Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy

Individual Leaning Focus (ILF), Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessing Pupils’ Progress (APP)

Context

Beatrice Tate School has developed and refined its current assessment, recording and reporting system over a three year period and puts the learner at the heart of assessment by ensuring that teachers can effectively track pupils’ progress, diagnose strengths and weaknesses and improve teaching and learning.

Key issues:
- the learner is at the heart of assessment
- assessment need to provides a view of the whole learner
- assessment is integral to teaching and learning
- assessment includes reliable judgements about how learners are doing

Assessment Phases

- lesson by lesson assessment and recording providing pupils with immediate feedback to plan the next steps in learning
- progress is recorded using our server based tracking system
- termly formative assessments lead to an ILF progress report which is moderated by the Deputy Headteacher (DHT) and team leader and sent home to parents.
- a summative annual report on progress is sent to parents in the summer
- transitional assessment where individual achievement is celebrated is on-going across the academic year.
- a report on progress towards the personalised targets in the individual learning focus is used for annual reviews.

Engaging with this assessment cycle provides the information we need to:
- inform planning to improve teaching and learning
- identify priorities for professional development
- improve teaching and learning across the school

Conceptualising progress

Individual pupil progress is assessed on the pupil’s age and their prior attainment. We have high expectations for all pupils and set challenging targets for their learning.

Linear and lateral progress

For many pupils with learning difficulties, progress within or across the levels is as important as progress to higher levels and the assessment systems at Beatrice Tate school are designed to recognise, highlight and acknowledge lateral progress. The school uses PIVATS 5 point breakdown scale of each P Level as a baseline to track small-step progress. The school is also considering ‘Routes for Learning’ as a more effective tool to assess, plan and record progress for pupils below P4.

Individual learning profiles

Some pupils may demonstrate progress in unusual ways. Many pupils with learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, multi-sensory impairments and complex physical disabilities and medical conditions, tend to develop uneven or “spikey” profiles of development across subjects, in different
aspects of subjects or in different contexts. The current ARR system is effective in recognising the ‘spikey’ nature of pupil profiles and ensures that targets in the ILF are targeted at ‘gaps’ of understanding. For example, a pupil may present globally as P5 Speaking & Listening but may have an ILF targeted at an aspect at P4 or even P3ii.

There is a strong focus on raising attainment in specific areas to secure lateral progress when pupil evidence reveals an uneven profile across subjects or within a subject. However, some pupils will retain their uneven or spikey as these may result from particular peaks or islands of ability or aptitude or from particular aspects of their disability or condition. Occasionally, it may be difficult to support a particular pupil in gaining new skills. Under these circumstances (or when a pupil is losing skills as a result of a deteriorating medical condition) we may decide to recognise and report that the pupil has consolidated or maintained skills. Contextual factors in learning (for example, working with a preferred member of staff; with trusted peers; with preferred resources; at a particular time of day; or in a conducive environment) can have a major impact on perceived progress for some pupils.

If a pupil shows no significant progress in an ILF (numerically recorded over time), team leaders review the ILF to ensure that all contextual factors are considered. Subsequently, a new or lateral ILF may be introduced. This does not mean that an area of consolidation or maintenance will be discarded e.g. a routine physiotherapy based focus will continue as a vital part of the pupils education and progress will continue to be monitored, but it will not remain an active ILF on the ARR system.

Using evidence

Working with evidence

The judgements made periodically about attainment should be informed by evidence. However, evidence from pupils working within the P scales is by its nature likely to differ from that of pupils making typical progress through national curriculum levels. To reflect the judgements staff make on pupil progress, this evidence is likely to take a number of different forms including, perhaps, a greater reliance on the views and interpretations of others. Peer moderation of all judgements is implicit in our system.

When using the APP approach you can support judgements with staff observations. A few brief, telling annotations about significant new attainments or landmarks in learning can capture the essence of a pupil’s progress over time more effectively than incremental illustrations. Lesson feedback and our ILF/AfL online system is based on recording detailed staff observations and best-fit judgements.

Judgements can rely on observations and materials arising from day-to-day teaching and learning. Normal classroom assessment practice provides the necessary information. You don’t need to set up separate assessment activities, with specific criteria or conditions, to make periodic judgements on pupils’ progress.

Observation has a crucial role in the process of assessment. Reflections based on professional knowledge and experiences often provide the most vital evidence when you step back to make a judgement. ILF progress is regularly reviewed collectively by key stage teams.
Refining evidence

As the picture of the pupil's progress builds over time, they can be involved in reviewing evidence and making decisions about what to keep. The key objective is to capture significant new responses, outcomes, indications of learning or attainment rather than to confirm established responses. Stepping back at regular intervals, using these working collections of materials, enables teachers to take a broader view of pupils' achievements.

Large collections of evidence are not necessarily required to substantiate best-fit judgements. To ensure this part of the process isn’t cumbersome, teachers need to use their professional discretion in deciding what sufficient evidence to support a secure judgement is.

Making judgements

Assessing the overall performance of a pupil

Teachers should base periodic, best-fit judgements on a review of the significant evidence generated by normal, everyday teaching and learning processes. They should use professional judgement to decide which P level description offers the best fit for a pupil’s performance. Considering pupils’ work against elements of the P levels is an effective way of clarifying a best-fit judgement. Teachers may need to work with colleagues to review their perspectives and decide whether a pupil’s performance in a given subject, taken as a whole over a year or key stage, represents secure attainment at a given level.

A pupil doesn’t have to demonstrate every element in a level description or demonstrate an element a certain number of times for teachers to judge that they’re working at a given level. Teachers should view the level descriptions in the P scales holistically and decide when the pupil has reached a level. It is essential that teachers develop confidence their professional judgements.

Flexibility in using the P scales

Teachers should not make judgements about levels on the basis of a single piece of work or any single item of evidence. Evidence from day-to-day assessment processes can be used to come to provisional judgements about a pupil’s performance, but from there, teachers can step back to confirm and formalise those judgements against national standards provided by the P scales on a periodic basis. However, pupils don’t need to repeat responses that are regarded as secure (by performing a given skill five times over, for example).

Remember that all pupils working at these levels are likely to need some form of prompting with the task. Elements of the performance descriptions at P1 to P3 in particular, acknowledge that responses at these levels may be ‘fully prompted’, ‘co-active’, ‘shared’ or ‘supported’. These and equivalent forms of support don’t invalidate pupils’ attainments at these levels.

Attainment Scale

When making best-fit judgements, teachers will need to take account of:

- pupils’ prior attainments
- the levels of support, modelling or prompting pupils receive
- other contextual issues that might influence learning and responses
- the effects of the barriers to learning experienced by pupils
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Some pupils with uneven profiles of development may reveal peaks or troughs in their learning within a subject. If there’s sufficient evidence, teachers may award pupils a level on the basis of a best-fit judgement.

The examples of activities and responses in the P scales descriptions are illustrative rather than prescriptive. Staff are encouraged to treat these examples with flexibility and draw on professional expertise to recognise other responses that represent alternative but cognitively equivalent learning. This is particularly the case where other activities are more meaningful or are preferred by pupils, or where barriers to learning make some aspects of the level descriptions inappropriate.

Staff are also encouraged to personalise assessment in this way, negotiating with pupils to minimise barriers to assessment. When acknowledging evidence of progress in judgements, teacher should note activities that are different from but equivalent to those listed in the performance descriptions that enabled a pupil to make a valid response at a given level.

Partnerships for assessment

Collaboration for assessment

While teachers are ultimately responsible for making periodic assessment judgements in relation to national standards, many people can contribute to the evidence that supports these judgements. Indeed, where pupils have SEND or learning difficulties, dialogue is crucial to the process of making judgements. Judgements should not be made in isolation. All target setting and judgements are regularly reviewed and moderated by TA’s, teachers, team leaders and senior managers.

Working with support staff

Classroom support staff, teaching assistants and learning mentors can often offer valuable insights into the responses made by pupils with SEND or learning difficulties on a day-to-day basis. Colleagues should be encouraged to share their thoughts about the emerging attainments they see in pupils’ everyday work. Shared reflections, collaborative processes of review and record-keeping practices that welcome contributions from all the members of the classroom team help to secure valid periodic judgements using the P scales.

Working with other professionals

Dialogue with other professionals can often confirm the significance, in terms of attainment, of pupils’ responses as observed over time and in a range of contexts. Quality of assessments can be improved when working closely with therapists, sensory support staff or psychologists to review and reflect upon pupils’ learning or to carry out an audit of the significance of the responses that pupils make. The school has been successful in developing an effective trans-professional status where therapists and associated professionals are working collaboratively on ensuring progress towards a mutually agreed target in the pupil’s individual learning focus.

Working with parents, carers and family members

Discussion with parents, carers and family members can enhance assessment... Discussing progress with people who know the pupil in a wide range of settings can help to inform periodic assessment and resolve uncertainties over best-fit judgements by providing evidence of the application of learning in contexts beyond the classroom. Progress towards the personalised learning targets in the
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ILF is now an integral part of the annual review process. Parents have commented that they appreciate the emphasis on key skill development and the evidence of progress.

**Working with pupils**

Pupils are meaningfully involved in the assessment process. The comments they make, using their preferred method of communication, as they review and think about their achievements can yield valuable evidence of progress. In turn, involving pupils in self-assessment can help them to become more aware of their own learning. Photographs, video clips, sound recordings, object prompts and tactile cues are very effective in involving pupils actively in recalling and reviewing their own learning. Visual images can sometimes prompt responses from pupils in situations in which spoken language is ineffective.

Assessment within group activities is often of particular relevance where pupils have SEND or learning difficulties. Pupil assessment folders can include evidence of peer-supported learning and peer review in the form of comments from other pupils. Take account of these notes and comments when using the APP approach to make periodic judgements about the progress made by individual pupils. The key task for teachers is to decide on the impact of the group activity on performance. At Beatrice Tate School all pupils are actively involved in all aspects of ARR.

**Securing reliable judgements**

**Securing reliable judgements through dialogue**

Discussion is a key part of the process that enables teachers to review and confirm the accuracy of assessment judgements. Professional dialogue can help ensure that the best fit is the right fit and that judgements you make are sound and consistent.

There’s no single way of securing reliable judgements, but this section provides guidance on assessment dialogue operating at three levels:

- in class teams and in teaching groups within a school
- across a whole school
- between schools in clusters, local authorities and regional or national groupings.

Good practice can be supported through a cycle of activities operating at three levels.

**Additional Information**

*Data submitted and processed by CEM P Scale Project Durham University*

*Comparative data - Progression Guidance data set 3*

*Reference: QCDA ‘Using the P scales to assess pupils’ progress’ 2011*