

Assessment Policy

Aims

It is the aim of teachers at Heritage School to form an honest view of what pupils *actually* know and can do, together with their strengths and weaknesses as whole people.

We do this in order more effectively to facilitate their ongoing development. Our goal is to prepare children for life not merely for exams.

Evaluation (assessment) and communication (reporting) are essential tools toward this end. They are vital to the teacher, the parent and to the child.

Through assessing and reporting on pupils' work, we aim to:

1. enable pupils to understand what they have to do to develop academically and personally, thus helping them acquire two essential life skills: self-assessment and self-correction;
2. offer parents another perspective (aside from their own) upon their child(ren)'s development, thus equipping them with information and strategies to enhance their child(ren)'s development;
3. enable teachers to identify specific teaching strategies to assist each pupil according to his or her needs.

Methods

There are two types of assessment used at Heritage School: formative and summative.

Formative

Formative assessment is the day to day evaluation of pupil performance and development which in turn feeds immediately into teaching strategies and target setting, that is, into learning opportunities. We see nearly every aspect of school life as an opportunity for assessment and learning. These opportunities include:

- in-class oral work (narrations in particular);
- written work in our various exercise books;
- the conduct of relationships with teachers and other children;
- moments of praiseworthy or problematic behaviour;
- playtimes;
- when pupils face new challenges (in PE lessons for example).

As teachers evaluate pupil behaviour and performance they regularly talk with pupils about areas for improvement, discuss particularly noteworthy areas for improvement with parents, and adjust their own teaching strategies and expectations accordingly. We do not grade daily student work, believing too regular use of grading schemes to be a distraction rather than aid to academic development.

Our goal is to meet pupils at their point of need and so equip them to 'take the next step'. Because our classes are small we are readily able to develop the positive nurturing relationship that make ongoing daily input into our pupils' lives both effective and rewarding.

We draw upon expert help and advice as required to assess reading age or dyslexic tendencies.

Summative

Summative assessment refers to the formal examinations that evaluate pupil progress at the end of a period of learning. At Heritage School the focal point of our formal assessment is our end of term exams for pupils age 6 and up.

Exams in every major subject are held during the last week of each term. Up to year 5, exams are conducted primarily orally, with a scribe taking down each child's answers. We do not revise or 'cram' for exams because we have confidence in the effectiveness of our teaching methodologies to deliver a secure base of knowledge. Our goal is to take a 'picture' of a child as he or she actually is, i.e. of what he or she has actually learned and enjoyed during the term's work. We do not 'teach to the test'. In our exams pupils are given open-ended questions that allow them to display what they know rather than what they don't.

In our exams we make use of a simple but effective grading system. From top to bottom it is as follows: excellent or very good (above average); good, fairly good or fair (average); poor or unsatisfactory (below average). The giving of marks has been initially judged against exam grading standards from the PNEU (Parents National Education Union) which we possess.

We deliberately reject the excessive emphasis placed upon standardised tests today, which provide a much narrower 'picture' of a child's performance, in favour of our highly personalised, more detailed and more constructive summative assessment strategy.

Early Years Foundation Stage Assessment and Profile

In keeping with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, we ensure that the class teacher who works with our Lower Preparatory Class (Reception) is fully cognisant of the Early Learning Goals and is able, therefore, to assess each child's progress against those goals. We do this by writing the Early Learning Goals into the learning objectives of our curriculum. This ensures that the class teacher devises activities consistent with those learning objectives.

A clear understanding of the Early Learning Goals enables assessment against them. The following system of assessment is followed by our Lower Preparatory Class teacher:

- A baseline assessment against the Early Learning Goals is undertaken in September (at the start of the Reception year).
- A notebook for each child is created so that observations and evidence can be recorded on an ongoing basis.
- Daily formative assessment is undertaken and feeds back into the teacher's strategies and target setting in relation to the Early Learning Goals.
- Termly reports are sent home to parents and provide an opportunity for the teacher to reflect upon and report against the Early Learning Goals.
- We hold parent consultations twice per year. The consultation in May, in particular, provides an opportunity to discuss with parents any Early Learning Goals a child has not yet achieved. It may be that the parent has input that allows a the teacher to determine that, in fact, a child has achieved the goal in question.
- In May of each year, the class teacher will have a list of Early Learning Goals that a child has not yet achieved and will devote two weeks to an intensive evaluation. The purpose of this intensive end of year assessment is to ensure the Early Years Profile, completed in the latter half of the summer term, is an accurate reflection of what each child can achieve.

How judgements are made regarding the Early Learning Goals:

- Assessments are based upon the teacher's ongoing observations of what children are doing in their day-to-day activities.
- Evidence is also sought from parents, where there is doubt about whether or not a child has reached a particular Early Learning Goal.
- Assessment is based upon behaviour that is consistent and predominately (but not exclusively) independent and self-initiated, as opposed to teacher directed.

- We participate in moderation meetings sponsored by the local council or through a visit by a moderator to Heritage School to ensure that our judgements are consistent with national standards.
- We evaluate our judgements against the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

In the summer term of each year, an Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child who reaches the age of 5 during the course of that year. The EYFS Profile is submitted to the Local Authority by 30 June. A copy of the EYFS Profile will be sent home to parents along with our normal reports, which include reference to the child's progress against Early Learning Goals, at the end of the summer term.

Reporting

In addition to regular informal communication with parents, we hold two parents' evenings per year, one in the autumn and another in the spring.

In addition, all parents receive a detailed report at the end of each term, together with an end-of-term exam assessment and a copy of all their child's exam papers.

For internal purposes, a file on each pupil is retained that includes original exam scripts and a selection of illustrative work.