

Assessment Policy

Moral Purpose

“We are united in the belief that together we can inspire all learners to dream, persevere and achieve so that we can change lives for the better, now and for future generations to come”

Policy developed by:	
Policy to be reviewed:	
Summary of changes	

Approved by:

Headteacher:

Chair of Governors:

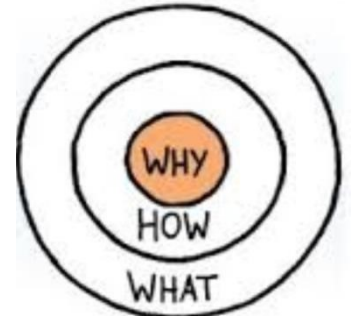
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Aims of Teaching and Learning at Acer;

Inspire – Impact – Independence

The aim of Teaching and Learning at Acer is to provide high quality education which **inspires**, has a positive **impact** on all young people and results in fostering **independence**, preparing them for the future.



Acer's Assessment Policy Intent (Why)

- **Informing classroom practice**- curriculum should drive assessment and not the other way round.
- **Cater to the needs of pupils** - pupils will have individualised expectations based on their starting points and SEND needs.
- **Understood by key stakeholders** - data systems will be easy to understand for all key stakeholders involved in discussions about pupil progress and attainment

Policy development (How)

This policy has been developed through:

- A response to 'Abolishment of Levels by the Government – Assessment After Levels'(Nick Gibb, 2015)
- Researching and reviewing the Rochford Report (2016)
- An annual SWOT analysis of the current assessment processes across the trust which will inform new assessment guidelines at Acer (see appendix 1)

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Introduction

From 2015, the Department for Education gave schools the freedom to develop their own approach for assessing pupils' progress.

Special schools have found it a challenge to show progress for pupils working below age related expectation. Some schools assess pupils as simply 'working below'. This is not good enough. It is important schools are able to identify where a pupil is working, the progress the pupil has made and what those next steps will be.

We have used information from the Rochford report (October 2016) which is an expert review of statutory assessment arrangements for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests. The review group brought together expertise in assessment, special educational needs and working with disadvantaged pupils.

"A successful assessment system will enable the teacher to understand thoroughly what is expected to be mastered by pupils at any given stage of education, and assess their progress towards doing so in a meaningful and fair way" ([Education Endowment Foundation](#))

Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of assessment at Acer Academy is to:

- Monitor and evaluate each student's progress across the school's curriculum to ensure that students achieve their full potential.
- Inform personalized teaching and learning strategies tailored to individual needs.
- Provide clear feedback to students, parents, and guardians on progress and areas for development.
- Support transition planning between key stages and post-16 education.

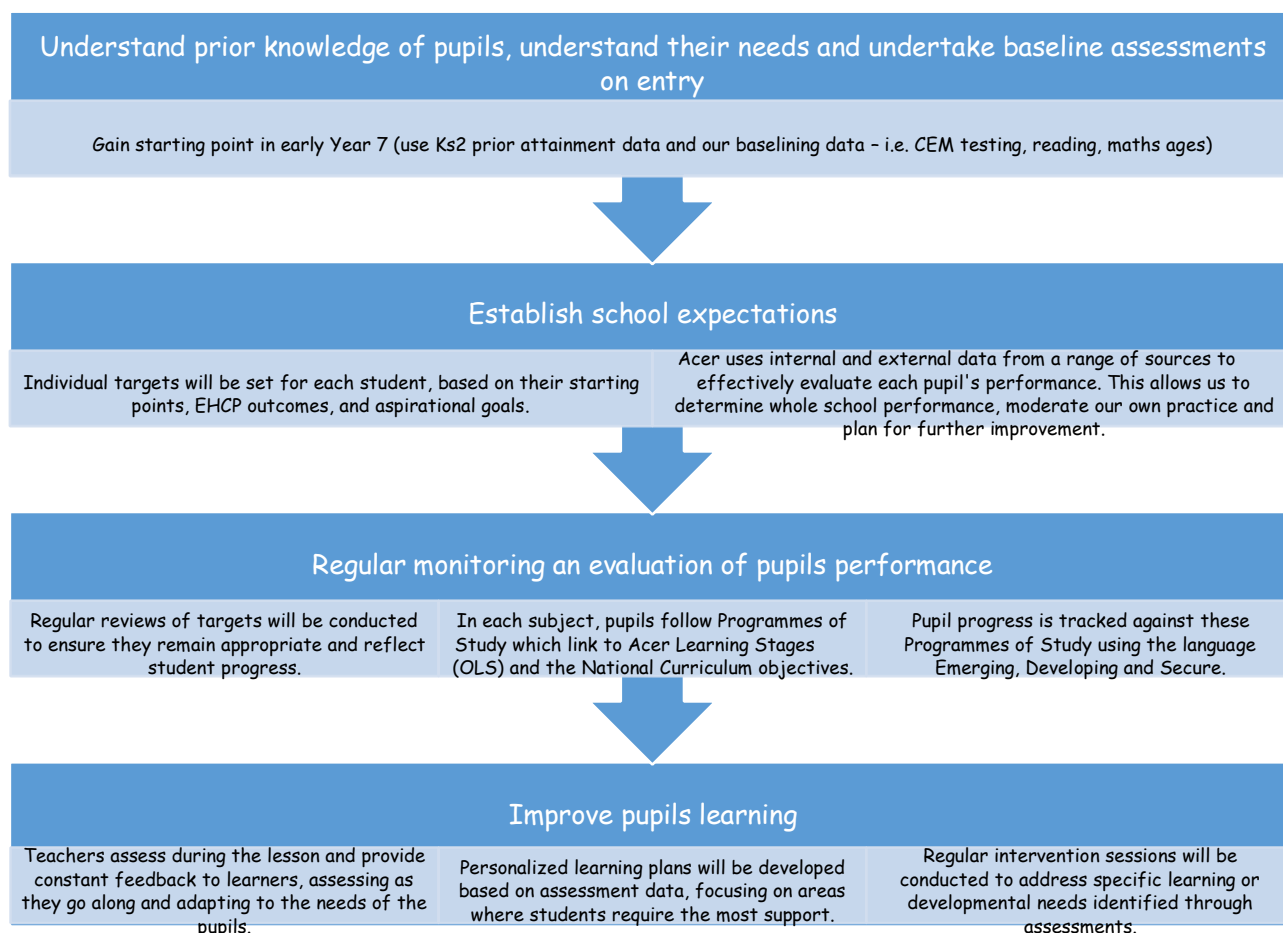
Principles of Assessment

Assessment at Acer Academy will:

- Be inclusive, catering to the diverse range of abilities and needs of all students.
- Use a combination of formative (ongoing) and summative (end-of-term/year/key stage) assessments.
- Be transparent, with clear criteria communicated to students and parents.
- Encourage and motivate students by recognizing progress and effort.
- Be flexible, allowing for adjustments and accommodations to support SEN students.

Overview of Acer's assessment approach

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at Acer Academy. It provides a framework for identifying, monitoring and communicating students' progress and outcomes, identifying areas for further development and setting challenging targets.



2. Types of Assessment

- **Formative Assessment:**
 - Ongoing observations, verbal feedback, and teacher assessments during lessons.
 - Individualized tasks and activities tailored to students' needs.
 - Regular use of self-assessment and peer assessment, where appropriate.
 - Daily or weekly progress checks using adapted materials or tools.
- **Summative Assessment:**
 - Regular assessments across the Acer curriculum, adapted to meet individual learning needs.
 - End-of-year assessments, which may include exams, portfolios, and project work.
 - Standardized assessments where appropriate, with necessary accommodations.
 - Use of external data sources to set and monitor progress targets, ensuring alignment with similar special schools and national benchmarks

- Use of Acer Learning Stages, Pre-Key Stage Standards, or similar measures for students working below national curriculum levels.
- Point in Time Assessments (PITA) to measure achievement against school expectations, using categories such as Above Target (AT), On Target (OT), Near Target (NT), Below Target (BT), and Not Counted (NC).
- **Specialized Assessments:**
 - Regular SEN reviews, including Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) assessments.
 - Speech and language, occupational therapy, and other specialist assessments. ○ Baseline assessments upon entry to the school, and ongoing tracking of progress against these baselines.

3. Inclusion and Accessibility

- Assessments will be designed or adapted to ensure they are accessible to all students, regardless of their specific needs or disabilities.
- Reasonable adjustments, such as additional time, use of assistive technology, or alternative formats, will be provided as required.
- Staff will receive ongoing training on assessment strategies for SEN students to ensure they are equipped to deliver effective assessments

4. Feedback and Reporting

Feedback to Students:

- Feedback will be regular, specific, and constructive, focusing on achievements and next steps.
- Teachers will use a range of communication methods suitable to each student's needs (e.g., verbal, visual, written).

Reporting to Parents/Guardians:

- Reports will be sent to parents, detailing academic progress and any concerns or areas for support.
- Annual reviews of EHCPs or SEN support plans will be conducted with input from teachers, specialists, parents, and students.
- Regular parent-teacher meetings will be held to discuss progress and agree on targets.
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5. Assessment recording and Tracking

- A centralised system will be used to record and track student progress across all subjects and key stages.
- Teachers will regularly update records to ensure accurate and current data is available.
- Data will be used to identify trends, inform teaching practices, and set whole-school or individual targets.

Subject leaders are responsible for moderating and recording assessment data within their subject area. Regular curriculum meetings provide a forum for sharing, discussing and moderating assessments.

Attainment data is recorded, tracked and monitored across the whole school using Arbour with data updated and analysed termly. The expectations of students who are consistently exceeding their targets will be reviewed at this point and intervention plans will be put in place for those who are not achieving expected progress. A full and final analysis of the progress of all students and the impact of any intervention is undertaken as part of the summer term analysis.

Arbour allows us to compare the performance of specific groups of students. We currently analyse the performance of the following groups as part of our termly and end of year KPI reports:

- Students in receipt of Pupil Premium
- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Ethnic minority students
- Girls and boys
- Primary SEN and Broad Area of Need

It should however be noted, and is acknowledged by Ofsted, that due to the relatively small size of some of these cohorts meaningful comparisons are not always possible and data must be interpreted with care. We are in the fortunate position of being able to analyse data at the individual student level rather than focusing on groups of students.

Curriculum-Driven Assessment

At Acer, our primary focus is to assess whether pupils know and can do what has been explicitly taught, based on their starting points and their curriculum pathway. All assessments are tightly aligned with the taught curriculum and designed to evaluate the specific content delivered.

Given the diverse starting points within our setting, careful curriculum adaptation is essential to ensure that the curriculum reflects each pupil's individual needs and starting points. Alongside assessing whether pupils have learned what they were taught, it is also useful to broadly identify where they are working in relation to their mainstream peers.

This dual approach allows us to:

1. Confirm that pupils have achieved the intended learning outcomes.
2. Place pupils on a scale (Acer Learning Levels) that reflects their development compared to other Acer pupils.
3. Measure and monitor smaller, meaningful steps of progress for pupils who may make atypical rates of progress.

Acer's Progression language

Emerging – Developing – Secure

- Emerging (E): Pupils are rarely able to apply their understanding to a skill, but show some understanding.
- Developing (D): Pupils begin to apply their understanding, this is usually with the support of a teacher or teaching assistant.
- Secure (S): Consistently applying a skill correctly and with independence.

Overview of data submission points

In line with government guidance regarding reducing teacher workload, we have revised our approach to the collection of pupil performance data.

Overview of data submission points	
End of Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review pupil's baselines and targets • Record all pupils PITA data • Record new pupils initial baseline assessment information
End of Spring 1	☒ Complete all pupils PITA data
Summer 2	☒ Complete all pupils OLS assessment

Point in Time Assessment (PITA)

Assessment will be based on teacher's professional judgments measuring pupil achievement against with their end of year targets.

This will be referred to as Point In Time Assessments (PITA's).

Point in Time Assessment (PITA)		
Category	Description	Indicators
Expected	Meeting expectations	Meets learning objectives Applies skills in familiar contexts
Near Expected	Slightly below expectations	Meets most objectives with some gaps Inconsistent skill application
Below Expected	Significantly below expectations	Struggles with objectives Requires substantial support
Not Counted (NC)	Data not included in standard assessment (Not Counted)	Performance not assessed. May follow a specialised curriculum

6. Target Setting

- Individual targets will be set for each student, based on their starting points, EHCP outcomes, and aspirational goals.
- Targets will be realistic yet challenging, encouraging students to achieve their best.
- Regular reviews of targets will be conducted to ensure they remain appropriate and reflect student progress.

Baseline assessing pupils

We receive end of Key Stage 2 assessment data from our feeder primary schools. Experience shows us that, for various reasons (poor retention of knowledge and skills over the summer break, anxiety over the move to a new school, a high level of one-to-one support in primary school etc) a significant minority of students do not perform at their reported level when they arrive with us.

Whilst we acknowledge that the reported end of Key Stage 2 data will be used in the Department of Education's KS2-KS4 progress measure, it would be doing students a disservice to stick rigidly to unrealistic end of Year 6 assessments when setting our own progress targets, indeed the discrepancy would be compounded year on year as we set increasingly more unachievable targets.

We therefore carry out a benchmarking exercise during the first half term of Year 7. In the first instance students undertake the following assessments:

- CEM Testing
- Accredited English and maths assessments
- Assessments in individual subjects

The outcomes of these assessments are then triangulated with the reported end of KS2 data and students are assigned an Acer baseline assessment. If there is a significant difference between reported KS2 attainment and our assessments then subject leaders (English and maths), form teachers and the Head of Lower School are all consulted as part of the baseline assessment process.

Students who join us post-Year 7 are benchmarked in a similar way.

School expectations

Expectations are still our key way of determining exceptional progress for our pupils. They rely simply on an accurate starting point for our pupils, and dictate the expectation of working expected OLS for that pupil for the end of each year or key phase of education.

Targets are expected to be 'aspirational' or 'challenging' to ensure pupils are provided with an environment that stimulates them to make the best progress possible.

As a result, target setting now often uses multiple sources of information to arrive at appropriate targets for each pupil including: Teachers' knowledge of the pupil and their circumstances and external benchmark expectations

Depending on the level of the pupil, different expectations of progression are used. These relate specifically to the schools expectations document.

Should a student make outstanding progress in a subject over the course of a full academic year then they will be put on an Accelerated Progress 'flight path' for the subsequent year, this has an expectation of progress over the year.

Acer are able to use comparative data not only to compare the historical progress of pupils against the benchmark but also to understand what 'expected' progress would be for one or two years ahead for pupils based on the amount of progress that statistically would be expected for a pupil of the same age, category of need and level of prior attainment.

Although pupil's SEND can lead to differences from one subject to another, the following general rules can be applied in terms of expectations and pathways:

Baseline (<i>start of KS3</i>)	Pit Stop (<i>Ideal progression made at the end of KS3</i>)	Expectations (<i>end of KS4 outcomes</i>)
WT	SS/1E	Personalised Progression Pathway (no formal qualifications)
SS and Acer Level 1	1D – 2S	Entry Level 1 – 3 (Functional Pathway)
Acer Level 2	3E – 3S	Level 1 qualification / GCSE 1 – 3 (mixed academic pathway)
Acer Level 3 and above	4E and above	Level 2 qualification / GCSE 4 - 10 (academic pathway)

7. Quality Assurance

- Regular internal moderation of assessments will be conducted to ensure consistency and fairness.
- External moderation or consultation with SEN specialists will be sought periodically to validate assessment practices.

Moderation of assessments for each subject takes the following forms:

- The curriculum clearly lays out what pupils should be able to know and do and this forms the basis of both formative and summative assessment. Staff can use the intended curriculum to help with assessment moderation.
- Our subject specific Acer Progression Documents has explicit curriculum descriptors that all teachers are familiar with.
- All qualifications have published grade descriptors.
- Standardised formative assessment tasks that address specific progression of key knowledge are included in planned outcomes in teachers schemes of work.

- All units of work have some form of levelled summative assessment.
- Moderation of work is a feature of curriculum meetings
- External moderation is a feature of all qualifications offered.
- Subject leaders carry out Department Health Checks that involve lesson observation and work scrutiny.
- Subject leaders attend LA support meetings where best practice is discussed.
- We have developed collaboration opportunities with similar special needs schools regionally and nationally
- We work collaboratively across SEND schools within the trust.