



Diocese of Salisbury  
Academy Trust

*'Beyond expectations for all of God's children'*

## **TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY**

Policy Date: September 2020

Review Date: September 2023

*This policy is to be adopted by each Academy*



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## Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

*"Our vision is for the growth of thriving Christian learning communities, providing everyone with the opportunity to achieve more than they ever thought possible." DSAT Vision statement*

This policy is to ensure that teaching and learning is the best it can be, so that all our individual children can achieve beyond expectations. Assessment measures learning and informs teaching, which enables progress. Consistency in assessment practices across and within the academies ensures our expectations for achievement are high for all of our children.

Between and within our academies we have a commitment to:

- A common philosophy but at the same time a recognition that staff have different strengths, styles and approaches. This is celebrated and shared;
- Shared aims – all staff working closely together as a team;
- Continuity - our success depends upon the support and energy that we give to each other in order to work efficiently and effectively;
- Progression - we are responsible for providing guidance, support and expertise necessary for the best learning to take place;
- Collaboration – we are committed to learning from each other and willingly share our ideas and most effective practice to benefit all of our staff and children;
- Ambition – all staff are ambitious as to what can be achieved by all our children; every child has the right to access the very best learning that we can offer;
- Equality of opportunity for all our families and staff members – everyone should be treated with dignity and fairness;
- Accountability to ourselves and to each other.
- High expectations:
  - Teaching staff are expected to be knowledgeable and to deliver effective learning sequences that meet children's various needs, building on children's prior knowledge and understanding;
  - The learning environment must first and foremost support learning;
  - All staff are role models for children in terms of their expectations and behaviour;
  - Teaching should be consistent with all academy policies.

### **Mastery pedagogy**

Mastery pedagogy works on the principle that all learners, with effort, will meet expectations. It works on the premise that great teaching, based on formative assessment and particularly great questioning, is crucial. Precise assessment and teaching that closes any gaps along with reconsidering fixed notions of "ability" are all part of mastery pedagogy.

All children should be enabled to achieve a deep learning of key ideas and constructs and should

have opportunities for even deeper learning. Some learners will be able to access, within a construct, even greater challenge to deepen their thinking further. Nurturing a growth mind-set in all learners is essential, so that they all will seek to deepen their understanding and stretch their “ability”, no matter what they are already achieving. As well as offering the children a nourishing learning environment, metacognition and self-regulation will be explicitly modelled and taught through all learning opportunities, so that children internalise these learning structures for themselves.

Mastery learning is *deep* learning that sticks and can be recalled over time. It is necessary to have deep learning in order to meet the key objectives. In essence, in order to meet the objectives securely children need to have mastered them.

In demonstrating mastery learning, learners may show:

- Complete independence in using a concept, skill or knowledge
- Fluency in the application of a concept, skill or knowledge
- Ability to apply learning across subject boundaries
- Consistency in application over a period of time
- Ability to apply without reminders or pre-teaching
- Ability to explain connections with other learning
- Evidence of resilience in applying their learning
- Ability to teach to another

### **Assessment principles**

We adhere to the principles of assessment set out by the NAHT, as follows:

- 1) Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning.
- 2) Assessment is fair.
- 3) Assessment is honest.
- 4) Assessment is ambitious.
- 5) Assessment is consistent.
- 6) Assessment outcomes provide meaningful and understandable information.
- 7) Assessment feedback should inspire greater effort and a belief that, through hard work and practice, more can be achieved.

These principles are set out in full in appendix three.

### **Formative assessment – or, “responsive teaching”**

All lessons should be planned with a clear focus on what is to be learned and this should usually stem from the relevant National Curriculum objectives in the first place, including prerequisites where this is appropriate. Learning should not be an identification of tasks to be completed – rather, it should be about knowledge, understanding or skills which are applicable, generalisable and deliberately planned and sequenced to build on prior knowledge.

These objectives for learning, should be shared with the children along with criteria for success so that children understand how they can be successful in their learning. However, ongoing assessment before or within the lesson, whether this is observation, skilful questioning, dialogue or marking need to redirect the objectives if necessary, to offer further support or to deepen the child’s learning with increasing independence.

Feedback and marking should always relate to the identified learning focus and indicate clearly the next steps for improvement. Feedback at the point of learning should be prioritised, as it is at the

point of learning where it has the most impact. We use “live marking” to achieve this.

### **Summative assessment**

Children’s attainment and progress are measured at set assessment points in the school calendar and at the end of each Key Stage. The statutory assessment points are:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of Reception Year;
- Phonics screening check at Year 1 (and again at Y2 for those not meeting the standard at Y1);
- Timestable test in Year 4;
- Teacher assessment in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science at Key Stage 1 (at the end of Year 2);
- Teacher assessment in Writing and national tests in Reading, EGPS and Maths at Key Stage 2 (at the end of Year 6).

Additionally, DSAT schools all undertake a baseline assessment on entry to Reception (to be completed by the end of September).

During each school year, attainment and progress are recorded on academies’ tracking systems at the end of each term. Practice tests are undertaken twice in Year Six, with the outcomes from these recorded separately. We use a range of other standardised assessments to support progress across the Trust.

Assessment is moderated within each academy and across the Trust. Pupil progress meetings are used to set targets and track progress, identifying any necessary intervention for individuals or groups, so that outcomes for all pupils can be improved.

## Appendix 1 – Effective assessment practice

Academies should engage in regular moderation of teacher assessment. This should be continuous systematic practice, with scheduled meetings reviewing outcomes in pupil books alongside assessment tracking information. This includes a two-pronged approach:

1. Consistency of standards in books i.e. EXS is 'expected' for that point in time,
2. Consistency of judgements between subjects and teachers are standardised (as seen in the data)

Scrutinise and triangulate assessment information (data) through a rigorous process of pupil progress meetings led by HT/DHT.

Use what the pupil progress meetings flag up to prioritise whole school areas of improvement. For example: the pace of coverage in maths, knowledge "sticking" so that it can be built on throughout the year, staff needing to use assessment information (the data) more formatively and staff using their increasing familiarity of this information to plan lessons that will give them the evidence needed to tick off objectives. So, where staff have evidence for the first part of an objective but not enough evidence to mark the whole objective as achieved (particularly in maths), focus on this in the subsequent term, so that data then shows accelerated progress across the board.

Key: focus on the progress from baseline (end of previous year), but more importantly, focus on progress from prior attainment and progress from key milestones, rather than progress from July. Use the progress matrix to support this. Teachers know where the children need to get to, based on prior attainment. Pupil progress meetings examine each individual child's profile for Reading, Writing and Maths and should always begin with a priority focus on disadvantaged pupils and their achievement. In meetings, consider Quality First Teaching, interventions, barriers to learning and engagement, attendance, learning behaviours, overall behaviour and parental engagement. Explore anomalies in the data due to individual cases.

Children will be involved in dialogue regarding their own learning, and in addition, academies offer opportunities for parents to talk to teaching staff regarding the attainment and progress of their children. These consultations take place at least twice a year. The main focus for these consultations is to provide parents with information on their child's current learning and how they can support them to make further progress. Any parent can request further consultations if required. Each academy will write a report for every pupil and offer parents an opportunity to discuss this report with staff.

The Headteacher, along with core subject leaders, will report progress and attainment to the Academy Standards and Ethos Committee throughout the year and at Academy Improvement Meetings. This will be presented from the data tracking system. The academy will also be held to account through external partners as specified by the Academy Trust.

There is an expectation that all schools in the Trust will engage with Trust-wide moderation sessions, led by and for practitioners and designed to identify a measure of agreement for colleagues about the standards at which children are working. These sessions are essential in supporting and delivering a shared approach to assessment across the Trust.

## Appendix Two – underpinning principles for assessment (NAHT)

The principles, in conjunction with the design checklist that follows, will assist schools as they develop their own assessment systems. Schools will be able to review their own processes to ensure that they are underpinned by these principles and, where this is the case, determine whether the assessment system is fit for purpose.

### ***1. Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning.***

- a.** Assessment provides evidence to guide teaching and learning.
- b.** Assessment provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate and review their progress.

### ***2. Assessment is fair.***

- a.** Assessment is inclusive of all abilities.
- b.** Assessment is free from bias towards factors that are not relevant to what the assessment intends to address.

### ***3. Assessment is honest.***

- a.** Assessment outcomes are used in ways that minimise undesirable effects.
- b.** Assessment outcomes are conveyed in an open, honest and transparent way to assist pupils with their learning.
- c.** Assessment judgements are moderated by experienced professionals to ensure their accuracy.

### ***4. Assessment is ambitious.***

- a.** Assessment places achievement in context against nationally standardised criteria and expected standards.
- b.** Assessment embodies, through objective criteria, a pathway of progress and development for every child.
- c.** Assessment objectives set high expectations for learners.

### ***5. Assessment is appropriate.***

- a.** The purpose of any assessment process should be clearly stated.
- b.** Conclusions regarding pupil achievement are valid when the assessment method is appropriate (to age, to the task and to the desired feedback information).

**c.** Assessment should draw on a wide range of evidence to provide a complete picture of student achievement.

**d.** Assessment should demand no more procedures or records than are practically required to allow pupils, their parents and teachers to plan future learning.

### ***6. Assessment is consistent.***

- a.** Judgements are formed according to common principles.
- b.** The results are readily understandable by third parties.
- c.** A school's results are capable of comparison with other schools, both locally and nationally.

### ***7. Assessment outcomes provide meaningful and understandable information for:***

- a.** pupils in developing their learning
- b.** parents in supporting children with their learning;
- c.** teachers in planning teaching and learning. Assessment must provide information that justifies the time spent;
- d.** school leaders and governors in planning and allocating resources; and
- e.** government and agents of government.

### ***8. Assessment feedback should inspire greater effort and a belief that, through hard work and practice, more can be achieved.***