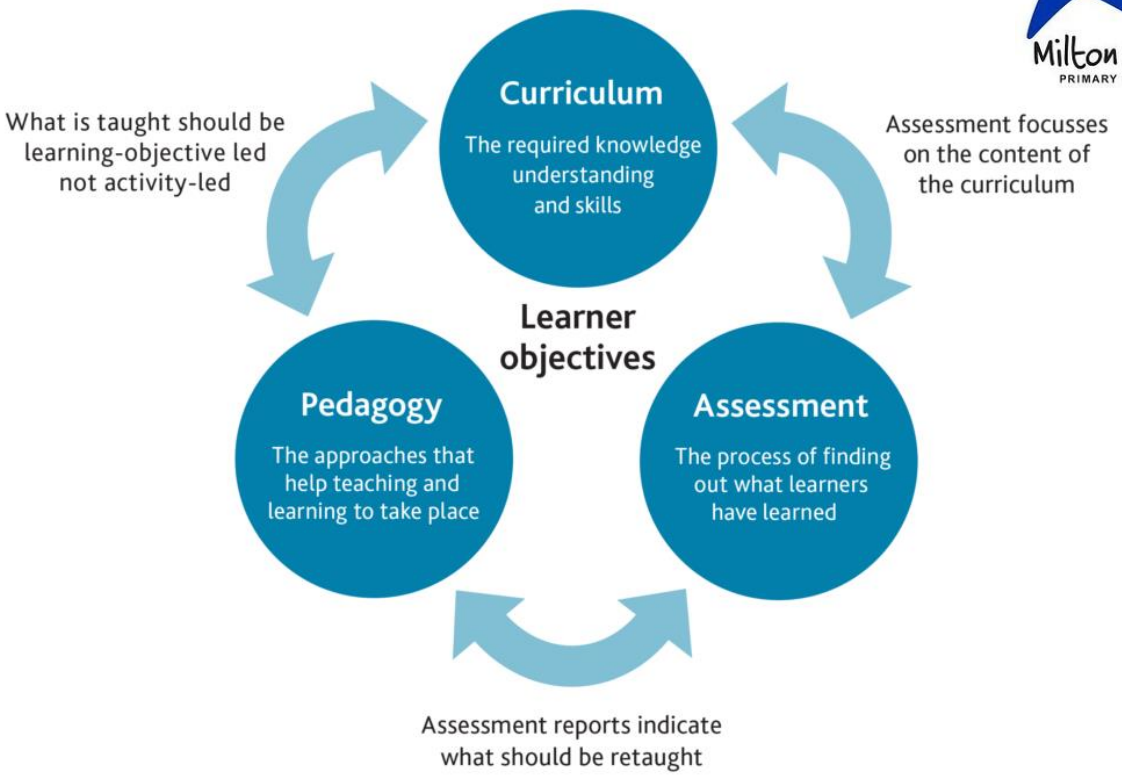
Assessment Methodology for Geography



This document has two parts, the first is the general principles of assessment in our school, and the second is the specific methodology for formative and summative assessment in this curriculum subject.

1. General Principles of Assessments

Why is Assessment Important?

Along with pedagogy and curriculum, assessment is a critical aspect in the learning continuum.

Assessment is very important for monitoring the progress pupils make in the curriculum, including the knowledge and skills that the children have acquired. Assessments help teachers and assistant teachers to plan next steps, to help set targets and goals, report to and involve parents in their children's learning and most importantly of all to encourage, inspire and motivate children to address misconceptions, to recall and to improve.

There are two main types of assessment: formative assessment and summative assessment. These are sometimes referred to as ***assessment for learning*** and ***assessment of learning***, respectively. At some level, both happen in almost all classrooms.

Formative Assessments

Formative assessment takes place on a day-to-day basis during teaching and learning, allowing teachers and pupils to assess attainment and progress more frequently. It begins with diagnostic assessment, indicating what is already known and what gaps may exist in skills or knowledge. If a teacher and pupil understand what has been achieved to date, it is easier to plan the next steps. As the learning continues, further formative assessments indicate whether teaching plans need to be amended to reinforce or extend learning.

Effective formative assessment encourages learning by stressing the importance of recall, critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection thus creating a quality learning environment. Many techniques may be used to formally assess student learning. These include questioning (either directed or no-hands up), concept mapping, writing two or three sentences, the teacher observing (e.g. listening to reading) and recommending specific improvements, low stakes quizzes and so on.

Often formative assessments may not be recorded at all, except perhaps in the lesson plans drawn up to address the next steps indicated.

Assessment for learning is an ongoing iterative process that arises out of the thoughtful and sensitive interaction between teacher and learners.

"Human Learning presupposes a specific social nature and process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them." Lev S. Vygotsky

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment sums up what a pupil has achieved at the end of a period of time, relative to the learning aims and objectives and the relevant national standards. The period of time between summative assessments may vary, depending on what the subject is and what the teacher or assistant teacher wants to find out. A summative assessment may take place at the end of a unit of work, at the end of a term or half-term, at the end of a year or, as in the case of the national curriculum tests, at the end of a key stage.

Typically summative assessments take place no more than three times a year. The results of summative assessments are reported to parents regularly so that they are fully involved in the child's learning journey and are able to monitor the progress their child is making at useful intervals over the course of the academic year. To distribute workload and make the summative assessment meaningful, the school provides short termly assessments rather than one long one at the end of the year.

A summative assessment may be a written test, an observation, a conversation or a task. It may be recorded through writing, through photographs that the child takes themselves and shared with families via SeeSaw, through presentation and performance including Expert Showcase, other visual media, or through an audio or video recording. Whichever medium is used, the assessment will show what has been achieved. It will summarise attainment at a particular point in time and may provide individual, cohort and whole school "snap shot" data that will be useful for tracking progress, for informing stakeholders (e.g. parents, governors, etc.) and for defining whole school improvement plans.

To optimise the benefit of summative assessment the outcome data is analysed by teachers inform whole class next steps and teaching and learning (therefore also having formative benefits). The school uses the NFER PIRA and PUMA tests in this way, results are diagnosed to inform formative next steps.

Recording and Reporting Summative Assessments

Some summative assessments in the Core Subjects such as PIRA (Progress in Reading and Language Assessment) and PUMA (Progress in Understanding Mathematics Assessment) take place on Insight. For Foundation Subjects, Three Part Assessment Grids are used. Once noted these may be shared with the Curriculum Subject Leader.

The Termly Reports to parents/carers use the same language as the Assessment Grids to inform parents whether their child is Working Towards Age Related Expectation/Standard (ARE), At Expected Age Related Expectation/Standard or Above Expected Age Related Expectation Standard.

2. Specific Methodologies for This Curriculum Subject – Geography

Curriculum Subject - Geography

Curriculum Subject Leader – Yvonne Hartley

Formative Assessment Methods

Each Geography unit begins with the introduction of our geographical enquiry, (big question), which leads our learning journey. Our enquiries are carefully chosen to inspire curiosity and motivate children to learn the 'what, how and why' of the geographer's discipline. Lessons are broken down into smaller steps, each with their own geographical enquiry. In this way, by the end of the unit, children are able to apply their knowledge and skills to respond to the geographical enquiry with a deep understanding.

Formative assessment takes place throughout each lesson, enabling teachers to adjust their teaching to progress children's learning towards the end goal. Much formative assessment takes place through speaking and listening, with teachers both assessing and advancing children's learning through careful questioning. Frequent feedback is given and peer and self-assessment are modelled and developed. Other methods include concept mapping, observation and discussion, low stake quizzes and other specific outcomes planned for each lesson. Over the course of a unit, children will be given opportunities to communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and written responses. Teachers will also assess children's confidence when carrying out fieldwork and their depth of learning when interpreting and applying data. For example, in Year 1, children may collect and compare weather data from different locations in the school grounds to discover, for instance, which location is the windiest or the driest. They will then apply this knowledge to choosing the best location for different activities such as drying clothes or reading a story.

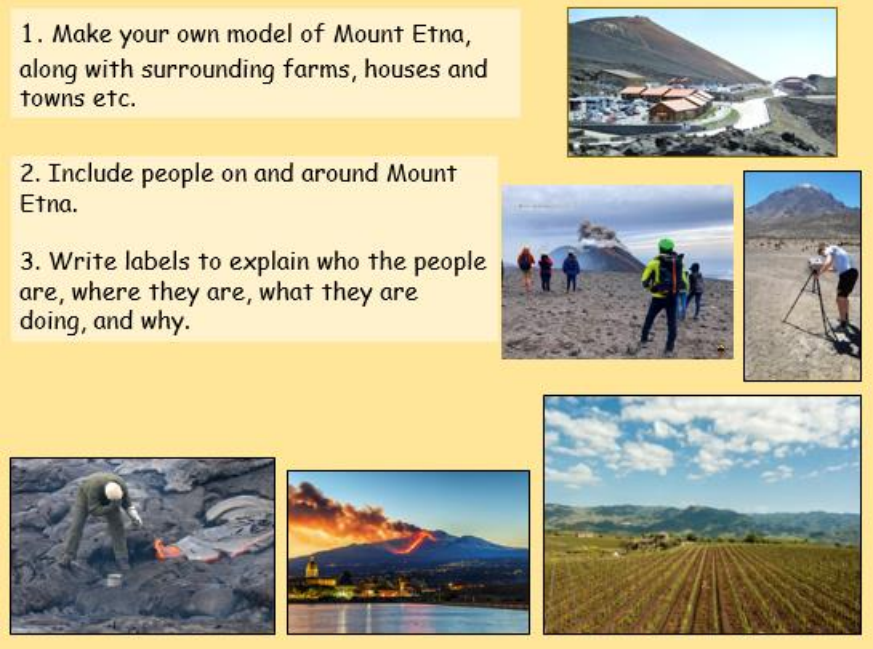
Children's depth of understanding is developed and assessed simultaneously with thought provoking explorative questions. For example, during the Year 2 unit, '*How are we Connected to the World?*' , they may be asked to discuss *'What if all the continents were joined together?*' In the Year 6 unit, *'What is the true cost of your burger?'* the children may be asked to consider, '*What if we stopped producing meat?'*

The subject leader will regularly carry out 'pupil voice' discussions with the children to assess their understanding of their substantive knowledge.

Summative Assessment Methods

At the end of each unit children will return to the 'Big Question' with which they started. They will be set a synoptic task which allows them to develop and demonstrate knowledge and thinking from the whole unit. Each task assesses both substantive and disciplinary knowledge. The task, whilst scaffolded, is designed to be more open-ended than usual to allow depth of learning and new connections as well as any misconceptions to surface. The synoptic task may be communicated through a combination of maps, diagrams, models, aerial photographs, application of primary and/or secondary data, oral presentations or written responses.

Here is an example of part of a synoptic task, (Year 4: *How do Tectonic Plates affect a place?)*



Summative assessment may also include a written test, an observation or a conversation. Teachers will record summative assessments for each unit on the 'Three Part Assessment Grid', (see example below).

Other Notes Relevant to this Subject:

References: https://blog.cambridgeinternational.org/describing-coherence-of-curriculum-pedagogy-and-assessment/

Appendix:

Example of Three Part Assessment Grid for Geography

Subject: Geography Year: 1 Unit: What is it like at our school?
Learning Objective: Use simple fieldwork and observational skills to study the geography of the school and the human and physical features of its surrounding environment.
Example Methodology for Assessment:
Above Expected Age Related Expectation Standard Simple fieldwork techniques are chosen and key physical and human features of the area surrounding the school are described well using geographical vocabulary.
At Expected Age Related Expectation/Standard A growing range of simple fieldwork techniques are used and the key physical and human features of the area surrounding the school are generally described well using some geographical vocabulary.
Working Towards Age Related Expectation/Standard (ARE) With support from the teacher, simple fieldwork is carried out. The key human and physical features of the area surrounding the school are described.