

Response ID ANON-9SM9-9YUK-4

Submitted to **Primary school pupil assessment: Rochford Review recommendations**

Submitted on **2017-06-21 16:23:39**

Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name:

Bart Shaw

2 What is your email address?

Email:

bart@lkmco.org

3 What is your organisation?

Organisation:

LKMco

4 Which of these categories best describes your role?

Categories:

Academic/Researcher

5 Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?

No

Reason for confidentiality:

Current assessment arrangements

Rochford Review final recommendations

Future arrangements as proposed by the Rochford Review

6 If the statutory requirement to assess pupils using P scales was removed, would any important information no longer be available to you?

No

Please explain your reasoning and provide any further evidence we should take into account.:

Our research has not to date used P Scales as a source of data. We would be unlikely to use P scales as a source of pupil attainment data in future, due to concerns over the reliability of teacher assessment when used to produce school performance data.

7 In your opinion, are the pre-key stage standards clear and easy to understand?

Yes

If you answered no, which of the bulleted statements lack sufficient clarity to enable an effective teacher assessment to be carried out? Please explain why. :

The bulleted statements are easy to understand. We agree that wherever possible pupils should be included in mainstream statutory assessment arrangements. However, we are concerned about the use of such data for accountability purposes. As a broad principle, we believe that the Department for Education should not rely on potentially subjective teacher judgements to produce data that may then be used to evaluate the performance of a school. The pre-key stage standards give teachers a foundation from which to:

- conduct formative assessment for the children they teach;
- report on progress to parents; and
- highlight areas where parents and carers can support a child's learning outside the school.

We are wary about using teacher assessment and judgements to produce data then used to hold schools to account. We explore some of the evidence for this in our May 2017 'Testing the Water' Interim Report, which shows:

- Teachers (like anyone) are prone to subconscious bias, affecting the reliability of their judgements.
- Knowing that the data may be used to hold them or their school to account creates incentives to deflate or inflate pupils' results:

- Teachers will (and should) interpret each element differently, depending on their children's needs, and the teacher's own understanding of the standards (as was the case with P-Levels and NC Levels).

- Comparing the progress across different schools of different children with different forms of SEND (particularly those with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) who may be able to access the NC in some subject areas, but not in others), is unlikely to provide meaningful information about the relative effectiveness of schools.

Our 'Testing the Water' Interim Report is available, here: <https://cdn.lkmco.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Testing-the-Water-Report-FINAL-INTERIM.pdf>

8 Do the pre-key stage standards support and encourage progression on to the statutory national curriculum tests for pupils who are able to do so?

Yes

Please explain your reasoning and describe how the pre-key stage standards could be improved to support and encourage progression on to the statutory national curriculum tests.:

The standards appear fit for this purpose. Supporting and encouraging progression (rather than accountability) is a legitimate use of these standards. We do not have a view on how they could be improved to provide a better fit with NC tests.

Assessment for pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning

9 Do you agree that statutory assessment should focus on cognition and learning?

No

Please explain your reasoning and, if applicable, describe what should be assessed instead or in addition to cognition and learning, and why. :

We do not understand the reasoning that assessment for children who are not engaged in subject-specific learning should mirror the national curriculum standards which focus on learning and development in English reading, English writing and mathematics. Assessing pupils with CLDD should avoid reducing education to academic achievement only. Reducing statutory assessment to cognition and learning risks teachers focusing on this at the expense of pupils' social, emotional and physical development.

Schools should be required by statute to report on all these aspects to parents and carers.

Assessment for pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning

10 Do you agree that assessing against the seven areas of engagement listed above is the right model to be used in the statutory assessment of these pupils?

No

Please explain your reasoning and, if applicable, provide details of robust alternative methods for the assessment of cognition of learning, or other SEND areas of need, which the department should explore.:

We feel that these seven areas may be relevant and useful for assessing pupils' cognition and learning, and possibly other areas of their development under the SEND Code of Practice. However, schools should be free to choose some, all or other areas when reporting to parents and carers. These seven areas would work best as part of guidance for schools on how they might think about assessing the development of pupils with CLDD, but in that context are probably too brief. Ideally schools should be engaging as early as possible with parents and carers to decide collectively what kind of information would be useful.

11 Do you believe that assessing pupils against the seven areas of engagement for cognition and learning would give parents and carers meaningful information about their child's attainment and progress?

Yes

Please explain your reasoning and provide any further evidence we should take into account.:

We believe the seven areas may give parents useful information. However, as explained above, parents should play a role in telling schools what information would be meaningful, and schools should not be forced to fit a standardised template (although they should be held accountable for the quality of their assessment and reporting).

12 If you did not agree that statutory assessment should only focus on cognition and learning, do you think that the seven areas of engagement would be useful in assessing the other areas of need as outlined in the 'SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years' (communication and interaction; social, emotional and mental health; sensory and/or physical)?

Yes

Please explain your reasoning and, if applicable, describe which other areas should be assessed and why.:

As above, we feel that the statutory requirement on assessment for pupils with CLDD should stop short of forcing schools to report progress against a pre-defined checklist. Schools should be given the flexibility to work with parents and carers to establish what is most beneficial for each pupil, and given guidance and ideas about how they might do this. The seven areas of engagement are a useful starting point for that guidance.

Assessment for pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning

13 For those working in educational settings, if the government accepted the recommendation that schools should decide the best way to assess the seven engagement areas of cognition and learning, would you be able to assess pupils against the seven areas using the guidance provided in the Rochford Review's final report?

Not Answered

Please explain your reasoning and describe what additional support you might need in order to make these assessments? :

N/A

Reporting assessment data

14 The Rochford Review recommends that schools should not be required to submit assessment information to the department for pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning. Do you agree with this recommendation?

Yes

Please explain your reasoning and provide any further evidence we should take into account:

We believe this is the right approach. At the same time, accountability measures for schools working with pupils with CLDD must be improved. Ofsted should hold high expectations of the progress schools (and special schools in particular) make in supporting pupils' cognitive, social, emotional and physical needs. Ofsted should also consider outcomes for pupils after they leave school. Are pupils equipped to handle transitions to secondary school? Are pupils developing the independence they will need in adult life? Furthermore, Ofsted inspectors require training and guidance on what makes effective practice for pupils with profound forms of SEND, as set out in our 2014 report "Joining the Dots", which examined the SEND landscape following the 2014 Act and Code of Practice.

Our "Joining the Dots" report can be accessed here: <https://www.lkmco.org/joining-the-dots-driver-youth-trust-report-on-send-reforms/>

There is a danger, too, that schools may be incentivised to "hold back" pupils from the NC, in those cases where pupils might be able to access the NC assessment, but whose results may negatively impact the schools' performance data. We consider this in our response to question 19.

Implementation

15 How can we ensure that ITT and CPD provision adequately supports those who work in schools with the assessment of pupils who are not working at the standard of national curriculum tests? What kind of training, materials and support would be helpful?

How can we ensure that ITT and CPD provision adequately supports those who work in schools with the assessment of pupils who are not working at the standard of national curriculum tests? What kind of training, materials and support would be helpful?:

We believe that the Department would best support the assessment of pupils by :

- Focusing primarily on the overall quality of teaching in schools, so that teachers can formatively assess pupils, plan for progress, and deliver engaging activities that support pupils' development
- Sharing practice wherever possible. A SEND-specific body that collates and disseminates research and practice (similar to the EEF) would be helpful in this regard.
- Working from the premise that changing attitudes to, and expectations of, pupils with SEND will have a greater impact than specific resources or materials that may have only limited relevance to schools whose pupils have a number of diverse and unique developmental needs.
- Focusing on CPD rather than ITT. Those working in schools need ongoing support through their careers, rather than frontloading information at the start of their careers, amongst a wide variety of competing training needs.
- Working with the College of Teaching to identify, celebrate and share examples of quality SEND training.

In our report "Joining the Dots" on changes to the SEND landscape following the 2014 Act and Code of Practice, we provide a number of case studies of organisations that are well placed to offer CPD. These include the London Leadership Strategy and Achievement for All.

Furthermore, the Department for Education must fund schools adequately so that they can afford training opportunities as they arise.

Our "Joining the Dots" report can be accessed here: <https://www.lkmco.org/joining-the-dots-driver-youth-trust-report-on-send-reforms/>

16 The Review suggests that schools should work collaboratively across different types of educational settings. How could schools best be supported to share good practice?

The Review suggests that schools should work collaboratively across different types of educational settings. How could schools best be supported to share good practice? :

As above, an organisation to collate and disseminate practice would be valuable, perhaps akin to the EEF's Teaching and Learning Toolkit. The College of Teaching should also play a role in identifying and sharing high quality research and practice.

The Department must provide adequate funding for schools that enables leaders to cover and pay travel expenses for their staff CPD needs.

17 Would additional guidance for the statutory assessment of pupils who are not yet working at the standard of national curriculum tests and who have English as an additional language be helpful?

Yes

Please explain your reasoning and, if applicable, describe what areas the guidance should cover? :

This is a completely different challenge for schools and as such requires different guidance. Our research on Ethnicity, Gender and Social Mobility shows how

pupils with EAL often catch up and overtake English speakers in NC assessments once the initial language barrier is surpassed. As we point out in our report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on the links between SEND and poverty however, EAL can mask underlying SEND.

Our report on Ethnicity, Gender and Social Mobility can be accessed here: <https://www.lkmco.org/ethnicity-gender-social-mobility-new-report/>

Our report "Special Educational Needs and Poverty" can be accessed here: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/special-educational-needs-and-their-links-poverty>

Implementation

18 What steps could we take to reduce any burdens on those involved in the statutory assessment of pupils not yet working at the standard of national curriculum tests?

What steps could we take to reduce any burdens on those involved in the statutory assessment of pupils not yet working at the standard of national curriculum tests? :

Guidance should be reviewed every two years and should include examples of how schools assess pupils not yet working at the standard of NC tests.

However, we also feel that teacher assessment for the purposes of producing accountability data should be kept to a minimum (if used at all), for the reasons described, above.

Technology may provide in some cases an appropriate means for conducting statutory assessment of pupils not yet working at the standard of the NC tests. During our research for our 'Testing the Water' Interim Report we heard from Early Years and special school practitioners using technology to aid their pupils' learning, and assessment of their learning. For example, one teacher talked about using QR codes to share videos of verbal feedback with pupils, parents and carers. While this would not be appropriate or necessary for a statutory assessment, it suggests technology can help streamline the process in some cases.

Equalities

19 Do you think that any of these proposals could have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific students, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics' (including disability, gender, race and religion or belief)?

Please provide evidence to support your response.:

Whilst we believe that assessment for pupils not yet at the standard of the NC should be non-statutory, there is a danger that a division between statutory and non-statutory assessment may create an incentive for schools to hold pupils back from progressing on to pre-Key Stage subject-specific content, if they believe that pupil may harm the school's progression data.

Ofsted have an important to play role here, particularly in gathering the views of parents. Equally, schools themselves must challenge their peers where they believe pupils with SEND are being held back from the pre-Key Stage subject specific assessments.

20 How could any adverse impact be reduced and are there any ways we could better advance equality of opportunity? Please provide evidence to support your response.

How could any adverse impact be reduced and are there any ways we could better advance equality of opportunity? Please provide evidence to support your response.:

N/A