the lesson, teachers need to be listening to, questioning, observing and engaging with the children. Teachers need to develop methods for quickly checking children's understanding and also develop more sustained assessment activities that give a particular insight into how well the children are applying what they have learned.

To make full and effective use of assessment strategies, we need to regularly engage children in the process. We need to help them to judge how well they are doing. To carry out this successful assessment in partnership requires a shared understanding of what is to be learned - the learning
objectives - and what we expect the children to be able to do after they have learned it - the learning outcomes. To help children, we share the learning objectives with them, usually at the start of the lesson, using language they understand. We discuss with the whole class and with groups of children what they can do as a result of their learning, both during and towards the end of the lesson and provide feedback on their responses and work, drawing on analyses and judgements. This ongoing oral and written feedback refers back to the learning objectives in order to identify for the children where they have been successful and what they need to work on next to progress.

The day-to-day assessment strategies of questioning, observing, discussing, checking on children’s understanding and analysing their responses are not mutually exclusive; neither is the list necessarily exhaustive. Each strategy meets different purposes; this requires teachers to determine their fitness for purpose in the context of the lesson, the learning objectives we have planned to teach, and the lesson’s place in the wider context of the unit of work and children’s prior learning.

**Questioning**

Asking questions to assess children’s starting points, in order to be able to adapt learning and teaching activities appropriately to meet children’s needs. Teachers use thinking time and talk partners to ensure all children are engaged in answering questions.

Asking a range of questions, from literal to higher-order, to develop understanding:
- Application, e.g. ‘What other examples are there?’
- Analysis, e.g. ‘What is the evidence for parts or features of …?’
- Synthesis, e.g. ‘How could we add to, improve, design, solve …?’
- Evaluation, e.g. ‘What do you think about …?’, ‘What are your criteria for assessing …?’

**Observing**

Watching children and listening to their discussions to assess their learning as it is happening. Making planned observations of particular children to support their learning in the lesson.

**Discussing**

Holding brief impromptu discussions with children to follow up any surprises at their responses or behaviour during the lesson.

Holding discussions with children to assess understanding, to diagnose the reasons for any misunderstandings or misconceptions and resolve difficulties within the lesson.

Holding informed discussions to follow up earlier assessment and diagnosis, and to discuss progress, targets and any peer or self assessments that have been made to inform next steps in learning.

**Analysing**

Marking and assessing written work with children to identify any common errors or misconceptions, and to guide children on how they can improve and progress.

Discussing with the children their responses to the tasks to identify and correct any errors and misconceptions, to assess their achievement against the learning objectives, to monitor their progress and to share with them how they can improve and what they need to do next.

**Checking children’s understanding**

Conducting recall tests with planned or spontaneous questions to assess immediately with the children their knowledge and speed of recall, involving, for example, addition or multiplication facts
or spellings.
Introducing brief review checks that draw upon what has been taught previously for children and teachers to identify what might need revision, and to guide the lesson and future planning.

Engaging children in reviewing progress
Developing supported self and peer assessment, in which pairs or small groups of children determine what they know and can do, what they still find challenging and the next steps for them. Developing independent self and peer assessment, in which the children identify their own achievements and progress and think about what they need to do next to improve. Carrying out sustained feedback with individuals or groups of children to identify the progress that has been made and to plan future learning.

An example of how AfL strategies are woven into the learning and teaching in a lesson
- A five-minute recap of the last related lesson’s outcomes or focus. Sometimes we use questioning with no hands up and talk partners to gather the key points and involve all children.
- Introduction of ‘the learning objective’. This is linked to the bigger picture of the work coverage so that children understand the place of today’s learning within the context of the whole experience (or unit of work in KS1 & 2).
- Children’s own ideas about the new focus are explored. The teacher questions and observes in order to assess children’s current understanding and to adapt teaching to meet children’s needs.
- The teacher’s modelling and teaching follows children’s ideas and build on them. Children’s feedback – individually, in pairs or in groups – gives indications of their understanding, which teachers make use of to shape the next steps in learning and teaching.
- The task is set and the teacher asks the children to summarise the key points to remember (the success criteria). These are written or posted up. They may have been gathered already during the course of the lesson. They may also be success criteria for aspects of learning such as working with others.
- Children are reminded throughout the lesson to use the success criteria to decide where they are doing well and where they need help – from each other or from an adult. The teacher considers the outcomes and decides on the appropriate form of feedback.

Feedback on learning
Learners need information and guidance in order to plan next steps in their learning. Teachers should: pinpoint the learner’s strengths and advise on how to develop them; be clear and constructive about any weaknesses and how they might be addressed; provide opportunities for learners to improve upon their work. (Assessment Reform Group, 2002a)

Sharing learning objectives and success criteria
Sharing learning objectives and success criteria provides the focus for feedback from teachers and other children, and for children’s self-evaluation. Sharing learning objectives and developing success criteria with children leads to children and teachers being more focused on the learning than on the activity and enables the children to become more self-evaluative. Teachers share objectives and success criteria for individual lessons, as well a sharing all the learning objectives across a unit of work as a way of keeping connections clear as the unit of work progresses, for example using the ‘spider diagrams’ in mathematics;
- Discussing with children at the start of a unit of work what they already know about this topic and what they would like to know and learn about. Concept mapping and Mind-maps are
often used as devices to help children put together their initial thoughts.

- Providing a visual display of the coverage of a unit of work, which is then used at beginnings and ends of lessons to draw together what has been learned and the connections with future learning.
- Presenting the unit coverage as a list of questions to be explored.
- Using simple language as a way of sharing learning objectives and success criteria with children, for example:
  
  We are learning to '... when referring to learning objectives;

  Remember to '...' when referring to success criteria.

- Just before the children start to work, asking 'So what do you need to remember to do in order to ... (achieve the learning objective)霁?' Their responses are written up and used by the children as criteria for their focus, self-evaluation and feedback.

Oral feedback

The language of the classroom gives strong messages to children about their achievement. Some schools have changed the way in which they talk to children about difficulties, focusing on the fact that challenge means that new learning is taking place. Instead of saying, for instance,

"I know you are having difficulty with this. Don’t worry – I'm going to help you"

Teachers use language such as:

'It's making you think because you are learning something you didn't know before and I am here to help.'

'When you find something challenging, it is an opportunity to learn something new.'

'Now you'll learn something that you didn't know before. Then it won't be hard the next time you meet it.'

'This is how we learn. If everything is easy, it means you already knew how to do it, so there's no new learning.'

As a result of this change in language, children are less afraid to make mistakes, children with special educational needs and those of higher ability have increased self-esteem and children are more able now to admit their difficulties.

Written feedback

Research has shown that:

- Children believe that the purpose of marking is for the teacher to find out what they have got right or wrong, rather than being for their own benefit.
- Children are rarely given time to read marking comments.
- Children often cannot understand or read the teachers’ handwriting or comments.
- Children are rarely given time to make any improvement on their work.
- Being too general (e.g. 'some good words here') or giving broad targets (e.g. 'remember to use more exciting adjectives') is not helpful to children. Giving specific feedback helps them to understand how they can improve.

Principles

- Work is marked against the key learning objectives identified in our planning although other significant evidence may be recorded where appropriate.
- Detailed marking takes place where learning is significant or where there are real difficulties. Other marking is less detailed and is often verbal feedback.
- Where marking is part of a summative assessment, a level may be recorded.
- Feedback provides a record of processes as well as outcomes and can show when support was given, particular resources used, time taken or problems overcome.
Feedback takes place during or straight after a piece of work when possible or as soon after as is practical. This is particularly important where similar work will be taking place and there is not yet a high degree of accuracy or independence.

As often as possible, the child is given time to improve their own work.

Monitoring, through work scrutiny, will look for a consistent whole-school approach, ensure that there is progression, high expectations and a clear link between the learning intentions as they appear in policies and planning and the outcomes that can be seen in children's work.

Involving Children

- Children are made aware of the learning objectives, the expected outcomes and the purpose of the tasks. Where appropriate the learning objectives (I can statements) are noted on the piece of work (either at the beginning or as part of a feedback and marking comment) and are a prompt and a record for the child and the marker.
- Wherever possible, marking is positive and aims to show the child where they have done well. It may also indicate a (limited) number of opportunities for improving their work using an agreed set of feedback and marking symbols.
- Children are involved in the feedback and marking process by being aware of what is expected of them, what progress they are making and by taking increasing responsibility for checking and improving their own work.
- Marking supports a learning environment in which it is 'safe to fail' and in which we learn from our mistakes. By valuing children’s efforts and attempts, and by referring back to previous feedback and marking, children become more aware of the difficulties they have already overcome.
- In KS2, most children, or the teacher, record the date on all written work. In KS1, children are encouraged to date their work as soon as they are able. All marking should be dated.
- Detailed marking by a person other than the class teacher/supporting adult is signed.
- Where work has been rushed, inappropriately presented or shows the minimum effort, children are asked to improve or re-present it. It will be made clear to the child that we know that they are capable of more than they have shown in the piece of work. We have high expectations and want children to have high expectations too.
- A rubber is only used in tasks where work is to be displayed, or where it would not be practical simply to cross out a mistake (e.g. accurate measuring work)
- Decisions about the number of marks, corrections or opportunities for improvement on a piece of work depends on the learning objective and feedback and marking focus and the needs of the child. We always expect children to do their best, but this does not mean that we expect perfection.

Reading

- Ongoing assessment of reading is made using group reading records and home-school reading diaries. As children progress, they may keep reading journals and are asked to comment about books they have read.

Writing

- Feedback and marking symbols are used in Class 3 (see attached); simplified versions are used in Class 1 and Class 2. Children are clear about the purpose of the task and the assessment criteria. Our feedback and marking is focused on the learning objectives.
- We do not expect children to be 'perfect' writers. They are developing and orchestrating a range of complex skills. This takes many years to perfect! In Class 1, for example, there is a balance between emergent writing and the development of 'perfect sentences'.
• Targets are used to give an opportunity for each child to address their own immediate priorities in writing
• Paired feedback and marking with children working as response partners is used as appropriate

Phonics / Spelling
• We record children’s progress in phonics and developing skills in spelling.
• Marking of spelling depends on the task and the child but will usually focus on key words or high frequency words. We encourage self-correction where appropriate and seek a balance between correct spelling and fluent writing.

Handwriting
• Appropriate presentation is important and handwriting is taught and marked as a key skill.
• Children are expected to try hard with their presentation, especially when someone else will read their work.

Special Needs
• Feedback and marking should motivate and encourage all children by helping to identify small steps of progress, set appropriate targets and provide help in overcoming problems.
• Feedback and marking should support targets identified in a child’s inclusion passport.

Equal Opportunities
• Our feedback and marking acknowledges the progress and strengths of all children and, in identifying areas of weakness, supports a planned way forward.
• Our feedback and marking is not gender specific (as in ‘Good girl’) and we strive to help every child fulfil his or her potential.

Behaviour Policy
• Feedback and marking rewards learning and should promote good self-esteem by involving children in understanding their own progress and by setting targets which the children and their teachers believe will be achieved.
• Feedback and marking has links with the rewards section of our behaviour policy and is supplemented where appropriate by the use of house-points, stickers, smiley faces and award certificates. However, we do not use external rewards excessively as we are aware that the they are not always effective for all children as:
  o Children strive for the reward, not the achievement;
  o They encourage competition, rather than cooperation;
  o Children of average ability get the fewest rewards;
  o They have short-term motivational gains.

Policy Review led by Andy Syers (Interim Headteacher) in consultation with staff, January 2012
Agreed by staff & governors January 2012
Practice clarified and agreed, marking symbols reviewed September 2012
Anticipated review date Autumn 2014
Marking Symbols

LO met  Well done, you have met the learning objective!
😊  Well done (good word, phrase, sentence etc.)
⭐  House point
.shift  Next steps
//  New paragraph
^  Word missing
?  What do you mean?
X~~X  Mistake
SP  Spelling to be corrected by you
_circle  We talked about this
CM  Child marked