



## Assessment Policy

### What is Assessment?

The word assessment is often used in two senses: a process carried out to provide data about something or someone, and as a product, as in referring to teachers' assessments. Assessment in the Academy involves making judgements about pupils' attainments. It involves deciding what information is relevant, how to collect it, how to come to a judgement and then how to report or communicate the judgement to those who want to know what pupils are achieving. All of these decisions depend on the reason for conducting the assessment. Reasons for conducting assessment within the Academy may include: helping pupils with learning, letting parents know how their child is progressing, allowing teachers to regulate their teaching and diagnose problems, to report on school progress and effectiveness to bodies such as Governors and Central Government.

The Assessment Reform Group simply define assessment as:

*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.*

At Lowbrook we believe assessment is an essential ingredient of outstanding teaching and learning. Quality assessment is of fundamental importance to all teachers, parents and children. They provide vital information required for planning the whole curriculum and for measuring learning outcomes. It is an ongoing process undertaken on a formal and informal basis. It is an essential feature of the effective practice at the Academy.

### Aims

- To ensure effective teaching and learning for all pupils.
- To ensure a common understanding of aims, objectives (Learning Intentions) and priorities.
- To provide for multiple opportunities for children to show what they know, understand and can do.
- To inform children, teachers, parents, governors, community and Central Government of progress and achievements.
- To ensure effective feedback so that children can learn from failure and develop resilience.

### Purpose and Methods of Assessment

The Cambridge review identifies two kinds of purpose for assessment:

- Helping learning and teaching,
- Reporting on what has been learned.

These are not different kinds of assessment, but different ways of using the data that assessment provides. The first is described as **formative** or assessment for learning. Information gathered for this purpose has only one use; by definition if it is not used to help learning then it cannot be

described as formative. In contrast, assessment for the second purpose, described as **summative** since the results provide a summation of learning at a point in time, is used in several ways.

The results for individual children are used within the school for recording pupils' progress, reporting to parents and to pupils, and in some cases for grouping pupils. Summative assessment is also carried out for use outside the Academy, to meet the requirements of statutory national assessment and in some cases for selection.

At Lowbrook Academy we ensure that there are both:

1. Assessment for Learning (formative)
2. Assessment of Learning (summative)

### **Assessment for Learning (Formative)**

What this involves for teachers is best described as a cyclical process, in which they gather data about pupils' current understandings and skills by observation, careful questioning, gathering children's views and studying pupils work, then interpret this information in relation to the lesson goals to decide the next steps in learning. The cycle is repeated by gathering more data in the next activity, having the effect of regulating learning so that the pace of moving forward is adjusted to ensure the active participation of learners. The value of children's participation at all stages in this cycle is widely recognised. It requires that children as well as teachers have a clear idea of what they should be aiming for, thus enabling them to take part in assessing their work and gaining some independence in learning. Teachers will continuously assess their children during the course of every day's teaching. Central to this process ensures that teaching:

- Shares learning goals with pupils.
- Helps pupils to know and to recognise the standards to aim for.
- Presents the learning intention as a question– Can I calculate ... ?).
- Provides feedback which leads pupils to identify what they should do next to improve.
- Has a commitment that every pupil can improve.
- Involves both teacher, TAs and pupils reviewing and reflecting a pupil's performance and progress.
- Involves pupils in self-assessment.
- Provides opportunities for revisiting prior work with limited input. We recognise that repeated testing using varied time intervals improves long term memory. Goodbye to "Cramming," and an endorsement of the phrase, "Use it or lose it."

There are many opportunities that allow for these assessments. For example:-

- Marking of work against the learning objective.
- Discussion with individual and groups of children.
- Discussion with teaching assistants and other professionals working with children.
- Targeted questioning.
- Revisiting learning objectives in the plenary of a lesson.
- The setting and evaluation of clear targets.
- Use of response partners.
- Re-testing, cold tasks, delayed feedback

These everyday assessments will inform the teacher of:

- Whether children have learnt and can re-call, use and apply what has been taught.
- Who needs more help or is ready for extension.
- Who is making better or less than expected progress.
- Whether all children, including vulnerable groups such as Pupil Premium and those with IEP's are meeting their learning targets.
- Whether teachers need to refine any aspects of their teaching and adjust planning.
- Whether children are working hard and putting effort into their learning and whether children are demonstrating resilience through their work.

### **Assessment of Learning (Summative)**

Summative assessment is a judgement made on what a child has learnt. This data is used to ascertain and recognise levels of pupils' achievement on a standardised basis, to compare and analyse progress and to assess the quality of learning within the Academy. Summative assessment at the Academy is carried out through testing and teacher assessments. It is used largely to inform parents how their child is progressing, allowing the school's leadership and teachers to diagnose anomalies or problems with teaching or pupil groups and to report on school progress and effectiveness to bodies such as governors and Central Government. Data is recorded and analysed within the school, by the DFE and by the Fisher Family Trust (FFT).

At Lowbrook Academy we ensure that throughout the year judgements about pupils' performance in relation to national standards are made.

These judgements are made through:

i) Formal testing

- On entry to Foundation Stage all children are assessed using NFER Reception Baseline Assessment. The EYFS profile (Development Matters 0-60) is completed throughout the year until the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Formal testing of Y2 is continuous throughout the year; the teacher's assessment will be used to inform the standard given at the end of the Key stage. A variety of assessments are used, these include the Standard Assessment Tasks for English grammar, punctuation and spelling, Reading and Maths. Monitoring of teacher assessment is essential and is carried out in school, with colleagues from surrounding schools and by the LA.
- At the end of KS2 the school administers the Standard Assessment Tasks for English grammar, punctuation and spelling, Reading and Maths in accordance with National Policy.
- All Domains have agreed assessment schemes and schedule as outlined within the assessment rota schedule. Re-testing of spelling, times tables, competencies and key facts are the norm and ensures that we are building the neural plasticity and long term memory of our learners.

ii) Teacher Assessment.

Teacher assessment is an essential part of the Curriculum. The results from teacher assessment are reported alongside test results. Both have equal status and provide complementary information about children's attainment. The tests provide a standard snapshot of attainment at the end of each year group, while teacher assessment, carried out as part of teaching and learning in the classroom, covers the full range of scope of the programmes of study, and takes account of evidence of achievement in a range of contexts, including that gained through discussion and observation. Moderation of teaching assessments is the norm and often external.

Teacher assessment is rooted in the level descriptions of the National Curriculum and agreed syllabus for RE.

The way this is achieved is through:

- On going standardised reading assessments.
- A termly unaided writing activity.
- End of topic assessment and review activities in Numeracy.
- Regular mental maths testing of x tables and the Lowbrook Competencies.
- End of topic assessments in Science,
- Regular topic and domain knowledge and skill assessment (Please refer to assessment rota),
- Weekly spelling tests.
- The review of IEPs.
- Recording statements in the significant observation section of Assessment Folders.

To ensure quality and consistency in assessments, teachers will moderate work together and with colleagues from other schools. Cross-referencing assessment information from different sources rather than relying on just one source of information gives the most reliable indication of progress.

### **The importance of assessment and record keeping**

- Assessment is a continuous process that should highlight a child's strengths, weaknesses and progress within the curriculum and also inform future planning. It will also identify the achievement of vulnerable groups within the school e.g. EAL, SEN, FSM, LAC, Summer born, Pupil Premium, etc.
- Assessment will aid in the identification of the more able and gifted and talented child.
- When children have shown what they know, understand and can do they will have a purpose to their education.
- Assessment breeds confidence because success is highlighted and achievable growth points are identified.
- Children should be involved in the assessment of their own work. This assessment should be criteria referenced and not comparative.
- It should be free from issues that cloud judgements, e.g. stereotyping, broad generalisations and be related to high yet realistic expectations.
- Record keeping allows efficient retrieval and reporting of progression and achievements. It will therefore be an open, systematic and comprehensive record of the individual's capabilities. Confidentiality is of paramount importance.

- Assessment folders are to be kept up to date, easy to read and follow children's progress. This policy along with the assessment rota are to be kept in every class teacher's assessment folder for easy reference.
- The records kept by the individual teacher and the school will record and assist the reporting of each child's achievements.
- All summative assessment results for English and Maths are recorded on Target Tracker, an interactive data tracking system. This is updated and reviewed termly.

### **Record Keeping**

Record keeping can be formal or informal. Sometimes brief jottings are appropriate; sometimes more detailed accounts are needed. Most children will achieve the learning objective as planned and a record will only be kept of children who are not meeting or exceeding the objectives in these circumstances. The teacher will make comments about these children in his/her assessment file.

Records kept by the school will:

- Clearly show children's progress over time.
- Identify children or groups not making the expected progress.
- Record significant achievements in Curriculum subjects, Religious Education and other learning.
- Include the outcomes of observation, questioning, marking and testing.
- Inform future planning.
- Inform and feed into the annual report to parents.
- Be used as diagnostic tools for continuous improvement planning.
- Be used as an indicator of success in achieving the aims and objectives of the Academy.

The quantity and quality of record keeping will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the purposes for which it is intended.

For details on specific records please refer to the assessment rota and individual teacher assessment files (Teaching staff only). A record of formal assessments for Literacy and Maths will be kept within the school office along with external judgements on our results such as RAISEONLINE reporting.

### **Reporting to Parents**

#### **Parent Teacher Consultations**

At Lowbrook Academy there are two formal parent-teacher consultations per year (Autumn Term 2 and Spring Term 4). This is important because it gives parents and teachers an opportunity to discuss a child's progression, achievements, targets and IEPs (if appropriate).

#### **The Annual School Report**

The Annual School Report is sent out to parents towards the end of the Summer Term. This report includes:

- Comments on a pupil's progress in English, Math and Science
- National descriptors of stage in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science.
- Comments on pupil's personal and social development.
- Attendance figures.
- Arrangements for discussing the report with parents.

Year 2 and 6 parents are also sent a separate sheet that includes details of their child's SAT results and teacher assessments.

### **Transfer of Information**

It is vital that useful assessments are passed on to the next teacher to ensure that progress can be tracked over time and planning can be pitched at the appropriate level.

To ensure a smooth transition from EYFS to Year 1, KS2 to KS3, Year 6 teachers meet with Year 7 teachers from the surrounding secondary schools in the Summer Term to discuss individual children.

### **Special Educational Needs & Disabilities**

Children with SEND are identified and assessed as early as possible so that appropriate provision can be made to support the child's learning. (See SEND Policy) Those children who are not attaining new national curriculum expectations are assessed using P scales.

### **English as an Additional Language**

Teachers are aware of those children in their class who speak English as an additional language. They will differentiate the tasks so that the children have access to the curriculum. All children who are identified as having English as an additional language are assessed on the levels according to local Government schemes.

### **Gifted and Talented/More able.**

The teachers regularly identify children who are gifted and talented or more able. Please refer to the Gifted and Talented policy for identification through assessment.

### **Roles and Responsibilities for Assessment**

The assessment policy and practice is the responsibility of the Executive Principal. Currently two members of the SLT (the Heads of Schools) share responsibility for managing the implementation of this policy.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the policies on:

- Teaching & Learning



- Curriculum
- Marking
- Monitoring
- SEN
- EAL
- More able/Gifted and talented

### **Confidentiality**

Parents/Carers will have full access to their own child's data and teacher assessments along with statutory reports such as league tables outlining the schools performance. Teachers will have access to all pupils' data and teacher assessments. Governors will have access to all data but will not have access to individual pupil data the school holds. Central Government will have all statutory assessments of pupils on role.

### **Considerations when applying this policy**

1. *Children in England, as is well known, are amongst the most tested in the world.* Cambridge Review 2011. We must ensure that we plan our assessment carefully in line with the above principles and don't over test or use tests in a negative way with the children within the Academy.
2. Summative assessment pleases some pupils but makes others anxious. This happens not only when they are given formal tests, but when their work is marked, which is why teachers' comments rather than grades are important in assessment for learning. Given that pupils in England are the most tested of any country, this Academy has reduced the need for marks where comments would be more useful.
3. Validity- High validity is important for summative assessment. Ideally it should provide information about the full range of learning goals. For instance, external tests which are administered to large numbers of pupils are in practice limited to what can be assessed using paper and pencil, thereby restricting validity while considerations of reliability mean that there is preference for test items that can be marked with minimum error. Both of these factors tend to reduce the range of what is included and hence the validity of the results. This causes tension between reliability and validity and the Academy must take a view on this when administering this policy.
4. The impact of Year 6 SAT's and league tables. The Cambridge review paints a negative picture regarding the impact on testing in Year 6. It highlights that teachers had adopted a transmission style of teaching based around test content and day to day testing became summative based. The submission from NAPE reported that "in a great many schools coaching for test performance has replaced education." The Cambridge review also concludes that evidence in relation to aspects of motivation for learning has accumulated to suggest that testing lowers the self-esteem of the lower achieving pupils and gives all pupils a rather narrow view of learning, in which test performance is more highly valued than what is being learned. The Academy is committed to quality learning and is committed to using assessment to this end. It does not teach to tests and does not advocate the transmission style of teaching.



Executive Principal's last thought:

**“Test scores and measures of achievement tell you where a pupil is now but they certainly don't tell you where a pupil may end up. Please use assessment as a key step towards the 'Yet'.”**

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The Governing Body approved this policy on date: **13<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Signed:

Executive Principal