Assessment for Learning Policy

January 2023

Contents:

Formative Assessment

Introduction

At Camp Primary & Nursery School, we want all children to make good progress and develop positive attitudes to their learning. Formative assessment or "Assessment for Learning" (AFL) is central to children recognising and achieving their potential.

"Formative Assessment is a set of teaching and learning processes that empower children to not only progress but also become owners of their learning".

Shirley Clarke 2021

Formative Assessment: A Guide for Teachers

Both assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning play an important part in improving the success of all learners. Whereas assessment *of* learning is mostly concerned with assessment for grading and reporting purposes, assessment *for* learning is concerned with both the learner and the teacher being aware of where learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there.

The following policy outlines the key areas that ensure the teachers and the children at Camp Primary & Nursery School achieve high standards and have ownership over the learning and teaching that takes place within the school. This does not replace summative assessment practices. These processes are complimentary and summative assessment can reflect the impact of the AfL.

Aims

The intention is for AfL to occur in all lessons. Research has proved that AfL is one of the most powerful and effective ways of improving learning and raising standards. The way teachers mark and give feedback is central to the process.

There is not one clear answer as to how and when feedback should be given and through this policy, our aim is to outline ways in which feedback can be given most effectively in order to improve pupil outcomes.

Language of learning

Our language tells children what we believe and what we value. It can also have a huge effect on how children view themselves, how motivated they feel and, as a result, how well they achieve. Therefore the language we choose to use when talking to children about their learning is worth taking the time to think about.

Using 'language of learning' means using language which:

- **Celebrates learning rather than performance or ability**
  e.g. talking about 'learning' rather 'work' – 'what are you learning?' rather than 'what are you doing?' This shows that learning is an ongoing process, not a fixed outcome.

- **Develops a growth mindset and a belief that we can all achieve**
  Mindsets predict motivation and achievement (Blackwell, L.S., Trzesniewski, K.H., & Dweck, C.S. (2007). In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities are fixed traits and therefore focus on documenting their talents rather than developing them. We want to foster a 'growth mindset' in the children at Camp. This is where people believe that their basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. This mindset creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for achieving. Younger classes may use a learning character (e.g. purple monster) who personifies the growth mindset and who can model a positive mindset towards talking learning activities.

- **Encourages self-belief**
  e.g. 'I can…' or 'I need help/time/practice to…' rather than 'I can't'. It develops an understanding that mistakes are part of the learning process. Making a mistake or getting 'stuck' can be turned into a positive opportunity to learn something new. We may refer to 'Mistake Monsters' and children being in the 'Learning Pit'.

- **Develops metacognition**

  Giving children the language of learning allows them to become aware of themselves as learners, to reflect upon their own learning and eventually, take ownership of their learning e.g. 'I learnt to do that by…' 'I learn best when…' 'My next step in learning is…' 'I will do…to help me to …' 'I already know… Next I'd like to know…'

Learning Intentions

Effective learning takes place when learners understand what they are trying to achieve and why it is important – 'the bigger picture'. It is therefore important that pupils know the learning objective (LO) to the lesson as this gives a focus enabling pupils to review their own progress and to see if they have achieved the intention.

Teacher demonstration and modelling will closely relate to the learning objective as will the subsequent activities. Together these will support and guide children to achieve the lesson intention. **The learning objectives will focus on the skills or knowledge for the lesson not on the activities. The 'context' of the lesson or 'activity' can be shared separately** to make this explicit.

It is important to note that lessons do not all need to start with sharing the LO. It is important to capture the children's interest first and find a natural path to the LO and success criteria.

It is expected that the children are aware of their learning intentions but not necessarily to write it in their books. They may instead use a small "learning title" such as Using Adjectives or, in KS1, a label stuck in with the date and learning title.

Sticky Learning

Sticky learning is the knowledge (including skills) we want the children to learn and store in the long-term memory. Whether it be the different ways of categorising materials, the use of prepositions of time in a paragraph or the process of regrouping for subtraction, we need to make sure concepts and key knowledge stay with children to use and build upon.

Strategies to make learning sticky are used by teachers on a daily basis through meaningful, active, collaborative tasks as well as building strong connections to previous learning. Making sticky learning at the centre of the feedback to pupils helps to focus the children on what they need to do to improve their learning . It may be in the form of, for example, spaced retrieval opportunities planned in to check previous learning, low stakes quizzes or pupil reflections. (See page 9 for further information on pupil self assessment).

Success Criteria

Developing success criteria (SC) to achieve the learning objective will help provide children with a framework against which they can focus their efforts, evaluate their progress and discuss issues. We recognise that on occasions there is no need for more than 1 or 2 success criteria and to be most effective, a limit of no more than 5. Feedback can then be given against the success criteria (by the child themselves, their peer or the teacher). Feedback against the criteria frees children from personal discouragement.

Success criteria are not needed in every session and only need to be displayed in books if teachers feel this will impact the children's learning in the lesson or as an effective editing / feedback tool when marking.

Success criteria can be generated by the teacher, but it has been recognised that where children together generate their own success criteria to meet a learning objective they gain more ownership over the learning with positive results. Some techniques to generate SC with the children include:

- Prove It / Do It Wrong: Child to model a task they say they can do or adult models a task incorrectly and children point out errors to help refine SC.

- Finished piece of work: analyse and discuss features of another child's work (from the year before for example)

- Two Pieces of Finished Work: look at two pieces of work of differing quality shown side by side.

- Poor Quality Success Criteria: look at ready prepared SC and alter through discussion and trying out.

- Demonstration / Retrospective Creation: the adult models how to make/ do something while children pull out the sc/ do a task stopping frequently to pull out exactly what they've done.

- Revisiting existing success criteria: refine, amend and clarify sc after a task.

When generating success criteria it helps to focus on the process rather than the final effect *e.g. I will be successful if…. 'I set the scene in the opening paragraph' rather than 'people enjoy reading my story'*. The success criteria should guide the child in how to achieve. Two sets of SC can be used: one for the current skill being taught and one for on-going expectations or 'non-negotiables' e.g. using full stops.

Questioning

We use questioning in a variety of ways. Our key purpose is to develop learning and extend thinking. Asking questions raises issues; from this the teacher builds up knowledge and information about the children's understanding and misconceptions. Time needs to be invested in framing key questions to use during the demonstration and modelling part of the lesson to ensure learning progresses. Teachers will think about key questions during planning to ensure they are used effectively when assessing learning within lessons.

Wait or 'thinking' time is essential to give all children the opportunity to think and respond. This enables more children to contribute to discussion and misconceptions can be dealt with more effectively.

The use of mixed ability **talking partners** where children can rehearse their answers with the scaffold of a **speaking frame** will lead to greater responses from the children and therefore provide much more information for the teacher about the extent to which children have understood the new learning.   This is especially important for English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners who may need support, rehearsal opportunities and encouragement to communicate what they do and do not understand.

Using **individual whiteboards** as a tool for assessment allows the class teacher to know whether children are ready for a new challenge or require further support.

Speaking (and writing) Frames

Speaking and writing frames provide models of sentence construction, language structures, and vocabulary to support learnings in forming their oral or written responses.

This could be in the form of:
- Sentence starters: where learners are given the first word, or first few words, of a sentence
- Sentence frames: where learners are provided with useful structures with gaps in for them to complete

Self and Peer Assessment
Pupil self assessment can be a really effective tool for children understanding how they learn and how to make improvements. Teachers will support children in how to look for ways to improve and move their learning forward.

Pupil Reflections
Children need to verbalise their learning to themselves, peers, and teacher through reflections at the end of or during sessions to demonstrate their understanding of the key knowledge in that session. Verbal or written reflections help focus on the core learning, making that learning more meaningful and stickier. It is also a way in which teachers can assess for any misconceptions and address them accordingly.

Challenge Stations
A challenge station is an area set up in classrooms (usually in coloured trays red, orange, green purple) where different learning activities often of different challenge are available for children to self assess and choose where they think their challenge needs to be. These may be used in classes as a means for children to choose an appropriate challenge for themselves, but this is not necessary or expected in every session. When using the challenge stations, there is no expectation for there to be four differentiated challenges, but support for children with SEN and challenge for those capable of working beyond the main LO is essential. The majority of children will be working towards the main learning objective in the lesson, although a few may need this to be adjusted to meet their individual needs. Other ways of differentiating could include the use of support, visual aids, practical activities and use of manipulatives.

Talk Partners (Peer to Peer Feedback)
Talk partners are used regularly in classrooms as a means for children to learn together, share ideas and solve problems together. It is also an effective tool for assessment. Using talk partners for peer assessment can be an effective process. Through consistent approaches, teachers will encourage peer feedback to be specific and supportive of moving learning on. Instead of saying "neat handwriting" on a narrative writing activity, children can link to the learning with more specific feedback such as "you have used great adjectives but I can see you are missing some commas where there is a list".
Self and peer assessment can be more accessible and effective for children to do when there is success criteria available to support their understanding of their achievements and steps for improvement.

"In the moment" Feedback

In the moment feedback refers to the practice of teachers seeing all that happens in the classroom as a form feedback about what needs to happen next. This includes children's success, errors and misconceptions. As most learning happens <u>during</u> rather than <u>after </u>lessons, this is a crucial time to uncover children's understanding and provide feedback while there is still time for them to make changes and improvements.

The culture of the classroom needs to support this for children to feel confident to share their misunderstandings and ask for feedback or support and will work well across a whole range of subject areas.

<u>On the move questioning and feedback</u>

During the lesson, providing <u>specific</u> questions and feedback prompts that relate back to the learning to individual children will help them move from what they have achieved to what we want them to achieve. Instead of "Can you improve these two long sentences?" you could say "Try improving these sentences by including a short noun phrase, such as, thin lips, raspy voice".

<u>Helicoptering and Landing</u>

Throughout the lesson, teachers will be constantly moving around the classroom "helicoptering" pen in hand. This enables them to "land" and catch slips, misconceptions, children who are stuck or muddled and those who have misunderstood the task.

The "landing" could be as simple as an "sp" in the margin to remind of a spelling word or a quick sentence or two: "Read this sentence aloud to me, can you hear where you pause? Perhaps it needs some punctuation."

Of course, there may be times when helicoptering reveals that many children are struggling and so teachers will need to stop to re-focus, explain or adapt the task.

<u>Random Checks</u>

You may try "in the moment" feedback by randomly selecting a group of children to share their working with you. For example: All children with a birthday in March and September to bring their work to share. Children will know that there is a random selection taking place and won't feel "picked on" to share their work.

<u>Mini Plenaries</u>

Mini plenaries are mid lesson learning stops which enable teachers to give feedback to the whole class at once. These could be used to model or scaffold a common misconception noticed during the "helicoptering" process or to share successes seen in children's learning.

"Post-Lesson" feedback

It is important that children know their teachers have looked at their work and much of this can happen through "in the moment" feedback. Often work is looked at after the lesson and the marking or feedback at this time can take place in different forms.

Success and Improvement comments

Written feedback should be shared with the children as soon as possible so children are able to read and respond. Research show that written feedback without timely opportunities to reflect has little to no impact on children's learning.

Keep comments specific to the learning objective, minimal and memorable for the children to be able to act upon. An example could be something a simple as:

√ Clear structure   —> improve two adjectives

Coded Marking (highlighting)

Coded marking allows for quicker acknowledgement of success and areas to improve. This could be highlighting areas where children have achieved the learning for example.   See "Marking Codes" on following page.

Success criteria feedback

Using success criteria for feedback is an efficient strategy for providing specific feedback both teacher to pupil and vice versa as well as peer to peer. There may be times where it is appropriate for SC to be shared in children's books for them to self assess (tick against criteria) or for teacher assessment (identifying areas of achievement or for improvement.

Whole Class Feedback

There are many ways in which marking may result in whole class feedback. This may be in the form of a simple starter to the next lesson to go over something missed in the previous day or a written form / taught session the next day allowing for children to listen to feedback and make changes on their learning from the previous lesson.

Acknowledgement marking and checking

This is where a brief comment "Excellent improvement", "Great effort today" or even a signature, tick or other agreed symbol is used to show the child that you have checked and read their work. While doing this, the teacher will be checking or grouping the children's work to help plan or adapt the next lesson or perhaps decide on the "immediate intervention" for the following day. (See page 12 for more details).

Marking Symbols

I   Independent work (for key children who often have support)

S   Support given for task (brackets to denote who provided support)

V   Verbal feedback

GG   Guided group

→   Next steps

•   Try again / answer to be corrected

√   correct

√√   great choice / answer

sp   spelling **

〜〜〜   better word choice needed

Ⓐ   capital letter

⊙   Full stop

Acknowledgement symbols may include:

√   ☆   ☺

What happens next?

Formative assessment is: *'an ongoing process, conducted both formally and informally, by which information and evidence about a child's learning is absorbed and used to plan the next step or guide through a given task'* (*Ruth Sutton, Assessment- A framework for teachers, 1991)*

The most important part of AfL or Formative Assessment is the "What Happens Next?". Now that the assessment process have been applied, teachers need to think about what the outcome for this is.

Timely Response

Teachers need to ensure children are given time to respond to feedback they are given. This may be within the lesson when verbal feedback is given and children can make changes there and then. It may also be from "post lesson" feedback where there is written instruction or codes for the children to respond to. It is crucial that this time is given as close is as possible to when the children first completed the learning. From Year 1, pupils will use their "purple polishing pens" to make changes to their work.

Adaptive Teaching

Upon checking learning from the lesson, teacher's will use this knowledge gained to carefully plan the learning for the next lesson. In most cases, this will just be the next stage in the progression of learning skills but on occasions, it may mean repeating learning that has not been understood by the majority or adapting the lesson to be taught in a different, more accessible way.

Immediate Interventions

Immediate interventions are sessions in a small group or individual basis where a child may need a quick recap or the learning explained again from the previous lesson. This is to ensure the child is not moving on to the next learning step before they have understood what was taught in that session. This is particularly efficient where there is a smaller misunderstanding and not a large gap in a child's understanding.

Guided Groups

A guided group will be used where a teacher has identified a group of children where there is a similar gap or misunderstanding in their learning or indeed a skill that could be taught to move the learning forward. This may be supporting the group on a similar activity to the rest of the class or planning a separate activity where needed to support the chosen group.

Presentation expectations

Layout

The date must be displayed on all work in books (KS1 short date, KS2 long date in English books but short date in all other subjects)

Work must also include a short learning title

In KS1 or for children with SEN where writing a date and title may be challenging, these could be stuck in or written for them by an adult.

Maths
- one number per square
- Leave a line / square between each answer
- Consider bigger squares for some children in KS2 where fine motor skills are still developing

Handwriting
- Use of Collins handwriting scheme + additional letter formation guidance
- Copies of Collins books kept in each classroom
- Letter formation sheet on display in all classrooms
- All staff modelling correct letter formation and joining
- Pre-cursive letter formation to be taught from Year 2
- Cursive lettering should be taught in Year 3 onwards
- Handwriting lessons will be taught daily in Years 1, 2 and 3 and 2 X weekly in Years 4, 5 and 6.

Worksheets
- Aim to balance number of sheets used with the amount of independent recording in books
- Expectations re how to stick worksheets into books neatly needs to be modelled explicitly
- Sheets need to be trimmed to an appropriate size to fit neatly into books (avoid folded sheets where possible).
- As an eco school, it is important that we think carefully about whether a worksheet is needed or it is something the children could complete in their books.

Pens/pencils:

Pen licenses will be issued to all children in Year 3 together.

References:

Gadsby, C. (2021) A Guide for teachers: Efficient Marking

Clarke, S. (2021)A Guide for Teachers: Formative Assessment

Gershon, M. (2017) How to use Feedback and Marking in the Classroom

Hattie, J. and Clarke, S. (2019) Visible Learning Feedback

Collin, J. and Quigley, A. EEF (2021) Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning

Collin, J. and Quigley, A. EEF (2021) School Leader Implementation Support