

Assessment Policy

Adopted Date: 01/09/2023

Review Date: 01/09/2024

Equality and Inclusion Statement:

We include our equality statement in the beginning of all policies to emphasise our commitment to equality and inclusion.

At Apex Specialist Education we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination and harassment, valuing diversity and promoting positive relationships. We provide an inclusive education which enables all pupils to develop their full potential meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014.

At Apex Specialist Education, we believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit us.

In line with the public sector equality duty (PSED) standards, Apex Specialist Education will have due regard to the need to:

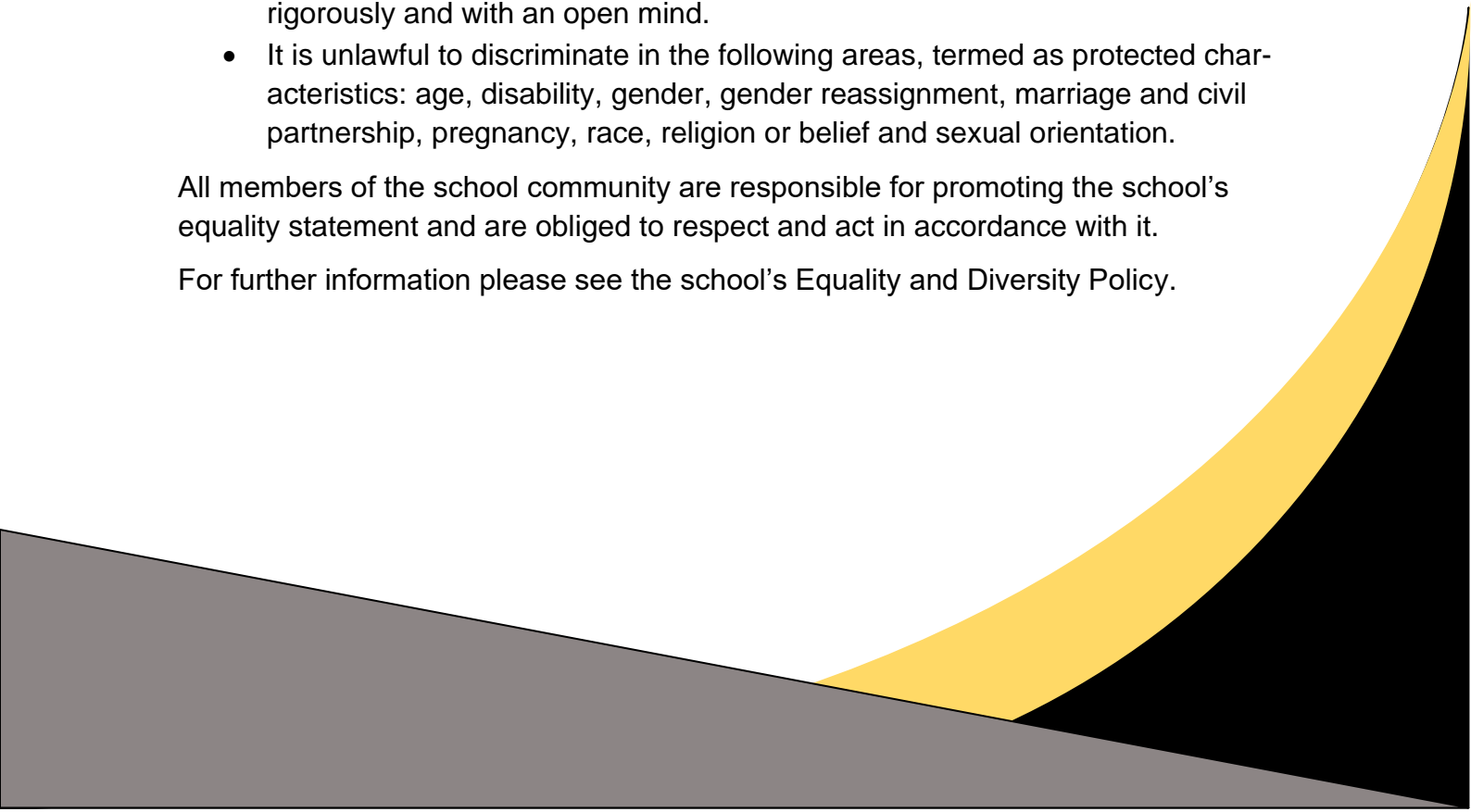
- Eliminate discrimination.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

In practice, due regard means that the governing board and the leadership team will:

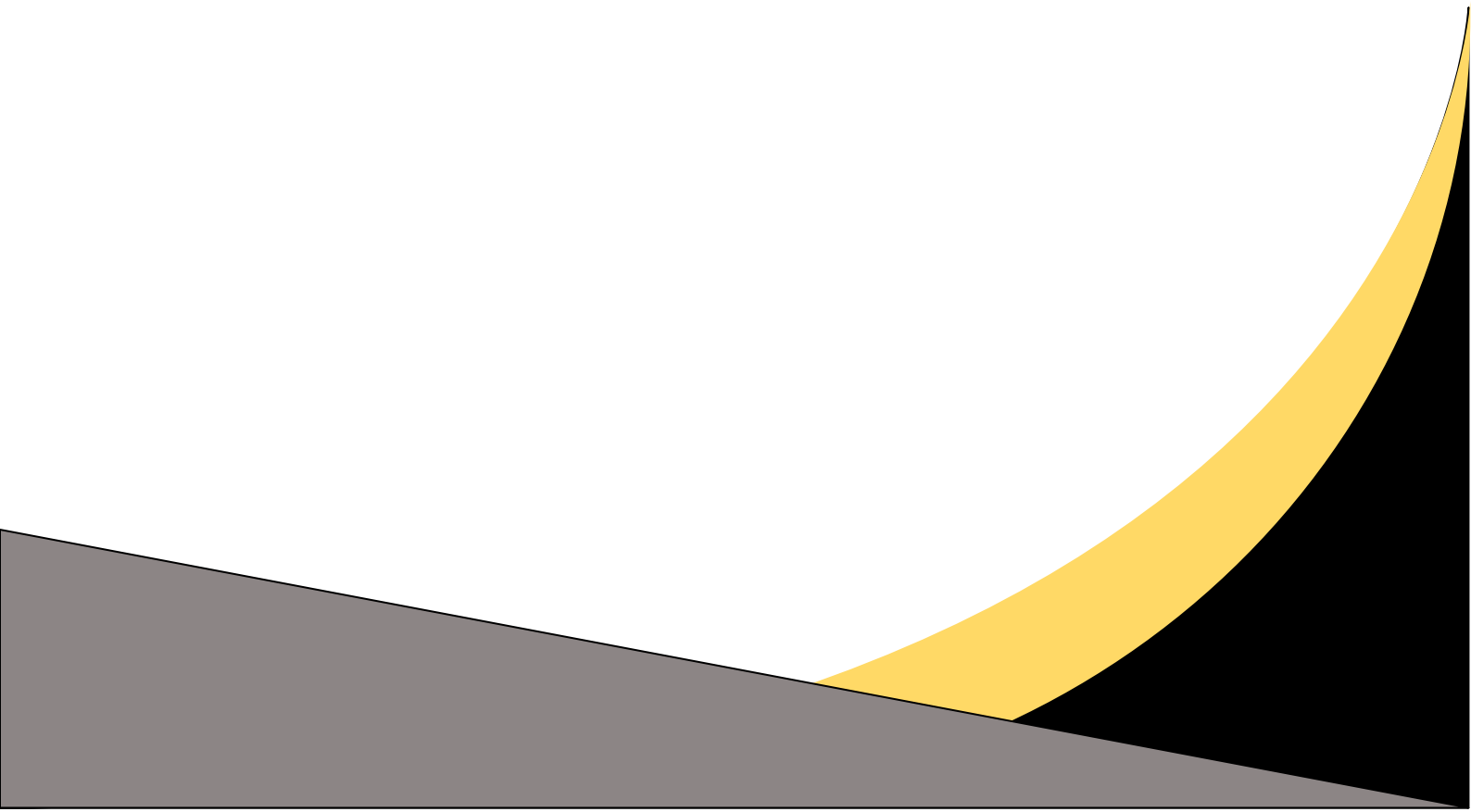
- Be aware of the duty to have due regard when making decisions or taking action and will assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Consider equality implications before and at the time that they develop policies and take decisions, not as an afterthought and keep them under review on a continuing basis.
- Integrate PSED into the implementation of all school functions and ensure that the analysis necessary to comply with the duty is carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind.
- It is unlawful to discriminate in the following areas, termed as protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

All members of the school community are responsible for promoting the school's equality statement and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with it.

For further information please see the school's Equality and Diversity Policy.



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1. Introduction

Apex Specialist Education recognises that all pupils attending our provision have individual needs, and barriers, which have proved detrimental to their progress within a mainstream setting. Apex Specialist Education is dedicated to implementing an environment, support, and a suitably adapted curriculum, to ensure all pupils can make progress and succeed to the best of their ability. Our assessment systems are therefore designed as a meaningful and reflective approach to support teachers in planning the best route for each pupil. The overarching vision is that assessment should be used as a supportive measure that allows all progress, no matter how small, to be demonstrated and for each pupil to keep moving forward in their learning, however that may look. When designing a curriculum that took account of all aspects of a pupil's life, the assessment of such learning requires a bespoke approach.

Teacher Standards (DfE, 2011) states that teachers are expected to make 'accurate and productive use of assessment'. To achieve this, they must know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements; make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress; use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons; give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

Apex Specialist Education believes assessment lies at the heart of the process of promoting children's learning. It provides a framework within which educational objectives may be set and children's progress expressed and monitored.

Assessment should be incorporated systematically into teaching strategies to provide information on the individual child's experience and achievement, which identifies what the child knows, understands, and is able to do. When used effectively, assessment helps pupils to embed knowledge and use it fluently and assists teachers in producing clear next steps for pupils.

Our school default assessment methodology is formative ongoing assessment, reinforced with regular summative checks using a variety of assessment tools. Our assessment procedures are free from bias, stereotyping and generalisation in respect of gender, class, race, and disability.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidelines on our approach to formative and summative assessment
- Establish a consistent and coherent approach to recording summative assessment outcomes and reporting to parents/carers

- Clearly set out how and when assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated
- Provide a framework to allow meaningful tracking of pupils at the end of each year (Year 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11) and also the end of each Key stage (Key Stage 3, and Key Stage 4) with expectation of progress in line with expected rates or progress, study modules within each subject within the school curriculum, flight paths and reference to the expectations as per the Independent Standards and the Curriculum Intent, Implementation, and Impact statements. We will ensure that there are dates (as per the school calendar) throughout the year where we are providing regular feedback to parents/carers.
- Detail recordable measures which can demonstrate comparison against expected standards and reflect progress over time.
- Support intervention by enabling Apex Specialist Education to identify any significant gaps in learning, plan how to address them and track progress in doing so.
- Support Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) by enabling the provision to understand and address the barriers to learning for each individual.

3. Legislation and guidance

Schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment since the National Curriculum levels were removed in 2014.

This policy refers to:

- The recommendations in the final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels
- Statutory reporting requirements set out in the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005: schedule 1

4. Roles and responsibilities

Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- Being familiar with statutory assessment systems, as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all pupils
- Holding school leaders to account for improving pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data
- Monitoring that school staff are receiving the appropriate support and training on pupil assessment, to ensure consistent application and good practice across the school

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the policy is adhered to
- Monitoring standards in core and foundation subjects
- Analysing pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement
- Reporting to governors on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years
- Making sure arrangements are in place so teachers can conduct assessment competently and confidently, including training and moderation opportunities

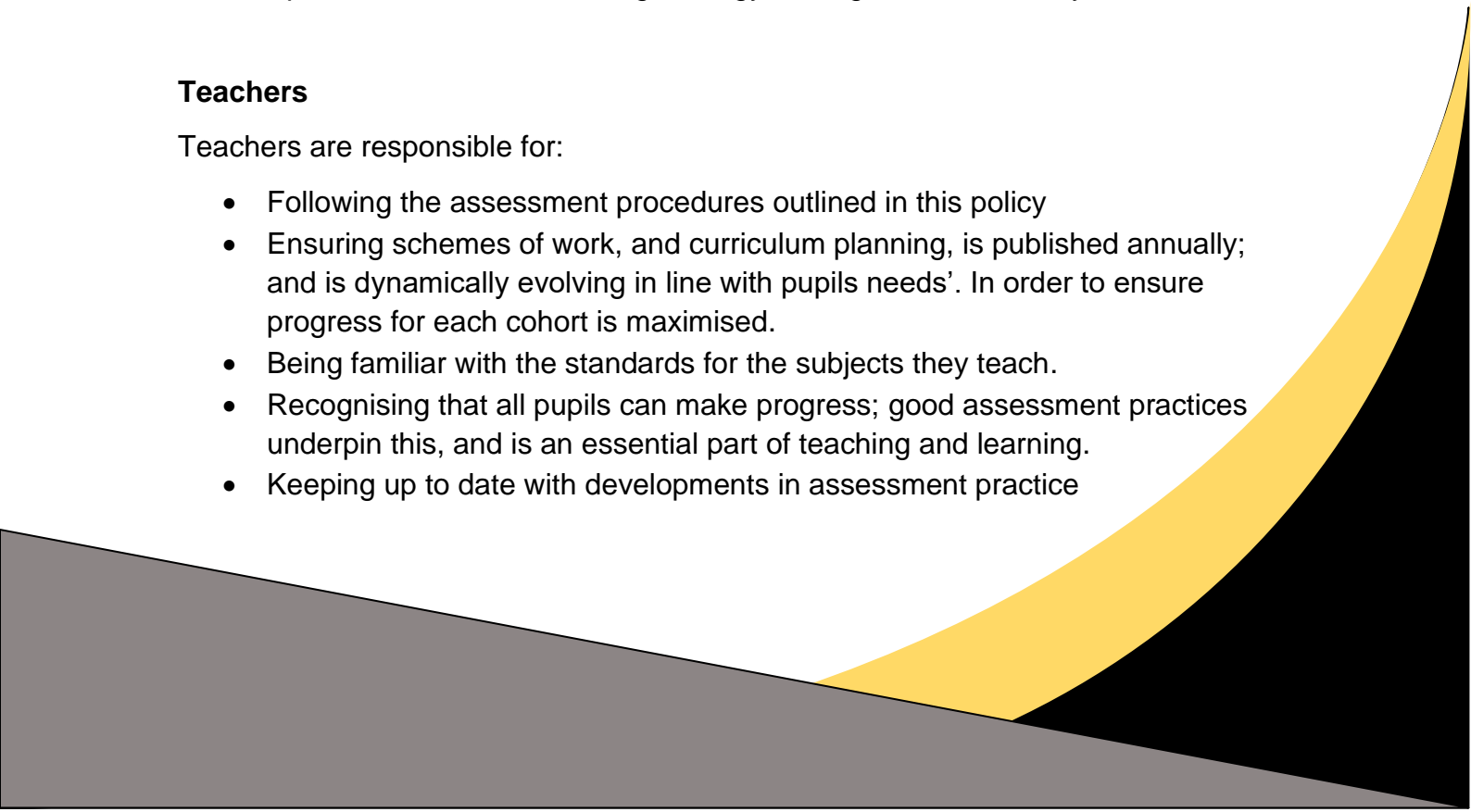
Curriculum Lead (Senior Leader)

Apex Specialist Education has a specific curriculum lead, who is responsible for:

- Coordination, moderation, support, and scrutiny of curriculum plans, and schemes of work; ensuring assessment opportunities are appropriately embedded.
- Support the governing body, Headteacher, and senior leaders to analyse, understand, and extrapolate findings from pupil progress/attainment
- Support teachers in monitoring attainment, and rates of progress; including how this informs interventions and future teaching.
- Coordinate teaching and learning scrutiny exercises; this will include specific foci around assessment informed teaching, to ensure teachers' implementation, is being informed via assessment outcomes.
- Keep up-to-date with contemporary assessment practices, and analyse Apex Specialist Education evolving strategy, through an informed eye.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- Following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy
 - Ensuring schemes of work, and curriculum planning, is published annually; and is dynamically evolving in line with pupils needs'. In order to ensure progress for each cohort is maximised.
 - Being familiar with the standards for the subjects they teach.
 - Recognising that all pupils can make progress; good assessment practices underpin this, and is an essential part of teaching and learning.
 - Keeping up to date with developments in assessment practice
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- Demonstrating awareness of the impact of feedback; ensuring that comments, grades, and marks are both developmental and recognise achievement. All feedback (oral and written) must be focused on the work, not the individual.
- Understand learner motivation by emphasising progress and achievement rather than failure and avoid comparison with others
- Be clear about a pupil's strengths and how to develop these, their areas for improvement and the next steps needed for them to make progress.
- Praise progress and reward achievement through comments and the school's praise and reward systems.
- Recognise that Assessment for Learning - AFL should be used in all areas of educational activity and that it should enable all learners to achieve their best and have their achievements recognised.
- Make it fit for purpose, varied and use it to inform future planning and teaching.
- Advise on "next steps" in clearly explained accessible language and, where appropriate, set SMART targets (WWW/EBI).
- Keep detailed records and regularly review pupils' baseline data, their effort, attainment, strengths and areas for development, as well as their completion of classwork and homework.
- Follow the marking and feedback policy
- Be involved in Curriculum meetings on a regular basis and that actions are taken where necessary to address matters raised.

Pupils will:

- Be fully aware of their current working levels and informed of the next steps in order to progress
- Agree aspirational targets for progression with their teachers.
- Be treated as partners in their learning.

Parents/carers and commissioning partners will be:

- Confident that their child is receiving an education that is designed to meet their learning needs and which will equip them with the skills they need to thrive throughout their lives.
- Kept regularly informed about the progress their child is making, in line with the relevant section of this policy.

5. Assessment approaches

At Apex Specialist Education we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

We use 3 broad overarching forms of assessment: day-to-day in-school formative assessment, in-school summative assessment and nationally standardised summative assessment (baseline assessments are an amalgamation of the aforementioned approaches).

Baseline assessment and standardised assessments:

Baseline assessment can take many different forms but is essentially a means of collecting information about a child's development or attainment at the point at which they enter a new educational setting or year group. Due to the nature of our school, pupils can join at any time in the year. They can be returning to education after long gaps and have various SEMH needs. Any reports obtained from previous schools may not be a true assessment of their educational attainment or needs.

To support this, baseline assessments are undertaken within 6 weeks of the pupil joining. Baseline assessments are carried out in a variety of different ways ranging from informal observations relating to a pupil's attainment steps and standardised assessments. All pupils are expected to complete a 'New Group Reading Test' (NGRT), 'New Group Spelling Test' and 'Hodder maths', standardised assessment; this provides us salient information as to where the pupil sits in line with the national average.

The data collected from these assessments supports our teachers in fully meeting the needs of each child, highlighting both their strengths and areas for development; identifying interventions, and allows end of year targets for individual pupils to be generated.

Standardised assessments are completed during the point of admission; and then informed by the needs of the pupil; standardised test will be completed a maximum of once a term per focus (e.g. NGRT – 3 x a year); this is to monitor and analyse progress, and interventions.

Formative assessment:

This type of assessment describes the focus on monitoring pupil response to and progress with teaching. The process provides immediate feedback to both the teacher and pupil regarding the learning process and indicates the next step to be taken to promote learning. Formative assessment is used by our teachers to evaluate pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding on a day-to-day and lesson by lesson basis and to tailor teaching accordingly. This may include:

Marking of pupils' work is an important element of formative assessment, helping children to note errors and know the 'next steps' in their learning or targets. The results of formative assessments have a direct impact on the teaching materials and strategies employed immediately following the assessment.

Summative assessment:

Summative assessments occur at defined periods of the academic year such as assessment weeks and during statutory assessment periods. Summative assessments help teachers in making end of teaching units and key stage assessments. They are also of use in determining the overall progress and achievement of pupils. Summative assessment is also used for the purposes of reporting to parents, other teachers, the pupils themselves and, in summary form, to other interested parties such as school governors or school boards.

Substantive Knowledge

Substantive knowledge is broadly defined as content that is taught as fact. This could include the plot of a play, or the event leading up to a war etc... Substantive knowledge is considered in all of our schemes of work; long term plans illustrate how this is considered. Furthermore, a weekly Friday 'recall day' is dedicated to reinforcing and revisiting pupils retention of substantive knowledge throughout the week.

Teachers use baselines, standardised assessments, and opening lessons (based on planned assumptions of what pupils should know) to assess and tailor content. Where there are gaps in pupils substantive knowledge, our Friday sessions provides a useful forum to bridge understanding of new topics; and revisit previous concepts which may not have been retained.

Disciplinary Knowledge

Apex Specialist Education considers disciplinary knowledge as an understanding about how knowledge is established, verified and revised.

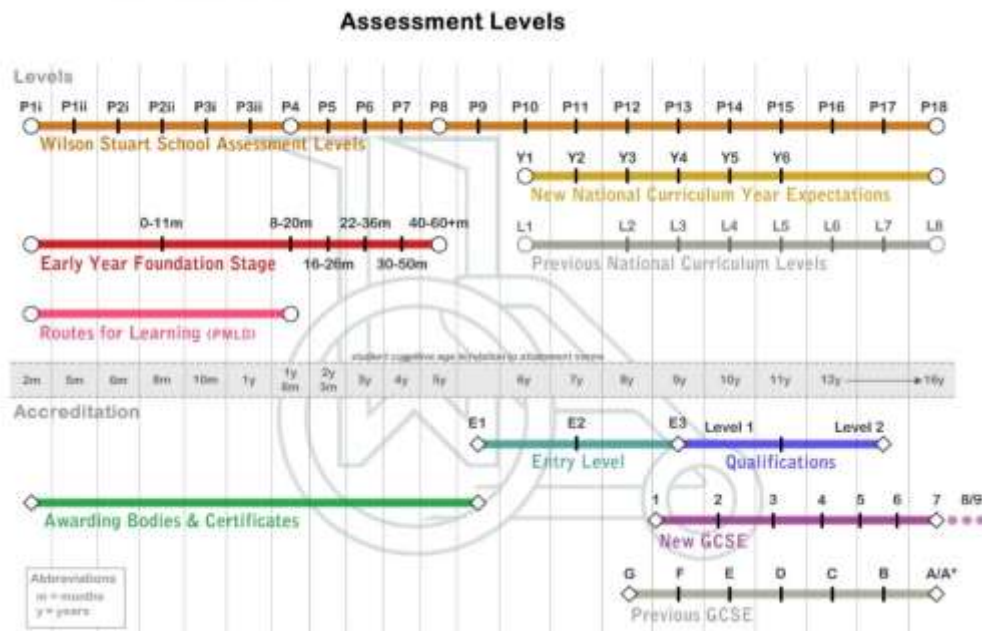
Apex Specialist Education's assessment system has been designed taking into account the needs of the pupils who attend school and following the Principles of Assessment as set out by the NAHT in the Report of the NAHT Commission on Assessment – February 2014. We use 'Wilson Stuart School Performance Steps' (WS P Steps' attainment descriptors as a means to quantify and analyse cognition levels and disciplinary knowledge (please see section below).

6. Target setting and attainment

Target-setting is a significant strategy in our school for improving pupils' achievement. We know it will be effective only if we remember that the pupil is at the heart of the process. The targets we set are challenging, but realistic, and considers a pupil's starting point. Target setting is based on learning objectives. It is informed

and identified by analysis of pupils' work, discussions, teacher's assessment and/or test performance. It identifies whole-school priorities, areas for improvement and links to the School Development Plan (SDP).

In order to set targets, and quantify progress, we use WS P Steps. The image below illustrates how WS P Steps has been mapped to complement other assessment systems, and cognition level/age. By using WS P Steps criteria, we can demonstrate what cognition level a pupil is working at.



WS P Steps assessment mapping

WS P Steps criteria cover the essential skills required to be able to move on to the next section. They are not a list of all skills to be taught. The curriculum for each subject will be significantly broader than the WS P Steps criteria.

Our assessments are primarily focused on P14 – P18 criteria; given the expected cognition level and age of pupils who attend Apex Specialist Education. The flight path below shows the progress pupils can make from Year 7 to Year 11).

END OF KS2 to KS3 -

END OF YEA R 6	WS P Steps	END OF YEA R 9
P16	+2	P18
P15	+2	P17
P14	+2	P16
P13	+2	P15
P12	+2	P14
P11	+2	P13
P10	+3	P13
P9	+3	P12
P8	+3	P11
P7	+2	P9
P6	+2	P8
P5	+1	P6
P4	+1	P5
P3ii	+1	P4
P3i	+2	P4
P2ii	+2	P3ii
P2i	+1	P2ii
P1ii	+1	P2i
P1i	+0	P1i

END OF KS3 to KS4 -

END OF YEA R 9	WS P Steps	END OF YEA R 11
P17	+1	P18
P16	+1	P17
P15	+1	P16
P14	+1	P15
P13	+1	P14
P12	+1	P13
P11	+1	P12
P10	+1	P11
P9	+1	P10
P8	+1	P9
P7	+1	P8
P6	+1	P7
P5	+1	P6
P4	+1	P5
P3ii	+1	P4
P3i	+1	P3ii
P2ii	+0	P2ii
P2i	+1	P2ii
P1ii	+0	P1ii
P1i	+0	P1i

WS P Steps flight path

Movement along this Flight Path can be fluid and is not restricted to only one strand so that pupils aspire to achieving the best grades they can.

Target and Attainment measures are determined using Attainment Levels. The skills, knowledge and understanding that are required at each level are mapped out for each subject in the form of 'WS P Step Attainment Level Descriptors'. For pupils to attain a particular Attainment Level, they need to demonstrate that they have mastered the particular skills and have a secure understanding and knowledge base. Our goal is for each pupil to gain a deep understanding of the key elements at each level within each subject area, rather than cover large of amounts of content superficially. The drive to master key skills will not only provide a more purposeful learning experience but will also support pupils to achieve their full potential.

In all subjects the levels (WS P Steps) have been developed to show pupils' mastery of the knowledge and skills within a level and the depth of learning achieved, each level is sub-divided into three sub-levels, emerging, developing, and secure.

S	Secure	The pupil has a thorough grasp of the WS P Step. Can apply knowledge/skills consistently.
D	Developing	The pupil has a good grasp of the WS P Step. Can apply knowledge/skills consistently.
E	Emerging	The pupil has a very basic grasp of the WS P Step. Can apply knowledge/skills consistently.

7. Assessment Cycle

At Apex Specialist Education, ongoing teacher assessment and reporting of progress will ensure that targets set are providing the appropriate level of motivation and challenge. Therefore, pupil progress is regularly reviewed and monitored as per the cycle below:

Autumn Term

- Mid-term starter: Baseline Assessment within six weeks entry to school.
- September: Teacher-led baseline assessments undertaken in all year groups.
- Formal assessment to take place in line with the school calendar.

Spring Term

- Mid-term starter: Baseline Assessment within six weeks entry to school.
- Formal assessment to take place in line with the school calendar.

Summer Term

- Mid-term starter: Baseline Assessment within six weeks entry to school.
- Formal assessment to take place in line with the school calendar.

8. Assessment and Target Stickers (Pupil Workbooks)

To ensure pupils are well informed of their assessments and expected levels of progress, subject leaders ensure Assessment and Target setting stickers are placed in pupil workbooks at the start of each term: Autumn, Spring and Summer. The Assessment and Target stickers that are displayed on each individual pupils' workbooks for each individual subject. They provide information on pupil 'current working at grade' and their 'target grade'. Pupils also set their own aspirational grades with subject staff. Pupils Reading and Spelling ages are also tracked through Assessment and Target

These grades link to the Flight Path data (see above).

9. Assessment Reporting

Reports detailing pupil progress and attitude to learning in each subject are sent out to parents/carers three times per academic year. Autumn Term, Spring Term and Summer Term. Should the need arise, parents/carers are welcome to discuss the progress of their child with Apex Specialist Education, at any time.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Our school's assessment, recording and reporting procedures will be monitored annually by the Senior Leader – Curriculum in order that they remain meaningful and manageable. This policy and its procedures may also be reviewed sooner to enable the consideration of any new legislation or changes in DfE guidance.

