

Dingle Community Primary School



Personal, Social and Health Education

A Guide to Assessment of PSHE



March 2026



Introduction

Assessment is as central to effective teaching and learning in PSHE education as it is in any other subject. It is therefore important to understand the process of, and reasons for, assessing learning in PSHE.

Assessment refers to gauging what has been learned and what still needs to be learned. It therefore differs from evaluation, which is about the process: how well activities worked, how useful resources were, how interesting students found the lesson, and so on. Teachers have tended to find evaluation easier in PSHE education than assessment but both are central to an effective programme.

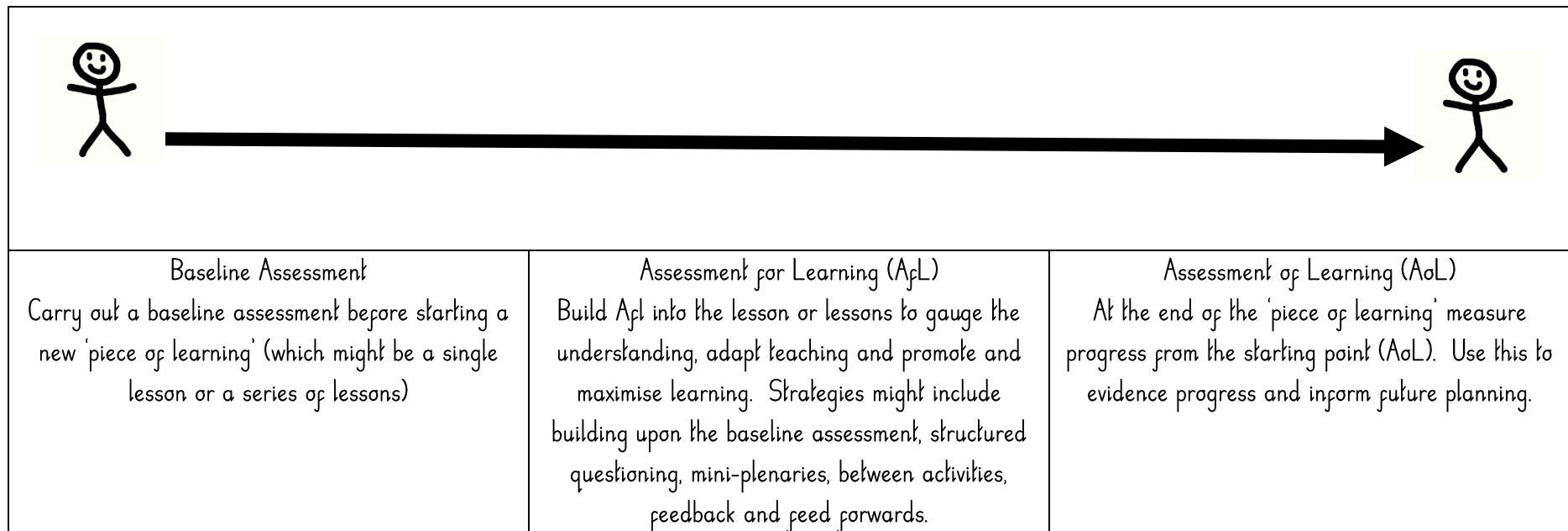
Learning in PSHE education should be assessed for several reasons:

- ✓ It is important for pupils to have opportunities to reflect on their learning, especially when that learning relates directly to the individual's identity – their personal qualities, attitudes, skills, attributes, achievements and influences.
- ✓ It is important for teachers to feel confident that learning has taken place, to be able to demonstrate progress, and to identify future learning needs.
- ✓ Assessment increases pupils' motivation and improves learning, as their increased awareness of their own progress and development illustrates the value of their learning.
- ✓ It allows the leadership team, parents, governors and school inspectors to see the impact PSHE education is having for pupils and for whole-school outcomes, such as personal development, safeguarding, SMSC development and the promotion of fundamental British values. Without assessing PSHE education all you can do is describe provision; you cannot show its impact.
- ✓ The Department for Education (DfE) states in the statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health education that "schools should have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas"

Personal attributes, so central to PSHE education, are arguably the hardest aspects of learning to assess. It is difficult for teachers to accurately assess a pupil's self-confidence or sense of their own identity and values. However, pupils themselves will be able to judge, for instance, whether they feel more confident, or have

a firmer sense of their own beliefs and opinions than they did before a particular series of lessons. Such personal reflection in PSHE education lessons is essential, so ensuring pupils have time and space within the lessons to reflect on this, either privately or through discussion, is a vital part of the assessment process. assessment.

It would be inappropriate for assessment in PSHE education to be about grades, or about passing or failing. The model of assessment that is most meaningful in PSHE education is ipsative assessment. Ipsative assessment compares where a pupil is at the end of a lesson or series of lessons against where they were before the lesson(s), in a similar way to an athlete measuring today's performance against their own previous performance. So the benchmark against which progress is measured is the pupil's own starting point, not the performance of others or the requirements of an exam syllabus. This gives us the following model for assessing any learning in PSHE education



Baseline Assessment

PSHE education covers issues and areas of life which children and young people will be affected by in different ways and at different times. As such we cannot make any assumptions based on pupils' age or year group about their existing knowledge, understanding, attributes, skills, strategies, beliefs and attitudes. So to assess learning and progress effectively, it is important to carry out a baseline assessment before teaching anything new. As pupils' learning in topics such as healthy eating, online safety, relationships and so on will come from a number of sources, we can only see whether they have made progress in their learning if we have established the knowledge, understanding, attributes, skills, strategies, beliefs and attitudes they had before any new teaching took place. The learning we wish to assess will relate to the pupils' attributes and skills, as well as their knowledge and understanding related to the theme or enquiry which is being offered. Pupils' existing knowledge and understanding is often the easiest learning to assess but whilst gauging pupils' existing skills, strategies, attitudes, beliefs and attributes can never be an exact science, there are activities that provide an insight into their starting point. Some examples of activities that lend themselves well to baseline assessment in PSHE education are outlined below. The elements of learning for which they are more or less useful will of course depend upon the exact nature of the activity and its context, so these are given for guidance only and are not definitive.

| Baseline Assessment Activity | More Useful for Assessing | Less Useful for Assessing |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Questioning | Knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs, strategies, pupils' questions relating to the topic | Skills, attributes |
| Discussion | Knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs, strategies, pupils' questions relating to the topic | Skills, attributes |
| Brainstorming | Knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs | Skills, strategies, attributes |
| Drama – role-play, hot seating, freeze-frame | Skills, strategies, attitudes | Knowledge, understanding |
| Storyboard/cartoon strips/scenario script writing | Skills, strategies, attitudes, attributes | Knowledge, understanding attributes |
| Responding to a scenario, picture or video clip | Knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs, strategies | Skills, attributes |

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| Mind map or spider diagram | Knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs | Skills, strategies, attributes |
| Graffiti Wall or Working Wall | Starting point of a group, knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs, pupils' questions relating to the topic | Starting point of individuals, Skills, strategies, attributes |
| Quiz | Knowledge, understanding | Skills, strategies, attributes |
| Questionnaire | Knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs | Skills, strategies, attributes |
| Continuum/washing line | Attitudes, beliefs, attributes | Knowledge, skills, understanding, attributes |
| Points on a scale (e.g. pupils rate themselves on a scale for where they see themselves to be in relation to the learning outcomes) | Attitudes, beliefs, attributes | Knowledge, skills, understanding, attributes |
| Draw and Write (pupils respond in pictures and words to an open ended neutral question e.g. draw a healthy person, draw someone doing something risky. | Knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs, complex concepts | Skills, strategies, attributes |
| Explain to an alien | Knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs, strategies, complex concepts | Skills, attributes |
| Card sort e.g. Diamond 9 | Attitudes, beliefs, understanding | Skills, knowledge, attributes |

Assessing progress over the course of a lesson or series of lessons

At the end of the lesson or series of lessons, pupils should have opportunities to demonstrate the progress they have made from their starting point assessed in the baseline activity. Possibly the simplest and most effective way of demonstrating progress is to either repeat, or better still, revisit the original baseline activity. Some baseline assessment activities (such as mind-maps, 'draw and write', 'explain to an alien'), lend themselves very well to a simple revisit where each pupil uses a different colour to add to their baseline activity and make any changes they now want to make, allowing the pupil and teacher to clearly see how far they have

come in their learning. In other cases, pupils might repeat the activity or carry out a completely different activity. Taking the examples of baseline activities above, the table below indicates possible ways of revisiting or using those activities to demonstrate progress at the end of the lesson or series of lessons. Again this is not a definitive list and activities should always be used flexibly to meet the needs of pupils and the learning objectives.

Using baseline activities to measure progress in the endpoint activities:

| Baseline Assessment Activity | Endpoint activity to demonstrate progress |
|--|---|
| Questioning | Revisit key questions, extending with higher order questions. Invite pupils to think of key questions for future learning. |
| Discussion | Revisit main arguments from baseline discussion; formal debate; presentations |
| Brainstorming | If written down, revisit in a different colour – add, amend, expand. |
| Drama – role-play, hot seating, freeze-frame | Repeat activity, showing how strategies have developed/changed and demonstrating new skills; script a conversation or role-play on a related but more challenging situation |
| Storyboard/carton strips/scenario script writing | Evaluate effectiveness of baseline strategies/ideas through discussion; revisit in a different colour – add, amend, expand, change; role-play their revised script |
| Responding to a scenario, picture or video clip | If written down, revisit in a different colour – add, amend, expand; discuss or write down any changes to their response as a result of the learning. |
| Mind map or spider diagram | Revisit in a different colour – add, amend, expand. |
| Graffiti Wall or Working Wall | Revisit in a different colour – add, amend, expand; answer questions written on the wall at the beginning and think of key questions for future learning. |
| Quiz | Repeat quiz; ask pupils to write a new set of quiz questions for peers to answer |

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| Questionnaire | Repeat questionnaire; ask pupils to write a new questionnaire for peers to answer. |
| Continuum/washing line | Repeat the activity, asking pupils to discuss whether- and if so how far- they have moved along the continuum and why; photograph new continuum or washing line positions and compare with photo of baseline positions. |
| Points on a scale (e.g. pupils rate themselves on a scale for where they see themselves to be in relation to the learning outcomes) | Pupils rate themselves on the same scale in the light of the new learning. |
| Draw and Write (pupils respond in pictures and words to an open ended neutral question e.g. draw a healthy person, draw someone doing something risky. | Revisit in a different colour – add, amend, expand. |
| Explain to an alien | Revisit in a different colour – add, amend, expand; think of additional questions for the alien to ask to explore the concept further and answer each other's questions. |
| Card sort e.g. Diamond 9 | Repeat the card sort; photograph and compare to a photo of the original; justify verbally or in writing any changes to the order resulting from the new learning. |

Additional ideas for endpoint activities to demonstrate learning:

- Presentations
- Producing resources and materials to teach younger pupils
- Leading a discussion or other learning activity with younger pupils
- Producing a blog or podcast
- Keeping a journal, diary or log of times when they have demonstrated a particular skill or attribute during the week