Bridge School Malvern

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Assessment Policy

"For Teachers, as for students,
the most effective evaluation comes from someone
who sits beside us and helps us grow"

Carol Anne Tomlinson (educator, researcher and author)

1. Scope of this policy

1.1   Assessment in schools is typically separated into three broad types

1.1.1   **Formative Assessment**
Evaluation of pupil progress, understanding or learning by teaching staff during a lesson to inform the teacher how best to progress the lesson.

1.1.2   **Summative assessment**
Evaluation of pupil outcomes at the end of a period of study or intervention program against some standard or benchmark. The purpose is for the school to understand how effective the pupils' learning is and inform decision making to improve pupil outcomes.

1.1.3   **Nationally standardised summative assessment**
Evaluation of pupil outcomes against external nationally standardised criteria. In the context of BSM this means;

   i.   Assessment by the awarding bodies City & Guilds and AQA for vocational and academic outcomes

   ii.   B-Squared progress tracking for psychosocial outcomes.

1.2 **This policy**
This policy is concerned with Summative Assessment (as defined in 1.1.2 and 1. 1.3). Formative Assessment is a core teaching skill and is covered in detail in the [Teaching & Learning Policy](#).

1.3 This policy sets out how BSM will;

    1.3.1 Assess baseline measures when a pupil joins BSM.

    1.3.2 Record assessment information.

    1.3.3 Internally validate and moderate our assessments so that we can compare a pupil's outcomes with their attainment at entry.

    1.3.4 Identify pupils not making expected progress.

    1.3.5 Outline steps when a pupil is identified as not making expected progress.

1.4 In this policy 'Assessment' refers to both types of summative assessment in a unified way.

2. Aims, Principals and Definitions

2.1 **There are 3 core principles to this policy:**

    2.1.1 Assessment is pupil outcome focussed. It is accurate, meaningful and informs the school on how to provide the next steps for individuals or cohorts of pupils.

    2.1.2 Assessment is not a burden to the pupil and fully respects the learning and emotional needs of pupils. BSM will avoid engaging pupils in tests preferring to trust the professional judgement of staff.

    2.1.3 Making and recording assessments is not an undue burden to staff. Data will be collected efficiently, duplication will be avoided and all assessment points will have a clear purpose based on the needs of pupils.

2.2 **Additionally the policy aims to;**

    2.2.1 Have a robust system of measuring progress across the full curriculum including social, emotional, communication and behaviour targets as well as progress in academic and vocational subjects.

    2.2.2 Provide information that can inform teachers' and managers' decision making affecting individuals, cohorts and the whole school.

    2.2.3 Provide information in a way that is useful and understandable to parents, governors, sending agencies and other bodies.

    2.2.4 Be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of all pupils but have measures that allow for meaningful comparisons.

    2.2.5 Broadly embrace the recommendations of the final report of the [Commission on Assessment Without Levels (2015)](#) and the [Qualitative report (2018)](#)

2.2.6 Meet the requirements set out in [The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005: schedule 1](#)

2.2.7 Supports the aims of the school's Curriculum Policy.

2.3 BSM will maintain standardised assessment data for three principle areas;

2.3.1 **Psychosocial Skills -** this term is used generically to define a range of social, communication, emotional regulation, thinking skills and other 'soft skills'. In total, they make up those skills needed for a functioning member of society to enjoy life, have respect for others and their environment, confidently engage in meaningful work and achieve a satisfying adult life. The planned explicit teaching of these skills is one of the defining features of BSM and is central to our mission and curriculum. Assessment is made against national standard developmental stages using the B Squared 'Connecting Steps' programme.

2.3.2 **Functional Skills** - Maths and English are taught and assessed as two separate subjects. Assessment is externally quality assured and awarded by City and Guilds.

2.3.3 **Vocational Skills** (including Employability) - these are integral to our curriculum for all year groups. During Bridge Stage 1 they are primarily used to deliver our Psychosocial Skills programme; and as pupils progress through Bridge Stages 2 and 3, the focus becomes increasing that of taught vocational subjects. Assessment is externally quality assured and awarded by City and Guilds.

2.4 Additionally BSM will assess pupils in other areas including;

2.4.1 **A Broad and balanced curriculum** - all pupils receive education in other areas to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum. Assessment in these areas may be externally quality assured and awarded by AQA.

2.4.2 **Bespoke provision** - for example, therapeutic interventions and work experience. Progress through these will be recorded, however, due to their bespoke nature, meaningful measures for comparison may not be possible.

2.5 **Definitions** - In this policy the terms *Psychosocial Skills, Functional Skills, Vocational skill, Bespoke Provision, Formative Assessment, Summative Assessment* have the meaning set out above.

2.5.1 *Expected Progress* - is defined as a minimum measure of progress BSM expects pupils to make. It is not a limiting target but a minimum threshold. If a pupil performs below this it is an indication the school needs to act. This policy in some ways codifies 'expected progress' measures but at all times we are flexible when applying progress measures and consider the circumstances of the pupil rather than simply applying rigid criteria.

2.5.2 *Proficiency* - is defined as a judgement that a pupil can demonstrate they can perform a skill, technique, recall a fact etc... most of the time in a wide range of realistic contexts. It does not mean the pupil will always in all circumstances show mastery; staff will be alert to the needs of pupils and revisit skills they are proficient as they professionally judge necessary.

3. Baseline assessment

3.1 To measure the progress a pupil has made over time it is important to have accurate meaningful baseline measures.

3.2 Without an accurate assessment at the start of a pupil's time at BSM, there will be no way of measuring the progress a pupil is making and therefore cannot gauge if the current provision is effective.

3.3 When pupils start at BSM they are likely to be anxious and will need time to transition into the school before they will be able to demonstrate accurately their abilities. Therefore setting baselines too early after enrollment could be misleading. Pupils need to be settled into the school's environment and feel safe before the school can make meaningful assessments of the pupil's abilities and needs.

3.4 It is our aim to set baselines in all relevant areas by the end of the first full half term of a pupil's enrollment. However, if a pupil has a long period of transition this may be delayed or an initial baseline could be subject to review.

3.5 **Baselines setting for Functional Skills**

    3.5.1 Will be set over a series of normally timetabled sessions.

    3.5.2 The Functional Skills scheme of work will be broken down into discreet skill descriptors in line with the course specification.

    3.5.3 Functional Skills teaching staff will use a variety of teaching tasks to formatively assess what skills the pupil has and which the pupil needs to develop.

    3.5.4 This process will be embedded into normal teaching and will not be presented to pupils as a series of tests, unless it is the teacher's professional judgement that this is the pupil's preferred way of working at that time.

    3.5.5 In delivering this assessment teachers will use formative assessment practice so the pupil is not engaged in tasks that are either too difficult or too easy. To the pupil it will appear as good teaching; in practice, the only difference is the nature of the recording of the teacher's professional judgement of the current level.

    3.5.6 The teacher will record over these sessions those skills the pupil has proficiency of.

    3.5.7 At the end of the assessment period (typically before the end of the first full term after enrollment) this record will be used to set the pupil's current 'working towards level' as the baseline.

    3.5.8 The aim will be for the pupil's first formal assessment to be at this 'working towards level'

    3.5.9 Future teaching will be primarily targeted at this level but the teacher will use their professional judgement when to work below or above that level.

3.6 **Baselines for Psychosocial Skills**

3.6.1   The pupil will be observed during a period of transition, typically one half term, by staff with different professional perspectives, typically a subject teacher, a member of pastoral support staff and one manager.

3.6.2   At the end of the assessment period each observer will independently complete a standardised questionnaire which will be used to determine baseline levels across a range of personal skills.

3.6.3   The assessment will be collated together and if there is no substantial disagreement between the independent assessments a suitable average will be set as the baseline.

3.6.4   In the event of substantial disagreement between the assessors, there will be a meeting for the assessors to discuss and agree on a final assessment. Additionally, other staff may be invited to complete their own assessment.

3.7   **Baselines for other bespoke interventions**
These will be measured by whatever criteria best serves the purpose of the intervention. Due to the wide range of possibilities, it would be restrictive to proscribe methods here. However, all assessments will adhere to the three core principles set out in section 2.1

3.8   In the event a baseline assessment is later proved to be misleading it can be revised in any direction. It is not the practice of BSM to set (intentionally or unintentionally) low baselines in order to show rapid progress - the intent of the policy is to show actual progress to inform planning for the best possible outcomes for the pupil not to produce superficially impressive data.

4. Recording

Staff will record and maintain assessment data for Functional Skills Maths, Functional Skills English, Psychosocial Skills, Vocational Skills and Employability Skills.

4.2   **Functional Skills**
4.2.1   Standardised Functional Skills assessment will be by awarded certificates from City and Guilds.

4.2.2   Additionally, staff will record proficiency of skills at the working towards level for Functional skills which will allow tracking of progress between standardised levels.

4.3   **Psychosocial Skills.**
4.3.1   All pupils will have their Psychosocial Skills recorded, maintained and assessed using at least one framework on the B-Squared 'Connecting Steps'.

4.3.2   Each term, at least three members of staff from different areas of the school (typically one vocational coach, one functional skills coach and one pastoral coach) will independently enter their assessment for individual pupils onto B-Squared.

4.3.3   In the event that there are substantial differences in the assessment of different staff a manager (Head, Teaching and Learning Manager or SENCO)

will look into the assessment and take appropriate action which could include moderation and/or inviting other staff to enter an assessment.

4.4 **Vocational Skills and Employability Skills.**

    4.4.1 During Bridge Stage 1 vocational skills and employability will be formally assessed through the City and Guilds "skills for working life" pathway, which encompasses Health and Safety units and those related to the vocational areas (ie: animal care, horticulture, construction, hospitality, art and environmental)

    4.4.2 Pupils/trainees at Bridge Stages 2 and 3 will be formally assessed in vocational and employability skills as follows.

        i. Standardised assessment will be by certificates awarded by exam boards.

        ii. For each course, a record of units passed towards the qualification will be kept on the school's internal database.

        iii. Due to the nature of the courses being varied and the professional flexibility BSM encourages its staff to adopt, there can be no proscribed rule on how progress towards completion is kept. That said, Coaches (as monitored by the line manager) set out the curriculum journey to specify when units will be completed and so demonstrate if a pupil is not on target to complete the course at the end of the stage.

4.5 **Other interventions**

Progress through other interventions will be recorded in a way that is fitting to the intervention and in line with the core principles of this policy. The record will be made available to all relevant staff either via the school database or use of shared drives.

5. Assessing if pupils are making 'expected progress'

This section sets out how managers will use data and staff feedback to flag pupils not making good progress.

5.1 **General considerations to take account of when measuring 'expected progress'**

The complex nature of pupils that come to BSM and their varied backgrounds means that terms like 'expected progress' are defined on an individual basis and cannot be determined by data alone. Data is used as a tool to help identify pupils not making expected progress and identify gaps in progress.

    5.1.1 When determining if a pupil has made expected progress data, measures will be used to flag if the matter needs considering.

    5.1.2 Data alone can only ever be used as an indicator, additionally these factors need to be considered before judging if a pupil is making expected progress

        i. The professional judgement of staff.

    ii.   The personal circumstance of the pupil, including factors in the EHCP.

    iii.   If any diagnosed SEND needs limit the capacity of the pupil to progress at the expected rate.

5.2   Psychosocial Expected Progress

5.2.1   The Pastoral Manager, with the support of the Teaching and Learning Manager will monitor the pupil's psychosocial progress.

5.2.2   As a rule of thumb, it is expected pupils will make better than one year's typical developmental progress per year. However, in making this judgement consideration will be given to a pupil's baseline and factors that impede a pupil's ability to progress (e.g. particular learning disabilities, SEND diagnosis, attachments, exposure to trauma etc.).

5.2.3   Alongside identifying pupils whose progress is below expectation staff will use B-Squared to identify those areas of social and emotional development that are holding back progress.

5.2.4   B-Squared will be the primary tool for making this assessment.

5.2.5   Pupils that do not progress at a rate of one year's normal development will be flagged as not making expected progress.

5.3   Functional Skills Expected Progress

5.3.1   The Functional Skills Manager, with the support of the Teaching and Learning Manager, will monitor the pupil's progress at the working towards levels each term.

5.3.2   As a general rule of thumb we expect pupils to progress through Entry Levels at around 1 level per year and at higher Levels one level in 18 months.

5.3.3   When considering progress, managers will consider teacher assessed progress of proficiency of individual course descriptors (e.g. six months into an Entry Level program of study, it is expected that the pupil has achieved proficiency in around half of the descriptors at their new level - or making good progress towards proficiency in a larger number of descriptors)

5.3.4   Pupils achieving progress at a lower rate will be flagged as not making expected progress.

5.4   Vocational Expected Progress

5.4.1   The Vocational Manager, with the support of the Teaching & Learning Manager, will monitor progress each term.

5.4.2   At the start of each course vocational staff will set a time schedule for unit completion and each term pupils' progress will be compared to the time schedule.

5.4.3   Pupils not on course to meet the requirement of the course in the time schedule will be flagged as not making expected progress.

5.4.4   At the sixth form, vocational staff will set individual vocational targets which will form part of the monitoring process.

5.5   Employability Expected Progress

5.5.1   During Bridge Stage 1, employability will be formally assessed through the City and Guilds "skills for working life" pathway and monitored by the Vocational team lead with support of the Teaching and Learning Manager.

5.5.2   At the start of Bridge Stage 2 all pupils will be set on a City and Guilds employability program of study in line with the curriculum policy.

5.5.3   At BS 2 this is monitored by the Vocational lead in conjunction with the Careers and Employability Manager.

5.5.4   Pupils not on course to complete the units for their employability program of study will be flagged as not making expected progress.

6. Case studies

6.1   Staff have high expectations for pupils and those that have been flagged as not making expected progress in any of the areas detailed in section five, will have their programme reconsidered.

6.2   Review of the programme will typically happen during case studies meetings.

6.2.1   Case studies meetings are meetings of relevant staff that take place throughout the year. Each site of the school will determine the makeup of the case study meeting.

6.2.2   It is the aim of the school to hold one case study meeting per term for each pupil.

6.2.3   Additional case studies will happen at any time it is considered beneficial for a particular pupil.

6.2.4   During case studies the following matters will be considered
   i.   If the pupil is making at least expected progress in all relevant areas.

   ii.   If the needs of the EHCP are being adequately met.

   iii.   If the current programme adequately addresses the pupil's diagnosed SEND needs.

   iv.   Review the pupil's IEP and update as required, including addressing barriers to learning, sessional targets, pupil triggers/likes/dislikes.

6.2.5   If there are concerns about any areas identified during the case study, action will be taken to address those needs. Such action could be any of the following

i. Change to the timetable (including pupil grouping)

ii. Introduce bespoke intervention to help the pupil manage specific social, emotional or learning difficulties.

iii. Offer support to the home setting.

iv. Make referrals to outside agencies if the pupil is thought to require additional support either inside or outside school.

v. Devise specific pupil management actions (e.g. extra supervision during break times, mentoring, out session management plans etc.)

vi. Request additional external assessment by external agencies if the SEND profile is believed to be inaccurate.

vii. Other actions as deemed necessary and achievable.

6.2.6 The findings of the case study will be fed back to all relevant staff in a format suitable for the site the pupil attends.

6.2.7 **Attendance**
In the event of poor attendance is a factor in the pupil not making expected progress the school will work with the family to improve their attendance including,
  i. Meeting with parents/carers to discuss possible strategies and joint working to encourage attendance. This could include teaching organisational skills, timekeeping and planning, the importance of sleep and nighttime routines.

  ii. Changes to their timetable, travel arrangements, or other aspects of their provision may be identified as presenting barriers to attendance.

  iii. Alternative strategies to delivering the curriculum (e.g. alternative provision or remote teaching)

  iv. Failure to see a significant improvement in attendance will require further action from the Headteacher, who will liaise with the relevant local authority for advice. The decision to prosecute families will be a very last resort and taken in conjunction with the governing board.

6.2.8 **Inaccurate or misleading baseline**
If it is thought the baseline has been set incorrectly, making expected progress unrealistic, baselines can be amended but only after serious consideration and not at all after the pupil has been in school for more than two full terms.

7. Training

7.1 As part of new staff induction all teaching staff will receive training on assessment practices and recording relevant to their teaching area.

7.2   All staff engage in a programme of continuing professional learning (CPL) which includes improving and standardising assessment methods.

7.3   Managers involved with case studies will look out for themes that require addressing across the school and organise suitable training for teams as required.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1   **The Head**
Has overall responsibility that this policy is fit for purpose and matches the requirements of the curriculum policy and mandatory reporting. Jointly with the Teaching and Learning Manager, they will also see that this policy is effectively applied.

8.2   **Teaching and Learning Manager**
Jointly with the Head Teacher will see that this policy is effectively applied. Additionally, they will take overall responsibility for recording and presenting data including ensuring all staff are adequately trained and supported in the systems used (eg: Use of BromCom)

8.3   **SENCO**
Will ensure assessment is sensitive to the diagnosed needs of pupils and that when pupils are identified as not making expected progress ensure any consideration of action is appropriate to the EHCP and identified needs of the pupil. Will take the lead in liaising with parents and carers and developing bespoke interventions.

8.4   **Line Manager**s
Ensure their team members are keeping records up to date. Proactively inquire of their team if staff believe a pupil is not making expected progress, including use of data and teacher professional judgement.

8.5   **Teaching staff**
Consistently maintain accurate and fair data records in line with this policy. Use professional judgement on a daily basis to spot the signs of pupils who may be at risk of not making expected progress and report to their Line Manager or Teaching and Learning Manager. Teaching staff are also expected to use formative assessment and assessment for learning strategies, as set out in the Teaching and Learning Policy, as part of their day to day practice.

9. Links to other policies

Curriculum Policy

Teaching & Learning Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Children Missing Education PolicySEND Policy