

# Vallis First School

## Assessment Policy

*This policy is subject to change as we evaluate the impact on our children's learning and progress.*



**Approved by the Governing Body of Vallis First School:** October 2024

**Shared with Staff:** September 2024

**Proposed Review Date:** September 2026

This policy will be reviewed two-yearly, and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedures.

# Assessment Aims at Vallis

At Vallis, we give our children regular feedback on their learning so that they understand what to do in order to improve. This allows us to base our lesson plans on a detailed knowledge of each child. We give parents regular updates on their child's progress so that teachers, children and parents are working together to raise standards for all our children.

At Vallis, we believe that the key aim of assessment is to support children's achievement and progress:

- Enable our children to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in their work;
- Help our children understand what they need to do next to improve their learning;
- Allow teachers to plan work that accurately reflects the needs of each child;
- Help set targets and involve children in their own learning.
- Give parents regular information of what their child can do and how they can support their child in their learning (this is achieved during our parent meetings throughout the year);
- Provide information that can be used to evaluate teaching and learning practice;
- Enable all children, including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to make effective progress;
- Ensure a consistent expectation and application of standards across the school through moderation;

## Assessment Approaches

At Vallis, we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning. We use 3 broad overarching forms of assessment: lesson-by-lesson assessment, in-school summative assessment (termly) and nationally standardised summative assessments.

### Lesson-by-Lesson Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is carried out by teachers every day in every lesson. It allows teachers to understand each child's performance on a continuing basis and this is recorded, where appropriate, in our 'Feedback Journals'. This type of assessment is used to assess sticky knowledge, subject specific skills and understanding, and is used to identify gaps and misconceptions.

It enables teachers to identify when children are struggling, when they have consolidated learning and when they are ready to progress. It also enables teachers to identify if children are exceeding age-related expectations within their learning. This assessment enables our teachers to evaluate their teaching of particular objectives of the curriculum and plan future lessons and/or intervention accordingly.

Formative Assessments strategies used within the lesson will vary according to the subject and learning objective taught – these include:

- Daily observations of learning outcomes against success criteria (*see our Marking and Feedback Policy*)
- Hearing children read during phonics and English lessons
- Use 'Flashback Fours' (rich question and answer sessions) quizzes to evaluate children's understanding and identify gaps or misconceptions.
- Use of whiteboards to get instant feedback of understanding.
- Mini-learning breaks within lessons to determine understanding at regular intervals and address misconceptions.
- Short re-cap quizzes or recall of facts.
- In mathematics lessons, 'Spot the mistake' challenges are used to explore concepts in greater depth and to identify and address any misconceptions.
- Observational assessment.
- Marking work in the moment for child attainment and progress.
- Self (or peer) assessment at the end of the lesson based on individual learning objectives and the Success Criteria.
- 1:1 or group discussions with children.
- Marking and feedback in line with the marking policy

## Interim Summative Assessment

Summative assessments will be used to monitor and support children's performance. They will provide children with information about how well they have learned and understood a topic or subject taught over a period of time, providing feedback on how they can continue to improve.

Teachers will make use of in school summative assessments to evaluate both a child's learning at the end of a term and the impact of their own teaching. Both these purposes will support teachers in planning for subsequent teaching and learning at Vallis.

In-school summative assessments will also be used at whole school level to monitor the performance of child cohorts, to identify where interventions may be required and to work with teachers to ensure children are supported to achieve sufficient progress and expected attainment. At Vallis, summative assessments include:

- **Reading Assessments:** using 'HeadStart Primary Comprehension' termly (at the end of each academic term for Y2-Y4) and record the outcomes on INSIGHT
- Teachers record the reading book band children are on their reading tracker
- Termly 'best fit' assessment relating to the Ready to progress assessment criteria for each subject is reported on INSIGHT for Reading, Writing, Maths and Science
- In Year R to Year 2, using our ongoing phonics assessments, teachers will record the Phase achieved in Letters and Sounds on their Phonics Tracker

- **Writing Assessments (At the end of a unit):** Children will be asked to complete pieces of independent cross curricular writing, these will be moderated and 'best fit' assessment relating to our ready to progress assessment criteria and record the outcomes on INSIGHT
- **Maths Assessments:** Children will complete end of unit reviews using 'White Rose Maths' and use these to evidence their 'best fit' assessment of our ready to progress assessment criteria and record the outcomes on INSIGHT and support these further with termly assessments using 'White Rose Maths' test papers.
- **Science Assessments:** During learning, children begin with exploring a key question/s to identify what knowledge they already know. This can take the form of questioning, labelling/ explaining around an image/diagram or statement. In addition to this, the children revisit and review learning at the start of every lesson using our 'Flashback Four' structure and in our daily/weekly quizzes.
- **Foundation curriculum:** Ongoing, in lessons, teachers assess whether children are meeting objectives as outlined in our Vallis subject spines – using children's work to evidence their 'best fit' assessment of the ready to progress criteria. Foundation subject 'best fit' assessments relating to Vallis' 'Ready to progress Assessment Framework is then reported on INSIGHT for foundation subjects at the end of the year.

## Nationally Standardised Summative Assessment

Nationally standardised assessments will be used to provide information on how children are performing in comparison to children nationally. They will provide parents with information on how the school is performing in comparison to schools nationally.

Teachers will have a clear understanding of national expectations and assess their own performance in the broader national context.

Nationally standardised summative assessment enables the school leadership team to benchmark the school's performance against other schools locally and nationally, and make judgements about the school's effectiveness.

The government and OFSTED will also make use of nationally standardised summative assessment to provide a starting point for Ofsted's discussions, when making judgements about the school's performance.

Nationally standardised assessments support children and parents in understanding how children are performing in comparison to children nationally

A range of 'Nationally standardised summative assessments' will be used:

- Reception Baseline Assessment at the start of Reception
- Year 1 Phonics Screen Test
- Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check

## Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry to the school children will be formally assessed using a baseline assessment. Results are used to inform planning, set targets and aid early identification of special educational needs. Children will be assessed regularly to ensure that the next steps in learning are appropriately planned in order to help children make progress.

The Early Years foundation stage profile (EYFSP), which is based on the teacher's ongoing observations and assessments, is made up of the following:

### **The prime areas of learning:**

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

### **The specific areas of learning:**

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

### **Characteristics of effective learning:**

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Each child's developments and achievements are recorded electronically. There are 17 early learning goals (ELGs) and evidence is collected against each area. For each early learning goal, the teacher judges whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of reception (expected), exceeding this level (exceeding) or not yet reaching this level (emerging) and this will be communicated to parents formally at the end of the school year.

## Marking

Whilst marking work at Vallis, teachers are continuously assessing children's achievements and noting areas of difficulty or gaps in learning in order to inform planning of future lessons. This is recorded in our class 'Feedback Journals'.

Our Marking and Feedback Policy ensures a consistent approach to marking throughout the school, including opportunities for children to self-assess and peer mark their learning. (See school Marking and Feedback Policy for further information.)

## Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

Assessment for learning is a key part of our approach to teaching and learning at Vallis. Staff use success criteria, peer marking and peer and self-assessment to involve children in their learning and to inform them of their next steps. Assessment for Learning opportunities are identified in planning. Marking should be against the learning objectives (topic page at the start of a unit of work) and should identify successes and areas for improvement. Effective questioning is also used to inform assessments.

## Accuracy and consistency of Judgements

Moderation is necessary to ensure accuracy and consistency of teachers' judgements about standards. Teachers will often share opinions informally with subject leaders and other colleagues to clarify 'best fit' judgements or for statutory teacher assessments. Professional Development Meetings, PPA and moderation meetings are arranged for teachers to compare judgements and agree standards. Staff at Vallis also works with colleagues across Frome and as of September 2024, will moderate with Rode and Norton Federated School, who we share a Head Teacher with to ensure that our judgements are accurate and consistent.

Staff training (staff meeting/INSET days and ECT mentoring) is arranged when there are changes to assessment processes to ensure all staff have a good understanding of assessment. Staff members attend training and update subject/assessment meetings for their subject areas to ensure they stay abreast of good practice. Feedback from this training is shared with staff so that we continue to develop and improve our practice.

## Target Setting

At the beginning and end of the academic year children's progress meetings take place. Aspirational targets indicating percentages of children expected to meet or exceed the national standards in English and Maths are set for children in Years 1 – 4. Targets for the prime areas are set in EYFS.

During pupil progress meetings, teachers are asked to evidence their judgements and are held accountable for the progress that children have made towards their targets. Before the meeting, teachers are expected to complete a detailed analysis which identifies children who are 'on track' and those who aren't so that interventions can be placed. This information is discussed during the pupil progress meeting to ensure that all children make maximum progress.

## Records

All assessment data is currently stored securely using INSIGHT tracker.

INSIGHT Online assessment documents are used as an aid to effective planning. The progress of children receiving extra support is monitored by the member of staff delivering the support.

The above records enable the class teacher to assess the progress made by each child and are an important part of the formative assessment needed for future planning. The child end-of-year report is filed on the server and is available for reference.

## Monitoring

The SLT monitor class on-line assessment data (INSIGHT) during the year. Monitoring of assessment and classroom practice will be carried out through lesson observations, book moderation and scrutiny and through pupil voice. This includes monitoring of agreed assessment arrangements defined in this policy. Feedback, with necessary actions, is then provided to staff to ensure consistency across the school.

## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Assessment plays an integral part in identifying the individual needs of all children. It enables children with special educational needs and disabilities, children who excel and children for whom English is an additional language to be given support and intervention and a differentiated curriculum which meets their needs.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all children. However, this should account for the amount of effort the child puts in as well as the outcomes achieved. For children working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to a child's starting point, and take this into account alongside the nature of child's learning difficulties.

The assessment policy at Vallis ensures that identification of these children is systematic and effective.

## Reporting to parents

Parents receive a written report during each academic year. In KS1 and KS2 this comments on the child's academic progress in the core and foundation subjects and on their skills and abilities in all areas of the curriculum. SATs results for children in 6 and teacher assessment in Years 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 are reported to parents at the end of the academic year. Also, children in Year 1 receive a notification to say whether or not they have passed the Year 1 Phonic Screening Check, as do those in Year 2 who did not pass at the end of Year 1. Parents of children in the EYFS class receive a report based on the Early Learning Goals. In addition, parents are offered the opportunity to discuss their child's report with the class teacher.

Parent/teacher consultation evenings take place twice a year, in the Autumn and Spring terms. During these meetings teachers share the children's age related attainment against national expectations, next step targets and the progress children have made to date. An Open Door policy is offered for any parents who would like to come in and have an informal discussion about their child if there are concerns.

Staff are available to discuss parents' concerns, staff can be contacted via the year group emails for Vallis, and a prompt appointment will then be made. If a member of staff has concerns over a child they will

contact the parents. Parents of children with SEND may also meet with the SENDCo and any other professionals working with them.

## Special Educational Needs

When assessment indicates a child may have Special Educational Needs or Disability, the SENDCO is informed and the child's progress is carefully monitored. Further assessment then takes place, as outlined in the SEND policy. For all children at the School Support stage of the Code of Practice, or above, an individual Education Plan will be implemented. When teachers assess a child with SEND they will draw upon any on-going formative and summative assessment. Where necessary, they will gain views from parents, the child and any external specialists.

**This policy also needs to be in line with our other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following:**

Marking and Feedback Policy, Curriculum policy and our Early Years Foundation Stage policy