



Thistly Meadow Primary School

ASSESSMENT POLICY

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Principles and Aims

Assessment at Thistly Meadow Primary School allows teachers to understand pupil's achievements which in turn enables every child to have access to a well-planned, engaging curriculum that is relevant and appropriate to their needs. It also ensures that every child has access to the age appropriate programmes of study with a clear focus on developing age appropriate skills whilst at the same time, catering for those pupils who may need a little more time, support or different learning experience in order to work within, or exceed, their age related curriculum.

At Thistly, rigorous and regular assessment allows teachers, leaders and governors to drive forward our desire for all pupils to reach their potential across a range of subjects. Assessment may be personalised or tailored for pupils with specific needs. The National Curriculum, Symphony assessment system and curriculum maps devised in school, drive the age related expectations and content of what is taught and assessed at Thistly.

It is the aim that assessment and judgments are consistent within year groups and also between year groups. To allow this to happen, moderation takes place routinely- within year groups, across phases and key stages. Teachers at Thistly understand their responsibilities and accountability, as set out in the teacher's standards¹, for pupil's attainment, progress and capabilities. They use a range of assessment techniques to secure pupil progress and use relevant data to inform planning and subsequent action.

Assessment at Thistly is supported by OTrack which holds all current and historical data. Teachers input data for the core subjects termly and for all other subjects annually. Otrack also forms part of the analysis of data and equips leaders across the school in holding teachers and leaders to account for the progress of cohorts, classes, groups and individuals.

Over time, experience shows what works for our pupils and staff; however, this is not fixed. The key to assessment at Thistly is that this is a live policy which may be evaluated and amended at any time (by senior leaders and the governing body) to allow for continuous improvement. It also provides the flexibility to adapt and amend practice according to research and practice in how assessment can best support all pupils at Thistly.

Approaches to assessment

Different types of assessment add to the overall picture of a child's learning and development towards, within and beyond age related expectations. Data and assessment outcomes are used by different people and organisations including pupils, parents, teachers, leaders and governors

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

as well as the government and Ofsted. The way in which data is used may vary according to the audience.

Day-to Day Formative Assessment

This includes the day to day assessment including marking, questioning, observations, quizzes, short tests and scanning pupil's work during the lesson. Teachers use a variety of ways of collecting and recording these assessments, however, it is focused on pupil's knowledge and understanding of a topic, concept or skill. Judgments are also made about the independence and confidence demonstrated. Pupils understand what they need to do to improve- this may be through verbal feedback to an individual, group or class, through written marking or through follow up guided/shared/modelled work. Teachers also look for regular opportunities to allow pupils to demonstrate skills and knowledge through application tasks.

Thistly caters for a wide range of abilities and ensures that assessment is inclusive; teachers consider access arrangements such as questions being read out, practical assessments and other ways which allow pupils to demonstrate their learning and understanding. Teachers employ a range of techniques within and between lessons to ensure that assessment is responded to and swift action is taken to support progression for those pupils who demonstrate secure knowledge and skills and those who may need greater support in order to achieve expectations and plug gaps in learning. Some assessments such as answers given during mental maths sessions or answers shown on a whiteboard may not be recorded but all add to the overall picture of a child's achievement and ability to access the age appropriate curriculum.

Teachers at Thistly understand that ability is not fixed - there is no ceiling on achievement. The overall aim for all pupils is for them to work securely within age related expectations. There is an understanding that some pupils may take a little longer than others to get there whilst some will need additional intervention or provision to reach expectations.

For pupils

Well planned learning objectives and success criteria allow pupils to measure their own success within a lesson and identify where they need to target effort. Pupils are also given time to respond to comments and feedback and reflect on their own targets.

For parents

There is frequent and regular feedback to parents either through planned parent's evenings, informal notes in home-school link books or meetings as requested by either the parent or teacher. It may also inform homework for pupils to work on in partnership with school. Comments made by parents on homework feed into the assessment and planning cycle.

For teachers

Day to day assessment is integral to teaching and learning. It allows teachers to identify within a lesson, at the end of a lesson, throughout a week and over a unit or topic, those pupils who

are struggling, those who have consolidated learning or those who require extension. Formative day to day assessment is responded to and planning, support or resources amended as appropriate.

For school leaders including subject and key stage.

Through observations, PMR, book, learning walks and planning scrutinies as well as less formal conversations, leaders need reassurance that teachers are identifying pupils at an individual level who need support to make progress and meet expectations.

For Ofsted

“Ofsted will want to be assured that teachers are making effective use of formative assessment to support teaching and learning. It forms part of Ofsted’s wider judgments about the quality of teaching in schools.” (Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels Sept 2015)².

“Ofsted recognises that marking and feedback to pupils, both written and oral, are important aspects of assessment. However, Ofsted does not expect to see any specific frequency, type or volume of marking and feedback; these are for the school to decide...Marking and feedback, which may cater for different subjects and different age groups of pupils in different ways, in order to be effective and efficient in promoting learning” (Ofsted Handbook 2015)³

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment may include end of term or year curriculum tests and end of topic tests. These may be whole school agreed tests or more personalised tests planned by class teachers or phases to support learning in future topics. Teachers at Thistly use end of topic assessments and other tests to inform subject leaders about achievement and progress in classes, cohorts and of individuals. Summative assessment within the academic year is used to inform subsequent lessons or topics. Comparisons are made in the data between individuals and groups of pupils- this allows identification of those pupils who may need additional intervention or longer term SEND support. When data is available, judgments against national data are made.

Throughout the year, at least termly, pupil progress meetings are led by the deputy head which focus on the progress of the cohort, class, groups as well as individuals. These meetings and assessments also help in the allocation of spending and LSA deployment. Teachers may be required to rethink how the timetable or LSA timetable need to later to further support the needs of pupils.

²

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/483058/Commission_on_Assessment_Without_Levels_-_report.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015>

At the end of an academic year, assessments are used to inform a formal written report for parents which details where pupils are working in relation to age related expectations. Strengths and weaknesses are conveyed as well as areas in which parents can support.

For maths, Headstart end of term tests are used to support the continuous use of materials from the same provider. The maths subject leader and SLT support the use of the materials as it matches most closely to the national tests, National Curriculum and power standards developed internally. Sample DFE materials and questions are used in reading and grammar.

For pupils

In school summative assessment provides pupils with information about how well they have learned and understood a topic or scheme of work over a period of time. It provides feedback about their gaps and how to continue to improve.

For parents

Parents are informed through parent's evenings and the annual written report about the achievement, progress and wider outcomes of their child over a period of time.

For teachers

Teachers are able to evaluate pupil learning at the end of a unit or period of time based on pupil data outcomes and also judge their own teaching and the impact of any additional intervention. Teachers are able to plan for subsequent learning and teaching. OTrack is used to input data three times a year for reading, writing, maths and science and annually for all other subjects.

For school leaders

School leaders are able to monitor the performance of cohorts and identify where additional intervention or support within the class may be required. OTrack reports may form part of this analysis. Leaders work alongside teachers to ensure that all pupils achieve sufficient progress and expected attainment. Leaders monitor the impact of teaching and intervention and, as required, may direct changes to timetabling or staff deployment.

For Ofsted

"Ofsted will want to be assured that schools are operating effective systems of assessment for monitoring and supporting pupil performance." (Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels Sept 2015)

"Ofsted will take a range of evidence into account when making judgments, including published performance data, the school's in-year performance data and work in pupils' books and folders." (Ofsted Handbook, 2015)

Standardised Summative Assessment

This constitutes the end of key stage curriculum tests at KS 1 and 2 including phonics and EYFS. At Thistly, we prepare the pupils for these tests with a broad and balanced curriculum which matches the new national curriculum and age related expectations. Throughout Foundation stage and Key Stage 1, pupils are taught phonics according to the Ruth Miskin⁴ scheme. All teachers are familiar with how the teaching in their year group is essential to reaching age related expectations at KS 1 or 2. Pupils in year 5 and 6 do use more sample tests to prepare them for tests; however, they drive the next phase of teaching.

All tests at KS 1 are marked internally and are delivered according to DFE requirements. Pupils do not learn to pass a test; at Thistly, we believe that well planned lessons meeting the needs of all pupils is excellent practice. The tests that teachers use form part of the teacher assessment judgment but clarify where there may be gaps of independence issues. Papers are stored in line with DFE guidelines. Phonics testing is all carried out by the teacher best placed to assess the pupil (The teacher who knows them best.) in line with the DFE arrangements and guidelines. Testing at KS 1 may be delivered to a whole class or smaller group if teachers and the deputy head believe that this will benefit pupils. Social and emotional needs are also taken into account and catered for. In more complex situations, pupils may even undertake assessments individually.

At key stage 2, tests are delivered according to DFE guidelines. Tests are marked externally- they are stored before and after testing in line with statutory requirements.

For pupils

Pupils, along with their parents, gain information about how they perform in comparison with pupils nationally.

For parents

Standardised assessments provide parents with information about how their child compares nationally. It also allows parents to compare schools nationally and inform parents' choice of school for pupils.

For teachers

The standardised tests help teachers to understand national expectations and understand how their teaching supports the progression throughout the school.

⁴ <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/read-write-inc-programmes>

For school leaders and governors

Leaders benchmark school performance against local schools and nationally. Patterns related to specific subject areas and cohorts may be drawn out in using published analysis materials including Raise online. Judgments are made about school effectiveness.

For the government

The government can hold education providers to account and measure the impact of educational policy making.

For Ofsted

“Nationally standardised summative assessment provides a starting point for Ofsted’s discussions with schools when making judgments about their performance, as part of Ofsted’s wider judgments of a school’s overall effectiveness.” (Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels Sept 2015)

Arrangements for the governance, management and evaluation of assessment

The Head teacher is responsible for writing the assessment policy and also ensuring that policy is put into practice. The policy is updated every three years or more often if required due to changes within the school’s system or those governmental decisions that force change. The Head teacher is responsible for the effectiveness of assessment practices in school with at least half termly meetings with the executive head teacher and school business manager.

Each term, the key stage manager will meet with each class teacher to discuss the next steps for learning. Governors and the Head teacher will also be informed of progress and achievement in each cohort with a focus on how different groups of pupils perform in comparison with their peers in school and nationally.

Moderation is carried out at least termly in the core subjects. The SLT understand that time must be put in for different teams to moderate work in different subjects. Year 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6 moderate at least termly within directed staff meeting time whilst year groups moderate more often. The Head teacher will lead moderation across the whole school working alongside english and math’s subject leaders and other members of the leadership team.

Assessment at Thistly is inclusive of all abilities. The SENCO or outside agencies may also carry out more in-depth or specific assessments should a child present far more complex needs. Teachers are supported with how best to provide quality provision for the pupils following the outcome of assessment.

The use of assessment outcomes

At Thistly, assessment of all types is purposeful and is useful for a range of audiences. Systems of assessment are manageable and additional time is planned in at different points during the year to support teacher's workload as well as teacher delivery of weekly PPA time. Assessment outcomes form part of a whole picture about each individual child, class, cohort and teaching within a class. Data is analysed alongside what senior and middle leaders know about the individual pupils, what is evidenced in their books, observations made by teachers and outside agencies if relevant. At Thistly, data is used as part of the performance management and appraisal process in order to identify teacher's strengths and needs in relation to different subjects and planning. It is also used as a tool to identify which individual pupils, class or cohort may need additional support.

Subject	How it is assessed	Data collection	What is not collected	Who will use the data?
Reading	Age related symphony sheets highlighted throughout the year. BDS judgment made at the end of each term.	Data is put onto OTrack termly. Year followed by B (Beginning) D (Developing) or S (Secure)	Guided reading records, individual reading records, reading comprehension test papers, word tests.	SLT Phase Leader Subject Leader SENCO
Writing	Age related symphony sheets highlighted throughout the year. BDS judgment made at the end of each term.	Data is put onto OTrack termly. Year followed by B (Beginning) D (Developing) or S (Secure)	Individual books and pieces of writing. Moderation will take place.	SLT Phase Leader Subject leader SENCO
Maths	Age related symphony sheets highlighted throughout the year. BDS judgment made at the end of each term.	Data is put onto OTrack termly. Year followed by B (Beginning) D (Developing) or S (Secure)	Mini maths tests or assessments, Headstart materials, end of year maths tests, results of x tables tests.	SLT Phase Leader Subject leader SENCO
Science	Scientific enquiry- Age related symphony sheets	Data is put onto OTrack termly. Year followed by B (Emerging) S	Before or after topic assessment sheets, results of any science tests	SLT Subject leader

	are highlighted throughout the year. Topic- symphony sheets are used for each topic.	(Expected) or S+ (Exceeding) A class symphony sheet is collected termly for enquiry and after each topic.	of quizzes, notes or observations made during investigations.	
All other subjects	Age related symphony sheets are highlighted throughout the year.	Data is put onto OTrack annually. Year followed by B (Emerging) S (Expected) or S+ (Exceeding)	Notes or observations, test or quiz results, tests devised within year groups.	Subject Leaders

Arrangements for teachers

All teachers at Thistly are accountable for the progress within their class whilst more senior members of staff are accountable for progress within a cohort, across a key stage or phase or within a subject.

All teachers understand their role in assessment made clear through the teacher's standards and also through the performance management process.

The Teacher's standards

- Be accountable for pupil's attainment, progress and outcomes.
- Be aware of pupil's capabilities and prior knowledge.
- Know and understand how to assessment the relevant subject and curriculum areas including statutory assessments.
- Make use of formative and summative assessments to secure pupils' progress.
- Use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets and plan subsequent lessons.

All teachers are part of regular and planned CPD opportunities. The Head teacher attends writing moderation training annually through the local authority. Teachers are given copies of new material related to assessment such as sample test papers, frameworks, updated DFE reports or documents.

All teachers have attended training at Thistly in the use of Symphony assessment materials in order to make judgments. Curriculum teams have worked collaboratively to ensure that the materials sit alongside the new curriculum and Thistly's curriculum maps. Termly year group

meetings and phase meetings, each attended by a senior or middle leader, allow moderation between year groups to further develop teacher's competencies in making accurate judgments. Training has also taken place for all staff in the use of OTrack to input data. Middle leaders have also been trained in the use of the reports. The school business manager has a thorough understanding of the use of OTrack working closely with the senior leadership team in decision making and analysing data.

The impact of assessment on pupils

Encouraging pupils to understand the purposes and practices of assessment is an important way of helping them to take responsibility for their own learning and progression.

Pupils at Thistly all have the opportunity and steps in place to succeed- the intention is for all pupils to reach age related expectations. Through discussion in class rooms, all pupils understand what is expected of them in order to achieve- this may be in an individual lesson, over a unit of work or topic or even over a longer period of time.

Pupils are given daily opportunities to reflect on their learning. Feedback may be individual written feedback which allows pupils to see what has gone well or areas that may need to be improved. Time is given to allow pupils to respond to comments and development points. Feedback on assessment may also be built into planning subsequent lessons for pupils or addressed during whole class or group teaching through verbal feedback. At Thistly pupils understand their targets which are intended to fill gaps in their learning- these may be addressed within lessons, for homework or in additional intervention sessions.

Assessment of pupils always has the intention of it being of value to learning and teaching. The value is in the response to the assessment rather than the recorded data.

Assessment data forms part of the discussion around staffing (Teachers and LSA's) and support allocation.

Links with parents

Thistly is proud of its links with parents. We ensure that parents understand the way that pupils will be assessed at different points throughout the year and also the purpose of the assessments. This is to allow parents to support their pupils effectively and help to avoid unnecessary pressure on pupils. Developments are explained to parents who attend curriculum or assessment meetings so that they understand any changes in timetabling, test preparation and how they can help at home.

There are two formal parents' meetings a year at which pupil's progress towards securing age related expectations are discussed. Parents are actively involved to support pupils with the gaps in their learning through homework and KIRFs (Key instant recall facts) in maths. Through

curriculum evenings, year group blogs and documents sent home, parents have a clear understanding of what constitutes age related expectations for their son or daughter. Whilst teaching is relevant to pupil's abilities and current attainment, we believe that parents also need tangible examples of what pupils should be able to do at particular ages in their education.

At parent's evening, pupil's books are shared which all have copies of the Symphony assessment sheets in relevant books. These may be referred to in discussion or used to clarify comments and judgments.

Following statutory assessments for phonics, end of KS1 (Reading, writing, grammar and maths) and end of KS2 (Reading, writing, grammar and maths) parents receive a letter which states whether or not their child has met age related expectations. They are also informed of their child's achievement in relation to others within the same school and compared with those nationally.

References and links to other documents and policies

- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Reporting Arrangements 2016 -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2016-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-pdf-format-versions>
- Interim teacher assessment frameworks KS1 and 2 September 2015
- Final Report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015 and Purposes and Principles of Assessment Without Levels
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/483058/Commission_on_Assessment_Without_Levels_-_report.pdf

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