Ark John Archer Primary Academy
ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

2021 / 2022

Ark Schools Approach to Primary Assessment

Executive Summary

This paper states our aims and ambitions around assessment across Ark primary schools. More than ever, it is important to have shared clarity around the purpose and expectations for assessment.

A framework for assessment

- The Ark assessment framework clarifies the purpose and aims of our assessment approach. These are to:
    - Support schools in regularly identifying gaps in students' knowledge to enable effective planning.
    - Measure the impact of our intended curriculum and interventions, identifying areas for development.
    - Quantify students' attainment at times when inferences will be valid and useful.
    - Prepare students for end of phase external assessments.
    - Provide meaningful comparative data at a network level, where useful and appropriate.

Precision is important when we refer to 'closing gaps'. We define the difference between curriculum, knowledge, attainment and group gaps and will use these terms in describing the purpose and impact of assessment in future.

The assessment framework sets out the network guidance around what strong assessments in schools looks like. We set out our definitions of formative and summative assessment, acknowledging the importance of both and how they can be used effectively.

Some elements of the assessment framework are mandatory, others are optional. This document sets out to make clear which elements are mandatory and provide a basis for schools to build their own school assessment policy.

This document should be read in conjunction with the current years assessment calendar.

Approach to Assessment

This document sets out the Ark assessment framework, clearly stating which elements are mandatory and recommended. All aspects of our approach are rooted in research around effective assessment techniques and we share references to further reading to support your understanding of this. We have built this research into a practical strategy to support schools in selecting the strategies that are appropriate in their context. Schools should supplement and complement this with their own assessment policy.

Purpose of Assessment

Formative vs Summative

The purpose of an assessment affects its design which, in turn, affects the inferences that can be validly made from the results. Formative and summative are the two foremost types of assessment.[1] Most summative assessments can be used formatively, at least to some extent, and some formative assessments could be used to make a summative judgement. The key difference is that formative assessments are designed to quickly show information about knowledge gaps and misconceptions, giving teachers the data they need to improve student learning whilst minimising workload.

Table 1 Summary of the way in which formative and summative assessment are used within Ark

	Purpose	Design
Formative	• Establish what pupils do and do not know, as well as any misconceptions they have. We refer to these as 'knowledge gaps'. • Informs adaptations to the curriculum, planning of re-teach and interventions. • Identify student strengths and weaknesses to direct them to resources to further their learning.	• Each question has a very narrow focus and is granular enough to quickly identify what students can and cannot do. • Questions are focused on the important residual knowledge that all students must remember. • Multiple choice questions are often used to easily highlight misconceptions.
Summative	• Gives a measurable snapshot of cumulative attainment of knowledge and understanding in a subject at a given point in time. • Enables comparisons and benchmarks of student attainment (i.e. attainment gap) within and across schools to quantify their progress over time and position within a cohort (i.e. group gaps).	• Questions are often multi-faceted or more open, requiring students to bring together their knowledge from across the subject domain. • Each test can only ever sample the domain.

At primary, formative and summative assessments can often look very similar due to the relatively granular nature of what students are learning. It is, therefore, even more important to be clear about whether the purpose of an assessment is primarily formative or summative as this has an impact on how we respond to the data gathered. Both forms of assessment are important parts of our curriculum and assessment strategy and are incorporated into our approach to improvement at a classroom,

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[1] https://www.nfer.ac.uk/for-schools/free-resources-advice/assessment-hub/introduction-to-assessment/an-introduction-to-formative-and-summative-assessment/

school, and network level. The Ark Assessment Framework sets out in more detail the types of assessments used and when we use them.

Closing Gaps

We refer to the use of assessment in 'closing gaps'. At each assessment point we must be clear about the 'gaps' that we intend to close through our approach to curriculum, assessment and intervention. As set out in the table above, this affects the design of the assessment.

Table 2 Types of 'gap' that we tend to describe. It is important that we are clear on each when we are referring to assessment and intervention.

Curriculum gap	The gap between what we expected to teach and what has been taught over a period of time.
Knowledge gap	The gap between what students know and understand compared to what we would expect them to know and understand at that point. This gap needs to be understood on a granular level within each topic.
Performance gap	The is a quantifiable overall gap, on average how much less do students know now compared to how much we would expect students to know in a normal year
Attainment gap	The gap in attainment between different groups of students i.e. by disadvantage, gender, ethnic group etc. This can help us to identify groups of students who may need additional support.

We can understand the curriculum gap by looking at teachers' planning in comparison to the intended curriculum. However, knowledge gaps can only be established through assessment. Attainment and group gaps are as a result of curriculum and knowledge gaps. Further information about the gaps and their relationship to each other can be found in appendix 1.

The Ark Assessment Framework

The Ark assessment framework sets out guidance on assessment as well as setting *network wide assessment points*. It is expected that schools build all mandatory aspects of the Ark assessment framework into their own assessment policy. Where schools choose not to use optional elements set out here, their policy should achieve the same aims through a proven alternative approach.

The core aims of our assessment framework are to:

1) Support schools in regularly identifying gaps in students' knowledge to enable effective planning.
2) Measure the impact of our intended curriculum identifying areas for development.
3) Quantify students' attainment at times when inferences will be valid and useful.
4) Prepare students for end of phase external assessments.
5) Provide meaningful comparative data on a network level where useful and appropriate.

Aims 1) and 2) are mostly met using **formative assessment** throughout each academic year, supporting improvements in teaching and learning as each cohort progresses through the curriculum.

Aims 3) to 5) are mostly met through **summative network assessment points** across each academic year.

The balance of these aims is different in years 2 and 6 than in other years as we prepare students for statutory end of key stage assessments. This, therefore, impacts on how we use assessments in those year groups.

A *school assessment policy* should be in place which both complements and supplements the Ark Assessment Framework. It is important to note that on its own, the Ark Assessment Framework will not improve learning outcomes for your pupils, it must become an integral part of the curriculum as well as teaching and learning strategies.

Together As One

At primary, our network assessment framework currently covers reading, writing, maths and science. We know that schools will assess more widely than this to ensure students are making excellent progress in all subjects taught. It is intended that over time the network assessment framework will cover more subjects.

Formative Assessment

There are many forms of formative assessments, all in service of the curriculum and designed to support teachers, leaders and curriculum developers in understanding which elements of our curriculum are strong and which need revisiting. The key purpose of all formative assessment is to evaluate and adapt our curriculum whether that is at a classroom level, leading to changes in the next lesson being taught, or feeding into changes in the curriculum programme. Some of these assessments will be used continually, throughout every lesson whilst others are used less often such as at the end of a unit of work or over a longer period. The type and regularity of these will vary slightly from subject to subjects. The table below sets out the formative assessments that we believe create a robust assessment strategy throughout the academic year with indications of their regularity. All curriculum programmes are working towards providing resources for each of the types of assessment below making clear in their resources the regularity and format that each type of assessment will take in that subject.

Table 3 Overview of formative assessment as part of the Ark Assessment Framework

Type	Purpose	Timing	Format / Examples	Who uses data
Pre unit quiz	• Establish whether students have the prior knowledge needed to access the upcoming unit. • Support planning to address any gaps and misconceptions before building new knowledge.	Before a sequence of lessons. Regularity depends on subject (some sequences of lessons may not need a pre quiz) (10 – 15 mins)	Often multiple choice. Centrally written in Maths on Eedi. In development for Science (released 2022/23)	Teachers Students
In lesson assessment • Directed questioning • Hinge questions • Mini whiteboards • Exit tickets • Observations • Etc...	• Check understanding of key concepts throughout the lesson. • Check if ready to move on to a task or the next section of learning.	Throughout every lesson, timings decided at a school / teacher level	Varied, decided at a school / teacher level. This includes EExAT for EYFS	Teachers Students
Regular low stakes checkpoint • Bi-weekly quiz • Tri-weekly quiz • Post unit assessment • Etc...	• Check what students have and have not understood from recent teaching. • Supports planning of re-teach to address gaps and misconceptions immediately. • Identify areas of the curriculum programme that need to be strengthened. https://youtu.be/kpFKerUXHC8 • Identify schools with strong practice.	Shortly after a sequence of lessons - regularity depends on subject (10 – 15 mins)	Often multiple choice. Centrally written in Maths on Eedi. Other AC+ subjects have post unit assessments in booklets.	Teachers Students Network (curriculum programmes)
Termly / Half-termly assessments	• Check that students are remembering content over a longer period of time. • Make adaptations to the next term's curriculum to address areas of weakness and strengthen learning. • Identify areas of the curriculum programme that need to be strengthened and look for schools with strong practice.	End of every term 10- 50 mins	Reading: • RWI (half-termly) • PM Benchmark / YARC (All Yr1 + Yr2-6 for those reading more than 6 months below CA) Maths: • Arithmetic assessments (half termly), • Maths Mastery assessment Writing: • TAFs	Teachers Students School leadership Network

Pre-unit, in lesson and regular low stakes assessments are provided by curriculum programmes but are optional for all schools.

Termly / Half-termly assessments are mandatory and are set out in detail in later sections.

Together As One

As formative assessments are used throughout the academic year it is important that middle and senior leaders are able to use this information to manage performance in the school. Suggested questions that leaders may wish to ask to support and challenge colleagues are given in appendix 2.

Summative Assessment

The table below sets out the network-wide summative assessment points. All of these assessment points are mandatory. Schools may choose to build in additional summative assessment points but should consider the balance between time spent teaching and time spent assessing, as well as the validity and reliability of the inferences they intend to make from the results. It is also important to consider the workload implications of summative assessments.

There are additional summative assessments in place in years 2 and 6. These fulfil aim 4 of the assessment strategy to prepare students for end of phase statutory assessments.

Table 4 Summary of all mandatory summative assessment points across each year

Type	Year groups	Purpose	Timing	Format	Who uses data
NGRT	2 - 6	• Identify students who are reading below their chronological age • Plan intervention groups	September and July (all students)	Online – GL	Teachers SLT
Mid-year reading assessments	2 - 5	• Track students' attainment and progress in reading comprehension	End of Autumn 2 End of Spring 2	Headstart assessment	Teachers Student SLT Network
End of year assessments	1 - 5	• Understand the attainment and progress of students • Compare attainment between subjects and schools • Check that attainment and group gaps are closing • Understand students' ability to remember, apply and pull together content from across the curriculum	Summer 2	Reading: Headstart Maths: NTS Science: Headstart Writing TA	Teachers Student SLT Network
End of phase exam preparations	2	• Identify students who need additional support to meet their potential • Inform interventions	End of Autumn 2 End of Spring 2	Reading: Headstart Maths: Maths Mastery assessments Writing TA and prediction	Teachers Student SLT Network
Mock SATs	6	• Identify students who need additional support to meet their potential • Inform interventions	Beginning of Autumn 2 End of Spring 1	Written - past SATs papers Writing TA and prediction	Teachers Student SLT Network

						Predictions in all subjects	

Summative assessments are graded using scaled scores. In year 2 and 6 teachers are also asked to enter an end of year prediction for reading, writing and maths at each point when mock SATs take place.

Assessment timing overview

An assessment calendar will be published each year with the dates of each assessment window alongside data entry deadlines. However, the table below gives an overview of the assessments that will take place in each term for each year group.

|	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Nursery	EExAT Baseline	EExAT		EExAT		EExAT
Reception	RWI EExAT Baseline Reception baseline	RWI EExAT	RWI GLD prediction	RWI EExAT	RWI	RWI EExAT EYFS Profile
Yr 1	RWI PM / YARC	RWI MM Maths Writing TAF	RWI PM / YARC	RWI MM Maths Writing TAF	RWI PM / YARC	RWI Headstart Reading Headstart Science NTS Maths Writing TA Phonics screening
Yr 2	RWI Arithmetic NGRT PM / YARC (Students below CA)	RWI Arithmetic MM Maths Headstart Reading Writing TA Phonics screening	RWI Arithmetic PM / YARC (Students below CA)	RWI Arithmetic MM Maths Headstart Reading Writing TA	RWI / PM PM / YARC (Students below CA) SATs	RWI NGRT Headstart Science NTS Maths Phonics* screening

Yr 3	Arithmetic PM (Students below CA) NGRT	Arithmetic MM Maths Headstart reading Writing TAF	Arithmetic PM (Students below CA)	Arithmetic MM Maths Headstart reading Writing TAF	Arithmetic PM (Students below CA)	NTS Maths Headstart reading Headstart Science Writing TA NGRT
Yr 4	NGRT PM (Students below CA) Arithmetic	Arithmetic MM Maths Headstart reading Writing TAF	Arithmetic PM (Students below CA)	Arithmetic MM Maths Headstart reading Writing TAF	Arithmetic PM (Students below CA	NTS Maths Headstart reading Headstart Science Writing TA MTC NGRT
Yr 5	Arithmetic PM (Students below CA) NGRT	Arithmetic MM Maths Headstart reading Writing TAF	Arithmetic PM (Students below CA)	Arithmetic MM Maths Headstart reading Writing TAF	Arithmetic PM (Students below CA	NTS Maths Headstart reading Headstart Science Writing TA NGRT
Yr 6	NGRT Mock SATs PM (Students below CA)	Mock SATs Writing TA	PM (Students below CA)	Mock SATs Writing TA	SATs PM (Students below CA)	Headstart Science NGRT

Appendix 1: Gaps

We often talk about the attainment gap in schools, this is the gap between groups of students with particular characteristics i.e. PP, SEND etc. However, this gap is just one of many gaps that we need to consider.

Attainment gaps and school performance gaps are relatively abstract gaps in outcomes, once we have identified them we must then look into what is causing these gaps and therefore how to close them.

Gaps in outcomes come about because students do not know everything we would hope that they would at the point that attainment is measured. This could be due to gaps in curriculum coverage or gaps in students knowledge. These are provision gaps. If we are able to close the provision gaps then we will close the attainment and performance gaps.
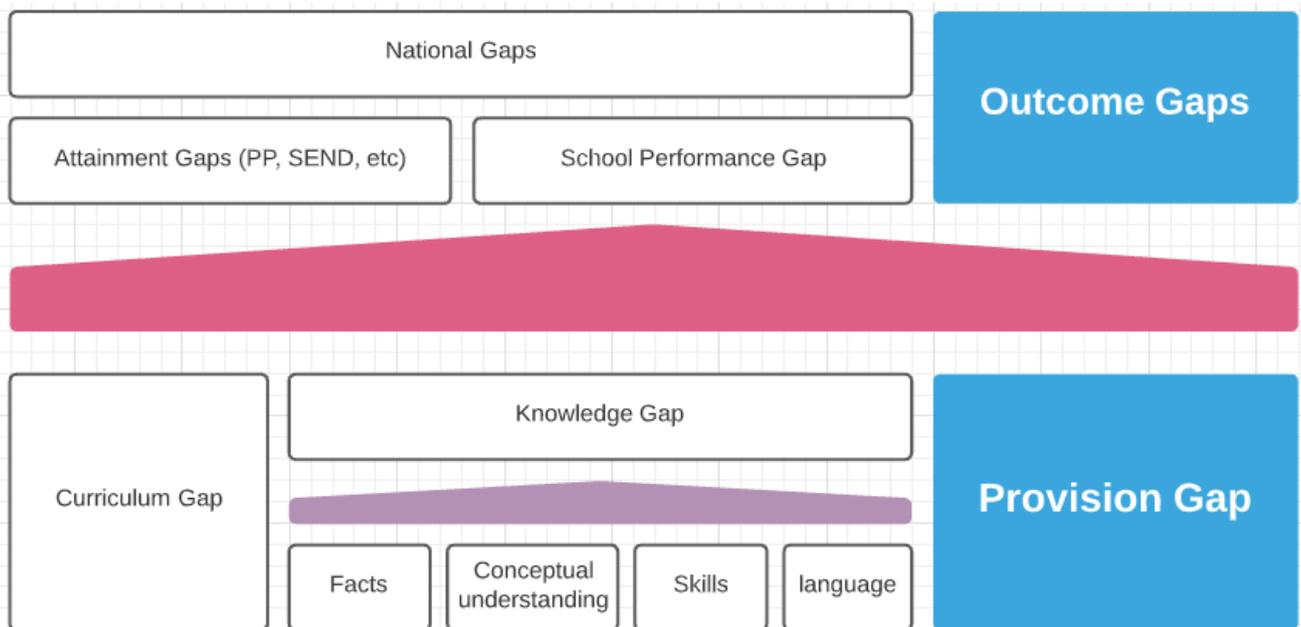
We need to be clear in conversations which gaps we are discussing and focus first on closing the provision gaps. A clear focus of teaching on the provision gaps will in turn close the outcomes caps.

Appendix 2 – Managing improvements using results of formative assessments

Questions for middle leaders to ask teachers

Class level analysis

1) Were there any question on the assessment that focused on topics you have not taught? Why?
2) Are there any questions where performance was weak because of the way in which the question was asked?
   a. Does the question need to be reviewed / changed?
   b. Do you need to teach the topic area in greater depth to support students in answering questions presented in an unfamiliar context?
3) Are there any topic areas that you have taught but students across the class have not performed well on?
4) How are you going to address these topics? Do you need any support with planning this?
5) What are the specific misconceptions that you have identified at a class level that need to be addressed? How and when are you going to address these misconceptions?
6) How have you adapted your curriculum / future teaching to close the gaps we have identified so far? Are you going to be able to address these gaps effectively and teach the new content required by the end of next term?
7) How and when are you going to check that the knowledge gaps identified have been closed?

Student level analysis

8) Are there any students who are of particularly concerned about? What are you going to do to support them?
9) Are there any students who have weaknesses in a particular area that are not common to the rest of the class? How are you going to address them?
10) How and when are you going to check the progress of these students in the areas you have identified?

Question for senior leaders to ask middle leaders:

1) Has the content you would have expected to be covered in the last half term been covered by all teachers in all year groups?
2) Are there any question in the diagnostic assessment that you need to adapt before you next use it?
3) Are there any topics where student's performance was weak across the department? What are you going to do to improve the quality of teaching in those topic areas?
4) Are there any adaptations that need to be made to the curriculum over the next half term to ensure department wide weaknesses or misconceptions are addressed?
5) Are there any adaptations you need to make to the previous terms curriculum so that outcomes are stronger when you come to teach it again next year?
6) Are there any teachers who struggled with teaching particular topics? How are you supporting those teachers to improve in that area?
7) Who are the students of concern across the department? What support are you putting in place for those students?
8) How are you going to be using department meetings over the next half term to support the improvement of teaching and learning and therefore outcomes?
9) How and when will you check that the gaps identified through this diagnostic assessment have been closed?

Together As One

Appendix 3 – Further Reading

Paul Bambrick-Santoyo (2018), "Leverage Leadership: A Practical Guide to Building Exceptional Schools", *Jossey-Bass*

Ruth Butler (1988), "Enhancing and undermining intrinsic motivation: The effects of task-involving and ego-involving evaluation on interest and performance". *British Journal of Educational Psychology*

Daisy Christodolu (2016), "Making good progress? The future of assessment for learning", *Oxford University Press*

Alfie Kohn (2011), "The case against grades", *Educational Leadersip*

Dylan Wiliam (2018), "Embedded formative assessment", *Solution Tree Press*

Harry Fletcher-Wood (2018) "Responsive teaching", *Routledge*

Dylan Wiliam & Paul Black (1998) "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment", *Gl assessment*