

ALDER COPPICE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Achievement through Commitment

Assessment for Learning Policy

Policy for the Attention of			
<i>Audience</i>	<i>Key Audience</i>	<i>Optional Audience</i>	<i>Additional/Notes</i>
Senior Leadership Team	✓		
Teachers	✓		
Teaching Assistants	✓		
Administrative Staff	✓		
Curriculum Support	✓		
Lunchtime Supervisors			
Site Manager			
Cleaners			
Governors	✓		
Parents	✓		
Website	✓		
Local Authority		✓	

Assessment for Learning Policy

Rationale

At Alder Coppice, our assessment strategies are in line with the current educational research and linked to cognitive science.

‘The most important assessments happened during teaching, not after it.’ (Black and Wiliam, 1998). Dylan Wiliam has suggested that ‘responsive teaching’ might have been a better term for Assessment for Learning. Responsive teaching – or formative assessment – blends planning and teaching, based on an understanding of how students learn from cognitive science, with formative assessment to identify what students have learned and adapt accordingly (Fletcher-Wood, 2018). Continual checking of pupil understanding and addressing of misconceptions facilitates the development of subject specific mental models. Responsive teaching is giving feedback as near to the point of teaching as possible to amend and improve the pupils’ mental model.

Continual daily assessment in lessons through the use of retrieval practice, check its, quizzes and formal assessments allows for responsive teaching – Checking for pupil understanding also helps to secure knowledge in the long-term memory. We use regular low-stakes quizzes and opportunities for retrieval practice to help pupils transfer information into their long-term memories. This is part of the process of mastery and helps build expertise through the organisation of knowledge into effective, subject specific mental models. Using the mastery approach teachers can re-teach and revisit knowledge to develop pupils’ mental models of the curriculum content. Spacing, interleaving and metacognition are a key element and are built into our formative and summative assessments throughout the year. Teachers and Phase Leaders record and discuss assessment results at the end of each term so that areas for improvement for individuals or key groups pupils can be addressed through interventions or reteaching and revisiting of concepts as necessary. Although, some pupils may not achieve as highly as others, we expect all pupils to improve with good teaching. End of Year assessments in the form of both quizzes and formal assessments check for retention of knowledge that has been taught across the year, and may reference work that has been completed in previous years.

Aims

- to provide a manageable and meaningful Assessment system;
- to achieve common practice throughout the School;
- to ensure assessment of pupils’ progress is formative and diagnostic;
- to ensure assessment of pupils’ work is summative and evaluative;
- to ensure results, records and reports are comprehensible and informative;
- to ensure assessment is closely linked to curricular planning;
- to ensure assessment procedures focus on what children can do and what they need to do next with regard to their progress through the National Curriculum;
- to use recording systems that identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils’ progress;
- to ensure results inform target setting arrangements where appropriate;
- to enable pupils to be involved in self-assessment.

Assessment should:

- Reflect and recognise achievement across the whole curriculum;
- Give children the opportunity to show what they can do;
- Be part of learning;
- Focus on how children learn and help strengthen long term memory;
- Be a central part of good primary practice;
- Use a range of strategies.

Revision should be built-in to every lesson.

'Unless we are intentional, there is a significant risk that pupils will forget much of what they have learnt.' (Mccrae, 2018).

As part of our mastery approach, it is important to invest significant time in consolidating connections between material. Our long term memory becomes stronger the more we retrieve information. *'The more effort there is in retrieving information – providing the attempt is successful – the greater the strengthening effect.'* (Bjork and Bjork, 2006). Material can be revisited across lessons as well as within lessons (spaced practice).

We use a variety of ways for retrieval including:

- Retrieval Practice – recalling information that has already been learnt through the use of *Do Nows*, *Exit Tickets*, *questioning techniques* and *quizzes*. The exact method will vary depending on the subject, but low-stakes quizzing is particularly high-leverage. (Learning Scientists)
- Elaboration – explaining and describing ideas with many details by asking 'why' or 'how' to make links between the different knowledge (Learning Scientists)
- Interleaving – alternate practice of different types of content e.g. if pupils are learning four mathematical operations, it's more effective to interleave practice of different problem type (Deans for Impact, 2015).

Teacher Assessment is used for:

1. Planning future teaching;
2. Diagnostic purposes;
3. Effectiveness of teaching;
4. Highlighting problem areas and giving the teacher a chance to rectify these;
5. Seeing what areas need reinforcement;
6. Establishing whether the work provides an appropriate level of challenge;
7. Giving information to parents;
8. Giving information to the next teacher/school.

9. Statutory reporting and external accountability

Good assessment practice

Educational research shows that approaches to assessment are linked with ensuring teachers deepen their understanding of how pupils learn and know how to ensure their pupils progress. Our knowledge-rich curriculum includes strategies that ensure effective formative assessment practices are embedded within the curriculum. This is of upmost importance, as this will enable teachers to adapt teaching where required to continually provide support and challenge for all learners, whilst ensuring that pupils are given quality feedback in order to develop their metacognitive skills and opportunities to continually evaluate and improve their own and their peers' learning.

In line with Wiliam's formative assessment practices and Rosenshine Principles, good quality assessment practices at Alder Coppice include:

- ❖ Clarifying, understanding, and sharing learning intentions;
 - Teacher input – Know where the learning is going present information in small blocks including sequencing concepts, providing models and appropriate scaffolding (Rosenhine Principles)
- ❖ Engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning:
 - Questioning and making teaching interactive - elicit frequent responses means students are required to say / write or do things. In the act of responding, all students are retrieving, rehearsing and practicing the information, concepts, skills, or strategies being taught.
 - Using teaching and learning strategies such as Cold Calling, No Opt Out, Stretch It and Call and Response.
- Providing feedback that moves learners forward:
 - Strategies such as modelling and thinking aloud – teachers externalise their thought processes by using modelling, scaffolding and thinking aloud to narrate their decisions and choices, to help pupils internalise and build schemata.
 - Giving whole class feedback and ensuring pupils respond to feedback – redraft, edit, rehearse and revisit. Display and discuss answers - Ticking and Fixing.
 - Move from guided to independent practice.
- ❖ Activating students as learning resources for one another:
 - Embedding think, pair, share – where pupils are given *Think Time* and share and discuss ideas with their learning partners, or checking their partners' answers to embed and further develop understanding of concepts taught.
 - Using retrieval practice to help learning stick and embed learning into the long term memory, using a range of strategies such as flash cards, brain dumps, retrieval grids, past papers and quizzing.

- ❖ Activating students as owners of their own learning - '*Owning your own learning*' is at the heart of strong self-regulation and metacognition, teachers can support pupils by:
 - Giving students access to Unit plans, and knowledge organisers before starting new Units of work;
 - Setting out goals or success criteria in the learning journey so that pupils can plan their own next steps through appropriate forms of practice, becoming increasingly independent.
 - Providing pupils with knowledge of what they need to do in order to improve and gain experience of being able to achieve success through applying effort to self-determined goals, which can encourage a growth-mindset.
 - Using visualisers to provide exemplars of performance at various levels of success so pupils can compare their own work against these and know how they can improve their own work to reach a higher standard.

Ref: D Wiliam 2011, <https://teacherhead.com/2019/01/10/revisiting-dylan-wiliams-five-brilliant-formative-assessment-strategies/> **Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching** By Anita Archer and Charles A. Hughes, **Moving Learners Forward** By Alex Quigley, Jamie Clark @Expat Educator.