





## **St Columbkille's Primary A Parent's Guide to Assessment and Achievement**

This leaflet has been produced due to feedback from a parental survey last year which highlighted that some parents would like more information about assessment within the school.

Curriculum for Excellence has changed many things in Scottish education – the way children are taught and the content of their lessons are probably the most obvious. But less well understood are the changes to assessment, and how young peoples' progress is reported to parents. This leaflet explains the changes and what information you can expect to receive as a parent or carer.

### **Learning Levels**

Your child's progress is described as working at or progressing towards a certain level. These levels are not set in stone – they depend on the development of the child – however, most children are expected to achieve the early level by the end of P1, first level by the end of P4 and second level by the end of P7.

The period from Early Years to Level 4 is described as being for Broad General Education (or BGE): this is the period in your child's education when they should be gaining a sound grounding in their learning across a wide range of subject areas, but with a focus on literacy (reading, writing, understanding and expressing themselves) and numeracy (dealing with numbers, money, measure and weight). The areas studied are languages and literacy; mathematics and numeracy; health and wellbeing; expressive arts; religious and moral education; the sciences; social studies and technologies.

### **What are Experiences and Outcomes?**

During the BGE phase, you may hear about Experiences and Outcomes (or Es & Os): Curriculum for Excellence sets out in detail what the Es & Os are for each area of learning. Basically this is a way of describing what children should experience in school (the teaching) and what they should learn from the teaching.

The curriculum puts a lot of emphasis on learning by doing, with the aim that children gain a deeper understanding and learn how to apply their understanding in different circumstances. Instead of just learning by rote, we try to ensure children have deeper learning as well as more personal responsibility for their learning.

### **What is Achievement?**

It is important to recognise and support children's and young people's achievements. It can help to develop their confidence and motivation for learning. It can also help them to reflect on their learning and plan appropriate next steps.

### **Range of achievement**

All of our children will be recognised for their academic achievements at school. However it is important to recognise that learning also takes place outside the classroom, at home and in the wider community.

Achievement covers learning in other areas of the life of our school, and in the variety of activities your child is involved in, for example:

- hobbies and interests, such as participating in a sport
- volunteering
- caring for a relative
- activities they undertake in the life of the school, such as Eco Schools or Buddying
- recognised awards or programmes, such as the Pope Francis Faith Award

Through these activities, they develop important skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that can be of real value to them as they grow up.

We recognise the full range of achievements and help our children understand the skills they have. It is important that they are able to demonstrate and describe these skills to others, and build on these skills. It is important that you encourage your child to let the school know about their achievements beyond the classroom at, for example, our weekly assembly.

### **What is Assessment?**

Assessment is carried out to see what your child, understands and are able to do. It is a way of supporting learning and helps teachers, learners, parents and others to understand the depth and breadth of learning undertaken so that progress and next steps can be discussed and planned.

Assessment is very important for tracking progress, planning next steps, reporting and involving parents and children in learning.

Assessment covers:

- The ways teachers support and assess your child's learning and monitor progress and identify next steps in learning.
- Reporting to you, in writing and in discussions, to help you to understand your child's progress and how you can support your child's learning.
- Formal recognition of your child's achievements

### **How are Children Assessed?**

Your child's progress is not only based on 'tests' but on the learning that takes place within the classroom and in different settings out with the classroom which informs the teachers' professional judgement.

Evidence of children and young people's progress and achievements will come from day to day learning and through the things they may write, say, make or do. For example, evidence may emerge as a result of children and young people taking part in a presentation, discussion, performance or practical investigation. Evidence could also be a drawing, report, or piece of art work that they have produced. Evidence may be captured as a photograph, video or audio clip as part of a particular learning experience.

The assessment of your child's progress throughout primary school is based on teachers' views: their professional judgement. In making these judgements, teachers draw on their professional knowledge and understanding of your child as well as using a range of assessment information. They also apply

recently published benchmarks for literacy and numeracy, which provide clear information about what your child should be able to do and demonstrate by the end of a Curriculum for Excellence level.

### **Gathering evidence**

Teachers have always used different methods to track and measure (or assess) a child's progress and we have a very clear Assessment Framework so we can measure how children are doing and where more support is needed.

Assessment takes place as part of ongoing learning and teaching, periodically and at key transitions.

### **As part of ongoing learning**

Your child's progress, strengths and needs are assessed as part of day-to-day learning and teaching. Teachers and others do this by, for example, watching and listening to your child carrying out tasks, by looking at what they write or make and by considering how they answer questions. Your child will be involved in planning their next steps in learning.

### **Time to time (periodically)**

From time to time, teachers will plan to assess children progress and achievements in order to be able to plan ahead and to record and report on progress e.g. spelling tests or achievement homework. This will help to ensure that their progress is recorded, on track and that any necessary action is taken to support their learning.

### **At key points (transitions)**

Transitions are the moves your child will make, from nursery to school, from stage to stage (and through Curriculum for Excellence levels) and from primary to secondary. Sharing of assessment information with parents is important to ensure your child is supported and has a positive experience. Information about their progress and achievements will be passed on to make sure that their broad general education continue uninterrupted at the correct level and crucially, at an appropriate pace for them.

Evidence of progress and achievement is gathered by:

- Children's self-assessment. They will be encouraged and supported to look at and revisit their own work, to develop a better understanding of what they have learned, and what they need to work on
- fellow pupils (peers) through peer assessment. Children will be encouraged and supported to work together with others to assess what is good about their work and what needs to be worked on
- teachers, parents and others who can help identify and support their next steps in learning.
- Standardised and class assessments.

From the start of this session, a new system of Standardised Assessments will be in place for every school in Scotland. That means that all children in Scotland in P1, P4 and P7 will take the same assessment. These assessments provide an additional source of nationally consistent evidence for teachers to use when assessing your child's progress.

**If you require further information regarding any aspect of your child's progress please do not hesitate in contacting the school.**