

Assessing special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Bristol Schools: Recommended tools

 **Bristol's SEND
Local Offer**



Purpose of this guidance

This guidance has been developed for Bristol schools to support knowledge and understanding of assessment tools which can be used with pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to identify their needs and monitor their progress over time. It is designed to be used by teachers and SENDCos to complement the assessment systems schools already have for all pupils.

Schools' responsibilities

Early identification and assessment of SEND is key to ensuring that support and interventions can be targeted effectively to improve outcomes for children and young people (CYP).

In addition to the responsibilities to assess all children, schools have additional responsibilities for the assessment of CYP with SEND as part of the 'graduated approach'. These responsibilities are set out in the **SEND Code of Practice (2015)** and are summarised below:

- **Identifying SEND:** Where schools believe a child has SEND, they should carry out a clear analysis of the pupil's needs. This should draw on teacher assessment and observations, attainment and progress overtime and the pupil's behaviour. This initial assessment should take account of the views of the child and their parent/carers and should also consider how the child is performing in relation to their peers and national expectations. Assessment should consider not only the pupil's academic progress but also their wider development (for example their social and emotional needs), and where appropriate the progress they are making towards making a successful transition to adult life.

- **Contextual factors:** Assessment should consider contextual factors which may be impacting on the pupil's development. This will include their access to and engagement with quality first teaching, issues and/or experiences within their family or community which may be impacting on their lives (such as a bereavement) and whether English is their first language.
- **Assessment over time:** Assessments of the pupil should be reviewed regularly to ensure that provision continues to be matched to needs. Assessment over time will include regular monitoring of their progress towards agreed outcomes and can help to develop a more accurate understanding of needs and the provision required.
- **Involvement of external professionals:** Where appropriate, schools should work with external professionals to support their assessments of CYP with SEND.
- SEND information report: Schools must publish information in their SEND information report about:
 - their policies for identifying children and young people with SEND and assessing their needs
 - their arrangements for assessing and reviewing children and young people's progress towards outcomes. This should include the opportunities available to work with parents and young people as part of this assessment and review.

Assessment is a key step in the 'Assess, Plan, Do and Review' (APDR) cycle (also known as the graduated approach) which is expected to be in place for all CYP with SEND. Bristol's **Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP)** document sets out the expectations for educational settings within this approach.

The OAP sets out the following expectations for Bristol Schools in relation to assessment of CYP with SEND:

- to use the APDR cycle
- formative assessment and feedback are key features in learning activities, lessons and in marking and assessment policies
- reasonable exam access arrangements are in place for all national tests and public examinations

Actions which schools are expected to take to fulfil these expectations are as follows:

APDR cycle	Formative assessment and feedback	Exam access arrangements
<p>The learning and behaviour of CYP is monitored and observed in different settings, contexts and times across the day for short periods to inform assessment.</p> <p>Staff are aware of CYP's starting points so that progress can be measured at each phase or key stage.</p> <p>Assessment is used to inform planning and interventions and assessment is undertaken through observing performance during interventions.</p>	<p>A wide range of assessment strategies and tools are used at regular intervals to ensure we understand learners' progress.</p> <p>Reading, spelling and numeracy assessments will be used where there are concerns about learners' progress. Assessments of spoken language and memory may also be used.</p> <p>All learners will have regular and frequent opportunities to communicate about their learning or play and evaluate their own performance. Self-assessment will be used as part of typical routines to set individual targets or next steps.</p> <p>The impact of interventions will always be evaluated as the first intervention tried does not always give the best results. Alternative approaches are explored to see if better outcomes are achieved.</p>	<p>Learners' preferred ways of working are established so that assessment arrangements are part of everyday ways of working for CYP.</p> <p>Arrangements could include rest breaks, use of a reader/ scribe/laptop, extra time, smaller examination rooms.</p> <p>For public examinations relevant exam board guidelines will be consulted.</p> <p>Resources and access arrangements are adapted for in-class assessments.</p>

Types of assessments

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is used during learning to understand children's comprehension, needs and progress during a lesson or unit of work. This type of assessment helps teachers to identify concepts, skills and standards that pupils are struggling to acquire, so that adaptations can be made to teaching and support provided. Considerations for formative assessment of CYP with SEND include:

- ensuring that CYP are able to demonstrate their learning and understanding in a range of ways, for example using signs and symbols
- planning ahead so that evidence of CYP's learning can be captured in a number of ways, for example photos, video and audio recordings
- using visual systems and signs when providing verbal or written feedback to CYP with SEND, particularly those with speech, language and communication needs or cognition and learning difficulties
- providing feedback about effort, persistence and independence as well as academic achievements
- ensuring that feedback relates directly to the individual targets and outcomes for the CYP rather than generic expectations and standards. This will often include a focus on very small steps of progress and/or maintenance of previously acquired skills and understanding.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is used *at the end of a period of learning* to draw conclusions about what CYP have learnt and understood relative to the intended learning outcomes for the work. SATs and GCSEs are examples of summative assessments, but teachers may also set tests or practical assessments at the end of a unit of work. Results of summative assessments may be used to keep parent/carers and other stakeholders up to date with CYP's progress and attainment. Considerations for summative assessment of CYP with SEND include:

- ensuring that assessments demonstrate CYP's progress *from their baseline* and not just against national standards
- decision making about whether it is appropriate for CYP to undertake the summative assessment, whether it needs and can be differentiated to reflect individual learning targets and whether reasonable adjustments need to be made to allow CYP to demonstrate their learning
- whether CYP with SEND should be assessed against pre-key stage standards or the five areas of engagement for those who are not yet engaged in subject-specific study.
- ensuring that the results of any standardised tests used are properly interpreted and communicated, recognising the limitations of any tests used


Specific assessment tools

Specific assessment tools can be used alongside a range of assessment approaches to identify SEND and monitor progress and attainment of CYP. These tools can be used at various points as part of the graduated approach:

- **Assess:** when concerns are first raised (to identify needs and long-term outcomes)
- **Plan:** when planning an intervention to meet these needs (providing detailed baseline information from which to set short-term outcomes and measure progress)
- **Do:** during the intervention (to understand the CYP's response and adapt approaches in a timely way)
- **Review:** at the end of an intervention or as part of regular tracking (to assess progress made and to inform next steps)

Specific assessment tools should be used alongside school-based observations, discussion with parent carers and CYP and should build on schools' approach to assessment for all pupils. The findings of assessments should be recorded on the child's **SEND support plan** and link to the short and long-term outcomes and provision described in this plan.

Assessments will sometimes indicate that good progress has been made which has closed the gap with other pupils, indicating that the support put in place has been effective. Where this is the case, schools are likely to consider either maintaining or reducing the support in place. This may mean reducing the frequency or type of intervention provided or stepping back to quality first teaching to meet needs. If assessment indicates that little or no progress has been made and the gap with other pupils has grown or remained static, schools should consider increasing the support in place. This may involve increasing the frequency or type of intervention and/



or seeking external professional advice to ensure needs are fully understood and that interventions are appropriate. Information about support available to schools is included in **Bristol's SEND Local Offer**.

When assessment over time indicates that little or no progress is being made as a result of OAP for learners with SEND, schools may wish to consider whether to request an Education Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA). More information about this assessment and when is appropriate is available on the SEND Local Offer at the following link:

EHC needs assessment

Any decision to change the support a child with SEND receives should be made in partnership with parent carers and where appropriate, the CYP themselves.

Actions which schools are expected to take to fulfil these expectations are as follows:

Cognition and Learning

Literacy

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
Access Reading Test	Reading comprehension: Literal comprehension, vocabulary, inference and analysis	Two parallel forms designed for repeated testing	7 – 18	Assess Plan Review	Access Reading Tests
Reading A-Z	Alphabet and phonological awareness, phonics, high-frequency words, fluency, and comprehension.	Graded assessment tools including benchmark passages, retelling rubrics and comprehension quizzes	4 – 14	Assess Plan Review	Reading A-Z
Detailed Assessment of Handwriting Speed	Handwriting speed	Can be used as evidence for exam access arrangements	9 – 17	Assess Review	Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting
New Group Reading Test	Sentence and passage comprehension	Termly assessment, to monitor reading progress and measure the impact of interventions	6 – 16	Assess Plan Review	New Group Reading Test
New Group Spelling Test	Word spelling and spelling in context (sentence completion)	Termly monitoring of spelling skills, benchmarked against the national average	7 – 14+	Assess Plan Review	New Group Spelling Test
New Salford Sentence Reading Test	Reading accuracy and an optional measure for checking comprehension	Provides reading ages for pupils up to 11 years 3 months and standardised scores for pupils to 13 (reading accuracy) and 14 (reading comprehension)	6 – 14	Assess Plan Review	New Salford Sentence Reading Test

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
Phonological Assessment Battery	Phonological skills	6 standardised tests	5 – 14	Assess Plan Review	Phonological Assessment Battery
York Assessment of Reading Comprehension	Reading accuracy, rate and comprehension	Can be used to assess individual reading comprehension following a group reading test	4 – 16	Assess Plan Review	York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension

Numeracy

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
Progress Test in Maths	Number and algebra, ratio, proportion and rates of change, geometry and measures, probability and statistics	Assesses pupils' current knowledge and skills appropriate to age-related expectations. Tracks progress at individual, cohort and school group level	5 – 14	Assess Plan Review	Progress Test in Maths
Sandwell Early Numeracy Test	Numeracy: identification, oral counting, value, object counting and language	Administered one-to-one, designed to identify specific number skills that require targeted teaching and to monitor the impact of teaching interventions	4 – 14	Assess Plan Review	Sandwell Early Numeracy Test
The Basic Number Screening Test	Understanding of number and number operations	Delivered orally so assesses number skills rather than reading ability. Can be delivered to individuals, small groups, or class	5 – 12:08	Assess Plan Review	Basic Number Screening Test

Cognitive skills

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
Cognitive Abilities Test	Verbal, non-verbal, quantitative and spatial reasoning	Large standardisation sample, providing baseline data against national benchmarks. Provides reliable indicators for national tests	6 – 18	Assess	CAT4
Lucid Recall	Word, pattern and counting recall	Helps identify children who require classroom intervention strategies related to memory to help them learn effectively	7 – 16	Assess	Recall
Raven Coloured Progressive Matrices	Non-Verbal Reasoning	Puzzles/patterns of increasing complexity – children have to identify the missing piece from four choices	4 – 18	Assess	Raven's
Verbal Reasoning	Vocabulary, verbal analogies and logical reasoning	Assessments can be used alone or as part of wider evaluation and can be administered individually or in groups. Familiarisation helps pupils understand what types of questions to expect	8 – 13	Assess	Verbal Reasoning

Speech Language and Communication Needs

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
AET progression framework	Communication and interaction, social and emotional understanding, learning, sensory processing, healthy living, routines and processing, independence and participation	Interactive assessment to identify learning priorities, intentions and track progress of CYP with autism	4 – 18	Assess Plan Review	AET Progression Framework
BPVS 3 (British Picture Vocabulary Scale)	Receptive vocabulary	Suitable for non-readers	3 – 16	Assess Review	British Picture Vocabulary Scale
Communication Supporting Classrooms Observation Tool	Oral language environment	Can be used to evaluate the suitability of learning spaces for CYP with language difficulties	4 – 8	Assess Plan Review	Classroom observation tool
Socially Speaking	Communication and relationships	Year-long social skills assessment and intervention program	7 – 16	Assess Plan Do Review	Socially Speaking
Speech Link	Speech sound difficulties	Help schools decide who needs to be referred to a Speech and Language Therapist and those at risk of literacy difficulties	4 – 8	Assess Plan Review	Speech Link

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
The Renfrew Language Scales	Information and grammar, naming vocabulary, narrative skills	Scales are available individually or as a set	3 – 8	Assess Plan Review	Renfrew Language Scales
Universally Speaking - The Communication Trust	Speech, language and communication issues	Checklist of statements describing what children should achieve at each stage of their development	5 – 11	Assess Plan Review	Universally speaking
WellComm	Language, communication and interaction	Provides focused teaching and intervention activities to meet individual needs	6 – 11	Assess Plan Do Review	WellComm

Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

Any assessment of possible social emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties should be carried out alongside assessments of the child's cognition and learning, and speech, language and communication needs. The possibility of the child having undiagnosed sensory issues should also be explored. SEMH difficulties are often apparent in CYP with unmet special educational needs. As such, provision and support can be misdirected if the underlying needs are not fully understood.

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
National Autistic Society A-B-C chart	Antecedents, Behaviour and Consequences	Record and analysis of concerns about behaviour	4 – 18	Assess Plan Do Review	bc-chart
Boxall Profile	Social, emotional, behavioural development	Two-part checklist each consisting of 34 descriptive items	4 – 18	Assess Plan Do Review	Boxall

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
Butler Self-image Profile	Self-image and self-esteem	Self-report questionnaire for pupils	7 – 16	Assess Review	Self Image Profiles
Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention	Emotional literacy: Self-awareness, emotional regulation, Motivation, empathy, social skills	Teacher, pupil and parent questionnaires	7 – 16	Assess Plan Review	Emotional Literacy
Good Childhood Index	Life satisfaction, happiness, friends	Pupil questionnaire	8 – 18	Assess Plan Review	The Good Childhood Index
Pupil Attitude to Self and School	Pupil views and attitudes about school, teachers attendance, curriculum, themselves as learners	Screening tool to help identify at-risk students and to plan suitable interventions	4 – 18	Assess Plan Review	PASS
Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents	Mastery, relatedness, emotional reactivity	Three self-report scales which can be used separately or in combination. Focuses on strengths as well as vulnerabilities.	9 – 18	Assess Plan Review	Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	Emotional responses, conduct, hyperactivity and inattention, peer relationships, prosocial behaviour	Behavioural screening questionnaire for completion by pupils, teachers and parent/carers	2 – 18	Assess Review	SDQ
Talkabout	Self-awareness, self-esteem, social skills, friendship skills	Interview, social skills assessment and self- assessment	4 – 18	Assess Plan Do Review	Talkabout series

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale	Feelings and thoughts over the previous two-week period	14 item scale questionnaire (can be used as a before and after measure)	13 years+	Assess Review	Mental Wellbeing Scale

NB: See also the Anna Freud Assessment Toolkit for a comprehensive list of validated tools that are available to measure subjective mental wellbeing across the age range.

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
Helping children to improve their gross motor skills: The Stepping Stones Curriculum	Gross motor skills	Assessment and worksheets to improve basic motor coordination skills and specific skills needed for sports	5 – 18	Assess Plan Do Review	The Stepping Stones Curriculum
Integra Sensory Sensitivity Questionnaire	Sensory sensitivity	Assesses the frequency of behaviours linked to hypo and hyper sensitivity to sensory experiences	4 – 18	Assess Plan Review	Sensory sensitivity questionnaire
Warwickshire Occupational Therapy	Foundation Skills, hand skills, skilled hand use, visual perception, handwriting, fluency and speed of handwriting	Assessment checklists and program plans	4 – 11	Assess Plan Do Review	Fine motor skills

P4A outcomes

Assessment name	Focus	Description	Age range	Graduated response	Web link
Preparing for Adulthood Outcomes Tool	Preparing for adulthood	Age-related indicators of preparing for adulthood and resources to support development	0 – 25	Assess Plan Review	P4A outcomes

