

BSquared

Response to the Final Report of The Rochford Review



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November 2016

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Published in the United Kingdom by B Squared Ltd.

November 2016.

B Squared Ltd. are proud members of the British Educational Suppliers Association

[BESA]

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Recommendation 1 – Removal of P Levels

As is often the case with big ideas, an important concept ends up being used differently to how it was originally intended. Everyone understands the idea in a slightly different way and takes from it what is important for their needs. They share their interpretation and, from that, the next person takes what is important for them. Every time the information is passed on, the original idea changes.

The P scale was a set of levels designed to work with the National Curriculum for pupils working below level 1. It was not perfect but it gave a structure and allowed schools to show progress. P levels also gave schools a common language to evaluate the progress for pupils with SEND. The jumps between levels was broad and the progress between levels often took a long time. Due the nature of the pupils, there was a lack of exemplar material. There were some projects designed to tackle this; the DfE produced a document and a number of local authorities produced their own moderation. However, there was no consistent standard. Pupils in Primary and Secondary who are working towards SATs or GCSEs generally have exemplar material and guidance on the levels expected of them. This was always missing for pupils with SEND.

The nature of pupils' needs also made judgements difficult – what one pupil found easy, another pupil found difficult. Pupils didn't learn in the linear way that the Government suggested. This led to pupils appearing to make limited or no progress, yet they had often made good progress.

The challenge for schools and companies working with schools was to find a way to make assessing with the P levels work. The Government frequently talks about how important standardisation and moderation is for learning to be effective. Teachers must have the same understanding of what is required of pupils for specific attainment levels. Without this, teachers will not necessarily agree on judgements or what the next step is.

At B Squared, our method was to breakdown the P levels into small steps. This has a number of benefits:

- Standardisation – Teachers have a better understanding of what is required for each level.
- Non-linear learning – Skills can be achieved in any order, from any level.
- Smaller steps of progress – Schools can show progress within levels, not just moving from one P level to the next.
- Improved understanding of needs – By seeing a pupil's strengths and weaknesses, schools can understand the pupil better and tailor learning to suit.

There are a number of agencies/organisations who work between a teacher and the Government. This is often where a good idea gets diluted and sometimes skewed for their requirements. A number of the negatives of the P levels are not necessarily from the Government's initial document, but in how they have been implemented. As the P levels are a linear scale, expectations, targeting and performance judgements were introduced. Some people saw P levels as equal steps. Pupils were suddenly expected to make linear progress and schools and teachers were judged by their pupils' linear progress. This led to a number of issues. There were a lack of national standards for SEND pupils, so how could teachers and schools be held to account? Teachers felt pressured to push pupils up through the P levels. Once this started happening the P levels stopped being what they were initially intended to be.

At B Squared we have always used P levels slightly differently. We have broken down the P levels into smaller steps. To us, levels are a group of similarly challenging skills that the Government deemed to be achievable for pupils operating at a similar ability. They are not intended to be used to teach to and they are not in a prescribed order of teaching. Pupils can achieve the skills in any order, they can make progress on any level and we report the pupil's current level as this is the information that the Government wants. With our approach, schools can show progress for pupils who cannot currently achieve all the skills required within their current level. Instead, schools can look at the progress on the levels above or below where they may be making progress.

Released in 2010, the Progression Guidance was a useful and powerful document. It provided extremely valuable information about progress, how it should be judged and demonstrated that the Government understood (a) progress is not always linear, (b) P levels aren't equal and (c) the amount of progress is individual to each pupil.

When the Progression Guidance was summarised or when people wanted to know what the focus of the document was, they often referred to the tables showing expected pupil outcomes. To some people, these tables became the sole purpose of the document and they used these tables exclusively to judge progress. This was probably the biggest issue with the document. The pages before the table contained a lot of useful information. At B Squared, we used this document regularly during training sessions when we talked about expected progress and the idea that schools shouldn't chase level progress. The second big issue was that the data set used to show expected progress only contained a limited number of pupils. This meant that schools easily dismissed the tables containing expected outcomes. Sadly it was often this information that was used to judge schools. A great document showing that P level progress is not linear and that schools shouldn't expect linear progress was ignored by a large number of professionals because the incorrect message was shared.

The Progression Guidance talked about non-linear progress for some pupils and how progress for these pupils should be judged differently. The document also suggested that pupils' progress should be judged against each student's individual potential. Prior attainment and the Progression Guidance data should have been one of a basket of indicators for judging progress; the tables should not be used on their own.

Clearly, learners in the fourth quartile have made better progress than those in the first quartile, but it is important to remember that, depending on individual circumstances, a learner could be performing in the upper quartile and not have made good-enough progress, or could be in the lower quartile but still have made good progress. Intelligent use of data, other sources of information and professional judgement allow schools to ask the right questions and find the right answers about whether progress is good enough.

DfE, 2010. Progression 2010-11. Pg. 19. Crown Copyright

I wonder, when people say that the P levels aren't fit for purpose, are they referring to the P levels themselves or how the P levels have been used as a judgement of performance and progress?

However, I do feel that the P levels lack breadth. The P levels were designed to be used with the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum dictates the curriculum, scope and breadth and the P levels provides the framework for the assessment of pupils working at lower attainment levels. The P levels are not always used this way. They are sometimes used on their own, with the P scale defining the curriculum as well as the assessment; resulting in a lack of breadth. The P levels focus on academic development including subject-specific learning. However, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years defines four areas of need:

- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical

The P levels concentrate on the Cognition and Learning aspect but it is widely recognised that schools should support development for pupils in all four areas.

So to summarise, the P levels themselves are a way show the academic attainment level for SEND pupils. The main issue is that the P levels have been used as a curriculum and they have been used to judge progress and performance. This was not their intended purpose.

We need to move away from the P levels because of the way in which they have been used. There is the need to assess a wider range of development, the need to show progress in a non-linear way and the need for more flexibility to suit the development and individual progress for pupils with SEND. The P levels could be updated and refreshed, but incorrect understanding and poor use of them is unlikely to be resolved in that way. The same practices to any new version may be applied, resulting in misuse and an outcome different to that which the Government intended.

This does not mean schools cannot use the P levels well and that the P levels cannot be modified to suit a school's needs. It means that on their own, P levels are not a good way of judging pupils' holistic progress and development. Good use of P levels is often part of a wider approach, taking other areas of pupil development into consideration as well.

Over the last five years, we have had an increased number of conversations with schools regarding assessment of the 'soft skills', the importance of non-academic skills and adopting a more holistic approach. Many schools have already recognised the need for wider assessments than the P scale and the tools linked to it currently provide. We started developing a new way of assessing pupils with complex needs a few years ago and it is refreshing to see that recommendations in the final report of The Rochford Review (the Report) are aligned with the work we have already done.

How Does this Affect B Squared?

We will be updating our formative assessment and moving away from P levels to a new structure which complements the new statutory assessment framework. There is a lot more freedom with the removal of P levels. This has an equal number of benefits and dangers. We will provide an assessment framework for Cognition and Learning that leads into the Primary Curriculum. We aim to provide a broad curriculum that enables schools to choose content to suit their needs. We will also be providing assessment frameworks for Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory and/or Physical so that schools are able to support pupils' development fully across the four areas.

Recommendation 2 – Inclusive Assessment

For inclusion to work, it has to be more than just pupils with SEND being in the same school or the same class. Pupils with SEND need to be included in the same assessment process as much as possible.

There was a distinct lack of provision for pupils with SEND in the 2014 National Curriculum. The curriculum allowed schools to use an assessment system that suited their needs. Schools were free to choose or develop their own system. The assumption was that, because the curriculum was set out in end of year outcomes, schools were expected to assess in the same way. Some other approaches we used, but local authorities still expected data in a prescribed formats. This limited schools' choices and went against the Government's intentions. The conversation in mainstream primary schools is often about Age Related Expectations (ARE) and whether the pupil is below, at or above. Pupils with SEND are often significantly below ARE and teachers don't want to use ARE when discussing pupil progress, especially to the pupil's family.

The Report recommends using pre-key stage standards for statutory end of key stage assessment and these should include all pupils working on subject-specific learning. These standards link in with the end of key stage standards used for pupils working at the level of National Curriculum tests, providing an inclusive scale for all pupils working on subject-specific learning.

However, this Report only covers statutory end of key stage assessments. It does not provide guidance for the formative and summative assessment that the school will use throughout key stages. It only specifies that schools should not work towards the standards but should use/develop an assessment system that suits their needs.

The approach schools choose for their formative/summative assessment system will struggle to be inclusive due to the National Curriculum's current use of ARE. Under the previous curriculum framework, the P levels fed into the National Curriculum giving a very inclusive system for formative and summative assessment. The pupils with SEND were working at a developmentally lower level on the same scale covering the same curriculum. It was an inclusive system.

The challenge for schools will be to develop or decide on a formative/summative assessment approach. They have to ensure their curriculum has sufficient breadth and is able to show the pupils' depth and breadth of understanding. This will be easier to achieve in special schools as this will be the focus for the whole school and will be used with every child. Mainstream settings may struggle in this area due to lack of resources (time, money and expertise) and would benefit from developing their approach by, for example, working with a local special school. This would give the added benefit of local schools all using the same language when discussing pupil progress.

How Does this Affect B Squared?

We will ensure our assessment is inclusive by providing an assessment framework for pupils working on subject-specific learning which is in line with the National Curriculum. This inclusive approach will prepare and support children who will transition on to the Age Related Expectations of the Primary Curriculum. This will assist teachers working with a wide range of abilities to differentiate work for their pupils. They will be able to look at a subject over a range of abilities so they can plan and deliver appropriate lessons.

Recommendation 3 - Assessing Pupils with Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

The Report recommends that pupils with severe or profound and multiple difficulties who are working below the pre-key stage standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 should not be included in subject-specific learning. Instead, schools should have a wider focus on the pupil's development. The school should not only focus on Cognition and Learning for these pupils but also on Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory and/or Physical.

The Report recommends, however, that the statutory assessment should only focus on the area of Cognition and Learning to stay in line with the statutory assessment for mainstream pupils.

We began work in 2014 on developing a different way of assessing progress for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. After consulting with a number of schools about their current issues with assessment, we worked with them to develop a new approach. We moved away from the subject-specific learning and moved to a much wider framework more suited to the development of these pupils. This work ties in extremely well with the Report's recommendation to support development across the four areas for the lowest ability learners.

How Does this Affect B Squared?

We are already in the process of mapping the new content we have developed over the last two years for pupils with complex needs to the 4 areas of need. We had identified this was an area that we needed to develop and worked on creating a Developmental Continuum that was not subject-specific. Instead we focused on areas of development that pupils working at these levels require. The content we developed already works across the four areas of need, we now need to identify the structure we wish to use for the non-subject-specific assessment.

Recommendation 4 - Cognition and Learning for Pupils with Severe or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

The Report has looked at Cognition and Learning for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, looking at how they develop and how this can be assessed. There are a number of difficulties in this area due to the time it takes to acquire new concepts and to establish them in a range of different contexts.

It recommends the approach suggested by the The Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) research project, released in 2011. The recommendation is to use seven areas of engagement to show development. Assessing the engagement allows teachers to monitor the varying degrees of attention, interest and involvement a pupil demonstrates.

The seven aspects of engagement are as follows:

- **Responsiveness:** Assessment of responsiveness should evaluate any change in a pupil's behaviour that demonstrates he or she is being attentive to a new stimulus or reacting in a meaningful way. This type of assessment is important for establishing what differing stimuli motivate a pupil to pay attention. This is a prerequisite for learning. It is particularly relevant for assessing pupils with multiple sensory impairments who have reduced and/or atypical sensory awareness and perception.
- **Curiosity:** Assessment of curiosity demonstrates how a pupil is building on an initial reaction to a new stimulus, perhaps by reaching out or seeking the source of a new stimulus.
- **Discovery:** Assessment of discovery provides information about the changing ways in which a pupil interacts with, or responds to, a new stimulus, sometimes accompanied by expressions such as enjoyment and excitement. Curiosity and discovery are closely linked. At a more advanced point of development they both help to demonstrate a pupil's degree of interest in, and exploration of, activities and concepts. These help to drive the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.
- **Anticipation:** Assessment of anticipation should demonstrate whether a pupil is able to predict, expect or associate a particular stimulus with an event. This is important for measuring a pupil's concept of cause and effect.
- **Persistence:** Assessment of persistence measures the extent to which a pupil is sustaining attention towards a particular item or action and is therefore beginning to develop conceptual understanding. The ability to sustain attention is important for maintaining an activity long enough to develop the learning associated with it and for consolidating that learning.
- **Initiation:** Assessment of initiation demonstrates the different ways and extent to which a pupil investigates an activity or stimulus in order to bring about a desired outcome. It is an important part of developing the autonomy required for more advanced cognitive development and learning.
- **Investigation:** Assessment of investigation measures the extent to which a pupil is actively trying to find out more about an object or activity via prolonged, independent experimentation. This demonstrates a more advanced degree of autonomy than the other aspects of engagement and is important for ongoing learning.

The Report states that the areas should not be viewed in a strict hierarchical sense but rather as a guide for assessing a pupil's effective engagement with the learning process. The seven areas can be used as an observational framework, monitoring the pupil's attention, interest and involvement in new learning activities.

Recommendation 4 states that all schools should have a statutory duty to assess pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning using these seven aspects of cognition and learning.

Over the last two weeks, it has been interesting to read how these seven areas have been interpreted. Some people have seen these as seven areas within Cognition and Learning, others have seen them as seven levels

of attainment and others have seen them as a replacement to the seven levels of engagement as used by ourselves, Barry Carpenter and others.

In the Principles section, it mentions the level of support the pupil may require so that the seven aspects are not a replacement to the levels of engagement. The CLDD uses the seven aspects to assess a child's interaction with an activity. Used in this way, the seven aspects identify different aspects of a child's learning and their interaction/engagement with the learning. The CLDD gives broad definitions on the seven aspects which helps identify how they should be used. The Rochford Review has created new definitions, targeting the pupils working on non-subject-specific learning. When reading The Rochford Review's definitions, a number of the areas require a certain level of cognitive ability before they can be applied. Responsiveness is the only area that the lowest ability pupils will be able to meet. The other areas will come in for pupils as they develop. The Report says the areas are not hierarchical so they won't move from Responsiveness to Curiosity or Discovery; instead they will continue their Responsiveness skills, and as they develop will start to gain skills in Curiosity and, subsequently, Discovery.

How Does this Affect B Squared?

This is good news for us. As we had already identified a need for non-subject-specific learning for pupils working between P1(i) and P3(ii). We created a Developmental Continuum covering this range, with plans to extend up to P8 at a later date based on the feedback we received from partner schools. The Report's recommendation is in line with the work we have done, which reinforces our decision. Our Developmental Continuum covered the four areas of need under a different range of headings. We are now in the process of mapping the content we developed to the four areas of need and including the seven aspects of engagement for Cognition and Learning.

Recommendation 5 - Progress for Pupils not yet Engaging in Subject-Specific Learning

The previous recommendation was that schools should have a statutory duty to assess pupils not yet engaged in subject-specific learning using the seven aspects of cognition and learning. Recommendation 5 is that schools are free to choose how to make these assessments - to suit their curriculum and their pupil's needs.

The Report comments that 90% of parents and carers said it is important that their child makes progress in relation to their own needs.

How Does this Affect B Squared?

As I mentioned previously, we will have an assessment framework that covers the seven aspects of cognition and learning. Our framework will not tell teachers how or what to teach but will them a framework to record the interaction and engagement of pupils. This is important when schools are developing their own curriculum. Their assessment system should not limit or dictate their curriculum.

Principles for Assessing the Seven Indicators of Cognition and Learning

Recommendations 3, 4 and 5 all relate to the seven indicators/aspects/aspects of engagement/areas (the Report keeps changing the term, which doesn't help with the clarity). The Report wants schools to find an approach that suits their needs but understands that they may want guidance on how to find this approach. It has included a number of principles that schools need to take into account.

The Report recommends that schools will still need to be aspirational when working with pupils who are working on the seven areas and that progress needs to be monitored. The Report also suggests a strong link to the pupils' EHC plans.

The Report talks about appropriate assessment, dialogue with parents and carers and demonstrating the breadth. When working at this developmental level, the most appropriate form of assessment is often photos or videos. Parents or carers can view the evidence and have a meaningful conversation with teachers. Having evidence of a similar situation earlier in the year or the year before is a great way of showing progress.

We recognised this shift in ways of assessing a few years ago and started developing Evisense, our evidencing system for schools. Evisense already meets a large number of the key principles set out in the Report and will assist schools in their assessment of pupils working at these levels of engagement.

Recommendation 6 - Supporting Good Assessment

Inclusion was never fully implemented. The big easy aspects were done – the more able SEND pupils moved into mainstream, special schools were closed etc. but a lot of the other aspects were not addressed. One of these was training. There is a big skills gap in some mainstream schools, especially when it comes to dealing with pupils with SEND. I am not referring to the more common aspects like Autism training and so on, but rather the basic understanding of P levels and the expectations of pupils working at significantly lower levels of ability. A SENCo in mainstream often works alone in their school, maybe meeting up with other SENCos for support, but not necessarily receiving the training and support that they need. The importance of SEND in mainstream schools is often low and I am not sure that the inclusion of the SENCo in the Senior Management Team has actually happened in a large number of schools. I am hoping that in the coming years all teachers will receive additional focused training on assessing the development of pupils with SEND.

How Does this Affect B Squared?

Our assessment has always supported teachers working with pupils significantly below age related expectations. Some teachers do not feel confident about setting appropriate work for these pupils. Our assessment frameworks identify appropriate skills for these pupils, helping the teacher to confidently plan and deliver lessons that are in line with the topics offered to the rest of the class, but with skills that are appropriate to the developmental stage of the pupil with additional needs. This helps to support every pupil's development.

One of the challenges created by the lack of guidance on assessment is that each school can implement their own approach. Freedom has its rewards and its challenges. It can create difficulties when teachers move between schools, as they will need to change their approach. Schools will need to use a system that is easy to understand and use. A system that promotes standardisation helps with moderation, both within the school and externally.

Recommendation 7 - Driving Improvement in Assessing Pupils Working Below the Standard of National Curriculum Tests

The Report recommends that good practice is shared between schools. I very much agree with this statement. Many schools already do this by working in clusters, creating cross-authority working groups, etc. However, I am not sure how this recommendation will happen in practice. With the move towards academies I am not sure how schools will work together in the future. Will teachers transcend academy boundaries or will good practice be shared only within the MAT? Unless the Government creates some sort of SEND Teaching School approach, how will schools know where to look? I believe the Government will not be able to provide this so schools will need to find other ways to look for good practice. How and when will good practice under the new framework be recognised? Does it rely on an 'Outstanding' rating from Ofsted?

How Does this Affect B Squared?

This is an area that was previously led by the Government and local authorities but the Government is now pushing schools to find their own way. There is no standard structure to this and schools are left to find their own ways of working together. Over the coming months, we will be trying to identify if we can be part of this process. Can B Squared facilitate collaboration between schools by organising regional events for schools to attend and, if so, what would the format of the event events be?

Recommendation 8 - Responding Positively to Change

The Report talks about the recommendations for assessing pupils working below the standard of National Curriculum. Tests form one part of the reform programme that the Government is taking forward. It says schools need to change and evolve, but that schools should also build on what works. There is a lot of good practice already out there and schools don't need to invent something new or throw away what they already have. They need to develop what they have to ensure that it is effective and meaningful.

There will always be a need for pupil tracking but this shouldn't be the only way to present data. Schools need to decide on the most appropriate way of demonstrating progress to parents, carers, senior leadership and governors. One size most definitely doesn't fit all.

I believe that the Government will provide schools with end of key stage comparative data for pupils working on the pre-key stage standards and the Report has recommended that pupils working on non-subject-specific learning should not have data collected. I hope that people using this comparative data for pupils with SEND understand that this information is not a true reflection of the effort and work that has been put in by the pupils and the teachers. It removes the need for schools to find a way to compare themselves with other schools. All too often comparisons are based on academic performance with minimal context and ignoring other areas of need.

How Does this Affect B Squared?

We also need to respond positively to change. B Squared cannot sit still and we cannot continue assessing against the P levels. We not only need to change the focus of our assessment frameworks but also need to look at how this information is presented and used. The Report talks about meaningful communication with parents and carers and schools need to find what works for families. While we can show percentage progress and how this compares to their peers, this may not be the most appropriate information to give to parents and carers. Sharing evidence with parents so they can see what their child can now achieve or has experienced may be the most meaningful way to demonstrate pupil development.

The Report talks about peer review and sharing good practice. I feel evidence will be a big part of this as schools will need to show the effectiveness of their approach. I also feel that it is important that B Squared facilitates schools working together and sharing what they do.

Recommendation 9 – Assessment and Reporting

The Report recommends that schools should not report the attainment level for pupils working below the level of the pre-key stage standards and who are working on the seven areas. Instead they should only report how many pupils are working at this level. However, they should be able to demonstrate a robust assessment process for these pupils.

What is not clear from the Report (and we will have to wait for the Government's response and also future adoption) is how they will use the data for pupils working at pre-key stage standards. Will their data be integrated into the main end of key stage data and included in national data? This would mean that the "W" that used to indicate pupils working below the old level 1 has been extended down to about P5 in "old money" and only pupils below the pre-key stage standards would not be included in the national data. This does make sense as these are the pupils with the most complex needs and will be the pupils least likely to make linear progress.

How Does this Affect B Squared?

This recommendation is about how information is presented. It promotes evidence as an important assessment tool which can be used to communicate with parents, reinforce the judgements that teachers have made and demonstrate that a school has a robust assessment system in place. This is important for sharing information, not only with families but also with Ofsted and governors too.

Ofsted will take a range of evidence into account when making judgements, including published performance data, the school's in-year performance information and work in pupils' books and folders, including that held in electronic form. However, unnecessary or extensive collections of marked pupils' work are not required for inspection.

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Recommendation 10 – Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

EAL has always been kept separate to SEND. Schools should not use the P levels for assessing pupils with EAL working below the old level 1. However no guidance on how to assess these pupils was provided. The guidance suggests further work should be done regarding statutory assessment for EAL. It would make sense to use the pre-key stage standards for statutory assessment for pupils with EAL, but the teaching and formative assessment would be very different.

How Does this Affect B Squared?

This doesn't really affect B Squared as I believe assessing SEND pupils and EAL will be very different formatively as different approaches will be used.

What's Next for B Squared?

The content of the Report has not come as a shock to me. It reflects the changes in teaching and ideas that have been implemented over the last few years. We feel that the Government will accept the majority of recommendations with minimal alteration.

Our approach to assessment will not fundamentally change. We will still use small steps and use these to build the bigger picture. What will change is the structure of our frameworks, the breadth of our content, an increased focus on the holistic achievements of pupils and how we present the data.

Over the last few years we have been working on a range of projects that have increased the breadth of content from B Squared. We have produced a tool for profiling Autism that covers Communication, Social Interaction, Flexibility of Thought and Emotional Regulation. We have worked on a Developmental Continuum for pupils with profound and complex needs, covering Expressive and Receptive Communication, Social and Emotional Affection, Comprehension and Imagination, and Sensory and/or Physical operation. This currently covers the ability of pupils working between levels P1(i) to P3(ii) but we have already been asked to develop this further.

We have also been developing Evisense, our evidence software. Evisense is designed to not only make the process of capturing and storing evidence easier, but to make the evidence more powerful. Evidence can be linked to assessments when it is added and then teachers can demonstrate this evidence by filtering in a variety of different ways – by student, by group, by subject or by ability level.

We are working on identifying the best approach to meet the needs of schools now and in the future. It is clear from the Report that all schools will be required/recommended to assess pupils with SEND across all four areas. It is currently unclear how in-depth this will be and how much focus will be placed on Communication and Interaction, Social and Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory and/or Physical for the pupils undertaking subject-specific learning.

Pupils Not Engaged in Subject-Specific Learning

The Report recommends that schools should help the development for all pupils with SEND across the four areas of Cognition and Learning; Communication and Interaction; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; and Sensory and/or Physical.

Combining the four areas of need, the seven aspects and our levels of engagement will provide schools with a rich source of data when producing reports. The traditional reports showing progress on current levels and using this information to set targets will not work. We will need to find useful and meaningful ways to show the data. It has to be meaningful to parents, senior management, governors and outside agencies.

I feel that evidence will play a large part in non-subject-specific learning. It may be as simple as linking evidence to the four areas of need so that schools can show as a whole how they are supporting their pupils' development across the four areas. Alternatively, it may link evidence to specific assessments within Connecting Steps. Schools are required to use meaningful ways to demonstrate progress and with parents and carers this can easily be done by regularly sharing evidence of achievement.

Cognition and Learning

We are planning to provide assessment across all four areas for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. We will use the work we undertook for our Autism Progress profiling tool and Developmental Continuum in order to increase the breadth and coverage fully. We will use the seven indicators/aspects/aspects of engagement/areas as levels within Connecting Steps for the area of Cognition and Learning. This will provide an equivalent ability scale as P1(i) to P4. We will put more emphasis on working across multiple levels as pupils are likely to be working across the curriculum at different aspects of engagement. The Report states that pupils may still require different levels of support to work at the different aspects so we will continue to use our levels of engagement.

Communication and Interaction, Social Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory and/or Physical

We have already carried out substantial work on Our initial focus will be on Cognition and Learning but once we have completed our development of the subject-specific learning we will be extending our assessments for these three areas to work across the pre-key stage standards and key stage standards.

Pupils Engaged in Subject-Specific Learning

The Report recommends that schools should help the development for all pupils with SEND across the four areas of Cognition and Learning; Communication and Interaction; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; and Sensory and/or Physical.

Cognition and Learning

B Squared have been providing subject-specific learning assessment frameworks since the P levels were introduced. We are currently deciding the best way to continue providing subject-specific learning assessment frameworks. I personally feel that there will be a big shift away from P levels and schools using P levels will be viewed negatively in the same way as levels were viewed negatively when the new National Curriculum was introduced. The National Curriculum stated schools could choose how to assess pupils. This was limited by local authorities who had a set expectation of how they wanted schools to submit data. So far many local authorities have expected the same structure as the primary programmes of study.

For this reason, I feel it would make sense to use the pre-key stage standards as levels for our formative assessment. We would also increase the range to include the end of Key Stage 2 standards for more-able pupils working in Key Stage 3 and 4. This would give us eight levels that in “old money” would cover from around P5 to level 6.

The Report states that the pre-key stage standards, like the end of key stage standards, are secure fit and not best fit. We will create two assessment frameworks:

- A summative scale that will use secure fit judgements, this will be reviewed at the end of term or annually. This scale will use the statements taken directly from the pre-key stage and key stage standards. This will only cover Reading, Writing and Maths.
- A formative scale that will use best fit judgements, this will be used on-going throughout the year. This will cover all National Curriculum subjects and will lead pupils into the Primary Curriculum.

The statutory pre-key stage standards have a narrow breadth. They consist of a small number of statements used as key indicators of ability. Schools should work towards these but should work on a more extensive and broader curriculum. There will be no link between our formative and summative scales; schools will need to review the statements from the summative scale at the end of term or year.

A pupil may achieve a very high percentage of standard 3 in our formative scale, but may not have achieved the key statements from the pre-key stage standard 3. Alternatively a pupil may have achieved a lower percentage of standard 3 in our formative scale and have achieved all the key statements from the pre-key stage standard 3.

One of our challenges will be providing a moderated system across subjects with definitions only for Reading, Writing and Maths as the key. While the breadth of the curriculum for SEND pupils has increased to include the four areas of need, the importance of each subject within cognition and learning has reduced. I feel that less emphasis will be placed on these subjects in the future and so we will be reducing our detail in the non-core subjects as a result.

Communication and Interaction, Social Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory and/or Physical

We have already carried out substantial work on Our initial focus will be on Cognition and Learning but once we have completed our development of the subject-specific learning we will be extending our assessments for these three areas to work across the pre-key stage standards and key stage standards.

Levels of Engagement

We have been using levels of engagement since 1999. Our levels of engagement allow teachers to record the level of interaction within each skill. Our levels of engagement are currently:

- Encounter (N)
- Awareness (A)
- Attention & Response (R)
- Engagement(E)
- Participation(P)
- Interaction (I)
- Gaining Skill and Understanding (U)
- Mastered (M)
- Confirmed (C)

Over the last few years there has been increased focus on the depth of learning and increased breadth. We are considering updating the levels of engagement, replacing Confirmed with two new levels:

- Increased Breadth (B)
- Increased Depth (D)

This will allow teachers to show where pupils have a secure understanding of a skill and can use that skill in a variety of contexts. These new levels of engagement will not give an increased percentage complete but we will need to identify ways of showing this information in reports so that teachers are encouraged to use these new levels of engagement and show where pupils demonstrated a greater level of mastery.

Not Applicable

For the last 15 years, schools have been able to use Not Applicable (N/A) as a way of dis-applying skills for individual pupils, specifically is the skill or item of knowledge is not in the school's curriculum and therefore something that the child will not experience. We have always recommended using N/A sparingly and to always talk to senior management before doing so. The effect of N/A when dis-applying assessments is to ignore the assessment when calculating the percentage complete. This increases the percentage complete as there are less skills to be achieved. As the P levels and National Curriculum levels have been statutory we have always advised against using N/A due to:

- All children are entitled to receive the full National Curriculum
- Using N/A raises attainment levels, resulting in increased expectations
- If the skills are part of the level, the child cannot complete the level

The last statement is a powerful one. P4 and P5 English Writing has a large section relating to physical processes – holding a pencil and vertical or horizontal movement. There are a number of pupils who will not be able to achieve these skills and therefore they cannot achieve P4 or P5. When looking at P6, the physical aspect has diminished. Pupils which cannot complete the physical aspects of P4 and P5 are able to complete P6. Assessment should be about recording what a student can or can't do; it should not be about trying to fit pupils into Government boxes.

If the Government accepts the Report's recommendations, the content and breadth of the curriculum are left to the school to decide. Each school can decide what they want to cover and what teachers can dis-apply. We may need to change how we present data so that data is not misleading for pupils who have had a large number of skills dis-applied.

Summary

I believe that the Final Report of The Rochford Review is a positive step forward for children with SEND.

My Head of Education and I have had a number of discussions over the last few years which relate to the idea of moving away from a solely subject-based assessment framework. We have also consulted with a number of schools in an endeavour to assist us in creating an approach to assessment which looks at a child's holistic development. However, a big concern has always been whether or not the majority of schools are ready to move away from the traditional subject-based approach, especially when they are driven by expectations from local authorities, Ofsted and other school advisors.

The Report's recommendations accept and promote the need for wider support and development for pupils with SEND. This is encouraging as it builds on the work set out by the 2014 SEND Code of Practice and supports pupils' development across the four areas of need. This will promote a wider curriculum for schools and will recognise the broader set of skills that schools have helped pupils to develop. The Report supports our direction of travel and our aims. It promotes broader educational ideals and we hope that schools will adopt these recommendations in order to better help the children they work with.

The Report gives schools a lot of autonomy with regard to how they can incorporate the recommendations and with limited involvement from the Government. As usual with autonomy, there are both benefits and dangers. This puts a lot of pressure on educational suppliers to find solutions for schools prior to the changes coming into effect. We are required to do this without any additional guidance from the DfE.

To assist us in this regard, we are conducting a questionnaire. We would like to know:

- What concerns schools have about the recommendations in the Report?
- What changes we should make?
- How else we can support schools during the transition period?

You can find a link to this questionnaire (with a chance to win 1 of 20 prizes) in the email you have received. If you cannot find the link to the questionnaire, please contact our Sale Team using the address below.

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