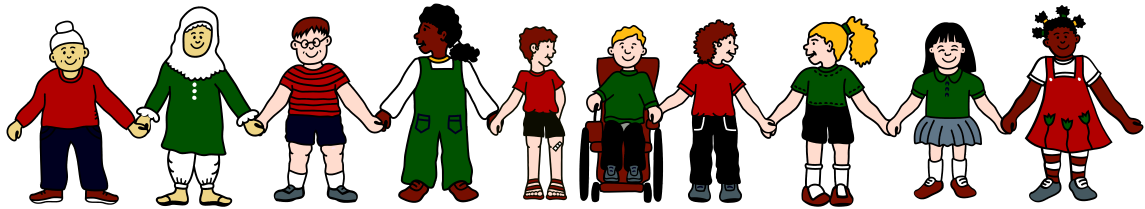


**THE GILES  
NURSERY  
AND  
INFANTS' SCHOOL**



**Assessment Policy**

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## Assessment Policy

### **Rationale**

To be successful independent learners, children and young people need regular opportunities to reflect on and identify what they have learnt, what needs to be learnt next and what they need to do to continue their learning. Teachers and other professionals need to be clear about the progress and achievements of the children and young people they teach, and how their learning might be improved. All forms of assessment need to provide useful information, which can be used to impact the learning of pupils. Assessment should always be purposeful and meaningful.

### **Aims**

In our school, assessment has the following purpose:

- To enable pupils to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in their learning.
- To develop a pupil's ability to self-assess and to understand what they need to do next to improve.
- To help pupils recognise the standards to aim for.
- To allow teachers to plan work that accurately reflects the needs of each pupil.
- To help parents to support their child's learning at home.
- To provide information which allows school leaders and governors to make judgements about the effectiveness of the school.

When used effectively, assessment helps to set clear expectations for standards and achievement through clear learning objectives and success criteria. It focuses on the learner rather than the teacher, concentrating on what is learned, understood or achieved, rather than what is 'taught'. Effective assessment emphasises progress and achievement and motivates pupils as they become partners in the assessment process. Assessment identifies strengths and how to develop them further, whilst also identifying areas for development / weaknesses. Effective assessment enables all learners to make progress, achieve and have their efforts recognised.

### **Principles and purposes of assessment**

At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School we recognise that there are different forms of assessment:

- Assessment **for** learning, also known as formative assessment, is based on the day-to-day assessments of pupil's learning and informs next steps in planning.
- Summative or assessment **of** learning, which includes assessments made at the end of a unit of work, the end of an academic year or the statutory assessments made at the end of a key stage.
- Ipsative, which involves a comparison of current and past attainment of a particular pupil, irrespective of the attainment of others.
- Diagnostic, used to provide specific information relating to a pupil's strengths and weaknesses.

We aim to use assessment strategies that support responsive teaching. Assessments may be made:

- At the beginning of the learning to activate prior knowledge, show misconceptions or gaps, provide retrieval practice and build fluency over time.
- During the learning to check inclusively for understanding and to identify gaps and misconceptions which can be acted on.
- To know if children are ready to move on or if further consolidation is needed.
- At the end of / after the learning to inform planning and future teaching.
- Sometime after the learning – ‘overlearning’.

We ask these questions to ensure any questioning or assessment is purposeful:

- What do I need to assess?
- Why that question at that point?
- Does it tell me something I don't know?
- Does it highlight something that will help the pupils?
- What am I doing with the information I've found out?
- Where should I go next in the lesson / unit / learning?

### **Characteristics of Assessment for Learning (Afl)**

Research shows that effective AfL is a key factor in raising children's standards of achievement. At the Giles Nursery and Infants' School, we ensure that teachers:

1. Promote a culture of 'growth mindset' and an 'I can' attitude to learning.
2. Plan teaching and learning in response to assessments of pupil's current knowledge and understanding.
3. Share learning objectives with pupils, within the context of the wider picture of learning.
4. Provide or involve pupils in co-constructing success criteria so they know the expectations for success and know how to be successful.
5. Use rich, carefully pitched questioning to support assessment.
6. Use mixed attainment grouping in the classroom.
7. Promote a mastery approach to learning.
8. Plan opportunities for pupils to use self and peer assessment, when appropriate.
9. Give pupils opportunities to revisit and revise prior learning through a spiralled curriculum to embed key learning.
10. Provide effective feedback (verbal and some written) and allow pupils the opportunity to respond to improve their work.

#### **1. Growth mindset:**

Growth mindset is based on the research of Carol Dweck. It is centred on the belief that intelligence is not fixed but can be developed. It leads to a desire to learn and improve, resulting in growth and development over time. Growth mindset enables pupils to foster a positive attitude to learning by promoting the belief that everyone can achieve a level of proficiency with enough time, effort, practice and input. It does not allow for the attitude 'I

can't do it' or 'I don't know it', but instead focuses on 'I can't do it **yet**' or 'I don't know it **yet**'. This implies that the knowledge or skill being taught is achievable with the right support and commitment and that **all** pupils can achieve.

Growth mindset involves embracing challenge, persisting despite obstacles, learning from mistakes, seeing effort as a path to mastery, learning from constructive feedback and being inspired by the success of others.

School staff promote a growth mindset by:

- Giving praise that highlights the effort, skill, process or attitude rather than the person.
- Celebrating mistakes, by seeing them not as a failure, but as a crucial and positive part of the learning journey that can lead to success in the future.
- Teaching children about the brain, so that they understand that their brain can be developed like a muscle, which can change and grow stronger the more it is used.
- Valuing contributions from **all** children so that they feel proud of their learning.
- Encouraging children to be active learners and to take some responsibility for their own learning and progress. Children need to be challenged at an appropriate level and demonstrate resilience and perseverance when the learning becomes tricky (being in the learning zone). If the learning becomes too challenging children may find themselves in the panic zone, which is detrimental to learning. The children are encouraged to recognise where they are in their learning journey and, with teacher support, identify when further input is needed. Regular learning stops or mini plenaries within the lesson are an essential part of the lesson structure to help children out of the panic zone.
- Having a flexible approach to groups and partner work, which enables pupils to learn from one another and challenge themselves more fully.
- Using positive language to support the development of a growth mindset.

## 2. Planning sequences of learning:

When planning sequences of learning, teachers should:

- Establish the prior knowledge of the children. Teachers are provided with a bank of assessment strategies to adapt as appropriate. These include using pictures as a stimulus, sentence starters or concept cartoons, true or false questions and multiple choice.
- Ensure that the key skills, knowledge and vocabulary set out in the national curriculum / early years foundation stage curriculum are covered.
- Refer to the school's curriculum journeys and progression maps to ascertain what pupils have already been taught, what they need to learn now and what they will learn in the future.
- Ensure that different learning styles are catered for and that reasonable adjustments are made to cater for the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable learners.
- Ensure there is an opportunity for high attaining pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

### 3. Sharing the learning objective:

The learning objective is what teachers expect pupils will know, understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson or sequence of lessons. It focuses on the learning that will take place and is de-contextualised from the activity. Teachers share the learning objective at the start of every lesson, enabling pupils to know the purpose of the activity. Teachers explain how the learning objective fits into the wider picture of learning; for example, 'Learning to use adjectives in your writing will help the reader to imagine the scene.'

### 4. Success criteria:

To encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning, teachers will:

- Explain and / or generate the success criteria with pupils.
- Ensure that pupils have interpreted the expectations so they can apply them as they are working, thus making their own judgements against the criteria before any teacher assessment takes place.
- Describe what they are looking for in the lesson so that pupils know the standards they are aiming for and have key areas of focus when carrying out the task, thus enabling them to begin the process of self-evaluation.

Research has shown that co-constructing success criteria with children has the maximum impact. Techniques for co-constructing success criteria may include:

- Looking at two or three excellent examples – what do the children see?
- Demonstrating doing it correctly / incorrectly.
- Learning partner discussions.

### 5. Questioning:

Teachers will use rich, carefully pitched questions by:

- Providing a high proportion of open questions.
- Providing time for pupils to think about and discuss their responses to questions.
- Providing supplementary questions to extend understanding.
- Providing questions that encourage pupils to reflect on their thinking.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to generate questions.
- Using a range of open and closed questions.
- Selecting pupils through a mixture of random selection, hands up and hands down.

There are pros and cons for all methods of questioning. Teachers use their professional judgement and knowledge of pupils to decide on the most effective method for each specific assessment purpose.

Pupils will be given the opportunity to explain, clarify and discuss their ideas and to question and support their peers in all areas of the curriculum. There will be opportunities to do this through whole class, small group, talking partner and one to one dialogue.

### 6. Grouping:

Teachers will have a flexible approach to groups and partner work, rather than grouping pupils by prior attainment. This enables pupils to learn from one another and challenge themselves more, thus leading to better outcomes.

When pupils are placed in ability groups, it can encourage them to have lower expectations of themselves. Pupils become aware of their ability in relation to the rest of the class and will vary their aspirations accordingly, thus undermining their growth mindset. This can potentially limit their access to higher order thinking, language and activities. By allowing pupils to work collaboratively in mixed attainment groups and pairs, they learn from each other and challenge themselves more. They place fewer limits on their learning and have higher expectations of what they can achieve.

#### 7. Mastery approach:

At the Giles Nursery and Infants' School we have adopted a mastery approach to the teaching of some areas of the curriculum; for example, mathematics and phonics. Mastery is an inclusive way of teaching that is grounded in the belief that all learners can learn the core curriculum content. Classes move through topics at one pace until the vast majority reach an agreed level of competency.

Teachers plan for a mastery approach by:

- Reinforcing an expectation that all pupils are capable of achieving high standards.
- Ensuring the large majority of pupils progress through the curriculum content at the same pace.
- Giving pupils time to think deeply and really understand concepts at a relational level, rather than as a set of rules and procedures. This slower pace leads to greater progress because it ensures children are really secure in their understanding.
- Making sure all pupils are given access to the full curriculum through this inclusive approach.
- Using precise questioning in class to test conceptual and procedural knowledge and assess pupils regularly to identify those requiring intervention so that all pupils keep up.
- Adapt learning through depth rather than acceleration. Although the class will go through the same content at the same pace, pupils who grasp concepts quickly will be challenged. Pupils who are not yet sufficiently fluent will be provided with additional support / intervention to consolidate their understanding before moving on.

#### 8. Self and peer assessment:

At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School we recognise that our pupils are very young and need to be supported in self and peer assessment. We work with them at the start of the process. If pupils are to learn they need to:

- Understand the criteria or standards that will be used to assess their work, through teachers sharing learning objectives and criteria for success.
- Reflect on their own work and make suggestions for improvement.

- Be supported to admit problems without risk to self-esteem.
- Be given time to work out problems.
- Be given the opportunity to revisit work to make improvements.

To enable pupils to do this, the interchange between teacher and child is crucial to the pupil's understanding of what needs to be done next. Peers can sometimes take on this role. By acting as a critical friend, a pupil will inevitably enhance their own understanding as well.

#### 9. Prior learning:

At the Giles Nursery and Infants' School, our curriculum is meticulously planned and sequenced from Nursery through to the end of Year 2. Subject leaders have produced curriculum journeys that detail the key skills, knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn as they progress through the school. In each subject, the curriculum is spiralled to ensure pupils meet key learning objectives more than once. Giving pupils opportunities to revisit and revise their prior learning enables knowledge to be embedded and skills to be practised. Teachers use the spiralled curriculum to assess exactly what pupils know, to identify any misconceptions and to plan learning accordingly.

#### 10. Effective feedback:

The purpose of feedback is to accelerate pupil's progress and achievement. It provides a useful ongoing diagnostic assessment record of achievement and supports pupils to identify their successes and work towards improvement. At the heart of feedback is the individual child and the impact it will have on their learning. Feedback and marking should not be undertaken if they will not help the pupil.

Feedback should help guide the future learning of pupils. Feedback should refer to the learning objective, be given regularly and in a timely manner so it is still relevant. Feedback is most effective when it confirms the pupils are on the right track, gives details of why answers are correct or incorrect and when it provides next steps to support corrections or improvements. Suggestions for improvement act as scaffolds to support pupils to respond to feedback independently. Research indicates that oral feedback is more effective than written feedback. Teachers aim to have quality dialogue with pupils to discuss their work.

Feedback should:

- Ensure that pupils retain ownership of their work to maintain their confidence and positive self-esteem.
- Be focused on the learning objective / success criteria / next steps which have been shared in child-friendly language. Marking too many aspects of work can be overwhelming for pupils.
- Give comments / next steps / reminders / questions that indicate to the pupil how to make improvements.
- Involve all adults working in the classroom. Where support staff work with a focus group, they should give feedback to the pupils.
- Give pupils opportunities to reflect on 'how' as well as 'what' they are learning and their future learning needs.
- Give recognition and appropriate praise for achievement, effort and strategies.
- Avoid comparisons with others.

- Allow time for pupils to reflect and respond, providing a corrective process which is both progressive and constructive.
- Respond to individual learning needs, marking face-to face with pupils where appropriate.
- Inform future planning and target setting.

Feedback should be immediate and verbal wherever possible, allowing the teacher to be reactive to the learner, and giving the opportunity to act immediately on the feedback. It may be given individually or collectively.

### **Written feedback / marking**

On some occasions, it may be judged that feedback should be written down and used to give 'next steps'. Pupils should be directed to the written feedback in order that they can respond to it.

It has been agreed that all marking at The Giles Nursery and Infants' School is to be carried out in pen using black ink. A yellow highlighter may be used to highlight small errors, such as a spelling mistake or forgotten punctuation. It is not expected that all pieces of work will be marked. Professional judgement should be made to ensure that marking remains manageable and effective.

The emphasis of the marking should be on both the success against learning objectives and next steps. Focused comments should help the child in 'narrowing the gap' between what they have achieved and what they should have achieved. New staff can see high quality marking in work sampling.

A possible model would comment on a success and an area for improvement; for example:

'I like the way you...' (link to learning objective)

'Next time, try to...' (look to narrow gaps / move learning forward)

'You have made good progress towards your target by...'

'Now can you...' (look to narrow gaps / move learning forward)

In key stage 1 (KS1), 'yellow box' marking may be used to illustrate to a pupil where there is a need for improvement in their work. A yellow box draws the pupil's attention to the error, but they are not told precisely what needs to be done. The pupil identifies for themselves the improvement that needs to be made and makes the relevant changes.

Teachers and support staff use the following codes when marking a pupil's work:

I – independent work

S – supported

VF – verbal feedback given

SC – self corrected

T – linked to target

TM – target met

TP – target practice

N/S – next steps

SP – incorrect spelling

No crosses are to be used. A dot means 'have another go'. A tick means correct.

Pupils use a red pencil to show they have made an improvement to their work, which they have identified themselves and completed independently. A green pencil is used to make an improvement after verbal feedback from an adult.

All work should be dated. Teachers and support staff should model the school handwriting script in written comments. Stamps may be used to depict next steps. Each class has a set of stamps to ensure consistency across the school. Stamps and stickers can also be used to praise a pupil's efforts.

### **Assessment in the early years foundation stage (EYFS)**

In the EYFS, progress is tracked using:

- Assessment information from previous settings,
- Induction assessment of development skills across the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning,
- Reception baseline assessment (RBA) – statutory,
- Pupil observations and anecdotal evidence,
- Group assessments resulting from adult-directed work,
- Photographic evidence,
- Pupil voice,
- Development Matters / Birth to Five Matters, and
- Early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) – statutory.

Regular assessment of pupil's learning is undertaken throughout their time in the EYFS. This information is used to ensure future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the foundation stage takes the form of observation and this involves both the teacher and support staff. During the first term in the Nursery and the Reception classes, the teacher assesses the ability of each child, using guidance set out in 'Development Matters'. These attainment judgements allow staff to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort to adjust the teaching programme for individual pupils and groups of pupils.

During the first six weeks in Reception, pupils participate in the baseline assessment (RBA), which is a statutory requirement. This provides a summary of each pupil's literacy and mathematical skills and knowledge.

Teachers assess the attainment of each pupil each term, using guidance set out in 'Development Matters'. The data is recorded on Arbor. These attainment judgements feed into the whole school assessment and tracking process.

In Nursery, staff keep progress records and examples of pupil's work in a large floor book. These books contain a wide range of evidence of attainment and progress. In Reception, the staff create photographic literacy, mathematics and topic books demonstrating the broad range of learning, including pupil voice.

Termly pupil performance meetings are held to assist in the tracking of individual, class, cohort or group progress and attainment.

The foundation stage profile is the statutory assessment tool that enables teachers to record pupil attainment at the end of the EYFS and to summarise their progress towards the early learning goals. It covers the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning in the foundation stage. The collection of assessment data in the foundation stage profile is a statutory requirement and is used for comparison both nationally and by the Local Authority. Outcomes for each child are reported to parents / carers at the end of the EYFS.

## **Assessment in KS1**

In KS1, progress is tracked using:

- Highlighted learning objectives for the sequence of work in English books (green – secure, orange – working towards),
- Written feedback in pupil books,
- Teacher notes,
- Herts for Learning (HfL) descriptors aligned to the national curriculum in reading and writing (termly at the mid-term point),
- Highlighted mathematics learning objective summary sheets,
- White Rose mathematics assessments at the end of units of work and the end of each term,
- Development Matters / engagement model for pupils working at pre-key stage levels,
- Phonics trackers (termly),
- Guided reading sheets,
- Reading trackers (termly),
- Foundation subject progression maps, and
- Year 1 phonics screening check (statutory)

Termly attainment judgements of reading and writing using the HfL descriptors are completed on a 'best fit' basis. Each class teacher selects six children: two low prior attainers, two middle prior attainers and two high prior attainers. They highlight the relevant descriptors on the HfL assessment documents, matching them carefully to the pupil's skills and knowledge. For those pupils working at a pre-key stage level (PRE), the process is completed using 'Development Matters'. A range of abilities should be represented, therefore the six children selected may be different for each subject. The judgements are made using a range of pieces of work.

Once the sheets are highlighted for each of the six individuals, the work and highlighted sheets will be moderated at a year group meeting to agree those working at pre-key stage (PRE), working towards the expected standard (WTS), working at expected standard (EXS) and working at greater depth (GDS). Teachers should be clear about why each pupil has been judged as working at that standard and they should identify what the next steps would be for the individual. Teachers need to agree the judgements to ensure consistency and accuracy. Year group leaders are responsible for ensuring this process happens.

Once the attainment judgements are agreed, each highlighted sheet acts as a benchmark. Teachers will note the names of the pupils in their class, also judged to be working at the same standard, remembering that it is a best fit.

In mathematics, pupils complete end of unit assessments and summative end of term assessments. The results are used to inform teacher judgements. Teachers also keep a summary sheet of the key learning objectives in each mathematics unit of work, on which they highlight which pupils are secure and which require further support.

Attainment judgements for reading, writing and mathematics are carried out in November, March and June and the results are entered onto Arbor so that interim reports can be generated for individual classes, cohorts or groups. Regular pupil performance meetings are held to assist in the tracking of individual, class, cohort or group progress and attainment.

At the end of KS1, attainment judgements are made using the Teacher Assessment Frameworks (TAF) for reading, writing and mathematics. Non-statutory SATS papers may be used to support teacher judgements. Pupils working below the standard of the KS1 curriculum but engaged in subject specific study are levelled using the pre-key stage assessment framework. These results are shared with parents / carers and the pupil's next school.

In the summer term in Year 1, statutory phonics assessments are carried out. Pupils in Year 2 who did not reach the threshold mark in Year 1 retake the statutory phonics assessment. The results of the check are reported to parents / carers and to the Local Authority.

Each teacher passes assessment information on to the next teacher at the end of the academic year.

### **Target setting**

At the Giles Nursery and Infants' School, we provide pupils and parents with regular updates on pupil's targets / next steps.

In Reception, bespoke next steps for each pupil are sent home termly. The next steps are linked to the areas of learning for communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development, literacy and mathematics. Alongside each step are strategies implemented at school and strategies parents could use at home.

In KS1, targets for reading, writing and mathematics for each pupil are sent home termly.

### **Reporting to parents / carers**

We have a range of strategies to keep parents fully informed of their child's progress in school. We encourage parents / carers to contact the school if they have concerns about any aspect of their child's work. The school encourages open dialogue and parental feedback.

Each term we offer parents the opportunity to meet their child's teacher. During the autumn term, parents meet with the teacher to discuss how their child is settling in their new class and to share any concerns. During the spring term, parents meet with the teacher and receive a snapshot which briefly reports on their child's progress towards their focus areas and sets new focus areas as appropriate for the summer term. Parents are offered a consultation in July to discuss their child's end of year report.

## **End of year assessments**

In Nursery and Reception, parents / carers receive a report that provides brief comments on their child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the pupil's strengths and development needs and gives details of the pupil's general progress. Parents / carers also receive a report detailing the characteristics of learning of their child and their EYFSP outcomes. Parents receive this report in July.

In KS1, parents / carers receive a written report summarising their child's progress and achievements during the year. The report includes attainment judgements for all areas of the curriculum and a comment on attendance, behaviour and effort. A written summary provides details of a pupil's knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science and specific achievements from the year.

Parents / carers of Year 1 pupils are informed whether their child has met the expected standard in the phonics screening check. The parents / carers of any Year 2 pupils re-taking the check are also informed whether their child has met the expected standard in the check.

Pupils in the Speech and Language Base have assessment and reporting arrangements tailored to their individual needs (see Speech and Language Unit Policy).

## **Moderation**

To ensure accuracy and consistency of attainment judgements, staff take part in regular moderation activities. These include:

- Moderation within year group teams,
- Whole school moderation,
- Moderation with other schools,
- Local authority moderation, and
- Moderation with an external consultant.

Teaching staff receive CPD on summative assessment when required.

Curriculum leaders collect examples of pupil's work to use as exemplars of different standards in each year group. All teachers are involved in discussion so they have a common understanding of the expectations in each subject and staff make consistent judgements about standards across the school. It is the curriculum leader's responsibility to ensure that the samples reflect the full range of ability within the subject.

## **Pupils with SEND**

Progress of pupils with SEND is carefully monitored during pupil progress meetings. Pupils with SEND may have an Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) with individual targets that are reviewed each term. A range of formative assessments are carried out to ensure pupil's needs are being met (see SEND policy). Pupils with SEND are included in formal assessments whenever this is appropriate.

## **Equal opportunities and inclusion**

We aim to ensure equal opportunities for pupils of all abilities, backgrounds, gender and social groups to succeed at the highest level possible. We strive to remove any barriers to learning and work to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups. Children in vulnerable groups are tracked and monitored to ensure that they achieve their potential.

We promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Resources and teaching strategies reflect and value the diversity of experiences and provide pupils with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience.

## **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, supported by the assessment leader, to ensure the implementation of this policy and guidance.

The assessment leader is responsible for the following:

- Keeping the Headteacher informed of any developments in national assessment policy and providing the necessary information for monitoring of learning throughout the school.
- Updating the assessment policy.
- Planning and organising meetings where all staff can agree common objectives and discuss the development and implementation of the assessment policy.
- Monitoring assessment through looking at teachers' planning, records, reports, marking and samples of pupil's work.
- Liaising with curriculum leaders and the Foundation Stage leader, working with them as subjects are identified for development to ensure consistency in assessment.
- Ensuring that statutory requirements are met, including the administration of the RBA and Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Maintaining a resource of materials to support assessment.
- Keeping up to date with local and national developments relating to assessment.
- Updating the governing body on any developments and changes in assessment policy and practice, and whole school assessment data.
- Ensuring all staff have the relevant documents, training and information to fulfil legal statutory requirements for assessment.
- Updating assessment recording sheets on Arbor each year.
- Producing an assessment overview each year to keep staff informed of important assessments dates and deadlines.
- Leading pupil progress meetings each term.
- Collating and analysing summative assessment data to look at trends, successes, and areas for development.

**This policy will be reviewed every three years or in light of changes to legal requirements.**