

Ysgol Gynradd Creigiau Primary School

Assessment for Learning Policy

An assessment activity can help learning if it provides information to be used as feedback by teachers and their pupils in assessing themselves and each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes formative assessment when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet learning needs. (Black et al, 2002)

The day to day informal assessment of pupils' work is an essential aspect of effective teaching. It involves the teacher: focusing on how the learning is progressing during a lesson, determining where improvements can be made and identifying the next stages for pupil development. At Creigiau Primary we are striving to develop our use of 'Assessment for Learning' strategies and develop the use of higher order questioning. The rationale for doing so is outlined below.

Assessment for Learning (A.f.L.):

- Focuses on how pupils learn.
- Is part of effective teacher planning.
- Is central to classroom practice.
- Encourages a pupil's motivation.
- Is sensitive and constructive.
- Involves the pupils within the process.
- Helps learners to realise where improvements can be made.
- Develops the capacity for self and peer assessment.
- Helps the pupils to understand the importance of setting goals and judging work against success criteria.
- Encourages paired and group working i.e. collaboration.

Sharing Learning Goals

Effective learning takes place when learners understand what they are trying to achieve and how the learning fits into everyday life. This is achieved by sharing the learning objectives with the pupils so they know what they are learning and why. The sharing of 'Learning Goals' is an area

which was monitored during the monitoring of the core subjects (see Monitoring File 2009/10)

- Learning objectives should be focused on the skills or range in line with the new Curriculum documentation. The learning objective focuses on what is being learnt and may be introduced as a W.A.L.T. (What we Are Learning Today).
- Success Criteria provides a list of features, steps, to aid the successful completion of the specific task. The success criteria focuses on what the pupils are doing as well as the quality of the work. The success criteria, especially in the upper juniors, should be generated using the pupils. The success criteria may be looked at under the acronym W.I.L.F. (What I'm Looking For).

The learning objective should be in language children can understand e.g. not educational terminology. It is important that the teacher explains how the learning will feature in everyday life i.e. the bigger picture and also the steps that will follow this aspect of learning.

Ideally, as written above, the pupils should be used to generate the success criteria, though with younger pupils it may involve the teacher setting the targets and then agreed with the pupils. The creation of success criteria should take place before a lesson and be visible throughout the lesson so the pupils have a good idea of the expected outcome. A good way of generating success criteria is through modelling using a good piece of work to flag up important features.

The learning objective and success criteria should form the main basis for the marking of the set work though the use of self and peer assessment is a powerful learning tool for the pupils involved.

Effective Questioning

The use of paired, group and class discussion with the use of higher order questioning is a powerful learning tool and allows the pupils to learn from one another. At Creigiau Primary we are looking to develop the use of higher-order questioning and their use will be monitored in future monitoring rounds.

Teachers should ensure:

- They ask rich, open ended questions to encourage thinking and discussion. Bloom's Taxonomy highlights the different type of questioning- see over the page.

Bloom's Taxonomy

The levels of the *Taxonomy* and examples of activities at each level are given below. The levels of this taxonomy are considered to be hierarchical. That is, learners must master lower level objectives first before they can build on them to reach higher level objectives.

1. **Knowledge** (Remembering previously learned material)

e.g. Mathematics: State the formula for the area of a circle.

2. **Comprehension** (Grasping the meaning of material)

e.g. Mathematics: Given the mathematical formula for the area of a circle, paraphrase it using your own words.

3. **Application** (Using information in concrete situations)

e.g. Mathematics: Compute the area of actual circles.

4. **Analysis** (Breaking down material into parts)

e.g. Mathematics: When given a mathematics word problem, determine the strategies that would be necessary to solve it.

5. **Synthesis** (Putting parts together into a whole)

e.g. Mathematics: Apply and integrate several different strategies to solve a mathematical problem.

6. **Evaluation** (Judging the value of a product for a given purpose, using definite criteria)

e.g. Mathematics: When you have finished solving a problem (or when a peer has done so) determine the degree to which that problem was solved as efficiently as possible.

- The teacher should also extend the thinking time i.e. allow a pupil time to assimilate the required information then think about it before answering.
- The teacher should look to make use of ‘No Hands Up’ as a strategy; this fits in well with the extended thinking time as pupils are not distracted with a sea of hands. The strategy ensures that all of the pupils may be asked for their opinion or asked to comment on another pupils answer encouraging the pupils to focus.
- The teacher encourages a willingness to try to answer and get the pupils to realize that their, and other pupils’ errors, are opportunities to develop their understanding.
- The use of ‘Discussion Partners’ allows the pupils to discuss their opinion, ideas before answering to the whole class.

Self and Peer Assessment

Self and peer assessment encourages the pupil to: become a more independent learner, allows them to take more responsibility for their own development and forces them to address the success criteria created at the start of the lesson. The self assessment may be oral or written but it needs to be constructive and positive and linked to the agreed success criteria. Self assessment therefore ensures that the pupils actively involved in their learning and take a greater responsibility for their own development e.g. traffic lighting at the end of a mathematics lesson using coloured pencils.

Target Setting

Pupils in Creigiau are encouraged to set targets in the core subjects, as well as a separate individual target, and these are reviewed and updated at regular intervals, in consultation with the teacher to ensure there is an agreement as to the meeting of the target. The ‘Target Booklets’ are in view in the classroom and the pupil can, between reviews, flag up that they feel they have met the target in a specific subject.

Provision for SEN pupils

Individual Educational Plans are set termly for all pupils on the SEN Register. The termly plans are reviewed at the end of each term before new targets are created. The SEN Co-ordinator is fully involved as are the pupil’s parents, guardians.

Feedback

The plenary at the end of a lesson is vital if the pupils are to see how well they have achieved against the success criteria. It also allows the pupils to identify what they need to do next in order to improve.

The feedback may be oral in nature or may involve distance marking using, for example, two stars and a wish. For younger pupils the use of a display outlining how well they are achieving is a powerful tool e.g. Archery target with arrows approaching the target as the pupils make progress against their agreed targets.

A wide range of AfL and Thinking strategies can be used to improve the quality of learning and the teachers in Creigiau Primary have had INSET sessions to develop their understanding of the principles and been provided with a the booklets, 'Developing an Assessment for Learning and Thinking Skills Toolkit' (produced by Abi Beacon, Advisory Teacher for Assessment). It is not intended that all the strategies are used, some will work better than other with different cohorts, but it is the school's intention to continue to monitor and evaluate the usefulness of the strategies introduced at regular intervals and the policy will be reviewed annually by the ARR Co-ordinator.

Phillip Ivins (22.03.10)