

Barley Lane School

Hard work, humility, kindness

Assessment 2017-18

In the recent “world without levels” staff and governors agreed a cautious and pragmatic approach to assessment of learning and we continued to use national curriculum descriptors moving to the new age related expectations and numeric descriptors allowing us to reliably track children over time.

We now describe where a child is by using the national expectations - the aim would be a grade C at the end of year 11 and we work to that benchmark.

This approach is recommended and used by the “Virtual School” a significant partner for our community given the relatively high proportion of children in care add the necessary rigour around monitoring their progress it was and is then pragmatic and helpful to use their model.

- A child at the end of the first term is said to be "emerging".
- At the end of the second term "developing"
- .At the end of the year "secure".

The number is the year that the learning would happen for the "average" or "on target" child.

So for example 6D is where a year 6 child who is meeting national expectations would be at Easter. Good progress would be if a child goes from (for example) 7D to 8D in a year.

Class and subject teachers in the primary and secondary school will moderate their benchmarking using mainstream and special school partners.

Levelled work will be submitted to the leading senior teacher twice a year who then records starting and finish points and monitors and reports on the extent of good progress by child, cohorts, teacher and subject now and over time so we know the extent of good progress.

Class and subject teachers in the primary and secondary school will describe and share their methods for summative (and formative assessment) with the leading teacher and in an annual audit and they will be scrutinised and shared developed and modified as necessary.

We nationally benchmark at the end of KS2 and KS4 by national testing and GCSE respectively. FFT data (a calculation and prediction of GCSE outcomes based on previous student performance) is accessed as a reliable external measure of potential and a specific finishing point to check GCSE outcomes against.

These external benchmarks provide stability and reliability and in a “world without levels”: that has made making comparisons problematic when both measures and notions of what is “good” progress are being explored and uncertain and diverse?

We can and do use DfE measures to compare with similar schools locally and nationally however our small and eclectic cohorts of children make conventional tracking and

comparisons of data problematic in 2016 the group so small it did not appear in the data and as a result our governing body reasonably expects to scrutinise detailed anonymised personal journeys for each child and this will not just include learning progress and outcomes but their development and achievements and destinations as young people.

Overarching then is the governing body's determination in such a relatively small school to know the personal journey of each student and their achievements and destinations beyond school and to track that for as long is practicable.

Assessment for learning presents a range of significant challenges and opportunities across phases and subjects but a common challenge is the resistance and inability to access written feedback rooted both in widespread literacy difficulties and the wider disconnection from and disaffection with school and learning that characterises many students.

In practice in our classrooms most assessment for learning happens through speaking and listening and the conversation about learning between teacher and student.

This can only happen when the teacher can securely "boss" the room and there is an embedded positive climate for learning and this an ongoing challenge and that positive climate at risk in our setting; without it the conversation about learning, the clarity about learning objectives and how to achieve them and the scaffolding and supporting of students' learning can't happen.

For that reason our ongoing improvement and best practice conversation as a team (see below) maintains a focus on protecting and promoting a positive classroom climate where behaviour is good and assessment for learning can therefore happen and this true of the diverse and various assessment methods used by teachers for example videoing practical demonstration in PE or photographing products in DT.

- "There is a strong and embedded three part lesson and the children observe explicit and known behaviour expectations **most notably speaking and listening** because this impacts most powerfully on both behaviour and learning; these are powerfully positively reinforced across every classroom by every teacher and in every lesson"
- Both at the opening of the lesson and its close it will be clear the teacher has tested and knows what has been learned securely and what needs to be supported and revisited and **what is next (clarity of objective)** and so, critically, do the children.
- The teacher employs pragmatic, practicable and innovative ways to make sure students engage with and understand how to progress and take next steps in both their learning and their behaviour (**assessment for learning**).

So what should assessment look like? What should we see in our lessons? What will formal observation and informal learning walks look for?

There will be a clear three part lesson that begins with clarity of objective rooted in reliable ongoing assessment for learning,

- *“Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan learning that sustains pupils’ interest and challenges their thinking... Pupils focus well on their learning because teachers reinforce expectations for conduct and set clear tasks that challenge pupils.” Ofsted*

Our children and young people will be supported and pushed on according to their needs, strengths and frailties and as Ofsted describe teachers will

- *“Develop, consolidate and deepen pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills...Teachers identify and support effectively those pupils who start to fall behind and intervene quickly to help them to improve their learning.” Ofsted*

Throughout and at the lesson’s end it will be evident teachers...

- *“Use questioning skilfully to probe pupils’ responses and they reshape tasks and explanations so that pupils better understand new concepts. Teachers tackle misconceptions and build on pupils’ strengths...Pupils use this feedback well and they know what they need to do to improve.” Ofsted*

Whatever the method if the children and young people know where they are, where they are headed and how to get there and learning progress is at least good that is the best evidence of at least competent and likely good assessment for learning.