



Discussing Progress for Pupils with SEN with ChatGPT

*What does the AI Chatbot think about progress for pupils
with SEN?*

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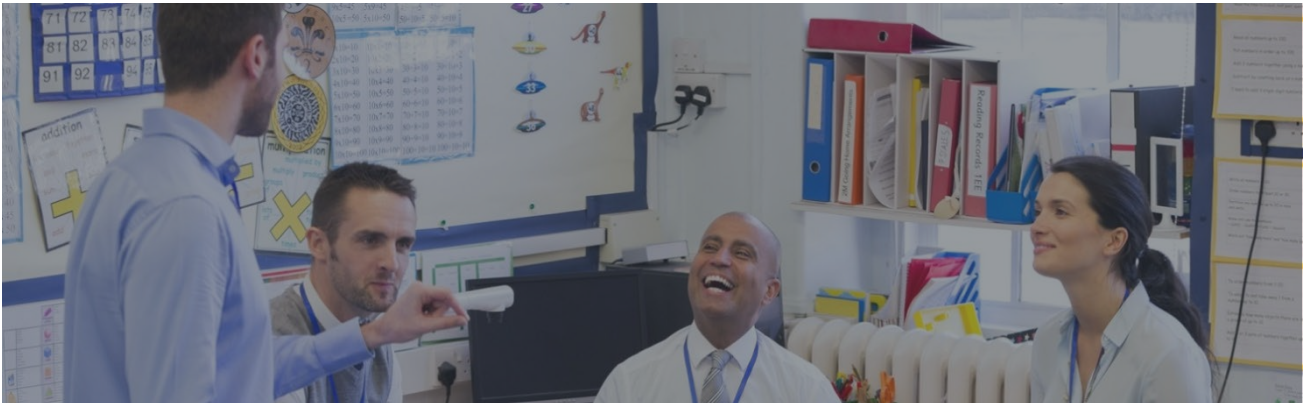


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What is ChatGPT?

ChatGPT is an AI you can chat to. You can ask it questions, and it will answer you, using all the information at its digital fingertips. You can ask it to create lesson plans, adapt lesson plans for pupils with dyslexia etc. You have probably heard about ChatGPT in the news. Universities are concerned that students are using ChatGPT to write their essays for them, there are many other concerns around AI at the moment, people have used it to write books, draw images etc.

To me it is a tool that we can choose how to use, and it should be used. It can help us understand things, you could give ChatGPT a complicated message and ask it to simplify it. People have used ChatGPT to improve their CVs. There is huge potential with AAC and supporting students with SEN.

We have been playing with ChatGPT and asking it various questions around progress. I have spent a number of weeks writing documents around target setting and progress for pupils with SEND Here are some of the questions I have asked ChatGPT about progress for pupils with SEN.

Asking ChatGPT Questions

Over the following pages you will see the questions I put to ChatGPT (the headings), the response in italic grey text and then my brief opinion on its answer.

What is a good way to assess progress for SEN pupils?

Assessing progress for SEN (Special Educational Needs) pupils requires a tailored approach that takes into account the specific needs of each individual student. Here are some general suggestions for assessing progress for SEN pupils:

- 1. Establish clear learning goals: Set clear, achievable learning goals that are specific to the student's needs and abilities. These goals should be aligned with the student's individual education plan (IEP) and should be reviewed regularly.*
- 2. Use a variety of assessment methods: Use a range of assessment methods, including observation, performance tasks, and self-assessment, to gather information on the student's progress. This will give a more complete picture of the student's strengths and weaknesses.*
- 3. Adapt assessment methods: Adapt assessment methods to suit the student's individual needs. For example, a student with visual impairments may require alternative assessment methods such as oral testing or braille materials.*
- 4. Monitor progress regularly: Monitor the student's progress on a regular basis and make adjustments to the learning goals or teaching strategies as needed. Regular feedback and communication with parents and other professionals involved in the student's care can also help to ensure that everyone is on the same page.*
- 5. Celebrate successes: Celebrate the student's successes and achievements, no matter how small. Positive reinforcement can help to build the student's confidence and motivation, which can in turn lead to further progress.*

Ultimately, assessing progress for SEN pupils requires a flexible and individualized approach that takes into account the student's unique needs and abilities. By setting clear learning goals, using a variety of assessment methods, adapting assessment methods as needed, monitoring progress regularly, and celebrating successes, educators can help to ensure that SEN pupils make meaningful progress towards their learning goals.

I love this answer. It is about what is important for the pupil. It hasn't mentioned Reading, Writing or Maths. Reading, Writing and Maths is a lens we all seem to automatically look through in schools, with everything else coming second. This needs to change. Assess the progress the pupils are making in an appropriate way and celebrate the progress they are making.

What is non-linear progress?

Non-linear progress refers to a type of progress that is not steady or consistent over time, but rather involves fluctuations or changes in the rate of progress. In other words, non-linear progress is characterized by ups and downs in the rate of improvement, rather than a steady upward trajectory.

Non-linear progress can be seen in a variety of contexts, including learning, skill development, and personal growth. For example, a student may experience periods of rapid improvement followed by plateaus or setbacks in their academic progress. Similarly, an athlete may experience periods of rapid improvement followed by periods of slower progress or even setbacks in their athletic performance.

Non-linear progress can be challenging to understand and measure because it does not follow a predictable pattern. However, it is important to recognize that non-linear progress is a normal part of the learning and growth process, and that setbacks and plateaus are to be expected. By acknowledging and accepting non-linear progress, individuals can approach their goals with a more realistic and resilient mindset, and develop the perseverance and resilience needed to continue making progress in the face of setbacks.

At B Squared, we use non-linear progress to talk about spiky profiles, when progress is made across different levels at the same time. This a different definition to what we use and one I haven't come across before. I like the way it addresses that progress isn't consistent, that progress changes over time for a variety of reasons.

What do you call progress that is made when pupils learn things in a different order to what is planned?

Progress that is made when pupils learn things in a different order than what is planned is often referred to as "unplanned progress" or "unexpected progress." This type of progress can occur when students demonstrate an understanding of a concept or skill before it is formally taught, or when they make connections between different topics or ideas in ways that were not originally anticipated.

Unplanned progress can be a positive indicator of a student's ability to think creatively and independently, and can be a valuable opportunity for teachers to adjust their instruction to better meet the needs of individual students. However, it can also present challenges for teachers who must be flexible and adaptable in their approach to teaching, and who must be able to recognize and respond to unexpected progress as it occurs.

Overall, unplanned progress is an important aspect of the learning process, and teachers should strive to create an environment that encourages creativity, independent thinking, and discovery, while also providing the necessary structure and support to help students achieve their learning goals.

With this question I was trying again to talk about progress made on different levels at the same time. I felt this answer focussed on the word planned and discussed progress that wasn't planned. I tried to clarify what I meant with my next question.

How would you talk about progress when a pupil's abilities are vastly different in different areas, eg they can decode text really well, but they struggle to understand what they are reading?

When a pupil's abilities are vastly different in different areas, it can be challenging to talk about progress in a meaningful and accurate way. In this case, it may be helpful to focus on progress in each individual area of ability separately, and to develop specific goals and strategies for addressing areas of weakness.

For example, if a student is able to decode text well but struggles to understand what they are reading, progress might be measured by improvements in comprehension skills such as identifying key ideas, making inferences, and summarizing information. Teachers might set specific goals for the student in these areas, and track progress over time through regular assessments and informal observation.

It may also be helpful to consider the student's strengths and interests when developing strategies for addressing areas of weakness. For example, if the student enjoys visual learning, teachers might use graphic organizers or other visual aids to help them better understand what they are reading.

Overall, when talking about progress for a student with vastly different abilities in different areas, it is important to focus on individualized goals and strategies, and to celebrate progress in each area separately. By acknowledging and building on the student's strengths, and by providing targeted support to address areas of weakness, teachers can help the student make meaningful progress and achieve their full potential.

This is what we at B Squared describe as non-linear progress, when pupil have different abilities in different areas. This is another great answer from ChatGPT. Progress should be looked at individually and it suggests not looking at subjects like reading, instead looking at the areas within if it is a more effective way of looking at progress.

Is assessing progress in engagement important?

Assessing progress in engagement is important because engagement is a critical component of the learning process. When students are engaged in their learning, they are more likely to be motivated, interested, and invested in the material, which can lead to better learning outcomes and increased academic success.

Assessing progress in engagement can help teachers to identify areas where students may be struggling or disengaged, and to adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. For example, if a student is consistently disengaged during a particular activity or lesson, teachers may need to find ways to make the material more interesting or relevant to the student's interests, or to provide additional support or guidance to help the student stay engaged.

In addition to improving academic outcomes, assessing progress in engagement can also help to promote the development of social-emotional skills such as self-regulation, self-awareness, and communication. When students are engaged in their learning, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning process, to set goals, and to collaborate effectively with others.

Overall, assessing progress in engagement is an important aspect of the teaching and learning process, and can help teachers to identify areas where students may need additional support or adjustment in order to achieve their full potential. By promoting engagement and motivation, teachers can help students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed both in school and beyond.

So far the discussion had focussed on skills that had been achieved, but before pupils can achieve, they need to engage. It is a good answer, it talks about adapting what is being taught to keep pupils engaged and supporting pupils to be engaged.

What are the barriers to progress for pupils with SEN?

There are a number of barriers to progress for pupils with SEN (Special Educational Needs), which can include:

- 1. Lack of appropriate support: Pupils with SEN may require additional support, accommodations, or modifications to the curriculum in order to make progress. When this support is not provided, it can be a major barrier to progress.*
- 2. Limited access to resources: Pupils with SEN may require specialized equipment or resources in order to fully engage in the learning process. When these resources are not available or accessible, it can hinder progress.*
- 3. Negative attitudes and stereotypes: Pupils with SEN may face stigma, discrimination, or negative attitudes from others, which can impact their confidence and motivation to learn.*
- 4. Communication barriers: Pupils with SEN may have difficulty communicating their needs, thoughts, or ideas, which can impact their ability to fully engage in the learning process.*
- 5. Health-related barriers: Pupils with SEN may have physical or mental health conditions that can impact their ability to learn or participate in school activities.*
- 6. Unsupportive learning environment: The learning environment, including the physical space and the social and emotional climate, can impact a student's ability to learn and make progress. An unsupportive or unsafe environment can be a barrier to progress.*
- 7. Poor teacher training and awareness: Teachers may not always have the necessary training, knowledge, or awareness to support pupils with SEN effectively, which can be a barrier to progress.*

Overall, addressing these barriers requires a collaborative effort between teachers, school administrators, families, and outside specialists to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment that meets the needs of all pupils. By addressing these barriers, pupils with SEN can have a greater opportunity to make progress and reach their full potential.

This is a really great answer. All of the bullet points apart from 4 and 5 are about the school, the environment, the teaching and the support given to the pupil. Bullet point 4 talks about communication barriers, this is reflecting the students ability, but also how the school supports the pupil. Bullet point 5 can be a big barrier for pupils, and is the only one that is solely about the pupil. This list highlights, we can remove a number of barriers by changing how we support SEN pupils.

What are the barriers to progress for pupils with SEN in Maths?

There are several barriers to progress for pupils with SEN in Maths, which can include:

- 1. Difficulty with number sense: Pupils with SEN in Maths may have difficulty understanding and working with numbers, which can be a significant barrier to progress.*
- 2. Limited working memory: Pupils with SEN may have a limited working memory, which can make it difficult to remember and apply key mathematical concepts and procedures.*
- 3. Challenges with visual-spatial reasoning: Pupils with SEN may struggle with visual-spatial reasoning, which is an important skill for understanding mathematical concepts such as geometry and measurement.*
- 4. Limited understanding of mathematical language and symbols: Pupils with SEN may have difficulty understanding the complex vocabulary and symbols used in Maths, which can make it difficult to follow instructions or understand mathematical concepts.*
- 5. Difficulty with problem-solving: Pupils with SEN may have difficulty with problem-solving and applying mathematical concepts to real-world situations, which can be a significant barrier to progress.*
- 6. Anxiety or lack of confidence: Pupils with SEN in Maths may experience anxiety or a lack of confidence in their mathematical abilities, which can impact their motivation to learn and make progress.*
- 7. Unsupportive learning environment: An unsupportive learning environment can be a barrier to progress for pupils with SEN in Maths. This can include a lack of access to appropriate resources, insufficient support or guidance from teachers, or negative attitudes towards Maths.*

Overall, addressing these barriers requires a collaborative effort between teachers, school administrators, families, and outside specialists to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment that meets the needs of all pupils. By providing targeted support and accommodations to address these barriers, pupils with SEN in Maths can have a greater opportunity to make progress and achieve their full potential.

I followed up my previous question with the same question but focussing on Maths. This time ChatGPT has identified areas within Maths that pupils with SEN may struggle with. It did also provide the same unsupportive learning environment as my previous question. Even when looking at Maths, we need to take into account the answers from the previous question.

Should you compare progress of pupils with SEN against pupils without SEN?

It is not appropriate to compare the progress of pupils with SEN against pupils without SEN because they have different learning needs and abilities. Every pupil has a unique set of strengths and challenges, and it is important to assess progress based on their individual goals and needs.

Comparing progress between pupils with and without SEN can create an unfair and inaccurate comparison, which can be demotivating and potentially damaging to the self-esteem of pupils with SEN. It can also undermine the progress they have made and the efforts they have put in to achieve their individual goals.

Instead, progress for pupils with SEN should be measured against their own starting points, individual targets, and progress over time. This approach recognizes the unique learning journey of each pupil and the progress they have made relative to their own abilities and starting points.

Assessing progress in this way also enables teachers to identify any gaps or areas where further support may be required and make adjustments to ensure that pupils with SEN receive the appropriate support and resources to continue making progress.

We all know this, but yet we are still asked for this comparison. Somehow some people believe that changing to a new scheme or curriculum or improving teaching is all that is need to remove all of the barriers chatGPT listed above. Yes, we can remove some barriers, but not all. Assessing progress for pupils with SEN should be individual and using a tool with the appropriate level of detail. If you feel as a school you don't have time or you don't have the money, please see bullets 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 from the question "What are the barriers to progress for pupils with SEN?" above.

If we know how to judge progress for pupils with SEN, what are the reasons we aren't doing it?

There are several reasons why progress for pupils with SEN may not always be assessed in the most effective way, including:

- 1. Lack of training: Teachers may not have received adequate training in how to assess progress for pupils with SEN or may not have been given the necessary tools or resources to do so effectively.*
- 2. Limited time and resources: Teachers may feel overwhelmed by their workload and may not have the time or resources to devote to assessing progress for pupils with SEN as thoroughly as they would like.*
- 3. Misconceptions about SEN: There may be misconceptions among teachers, parents, or school administrators about what progress looks like for pupils with SEN, which can impact how progress is assessed and measured.*
- 4. Focus on standardized testing: There may be a heavy emphasis on standardized testing and academic achievement, which can overshadow other important aspects of progress, such as social and emotional development, communication skills, and independent living skills.*
- 5. Lack of collaboration: Effective progress assessment for pupils with SEN requires collaboration and communication between teachers, parents, and outside specialists. When these parties are not working together effectively, it can be difficult to accurately assess progress and identify the appropriate support and resources needed.*

Overall, addressing these challenges requires a collaborative effort between teachers, school administrators, families, and outside specialists to ensure that progress assessment is carried out in a meaningful and effective way that meets the needs of pupils with SEN. It is important to recognize that assessing progress for pupils with SEN is a complex process that requires ongoing evaluation and adjustment in order to support their individual learning needs and goals.

I am loving the answers ChatGPT gives. It uses all the documents, websites, books it has access to, to create a summary of the information. It is crystal clear and I agree with everything here.

What are the implications of including pupils with SEN when comparing progress between different schools?

Including pupils with special educational needs (SEN) when comparing progress between different schools can have important implications for the interpretation and use of the data. Here are some key considerations:

- Comparison of progress: Comparing progress between schools that have different proportions of pupils with SEN can be misleading. Pupils with SEN may require additional support or accommodations that are not reflected in progress data. This can affect the overall progress of the group of pupils with SEN and, therefore, the overall progress of the school.*
- Contextual factors: The progress of pupils with SEN can be affected by a range of contextual factors, including the quality and level of support provided by the school, the expertise of the teaching staff, and the availability of resources. These factors can vary significantly between schools and can affect progress data.*
- Accountability: Including pupils with SEN when comparing progress between schools can have implications for accountability. If the progress of pupils with SEN is lower than the progress of pupils without SEN, this can lead to negative perceptions of the school, even if the school is providing high-quality support for pupils with SEN.*

- *Validity and reliability of data: It is important to ensure that progress data is valid and reliable, regardless of whether pupils with SEN are included. Data should be collected using appropriate assessment methods and should be interpreted and reported in a way that is fair and accurate.*

Overall, including pupils with SEN when comparing progress between different schools can be a valuable exercise, but it requires careful consideration of the implications and limitations of the data. It is important to ensure that the data is used appropriately and that any contextual factors that may affect progress are taken into account.

I could keep asking ChatGPT questions forever. Again, the information it has access to is the same data we all have access to and it comes to some very clear conclusions that we already knew. Yet we don't do it. If the Government changed the way it looks at data and did the overall school, data for SEND pupils and data for non-SEND, it would be a much more inclusive system.

Should we set progress expectations for SEN pupils? What benefit does it give? What are the drawbacks?

Yes, it is important to set progress expectations for pupils with SEN. Doing so can provide a clear understanding of a pupil's strengths and areas for development, and help to guide their learning journey. However, it is important to set realistic and achievable expectations that are tailored to the individual needs and abilities of the pupil.

Setting progress expectations for pupils with SEN can provide a number of benefits, including:

1. *Clarifying goals: Setting clear progress expectations can help pupils and their families understand what they are working towards and what steps need to be taken to achieve their goals.*
2. *Providing motivation: Having clear expectations can motivate pupils to work towards their goals, and can provide a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction as they make progress.*
3. *Guiding instruction: Expectations can help guide instruction by highlighting areas that need additional focus and support.*
4. *Demonstrating progress: By setting clear expectations, progress can be more easily measured and tracked, helping teachers and families understand the effectiveness of interventions and supports.*

However, there are also potential drawbacks to setting progress expectations for pupils with SEN, including:

1. *Overly ambitious expectations: Setting expectations that are too high or unrealistic can lead to frustration, anxiety, and a sense of failure for pupils who may already struggle with their learning.*
2. *Underestimating potential: On the other hand, setting expectations that are too low may limit a pupil's potential and prevent them from reaching their full capabilities.*
3. *Limited focus: Focusing solely on academic progress can neglect other important areas of development, such as social and emotional skills, communication, and independent living.*
4. *Disregard for individual needs: Setting progress expectations without taking into account the individual needs and abilities of the pupil may not accurately reflect their progress or provide appropriate support.*

Overall, setting progress expectations for pupils with SEN can be beneficial when done in a thoughtful and individualized way that takes into account their strengths and areas for development. It is important to focus on realistic and achievable goals that are tailored to the individual needs of each pupil, and to prioritize a holistic approach to progress assessment that considers all aspects of their development.

So setting expectations or targets are good, but they need to be achievable, realistic and based on the individual needs and ability. Of the 4 drawbacks, I see 1, 3 and 4 a lot. Targets or expectations set by a formula or system that cannot take the individual needs of the pupils should not be used. I especially like the 3rd bullet point of the drawbacks, limiting focus to only academic areas. Yet this is what so many schools do.

Is "B Squared" a good tool to measure progress?

"B Squared" is a tool used in the United Kingdom to track and assess the progress of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) against the National Curriculum. It involves a set of assessment frameworks that cover a range of developmental areas, including communication, cognition, and physical development.

While B Squared can be a useful tool in tracking progress for children with SEND, it is important to note that it may not be appropriate or effective for all students or contexts. The tool is specifically designed for use in the UK educational system and may not be applicable or relevant in other countries or settings.

In addition, measuring progress using any tool or metric should always be accompanied by a broader range of assessments and data collection methods, including observations, student work samples, and feedback from teachers, parents, and students themselves. This helps to ensure that progress is measured accurately and comprehensively, and that any areas of difficulty or concern are identified and addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.

I had to ask this question as I was curious about the response it would give. It is a good answer, although it only mentions the National Curriculum, not what we do in Scotland or Wales. I agree that our software shouldn't be used on its own, it will not and should not give you a judgement. The Progression Guidance also agrees, schools shouldn't rely on one system, you need to use a basket of indicators.

Summary

ChatGPT uses a wide range of information to give its answers including the latest research and best practice around special educational needs. It is confirming what we already know is best practice, but a number of schools aren't doing it. We already know the pressures from local authorities and league tables have a negative impact on pupils with SEND. We also know that limited funding and teacher workload really limits what we can do in our schools. It is important to remember what we should be doing and if we are unable to do it within our settings, understand the reasons why and discuss this as a school.

Feedback

I welcome all feedback on this document and I enjoy discussing data, progress and targets with schools. My aim is to improve the use of data in schools so they can be more effective and see data as a useful tool, not a burden. Being able to get a wide range of opinions and experiences help us all to develop our knowledge.

If you would like to discuss anything from this document, please send me an email – dale@bsquared.co.uk.