



The Willows School
Academy Trust

Learning - Achieving - Succeeding

Assessment Policy

Introduction

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve and modify teaching and learning, as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. It is a process that provides information about what knowledge, understanding or skills students have acquired or need. By finding out what students currently know, understand and can do, any gap between the two can be made apparent, and activities learning opportunities can be created to help pupils move forward.

The philosophy on assessment at The Willows School has at its core knowledge of the need to embrace a range of assessment methods appropriate to each curriculum subject and the learning process used by the pupils. To this end, assessment is both formal and informal, summative and formative. Thus, its aim is not only to mark out where a child is in their attainment, but informs both the teacher and learner of future learning steps they need to take to achieve an outcome that is clear and achievable. Teachers, then, need to be clear of the intended purpose of any assessment, and the assessment itself must be reliable to support this purpose and to achieve this, The Willows uses a simple yet effective assessment cycle that provides not only clear assessment at any point in time, as mentioned but allows for an ongoing picture of the individual and group achievement of pupils over time.

The Principles of Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- The assessment policy is built on the whole school curriculum policy, which encompasses learning and teaching.
- Assessment is both formative and summative.
- Planning is led by learning intentions not activities.
- Assessment is not one thing it involves a whole range of activities and strategies.
- Assessment involves both pupils and their parents.
- Assessment takes account of the unexpected as well as the intended learning.

Assessment includes achievement of areas beyond, and not included in the National Curriculum.

Aims

- To provide up to date information about the attainment of individuals and groups of students.
- To establish what pupils can do, know and understand.
- To provide a record of pupil progress, consolidation of learning.
- To assess the readiness of pupils for future learning – to inform planning.
- To identify patterns over time (useful when pupils learn in very small steps.)
- As a basis from which to set targets for improvement.
- To promote rigour and pace.
- To give an insight into the curriculum received by the pupils.
- To enable the school to review the effectiveness of the curriculum and models of delivery.
- To assess the progress of specific groups of pupils, e.g. such as pupils from a range of different gender groups, ethnic groups etc.
- To assess the need for additional, specialist support.
- To help motivate pupils and staff.
- To encourage pupil motivation and self-esteem.
- To provide information to discuss with parents.
- To provide information for other teachers.
- To satisfy statutory requirements.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting should:

- Value all pupils equally and free of bias
- Recognise and give credit for pupil achievements in and outside school.
- Involve pupils in self-assessment where appropriate.
- Form an integral part of learning and teaching.
- Use a variety of approaches to assessment.
- Provide valid and reliable evidence of achievement.
- Measure and monitor performance against agreed criteria.
- Identify positive achievements.
- Provide opportunities for contributions from all involved in pupils learning.

For whom are we assessing?

- The class teacher, all teachers and STA's within the school.
- Curriculum Coordinators.
- Pupils.
- Parents / Carers
- The Leadership Team.
- Governors.
- External bodies e.g. LA, Ofsted

Why do we assess?

Assessment is not merely testing pupils; rather it is a multifaceted process by which we establish a pupil's present level of functioning.

Assessment is a means of enabling future planning in order to meet individual needs.

Assessment provides evidence of achievement and enables the school to report to parents, Governors, the LA and other professionals.

Every child achieves no matter how small the steps, therefore every child deserves and is entitled to a celebration of their achievement.

What do we assess?

We assess the pupils' experiences and achievements in all aspects of their learning within the whole curriculum.

How do we assess?

Assessment should be set in the context of planning, implementation, recording and reporting, when in this cycle it is seen to be informative and directly related to the learning and teaching, which occurs within the classroom.

Contents of lessons and methods used should be continually assessed and evaluated by close observation of pupils' responses and recorded on the records sheets at the back of lesson plans, which are easy to follow, by everyone.

Assessment can be summative or formative.

Summative Assessment

This is used as a baseline from which to measure progress, to highlight strengths and weaknesses to assist planning and to monitor the effectiveness of teaching.

It is also used for measuring and comparing, to inform planning and to inform target setting, both individual, class and whole school.

Summative assessment is also used to provide information at transition times e.g. moving from one Key Stage to another or to another school.

Models of Assessment Used

- National Statutory tests for those pupils working at an appropriate level. If it is felt appropriate for a pupil to undertake these tasks or tests then they will do so.
- (P levels.)
- Target Tracker
- Routes for Learning
- Work samples to see progression over time
- Baseline Assessments (running records)
- Teacher Assessment

- Children's books, triangulated with lesson plans and Target Tracker

Formative Assessment

This is the day to day, ongoing assessment which is based on how well our pupils fulfil the learning intentions, providing feedback and wherever possible involving pupils in improving their own learning.

How planning links with formative assessment

Effective planning provides an essential framework within which to facilitate learning and therefore provides a basis on which to assess progress.

- Curriculum map and yearly plan – shows coverage and progression, it provides an overview of the curriculum for each year group and each pupil. It helps to provide learning aims.
- Medium term – include the learning intentions. Having taught the scheme the teacher reviews it considering how far the pupils have fulfilled the learning intentions.

- A copy of the medium term plan can be annotated showing where adjustments need to be made next time round.

- Assessment is then informing planning.
- Daily plans – this is a working tool. It includes a breakdown of the learning intentions, including differentiation. These are annotated to show where pupils need further reinforcement, who needs extending further. These observations feed directly into the planning for the next lesson. They are formal assessment judgements and form a continuous assessment record against the planned learning intentions.

Suggested criteria for making judgements:

- Changes in demeanour – pupils look bright eyed and interested, not half-hearted.
- Extension of concept – if they understand something they may take it a step further by themselves.

- Use learnt processes in a different context – pupils who understand an idea may start to see the same patterns elsewhere and transfer concepts and skills.
- Use shortcuts – once sure of the 'big picture' they can shortcut a procedure.
- Are able to explain what they have learnt.
- Can focus attention on a task for longer.

Celebrating achievement

This is celebrated in a number of ways:

- Saying well done in an animated way – but stating what the pupil has done e.g. 'Well done! Good looking!'
- Acknowledging achievements in the whole school or within a year group (certificates, star of the week etc)
- Displaying work and other evidence of achievement around the school.
- Sharing achievements with the local and wider community via the website.
- Encouraging staff to take part in initiatives.
- Via the home / school books
- Articles on the website
- End of half term class newsletters
- Writing letters home.
- Annual Review Meetings / EHC Meetings
- Through the Annual End of Year Report.

Recording Achievement

The recording and celebrating of achievement is a key area. It has a direct impact on raising our pupils self-esteem and on raising achievement. We acknowledge and celebrate success in all aspects of school life. Achievement is defined as something the pupil, teacher, or TA is proud of or regards as significant in all areas of the whole curriculum.

Why do we record?

Records are kept to:

- assess a starting point.
- Be a record of what's gone before – experienced, encountered, covered, working on, in progress, achieved.
- Serve and help teachers and parents track pupil progress.
- Enable teachers to focus on the attainments of individual pupils.
- Acknowledge achievements, increase motivation and self-esteem.
- Arise from the routine process of teaching, learning, assessing.
- Ensure breadth, balance and relevance.
- Be a way by which continuity and progression in the curriculum can be shown.
- Be manageable, precise, and accurate (when moderated.)

What do we record?

We record any significant developments and findings in a pupils learning. This applies to the whole curriculum.

How do we record?

We record in a variety of ways, which are easily accessible, manageable, understood, consistent and useful.

They include:

- Target Tracker
- Written daily observations (younger children)
- Photographs
- Pupil work evidence
- IEP/IBP targets
- Reporting to Parents

Why do we report?

We report on pupils' progress:

- In order to satisfy statutory requirements as identified in Circular 3 / 96

- To summarise and celebrate pupils achievements and experiences over a period of time
- To describe completed work and experiences and the context / processes by which it was done
- To highlight strengths and particular achievements
- To identify any particular weaknesses
- To inform future planning, learning and teaching.

How do we report?

Written Reports

1. Annual Review Reports / EHCP Review Reports

We are legally required to report to parents on the progress made towards meeting the objectives of a pupil's statement of special educational needs each year. This report is separate from the report on academic achievement.

The Annual Review Report /EHCP is the responsibility of the SENCO and class teacher.

2. End of Year Reports – Educational Reports plus DVD's

The pupil's end of year educational report is sent to parents in the Summer Term and is used to discuss the educational experiences and achievements of the pupils. This also includes a pastoral summary by the class teacher and a comment from the Headteacher.

3. Additional Reports

Parents may request a re-assessment at any time, if so the report is produced by the class teacher.

The LA may request an updated report as a result of a pupil attending The Willows Academy on an assessment placement or as part of the re-statementing process.

4. SATS

We have a statutory responsibility to report the results of end of Key Stage assessments to the relevant parents and to the LA / QCA.

5. Informal Reporting

The class teacher TA staff may write in the home school diaries or a letter describing a particular achievement or email a parent / carer.

6. Meetings

The following meetings are scheduled every year:

- Annual Review or EHCP Meetings currently held during the school day
- Parent/ Carer Consultation Meetings during the school year
- Any other meetings deemed necessary to parents / carers, the LA or the school.

If the school has any concerns about a child, staff are encouraged to invite the parents/ carers in for a meeting. The Leadership Team must be informed and a member may like to attend.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The success of assessment, recording and reporting in the school is evaluated in a number of ways:

- Through whole school subject self-evaluation focussing on pupil achievement.
- By monitoring the self-esteem of pupils and staff.
- By ensuring that the systems in place are working effectively.
- By discussion with pupils, parents, staff and other interested parties in the progress made within our school.
- By measuring achievement – quantitatively and qualitatively.
- Through the target setting process – individual, group and whole school.