

# **MERSTONE SCHOOL**



## **Assessment Policy**

**Adopted: July 2017**



## MERSTONE SCHOOL

### ASSESSMENT

*At Merstone we firmly believe in identifying and addressing the needs of each individual pupil and in recognising achievement at every level of success, no matter how big or small the steps of progress.*

*We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement.*

*The diverse range of assessment techniques used at Merstone are relevant to key stage phases, and alongside recording, reporting, moderation and target setting structures, enable even the smallest step of achievement to be evidenced appropriately and celebrated.*

### RATIONALE:

- Assessment is a crucial and integral part of the teaching and learning process.
- It is a process of gathering information, enabling us to ascertain each individual pupil's understanding and skill level, monitor and evidence progress, identify next steps and inform future planning.

### PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT:

#### **WHY DO WE ASSESS?**

- To recognise and celebrate individual achievement, acknowledged and rewarded by praise, tokens, certificates and awards
- To ascertain what pupils have learnt
- To identify individual needs and intervention strategies
- To inform planning and next steps
- To support transition between key stages
- To provide school self-evaluation information to support raising standards
- To inform future yearly action plans and termly targets for pupils
- To monitor progress against targets at designated times of the year, including reporting to parents and the Local Authority
- To standardise through moderation assessment across key stages for subject leader portfolios
- To assess progress and plan appropriate intervention strategies for individual pupils
- To meet specific individual needs – learning, medical, emotional, social and sensory
- To plan for staff training needs and resources

## **CYCLE AND ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT:**

### ***WHEN, WHAT AND HOW DO WE ASSESS?***

### ***WHOLE SCHOOL PROCESSES THAT ARE IN PLACE ACROSS THE KEY PHASES:***

- Pupils are base-lined on entry to our educational setting
- Progress towards yearly action plan targets are monitored and assessed termly and reported at Annual Review
- Evidence collated for each pupil and provided for subject leader portfolios
- Internal class team moderation and subject leader for external scrutiny
- SOLAR assessments completed at least half-termly for all subjects/areas of learning in all strands recognising assessments at emerging, secure and embedded attainment levels
- Photographic evidence during lessons collated for SOLAR evidence
- PS1 to PS3 pupils' individual folders annotated with progress of interaction
- Workbooks for evidence annotated by staff
- TEACCH tasks recorded and assessed for independent work and next 'new' skill to be taught
- Provision for delivery of Speech and Language/Communication targets
- Provision for Reading interventions

### **FOUNDATION STAGE:**

- Progress trackers are completed half-termly by class teacher
- Developmental journals are completed termly and electronically recorded on SOLAR assessment
- One formal observation per half-term to include photo/work sample, descriptor, witness statement and moderation by colleague
- All 7 areas of learning are assessed
- Post-its used for initial observations and matched to Foundation Profile statements
- Children base-lined at end of Foundation Stage to transfer to key stage 1 where Performance Standards (PS) replace the Progress Tracker

### **KEY STAGE 1:**

- Pupils entered for Phonics testing or dis-applied in consultation with parents

### **KEY STAGE 2:**

- Pupil Writing evidence may be required for LA moderation

### **KEY STAGE 3:**

- New Horizons folder for tasks related to PSD, Vocational Education and Citizenship

#### **KEY STAGE 4:**

- SOLAR completed only for core subjects of English, Maths, Science, Computing and PSHE/PSD in all strands of the development walls
- Assessment through accreditation opportunities internally and externally moderated for ASDAN Transition Challenge and Personal Progress

#### **KEY STAGE 5:**

- SOLAR completed only for Computing and PSHE/PSD in all respective strands of the development walls
- Assessment through accreditation opportunities internally and externally moderated for PSD and ASDAN Towards Independence
- Post - 16 students base-lined in September Year 12 for numeracy and literacy against the Adult Curriculum for three distinct groups of learners or Entry Level and updated half-termly

**Merstone School has a separate Marking and Homework policy integral to assessment.**

‘The overriding principle of good assessment is that it should be clearly tied to its intended purpose. There are three main forms of assessment: in-school formative assessment, which is used by teachers to evaluate pupils’ knowledge and understanding on a day to day basis and to tailor teaching accordingly; in-school summative assessment, which enables schools to evaluate how much a pupil has learned at the end of a teaching period; and nationally standardised summative assessment, which is used by the Government to hold schools to account.’

Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels – September 2015.

#### **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:**

- Merstone School has adopted SOLAR assessment tool as the school electronic system for recording progress in all key phases in school
- There are personalised programmes for the Early Years (Foundation Stage Profile) and Sixth Form (Adult Curriculum)
- The school has led and developed in collaboration with other special schools ‘Development Walls’ which relate to the Performance Standards of the new curriculum and are populated with the Key Performance Indicators of each programme of study for all subjects and strands of the curriculum on SOLAR assessment
- This assessment tool for ‘Life after Levels’ underpins the broad school curriculum and has been extended to scaffold the pre-requisite content of the P-levels
- Every subject/strand has an appropriate Development Wall where progress for each Key Performance Indicator in the Performance Standard is recorded at emerging, secure or embedded level of attainment
- Progress can be captured on the iPad and evidenced electronically for each individual pupil with appropriate comments on SOLAR
- Pupil workbooks and evaluative comments from all staff demonstrate the learning journey across the curriculum

## **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:**

- Merstone School sets targets at the start of each key stage and tracks progress termly to ascertain the progress over a period of time
- Targets at end of key stages 2/3/4 include levels of progress across the key stage compared to upper quartile benchmarks and levels of progress
- Tracking and monitoring of targets inform intervention planning when necessary and appropriate breadth and personalisation of curriculum delivery

## **SCHOOL STANDARDS:**

- Merstone School leads an extended Local Authority Moderation programme which meets monthly according to a set programme of subject specific moderation
- The cross LA moderation group work together on initiatives to drive forward school improvement around assessment
- Assessment is shared with parents regularly, particularly at Annual Review to track progress over the last academic year in the core subjects: English (including reading and writing); Maths; Science; Computing and PSD/PSHE.
- Assessment influences the next steps which inform the yearly action plan targets for discussion at Annual Review of Statement of Educational Need or the Education, Health and Care Plan
- Pupils are entered as appropriate for any nationally recognised tests such as Phonics testing
- The Governing Body data scrutiny group challenge and question target setting, progress and outcomes
- The end of key phase data is summarised for access on the school website

### **Merstone School can demonstrate the progress the school have made with assessment against the Rochford Review recommendations.**

The review makes the following recommendations to government for the statutory assessment of pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests at the end of the key stages 1 and 2:

- 1. The removal of the statutory requirement to assess pupils using the P scales.*

Our development work on life after levels has created 'one system for all pupils, that is meaningful and appropriate for the pupils in question'. Development walls provide an appropriate assessment tool for those working at sensory curriculum level with a 'bridge' to subject/strand specific Key Performance Indicators from Performance Standards PS4 to PS8.

- 2. The interim pre-key stage standards for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests are made permanent and extended to include all pupils engaged in subject-specific learning.*

We believe that are assessment criteria allows us to report pre-key stage standards appropriately for our pupils with a unified language of emerging, secure and embedded. If a pupil meets the criteria at 'emerging and entry' which remain subject to consultation the language will be used where appropriate within our subject-specific curriculum to report progress.

- 3. Schools assess pupils' development in all 4 areas of need outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, but statutory assessment for pupils who are not engaged in subject-specific learning should be limited to the area of cognition and learning.*

The SEND code of practice outlines the following 4 areas of need: cognition and learning; communication and interaction; social, emotional and mental health; and sensory and /or physical. All 4 areas are already pivotal to the yearly action plan targets set at Annual Review of Statement or Education, Health and Care Plans. For those pupils able to progress with Reading, Writing and Maths, the development wall assessment tool enables breadth and balance in subject-specific learning. For those pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties the development wall assessment is modified to focus on the area of cognition and learning across the curriculum.

*4. A statutory duty to assess pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning against the following 7 aspects of cognition and learning and report this to parents and carers:*

- *Responsiveness (awareness)*
- *curiosity*
- *discovery*
- *anticipation*
- *persistence*
- *initiation*
- *investigation*

Under the area of cognition and learning the school presently records progress from Performance Standards PS 1(i) to PS3 (iii) (the bridging to subject-specific learning). This formative assessment is underpinned with evaluations on a day to day basis using the levels of engagement: encounter; awareness; responsiveness; focused attention; participation; involvement; initiated; independent and generalised.

*5. Following recommendation 4, schools should decide their own approach to making these assessments according to the curriculum they use and the needs of their pupils.*

The development walls previously described enable the development of concepts and skills that are pre-requisites for progressing onto subject-specific learning. The Key Performance Indicators within PS 3(iii) provide a scaffolded pathway to the first steps of subject specific progress.

*6. Initial teacher training (ITT) and Continuing professional development (CPD) for staff in educational settings should reflect the need for teachers to have a greater understanding of assessing pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests, including those pupils with SEND who are not engaged in subject-specific learning.*

Merstone School provides all staff with the necessary tools to accurately assess and record the progress of all learners. We work closely with training partners to ensure trainees receive a clear understanding of the assessment of pupils with SEND.

*7. Where there is demonstrable good practice in schools, those schools should actively share their expertise and practice with others. Schools in need of support should actively seek out and create links with those that can help to support them.*

Merstone School facilitates a moderation programme that is supportive but challenges judgements by sharing expertise and practice across similar schools. We also work within a network of mainstream primary and secondary partners to create further professional links.

8. *Schools should work collaboratively to develop an understanding of good practice in assessing pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests, particularly across different educational settings. Schools should support this by actively engaging in quality assurance, such as through school governance and peer review.*

The governing body scrutinise assessment termly and challenge what the data shows. Merstone School has a rigorous cycle of providing evidence for external audiences which initially involves the class/key stage team, subject leader scrutiny and senior leaders internally. For external moderation at Local Authority level the advisory service have consistently upheld our accurate judgements.

9. *There should be no requirement to submit assessment data on the 7 areas of cognition and learning to the DfE, but schools must be able to provide evidence to support a dialogue with parents and carers, inspectors, regional schools commissioners, local authorities, school governors and those engaged in peer review to ensure robust and effective accountability.*

Merstone School have systems in place for pupil-tracking information that provide a format to monitor progress effectively that is accessible to parents and carers, teachers, governors and other professionals.

10. *Further work should be done to consider the best way to support schools with assessing pupils with EAL.*

Primary need: Severe Learning Difficulty; Profound and Multiple Learning Disability or Complex needs – Autism is the overriding factor in supporting teachers to assess their pupils. Where the specialist support service can further improve provision and pupil outcomes for those pupils with EAL the school would welcome the additional input.

The Rochford Review: final report - October 2016  
Review of assessment for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests

