



STEP Academy Trust

Assessment Policy

Date of Policy: March 2016

Review: March 2017

Rationale

The overriding principle of good assessment is that it should be clearly tied to its intended purpose, connected intrinsically to the curriculum of the school and have pedagogy at its core. It is a fundamental part of the teaching and learning process and must have at its heart, the goal of improving outcomes of children, not simply measuring them. The new national curriculum focuses on the raising of standards and pupil motivation through high-quality, in-depth teaching, supported by in-class formative assessment. This with the outcome of ensuring children are secure in the knowledge and understanding defined in the programmes of study. Depth and breadth of understanding is paramount in favour of pace.

Assessment goes hand-in-hand with the curriculum; but it is high quality **formative assessment** that goes to the very heart of good teaching: day-to-day approaches to assessment. Good formative assessment ranges from the probing questions put to a pupil as they think something through; quick recap questions at the opening of a lesson and marking and response of the work of pupils.

This policy seeks to define a broad set of parameters for all STEP academies to work within when deciding how best to assess their children.

To be read in conjunction with the following policies: Teaching and Learning, Marking and Presentation, EYFS, Maths, English, Science, Computing, Arts, PE, RE, MfL, SRE and relationships, RRS and Homework.

Context

This policy is written in the context of the removal of National Curriculum Levels, and the Final Report of The Commission on Assessment without Levels. This Government-commissioned report emphasises the importance of schools developing their own individual assessment practices, rather than being constrained by familiar 'one-size-fits-all' systems.

'The Commission encourages schools to make the most of the freedom to develop their own approaches to assessment and explore new methods of recording assessment information...Ofsted will not expect to see any particular type of assessment system in a school. It is important that each school develops a system that is consistent with its own curriculum and supports effective teaching and learning.'

(The Commission on Assessment without Levels, 2015)

Assessment

STEP Academies develop assessment systems that work effectively within their individual contexts, support and assess their individual curricula and ensure and monitor progress. A relentless focus on formative assessment will ensure that assessment feeds back into the learning process. This will drive rapid improvements in learning through a cycle of teaching, continual assessment and relevant feedback.

Academies will decide how they wish to summatively assess their children and what data they wish to gather. **STEP Way:** this data will be in a form that enables standardised, comparable and timely assessment information (populated three times a year) across all academies. The rigorous tracking system will report on attainment for all year groups: working towards national expectations, working at national expectations and working at greater depth.

Three main forms of assessment:

1. **In-school formative assessment**, which is used by teachers to evaluate pupils' knowledge and understanding on a day-to-day basis and to inform and tailor teaching and learning accordingly;
2. **In-school summative assessment**, which enables schools to evaluate how much a pupil has learned at the end of a teaching period, this could be achieved by a test;
3. **Nationally standardised summative assessment**, which is used by the Government to hold schools to account.

Accountability: Ofsted will look at the effectiveness of an academy's curriculum and assessment system in terms of the impact on pupils' achievement and how the curriculum and assessment system is linked. *Therefore the curriculum has to drive the assessment system* (formative, on-going approach), with the sole aim of supporting children's achievement. Therefore, part of the **STEP Way** will include regularly moderating judgements regularly across the Trust, with external quality assurances to ensure our formative systems and judgements are robust.

When assessing children's progress, the following needs to be taken into account:

*Academies individual contexts.

*Some academies will need to spend more time on basic skills and knowledge, based on the fact that their children come in far behind age-expected levels. Some academies, conversely, will not face the same problem.

*Academy leaders will ensure that they can clearly demonstrate that they are narrowing/closing the gap between children falling behind the expected standards and those working at the expected standards and those working at greater depth within the expected standards.