

The Vale Academy
Assessment Policy 2016-17

Introduction

At The Vale Academy, we believe that assessment underpins everything we do as teachers for our pupils. Our vision is tightly linked to our Stepping Stones assessment tool, and we hold the upmost importance on all children having the ability to achieve their full potential, using assessment in our daily practise to ensure we provide those stepping stones to success.

Aims and Principles of Assessment

We will ensure that:

- Assessment is an integral part of teaching, based on best practice, focusing on the curriculum and that it lies at the heart of promoting children's education.
- High quality, in depth teaching, is supported and informed by high quality formative assessment (on-going assessment)
- The academy ethos promotes and emphasises the opportunity for all children to succeed if taught and assessed effectively.
- There is always a clear purpose for assessing and the assessment used is fit for its intended purpose.
- Assessment is used to focus on monitoring and supporting children's progress, attainment and wider outcomes.
- Assessment provides information which is clear, reliable and free from bias and informs teaching and learning.
- Assessment supports informative and productive conversations with pupils and parents
- children take responsibility for achievements and are encouraged to reflect on their own progress, understand their strengths and identify what they need to do to improve.
- We achieve our assessment without adding unnecessarily to teacher workload.
- Assessment is inclusive of all abilities.
- A range of assessments are used including 'Day to Day In-School Formative Assessment', 'In School Summative Assessment and 'Nationally Standardised Summative Assessment.

Delivery

At The Vale Academy, we use three broad over-arching forms of assessment; 'Formative Assessment', 'In-Academy Summative Assessment' and 'Nationally Standardised Summative Assessment'.

Formative Assessment:

'Formative Assessment' is an integral part of teaching and learning. It helps children to measure their own strengths and areas for development. It allows teachers to understand pupil performance on a continuing basis, enabling them to identify:

- when pupils are struggling
- when they have consolidated learning
- when they are ready to progress

In this way, it supports teachers to provide appropriate support (reflective and corrective activities) or extension (enrichment activities to deepen understanding) as necessary and informs progress. It enables teachers to evaluate their own teaching of particular topics or concepts and to plan future lessons accordingly.

Through 'Formative Assessment', we will:

- 1) Support children in measuring their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives and wider outcomes, identifying where they need to target their efforts to improve.
- 2) Ensure that problems are identified at the individual level and that every child will be appropriately supported to make progress and meet expectations
- 3) Record and report progress to parents via Stepping Stones Pathways, providing parents with a broad picture of where their children's strengths and areas for development lie, including what they need to do to improve. We hope that the use of Stepping Stones at home will clearly reinforce the partnership between parents and schools in supporting children's education.

A range of 'Formative Assessments' will be used, including, as an example:

- Reference to assessment of Stepping Stones in Reading, Writing and Maths (Linking to appropriate pathway)
- Making use of rich questioning within planning and in the classroom
- Regular in depth marking of pupils' work, particularly using 'To Be Wonderful' Learning Objective and Success Criteria stickers, green highlighted work for an achievement, and orange for 'Next Steps' feedback (highlighting misconceptions, errors or for extension questions)
- Observational assessments

- Regular short re-cap quizzes
- Scanning work for pupil attainment and development
- Discussions with children
- Pupil self-assessment e.g. traffic lighting, self-marking against agreed success-criteria using purple pen assessment
- Peer marking using star and wish, linked to success criteria of the lesson.

In-Academy Summative Assessment

In-academy summative assessments will be used to monitor and support children's performance. They will provide children with information about how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time, providing feedback on how they can continue to improve.

In-academy summative assessments will also inform parents about achievement, progress and wider outcomes. Teachers will make use of in-academy summative assessments to evaluate both pupils learning at the end of a unit or period (based on pupil-level outcomes). Both these purposes will support teachers in planning for subsequent teaching and learning. In-academy summative assessments will also be used at whole academy level to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, to identify where interventions may be required and to work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and expected attainment.

A range of 'In-Academy Summative Assessments' will be used, including, for example:

- End of term tests-focussing on age related expectations, in line with Stepping Stones, for Reading, Writing, GPS, Maths and Science
- Short end of topic consolidation tests or specific tasks
- Reviews for pupils with SEND
- Half termly monitoring of Stepping Stones with leaders-reported on SIMs
- End of Year annual reports outlining progress and attainment of children in relation to National Curriculum age related expectations
- Moderation of teacher assessment within each Key Stage with leaders

National standardised summative assessment

Nationally standardised assessments will be used to provide information on how children are performing in comparison to children nationally. They will provide parents with information on how the school is performing in comparison to schools nationally. Teachers will have a clear understanding of national expectations and assess their own performance in the broader national context. Nationally standardised summative assessment enables the school leadership team to benchmark the school's performance against other schools locally and nationally, and make judgements about the school's effectiveness. The government and OFSTED will also make use of nationally standardised summative assessment to provide a starting point for Ofsted's discussions, when making judgements about the school's performance.

A range of 'Nationally standardised summative assessments' will be used:

- A Baseline Assessment in EYFS
- A phonics test in Year 1
- National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1
- Moderation of teacher assessment in Year 4
- National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2

An inclusive approach to assessment

In addition to the assessments above, the school will make use of additional diagnostic assessments to contribute to the early and accurate identification of children and young people's special education needs and any requirements for support and intervention.

Training for staff

Upon joining the academy, all teachers will be provided will be provided with a copy of this policy and it will be explained and discussed as part of the induction program. During 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD) sessions for teachers and support staff, there will be an emphasis on having a good understanding of assessment and assessment practice.

The academy makes significant use of technology to assess and in order to support staff, training in the use of the SIMS school assessment information system and the use of Stepping Stones Assessment will be provided.

Continuing professional development may take various forms including the provision of direct face to face training and online training. The Director of Learning for Assessment and Pupil Outcomes will ensure that best practice is shared and endeavour to keep up to date with latest research. The academy will continually review and evaluate the assessment systems used within the academy to ensure that they support the delivery of the academy's assessment policy and are in line with the aims and principles outlined.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Director of Learning for Assessment and Pupil Outcomes is responsible for updating this policy in line with any new developments in the academy and new government guidance. All staff are expected to follow the policy and the Leadership Team, following ongoing regular reviews of classroom practice, will be responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of practice across the academy.