



Assessment at Bowdon Preparatory School

Information for Parents

Your child's teacher will carry out regular checks on their progress in each subject as a normal part of their teaching. At the end of Infants (Reception to Year 2) and each year within the Juniors (Year 3 to Year 6), they will carry out a formal 'teacher assessment', indicating which national curriculum level best describes your child's performance in each area of learning. We use the national curriculum levels to monitor progression.

Teacher assessment levels are used along with the annual CEM assessment to provide a snapshot of a pupil's attainment and developing ability in the core subjects. These tests give an independent measure of how pupils and the school is doing compared with national standards in the core subjects.

Please note that the following tables provide information relating to national targets, not the school's targets

National Targets compared with age group

	7 years	11 years	14 years
Level 8 *			Exceptional
Level 7			Beyond expectations
Level 6		Exceptional	At level expected
Level 5		Beyond expectations	Below expectations
Level 4	Exceptional	At level expected	Below expectations
Level 3	Beyond expectations	Below expectations	
Level 2a, 2b, 2c	At level expected		
Level 1	Below expectations		

Exceptional
Beyond expectations
At level expected
Below expectations

Progression guide towards expected levels is broken down for each year group (again these are national targets, not school targets).

Year 1	1a/2c
Year 2	2b
Year 3	2a/3c

Year 4	3b
Year 5	3a/4c
Year 6	4b

Assessment at Bowdon Preparatory School is about gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and can be used in a variety of ways, such as to test and certify achievement, to determine the appropriate route for pupils to take through a differentiated curriculum or to identify specific areas of difficulty (or strength) for a given pupil.

Bowdon Prep has a whole-school approach to assessment. All teachers engage in assessment as part of their everyday work. Teachers use a variety of assessment tools to gather information about pupils' learning, asking questions, giving tests at the end of units of study, setting and correcting homework assignments. Teachers use the results of this assessment to inform pupils on their progress, to report to parents and to plan future classroom activities.

However, knowledge of how learning takes place and how learners make their way through classroom activities demonstrates the importance of assessment in the promotion of learning. Hence, the focus in assessment activity has moved from an emphasis on the assessment **of** learning, to include assessment **for** learning.

It is important, however, to avoid seeing assessment of learning and assessment for learning as opposing or contradictory practices. While the assessment of learning will always have a place in our classrooms, assessment for learning offers real benefits for pupils.

The main features of assessment of learning and assessment for learning are set out below:

Assessment of Learning	Assessment for Learning
Happens after the learning takes place	An integral part of the learning process
Information is gathered by the teacher	Information is shared with the learner
Information is usually transformed into marks or levels	Information is available on the quality of learning
Comparison with the performance of others or national targets	Comparison with aims and objectives is important
Looks back on past learning	Looks forward to the next stage of learning

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide at what stage the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

Self and Peer Assessment

Once fully embedded into teaching and learning, self and peer assessment can be particularly effective in motivating pupils to move forward in their learning, thereby facilitating teaching. In short, peer assessment involves pupils looking at each other's work and assessing it against pre-agreed criteria. They then give each other feedback on the work. Self assessment encourages pupils to be owners of their own learning so that they can become more independent in developing skills to move learning forward. It is evident that peer and self assessment can be hugely beneficial for both pupils and teachers:

- Children become involved in their learning
- It encourages discussion and promotes good relations
- Enhances achievement and increases motivation
- Children can learn from and support each other
- It encourages self-reflection and helps children realise their own learning needs
- Helps to give children a clear idea of expectations
- Children will often achieve more than they would un-aided
- Increased involvement can lead to a better level of well-being
- It encourages discussion and good use of vocabulary (particularly beneficial for children with SEN and EAL, speech and communication difficulties).

Teaching Methods

As part of both medium and short term planning, teachers ensure that specific learning objectives are incorporated into their plans. These learning objectives cover the attitudes, skills, knowledge and concept that the lesson is designed to teach. The objective explains what the learners will know, understand, believe or be able to do by the end of the lesson or unit. These are often shared with the pupils as it enables them to focus their minds to gain an insight into the knowledge that they are bringing to the lesson. It also provides the opportunity to establish 'success criteria' for each lesson.

During lessons the teacher supports the children's learning by working with small groups or individuals. Throughout each lesson the teacher encourages the children to explain what they are doing and why they are doing it. The act of discussion and verbalisation helps them to structure and clarify their understanding.

Throughout, and at the end of lessons, teachers hold plenary sessions which are designed to be periods of reflection and consolidation. Pupils are encouraged to comment on their learning in light of the lesson's objective. During plenaries the teacher summarises and reviews the lesson objective and asks the children questions designed to reinforce the lesson and to encourage self-evaluation. Plenaries allow the teacher to assess the pupils understanding and the progress they have made.

Marking & Feedback

The marking of children's work has several purposes. These are:

- To provide feedback to the child on how well the learning objective has been achieved
- To praise the child for her efforts and achievement
- To acknowledge progress and/or achievement of the child's target
- To give the child advice on how to improve her work
- To acknowledge that the teacher has looked at the child's work
- To aid teacher assessment

The amount of detail in the marking is determined by:

- The purpose of the piece of work
- The child's age
- The child's ability
- The extent to which feedback has already been provided in the lesson

Teachers mark children's work in order to assess the success of their teaching and to ensure that the children have understood the lesson. Marking is intended to provide children with feedback related to the lesson's learning objective and to acknowledge progress.

Marking allows the teacher to identify where children have misconceptions and to begin to address them. This can be done by either providing an explanation to correct the misconceptions, asking a question in order to extend their thinking or providing a prompt. In this way, teachers' comments give the child advice on how to improve her work by including something the child can act upon – 'next step or target'. These targets may also address frequently repeated errors in spelling, punctuation, handwriting or mathematics.

Many children make mistakes or produce work which indicates that more learning of a skill or concept is needed. It is useful to draw the child's attention to this when marking.

Teachers are selective when correcting mistakes and writing comments, choosing the only the most relevant, as over marking a piece of work can be counterproductive and demoralising. Comments are also used to praise the child for her efforts and achievement.

Where possible, marking and feedback takes place during the lesson, or as soon as possible afterwards. This can be carried out as the children work, hence enabling immediate feedback to individuals or groups, or as a whole class during the plenary. The amount of detail in the marking is determined by the purpose of the piece of work, the child's need and the extent to which feedback has been provided during the lesson.

In marking work undertaken during literacy lessons, teachers bear in mind what the child can reasonably be expected to know appropriate to their level of ability, particularly in terms of grammar and spelling.

Next Steps

During the marking and feedback process, teachers and pupils identify the '*next steps*' in their learning. These are effectively short-term targets designed to move the children's learning on. The next steps are carefully chosen to ensure that they are manageable for pupil and teacher, and realistically achievable. The next steps are written in language which is accessible to pupils.

Curriculum Targets

Target setting is recognised nationally as being a significant factor in raising the attainment of all pupils.

Involving pupils in the target setting process is central to our assessment process. The purpose of involving children in the feedback and target setting is to encourage the children to take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning. Sharing the process enables teachers to monitor and acknowledge pupils' progress; it also ensures that each pupil has a clear understanding of what she needs to do to make progress.

Reflection and Annotation

Any significant issues that are identified during the feedback and marking process that cannot be dealt with effectively and immediately through discussion or the use of next steps, are used to directly inform subsequent planning. The action teachers take as a result may, in the short term, inform lessons planned in the following days or, in the long term, lead to alterations to units of work that are taught or revisited later in the academic year.

The reflection and annotation process also helps to identify children who, because of their response during a lesson or series of lessons, would benefit either from reinforcement or extension to achieve the lesson's objectives. These needs are then reflected in alterations to subsequent planning and further differentiation.

Strategic Assessment

Strategic assessment is a crucial tool for tracking pupil progress, identifying their needs and for providing information for grouping and resourcing. Information gathered through summative assessment is inputted onto the target tracker and reviewed by the teacher, Headmistress, Deputy Head (Progress Co-ordinator) and learning support assistant responsible for assessment and intervention.

During this period the progress of each individual girl's development and learning needs are reviewed. If it is viewed that the child would benefit from additional support in order to meet end of year targets, then an Individual Intervention Plan will be developed between the class teacher, Deputy Head, Intervention Co-ordinator/ Assistants and the parents.

The information held on the database enables the progress of individual children to be carefully tracked throughout the school. This summative data is combined with information gathered through formative assessment to inform the school's target setting procedures.

The strategic assessment periods are reviewed each year to support the learning needs of each cohort.

Reporting

We believe that it is important for children to recognise their learning achievements as they progress through the school. Parents' evenings are held at the end of the autumn and spring term to provide an opportunity to discuss each child's learning achievements and developing abilities. A written summary report will also be issued. In addition to pupil review meetings, the Headmistress will review each child's report each term and comment on the full report in the summer. The autumn term report has a strong emphasis on personal and social developments. At the end of the summer term each girl will bring home a full report which will highlight her overall progress and development across the curriculum. A parents' evening will take place in the summer term to discuss specific attainment, development and targets in more detail.

Parents should note that the reported end of year level is a holistic measure of their child's achievement, i.e. a child with a level 3b in literacy may well have achieved a level 4c in some aspects of this subject or has an understanding of some level 4 concepts. However, the level 3b would reflect that there are still areas which the child needs to consolidate before moving on and achieving the next level.

Junior pupils benefit from a review meeting which will take place prior to each parents' evening with their form tutor. This provides an opportunity for self-appraisal and enables the girls to be involved in target setting. We encourage the attendance of Year 5 and 6 pupils at each of the parents' evenings.

It is valuable for parents to attend parent's evenings where further details can be shared.

We are an academically focused school and many girls at Bowdon Prep will be working at levels higher than national targets and beyond the primary national curriculum. The teaching programmes provide all girls with the relevant level of challenge needed to ensure maximum progress. All girls are expected to access the core curriculum which provides coverage at an appropriate level for preparation for the Trafford grammar school assessments.

Early Years

In Kindergarten we:

- Plan and provide a curriculum that encompasses the six areas of learning in the foundation stage curriculum
- Focus on early stages of phonic and numerical development through teacher led sessions and group activities
- Make sure that the curriculum enables children to achieve and, where appropriate, exceed the early learning goals
- Use the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to help plan activities and opportunities for play
- Report progress and achievements against the early learning goals at the end of the year

Assessments in Kindergarten are on-going and are an integral part of everyday practice. Along with informal assessments, all girls will be assessed on entry to the Kindergarten class using baseline CEM. If children come into Kindergarten with an assessment profile from their nursery setting, this helps to inform their baseline assessments.

Each child has a foundation stage profile based on ongoing observations and assessment in all six areas of learning. Each girl's developments and achievements are recorded on assessment scales derived from the early learning goals. Summary profiles are completed for each child reaching the end of the foundation stage four weeks before the end of the summer term.

Our assessment techniques range from incidental observations of children undertaking learning, planned play observations and adult supported activities.

At the end of Kindergarten, children's progress and achievement are shared with the Reception class teacher.

Infant and Junior Department

Development information passed on from previous settings aids our informal initial assessments in the Reception class. The girls will also be assessed using Start of Year CEM. Pupils' progress is closely monitored to ensure progression through the early curriculum at an appropriate level. In Year 1, teachers set learning and development targets from the End of Year CEM and carefully track the progress of all the pupils, measuring progress in English and maths against clear learning targets. CEM assessments support teacher assessment in Year 1 to 6. In addition to the CEM test, each child is formally assessed in reading annually and there are three key writing assessment which take place throughout the year. Pupils complete module and topic tests in maths and science. Assessments are internally moderated. Teachers in specialist subjects assess progress and development by tracking each girl's progress against key skills. The girls also complete three knowledge based tests each year to measure their developing learning in skills relating to retention and recall.

Handover & Liaison

Class/form tutors and pupils complete transition and review documents at the end of the academic year and time is made available to teachers in order to discuss the handover of their classes to their new teachers and to pass on important information about each child. A full electronic history of information is held on each child's file. This includes all targets, tracking and progress information along with the parents' communication record.

Inclusion (SEN, Able Gifted & Talented, EAL)

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs or be identified as able, gifted and talented. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials and teaching style and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn most effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

If a child is identified as having special educational needs, intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP).