Assessment Policy

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"Learning together, to be the best we can be"

1. Aim

1.1. At Nexus Multi Academy Trust (Nexus MAT), assessment is a fundamental part of our commitment to high-quality, inclusive education. We believe that assessment should support the achievement, wellbeing, and personal development of every learner across our Trust, regardless of their starting point or needs.

1.2. This policy outlines a consistent yet flexible approach to assessment that meets the needs of both mainstream and specialist settings, while enabling school-level autonomy within a framework of Trust-wide values, standards, and expectations.

1.3. The policy aims to:

    1.3.1. support **outstanding teaching and learning** through meaningful, responsive assessment.

    1.3.2. ensure that all pupils make **holistic progress**, including academic, personal, social, and emotional development.

    1.3.3. provide a consistent approach to assessment across Nexus MAT schools while respecting each setting's **unique context**.

    1.3.4. inform **planning, intervention, and curriculum development**.

    1.3.5. enable clear and purposeful communication of pupil progress with **parents/carers, pupils, staff, governors, and external agencies**.

    1.3.6. ensure statutory responsibilities for assessment and reporting are fully met.

2. Principles of assessment

2.1. All assessment across the Trust is underpinned by the following core principles:

    2.1.1. **Inclusive**: Assessment practices must meet the diverse needs of all learners, including those with SEND and EHCPs.

    2.1.2. **Purposeful**: Assessment is only carried out where it directly informs learning, teaching, planning, or accountability.

    2.1.3. **Proportionate**: Assessment should be manageable for staff, avoiding unnecessary workload.

2.1.4. **Collaborative**: Pupils, families, and professionals are partners in the assessment process.

2.1.5. **Developmental**: Assessment informs not only academic progress but also personal development and wellbeing.

2.1.6. **Accurate and Honest**: Judgements are based on a wide range of evidence and are subject to moderation and review.

3. Types of Assessment

3.1. **Formative Assessment & Assessment for Learning** (see Appendix 2 – Approach to the use of formative assessment and AfL across Nexus Mat):

3.1.1. Ongoing, day-to-day assessment used by staff to identify learning needs and adapt teaching.

3.1.2. Examples include questioning, observation, feedback, pupil self-assessment, and low-stakes quizzes.

3.1.3. Enables **responsive teaching** and **pupil ownership of learning**.

3.2. **Summative Assessment**:

3.2.1. Assessment of learning at a particular point in time (e.g. end of unit, term, or year).

3.2.2. May include internal assessments, teacher judgments, and standardised tests.

3.2.3. 4.23 In specialist settings, summative assessment may also capture progress using non-linear or bespoke frameworks.

3.3. **Diagnostic Assessment**

3.3.1. Used to identify specific learning needs, barriers, or strengths (e.g. dyslexia screening, cognitive assessments).

3.3.2. Informs personalised provision, interventions, or referrals.

3.4. **Statutory Assessment**

3.4.1. Includes statutory EYFS, Phonics Screening, KS1 and KS2 SATs, multiplication tables check, and teacher assessments where required.

3.4.2. Includes submission of performance data and compliance with local authority/EHCP review processes.

3.4.3. In specialist settings, this may also include engagement model assessments or pre-key stage standards.

3.5. **Qualifications and Accreditations**

3.5.1. Pupils in our specialist setting may also be entered for assessment such as GCSEs, functional skills, Entry Level assessments, AQA awards etc. These are not statutory but represent aspirational qualifications and accreditations that pupils secure before leaving school.

4. Assessment in Specialist Settings

4.1. In Nexus MAT special schools, we recognise that traditional linear progress measures are not always appropriate. Therefore, assessment systems:

4.1.1. Are tailored to each school's cohort and curriculum model.

4.1.2. May include be**spoke frameworks, evidence-based learning journals, engagement scales,** or **RfL (Routes for Leaning)**.

4.1.3. Align with EHCP outcomes and are regularly reviewed through **person-centred planning** and **annual reviews**.

5. Assessment in Mainstream Settings

5.1. In our mainstream schools:

5.1.1. Assessment aligns with **national curriculum expectations** and supports **high academic achievement** for all.

5.1.2. Progress is tracked using Trust-approved systems, with school-level flexibility in tracking tools and frequency.

5.1.3. All learners, including those receiving SEN Support, are monitored to ensure **early identification of needs** and **timely intervention**.

5.1.4. Target setting information or most likely outcomes for pupils in Y2, 4 and 6 as well as projections for Y1 Phonics Screen will be shared with the Headteacher's line manager and the assigned Executive Assurance Partner (EAP) at the end of Autumn Half Term 1.

5.1.5. Information on progress towards the agreed most likely outcomes/targets will be formally discussed with the line manager and EAP in December, March and July.

6. Moderation and Quality Assurance

6.1. Internal moderation takes place in schools with data being collected at least termly to ensure consistency and accuracy of teacher judgements.

6.2. Cross-school moderation is led by the English and mathematics consultants. This is done through the use of the 'Next Steps' model (Appendix 1) for termly summative assessment in English and mathematics and is moderated through the respective PLC (Professional Leaning Community).

6.3. Executive Assurance Partners from the Central Team work with school leaders to conduct regular learning walks, book scrutiny, and conversations about pupil progress and attainment.

6.4. Assessment processes are subject to ongoing review and development, informed by research and professional dialogue.

6.5. Senior Leaders work with line managers and Executive Assurance Partners (EAPs) to update the School Performance Dashboard on a termly basis. This includes information regarding pupil attainment and progress which is then moderated within the Central Trust Team through the Schools Performance and Scrutiny Board (SPSB).

7. Reporting to Stakeholders

7.1. **Pupils** receive regular feedback in lessons and via review of personal targets.

7.2. **Parents/carers** are informed of progress through reports, meetings, and EHCP or support plan reviews.

7.3. **Local governors** receive regular updates on progress and attainment, including data on disadvantaged groups, SEND, and key performance indicators.

7.4. **The Trust Board of Directors** monitors trends and ensures strategic accountability for outcomes across all settings through the Standards Board. They receive information form the moderated SPSB meetings and through a Standards Report.
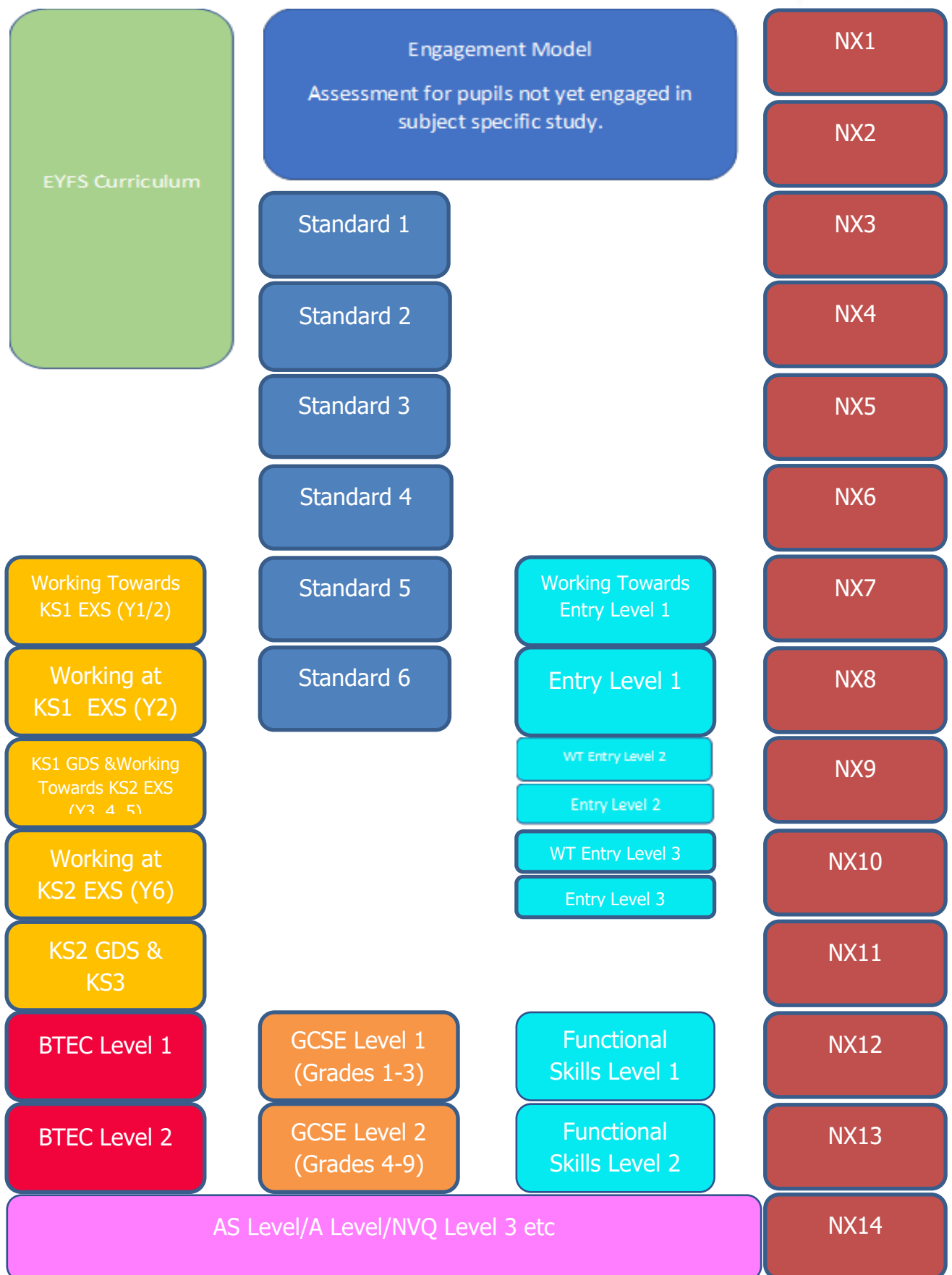
8. Data Collection and Use

8.1. Data collection is purposeful and limited to what is needed to support pupil progress and strategic decision-making.

8.2. All schools submit assessment data at the end of each term (three times per year). Currently this focuses on English and mathematics attainment using the Next Steps approach (see Appendix 3 for Data Collection Rationale).

8.3. Schools new to the trust are required to submit baseline assessment data within 6 weeks of conversion. This data should be against the Next Steps model for mathematics, reading and writing.

8.4. The Trust Quality Assurance and Improvement Team uses data to:

    8.4.1. Identify trends and areas for support;
    8.4.2. Monitor vulnerable groups;
    8.4.3. Inform CPD, curriculum design, and school improvement planning.

9. Professional Development

9.1. All staff receive regular training and support to enhance their understanding of effective assessment practice.

9.2. This includes:

    9.2.1. Developing high-quality formative strategies
    9.2.2. Target setting and review (including for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), Individual Education Plans (IEPs) Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) etc.);
    9.2.3. Interpreting data;
    9.2.4. Adapting assessment for pupils with SEND.

Appendix 1 – Next Steps

nexus Multi Academy Trust

	Engagement Model Assessment for pupils not yet engaged in subject specific study.	NX1

EYFS Curriculum

Standard 1 — NX2

Standard 2 — NX3

Standard 3 — NX4

Standard 4 — NX5

Working Towards KS1 EXS (Y1/2) — Standard 5 — Working Towards Entry Level 1 — NX6

Working at KS1 EXS (Y2) — Standard 6 — Entry Level 1 — NX7

KS1 GDS & Working Towards KS2 EXS (Y3, 4, 5) — WT Entry Level 2 — NX8

— Entry Level 2 — NX9

Working at KS2 EXS (Y6) — WT Entry Level 3 — NX10

— Entry Level 3 — NX11

KS2 GDS & KS3

BTEC Level 1 — GCSE Level 1 (Grades 1-3) — Functional Skills Level 1 — NX12

BTEC Level 2 — GCSE Level 2 (Grades 4-9) — Functional Skills Level 2 — NX13

AS Level/A Level/NVQ Level 3 etc — NX14

Appendix 2

Approach to the use of formative assessment and AfL across Nexus Mat

Approach to the Use of Formative Assessment and Assessment for Learning Processes Across Nexus Multi-Academy Trust

Types of Assessment

1.1 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is an ongoing process used by teachers and learners to gather evidence of learning, identify understanding and misconceptions, and make timely adjustments to teaching and learning activities. Its primary purpose is to support and improve pupil progress by providing feedback that informs next steps in learning.

1.2 Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment for Learning is the use of assessment strategies to actively involve pupils in their own learning. It includes sharing learning intentions, using success criteria, giving constructive feedback, and encouraging self- and peer-assessment. AfL helps pupils understand what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how they can improve.

1.3 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is the process of evaluating pupil learning at the end of an instructional period—such as a unit, term, or academic year—against a set of standards or benchmarks. It is typically used to measure overall achievement and to make judgments about progress, attainment, or qualification. Summative assessments are often formal and may take the form of tests, examinations, final projects, or externally moderated assessments.

1. **Why is the use of high quality formative assessment and Assessment for Learning (AfL) important?**

Appendix 2

Approach to the use of formative assessment and AfL across Nexus Mat

Formative assessment and Assessment for Learning are key to high-quality teaching and learning across all educational settings. Within a multi-academy trust (MAT) that encompasses both mainstream and special schools, the strategic and consistent use of ongoing assessment practices serves as a unifying approach to improving learner outcomes, promoting inclusive practice, and supporting teacher development.

At its core, formative assessment is an evidence-based process that allows teachers to identify pupils' current understanding, address misconceptions in real time, and adapt instruction to better meet individual learning needs. In both mainstream and specialist contexts, this responsive approach to teaching is essential to ensuring progress for all learners, regardless of their starting point. AfL strategies—such as clear learning intentions, success criteria, effective questioning, feedback that moves learning forward, and opportunities for peer and self-assessment—provide teachers with real-time insights into pupil understanding. These strategies enable responsive teaching, allowing staff to adapt instruction to meet learners' needs immediately and meaningfully.

In mainstream schools, formative assessment supports curriculum coherence, helps close attainment gaps, and builds student ownership of learning. It allows for early intervention and helps staff differentiate effectively within diverse classroom environments. AfL plays a key role in identifying misconceptions early, promoting deeper understanding, and supporting all students to achieve ambitious outcomes. It encourages pupil independence, metacognition, and a growth mindset—key attributes for lifelong learning. In mainstream schools, AfL plays a key role in identifying misconceptions early, promoting deeper understanding, and supporting all students to achieve ambitious outcomes. It encourages pupil independence, metacognition, and a growth mindset—key attributes for lifelong learning.

In special schools, formative assessment plays a particularly vital role. Pupils with complex learning needs often follow highly individualised pathways that are not easily measured by standardised testing. Formative assessment enables staff to track progress in small steps, adjust provision dynamically, and celebrate achievement in meaningful ways. It also supports person-centred planning and informs the review of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) or Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In special schools, where pupils often follow bespoke learning pathways and progress may not be linear, AfL is equally—if not more—critical. It enables highly individualised teaching, supports the recognition and

Approach to the use of formative assessment and AfL across Nexus Mat

celebration of small but significant steps of progress, and fosters pupil engagement and ownership of learning. Importantly, AfL can be flexibly adapted to suit a range of communication styles, cognitive profiles, and emotional needs, ensuring that all pupils can access and contribute to the assessment process.

2. Developing a shared commitment

Across the trust, a shared commitment to formative assessment strengthens collaboration between schools. It provides a common language for professional dialogue, encourages evidence-informed practice, and allows leaders to ensure that assessment serves learning rather than distorting it. When used effectively, it builds a culture of continuous improvement—where data is used not just to measure performance, but to drive it. The use of AfL creates a shared pedagogical foundation. It supports professional consistency, fosters collaborative practice, and ensures that assessment serves learning in every context—not just accountability. By prioritising AfL, the trust affirms its commitment to inclusive, evidence-informed teaching that raises standards for all while recognising and respecting the diverse needs of its learners.

3. Summary

In summary, embedding formative assessment and Assessment for Learning strategies trust-wide creates alignment between inclusive practice and academic ambition. It ensures that all learners—whether in a mainstream or specialist setting—benefit from teaching that is adaptive, personalised, and grounded in high expectations. As such, it is a critical lever for equity, quality, and shared excellence across the MAT.

Appendix 3

Rationale for Data Collection Across Nexus MAT

Rationale for Pupil Attainment Data Collection using 'Next Steps' Across Nexus Mat

Attainment Data collection across Nexus Multi-Academy Trust, which encompasses both mainstream and special schools is a strategic necessity for fostering equity, driving improvement, and ensuring high-quality education for all students. By systematically gathering, analysing, and utilising attainment data, the MAT can address the diverse needs of its student population while aligning schools with shared goals.

Schools within Nexus each have their own approaches to collecting data on progress and attainment. There is no 'one size fits all' approach and neither should there be. School leaders are best placed to make decisions and changes to policy and procedure that support pupils to make the best possible progress with their learning and development.

Whilst school leaders are responsible for managing systems and processes for tracking and monitoring pupil progress in their schools, the Trust needs to be able to quality assure that provision for pupils in all schools is at least good and is leading to high quality pupil outcomes. To do this effectively, we need to be able to use a common language that applies to all pupils across the trust.

The rationale for this practice is outlined below:

1. Understanding Diverse Student Needs

A MAT with both mainstream and special schools serves a highly diverse student body, including those with additional learning needs, disabilities, or complex behavioural and health challenges.

Trust wide attainment data collection using a common language allows us to:

Rationale for Data Collection Across Nexus MAT

- Capture the varied experiences and progress of all students, from those in mainstream settings to those with more specialised support needs.
- Have a nuanced understanding of how well different approaches meet the needs of distinct groups, enabling more effective personalisation of education.

2. Promoting Equity Across the Trust

Attainment data collection ensures that no student or school is left behind. This is vital for maintaining equity across settings with different focus areas.

Trust wide attainment data collection using a common language allows us to:

- Identify gaps in outcomes, access to resources, or support services across mainstream and special schools.
- Ensure fair allocation of resources to ensure all students, regardless of their school type, receive the support they need to succeed.

3. Enabling Shared Accountability and Governance

Systematic attainment data collection provides MAT leaders and trustees with the tools to oversee performance effectively across all schools.

Trust wide attainment data collection using a common language allows us to:

- Facilitate evidence-based governance, where decisions are informed by robust data on attendance, attainment, well-being, and resource utilisation.
- Have a strengthened ability to meet statutory requirements and demonstrate progress to regulatory bodies such as Ofsted.

4. Driving Continuous Improvement

Data allows for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching practices, interventions, and support systems.

Trust wide attainment data collection using a common language allows us to:

- Identify best practices from high-performing mainstream and special schools which can be shared, and implemented across the MAT.
- Design and refine evidence-based interventions to address common challenges, whether academic, social, or behavioural.

Appendix 3

Rationale for Data Collection Across Nexus MAT

5. Facilitating Collaboration and Inclusion

Attainment data can be a powerful tool for fostering collaboration between schools.

Trust wide attainment data collection using a common language allows us to:

- Highlight opportunities for inclusive practices, where expertise from special schools can inform approaches in mainstream settings and vice versa.
- Promote a culture of shared learning, where data insights guide joint professional development, moderation and cross-school initiatives.

6. What Information Will Schools be Required to Submit?

Whilst we acknowledge that *attainment* data in isolation does not give an accurate view of how successfully a student is accessing the curriculum and that *progress* data is more useful, collating this in a meaningful way across a very diverse trust presents many challenges. It is with this is mind that the trust's approach to centralised assessment data collection is based around the termly *attainment* of pupils. This will be done using 'Next Steps' which is a Nexus developed common language for attainment that spans the entire range of assessment points across the trust. This has been based on statutory assessment data where it exists, and developed through collaboration with school subject leaders where it does not. Schools will be expected to share attainment data for English and mathematics with the central team at Nexus at the end of each term, demonstrating at which Next Steps point (NX) each pupil in school is working within. This is a best fit model that considers a broad range of information about pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, as opposed to a definitive checklist of objectives that pupils have secured.

7. How Will this Information be Shared with the Trust?

Schools will be required to share information about the current NX point at which all pupils in the school are working in both English and mathematics. This will be done on a termly basis and will be collated by the central team and will be used to produce elements of the Standards Report which will be shared with directors and relevant staff form the central team who work with schools. *This information will be submitted through the Nexus Portal in the first instance or through a spreadsheet supplied by the Trusts' Data and Performance Analyst where this is not possible.*

Appendix 3

Rationale for Data Collection Across Nexus MAT
Conclusion

Collecting attainment data across a MAT that includes both mainstream and special schools is a cornerstone of strategic leadership and operational success. It allows the trust to meet the varied needs of its student population, foster collaboration between diverse school settings, and drive continuous improvement. By embedding data-driven decision-making at the heart of its practices, the trust ensures that every student has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their starting point or educational context. Creating a common language which assimilates current assessment practices in individual schools through 'Next Steps' documentation is the route that Nexus has chosen to ensure that this is both meaningful and useful in ensuring pupils make the best possible progress whilst attending a Nexus setting.

Appendix 4

Nexus Multi-academy Trust Rationale and Guiding Principles for Measures of Success and Achievement in Special Schools

Nexus Multi-academy Trust Rationale and Guiding Principles for Measures of Success and Achievement in Special Schools

1. Rationale

At Nexus, we recognise that the concept of success in special education is multifaceted. Unlike traditional educational settings, where success may often be defined by academic achievement or standardised testing, success in our special schools is about progress—meeting individual needs, growing in personal development, and achieving meaningful, person-centred goals.

Success is not solely about mastering a specific curriculum but about enabling our students to lead fulfilling lives with dignity and independence.

We believe that:
"Success is not defined by others but by the individual's ability to make progress on their personal journey." – Unknown

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 Defining Success

Measuring success in special schools involves a departure from traditional academic benchmarks. In our context, success is defined by the progress a student makes relative to their starting point—progress in academic subjects, but also in areas such as social interaction, emotional regulation, and practical life skills.

In special education, progress and success include:

Appendix 4

Nexus Multi-academy Trust Rationale and Guiding Principles for Measures of Success and Achievement in Special Schools

- **Personal Development:** Improvements in confidence, self-awareness, and the ability to set and achieve personal goals.
- **Communication:** Developing the ability to express needs and engage with others, including through non-verbal communication systems or assistive technology.
- **Physical and Sensory Development:** Achieving milestones in motor skills, mobility, and sensory integration.
- **Life Skills:** Gaining independence in daily tasks, community participation, and preparation for adulthood.

2.2 Personalised and Individualised Achievement

Success is individualised and rooted in each student's unique path. At Nexus, we know students may not follow the same trajectory as their peers in mainstream schools.

Using Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs), and regular reviews, we work in partnership with students, families, and multi-disciplinary teams to define what progress looks like—and how it can be supported. Every small step, whether it's using a new communication tool or increasing independence, is a significant achievement.

2.3 Holistic Development

Success at Nexus is not limited to academics—it embraces holistic progress across emotional, social, and functional domains.

Students may show significant growth in areas beyond the traditional curriculum, such as:

- Building positive relationships
- Managing emotions more effectively
- Making independent decisions with confidence
- Enhancing communication using various methods

Appendix 4

Nexus Multi-academy Trust Rationale and Guiding Principles for Measures of Success and Achievement in Special Schools

This broader lens allows us to celebrate the full scope of each learner's development and ongoing progress.

2.4 Progress Over Time

Success is not defined by a single event or outcome, but by progress over time. We understand that for students in our special schools, progress may not follow a linear path.

What matters most is consistent movement forward, however small. At Nexus, we place great value on sustained, meaningful progress—recognising that each gain represents hard work, resilience, and support.

2.5 Inclusive and Holistic Assessment Practices

Standardised assessments often fail to capture the depth and complexity of student progress in our settings. Instead, we use inclusive tools that better reflect individual growth and learning journeys.

These include:

- **Qualitative assessments** like observations and reflective notes
- **Portfolios and E-Portfolios** that show academic, social, and personal progress
- **Feedback** from families, staff, and external professionals
- **Regular IEP and EHCP reviews** to track evolving goals and achievements

This broad approach ensures that every aspect of a student's progress is visible and valued.

2.6 Family and Community Involvement

Families and communities are vital partners in recognising and supporting student progress. Parents and carers bring invaluable insight, and we collaborate closely with them to monitor development, celebrate milestones, and refine goals.

Nexus Multi-academy Trust Rationale and Guiding Principles for Measures of Success and Achievement in Special Schools

This shared approach strengthens the network around each student and reinforces their progress both at school and at home.

3. Conclusion

At Nexus, success is not defined by the attainment of external benchmarks, but by the recognition and celebration of individual progress in all its dimensions. Whether it involves the acquisition of a new life skill, the development of social relationships, or an increase in independence, each step forward is valued and meaningful.

We are committed to identifying, supporting, and acknowledging the unique progress of every learner, while also placing a strong emphasis on preparing students for their transition to the next stage of life. This includes structured and personalised planning for further education, employment opportunities, independent living, and active participation in the wider community.

Our role is to support each student from their individual starting point, facilitating their growth and development in a way that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence required for adulthood. Ultimately, our vision of success is one in which every student is empowered to lead a fulfilled, independent, and meaningful life, underpinned by sustained and purposeful progress throughout their educational journey