TAPS Focused Assessment

Teacher Assessment in Primary Science (TAPS)
support for Working Scientifically

April 2020

Primary Science Teaching Trust

BATH SPA UNIVERSITY

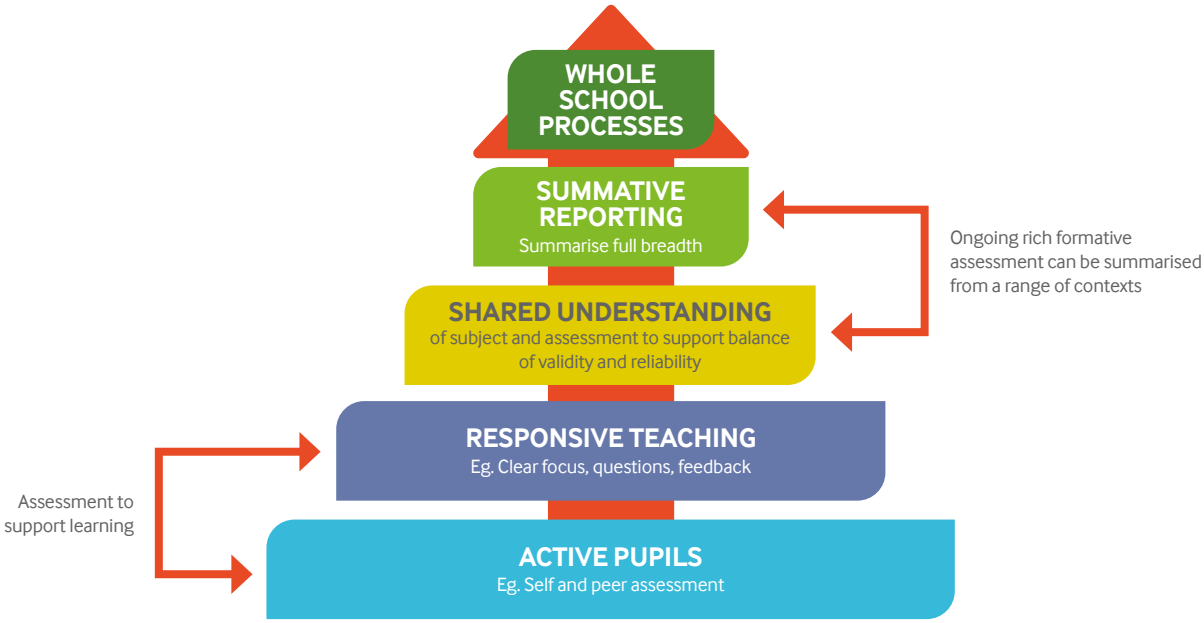
TAPS Focused Assessment

The Teacher Assessment in Primary Science (TAPS) project is based at Bath Spa University and has been funded by the Primary Science Teaching Trust (PSTT) since 2013.

TAPS project researchers and teachers work collaboratively to develop support for valid, reliable and manageable teacher assessment. TAPS has developed a pyramid-shaped framework (see below) and the Focused Assessment approach which supports teachers and pupils to focus on one part of an enquiry at a time, within the context of a whole investigation.

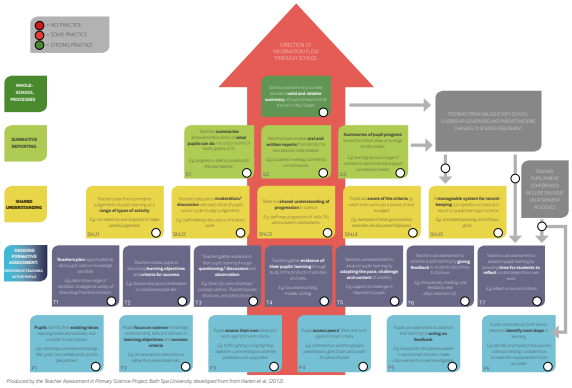
The TAPS Focused Assessment approach embeds assessment within classroom primary science activities. Taking one focus at a time means that teaching and assessing science becomes more manageable. Many teachers find that annotating plans or just noting those who have 'not yet met the objective' is sufficient for record-keeping. During the lesson children may well be involved in other aspects of scientific enquiry that are not the focus, but any recording of children's learning is around the focused element.

Assessment indicators on the TAPS plans provide suggestions about what the children might do or say to demonstrate their science skills or knowledge. Over time, the full range of children's science enquiry skills and understanding of science can be considered in depth. Completing Focused Assessment activities roughly two-thirds of the way through a topic means that the assessment information can be used formatively; specific areas for children's development can be identified and subsequent teaching can take this into account. These Focused Assessments can also contribute to an ongoing summative.



The TAPS pyramid model

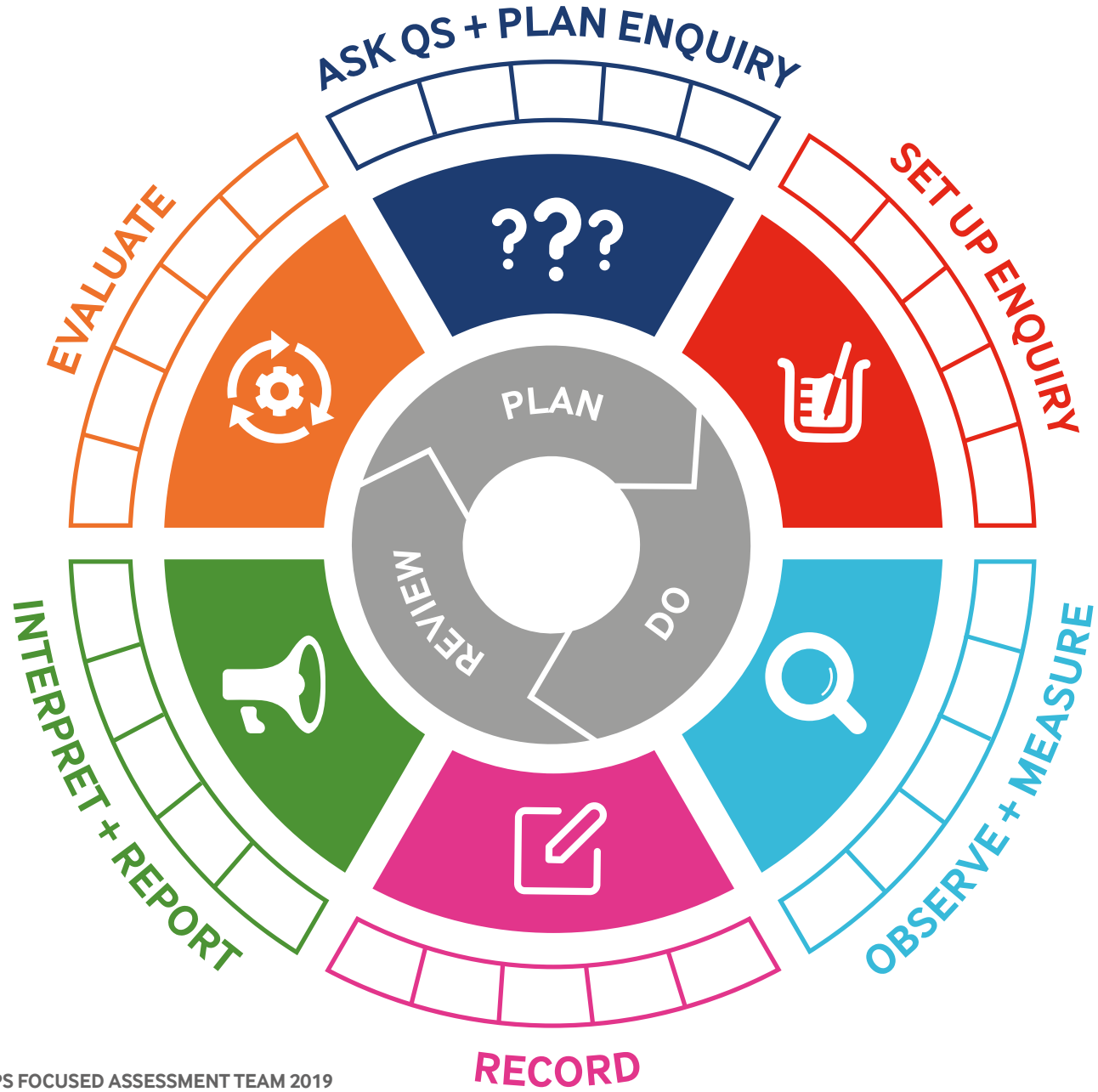
The TAPS pyramid provides a model to support schools to develop their practice. The blue pupil and teacher layers contain examples of classroom practice, for example, choosing a focused skill for a lesson or adapting activities to support all learners access an investigation. The yellow 'shared understanding' layer considers ways to develop the range of science (validity) and the consistency of practice (reliability). The green layers provide ideas for summarising learning for reporting purposes. Clicking on each layer or box will take users of the website or pdf to numerous examples from schools across the UK.



The Working Scientifically Wheel

The National Curriculum for England (2013) outlines the skills for Working Scientifically. TAPS has created this Working Scientifically Wheel which can be used in class to draw attention to the focused skill in each lesson. Colouring a section for each focused skill provides an opportunity to check that all of the skills are covered across the year.

The TAPS activity plans provide guidance for using the Focused Assessment approach to support progression in science skills. Pupil outcomes from each focused activity can be used formatively to consider next steps for the class or individual, and/or summatively to inform summaries for the next class teacher or for parents.



TAPS FOCUSED ASSESSMENT TEAM 2019
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Quick start teacher guide to using TAPS Focused Assessments

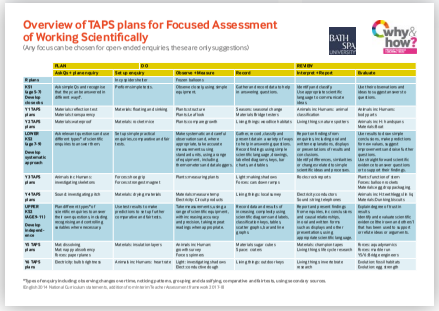
When using the Teacher Assessment in Primary Science (TAPS) resources for supporting science teaching and assessment, start by trying some TAPS plans with your class.

CHOOSING A FOCUS

Look at the **Focused Assessment Overview**.

Select a TAPS plan linked to your science topic, your Working Scientifically Focus or your pupils' needs.

Two-thirds through your topic is a good time: info can then be used formatively and summatively.



PREPARING

Use the **TAPS plan** to prepare the lesson for your class, maintaining the skill focus.

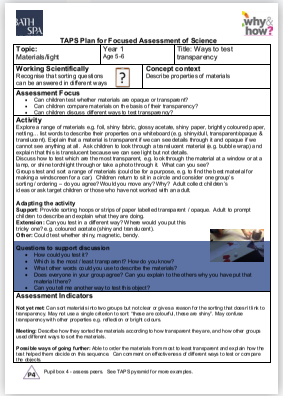
Familiarise yourself and any supporting adults with the assessment indicators, choice of recording and **questions** to support discussion.

ORGANISING

Organise the class in a way which will both: help the children to use the focused skill; and help you to **observe** and **talk** to the children **during** the activity (e.g. small groups/pairs).

FOCUSED RECORDING

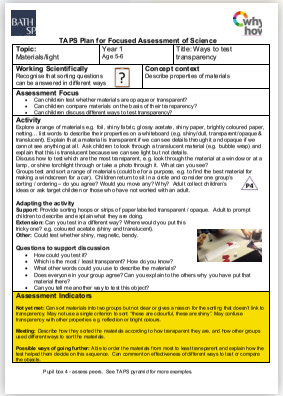
Choose a way of **recording the focused skill** which is appropriate for the task and the pupils, e.g. post-it pupil comments, photos, pupil presentations, written work, peer review...



USING EVIDENCE

Compare pupil outcomes with **Assessment Indicators**.

Use judgements to plan next steps for class and individuals.

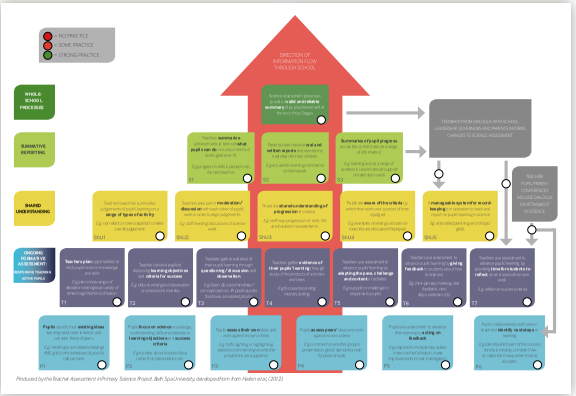


MODERATING

Discuss and compare pupil outcomes and judgements with colleagues to enhance reliability, supported by criteria and exemplars.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

Collating evidence about pupil skills and concepts from FA, alongside a range of other class activities (e.g. from floor books, pupil books, teacher class discussion notes) helps to provide a valid & reliable summary.



Refer to blue layers of TAPS Pyramid for more ideas.

Refer to yellow and green layers of pyramid of TAPS Pyramid for more ideas.

TAPS Focused Assessment overview, plans and TAPS pyramid available on the PSTT website here: pstt.org.uk/unique-resources/taps