



# Yarrells School & Nursery

## ASSESSMENT POLICY

Policy Lead (Position (and Initials)): **Deputy Head Academic (LS)**

Date of Last Review: **April 2021**

Date of Next Review: **April 2022**

At Yarrells Preparatory School, pupils are assessed formally and informally on an ongoing basis. Assessment is fundamental to effective teaching and learning. On a day-to-day basis, assessment for pupils' learning guides students and teachers in terms of next steps. At identified points throughout the academic year, more formal assessments of the pupils' learning will occur to act as signposts to an individual's progress towards age-related expectations. Regardless of its format, all assessment should be used to support teachers and pupils in moving forward in their learning; it must be purposeful, reliable and valid, allowing each individual to demonstrate their skills and understanding.

Tests and assessments will vary according to the age of the pupils. They will develop from mostly observational assessment of children in the Foundation Stage to a wider range that includes formal tests as pupils progress up through the school.

### **Assessment for Learning**

Throughout the school, value is given to teachers' and supporting adults' ongoing assessments of the children in their classes and groups. No matter how informal, by implementing workable, explicit AfL practices, school staff move further towards the goal of supporting each individual achieve their academic potential.

At Yarrells, effective AfL involves:

- both sharing and constructing learning intentions and success criteria with pupils.
- providing meaningful feedback, verbal, non-verbal and written, that helps pupils to identify successes and how to improve work.
- applying a consistent marking policy.
- using questions that both challenge our pupils' thinking and nurtures their naturally inquisitive minds.
- identifying misconceptions and planning for these to be remedied.
- children working collaboratively to support each other's development.
- setting manageable targets for improvement.
- monitoring and adapting pupils' learning experiences so as to ensure that their learning is progressive and continuous.

The recording of formative assessment information may vary from teacher to teacher, although staff are provided with templates in which to record ongoing information pertaining to children's writing (\* in

development) and mathematical development. Pupil self-evaluation and peer-assessment is considered an integral part of the daily assessment for learning process.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile**

Assessment is continuous throughout the Foundation Stage. To ensure effective teaching and learning, practitioners use observational assessment to gauge a child's development and understanding. Achievements are recorded throughout the year, making assessments based on day-to-day observations of a child's achievements.

Each area of learning has specific Early Learning Goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that children should have gained by the end of the Reception year. These Early Learning Goals form the basis of the EYFS profile. This is a statutory assessment, designed to sum up the child's progress across the entire curriculum. This profile is reported to parents alongside the summer school report and parents will have an opportunity to discuss the profile with the class teacher.

Reception Teachers complete the individual profiles. At Yarrells, we recognise that parents can make an important contribution to these assessments, and parents are encouraged to talk about and record their children's achievements to share with the teacher.

The school will endeavour to communicate as much as possible to keep parents abreast of what we are doing at school; and parents are encouraged to talk to the class teacher as necessary so that good communication is fostered between home and school.

From September 2017, the online Tapestry Learning Journals were introduced to the EYFS at Yarrells. These are used to record individual children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and explicit reference is made to developmental stages and milestones as the children work towards achieving ELGs with each additional record. Every observation that is taken – whether written, photographic or a video – is shared with the parents of the individual concerned, who can in turn comment on their child's learning. (Whilst this is present in our Nursery and Reception practice currently, it is planned for Tapestry to be introduced throughout the Pre Prep department over time).

### **Standardised Assessment of Learning**

Standardised testing is used to track the attainment and progress of all children. These further inform teaching staff of relative strengths and areas for development of whole cohorts, classes, focus groups and individual children. They are also used as an initial assessment for pupils entering after Year 2. Teachers use all assessment data to impact their classroom practice. Reports generated from any externally marked test papers are carefully used to (a) reflect on past practice and (b) inform future planning and interventions. Individual children's progress is monitored by both Heads of Departments and the school's Assessment Leader, and frequent dialogue is held with class and subject teachers.

The list of tests used and when they are taken are listed on a separate sheet: *Appendix 1 - Assessment Overview*.

Together with the Director of Studies, the Assessment Leader oversees standardised testing throughout the school and makes all necessary arrangements for administration in consultation with Section Heads, Department Heads and teachers.

If they are not externally marked and validated, standardised tests from Rec to Year 4 are marked by form teachers; in Years 5 – 8, they are marked by the relevant subject teacher.

Test results are entered into cohort-specific spreadsheets and the Assessment Leader is responsible for monitoring the attainment and progress of all pupils in the school. Meetings are held with year group teaching staff so as to ensure that all assessment information is used to inform pupils' learning and the teaching that they receive. If deemed appropriate and purposeful, teachers will communicate test outcomes and implications to parents.

Other teacher assessment material is available to help make a preliminary identification of learning difficulties prior to referral to an outside assessor. See *SEND Policy*.

Nationally standardised diagnostic tests are used to assess children's performance in English and in mathematics.

GL Assessment's externally marked Progress Tests in English (PTE) and New Group Reading Tests are used to assess children at six-monthly intervals from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 to track pupil progress in spelling, punctuation and grammar and reading respectively. Single Word Spelling Tests are also administered to children across the school (Years 1 to 7) and progress is monitored.

Progress Tests in Maths (PTM) are carried out on a six-monthly basis across Years 2 to 6.

To support the preparation for Common Entrance examinations for pupils in our Senior Prep, past papers are regularly used in Years 7 and 8: these both support students in becoming familiar with the nature of this testing and are used by teaching staff to identify progress towards anticipated grades and spot areas for further development. After discussion with senior schools, ISEB pre-tests are used as deemed necessary.

Children in Years 3, 5 and 7 also sit Cognitive Ability Tests. Year 6 children will sit additional Verbal and Non Verbal tests in September as part of the preparation for secondary school entrance examinations and for use as supportive evidence as may be required by the schools.

## **Results and Scores**

After children have taken diagnostic tests, these are marked in order to arrive at a standardised score. The raw score is the mark out of the number of questions on the paper, but the standardised score takes into account the level of challenge of a test. By considering the raw score in relation to the child's age in years and months, an age standardised score is also achieved. These measures enable our children to be compared with large, nationally represented samples.

A standardised score of 100 is the centre of children in the average band. Deviations of 11 points either way are also considered average. Standardised scores of 111 to 125 are considered high scores and 125 and above are considered very high.

Scores may vary from one test to the next, so a confidence band is also usually worked out when children are tested with allowances on either side of the mark.

Together with Pupil Attitude Surveys, all results from both cognitive and progress tests are considered by staff on a planned and regular basis. Data is used to be indicative of pupil performance, whilst also recognising the limitations of such information. Through wider discussion about individual children and teachers' ongoing assessments of them, priorities for intervention and focus are identified.

## **Entry to Senior Schools**

Pupils will be prepared for exams for entry to senior schools of parents' choice after consultation with the Head as to suitability at the standard ages of 11+, 12+ and 13+. Pupils are prepared for the Bournemouth

and Poole Grammar Schools tests and for entry to independent schools through Common Entrance exams at 11+ and 13+. In addition, pupils are prepared for any entry exams set by individual schools, including scholarship exams and pre-testing. This preparation may involve mock testing, 1:1 guidance and preparation and the use of past material.

### **Rationale**

The purpose of school examinations is to test the skills and knowledge acquired during the period leading up to the exam; to find out what children have and have not learnt, can and cannot do, in order to inform future planning and identify any additional provision required for individual pupils. It is also important to enable pupils' progress to be tracked as they move through the school.

We also believe the formality of the tests, and discipline of revising for them, is good practice to help children in our senior years prepare for the rigours of senior schools.

The aim is for every pupil to perform to the best of his or her ability in a formal assessment, and the setting and conduct of exams should attempt to ensure that this happens as far as is possible, without causing pupils undue stress. An exam should aim to give a good opportunity for a child to show what he/she *can* do, though there needs to be challenge for the more able child in every exam. Exams for pupils with SEND are sometimes modified where necessary and after discussion with the SENCO, and some high-attaining pupils may sit test papers that are primarily designed for older children than themselves.

#### **A. Preliminary Planning**

Staff should ensure that examinations set take into account the SEND requirements for every child. The Assessment Leader will coordinate timetables to be posted prior to exams and will help with organising rooms and invigilators where necessary.

#### **B. In the Examination Room**

An effort should be made to keep the atmosphere calm, encouraging and purposeful at all times. The invigilator allocated to an exam should ensure that the necessary equipment is available. Examinations are conducted in silence.

The start and end times must be prominently displayed and periodic reminders of the time should be given, as well as a five minute warning prior to the end of the examination.

#### **C. Arrangements for SEND Pupils**

Prior plans and arrangements for SEND must be made – see SEND policy regarding special arrangements for exams. If it is felt appropriate, pupils may sit the exam with the support of the SEND team, so long as the integrity of the test is preserved. Staff setting an exam should be aware of the SEND of every pupil sitting the exam and must produce differentiated papers where necessary. They are responsible for giving these papers to the SEND team and providing the necessary instructions and equipment.

#### **D. Marking**

Teachers give children feedback about exams. Papers should be worked through with senior prep pupils and one or more follow up lessons should be planned for all classes to review performance constructively in order to aid the formative process. Areas of weakness should be reviewed and corrections may form the basis of further work.

The school's Assessment Leader tracks individual pupils' progress towards anticipated outcomes and further liaises with class and subject teachers as well as the school SENDCo.

**E. Evaluation**

Class strengths and weaknesses - together with individual performances of children - should be reviewed along with the exam paper itself so that improvements in structure, presentation or content can be made where necessary. From this evaluation, schemes of work and class preparation can then be adjusted if required.

**Assessment Policy reviewed and amended by L.Sharpe, Deputy Head Academic in April 2021**

To be reviewed again as part of ongoing process in April 2022 by Assessment Team