



## Assessment Policy

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“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

## 1. Aim

- 1.1. This policy aims to provide clarity around the minimum expectations for assessment within Nexus MAT academies, so that all learners are subject to same minimum standards of having their learning assessed.
- 1.2. Assessment of a child's learning is distinct and different to how learning targets are set. Equally, the curriculum pathway(s) that a child follow(s) fall outside of the remit of this policy, though measurement of their progress in meeting targets – however they are defined – is informed by the requirements outlined in this policy.
- 1.3. Pupils in our Trust's mainstream settings and those pupils in special schools undertaking accredited qualifications will be subject to 'high stakes' assessment, which is delivered through formalised structures such as SATs, coursework or exams. These assessments are subject to their own quality assurance processes, which fall beyond the remit of this policy.
- 1.4. This policy is specifically about the Trust's expectations for the formative assessment of pupil learning that Teachers undertake in all our schools, which in turn informs summative assessment.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1. **High-stakes assessment** is standardised tests used for the purposes of accountability e.g. SATs, GCSEs, A-Levels etc.
- 2.2. **Base-line assessment** can be range of toolkits used to establish where pupils are in their learning, either prior to or within the first six weeks (full time equivalent) of joining a Nexus MAT school. There is no singular base-line assessment used by the Trust, as schools can use a range of toolkits to best meet the individual needs, age and aptitude of the pupils being assessed. The Trust does expect any and all toolkits to be informed by evidence-based research and practice, typically endorsed by the Education Endowment Foundation or other licensed agency.

**2.3. Formative assessment** is the in-process evaluation of pupil learning that are typically administered multiple times during a unit, course, or academic program. The general purpose of formative assessment is to give pupils, families and school leaders' in-process feedback about what pupils are learning or not learning, so that approaches can be modified accordingly.

**2.4. Summative assessment** is used to evaluate pupil learning at the end of each unit of work, term or at the end of the school year. Summative assessments are used to evaluate learning by comparing to a standard or benchmark.

## 3. Guiding Principles

**3.1.** Within Nexus MAT, we expect all academies to:

- 3.1.1.** Utilise accurate Baselineing to ascertain what children already know and can do;
- 3.1.2.** Use this information to set specific, meaningful, relevant objectives from which progress can be measured;
- 3.1.3.** Explicitly link assessment to a pupils spiral curriculum, ensuring opportunities for overlearning and retention of knowledge over time;
- 3.1.4.** Inform planning - to ensure that planning is personalised to each child and progressively builds upon what they already know and can do;
- 3.1.5.** Gather observation and evidence over time towards objectives and use this tracking information to ensure progress is being made;
- 3.1.6.** Record a minimum of 3 separate observations of a learning target being achieved/met for pupils working within the pre-key stage standards;
- 3.1.7.** Have a range of robust Quality Assurance activity in place in order to triangulate judgements and ensure judgements are accurate, reliable and valid;
- 3.1.8.** Use a defined system and/or ICT solution to record evidence of progress in all areas of development over time, not just academic;
- 3.1.9.** Use assessment to inform meaningful, professional conversations with pupils, parents, colleagues and other professionals;
- 3.1.10.** Ensure there is sufficient, objective evidence in place to validate the teacher assessments made;
- 3.1.11.** Participate in all Trust wide moderation activity;

- 3.1.12. Ensure that assessment is meaningful and helpful and does not add to unnecessary workload.

## 4. Assessment approaches

- 4.1. Nexus MAT views assessment as a symbiotically linked to the curriculum, providing a robust insight regarding what has been learnt, understood and retained.
- 4.2. The Ofsted working definition of curriculum is 'a framework for setting out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage' (intent)...for translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative, within an institutional context (implementation)...and for evaluating what knowledge and skills children have gained against expectations (impact/achievement).'
- 4.3. All Nexus academies will enable learning opportunities that are appropriate to a pupil's age and stage of development. Practitioners will receive training to ensure that they have a good understanding of child development and know how to support children as they practise and refine their skills and knowledge in all areas of their learning and development. School leaders will recognise the importance of repeated retrieval and 'spiral' learning to ensure that learning is committed to the long term memory.
- 4.4. Expected progress for mainstream pupils is defined by national progress averages and measures. Formative assessment is carried out in line with the policy and practice identified at individual academy level.
- 4.5. Expected progress for pupils in special schools is defined at a personalised level for each child. Formative assessment is carried out in line with the policy and practice identified at individual academy level.
- 4.6. Each academy will use the assessment tools that meet the need of their community. We do not seek to standardise and use a 'one size fits all' model.
- 4.7. However, all academies will report summative assessments to Senior Leaders in school and the Central team three times each year. The data presented

will include Reading and Mathematics alongside any other assessment criteria set by each academy.

- 4.8. Data will be compiled onto the Data and Reporting Tool (DaRT) accessed via the Portal by a given deadline.
- 4.9. All schools will report the numbers of pupils that are identified as working below the expected level, at or on target to be at the expected level, or above or on target to be above the expected level.
- 4.10. Mainstream primary schools will use internal tracking/summative data to report whether pupils are 'Working Towards Age Related Expectations' (Below) 'At or on target to be at Age Related Expectation' (expected) or 'at Greater Depth Standard' (Exceeding).

## 5. Establishing ambitious levels of progress through the assessment of learning

- 5.1. Mainstream schools are subject to national metrics of performance management for progress and attainment, which change annually depending on the national average. These provide the benchmark for all mainstream schools and inform league tables/rankings.
- 5.2. Special schools in the Trust should use the most recent national averages of Key Stage 2 SATs as a proxy for establishing a measure of what good "expected" progress looks like.
- 5.3. Whilst the contents of learning targets are different for individual children, the national average for mainstream primary pupils is a useful proxy for the measurement of whole school progress in core subject areas, without this being an absolute.

## 6. Quality Assurance

- 6.1. Each academy in the Trust must have an annual Quality Assurance (QA) calendar, which outlines the schedule of activity school leaders will undertake to interrogate and confirm judgements made through assessment.
  
- 6.2. Quality Assurance activity should include, as a minimum:
  - 6.2.1. Lesson observations;
  - 6.2.2. Pupil discussions/interviews;
  - 6.2.3. Learning Walks/Drop Ins;
  - 6.2.4. Work/Book Scrutiny;
  - 6.2.5. Pupil Progress Meeting;
  - 6.2.6. Moderation activity;
  - 6.2.7. Testing e.g. at the end of a unit of work, mock exam papers (for pupils subject to high-stakes assessment) etc.