

School leaders' views

[Music]

Narrator: We're going to look at the impact of assessing pupils' progress on teaching and learning. How does it affect the school as a whole? What do senior managers think of the benefits of knowing where children are against national standards?

Steve: We knew that we weren't using formative assessment enough. We were basing all our evidence on summative assessment and formal tests. We knew we needed to engage our children in their learning a lot more. We wanted to make them part of it much more.

Jo: Properties of a quadrilateral. What's a quadrilateral, George?

George: A four-sided shape.

Flo: OK. We need to see what the people are thinking by your facial expressions, by your body language. We need to be able to work out what you're thinking.

Steve: In lots of ways, it has affected our teaching and learning, right from its core.

Flo: Freeze! What's the older brother thinking right now? Joe?

Joe: Uh?

Flo: Yeah.

Joe: Really like, shocked that he's here.

Flo: Yeah, I like that. OK.

Narrator: Newly qualified teacher Flo is collecting reading evidence during an RE lesson.

Jackie: Who found theirs took the longest, or whose was fairly quick...

Narrator: And Jackie is collecting evidence for maths during science.

Ross: There's this feeling that you don't need to concentrate on the end of the journey to get the best effect from your assessment, and really the best work that we've been doing has been looking at formative assessment all the way through the teaching process.

Pupil: Crackers.

Pupil: That would come under sugars...

[Music]

Antony: Group on the outside, anticlockwise.

Ross: A cross-curricular approach is vital in a primary setting. It's something that we hold deeply dear because it's something that we've worked on for so long. We know that learning is only effective if children can pick up the learning in an English lesson and apply it in another lesson. How are they applying it in PE? How does it come through in science?

Pupil: Forward. Stop, stop, stop.

Katie: What do you think you might be able to find out next?

Pupil: How many cows.

Lin: That's what we're looking to sort of move out across the school, and where the moderation comes in, in school standardisation and moderation, that's very important, having those conversations about evidence, and about what you're seeing is really, really important.

Katie: But I do feel that in that strand, that maybe we could highlight the appropriate vocabulary that was used confidently.

Teacher: Yeah.

Antony: I'm saying here that he would be a low 3 at the moment, because he hasn't...

Ross: There's always been a slight tension with teachers about comparing their knowledge of children with how they perform in a summative test, and there's sometimes a mismatch, and this will help us be even more confident that what we're giving is a standardised, but comprehensive, judgment because there's a wealth of materials to support that.

Steve: The teachers plan from the curriculum, and that's helping them to produce a broader range of activities for the children.

Debbie: Could we have changed that one, because you're telling them that there's a message in the story? Could you not ask it to try and get them to tell you that?

Flo: So ask what's the purpose of the story?

Debbie: Yeah.

Ian: I haven't really had to crack the whip to get people involved in it. People have seen that it makes their lives easier, and the sorts of conversations in the staff room are 'Well, I've found out much more information about that child now. I now know why that child's making progress.'

Jo: So if we just have a quick read through it and then see if we agree with what's been highlighted.

Teacher: OK.

Lin: This is definitely the way to go forward, because the evidence is there in terms of the progress that children are making, and whether that's looking at what children are producing in terms of their work, the conversations that you have with children, or even to those numbers in boxes in terms of the levels that they get at the end of a key stage.