

## **New Perspectives School Assessment Policy**

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### **Introduction**

Following the 2013 Primary Assessment and Accountability consultation, the Department for Education designed a set of principles for assessing pupils' progress against the school's curriculum, these state that effective assessment systems:

- Give reliable information to parents about how their child, and their child's school, is performing.
- Help drive improvement for pupils and teachers.
- Make sure the school is keeping up with external best practice and innovation.

These principles have been used to guide the practice and procedures for assessment at New Perspectives School. In addition to this, regard has been given to the following:

- Part 1 of the Independent School Standards (ISS), which states that independent schools must ensure that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- Ofsted's Education inspection framework Overview of research (2019) which states that, whilst formative assessment is designed to inform the teacher about their pupils' performance, knowledge and skills, summative assessment is more useful for general quality control and to provide a picture of how well a pupil (or group of pupils) has performed over a time period on a set of learning goals in a particular subject.
- Ofsted's Non-association independent schools' handbook (updated October 2021) which explains that, during inspection, schools can be asked to 'explain why they have decided to collect whatever assessment data they collect, what they are drawing from their data and how that informs their curriculum and teaching'.
- Public Health England's The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment (2014) which concludes that 'pupils with better health and wellbeing are likely to achieve better academically' but also states that achievement in school can have a positive impact on wellbeing.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Curriculum Policy and Feedback and Marking Policy.

## Rationale

Due to the nature of our cohort, measuring progress can be a challenge and the small number of learners in each year group can make the statistical analysis of trends difficult. Some of the issues faced include:

- A lack of prior data due to pupils having been out of school for a period of time.
- Pupils having gaps in their knowledge due to disengagement/absence/exclusions from lessons in previous settings.
- The impact of the Covid Pandemic on attendance and learning
- A wide range of individual, sometimes complex, needs including SEND pupils may have in addition to Autism (e.g., ADHD, Cerebral Palsy, PDA) and mental health issues (including PTSD due to trauma suffered in previous educational settings or abuse).
- Trauma specifically associated with assessment which may be ongoing (i.e. anxiety and the fear of failure) or from experiences in previous settings specifically linked to an assessment

Staff must often be creative in their approach to assessment, and it is vital that staff build trust with our pupils. Upon admission to the school, the main focus of the curriculum for a new pupil is often wellbeing and building relationships with staff for a period of time. It is important for the school to measure social and emotional development as well as academic progress to ensure that pupils are ready to learn.

## Aims

The following are central to the provision of education at New Perspectives School:

**Assessment** of pupil's needs, gaps in learning and abilities.

**Recording** achievements and experiences.

**Reporting** these to parents/carers and other professionals.

This policy aims to:

1. Provide clear guidelines on the school's approach to assessment of progress.
2. Establish a coherent approach to assessment across all subjects.
3. Provide a system that is clear to learners, staff and other stakeholders.

Education staff will aim to:

- Facilitate individual progress and attainment for all our pupils through appropriate planning, recording, assessing and evaluation of their work.
- Ensure accurate recording and reporting to parents/carers, statutory agencies and governors.
- Use the target setting process to build in challenge and to motivate pupils.
- Contribute to the process of writing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) Annual reports and Annual Reviews.
- Recognise and take account of the variety of prior learning experiences, learning styles, special educational needs and strengths for all pupils.
- Identify achievements and plan for future progress.
- Ensure continuity and progression.

## **Types of Assessment**

**Summative Assessment** provides a snapshot of attainment at the end of a unit, term, year or key stage. It makes judgments about a pupils' performance in relation to national standards and can therefore be used by the school to determine areas for development.

**Formative Assessment** (Assessment for Learning (AFL)) is the day to day, ongoing and continuous assessment that enables teachers to identify what a pupil has learned and what the next steps are. Key strategies used to ensure good formative assessment are described below.

**Diagnostic Assessment** helps to identify pupil's strengths and areas for development. Outcomes from written, oral or online assessments can be used to plan future work and to identify groups of pupils who need support. This process also helps us with our target setting and to reflect on the teaching and learning strategies which we use.

## Assessment for Learning Strategies

Strategy Used	How and when	Purpose
Learning Objectives	<p>Learning objectives from medium-term plans and are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons.</p> <p>Where relevant teachers explain how these build towards an end point.</p>	<p>Clarify the learning objective. Give learning a clear focus.</p>
Success Criteria/Lesson Outcomes	<p>Success criteria/lesson outcomes are shared, discussed and agreed with pupils.</p> <p>Along with Learning Objectives these are reviewed with pupils at the end of each lesson.</p>	<p>Clarify the lesson outcomes.</p> <p>Set expected standards (individualised where necessary).</p>
Live Feedback	<p>Work is discussed with pupils in the lesson, improvements may be made in response.</p> <p>Staff should model skills and correct misconceptions.</p>	<p>Immediate impact on standards and better understanding.</p> <p>Misconceptions are addressed.</p>
Feedback and marking	<p>Oral and written feedback, linked to learning objectives and outcomes.</p>	<p>Pupils receive feedback on how they can improve their work and make progress towards their personal targets.</p>
Observation	<p>Ongoing observations watching, listening and talking.</p>	<p>To inform assessment and the creation of curricular that take account of pupils' interests.</p>
Questioning	<p>Teachers encourage, trigger and sustain verbal dialogue.</p>	<p>To ascertain prior learning and understanding of new topics.</p> <p>To enable pupils to become independent, inquisitive learners.</p>
Self / Peer Assessment	<p>Pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and what they need to develop further.</p> <p>Pupils are encouraged to assess each other's work and to provide fair and helpful feedback.</p>	<p>To be reflective and able to self-assess.</p> <p>To have a voice in their own learning, to share ideas with their peers.</p>

## The Use of Baseline Assessment

All staff at New Perspectives School place great emphasis on 'knowing' our pupils. Knowledge of our pupils is gathered in a number of ways:

- Information from previous settings and EHCPs.
- Induction interviews with parents and pupils and continuous discussion.
- Reading ages.
- Maths and English baseline assessments.
- The use of introductory tasks, mini quizzes and games.

Following a period of getting to know our pupil the following actions are taken:

- A baseline grade is calculated for each area of the Autism Education Trust's Progression Framework (AETPF), this is the school's measure of social and emotional progress and has been devised to measure the progress of autistic pupils specifically. The school's SENCO will then determine targets for each of the 8 areas of the AETPF, taking into account EHCP targets, to create an ILP. Targets on the ILP are reviewed on a termly basis and pupils may be referred for intervention with the school's behaviour or pastoral lead if necessary.
- Baseline 'grades' are set on ARBOR for each subject that the pupil studies. This allows us to determine a workplan for the pupil or group of pupils. It also means that we can identify the size of any gaps that need to be closed in English and maths and monitor the closing of any such gaps.

## Tracking progress

At New Perspectives School we use ARBOR, our MIS, to track what pupils know and can do. In Key Stages 2 and 3 this relates to progress towards National Curriculum age-related expectations for most subjects. In Key Stage 4, progress towards qualification requirements is monitored. Staff are encouraged to update SOLAR on a daily basis as it is often quicker and easier to recall what has happened in a lesson at the end of the day rather than looking through books at the end of the week or half term. Teaching staff can use this up-to-date record of attainment to inform teaching and to allow for bespoke interventions where necessary.

## Expected Levels of Progress

At New Perspectives School there is an expectation that most pupils will progress at the same rate as their peers in mainstream schools. Pupils are expected to make a 'stage' (one year's worth) of progress for each academic year. The 'stage' is broken down into three sub levels so progress made can be recorded over the year. However, all learners are treated as individuals, and we recognise and understand that pupils with additional needs may not be expected to make the same level of progress. The expected progress for each pupil and progress made in relation to this is discussed during data reviews with all staff and this data is used to inform teaching and benchmark progress against a cohort average.

## Target Setting

Targets, in relation to the expectations described above, are not discussed with pupils or parents unless parents specifically request data that relates to age-related expectations. There are many reasons for this, including:

- New Perspectives School believes in developing a growth mindset where intelligence, skill and talent are not seen as fixed. Target setting is not compatible with a growth mindset as it can lead to a failure to reinforce the connection between effort and achievement: Setting a target can sometimes cap aspiration at a particular point when pupils could be capable of more. If a target is set too high it becomes a constant reminder of inadequacy which then impacts on achievement, attitude and mental health and wellbeing.

At New Perspectives School we 'expect' pupils to Be Kind, Work Hard and Stay Safe and we talk to them about what we want them to know and be able to do. We do this in relation to what they are expected to know and be able to do by the end of a lesson and by the end of a topic. Such 'targets' for a topic should be shared in pupils' books. Termly reports to parents/carers focus on the skills and knowledge developed by pupils as well as effort and engagement in learning.

## Records of Progress

The amount of progress made in each subject is recorded on Arbor by the subject teachers on a termly basis and compared with 'expected progress'. Information from such data collections is used to report on progress to the Headteacher, school governors and is used during data reviews with teachers as described below.

The use of data linked to age related expectations means that the school is also able to report on gaps closed.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Review (MER)

At New Perspectives School the effective use of assessment is monitored through:

- Book scrutiny
- Planning scrutiny
- Learning walks and lesson observations
- Pupil voice surveys
- Parent voice surveys
- Termly data/pupil progress reviews
- Monitoring use of targeted interventions and their impact
- Moderation exercises.

The MER cycle begins each term with a review of data from the previous term (or, in the Autumn term, data from the previous school year). Each teacher takes part in a review with the Head Teacher to look at progress in the subject(s) they teach. Leaders at New Perspectives School recognise that data should only be collected if it has a purpose and have chosen to use summative data as an initial measure of the quality of teaching and learning. Where progress is poor within a subject the data review aims to identify the causes of this and determine whether intervention for a specific pupil, or group of pupils, is needed or whether there is a staff development issue that needs to be addressed

Examples of interventions for a specific pupil (or group of pupils) include:

- Adapting the curriculum, for example, where it is recognised that a gap in prior learning is impeding the development of understanding, assimilation or application of new knowledge or skills.
- 1:1/small group reading sessions.
- Pre-teaching of subject specific vocabulary.
- 1:1/small group Mathematics sessions.
- 1:1/small group Spelling sessions.
- Exam preparation sessions.

## **Continuing Professional Development**

All staff regularly participate in staff development sessions designed to help them understand effective assessment and its role within good and outstanding teaching. Leaders aim for the school to be a Professional Learning Community (PLC) recognising that teachers learn best from each other and encouraging staff to work together to improve pupil outcomes.

Staff are encouraged to explore options for professional development from external providers.

## **Review of this Policy**

All staff will be involved in reviewing this policy on an annual basis and will be encouraged to contribute information, knowledge and experiences they have gained through their practice and from research, training etc.

Leaders at New Perspectives School are committed to keeping up with best practice and innovation and will constantly seek ways to improve the use of assessment.