



ASSESSMENT POLICY

Adopted: Summer 25

Review: Summer 28

Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy is due to be reviewed at the time stated, unless circumstances determine that this policy needs to be reviewed at an earlier time.

Signed: Chair of Governors
Mr J. Orchard

Headteacher
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ASSESSMENT POLICY

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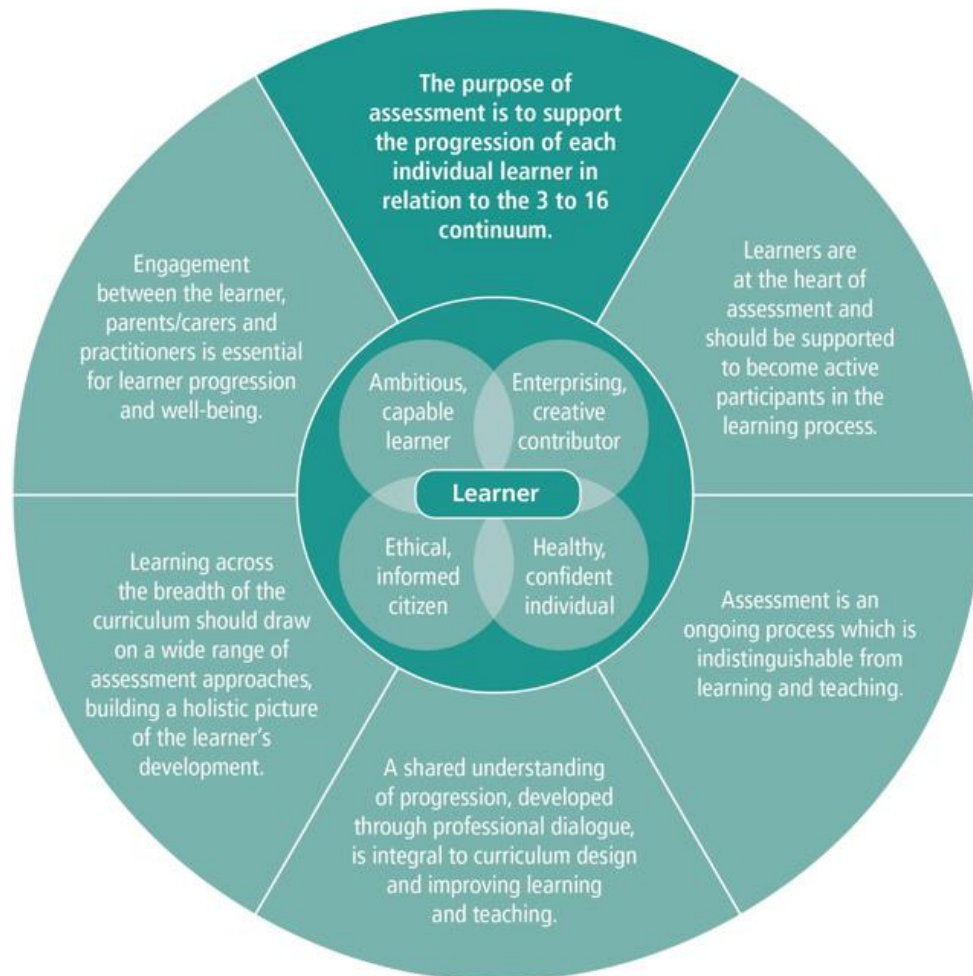
Introduction

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and plays a fundamental role in ensuring that our pupils make good progress. Progress in learning is a process of increasing depth, sophistication, engagement, application and independence, rather than of covering a body of content. Such progress is not linear, and different learners are likely to progress in markedly different ways and at different paces. At Maes yr Haul, our assessment planning and practice is built into the curriculum and classroom practice, recognising and allowing for the variety of diversions, stops and variations in pace in a learner's journey.

We assess all learners from when they join the school and throughout their time at Maes yr Haul Primary based on the progression articulated in our curriculum and against planned learning intentions. Staff assess a wide range of pupils' capabilities, skills, knowledge and aptitudes, including their literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing to determine the next steps in their progression and the learning and teaching needed to make that progress.

Principles and Purpose of Assessment

[Welsh Government](#) illustrate the principles and purpose of assessment as follows:



The roles of assessment

Assessment has three main roles in the process of enabling learner progression:

- Supporting individual learners on an ongoing day-to-day basis
- Identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time
- Understanding group progress in order to reflect on practice

Supporting our learners on an ongoing, day-to-day basis

To support our learners on an individual and ongoing, day-to-day basis, assessment is embedded into everyday classroom practice in a way that supports and is indistinguishable from learning.

Our assessment practices will identify individual learner's strengths, achievements, areas for improvement and, where relevant, barriers to learning. This understanding will be used by our practitioners, in discussion with our learners, to ascertain the next steps required to move their learning forward, including any additional challenge and support required.

Identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time

Our practitioners will identify the progress being made by our learners and record this, where appropriate, to understand each learner's journey over different periods of time and in a variety of ways. This includes developing an understanding of how a learner has learned, as well as what they have learned and are able to demonstrate.

Reflecting on a learner's progress over time enables practitioners to provide feedback and plan their future learning, including any interventions, additional support or challenge that may be required. This feedback will include both immediate next steps and longer-term objectives and goals that the learner should work towards to help keep them moving forward in their learning. This information will also be used as a basis for communicating and engaging with our parents and carers.

Understanding group progress in order to reflect on our practice

Assessment enables our practitioners and leaders to understand to what extent and in what ways different groups of learners are making appropriate progress. This understanding contributes to our processes of self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

Different types of assessments

Our practitioners use a wide range of activities and methods to assess pupil's prior knowledge, check on progress and identify next steps for learning and teaching. Amongst these will be assessments that are formative, diagnostic or summative. Formative assessments (sometimes referred to as 'Assessment for Learning') is by far the method which is used the most by all practitioners on a day-to-day basis as part of the everyday teaching and learning process.

Diagnostic Assessments

Diagnostic assessments are assessments which are used periodically for specific reasons to help 'diagnose'. Typically, these will be very specific and will be used to help practitioners to gauge what a learner already knows or can do. An example of this would be the 'Read, Write, Inc' assessments which practitioners use to check a learner's phonics knowledge, ability to read sounds in real and nonsense words, and comprehension skills. This information enables staff to target their future learning needs either in whole class work, or through targeted group activities. Specific diagnostic assessments are often used to support the identification of specific additional learning needs (ALN) for individual pupils.

Summative Assessments

These are assessments which are most often carried out at the end of a 'unit' of teaching or at specific intervals during the year. They are mostly used to check on learner progress compared to their previous understanding and performance but can also be used to provide a measurement against 'standardised' norms, for example to assist secondary schools for transition.

Formative Assessments

These are mostly frequent, small evaluations carried out by gathering evidence of progress or areas of difficulty for each learner. They take a wide range of forms, including but not

limited to simple questioning, discussion, a quiz, a practical task, providing timely feedback, and also including peer and self-assessment activities.

These processes provide ongoing and regular feedback to practitioners which are 'formative' in identifying the next steps in learning that can be implemented immediately. It also supports higher levels of pupil engagement and metacognition – learning about learning. Dylan Wiliam, co-author of 'Inside the Black Box' (1998) with Paul Black, describes formative assessment as *"...all those processes by which teachers and learners use information about student achievement to make adjustments to the students learning that improve their achievement."* Research from the 1980s onwards strongly supports that effective use of formative assessment can have a very powerful impact on pupil progress.

The Five Strategies of Formative Assessment

Our school approach to formative assessment is based on the model set out by Dylan Wiliam in "Embedding Formative Assessment" (2011) and aligns closely to the [pedagogical principles](#) specified in Curriculum for Wales.

1. Clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning intentions and success criteria:

Practitioners will ensure that learners have a clear understanding of what the expected learning is (**Learning Objectives**) and what success should look like (**Success Criteria**). Often practitioners will establish this at the start of a session and may write this on the classroom board for reference. This is a matter for professional discretion and there will be examples where it is more effective for learners to 'find out' what the learning objectives are as part of the process, rather than at the outset. Success criteria may also be 'tiered' to show how different levels of performance can be achieved.

Practitioners need to be very clear about the learning objective and to ensure that this is not confused with the context. For example, if writing a set of instructions to change a bicycle tire, the learning is about writing clear instructions, the context is about changing a tire. The context could easily change but the learning would remain the same. Learners' ability to apply their learning, skills and experience to different contexts is an important mechanism for practitioners to assess pupil progress.

2. Engineering effective classroom discussions, questions, and tasks that elicit evidence of learning:

Learning activities are planned to enable practitioners to see what learners understand and to help identify what they are having difficulty with and where they may need more support or alternative methods. This can take a wide variety of forms and often involves high levels of interaction between the practitioner and learners during activities to check on learners understanding. This process also supports learners to embed their own learning, such as by describing a process, explaining their thinking, showing how they arrived at an outcome.

Practitioners need to use questioning carefully and skilfully to give insights into learners' thinking and understanding. Closed questions (e.g. Did you...) require a simple "yes or no" answer, whereas open questions (e.g. "why did you...") requires more information,

explanation and therefore, thinking. Both types of question have a purpose, but generally open questions should be used much more to support formative assessment.

3. Providing feedback that moves learners forward:

Feedback from practitioners should be timely, specific, and actionable, helping learners understand what they need to do to improve and demonstrate those improvements.

We prioritise giving feedback that is ‘in the moment’ and where our learners can readily relate the feedback to the activity and take action to improve. Where feedback is given through more traditional (‘distance’) marking, it is essential that learners are able to read and understand the feedback and are given time and support to take the appropriate actions. Further detailed information is given in the school’s ‘feedback’ policy.

4. Activating students as learning resources for one another:

Practitioners will encourage and facilitate pupils to learn from and support each other's learning through peer feedback and collaborative activities. This will most often happen in paired activities and can take a variety of forms such as checking each other's work or testing one-another. Research clearly demonstrates that both learners gain from these experiences, even when one of a pair is the more confident or knowledgeable on the topic.

Our pupils will collaborate with different peers in their class (and beyond their class) over time, for a variety of different purposes. A pupil who is confident in one area of their learning and may help to support their peers, may be less confident in another area and be the learning in a paired task. As teachers all know, teaching a topic to somebody is a powerful way of challenging and ultimately embedding your own understanding.

5. Activating students as owners of their own learning:

Practitioners will use a variety of methods to support learner's ‘metacognition’ – helping pupils to understand the learning process and have ownership of this. This includes helping pupils to identify their prior knowledge and recognise what they have learned – the progress they have made. Included in this process, we recognise that this process is also emotive, and that pupils need to be supported to develop self-regulation, recognising the need to challenge themselves and the benefits that brings to achievement. This helps to improve self-esteem and motivation.

We recognise that effort is a much stronger predictor of pupil progress than ‘ability’. We encourage pupils of all abilities to try their best and to have the confidence to take on challenges and not fear making mistakes or ‘failing’. We encourage our learners to recognise their achievements as personal goals, rather than comparative ‘ego’ activities.

The model below illustrates how Dylan Wiliam's five strategies of formative assessment relate to the processes (finding out where the learners are, where they need to go, and how to get them there). The roles in the classroom include the practitioner (‘teacher’), the learner and the peer.

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is	How to get there
Teacher	Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions	Engineering effective discussions, tasks, and activities that elicit evidence of learning	Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer		Activating students as learning resources for one another	
Learner		Activating students as owners of their own learning	

The following model illustrates how the majority of formative assessment activities will take place in the 'short-cycle', being frequent, day-by-day and requiring high levels of engagement and responsiveness from learners. Through effective use of these strategies, we aim to use formative assessment effectively to maximise pupil progress. We recognise that in order to prioritise the time and effort of staff in these strategies, this will involve an element of 'trade-off' for less impactful, but historically recognised activities, such as teachers using commentary marking in books.

	Long-cycle	Medium-cycle	Short-cycle
Span	Across terms, teaching units	Within and between teaching units	Within and between lessons
Length	Four weeks to one year	One to four weeks	Minute-by-minute and day-by-day
Impact	Monitoring, curriculum alignment	Student-involved assessment	Engagement, responsiveness

The role of different participants in assessment

For assessment to be effective, we recognise that partnerships between our practitioners, our learners and parents and carers are important.

Leaders

Leaders at our school will establish a strong learning culture that supports and challenges our practitioners to enable them to make appropriate progress. This is achieved by:

- creating a clear vision for curriculum that supports our learners' realisation of the four purposes and supports individual learner progression;
- creating an environment that develops the necessary knowledge and skills to promote learner wellbeing;
- creating an environment based on mutual trust and respect, rather than one focused on compliance and reporting;
- enabling our practitioners to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their role in assessment effectively;
- ensuring the design, adoption, review and revision of our curriculum that affords opportunities for our practitioners to plan purposeful learning that addresses the needs of each of our learners;
- developing and embedding processes and structures that enable our practitioners to develop a shared understanding of progression;
- ensuring there is a clear picture of learner progression within our school that is understood by all our practitioners, a process that embeds regular ongoing professional dialogue on progression into our systems to support self-reflection and inform improvement;
- ensuring there is a clear understanding of learner progression across our cluster of schools that feeds into discussions on learner progression within each school or setting
- considering how additional challenge and support for our learners can be best provided, including working with other partners
- encouraging engagement between all participants in the learning and teaching process in order to develop effective partnerships
- ensuring that the statutory requirements have been met and that due regard has been paid to this guidance for assessment, and that practitioners are taking account of this in planning, learning and teaching and within daily practice.

Practitioners

Practitioners at our school will plan for and provide effective learning experiences that are appropriate to the age and development of our learners. They support and challenge learners effectively to ensure individuals make progress from their own starting points. This is achieved by:

- being clear about the intended learning, and planning engaging learning experiences accordingly;
- supporting the promotion of learner well-being through assessment practice;
- sharing intended learning appropriately with learners;
- evaluating learning, including through observation, questioning and discussion;
- using the information gained from ongoing assessment to reflect on their own practice to inform next steps in teaching and planning for learning;

- providing relevant and focused feedback that actively engages learners, encourages them to take responsibility for their learning, and moves their learning forward;
- encouraging learners to reflect on their progress and, where appropriate, to consider how they have developed, what learning processes they have undertaken and what they have achieved;
- providing opportunities for learners to engage in assessing their own work and that of their peers, and supporting them to develop the relevant skills to do this effectively;
- developing learners' skills in making effective use of a range of feedback to move their learning forward;
- involving parents and carers in learner development and progression, with the learner's involvement in this dialogue increasing over time;
- engaging in dialogue with leaders and fellow practitioners to ensure we have a clear picture of the progress being made within our school;
- identifying any additional challenge or support learners may require, engaging with external partners where necessary.

Learners

Our learners will participate in and contribute to the learning process in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. This will help them develop knowledge, skills and understanding, and to apply them in different contexts. As they make progress with increasing independence, our learners will be supported and encouraged to:

- understand where they are in their learning and where they need to go next;
- develop an understanding of how they will get there;
- respond actively to feedback on their learning, and develop positive attitudes towards receiving, responding to and acting upon feedback in their learning;
- review their progression in learning and articulate this both individually and with others;
- reflect on their learning journey and develop responsibility for their own learning over time

Parents and carers

Parents and carers have an important role to play in assessment and we will engage with them so that they can support their child's progress in an appropriate way.

We will encourage and enable parents and carers to:

- engage regularly with our school and our practitioners in order to understand and support their child's progression in learning;
- share relevant knowledge and understanding with us which will support their child's learning and progression;
- respond actively to information provided about their child's learning and, in collaboration with us, plan ways of supporting that learning within and outside of school.

External partners

We will engage external partners to:

- help our practitioners assess and identify the needs of learners who may require additional support and then help them through the provision of advice and support.

This includes specialist educational support and support from other agencies such as health

- provide information about learning progression that has taken place for our learners who may spend some of their time in other contexts.

When communicating and engaging with parents and carers, we share information about:

- the progress their child is making
- their future progression needs
- how future progression needs can be supported at home
- their general well-being in school

Communicating with parents and carers

We share information about pupils' progress with parents and carers termly through a combination of face-to-face parent consultations and an end-of-year written report with contributions from pupils.

We also provide information about any support, interventions or additional needs required for the learner's development, either as part of termly discussions or in separate ALN meetings if/when appropriate.

As part of our end-of-year reporting to parents, our learners are asked to reflect upon their learning and progress, giving their views on their next steps.

Parents are informed about our use of the personalised assessment activities and are encouraged to consider the feedback provided along with their children.

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