

NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

COVID-19 - Assessment Guidance for Schools

Overarching principle

As part of the support to schools and academies, the local authority is engaged with school partners in providing guidance to schools. We have looked at the ways in which schools are thinking about assessment in a variety of forms. Schools may wish to consider the points below: this is not a proscriptive document.

At this time, the key message from NYCC local authority is that the health and well-being of all pupils and staff is the **most important** aspect for school leaders to focus on as schools plan to reopen. When pupils begin to return to school, positive, sensitive re-integration and smooth transitions must be the most important factor. This document offers how schools are planning to support learning in these difficult times. Assessment, in a variety of forms is one part of the jigsaw. Our school improvement service has been working with other services to develop transition and curriculum guidance for school leaders which can be use alongside this assessment guidance.

In response to our recent snap survey relating to assessment (149 returns) we are aware that schools would welcome some clarity of the local authority's stance on assessment at this time. Thank you to those of you who completed the survey to support us in producing this guidance, this has enabled us to get a broad understanding of your views.

LATEST INTERNAL SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

- Many schools across our LA have robust assessment and tracking systems in place and feedback has confirmed that most schools have reported that they have already collected, collated and analysed the end of spring term data for pupils across all year groups. There is little variation between primary and secondary schools in this.
- In some schools, particularly in primary schools, this has been done for core subjects, whilst in other schools this has been done for a wider range of subjects across the curriculum.
- With school closures taking place from the 20th March 2020, end of spring term assessments provides the latest, most robust and accurate data that schools have regarding pupil attainment.
- The LA school improvement service recommends that if this has not yet taken place, school leaders should collect, collate and analyse data (at least for core subjects) for their pupils up to that point in time. Since this will be done retrospectively, schools will be able to plan the most appropriate time to ask staff to consider this.

PREDICTED/PROJECTED/FORECASTED ASSESSMENT

- Over 50% of schools that responded to the survey have already decided to produce end of year predictions/forecasts for pupils, based on previous key stage prior attainment, beginning of the year assessments and the end of spring term 2020 assessment information. This is based on where they would have expected pupils to be at the end of the year had normal schooling continued.
- The LA school improvement service recommends that if predictions have not already been made (especially for key year groups – EYFS, Year 1 phonics, Year 2 reading, writing and mathematics and Year 6 reading, writing and mathematics), then school leaders should think about recording pupil attainment predictions up to July 2020 – based on forecasts of attainment for each pupil as if schools had not closed and learning had continued as planned. This should be based on a simple projection without any requirement for staff to collate further information other than that available to them during the spring term.
- These predictions will not realistically be a measure of where pupils actually are, but helpful in ensuring that there is a clear record of expectation of what would have been expected in normal circumstances and helpful at a later stage in order to assess the impact that the time out of school

has had on individual pupils. This can be used over time to support teachers in closing gaps and eliminating risks of under achievement. The LA acknowledges that this will not be a short term fix but schools need to record predictions in order that pupils can be supported to plug gaps and catch up as reasonably as can be expected, in their remaining school career.

SHARING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- The LA school improvement service recommends that both the accurate and robust assessment information from March, along with the predicted outcomes for the end of the 2020 academic year (had schools remained open) are shared with the pupils' next teachers, key stage leaders and schools.
- The LA school improvement service also recommends that where pupils are changing class teacher/school and where possible, pupils' books are also shared as additional support to the new class teacher. This will be particularly valuable in supporting new class teachers with an overview of the wider curriculum for each pupil, particularly in primary schools. The LA is **NOT** suggesting that teachers produce portfolios of work to pass on to colleagues – **passing on pupils' books should not provide any additional workload in supporting transition.**
- There was limited demand for the LA to support with this process. Therefore, we are making recommendations around what we think schools could do, but will leave the sharing process up to individual schools to decide.

REPORTING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- There will be no statutory assessment collection for primary schools in 2020.
- GCSE and A-Level teacher assessment will be calculated by exam boards in June 2020.
- Just over one third of schools reported that they would like some form of end of key stage data submission in order to support school self-evaluation. A further third were undecided.
- The local authority is willing to support school leaders who wish to submit end of key stage data to FFT and Nexus. The LA would like to re-iterate that there is **no requirement to do so** and this is entirely the school's own decision. If schools choose to do this, the submission will need to be aligned with the criteria that FFT and Nexus are planning to offer which will be confirmed at a later stage. **There is no expectation to test or assess pupils at any stage to confirm this information and we would strongly advise against doing this.**
- The LA will be in touch at a later stage, with details about how schools who want to do this can submit their data and what we are able to offer. There will have to be a shared understanding of this process in order for any valid comparisons to be made for self-evaluation purposes only.
- The LA guarantees that any data which is submitted to FFT/Nexus **would NOT** be used for accountability purposes. We are exploring if there is a way to 'lock' this data to provide schools with further reassurance on this matter.

BASELINE ASSESSMENT

- As and when pupils return to school, their health and well-being must be the main priority for school leaders and teachers, through positive transition and re-integration.
- The LA school improvement service recommends that once pupils are settled in to school and learning, at an appropriate time (possibly no sooner than October half term), class teachers should gather baseline assessment information about each pupil in order to establish their attainment at that point in time.
- The form of this baseline assessment will be decided by each individual school. We would encourage schools to use a diagnostic assessment in order to address gaps in knowledge, however, if it is deemed appropriate by the school, then end of key stage assessment criteria for the preceding key stage may be useful to establish a starting point for the new key stage.

- Any baseline information that is gathered can be compared with end of spring term data and end of summer term predictions to support class teachers with planning to meet the needs of every pupil.

EARLY YEARS ASSESSMENT

- Discussions with head teachers and early years colleagues revealed that schools have robust, up-to-date records and observations of their Early Years children post closure in March 2020.
- Where parents have been liaising with schools and providing up-to-date information regarding home learning, this can feed into teacher assessment judgements within schools' current record keeping systems.
- In line with the broad LA recommendations (above), Early Years teachers should continue to use their specific electronic systems, or alternatively use the EYFS profile documentation as a template for recording children's documented achievements (prior to closure), together with any professionally considered predictions of where a child's learning may have reasonably expected to be at the end of the Summer term had learning continued uninterrupted.
- In order to assist receiving teachers, classes or schools – a short, specific commentary upon the child's Characteristics of Effective Learning together with their learning journal would be sufficient for the vast majority of children. Where a child has previously been identified as vulnerable or having additional needs, then more detailed information and professional discussions between parents, children and teachers would be required and this should be addressed on a case by case basis.
- Moving forward, schools could choose to use developmentally appropriate summative assessment strategies to sensitively assess prior learning, helping teachers to identify gaps in learning which will be addressed over time.

SUMMARY

The decision for schools and settings to assess children and pupils, rests with school leaders. We will support whatever processes schools choose to follow and there is no expectation for schools to assess, test or baseline until they see fit.