Northern Ireland
Curriculum

Guidance on Assessment in the Primary School

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Introduction

> **'Assessment can affect pupils' motivation to learn. It plays a crucial role in improving learning and raising standards.'**
>
> *Stiggins, 2008*

What is taught in schools is often determined by what is assessed, particularly where the assessment results are used for high stakes purposes. The nature and content of the assessments could determine the nature of teaching and learning and may limit the use of more innovative modes of teaching (Burkhardt, 1987; NCETM, 2008). Assessment is also a crucial aspect in the implementation of the key competences (European Commission, 2012b).

Assessment is a key professional competency (GTCNI, 2011) that requires teachers to:

- use a range of assessment strategies to assess pupils' learning;
- appreciate its uses and limitations;
- make evidence-based assessment against relevant criteria;
- involve pupils in assessing their learning and performance;
- assess pupil performance against relevant benchmarking data;
- understand the relationship between assessment, setting pupil targets and progression;
- use assessment information to make teaching more effective; and
- collaborate with others to make assessment more effective at the classroom and whole-school level.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum sets out a flexible framework of knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities, to prepare young people for a rapidly changing world. It aims to:

> **'empower young people to develop their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.'**
>
> *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary, 2007*

Assessment is an integral part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. It must reflect curriculum requirements to provide constructive, motivating and challenging learning experiences. This enables young people to gauge their own progress and potential and take informed action towards ongoing improvement. Teachers can use a variety of assessment techniques as part of an integrated approach to teaching, learning, planning and assessment. When planning assessment, they should ensure that it is purposeful and fits in well with the work they are assessing.

Aims

The teacher's role is central to ensuring quality assessment within schools (Wyatt-Smith et al., 2010). Teachers and schools must have sound knowledge of assessment and the professional skills to develop and apply this in practice (GTCNI, 2011). Webb defines assessment literacy as:

> **'knowledge about how to assess what students know and can do, interpret the results of these assessments, and apply these results to improve student learning and program effectiveness'**
>
> *Webb, 2002*

Improving assessment literacy is essential for developing teachers' competency to assess pupils' learning. This will help them to be more consistent and understanding in their professional judgements.

This guidance supports principals, vice-principals, assessment and Key Stage co-ordinators, and teachers in planning for assessment at individual pupil, class, and whole-school level and at the end of each phase: Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

This guidance aims to encourage and promote:

- effective and manageable assessment planning, marking, judgements and standard-setting;
- pupils' more active involvement in peer and self-assessment, including setting and reviewing their own learning targets and identifying areas for development;
- the constructive use of feedback to improve learning;
- the effective use of assessment data to inform teaching and learning for tracking progress and to promote improvement (DENI, 2009); and
- the development of coherent and manageable assessment practices that promote equity and fairness for all individuals and groups and reflect the Northern Ireland Curriculum and school improvement strategies (ibid.).

This guidance focuses on continuing professional development connected with school Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) programmes (Regional Training Unit (RTU, 2005)). This may help teachers to become more competent practitioners of quality assessment.

SECTION
01

What is Assessment?

What Is Assessment?

For the purposes of this guidance, we define assessment as the systematic collection, interpretation and use of information to give a deeper appreciation of what pupils know and understand, their skills and personal capabilities, and what their learning experiences enable them to do.

Principles of Assessment

The following five principles underpin quality assessment. It should:

- be complementary to and supportive of learning;
- be valid and reliable;
- be fit for purpose and manageable;
- support teachers' professional judgement; and
- support accountability.

The Purposes of Assessment

Assessment can serve different purposes according to how we use the information it provides (Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP), 2010). For more information, please refer to Appendix 2: The Big Picture of Assessment and Reporting.

Assessment has four main purposes:

1. Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment identifies strengths and areas for improvement and informs the next steps. It normally takes place at the beginning of a learning programme. It involves the teacher working closely with the pupil to identify their strengths and learning needs. Teachers identify the nature of a pupil's learning difficulties and use this information to plan interventions to address the issues discovered. They should then share this information with the pupil to plan the next steps to improve their learning.

2. Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning or AfL)

Formative assessment, often referred to as Assessment for Learning (AfL), is part of the everyday teaching and learning process. Teachers gather evidence about a pupil's learning, for example by observing, listening, questioning, discussing and reviewing pupil work. They can then use this evidence to:

- identify progress and gaps in learning (including individual support needs);
- set learning goals and success criteria; and
- provide feedback to pupils.

> **'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 Reform Group (ARG), 2002*

Teachers use AfL to enable pupils to build on their learning. AfL focuses on how pupils can improve their learning. The continuous process of dialogue and interaction between teachers, pupils and peers is an essential part of AfL. It involves peer and self-assessment (ARG, 2008; Black and Wiliam, 2009). Ten guiding principles underpin AfL. It should:

- be part of effective planning;
- focus on how pupils learn;
- be central to classroom practice;
- be a key professional skill;
- be sensitive and constructive;
- foster motivation;
- promote understanding of goals and criteria;
- help learners know how to improve;
- develop the capacity for self-assessment; and
- recognise all educational achievement.

ARG, 2002

Five key AfL strategies support these ten principles in classroom practice:

- **Focus on learning** by sharing learning intentions and success criteria with pupils.
- **Effective questioning** encourages pupils to think about their learning.
- **Quality formative feedback** allows teachers to identify pupils' achievements, any gaps in their learning, and areas for further work (what learners have done well and what they should to do to perform better).
- **Scaffolding reflection** gives pupils time to reflect on their learning, allowing them to think about what and how they are learning and to adapt their approaches, if necessary, to achieve their goals.
- **Teacher reflection** on effectiveness of teaching and learning allows teachers to verify what their pupils have learned. This helps them decide what they may need to teach again in a different way, or how to focus future teaching plans.

Assessment for Learning: A Practical Guide CCEA, 2009

3. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment gives pupils, parents and teachers valuable information about a pupil's overall performance at a specific point in their learning. It provides information about a pupil's progress in subject knowledge, understanding and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPC).

Summative assessment in the primary school can occur at different intervals such as weekly, on completion of a topic of work, at the end of each term, or at the end of the year. The information it gives indicates pupil progress and achievement in the knowledge and skills in a particular area of learning, sometimes in grade-related or numerical terms. Short summative assessments can be relevant and valid when they are part of a wider range of assessment methods used to form a holistic picture of each pupil's achievements.

Summative assessment should:

- take account of all the objectives or outcomes of the programme of study/ topic (this is why summative tests of part of the programme of study are not necessarily valid);
- make use of several short assessments rather than the 'big test' at the end of the year;
- take account of formative assessments throughout the year, or at the very least in the last term;
- be formative in its own right;
- provide feedback on what learners did or did not do well; and
- provide teachers with insights into what pupils have and have not learned in order to adjust and refine their teaching.

Teachers can use this information to inform the next steps in their planning or to highlight gaps in pupil knowledge and identify areas that they may need to re-emphasise. The information gathered from summative assessment can also be analysed at whole-school level for benchmarking and target setting.

4. Evaluative Assessment

The main purpose of evaluative assessment is to ensure that there is appropriate accountability at all levels for the performance of our school system (CCEA, 2011).

Evaluative assessment informs curriculum planning and provides information for monitoring and accountability. For evaluative purposes, the Department of Education requires information on end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessment outcomes for the Cross-Curricular Skills. Schools can use this data for school development and action planning. Teachers can also use this data to set class targets to improve specific pupil outcomes.

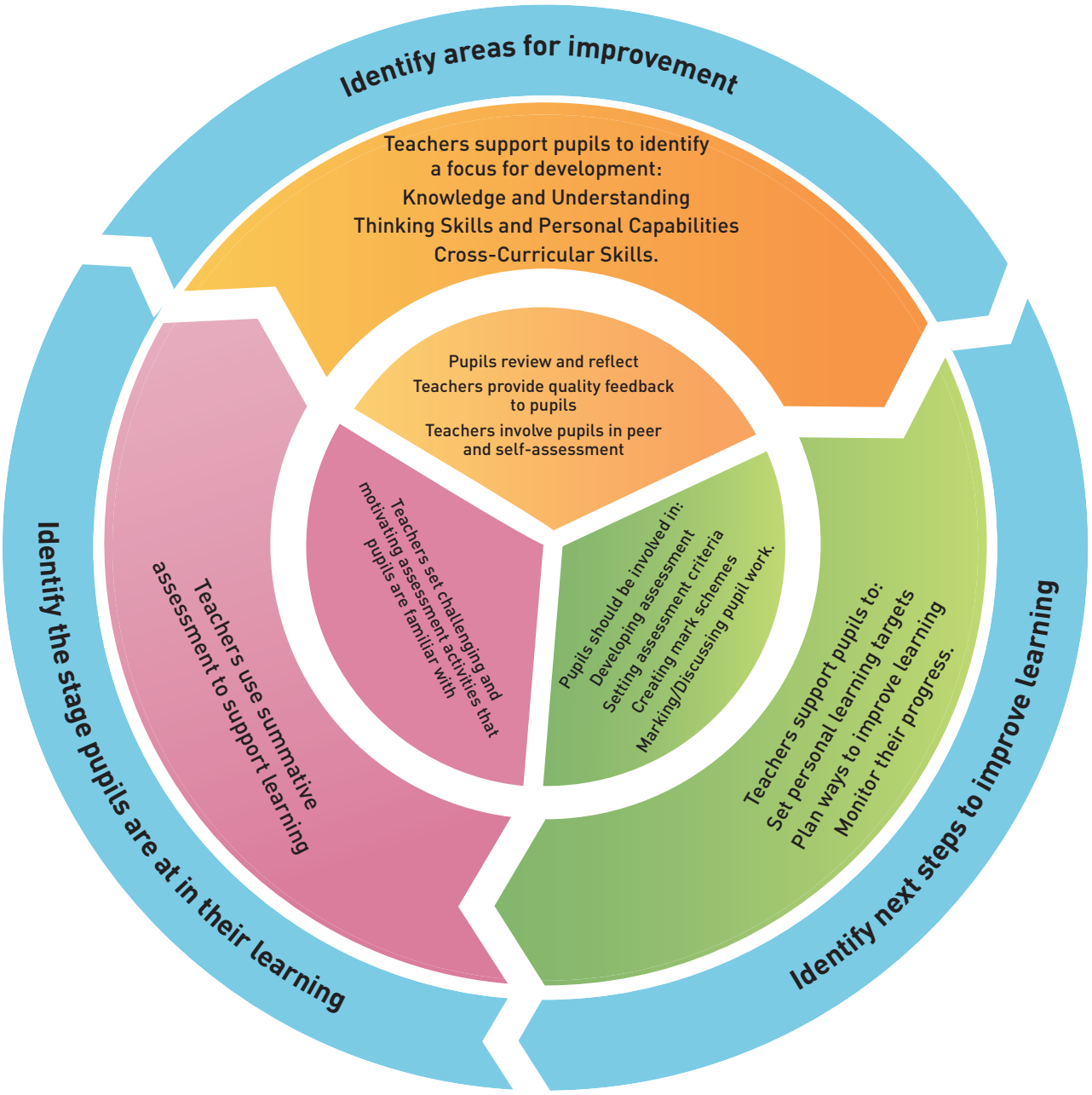
The Relationship between Formative and Summative Assessment

Formative assessment and summative assessment have been seen as serving two separate purposes. Formative assessment focuses on improving learning. Summative assessment summarises learning at the end of a period of study. Recently, however, formative and summative assessments have been recognised as interrelated and complementary. They can serve both purposes, depending on how teachers use assessment information and feedback (Black et al., 2003; Harlen, 2005; Taras, 2005). Research suggests that teachers could make better use of assessment by taking this interrelationship into account (ARG, 2008).

> **'The information from formative assessment, supplemented by valid class tests or tasks, helps to ensure dependable summative assessment'**
>
> *Harlen, 2005*

Teachers can use the information generated from summative assessments as feedback to support and help pupils to improve their learning. Teachers should 'report not only the pupils' final performance, but also what processes pupils need to improve in order to raise their performance' (Harlen, 2005).

Figure 1
Using summative assessment to improve learning



Research suggests (Black et al., 2003; Black, 2010; Black, 2011; Harlen, 2005) that teachers should make greater use of summative assessment to support learning by:

- giving pupils opportunities to review their work before the assessment, to become familiar with the type of assessment set and to identify areas of insecure understanding;
- involving pupils in developing assessments and setting assessment criteria and mark schemes to help them to develop their understanding of assessment and to focus on areas for improvement;
- involving pupils in marking and discussing their assessment performance, including the use of peer and self-evaluation; and
- giving pupils quality feedback, focusing on their performance and how they can improve.

Equal Opportunities in Assessment Activities

The terms 'equity and fairness are often used interchangeably' (Stobart, 2005). These terms refer to the idea that assessment should be inclusive and provide all pupils with equal opportunities to demonstrate their performance and achievements (ibid.). An equitable or fair school assessment system is one that is free from bias and does not disadvantage pupils. A fair assessment should also be open and transparent to all staff, pupils and parents. This is important for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and newcomer pupils attending mainstream primary schools in Northern Ireland. It is also essential that schools' assessment systems are free from systemic bias that would disadvantage pupils. This is in accordance with Department of Education School Improvement Policy (DENI, 2009).

Validity and Reliability

Validity is the extent to which an assessment provides a measure of what it was intended to assess. A valid assessment assesses essential subject knowledge, understanding and skills as set out in the minimum requirements and outcomes of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Reliability is the extent to which we can trust that an assessment will give consistent information on a pupil's progress. For teacher-based assessment to be reliable, schools need to ensure that the variation in the standards that different teachers apply and any potentially biased judgments are minimised. This requires professional dialogue by teachers and internal standardisation in year groups (where applicable) across all three phases and throughout the whole school, as appropriate.

SECTION
02

Developing Quality Assessment Policy and Planning at Whole-School Level

Developing Quality Assessment Policy and Planning at Whole-School Level

Schools need to plan and develop assessment policy at whole-school level, taking into account relevant educational policies and guidance such as *Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement, Together Towards Improvement: A Process of Self-Evaluation,* and *Count Read: Succeed A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy.* They should review their assessment policy and practice as part of their self-evaluation and prioritise areas for improvement in their school development plan. Schools need to ensure that they meet statutory assessment requirements and promote a cross-curricular approach to assessing the Areas of Learning and the skills and capabilities. They need to ensure that there is continuity and progression within and across each phase of the primary school.

Schools should review their assessment policy, along with all school policies, on a regular basis to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful.

In the primary school all assessment is teacher-based. The assessment co-ordinator should manage and lead all assessment matters and undertake consultation, where and when appropriate, on assessment with teaching staff, classroom assistants, school governors, parents and pupils (DENI, 2010). All teachers, across each phase of the primary school, should be involved in collaborative working, professional discussion, and sharing assessment practice. This will build their capacity for contributing to quality assessment.

The Role of the Assessment Co-ordinator in the Primary School

One member of the teaching staff, usually a member of the senior management team (SMT), should take on the role of assessment co-ordinator, with responsibility for overseeing whole-school assessment.

This role will involve:

- evaluating school assessment policy and practice and identifying areas for improvement as part of the school development plan;
- identifying staff training needs in assessment;
- leading school development in assessment;
- leading In Service Training (INSET) for continued professional development for teachers in assessment;
- liaising with the Area of Learning and Key Stage co-ordinators;
- establishing clear, effective communication processes to keep teachers, Key Stage and the Area of Learning co-ordinators, SMT, the principal, and the Board of Governors informed; and
- managing day-to-day issues related to assessment.

Assessment co-ordinators should involve pupils in the assessment development process. This helps to ensure that they are more actively engaged in the classroom assessment processes. The school should also inform parents of the assessment arrangements to help them understand how their child's progress is measured, so that school reports are more meaningful.

Effective whole-school planning will help to ensure that assessment is:

- manageable;
- appropriately aligned with the core business of teaching and learning (DENI, 2011); and
- used to monitor progression in:
  - Knowledge and Understanding;
  - Other Skills (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities);
  - the Cross-Curricular Skills (CCS) of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT; and
  - Areas of Learning.

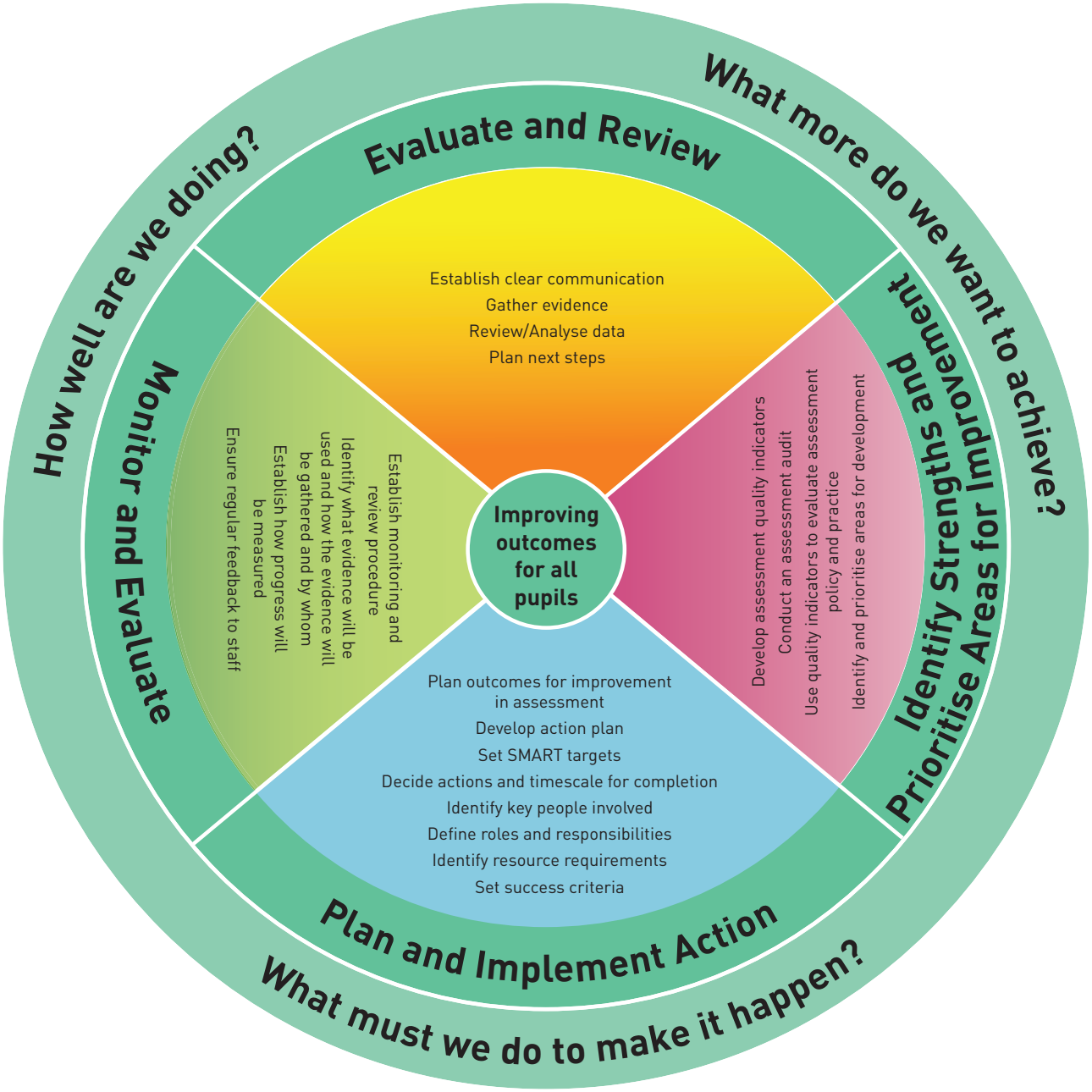
Assessment Evaluation and Review

At the start of the development process, under the guidance of the assessment co-ordinator, schools should review their current assessment policy and practice to identify areas for improvement. It is important to involve all teachers in this process and to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the purpose of the review. The school should consider a range of qualitative and quantitative data (DENI, 2010) including:

- relevant school policy documents;
- class schemes of work for Areas of Learning;
- guidance materials;
- assessment resources; and
- pupil information on progress and performance (including samples of pupil work).

The review may include gathering evidence from pupil, teacher and parent questionnaires and/or interviews to obtain views on assessment. It should also take into account other educational policy and guidance.

Figure 2
Assessment planning



Audit of Assessment Practice

The assessment co-ordinator should lead sessions to identify pupils' strengths and areas for improvement in assessment. Schools should conduct an audit of their assessment practice as part of their ongoing school self-evaluation process. They may wish to consider:

- teacher views on the manageability of current processes;
- the range of assessment approaches being used across classes/phases;
- the coherence and consistency of approaches;
- pupil and parent information and involvement;
- equity and fairness;
- the quality and frequency of continuing professional development; and
- evaluating the impact of current assessment practices on learner motivation and improvement.

The results of this evaluation will identify areas for improvement. Schools may find the Section 3.2, School Self-Evaluation of Assessment Practices, in our *Guide to Assessment* (CCEA, 2011) a useful starting point for professional discussion.

Prioritise Areas for Improvement

Using the information collated from the audit, schools should set manageable priorities to improve assessment. These should take into account other school improvement targets, including those for literacy and numeracy (DENI, 2010). Schools should consider:

- how to build on their strengths in assessment;
- how to achieve improvements in assessment; and
- what resources they will need to help to achieve improvements.

Schools will also need to plan how they are going to monitor their assessment policy and practice and how it improves learning outcomes. This should be a key focus of their ongoing self-evaluation process (DENI, 2010).

Statutory Assessment Requirements

The statutory assessment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is teacher-based. Schools must assess and report on each pupil in each school year by the end of the summer term. Reports should include the results of assessment in:

- each of the Areas of Learning;
- the Cross-Curricular Skills; and
- Other Skills (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities).

At the end of each Key Stage, teachers assign a level to pupils in each of the Cross-Curricular Skills and these levels are reported to parents.

From 2012/2013, schools must use the Levels of Progression to assess and report on pupils' achievement in Communication, Using Mathematics and, from 2013/2014, Using ICT.

The Department of Education has delegated responsibility to schools for assessing and reporting on subject strands/Areas of Learning and the Other Skills (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities). This allows teachers the flexibility to develop assessments that meet their pupils' needs and to support progression in the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT.

Developing and Assessing Cross-Curricular Skills

Through careful planning, teachers should ensure that pupils have opportunities across the curriculum in all Areas of Learning to acquire and develop the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT.

We recommend an integrated approach to developing these skills alongside Area of Learning knowledge and understanding and the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, taking into account Department of Education strategy on literacy and numeracy.

Depending on the Key Stage and the level the pupils are working at, teachers should set assessment opportunities in both familiar (and when appropriate) unfamiliar contexts. This allows pupils to:

- apply their learning in/across all Areas of Learning;
- demonstrate the breadth and depth of their knowledge and understanding; and
- show the range of Cross-Curricular Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities that they have developed.

Throughout the primary school, teachers should plan a cohesive range of assessment approaches across the curriculum to build up a comprehensive picture of each pupil's progress.

SECTION
03

Developing Quality Assessment Approaches in Primary Schools

Developing Quality Assessment Approaches in Primary Schools

> **'Children learn best when learning is connected'**
>
> *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary, CCEA, 2007*

Consistency across all phases of the primary school is necessary, especially during the transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. All teachers in the school should work together to ensure that the progression from one phase to the next is clearly defined. Through careful planning across the curriculum, pupils should have opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding in meaningful contexts to develop the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT. Alongside developing these skills pupils should have opportunities to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

Teachers should provide opportunities across the whole curriculum for pupils to think and do for themselves to develop these skills and capabilities. The 'Plan, Do, Review' process promotes and incorporates these skills.

Teachers throughout the primary school should give pupils a range of challenging assessment opportunities across all curricular areas. They should use a variety of assessment approaches that allow pupils to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. Teachers should provide opportunities for pupils to be assessed as individuals, when working with a partner, and as part of a group. Using a single method of assessment is unlikely to give a comprehensive, or indeed adequate, profile of a pupil's learning. Teachers should use a broad range of assessment approaches, for example:

- effective questioning;
- teacher observation;
- peer and self-assessment;
- assessment activities; and
- CCEA Assessment Tasks.

Effective Questioning

This should be an integral part of good assessment practice. Effective questioning has two main purposes, it:

- helps teachers with assessment; and
- encourages pupils to develop their communication skills, through listening and responding.

Teachers can encourage pupils to use thinking skills to inform their answers. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils should build on and develop their experiences from Foundation Stage. Teachers should encourage pupils to think and ask meaningful questions to develop their understanding. They should create a safe learning environment where pupils feel affirmed. They could use questioning strategies to enable pupils to:

- become effective learners;
- take risks; and
- analyse their mistakes.

For further information on effective questioning, see *AfL: A Practical Guide*.

Teacher Observation

Over time, teachers should ensure that they have opportunities to assess each pupil individually, with a partner, and as part of a group, keeping a record of evidence. Throughout all assessments, teachers should build a holistic picture of each pupil and not just observe the pupil in one specific area.

In each year group and throughout all curriculum areas, observation should be a natural part of teacher assessment. This can be formal, where teachers use a pro-forma to record specific aspects of what they are assessing, or less formal where observation of shorter activities could be recorded informally for teachers to reflect on.

In the Foundation Stage, observation should be a common approach to assessment. As assessment in Key Stages 1 and 2 becomes more activity-based, teachers should also plan some observation of pupils as part of the assessment. As part of their assessment policy, schools will need to have an agreed pro-forma for recording these observations. This should include:

- the date and time of the observation;
- who was observed; and
- the activity being observed and its duration.

Teachers could record their observations in a notebook or use photographs, videos or audio recordings as evidence. Observation used for assessment can be both formative and summative. It can provide evidence to confirm to the teacher what the pupil can do. It should also inform the teacher about the pupil's learning and what their future needs may be.

Peer and Self-Assessment

> **'Along with other assessment methods, peer and self-assessment, should be an integral part of a whole-school approach to developing quality assessment practice in the classroom'**
>
> *Chappuis and Stiggins, 2008*

Teachers should foster a supportive classroom culture to encourage their pupils to engage in a range of peer and self-assessment strategies. They will need to model the process for pupils and encourage them in their reflection. Teachers should encourage their pupils to reflect on what they have learned and how they learned it. In Foundation Stage, teachers can introduce self-assessment by providing a simple colouring chart for pupils to fill in at the end of a teaching and learning activity. At first this could take the form of 'traffic lights' or a 'smiley face'. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teachers may develop questions that their pupils should ask themselves. Teachers should encourage their pupils to discuss these questions with a partner who has been designated this role. This should help pupils to identify gaps in their learning, and enable them to be involved in setting targets and identifying the next steps to improve their learning.

Peer assessment involves pupils assessing each other's work and giving constructive feedback. Self-assessment involves pupils making judgements about their own learning and achievement and deciding how to progress in their learning. Teachers should plan and provide opportunities and encourage pupils to review and evaluate their own work to help them understand how to make improvements. They can do this by modelling a feedback session and giving pupils guidance or a pro-forma based on the learning outcomes to enable them to give their peers constructive feedback.

Peer and self-assessment also gives pupils opportunities to celebrate their successes. Pupils can identify peers' work that they consider worthy of praise. They could celebrate this as part of a circle-time activity. Teachers could use circle-time to introduce the notion of peer and self-assessment and using positive language, as well as a way to celebrate success.

Other Assessments Used in Primary Schools

The computer-based Northern Ireland Literacy Assessment (NILA) and the Northern Ireland Numeracy Assessment (NINA) are not mandatory in 2013/14, although they are available to schools who wish to use them and participate in a Computer-Based Assessment (CBA) Pilot.

The Department of Education does expect schools to continue to carry out diagnostic assessment using an assessment, or assessments, of their choice. The results of this assessment should be used as a basis for engagement with each pupil's parent/guardian.

For the most up-to-date information, please visit www.nicurriculum.org.uk and/or www.deni.gov.uk

Schools may choose to use a variety of standardised tests, both written and computer-based, as part of their planned assessment arrangements. Schools should plan a suitable time of year for standardised testing. Early in the year schools can use this as a diagnostic assessment to help identify strengths and weaknesses and therefore priorities for planning teaching and learning activities. If used at the end of the year standardised testing can become summative.

Individual teachers and schools should use the data that standardised testing gathers to inform their planning for:

- teaching and learning;
- identifying weaknesses in literacy and numeracy; and
- measuring pupil progress.

Schools should use a range of assessment throughout the year to inform planning, teaching and learning and to measure the progress of individual pupils, classes, and the whole school.

Tests

Short tests when used appropriately can be a useful indicator of a pupil's knowledge and understanding.

Progression in Learning

Progression in teaching, learning and assessment is an iterative process. Teachers should give pupils tasks in increasingly difficult contexts across all Areas of Learning with a progressively challenging range of information and concepts. Progression in learning is about pupils:

- knowing and understanding more – in quantity, breadth and depth;
- thinking more – researching, questioning, breaking ideas apart and piecing information together;
- communicating better – structuring responses in clearer and better ways; and
- becoming more capable – managing their own learning and working with others.

To make real progress, pupils need:

- clear development in all of aspects of learning;
- the interest and motivation to learn;
- the confidence to try, struggle and even fail; and
- the ability to learn from experience.

Therefore careful planning is essential for teaching and learning across the curriculum and assessment should be complementary and aid the progression of the pupils.

Marking Pupil Work

As part of their assessment policy, schools should have a marking policy that all teachers have agreed and to which they should refer. This should ensure consistency in marking across the three phases in the primary school.

The marking policy could require teachers to:

- mark pupil work on a regular basis;
- provide constructive feedback in an agreed form;
- provide comments with reference to learning intentions; and
- suggest how to make improvements.

Teachers need to recognise the breadth, depth and quality expected of pupils' work in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities in the primary school. They should also encourage pupils to self-correct. For further information, see *AfL: A Practical Guide* (CCEA, 2009).

There should be opportunities for all staff to work together with the Areas of Learning co-ordinators, to ensure that there is progression across all three phases in the primary school. The Areas of Learning co-ordinators should ensure that there is a shared understanding and expectation among all staff.

Individual teachers may wish to assess pupil achievement in Areas of Learning at the end of a topic or through medium-term planning. The teacher could identify the key learning objectives from the topic and assess by means of observation, short test, specific task or evidence from pupil work if they have met the criteria. There may also be opportunities for pupils to self-assess.

Opportunities in the Areas of Learning could also be identified for an assessment activity for one of the Cross-Curricular Skills.

SECTION

04

The Areas of Learning and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

The Areas of Learning and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

> **'Although the Areas of Learning are set out separately teachers should, where appropriate, integrate learning across the six areas to make relevant connections for children.'**
>
> *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary (CCEA, 2007), page 2*

Assessment of the Areas of Learning is delegated to schools. (See Appendix 2.)

At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society. Children come to school with experiences from home, and many also have experience of nursery or other pre-school provision. Already they have rich experiences that teachers could build on when beginning to plan.

In the primary school, through opportunities to engage in active learning activities across the curriculum, pupils should be able to develop their skills and experience success in learning.

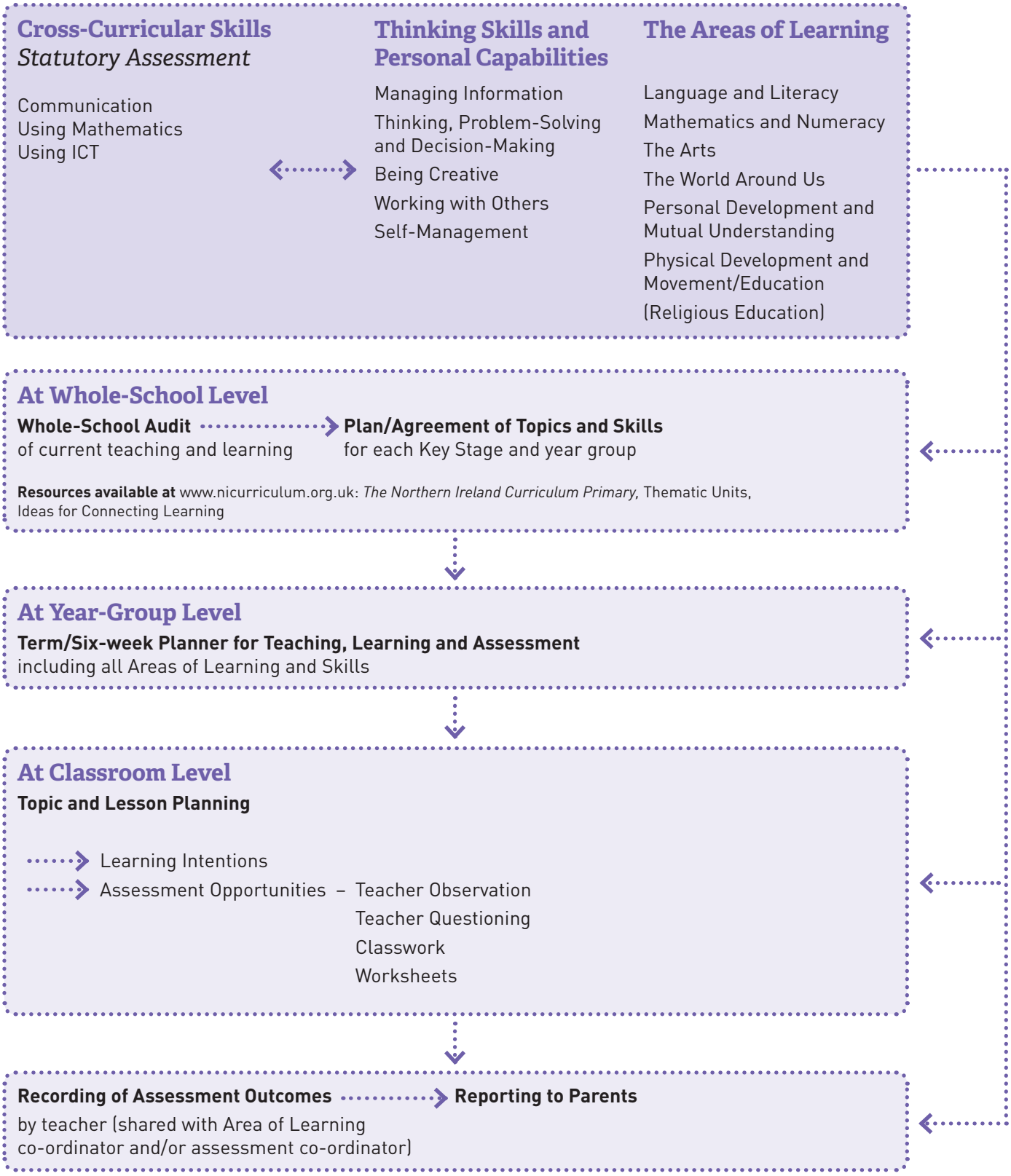
The grids in this section show the progression through the three phases in the primary school. These are not schemes of work, nor are they a checklist. Rather, they are a brief summary of the expected skills that pupils should be demonstrating throughout each stage. For full details, see *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007), available online at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Teachers may wish to use the grids in this section as a framework to help with their planning for progression in assessment activities, taking into account the different forms of assessment mentioned in Sections 2 and 3.

Whole-school planning is essential to ensure that all pupils are being provided with a broad and balanced curriculum with relevant depth. A whole-school audit may be necessary to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. For example, this could involve teachers completing a simple questionnaire or table drawn up by the Areas of Learning co-ordinators to identify topics covered in each year group. Each co-ordinator would collate all responses, highlight any gaps, and identify which year group could best address them.

It is important that all staff agree what content from each of the Areas of Learning pupils will cover throughout the school and in each year group. Teachers may find the Thematic Units and Ideas for Connecting Learning, available in print and online at www.nicurriculum.org.uk, a useful starting point for this.

Figure 3
Integrating Assessment into Whole School Planning



Each class teacher should tailor the skills that they need to cover at the appropriate level to meet the needs of their pupils. Planning for teaching and learning should identify clear learning intentions, specifying the knowledge that pupils should acquire in each area. The teacher could also indicate in this planning if an assessment activity was to be carried out and the form this would take. Discussion with pupils should take place to negotiate the success criteria.

For example, teachers might plan to observe a particular class/group activity or plan an assessment activity to allow pupils to demonstrate a Cross-Curricular Skill, or include a piece of work that allows them to apply what they have learned. Whichever type of assessment teachers choose to use, it should be manageable for them and meaningful for the pupils.

Throughout the year, teachers will use a variety of approaches to assess pupils' progress and record the assessment outcomes. This should help them build up a holistic picture of each pupil. They may also need to share the outcomes with the school's Areas of Learning co-ordinators and/or assessment co-ordinator.

The assessment outcomes will then be reported to parents in each pupil's Annual Report. This will include an explanation of the topic(s) studied, the interest that the pupil has shown in this Area of Learning, and any special ways in which they may have contributed to the class activities.

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

In Foundation Stage, pupils work in familiar circumstances on tasks that are structured and only require a small number of stages and features. During this time they should be given some opportunities to move in the direction of independence.

In Key Stage 1, pupils should have increasing opportunities to work independently. They should begin to take initiatives in tasks which are becoming more challenging and have more features.

In Key Stage 2, pupils should be given opportunities to demonstrate more independence and consistency in their work, increasingly making judgements in unfamiliar settings.

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities	Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
	Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
Managing Information	• work with a focus, asking and responding to questions to clarify the task; • select, with help, information from materials and resources provided and suggest ways to obtain information; • follow directions in relation to a task; • begin to plan; • identify and use simple methods to record information;	• ask more focused questions about the task, clarifying purpose and what needs to be done; • recognise where similar tasks have been done in the past; • use their own and others' ideas to identify, locate and select various sources of information; • set goals for their work, break tasks into smaller parts and plan the next steps; • record information in a variety of formats; • begin to identify audience and purpose when communicating;	• be able to ask deeper and wider questions to clarify the task, to plan and to set goals; • begin to challenge conventions and assumptions; • be able to classify, compare and evaluate information and to select the most appropriate methods for the particular task; • develop methods for collating and recording information and monitoring progress on a task; • have a sense of audience and purpose;
Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision Making	• show their ability to memorise by recalling and restructuring experiences and stories; • make close observations and provide descriptions of what they notice; • show the ability to sequence and order events and information, and to see wholes and parts; • identify and name objects and events as same/different, and sort and put objects into groups; • make simple predictions and see possibilities; • give opinions and reasons; • ask different types of questions;	• show their understanding by organising and summarising; • sequence, order and rank along different dimensions; • identify similarities and differences by making simple comparisons and connections; • begin to test predictions and to look for evidence; • make decisions and generate options; • suggest possible solutions to problems; • be systematic and work through the stages in a task; • explain their methods and opinions, and the reasons for choices and actions; • recognise the differences between *why, what, where, when* and *how* questions;	• show the ability to use memory strategies to deepen understanding and comprehension; • identify and order patterns and relationships through a range of strategies such as grouping, classifying and reclassifying, comparing and contrasting; • make and test predictions, examine evidence and make links between possible causes and effects; • discriminate between fact and opinion and question the reliability of evidence; • explain and justify methods, opinions and conclusions; • understand more than one point of view; • examine options and weigh up pros and cons; • try alternative problem-solving solutions and approaches; • use different types of questions systematically and with purpose;

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities	Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
	Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
Being Creative	• be curious and ask questions about the world around them, using all the senses to explore and respond to stimuli; • talk about their memories and experiences; • play for pleasure and as a form of creative expression; • show excitement, enjoyment and surprise in learning; • be willing to take on new challenges; • experiment with ideas through writing, drawing, mark making and model making;	• show curiosity when approaching new tasks and challenges; • have experiences with all the senses; • listen to and share ideas and experiences; • generate as many ideas and options as possible, building and combining ideas; • take time to use imagination for enjoyment; • enjoy the unexpected, unusual and surprising; • experiment and investigate real life issues;	• pose questions that do not have straightforward answers, seek out problems to solve and challenge the routine method; • see opportunities in mistakes and failures; • use all the senses to stimulate and contribute to ideas; • experiment with different modes of thinking (for example visualisation); • learn from and build on their own and others' ideas and experiences; • value other people's ideas; • experiment with objects and ideas in a playful way; • make ideas real by experimenting with different designs, actions and outcomes; • begin to develop their own value judgements about the merits of their work;
Working with Others	• be willing to join in; • learn to work and play co-operatively; • develop routines of listening, turn-taking, sharing, co-operating and reaching agreement; • be able to learn from demonstration and modelling; • be aware of how their actions can affect others; • learn to behave and to use words to suit different purposes; • develop confidence in being with adults and other pupils in a variety of contexts;	• develop further the habits of collaborative learning; • become more adept at turn-taking, sharing and co-operating when working in a group or team; • decide what needs to be done in a group and take responsibility for aspects of the work; • show the ability to learn from shared and modelled activities; • adapt behaviour and language to suit different situations; • show fairness to others; • recognise and respect other people's feelings and ideas;	• become more independent in their social and interpersonal skills; • show that they can work in different roles in a group and take responsibility for appropriate tasks; • be willing to help others with their learning; • understand and learn to respond to feedback; • work with their peers to reach agreements and begin to manage disagreements;
Self-Management	• talk about what they are doing and what they have learned; • develop the ability to focus, sustain attention and persist with tasks; • develop awareness of emotions about learning, their likes and dislikes; • be able to make choices and decisions; and • ask an adult or friend for help.	• check that they are achieving their purpose by talking about what they are learning, how the work was carried out and some aspect that might be improved; • check their work routinely for accuracy and precision; • persist with tasks until an appropriate endpoint, with teacher prompting; • seek help from other people; • work towards personal targets identified by the teacher; and • develop an awareness of what they enjoy and what they find difficult, their personal strengths and limitations.	• evaluate what they have learned and compare their approaches with others; • make links between their learning in different contexts; • become self-directed by working on their own or with a group; • learn ways to manage their own time; • seek help from a variety of sources; • work towards personal targets identified by themselves or jointly with the teacher; and • be more confident in their knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007) pages 8–9.
See also our *Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities* guidance booklet and other resources on Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities available at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Language and Literacy

Children come to school with language that has been developed at home and in many cases a nursery or pre-school setting. In Foundation Stage, this oral language and listening is developed to enable pupils to begin to interact effectively in the world. Oral language is developed to include reading and writing, which should be integrated throughout the curriculum.

In Key Stage 1, these skills are further developed to help pupils to express themselves and communicate confidently across the curriculum. They will develop their written vocabulary, be introduced to different genres in writing, and should be encouraged to present their ideas clearly. Pupils will further develop their strategies in reading, engaging with and choosing books for specific purposes.

In Key Stage 2, pupils should be able to communicate effectively with both peers and adults. They should recognise differences in spoken and written language and be able to write with clarity for different audiences and purposes. They should be able to read confidently and analyse a range of different texts.

Although some of the same wording appears in the statements for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 below, there are of course opportunities for progression within these. The text in brackets illustrates some ideas that teachers may find useful; please note that these are examples only.

Talking and Listening

Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• express themselves with increasing clarity and confidence, using a growing vocabulary and more complex sentence structure (for example to speak clearly and be understood);	• express themselves with growing clarity and confidence, using a personal vocabulary and a recognisable sentence structure (for example thinking about the tone of voice they use in different situations);	• engage the interest of the audience by using vocabulary, register of language and detail appropriately to present ideas and achieve effects;
• understand and use social conventions in conversations and pupil initiated interactions; • initiate and sustain conversations with adults and peers in the classroom (for example understanding about turn taking in conversations);	• understand and use social conventions in conversations and pupil initiated interactions (for example developing their use of syntax);	• recognise the different uses of formal and informal language and dialect;
• retell stories, events or personal experiences in sequence with reasonable detail (for example retelling simple stories with some prompting); • answer questions to give information and demonstrate understanding;	• retell stories, events or personal experiences in sequence with reasonable detail (for example retelling or sequencing simple stories without prompting);	• retell stories, events and experience, keeping to the point and adapting and structuring contributions logically to suit the needs of the audience and purpose;
• ask questions to find information or seek an explanation;	• communicate ideas and feelings in simple activities;	• work co-operatively and communicate effectively with others in a variety of more complex activities;
• offer reasons to support opinions given (beginning to understand the 'whys' of something they think);	• offer reasons to support opinions given (for example to back up their feelings and thoughts);	• collaborate with others, explaining and justifying views and opinions;
• listen with increasing attentiveness and for longer periods of time (for example listening to a stimulus such as a piece of music, a nursery rhyme or a story and becoming involved with it); and	• listen attentively for reasonable periods of time (for example engaging with an activity and extracting the main points); and	• listen with concentration and ask questions to develop understanding; and
• listen to and carry out increasingly complex instructions (for example following a simple information-carrying word instruction).	• listen to and carry out two or three part instructions (for example listening to another person and acting on the necessary information).	• listen to, clarify and carry out complex instructions.

Reading

Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• understand that words are made up of sounds and syllables and that sounds are represented by letters (phoneme/ grapheme awareness);		
• recognise different types of text and identify specific features of some genres;	• recognise different types of text (for example instruction booklets and comic strips);	• express interests in and preferences for certain texts;
• read and follow simple instructions; • use a range of reading cues with increasing independence and begin to self-correct; • read on sight some words in a range of meaningful contexts; • understand the purpose of and use environmental print;	• use a range of reading cues with increasing independence and begin to self-correct (for example beginning to use a range of strategies to read with meaning);	• read independently;
• begin to read with expression in response to print variations and punctuation, for example sounding surprised, sounding angry and stopping at a full stop;	• begin to read aloud with expression in response to print variations and punctuation (for example responding to variations such as commas, full stops and speech marks in text naturally);	• read aloud, inflecting appropriately to assist meaning;
• use extended vocabulary when discussing text, retelling stories or in their emergent writing;	• retell and sequence texts in reasonable detail, using appropriate language;	• reflect, analyse and discuss the meaning of texts;
• make links between personal experience and the text, for example *'My cousin broke my chair'*;	• talk about their own experiences and feelings to understand text;	• show some awareness of empathy by reflecting the thoughts and feelings of the characters;
• make and give reasons for predictions; and	• give reasons for their predictions (for example beginning to select evidence from text); and	• justify their responses by inference, deduction or reference to evidence within the text; and
• browse and choose books for a specific purpose.	• choose books for a specific purpose (for example non-fiction books for information and a dictionary to check spelling).	• use a range of sources to find, select and use ideas and information to investigate a topic.

Writing

Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• begin to problem solve how to write using sound/symbol correspondence as the first strategy;		
• write without prompting and make decisions about how and what they will write, for example a story caption for a model, a label for a picture, an order in the café, a sentence about a topic or shopping lists;	• talk about what they are going to write and demonstrate reasonable independence when writing;	• plan, revise and redraft work to improve meaning, with some independence;
• use rhymes, poems and patterned stories as models for structuring their own writing;	• use texts such as poems, stories and instructions as models for their own writing (moving towards independent writing, although they may still require prompts as a stimulus);	• relate their own experiences and reflect on ideas, thoughts, feelings and imaginings;
• use a wide range of vocabulary in their writing (for example being able to write familiar words);	• use a widening range of vocabulary in their writing (for example writing words from topics in a recognisable way);	• use more imaginative and increasingly precise vocabulary;
• write in a range of genres with teacher guidance, for example a simple report on an animal following a visit to the farm, a story or a poem;	• demonstrate some awareness that written language can be more formal than spoken language;	• write with clarity in a range of forms, showing an awareness of appropriate audience;
• begin to show evidence of sequence in recount and instructions (a simple recount in the correct order);	• begin to show evidence of sequence in recounts and instructions (for example introducing more detail and the time words *next* and *then*);	• structure and present ideas and information logically and coherently;
• begin to demarcate sentences; • begin to use capital letters for the pronoun 'I', for names and at the start of a sentence; and	• begin to write in sentences; and	• show increasing proficiency in the use of syntax, spelling and punctuation; and
• show increased control over formation of lower and upper case letters, size and spacing.	• show reasonable control over the formation of upper and lower case letters, size and spacing.	• produce handwriting that is well-formed, swift and legible.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007): Foundation Stage: pages 17–22
Key Stages 1 and 2: pages 50–56.

See also the sections on Language and Literacy at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Mathematics and Numeracy

Mathematics and Numeracy is the development and application of mathematics in a variety of meaningful contexts.

In Foundation Stage, the emphasis is on working in practical situations and games to develop confidence in using mathematical concepts and language.

Progression in Key Stage 1 requires pupils to have opportunities to develop and consolidate what they have learned in Foundation Stage, developing their mathematical language and being increasingly able to record their work formally using mathematical notation. They should be given opportunities to begin to develop mental strategies, problem solve and see the relevance of mathematics throughout the curriculum.

In Key Stage 2, pupils should be given opportunities to further develop their skills throughout the different areas of mathematics in a wide range of purposeful activities. Pupils should be able to work both independently and co-operatively. They should now use mathematical language and be able to use standard forms to record.

Throughout Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils need opportunities for making and monitoring decisions, to communicate mathematically and use mathematical reasoning.

Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• use appropriate mathematical language and symbols; • sort and re-sort materials, recording the outcomes in a variety of ways; • talk about data represented in simple block graphs, tables and diagrams; • understand the conservation of number;	• develop and consolidate their mathematical ideas from Foundation Stage, using practical materials before moving on to more formal methods of recording;	• continue to use a wide variety of materials, games, tools and ICT resources to develop and consolidate their mathematical skills and concepts;
• count forwards and backwards from different starting points; • recognise numbers to at least 20; • carry out mental calculations such as 1 more/less than up to 20, doubles up to 10, and mentally add and subtract within 10;	• communicate in oral, pictorial and written form, progressing at their own pace from informal personal language to mathematical language and from personal recording to mathematical representations and symbols; and	• communicate in oral, pictorial and written form; and
• understand that 'teen' numbers are made up of 10 plus another number; • begin to measure using non-standard units; • talk about the properties of 3D and 2D shapes using appropriate mathematical language; and • be involved in solving practical problems.	• develop their mathematical language, which is of fundamental importance (talking about work has a higher priority than recording in the early years).	• use and extend their mathematical language by discussing, describing, comparing and explaining all aspects of their mathematics, progressing from the use of informal personal language to effective use of appropriate mathematical language.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007): Foundation Stage: pages 23–26
Key Stages 1 and 2: pages 57–67.

See also the revised Lines of Development available in the Key Stages 1 and 2 Mathematics and Numeracy section at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

The Arts

The Arts give pupils opportunities across the curriculum to develop their creativity and express their ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world through pictures, sound and drama. Pupils should be able to explore and share their thoughts and ideas across the three strands of Art, Music and Drama. Expressive and creative development is closely linked with all aspects of learning and building self-esteem.

In Foundation Stage, the emphasis should be on process and enjoyment rather than a finished product. Pupils should have opportunities to explore and develop their ideas and language and be introduced to working with different materials and equipment.

In Key Stage 1, there is continued development in direct sensory experiences. Pupils should develop confidence in the use of different media, equipment and tools.

In Key Stage 2, pupils will further develop their sensory skills. They should now be more discerning about which types of media equipment and tools to use to express their ideas.

Art and Design

Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• use senses to explore real things, developing the capacity for focusing attention to detail; • use direct experiences, memory and imagination to observe and respond to the world;	• observe and record first hand experiences and respond to memory and imagination;	• be able to collect, examine, select and use resource material to contribute to the development of ideas;
• begin to use visual language to describe what has been examined and observed, for example the colours and textures of a leaf; • begin to appreciate the visual qualities in the natural and made environment;	• explore shape, colour, tone, form, space, texture and pattern;	• be able to use visual elements to express ideas;
• value their own and other pupils' work, for example talk about something they like about another's work; • talk about the processes involved in creating their own work;	• talk about their work and how it was made;	• be able to begin to explain their work in more detail, discussing difficulties and suggesting modifications;
• look at, explore and talk with some confidence about works of art, craft and design; • explore and discover qualities of various materials in order to make choices and to create their own unique pictures and structures; and	• look at, enjoy and appreciate the work of artists; and	• be able to examine the content and methods used in an artist's work and use this information to extend their ideas; and
• begin to develop a range of skills using materials, tools and processes (drawing, painting, printmaking, textiles, malleable materials and three-dimensional construction).	• experiment with a range of media.	• be selective in the use of media in order to express personal ideas and responses.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007).

Art and Design Foundation Stage: pages 29–31
Key Stages 1 and 2: pages 71–76

See also the sections on The Arts at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Music

Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• be aware of and perform a steady beat; • distinguish between loud/quiet sounds, high/low sounds, long/short sounds and fast/slow music; • listen to and repeat simple rhythms; • make music, for example by using vocal and body sounds and by tapping, shaking and scraping simple percussion instruments; • watch and respond to start/stop signals; • value their own and others' contributions in the team aspect of music making and performing.	• increase their ability to combine and use the elements of music to express their own ideas and feelings and to create mood, atmosphere and contrast;	• demonstrate increasing ability to combine and use the elements of music to express their own ideas and feelings and to create mood, atmosphere and contrast;
	• increase control of the sounds they make when singing (words, expression, breath control and singing in tune) and playing simple percussion instruments (manipulative control); and	• demonstrate increasing control of the sounds they make when singing (words, expression, breath control and singing in tune) and playing simple percussion instruments (manipulative control);
	• have an increasing awareness and understanding of the elements of music in relation to: - loud sounds, quiet sounds and silence; - fast music and slow music; - long sounds and short sounds (duration); - high sounds and low sounds (pitch); - characteristics of the sounds they make and hear; and - single sounds and combined sounds.	• have an increasing awareness and understanding of the elements of music in relation to: - variations in volume, including gradually increasing/decreasing levels of sound (dynamics); - variations in speed, including getting gradually faster and slower (tempo/pace); - patterns of longer and shorter sounds (rhythm) over a steady beat, including repeated rhythmic patterns; - patterns of higher and lower sounds (melodic shape), including repeated melodic patterns; - qualities of sounds they make and hear, including the sound characteristics of common musical instruments (timbre); and - combinations of sounds (texture), including melody and accompaniment.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007).

Music Foundation Stage: pages 32–33
Key Stages 1 and 2: pages 77–79

See also the sections on The Arts at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Drama

Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• co-operate during role-play, negotiate roles, agree rules and act out scenarios; • express thoughts, ideas, feelings and imagination with confidence in a range of dramatic contexts using verbal and non-verbal language; • adopt and sustain a role.	• listen and respond as individuals; • use basic narrative in play; • use spontaneous vocal and movement responses; and • talk about their work.	• discuss feelings and thoughts with others in order to make meaning; • create negotiated responses to social and emotional issues using polished improvisation, sequences of mime or movement, acting and a range of drama strategies; • develop chosen approaches to achieve appropriate reactions from an audience; and • explain and justify their approach and chosen style.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007).

Drama Foundation: pages 34–35
Key Stages 1 and 2: pages 80–82.

See also the sections on The Arts at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

The World Around Us

In Foundation Stage, pupils will, through play, be aware of their surroundings and begin to be aware of and question why things happen.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, The World Around Us connects History, Geography and Science and Technology.

In Key Stage 1, pupils should gain understanding and skills in how they relate to the world and how change occurs.

In Key Stage 2, they should further this experience in how they and others relate to their place in the world and how and why changes occur.

Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• show curiosity about the living things, places, objects and materials in the environment;	• make first hand observations and collect primary data;	• examine and collect real data;
• identify similarities and differences between living things, places, objects and materials; • understand that some things change over time; • understand that different materials behave in different ways, have different properties and can be used for different purposes; • understand that some materials change if kept in different conditions; • understand that materials can be joined/assembled in different ways;	• identify similarities and differences; • recognise a fair test;	• investigate similarities and differences, patterns and change; • design and carry out tests;
• be aware of everyday uses of technological tools and know how to use some of these safely;	• use tools, components and materials to design and make;	• combine designing and making skills and techniques with knowledge and understanding in order to present solutions;
• be aware of the local natural and built environment and their place in it; • understand the need to respect and care for themselves, other people, plants, animals and the environment;	• develop a sense of place, using maps to locate places;	• use resources such as atlases, maps and digital sources to identify and describe places and environments investigated;
• understand and use positional and directional language, as well as simple maps and drawings; • know some of the jobs that are carried out by different people in the local community; • be aware of different lifestyles; and	• use everyday language when talking in each subject; and	• use more precise subject-specific vocabulary, notation and symbols; and
• be able to sequence familiar events.	• sequence events and objects on a timeline in chronological order.	• develop a sense of change over time and how the past has affected the present.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007): Foundation Stage: pages 37–38
Key Stages 1 and 2: pages 83–90.

See also the sections on The World Around Us at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

The programme for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding is set out in two strands:

- Personal Understanding and Health; and
- Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community.

At Foundation Stage, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding focuses on social and emotional development. Pupils should be encouraged to develop their self-esteem, confidence and the forming of relationships with peers and adults.

Progress in Key Stage 1 should involve pupils developing positive feelings about themselves and their relationships with others.

In Key Stage 2, it should involve pupils understanding their role in their environment.

Throughout Foundation Stage	**Throughout Key Stage 1**	**Throughout Key Stage 2**
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• express a sense of self-awareness; • show some self-control and express their own feelings and emotions appropriately;	• learn about themselves as individuals and explore their own feelings and emotions;	• become more aware of others, learning more about how they interact with others and impact on their feelings and behaviour;
• show a positive attitude to learning;	• have a positive attitude about themselves and their learning;	• develop strategies to improve their learning;
• adopt healthy and hygienic routines and understand how to keep safe;	• learn about the different options for a healthy, safe lifestyle and how we grow; and	• respect their own body and keep it safe and healthy by making the right choices; and
• form good relationships with adults and other pupils; • show independence and know when to seek help; • show respect when working and playing together and recognise the need for rules; • recognise similarities and differences in families and the wider community; and • be familiar with the interdependent nature of the class/school community.	• become aware of the relationships they have with their family, friends and others in school and in the local community.	• have an appreciation and understanding of other cultures in the local and wider community.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007): Foundation Stage: pages 39–42
Key Stages 1 and 2: pages 91–98.

See also the guidance booklet and progression grids available in the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding sections at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Physical Development and Movement (Foundation Stage)/Physical Education (Key Stages 1 and 2)

In Foundation Stage, pupils should have opportunities to develop control of a variety of movements, manipulation and co-ordination and have an awareness of space. Experiences in Physical Development and Movement should encourage their understanding of safe practices when moving and awareness of the relationship between physical activity and good health.

In Key Stage 1, these skills are developed further to include more control of movement, following specific instructions for movement, rules for games, wearing appropriate clothing and the relationship between health and physical activity.

In Key Stage 2, pupils should have more opportunities to confidently develop and extend control of their physical activities, developing their ability to use equipment safely, follow rules and evaluate their performances.

Throughout Foundation Stage	Throughout Key Stage 1	Throughout Key Stage 2
Pupils should:	Pupils should:	Pupils should:
• move with control and co-ordination, for example in running, jumping, climbing; • move with confidence, imagination and safety; • show an awareness of personal and general space; • respond appropriately to instructions and to stimuli;	• make simple movement explorations and performances;	• develop increasing competence, control, co-ordination and spatial awareness in a range of physical movement skills and be able to refine, extend and perform the skills with improved accuracy and consistency;
• travel, showing changes of speed, direction and level; • develop controlled movement, understanding positional language;	• share and play co-operatively in small groups;	• work co-operatively and play competitively in a variety of physical activity situations;
• create, remember and perform simple movement sequences;	• recognise and follow rules and safety procedures;	• be able to apply the rules and safety procedures in the appropriate context;
• use a range of small and large equipment appropriately; • handle small tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control;	• explore and use a wide range of large and small equipment;	• use equipment appropriately and with increasing confidence and control;
• use appropriate language to talk about ideas, feelings and movements of themselves and others;	• respond to a range of stimuli;	• develop their responses in movement by exploring, creating and performing movement phrases in response to different stimuli;
• begin to understand the importance of warm-up and cool-down activities before and after exercise;	• be able to talk about movements of themselves and others;	• be able to make decisions, observe, appreciate, discuss and evaluate the movements of themselves and others and recognise what makes a good performance;
• begin to understand the importance of physical activity for good health and the reasons why it is important to dress appropriately for physical activity; and	• understand the reasons for changing for Physical Education; • experiencing a variety of warm-up and cool-down activities; and	• understand the need to wear appropriate clothing and footwear for different activities; • understand the reasons for warming up and cooling down;
• be aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies.	• be aware of the effects of exercise on the body.	• develop an understanding of the relationship between physical activity, good health and well-being.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007): Foundation Stage: pages 43–45
Key Stages 1 and 2: pages 99–110.

See also the sections on Physical Development and Movement/Physical Education at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Using Information and Communications Technology

Teachers should integrate ICT throughout the curriculum at all levels in the primary school. Pupils should have opportunities to develop their skills in meaningful contexts to enhance their learning.

Across the curriculum, at a level appropriate to their ability, pupils should develop their ICT skills to:				
Explore	**Express**	**Exchange**	**Evaluate**	**Exhibit**
Pupils should be enabled to: • access and manage data and information; • research, select, process and interpret information; • investigate, make predictions and solve problems through interaction with digital tools; and • understand how to keep safe and display acceptable online behaviour.	Pupils should be enabled to: • create, develop, present and publish ideas and information using a range of digital media; and • create information and multimedia products using a range of assets.	Pupils should be enabled to: • communicate using a range of contemporary methods and tools; and • share, collaborate, exchange and develop ideas digitally.	Pupils should be enabled to: • talk about, review and make improvements to work, reflecting on the process and outcome; and • consider the sources and resources used.	Pupils should be enabled to: • manage and present their stored work; and • showcase their learning across the curriculum.

See *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary* (CCEA, 2007) page 7.

See also the sections on Using ICT at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

SECTION
05

Effective Use of Data and Target Setting

Effective Use of Data and Target Setting

To manage and use assessment data effectively, schools should have a whole-school approach. Using data effectively can enhance teaching and learning, improve learning outcomes, and contribute to raising standards. The assessment co-ordinator should have in place processes and procedures for gathering and recording assessment data and monitoring and tracking pupil progress against individual and class targets. This will help schools to identify low achievement and underachievement, enabling them to put intervention strategies in place to support pupils to improve their learning. School assessment data is also important for benchmarking performance against similar schools.

The Department of Education's school improvement policy (DENI, 2009) and *Count, Read: Succeed A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy* (DENI, 2011) both recommend using assessment data effectively to inform teaching and learning at whole-school and classroom level. Teachers should use assessment data to:

- enhance teaching and learning;
- promote improved outcomes for pupils; and
- raise standards.

Using Assessment Information

The assessment co-ordinator is responsible for the management of assessment data and keeping all teachers informed. Standardised testing takes place in schools to:

- monitor the progress of individual pupils;
- compare pupil progress in each class or year group;
- compare progress in and between Key Stages; and
- compare pupil attainment with other school national averages.

Schools can use the data from standardised testing to plan their next steps at classroom level.

Each school collates data from standardised tests and can use SIMS to enter this data on Assessment Manager. Each teacher should have access to this information. Teachers record results from topic and other assessments for each pupil, and they may choose to add this information to the data in Assessment Manager.

Class teachers can use this information for day-to-day planning for teaching, learning and assessment and to establish teaching groups in their classrooms. Data management systems can be modified to suit the requirements of individual schools. It can be used for statutory assessment purposes only, or it could contain all assessment records across each Area of Learning and Other Skills to build a holistic picture of the pupil's achievements.

Other Uses for Data

Assessment co-ordinators, Key Stage co-ordinators and Area of Learning co-ordinators can use the information from standardised testing to inform policy.

SEN co-ordinators can also use the information gathered to monitor individual pupil progress. This will identify pupils who:

- have not made significant progress;
- may need extra support possibly due to a specific learning difficulty;
- no longer need extra support;
- are not realising their potential; or
- may be Gifted and Talented and need extra support.

The SMT can use the data to identify any issues such as underachievement by:

- individual pupils;
- groups of pupils;
- a class; or
- a year group;

The data may also identify areas for development across the whole school.

The SMT could, for example, introduce a whole school or Key Stage initiative such as a particular phonics programme to improve literacy. It could set and monitor targets for improvement. The SMT should also note positive progress when planned intervention enables pupils or classes to meet targets.

Where individual pupils or a group in a class have been identified as having a particular problem, the class teacher should set realistic targets in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator and other support staff as appropriate. Teachers should monitor these targets over a specific time to ensure that pupils are making progress.

Schools can track their data over several years and compare the results from standardised testing with end of Key Stage results to ensure that pupil progress is taking place within their school. This should identify how effective a whole-school intervention, if implemented, has been. The data can also identify other groups for comparison, for example boys and girls, birth dates (July–December and January–June), or pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs.

Schools may wish to consider:

- how they are performing compared with recent three-year trends;
- whether there are any unusual circumstances over time that may have contributed to the schools' performance outcomes;
- how they are performing in comparison with other schools in similar circumstances; and
- how they have addressed whole-school priorities for improving pupil outcomes in literacy and numeracy in line with Department of Education policy.

For further information on low or underachievement, please refer to *Count, Read: Succeed A Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy*.

Setting Targets

The primary school can set targets at different levels:

- individual pupil;
- class;
- phase (Foundation, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2); or
- whole school.

Class teachers should set targets for individual pupils and the class at the beginning of the school year. They should do this through discussion, using the data available. Involving the pupils in target setting should encourage motivation for individual pupils and the class. Teachers and pupils will need to plan how to monitor and when to review the targets.

The targets for each phase in the primary school should be set in agreement with all the staff and the co-ordinator of that phase.

The SMT, in consultation with all staff, should set whole-school targets. All targets should be interlinked and contribute to enhance the learning experiences and achievements of individual pupils and the school.

When target setting, schools should consider:

- planning to set targets as soon as possible after analysing school data;
- prioritising the number of targets to be set within an agreed time;
- setting targets that are realistic but challenging;
- involving all staff in setting the targets and ensuring they know their role in implementing them;
- involving pupils in target setting;
- how to track pupil progress for targets; and
- comparing like with like.

SECTION
06

Internal Standardisation in the Primary School

Internal Standardisation in the Primary School

Internal standardisation involves the whole staff and Key Stage groups or year groups, as appropriate, discussing pieces of pupil work and assigning agreed levels. This process ensures that assessment judgements are consistent.

The Levels of Progression describe assessment standards for the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT. Schools can use Areas of Learning or Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities grids to define assessment criteria and set standards. Teachers can combine both these sets of assessment criteria with those for subject knowledge and understanding to create holistic standards to judge pupils' performance.

Many teachers will have taken part in agreement trials facilitated by CCEA and CASS officers that enabled them to have a common understanding of what a level looked like. Using this experience, assessment co-ordinators will facilitate internal standardisation meetings, using the examples of work from the school's pupils. It is important that class teachers/year groups, across all three phases in the primary school, should have a shared understanding of the assessment standards for their school. This helps to ensure consistency in:

- setting standards;
- judging pupil performance; and
- measuring progression in learning.

As part of their continuous professional development, teachers should have opportunities to discuss assessment and standards by participating in internal standardisation meetings with opportunities to work collaboratively. This helps teachers to develop consistency in their judgements by agreeing criteria and applying shared standards across the school. The assessment co-ordinator should facilitate these meetings to enable teachers to meet to review, discuss, and agree standards for samples of pupil work, using the Levels of Progression (they may also find the non-statutory guidance useful). This shared understanding by all teachers is essential to ensure consistency when making formal judgements about the levels pupils are working at in the Cross-Curricular Skills. It is important that all CCS assessments are set in a meaningful context and at a level appropriate to the knowledge and understanding in all Areas of Learning.

Further support is available to help teachers reach a decision about the level a pupil is working at. Teachers can use the Exemplification Database at www.nicurriculum.org.uk for reference. This database contains the Exemplification Library, which illustrates examples of good assessment practice sourced from teachers and pupils across Northern Ireland. Teachers can use these to help them to decide the level a pupil is working at.

The Task Library contains CCEA Assessment Tasks. Teachers can use these to support their judgement of the level at which a pupil is working.

Teachers should decide on the level a pupil has attained by assessing the pupil's progress throughout the Key Stage and deciding whether this fulfils the criteria for that level.

Teachers level pupil work using the Levels of Progression. Through professional dialogue during the internal standardisation process, teachers agree the level or standard the pupil has attained.

For more information on internal standardisation refer to Section 4 Internal Standardisation in the *Guide to Assessment: Supporting Schools in Meeting Statutory Requirements for Assessment and Reporting, for Assessment and Reporting Foundation to Key Stage 3 CCEA 2011.*

SECTION
07

Effective Reporting

Effective Reporting

> **'the education of the child shall be directed to: the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential'**
>
> *Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)*

Schools need to plan reporting alongside assessment. They should establish efficient and manageable reporting processes and procedures. The annual report to parents should provide meaningful information about their child's progress and achievements in all aspects of their learning.

The Purpose of Reporting

Reporting should support and improve learning. It must provide useful information to pupils and their parents. Pupils should know:

- what they have achieved;
- how they performed against expectations in each subject; and
- how much effort they made.

To encourage parents to become actively involved in their child's learning, teachers should discuss with them what they can do for their child to:

- ensure progress;
- improve learning; and
- support them to achieve their potential.

Effective reporting procedures should:

- be efficient and manageable;
- reflect the integrated nature of assessment and reporting;
- reflect the language of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- be based on the teachers' professional judgement and on dependable assessment evidence;
- be based on a common school approach to reporting (performance in terms of grades or marks, if used);
- be child-centred and focus on the individual;
- support improvements in pupil learning;
- encourage pupil motivation and commitment to learning;
- provide meaningful detailed information about pupils' achievements and progress and how they can improve their learning;
- support planning for future learning;
- encourage parents' involvement in their child's learning; and
- comply with data protection legislation.

Annual Report

The statutory reporting requirements

Schools must provide annual reports to parents of pupils by June 30 each year. Schools may choose to report to parents more often. The annual report should include brief details about the pupil's achievement in the following:

- Communication, taking account of his or her achievement in the Language and Literacy area of learning (in Irish Medium schools, at Key Stage 1 Communication will be reported in Irish and at Key Stage 2 Communication will be reported in both Irish and English);
- Using ICT; Using Mathematics, taking account of his or her achievement in the Mathematics and Numeracy area of learning;
- each of the Areas of Learning (The World Around Us, The Arts, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, Physical Development and Movement/Education); Other Skills (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities);
- Religious Education (optional);
- the pupil's interests and strengths; and
- any focus for development.

Schools may also add any optional content such as commenting on behaviour or homework.

Irish medium schools can report to parents in either Irish, English or in a bilingual format.

Schools may choose their own format for the annual report. They are required to report 'consistently and in line with the requirements of legislation' (DE 2009/15). The information schools give to parents about their child's progress should be meaningful.

End of Key Stage

At the end of Year 4 (end of Key Stage 1) and Year 7 (end of Key Stage 2), schools must assess, using the Levels of Progression, and report the level a pupil has achieved in Communication, Using Mathematics (from 2012/2013) and Using ICT (from 2013/2014).

In addition to the pupil's results, the school must also provide an overview of the school's results at the end of that Key Stage for each parent. This information can be embedded in the Annual Report or can be sent to parents separately.

It is a statutory requirement that all pupils have opportunities to acquire and develop the Cross-Curricular Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. Further details and guidance on reporting at Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are available at www.nicurriculum.org.uk. The Education (Pupil Reporting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (HMSO, 2009; see also DENI circular 2009/15) outline the statutory reporting requirements for all grant-aided schools.

Primary Record of Achievement

At the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 7), schools must provide each pupil with a Primary Record of Achievement. This must include:

- any certificates the pupil gained and the year achieved;
- any clubs, societies or activities that the pupil was involved in; and
- any positions of responsibility the pupil held.

Special Educational Needs

Pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs should receive reports at the same time as other pupils. If the pupil has been exempted from any part of the curriculum for any reason, teachers must state this on the report. Schools should carry out annual review procedures at the appropriate time during each school year.

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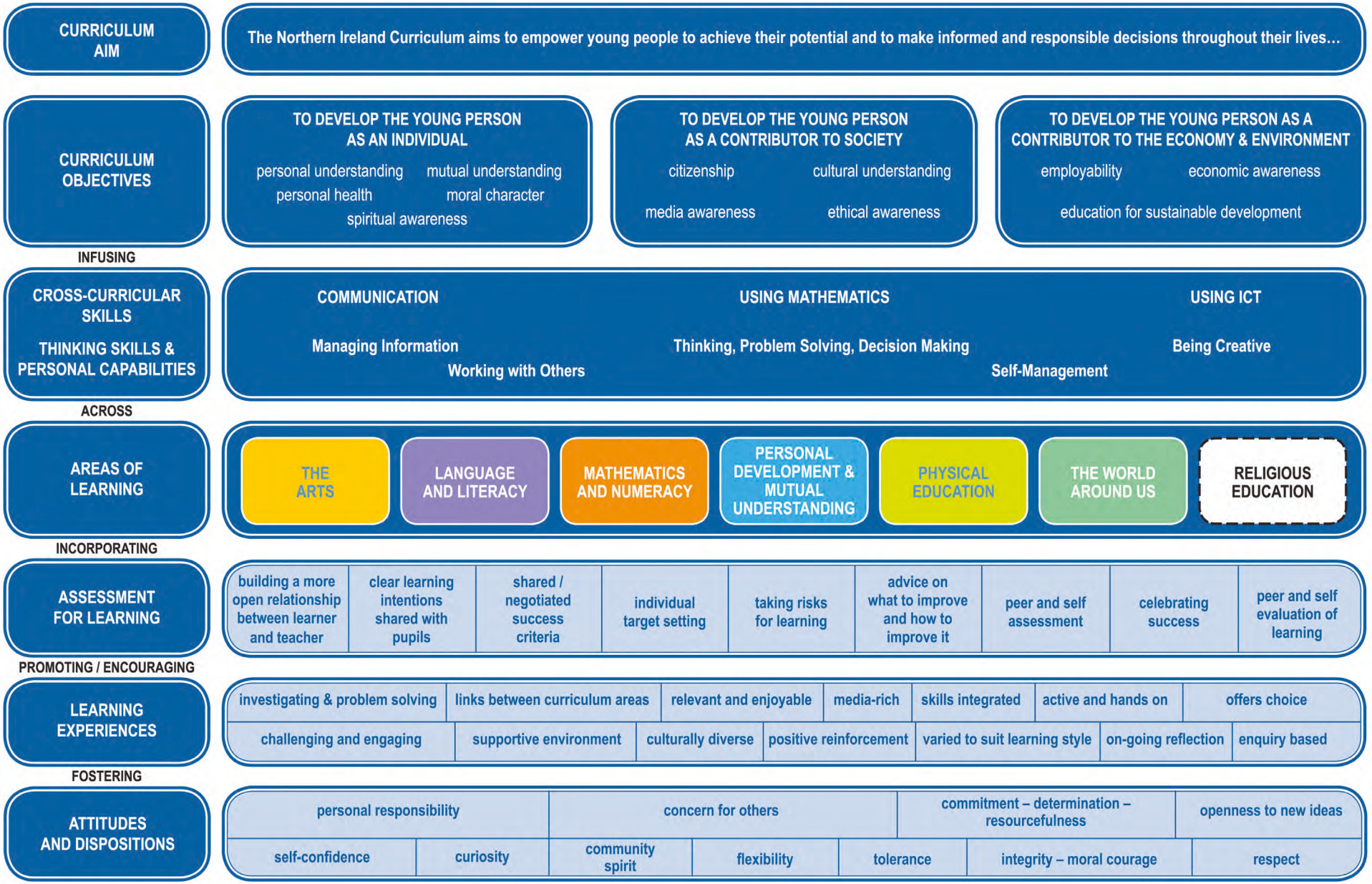
The Big Picture of the Curriculum

The "Big Picture" of the Curriculum at Key Stages 1 & 2



The Big Picture of Assessment and Reporting

THE BIG PICTURE OF ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

AIM OF ASSESSMENT

To facilitate the monitoring of standards over time in order to inform the development of policy and practice leading to better pupil outcomes

PRINCIPLES

Assessment should:

1. be complementary to, and supportive of, the key aims of the NI Curriculum
2. be fit for purpose
3. be manageable
4. be supported by teacher professional judgements that are consistent and reliable
5. be appropriate at all levels for system-wide accountability

PURPOSES

DIAGNOSTIC
To identify strengths and areas for improvement and to inform next steps

FORMATIVE
To use assessment information to make specific improvements in learning

SUMMATIVE
To acknowledge, record and report pupils' overall performance and achievement at a point in time

EVALUATIVE
To inform curriculum planning and to provide information for monitoring and accountability

WHAT IS ASSESSED?

Pupil performance and achievement in ...

CROSS-CURRICULAR SKILLS (CCS)
Assessment: a robust model of moderated teacher judgement

OTHER SKILLS (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities: TSPC)
Assessment: delegated to schools

AREAS OF LEARNING (AoL)
Assessment: delegated to schools

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

FOUNDATION STAGE

Assessment
- Assess pupil progress in each CCS
- Assess pupil progress in each of the Other Skills (TSPC)
- Assess pupil progress in each AoL

Reporting
- Annual Report
- Parent Meetings
- Annual Review*

KEY STAGE 1 & KEY STAGE 2

Assessment
- Assess pupil progress in each CCS
- Use of CCEA designed tasks Years 4 & 7
- Assess pupil progress in each of the Other Skills (TSPC)
- Assess pupil progress in each AoL

Reporting
- Annual Report
- Years 4 & 7 numerical outcomes for CCS and additional school/system information to parents
- Years 4 - 7 computer-based assessments, autumn term
- Parent Meetings
- Annual Review*

KEY STAGE 3

Assessment
- Assess pupil progress in each CCS
- Use of CCEA approved tasks Year 10
- Assess pupil progress in each of the Other Skills (TSPC)
- Assess pupil progress in each AoL

Reporting
- Annual Report
- Year 10 numerical outcomes for CCS and additional school/system information to parents
- Parent Meetings
- Annual Review/Transition Plans*

USING ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES TO INFORM NEXT STEPS PLANNING

AT CLASSROOM LEVEL:	What level are my pupils now?	Where do they need to be next (with an appropriate level of challenge)?	What are the best strategies to help pupils reach the 'next steps' in their learning?
AT CO-ORDINATOR LEVEL:	How is my area of responsibility performing, compared with recent 3 year trends?	How is my area of responsibility performing compared with other curriculum areas?	What are the priorities for improving provision within my area of responsibility?
AT WHOLE SCHOOL LEVEL:	How is our school performing, compared with recent 3 year trends?	How is our school performing compared with other schools in similar circumstances?	What are our whole school priorities for improving pupil outcomes, especially in Literacy and Numeracy?

* EDUCATION (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1996 Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1 September 1998

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Rewarding Learning