

PRINCES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Assessment policy



October 2015

Aims of the policy

The School Leadership Team aims to

- ensure that all teachers know what is expected of them as regards assessing pupils;
- support teachers in sharing this process with colleagues;
- help teachers make well-founded judgements about pupils' attainments and progress;
- track the attainments and progress of individual pupils and pupil groups over time;
- provide parents with accurate information about their child's attainments and progress;
- monitor practice in assessment and the use made of assessment information;
- collate information that enables the Governing Body to evaluate practice across the school;
- use assessment information when planning training and the deployment of resources;
- compare the progress made by different groups of pupils to ensure that no group is disadvantaged.

Assessment terminology

This policy document contains guidance for staff on assessment for learning and is also designed to inform Princes' assessment of learning. We make this distinction in terminology to convey our different uses of assessment: first, to influence teachers' planning and have a formative effect on pupils' learning (as a result of feedback on their performance); and, secondly, to influence Governing Body priorities and render the School accountable for its results (by analysing pupil progress data with like pupils nationally and analysing percentages of those exceeding expectation and comparing them to numbers for like pupils nationally)

The first part of the policy focuses on assessment for learning and the second part will focus on the assessment of learning and the school evaluation of performance and targets.

Purpose of assessment for learning

The main purpose of assessment is to support teaching and learning by identifying what pupils already know and can do and what their next step should be. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning which is evident in every lesson. We believe that when teachers identify and record in advance what they intend to assess during a lesson and then record the outcomes of this assessment in a systematic way, then the information will contribute to a developing picture of each pupil's attainments and learning needs and influence teachers' future plans.

By assessing pupils accurately and consistently and recording key information we

- build a clear picture of each pupil's skills, knowledge, understanding and approaches to learning;
- identify each pupil's strengths and the priority areas for their future learning;
- identify an appropriate curriculum for each pupil;

- identify “next steps” for each pupil and express these as clear learning objectives;
- identify the progress made in individual lessons or series of lessons;
- evaluate the progress that each pupil is making over time;
- evaluate and improve the teaching strategies used with each pupil;
- support pupils, where appropriate, to monitor their own learning;
- identify, celebrate and share achievement.

Pupils with significant medical needs, including degenerative conditions ,and those in the earliest stages of development make particular demands on the assessment process. For example, it is very difficult to assess a pupil’s attention to stimuli if they are only alert for part of the day or if their physical control is such that they show few unambiguous responses. For these pupils the initial aim of assessment may be to identify potentially reliable responses and, overtime, to build a profile of stimuli likely to elicit a response. Our pupils’ progress is not always linear and skills are rarely generalised spontaneously. Teachers need to use their professional judgement in analysing the outcomes of any assessment, particularly one that depends on a published tool or on an observation made on only one occasion.

The assessment cycle

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has identified three linked aspects of assessment

- day to day assessment
- periodic
- transitional

Day to day assessment is based on learning objectives (including IEP goals and targets) and teaching strategies, which the teacher has identified for a specific lesson or series of lessons. During lessons the classroom team (involving pupils as appropriate) identify the progress being made. The teacher uses this information to judge how far learning objectives have been met and whether the strategies used were effective. They also note any other key achievements observed by members of the team. Day to day assessment informs planning for the next lesson in the series; for instance, it may show that a pupil is ready for a more challenging objective or suggest how a successful/unsuccessful a strategy was.

Periodic assessment involves a broader view of progress. At Princes pupils IEPs targets are reviewed termly with the pupil if appropriate and new targets set. In February each pupil’s progress is assessed against the external assessment tool, PIVATS and other criterion based measures (such as assessments of speech and language) may also be used on a periodic basis. The outcomes of these assessments form the basis of bi annual and termly records.

Transitional assessment recognises and records a pupil’s achievement at a time of transition, usually the end of a school year and/or Key Stage. At Princes, transitional assessment looks at external measures of progress (PIVATS and INGOTS) and internal measures of progress within the school’s curriculum (IEPs, Personal Skills Booklet). These assessments are formally reported to parents and, together with the records of periodic assessments, enable the next teacher to tailor the curriculum to their pupils needs for the following year. They also make an important contribution to the school’s improvement plan.

Assessment documents

We use the following documents to assess and/or accredit aspects of learning and progress, as appropriate to individual pupils

- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
- PIVATS
- INGOTS
- Quest
- Programmes of Study, within the school's curriculum framework
- Personal Skills Checklist

In addition, teachers or speech and language therapists may use specific tools to look in more detail at particular aspects of learning – for example, 'Snowdrop' helps our PMLD teacher to identify responses shown by pupils at early developmental levels.

Assessment techniques

Princes pupils have a wide range of abilities and learning styles and our approaches to assessment reflects this. Techniques that we use include

- observational assessment, where a member of staff who knows a pupil well observes his or her response to learning activities and unstructured situations; assessing the level of engagement and interaction
- dynamic assessment, which looks at the pupil's responses in the context of learning a task;
- questioning, which enables the teacher to make a judgement about pupils' degree of understanding;
- criterion-referenced assessment, which measures a pupil's attainment against a list of skills
- formal assessment, where the pupil is asked to complete set tasks which indicate his or her knowledge or approach to learning;
- review of written work;
- reviewing other evidence, such as photos, collected over a period of time;
- records of frequency and intensity of behaviour;
- multidisciplinary discussion, e.g. to review a behaviour support plan or IEP.

Involving the class/ multi-disciplinary team

Although teachers are responsible for ensuring that assessment is planned for and takes place, all members of the classroom team are involved in assessment during lessons and in sharing the information with teachers. This means that they need to be aware of the goals and targets within IEPs and of the learning objectives for each lesson. Other professionals (physiotherapists and speech and language therapists) make separate assessments of pupils' progress in their specialist areas as well as observing progress during the lessons in which they support pupils. This information is shared with teachers, so that they can use it to inform future lessons and to set future learning objectives.

Involving pupils

We involve pupils in recognising and assessing their progress in ways that reflect their level of understanding. This varies from sharing in the celebration of achievement at the end of a lesson to identifying (with support) what they have achieved in a lesson and finally to discussing and reviewing learning objectives.

Some pupils are able to recognise when they have done well during a lesson, either from the outcome or because they know that staff are pleased with them. Some are able to respond to a structured system of rewards that in time will enable them to understand the desired outcome.

For our most able pupils classroom staff will help them to understand the progress they are making and what they need to do next to continue learning. They are involved in the evaluation of their IEP targets and choose a 6th target for their IEP.

Sharing information

Teachers gather relevant information from their colleagues, either at the end of a lesson or the end of the day, and involve all members of the classroom team in recording pupils' progress against IEPs and learning objectives.

Teachers' records are available to all staff working with pupils. The following documents are kept in the classroom

- Planning folders including termly, weekly and daily plans
- Annual Progress Reports
- IEPs and IEP evaluations
- Progress files
- Behaviour Support Plans

Planning folders are accessible to all staff and IEPs are displayed prominently in classrooms.

We involve parents in the Annual Review process by seeking their views on their children's progress and priorities for the following year and by sending them a copy of the teacher's annual review 2 weeks in advance. We also send home termly IEPs so parents can have an input if they so wish. At the end of each year teachers write a full report of the activities in which each pupil has taken part and the progress they have made.

Incidental assessment

Alongside planned assessment we also seek to identify key achievements outside the planned learning outcomes. A pupil may demonstrate in one lesson a skill which has been worked on in another curriculum area or show a response related to the focus area but not the same as the learning objective. We also seek to be alert to the 'wow moments' where a pupil engages in a task for the first time or unexpectedly displays a skill or an attitude which has not previously been observed (for example, attracting an adult's attention for the first time or accepting close proximity with another pupil). These significant steps need to be noticed, shared and recorded.

Assessment of learning

Introduction

Our systems for monitoring standards and tracking pupil progress in Princes are uniform across the schools and therefore transferable between classes and teachers. By monitoring standards and tracking and evaluating progress, we ensure that our teaching enables pupils to learn to their maximum potential, and receive a wide range of experiences. The School Leadership Team is responsible for monitoring standards, progress and the breadth and balance of the curriculum offered.

Annual Assessment

All pupils are assessed biannually, in February and May. PIVATS is used to assess pupils operating within the P levels and early National Curriculum levels. The data from the PIVATS assessments is submitted to the Curriculum Evaluation and Management Centre (CEM) at the University of Durham. The results are compared with those of other like schools nationally. PIVATS data is also inputted into CASPA, a national analysis tool where all of our pupil results are compared against pupils with similar special educational needs. These results are analysed, to provide value added data and show progression from a particular starting point. Individual and cohort data is analysed using Durham and CASPA and used to inform decision making for the priorities in the school improvement plan, subject action planning and target setting. All these actions have a positive impact on pupil progress.

How do we assess progress?

Most of the data that we analyse relates to assessments based on relatively narrow summative assessment of National Curriculum criteria. Throughout the year teachers and their colleagues also look at a wider range of indicators to assess individuals' progress: how far pupils have engaged with the school's curriculum, which targets pupils have met from their Individual Educational Plans and other measures of achievement. Depending on the pupil, we assess progress in specific areas such as their ability to manage their behaviour or to respond to the plans put in place by speech and language therapists and physiotherapists.

Target Setting

Targets are set in November for the following summer term by class teachers. Targets are set for all the aspects of English, Maths, Science and PSD. We ensure targets are challenging enough by analysing individual pupil data. This year we will also set an end of KS2 target taking into account a pupil's development in the first 2 years of the key stage and the pupil's performance at the end of KS1. Progression guidance will be used to ensure that target setting is challenging and that we are striving for the majority of pupils to make better than expected progress.

Targets are also set termly through the pupils IEP, parents are consulted on those targets, and for our more able pupils at least one of the targets is chosen by the pupil. Monitoring of the targets and the strategies used to achieve these targets is carried out each term by members of the senior leadership team. Teachers also have in their planning learning objectives differentiated to meet individual pupils' learning needs.

Broader whole school targets are set out in our School Improvement Plan.

End of Foundation Stage and Key Stage Assessments

All pupils at Princes are dis-applied from end of key stage SAT examinations.

Pupils are assessed by their current class teacher at the end of a key stage and this is reported to the Dfe

Initial Assessments

On entering the school all pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or a draft Statement. New pupils starting in September are base lined by their class teacher in November and targets are set for them as they are for all pupils in the school. Within the first half term of the school an IEP is written. If a pupil enters the school at another point in the school year then a PIVATS baseline assessment would be completed in the Feb or June with an IEP being written within 6 weeks of the pupil starting.

IEPs

IEPs are written and reviewed termly. They have 5 compulsory SMART targets which include:

Communication/Literacy

Maths

Personal Independence/PSHE

Motor Skills

Play/social skills

For our more able pupils we have a 6th target which is set by the pupil. Where possible pupils are helped to put their targets into their own words using an appropriate medium e.g. writing, photograph, drawings, and symbols. Wherever possible IEP targets should be discussed and reviewed with pupils

Teachers also ensure that IEPs are sent home at the end of each term to allow parents to comment on their child's progress and the proposed IEP for the following term. IEPs are also discussed at parent's evenings, annual reviews and class meetings.

Progress Reports

A Progress Report covering the six areas of learning is produced for each pupil, in the summer term by the end of June. This is a full reports, which aim to give parents information about their child's education and progress in school, as well as their experiences. Progress reports are sent to parents who are asked to comment on their child's progress.

Progress Files

Each child has an on-going progress file. They contain levelled evidence of progress in each aspect of Maths and Literacy. They are added to each term. These are kept in school and form part of pupils' records. At the end of each year, pupils are encouraged wherever possible to comment on their own progress.

Moderation Files

The English/Maths/Science Co-ordinators each have a moderation file which contains a sample of moderated work that has been put together by the MSLD consortium. All staff are encouraged to look at these files. We also have termly moderation meetings for Maths and English at Prince, when staff have the opportunity to discuss and level pupils work for each of the aspects.

Each week we have a foundation subject as the focus for moderation. Staff give levelled evidence to the relevant coordinator so they can monitor what is happening across school, at each stage in the curriculum.