



# **St Mary's Academy Trust**

## **Assessment Policy**

**Date agreed by Performance and Standards Committee November 2021**

**Date to be reviewed November 2023**

## Introduction

Under national changes which were introduced with the launch of the new Primary Curriculum 2014, each school or group of schools are responsible for developing their own way of assessing their children. At St. Mary's Academy Trust, we have embraced this opportunity to review and develop our assessment procedures in a way that best suits our children and educational principles. This policy outlines the assessment procedures and practices that are used across St. Mary's Academy Trust.

## Aims of Assessment Policy

- To ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the assessment procedures used by St. Mary's Academy Trust.
- To ensure that there is a consistent approach to assessment across all Academies within St. Mary's Academy Trust.
- To ensure that children make progress, knowing their achievements and what they need to do next.
- To track the children internally for both progress and attainment.
- To ensure that assessment is an integral and highly valued part of the teaching cycle.
- To inform parents about the ways in which their children are assessed across St. Mary's Academy Trust.

## Principles

The use of daily formative assessment during all lessons is at the heart of St. Mary's Trust educational philosophy. St. Mary's Academy Trust has always believed in the principles of finding out what pupils already know and their personal strengths; assessing what they need to learn next and then ensuring that we personalise our curriculum to teach pupils their next steps to make progress.

We base our teaching on 'Four Key Questions' which are central to our use of assessment and the planning and delivery of lessons:

1. What do children know?
2. What do they need to know?
3. How will they learn it?
4. Have they got it?

Assessment is analysed and used as a tool to make teaching more effective, personalised to the needs of the children and to produce SMART targets through marking and feedback. Teachers should have a secure understanding of what all their pupils can do and what their next steps to learning are.

A range of assessment for learning strategies should be employed effectively to support pupil progress, including the consistent use of Trust and school approaches in the use of learning objectives, questioning, feedback and marking and peer and self- assessment.

## **Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage:**

Schools within SMAT use the national baseline from Sept 2021

Baseline assessment is carried out during the children's first four weeks upon entering the setting. The baseline assessment will score each child against the knowledge and understanding typical for children at the start of reception year. Baseline information will be used to track children's progress during their time at the school.

St. Mary's Academy Trust use a variety of ongoing and formative assessments to assess as the children move through Foundation stage. As part of their everyday practice, practitioners build their knowledge of each child through their, interactions observations and every day activities. They use this professional knowledge to make a series of judgements about each child based on a clear set of assessment criteria. The baseline data is used to identify strengths and weaknesses of the cohort, to inform planning and provision within the settings.

Throughout their Foundation Stage education, judgements are made on children's development, based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all areas of learning and development. There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development as well as pupil progress meetings around children's stages and next steps and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This is updated at least once each term to track individual progress. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements.

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS settings across St. Mary's Academy Trust. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept through the observations, assessments and practitioner knowledge of the children. The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play.

Practitioners spend time working with the children in the setting, building an in depth knowledge of the children and recording wow moments of learning through observations. Each child is designated a Key Person in EYFS, however, all practitioners are involved in the learning journey of all children. Practitioners use informal observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. Each EYFS class across the Trust carefully tracks children's learning within the setting to ensure knowledge about what individual children can and cannot do and to inform next steps for learning. Pupil progress meetings. These are used to identify children's learning priorities and relevant learning opportunities planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations and provide a valuable journey of the learning that has taken place for each child. Parents/carers and children are encouraged to contribute to these journals over the course of the year, either online or through sharing information with Early Years practitioners.

The EYFS teacher is responsible for ensuring that all assessment data and records are kept up to date and accurate. Moderation is carried out and offered within settings between

Assessment Policy

practitioners, and offered at a trust level. Moderations carried out by each academy within the Trust and is the responsibility of the headteacher and EYFS leader. The

Data is submitted termly to the EYFS lead practitioner, Director of Teaching and Learning and CEO of St. Mary's Academy Trust. This data is analysed as a Trust in EYFS leader meetings and an overview of the data submitted to the Performance and Standards Committee of St. Mary's Academy Trust by the CEO. The Trust will carry out moderation of EYFS data across all academies.

### **Key Stage 1 and 2 Formative Assessment**

On-going formative assessment is central to ensuring that our pupils make excellent and sustained progress. On-going formative assessment includes staff using:

- skilled questioning
- observations of pupils
- work in books
- providing ongoing verbal and written feedback

Teachers use this on-going formative assessment to:

- adapt their teaching for individuals/groups to ensure that work is pitched appropriately
- identify which pupils have secured a learning objective

### **Involving pupils in the assessment process**

Pupils are expected to engage in the assessment process. Where appropriate, pupils are asked to evaluate their learning against their learning objective or a set of success criteria. As they get older, children may also be asked to write their own success criteria for lessons, in order to demonstrate their understanding of a skill and to develop their independence. Pupils should also have opportunities within lessons to:

- Identify strengths and possible improvements in their own work and others' work
- Identify errors and make corrections to their work
- Have opportunities to improve their own and others' work, for example through editing and redrafting of writing
- Respond to feedback and marking from teachers through a verbal or written response

### **Summative assessment**

Termly, a summative assessment judgement is reported for each pupil in reading, writing and maths. In Years 2 through to Year 6, for reading and maths, teachers use test evidence to assess pupils' attainment and progress. These summative assessments include: Year 2 and Year 6 previous SATs papers; Rising Stars tests (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Progress Tests; Optional Reading tests and Optional Maths tests).

In Year 1,3,4 and 5 termly maths assessment will be carried out termly through either NFER tests or through White Rose Assessments. This is at the discretion of each school. All pupils in Y1,3,4 and 5 complete NFER summative assessments in July in maths.

In Year 1,3,4 and 5, assessment will be carried out termly NFER reading assessments and /or teacher assessment in the Autumn and Spring terms. This is at the discretion of each school. All pupils in Y1,3,4 and 5 complete NFER summative assessments in July in reading.

For writing, summative assessment judgements are based solely on on-going formative assessment of independent pieces of writing.

Headteachers hold pupil progress meetings with each teacher to review both test and summative assessment results. The basis of the meetings is to inform the next steps for learning for each pupil, address any gaps in learning and monitor the progress of groups within the cohort. As part of this meeting, pupils' test results may be reviewed and adjusted if there is sufficient evidence of a pupil's achievement in their books for a specific objective that they have not achieved in a test situation.

The terminology that we use to explain where children are working within their year group expectations is below, at expected or above.

The majority of pupils will be taught and assessed against objectives from their age appropriate year group (e.g. a pupil in Year 2 will be taught and assessed against the Year 2 curriculum content). For the majority, where small gaps in previous year group content are identified, these can be addressed through analysis groups/intervention groups. However, for a small number of pupils where there are more significant gaps in learning, it may be appropriate for them to be taught and assessed against objectives from a younger year group (e.g. a pupil in Year 4 may need to be taught and assessed against the Year 2 curriculum). This includes Year 1 children, who may need to continue to be taught the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, if appropriate, at the start of Key Stage 1.

### **Indicative outcomes**

Headteachers and teachers will use their professional understanding of current national assessment and professional judgement to consider all the evidence and outcomes from pupils' work when providing forecasts of attainment to establish potential indicative outcomes.

### **Nationally Standardised Summative Assessments**

There is a statutory expectation from the government that our pupils in Key stages 1 and 2 complete the following tests.

- Year 1 Phonics Screening Check (June). Pupils who do not pass the screening check must re-take it in Year 2.

## Assessment Policy

- Years 2 and 6 complete the end of Key Stage 1 / 2 assessment tests in Reading, Maths and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling. Writing is also assessed against National Standards using the Teacher Assessment Framework.

## Progress Measures

**We believe that whatever a child's ability, the progress that they make each year is the most important measure of how well they are doing at school.** We aim for every child to

make at least the expected progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and from their end of Key Stage 1 outcomes to their Key Stage 2 outcomes. For example, a pupil working within the expected level (2) at the end of EYFS should be working at least within the expected level at the end of Year 2. A pupil working above the expected level at the end of EYFS (3) should achieve working above expected at the end of Year 2. A pupil working at expected at the end of Year 2 should be working at least at expected by the end of Year 6. A pupil working above the expected level at the end of Year 2 should be working above the expected level by the end of Year 6. Our aim and ambition should always be to ensure that all pupils are provided with opportunities to meet their full potential and that no ceiling or limits be placed upon achievement and ensure that we have the highest expectations of the progress all of our pupils can make.

## Moderation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Senior and middle leaders within each school are responsible for the moderation and accuracy of their data. Schools should have a number of ways in which teacher judgements for reading, writing and maths are moderated. These include:

- ensuring that tests are conducted under an agreed set of guidelines from the National Standardised test, Rising Stars or NFER test guidance;
- rigorous and robust pupil progress meetings between the headteacher and each individual class teacher;
- moderation of assessment for writing and work by senior and middle leaders through observation and work scrutiny;
- joint teacher moderation of writing and books for reading, writing and maths, for example through whole school CPD (continued professional development) and through cross school moderation workshops.

St. Mary's Academy Trust also has a moderation team for writing, EYFS outcomes, Year 1 reading and Year 2 reading, writing and maths which is monitored by the Deputy CEO and includes LA moderators, literacy leaders and one representative from each school. The aims of the moderation team are to:

- validate the judgements of each school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2;
- ensure that there is consistency in judgements across the Trust;
- identify any necessary areas of support for schools or individual teachers.

The Trust uses the services of Barnsley Local Authority for statutory monitoring and moderation arrangements for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and primary assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2.

Progress meetings are held at least termly, or more frequently if necessary, in school between each class teacher and the headteacher. This focuses on the attainment and progress of individuals and groups of pupils, including using a range of teacher assessment data and looking together at pupils' books and outcomes, in order to identify next steps for teaching and learning for the whole class, groups and individuals.

### **Year 2 and Year 6**

It is the responsibility of each headteacher, alongside the Deputy CEO, to collate and analyse the school's summative results at the end of each term, following St. Mary's Academy Trust's Assessment Calendar.

### **Internal Year groups**

It is the responsibility of each headteacher, alongside the Deputy CEO, to collate and analyse the school's summative results at the end of year, following St. Mary's Academy Trust's Assessment Calendar.

Termly data for internal year groups will be analysed and discussed internally within the school by the headteacher, the SLT and the class teachers through rigorous pupil progress meetings.

Assessment data is evaluated by each senior leadership team, in conjunction with the CEO and Deputy CEO, to identify priorities and next steps for individual pupils, each cohort and the school. Assessment data is used to inform the School Strategic Plan, the school's and individual teachers' continued professional development needs; and to inform future financial planning and resource needs.

An accountability meeting is held each term with the Chief Executive and the Deputy CEO to ensure that the data presented by each school is accurate and robust; to discuss the school's progress against key targets and objectives; and to identify and agree the next steps for improvement for the school.

### **Information for Parents and Carers**

All of our teachers are expected to know what their pupils' individual strengths and areas for development are. These should be shared with both pupils and parents informally on a regular basis and formally at least twice yearly at Parents' Evening. Pupils will receive personal targets to work on which are shared with parents or carers either at Parents' Evening or sent home if they are unable to attend. Parents/carers should be supported to help their children to achieve these targets at home. Parents/carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are able to access their child's electronic learning journey at home via a secure log in.

At the end of each academic year, each pupil will receive an annual report which will inform parents of their child's attainment and the progress that they have made.

## **Governance**

The attainment and progress of each Academy within St. Mary's Academy Trust should be reported to the Academy's Local Governing Body through the headteacher and to the Performance and Standards Committee of the Trust Board of Directors through the Chief Executive Officer. It is the role of these committees to monitor and challenge the performance of the Academies. The Performance and Standards Committee of the Trust should, through the Chair Person, report back their findings to the full Trust Board of Directors.

The information provided to governors should include:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Baseline data.
- Termly attainment data for EYFS and phonics, Year 2 and Year 6.
- Annual progress data for EYFS and Years 1 phonics, Year 2 and Year 6.
- Annual attainment data for Y1,3, 4 and 5
- Attainment and progress data for different vulnerable groups of pupils, including: gender; SEN; most able pupils; disadvantaged pupils; English as an Additional Language; and different ethnic groups of pupils.
- Headline and indicative data for EYFS, Phonics, Year 2 and Year 6 for their end of Year assessments.

This is not a definitive list and governors may request further information at any one of their meetings.

An Academy's internal assessment data should be read and used in conjunction with national data, including ASP (Analyse School Performance) and IDSR (Ofsted's Inspection Data Summary Report).

## **Review**

This Policy on Assessment and the resulting assessment practices will be reviewed every two years and consultations sought if it is to be updated.