

Underpinning principles for assessment

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

1. Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning.
 - a. Assessment provides evidence to guide teaching and learning.
 - b. Assessment provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate and review their progress.
2. Assessment is fair.
 - a. Assessment is inclusive of all abilities.
 - b. Assessment is free from bias towards factors that are not relevant to what the assessment intends to address.
3. Assessment is honest.
 - a. Assessment outcomes are used in ways that minimise undesirable effects.
 - b. Assessment outcomes are conveyed in an open, honest and transparent way to assist pupils with their learning.
 - c. Assessment judgements are moderated by experienced professionals to ensure their accuracy.
4. Assessment is ambitious.
 - a. Assessment places achievement in context against nationally standardised criteria and expected standards.
 - b. Assessment embodies, through objective criteria, a pathway of progress and development for every child.
 - c. Assessment objectives set high expectations for learners.
5. Assessment is appropriate.
 - a. The purpose of any assessment process should be clearly stated.
 - b. Conclusions regarding pupil achievement are valid when the assessment method is appropriate (to age, to the task and to the desired feedback information).
 - c. Assessment should draw on a wide range of evidence to provide a complete picture of student achievement.
 - d. Assessment should demand no more procedures or records than are practically required to allow pupils, their parents and teachers to plan future learning.
5. Assessment is consistent.
 - a. Judgements are formed according to common principles.
 - b. The results are readily understandable by third parties.
 - c. A school's results are capable of comparison with other schools, both locally and nationally.
6. Assessment outcomes provide meaningful and understandable information for:
 - a. pupils in developing their learning;
 - b. parents in supporting children with their learning;

- c. teachers in planning teaching and learning.
Assessment must provide information that justifies the time spent;
- d. school leaders and governors in planning and allocating resources; and
- e. government and agents of government.

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