

The Potteries School

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POLICY: Assessment policy

COMPILED	IMPLEMENTED	COORDINATED	REVIEWED
17/05/2017	11/04/2018	Andy Joynson	20/01/2026

THE POTTERIES SCHOOL: ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

The Potteries School forms part of an integrated assessment centre where learners are in residential placement for up to 39 weeks. In general, the learners are placed here when they are in crisis at home, with foster families or other care organisations. The initial part of a learner’s placement involves stabilising their behaviour, putting into place structure and boundaries around their behaviour and enabling them to feel safe enough to begin a re-engagement process. Dependent on the extremity of their behaviour, this process may take a significant length of time. The provisional time before the initial education sessions begin is **one week** although this may be extended if their behaviour is militantly non-compliant.

THE RIGHT WAY

The Right Way PRINCIPLE	THIS MEANS:	ORGANISATIONS WILL:
EMBEDDING	Putting Children’s Rights (UNCRC) at the core of planning and the delivery of services for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make links to Children’s Rights (UNCRC) in their plans. ○ Agree on a structure of how they make sure children’s rights are taken into account at all levels of decision making. ○ Make sure that leaders and staff have a good knowledge of children’s rights (UNCRC), and help them understand how it can benefit their work.
Equality and NON-DISCRIMINATION	Ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to be the best they can be and that no child has to ensure poor life chances due to discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make sure staff have up-to-date knowledge of the Equality Act and receive training to increase their awareness of different groups of children and young people’s needs. ○ Give information to children in a language or format appropriate for their age, culture, or ability. ○ Analyse data and consider which groups of children are not accessing your services, and why - can use our a children’s rights impact assessment.
EMPOWERING children and young people	Giving children the knowledge and confidence to use their rights and hold organisations and individuals that affect their lives to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give children the information they need to influence decisions that affect them (e.g. simple language reports). ○ Involve children and young people by giving them the opportunities/ training/ information they need to influence decisions that affect them. ○ Build relationships with groups of young people to allow them to regularly give ideas and feedback. E.g. youth groups/forums.
PARTICIPATION	Listening to children and taking their views seriously (as guaranteed by Article 12 — UNCRC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop clear targets to listen to children and young people from marginalised groups. ○ Involve children directly in the design, monitoring and evaluation of services they receive (this can include involving children in recruitment of staff). ○ Adopt Wales’ National Participation Standards for Children and Young People, to make sure when children participate, their experience is a quality one.
ACCOUNTABILITY	Organisations and individuals should be accountable to children for the decisions and actions which affect their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Publish an accessible annual update showing how they’ve worked towards making children’s rights a reality. ○ Feedback regularly to children in a suitable format. ○ Provide children with accessible information on how to provide feedback about services or to how to make a complaints and hold staff to account.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT DATA AND PLANNING

This week period enables the Headteacher to undertake a number of processes that will inform the assessment programme and ensure that it meets the needs of the learner:

- To investigate the learner's education history through contact with the local authority
- To establish links with the person or virtual school responsible for education monitoring exchange information, key into monitoring processes plan the programme effectively
- To contact then learner's social worker to outline the assessment process, organise a personal education plan meeting and discuss the education timeline processes
- To glean the necessary documentation to ensure an informed education programme is delivered – this can include an E.H.C.P./I.D.P, Personal Education Plans, educational reports, contemporary risk assessments and behaviour plans.

Historically, the learners at the Potteries school have had very negative experiences of the education system. Problems accessing the curriculum due to behavioural difficulties, frequent periods out of school and low self-esteem all coalesce to produce a fractured education profile often with low attainment and little tangible achievement. This can be evident in the following:

- Poor, intermittent recall of the curriculum in core subjects
- Inability to concentrate and focus on task
- High levels of anxiety leading to classroom incidents
- Frequent refusal to attend lessons
- Aggressive, oppositional behaviour towards structure and boundaries

At the Potteries School, careful adherence to classroom expectations and structure, individual bespoke timetabling and precision teaching allow for pupils to develop the feeling of safety in their learning environment. The experience of the Headteacher, a behaviour management model based on assertive discipline and the additional resources available ensure that the engagement process has the best possible chance of succeeding. The planner below outlines the assessment process in detail, the tools used in formative and summative assessment in each of the core subjects and the developmental/diagnostic framework surrounding behavioural assessment and monitoring of health and well-being.

PRE-PLACEMENT INFORMATION REQUESTS

As part of the referral process and transition to the Potteries School, education information on the learner is requested from the Placing Authority prior to the onset of a placement. This information assists in determining if the learner meets the registration requirements of the school and if their needs can be properly met. The data the school expects includes the following:

- National Curriculum Levels gleaned from testing in Year 2, 6 and 9

- Education Health Care Plan/Individual Development Plan (contemporary)
- School reports, certificates and teacher observations
- Educational psychologist reports
- Samples of learner work
- Risk assessments
- Individual Education Plans
- Personal Education Plans

In terms of giving a formative baseline level to work from for each subject, this information can often be helpful in allowing the Headteacher to set a starting point for the assessment programme that is suitable, appropriate and individualised for each learner. This often helps when information is scant, the detail rather basic and the usefulness for precision assessment questionable. This is more a reflection of the fractured nature of a learner's educational history than inefficiency on behalf of the Local Authority.

INITIAL EDUCATION INTERVIEW

Following the first week stabilising behaviour and establishing boundaries within the home, an Initial Education Interview is timetabled for the new learner and is conducted in the schoolroom. The interview takes up to an hour and is conducted by the Headteacher in order to gain information to produce a comprehensive background from both local authority and learner inputs. More often than not, the profile of learning presented in the documentation differs somewhat from the experience presented by the learner. This process means that idiosyncratic detail that is often missed from the big picture (and that is often key in helping a learner begin to re-engage) comes to light and assists in informing the learner's profile. The areas discussed in the interview are:

- Previous schooling - chronology and transitions
- Educational experience - relationships, teachers and peers
- Difficulties and behaviour - triggers, patterns and strategies
- Curriculum consideration – likes, performance and accreditation
- Comparison profiling - pre-placement, risk assessment and reflection

INTERIM AND SUMMATIVE EDUCATION REPORTS (WEEKS 8 :: 18 :: 26)

Local Authorities have requested frequent, contemporary reports on the learners placed at the Potteries School both as good practice and to confirm progress for learners. In addition, the reports also serve as feedback for learners themselves to provide tangible evidence of their own progress. These reports are discussed with learners during tutorial sessions near to report dates. Interim reports are produced at week 8 and 18; summative reports at week 26. The information included is listed below:

- Progress in the core subjects with assessment scores
- A description of strategies that have assisted learning
- An outline of sport activities, life and independent skills and education visits
- Observations of behaviours in the classroom and offsite
- Outcomes against targets (objectives) from Personal Education Plans, EHCP/IDP (if

appropriate), Individual Learning Targets (see below) are detailed

- Recommendations for future learning and development

These reports are sent to the LA social worker, education representatives and (if requested) parents of the learner. These interim education commentaries then feed into an integrated assessment report compiled by the Registered Manager (Care), consultant psychotherapist and education. The report is a comprehensive assessment of need across all three areas of placement and serves to act as a benchmarking tool for future placements to use for planning a package of care and education for the learner.

TARGET SETTING AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

It is essential that learning experiences be delivered appropriately, monitored accurately, outcomes measured and learners show progress during their time at school. The short-term nature of the placement, the fact that a large proportion of the education is non-classroom based and support staff are not qualified educationalists (in most cases) entails the need for a robust system of target setting to accompany the curriculum. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement this system, monitor outcomes and train staff on a regular basis to articulate the targets and help learners succeed. The learning targets will:

- Apply to all learning activities across the curriculum
- Enable all support staff to deliver quality education experiences
- Facilitate the accurate recording of learner outcomes
- Follow a S.M.A.R.T. wherever possible to ease implementation
- Be reviewed on a fortnightly basis along with attainment rewards
- Become **the** driving guide for learner progress and success

Individual Learner Targets (I.L.T.) are drawn from quality-of-life indicators and are the foremost signposts from the information gleaned from pre-placement and early observations of the learner within the home. will inform this target. These are implemented at week 8 and developed with help from the learner.

The completion of the **Personal Education Plan (P.E.P.)** within thirty days forwards a more precision education target to compliment the quality-of-life indicators. This plan is engined by the local authority social worker and reviewed at week 18.

Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.) are formulated with all targets and objectives from the above combined into a single monitoring document that can map progress during the assessment programme. This includes potential annual reviews of ALN as appropriate.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

In response to core inspection recommendations from 2024 under the new standards and, more importantly, a change in the length of placement from 26 to 39 weeks, the school has needed to have a more robust assessment process for its learners. The extension was put into place to resolve the problems with learner transition to new provisions but the

indirect effect has been to extend the education to a complete academic year and the inspectorate felt that the current assessment scheme did not meet the independent school standards or present evidence of improvement during enrolment at the school. With this in mind and a willingness to provide a high standard of education, the assessment programme has been overhauled.

The school will maintain the form of how to carry out assessment with learners who are (sometimes militantly) resistant to 'exams' or 'tests' and this has been identified historically as a strength of the school. The incorporation of assessments will continue with:

- Discrete lessons solely for subject testing
- Elements of the planned lessons to involve informal testing
- Teacher-assessed work including differentiation

The process requires skilled judgement from the Headteacher as to the likelihood of success for the learner. Marking is immediate and a feedback session ensues following the assessment. This is good practice as it prevents learners with amplified levels of anxiety and arousal becoming more nervous due to the perceived uncertainty of their performance.

CORE SUBJECT ASSESSMENT

Initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills will be undertaken in the first two weeks following enrolment. During this period, putting in place safeguards within the behaviour management framework and establishing routines to encourage participation and engagement is the fundamental aim to assist learners. It is important that the teaching staff create a **safe and consistently certain** environment for learners to be ready for learning, begin to build relationships with teaching staff and positively reboot their schooling.

Our minds are **continually shaped** by emotions, experiences, relationships, opportunities, *attitudes, values and beliefs, knowledge and genes*. However, there is an **instinctive priority of attachment over the brain's exploratory system** – *feeling safe and secure is more important than learning*.

(Geddes... 'Attachment and learning' 2017 pp.14)

Formative snapshots

Generally speaking, education information received before enrolment is scant, often out of date, lacking levels and relatively light on behavioral detail. **The starting point for assessment therefore is to determine basic levels of literacy and numeracy.** To achieve the necessary information to determine levels, the assessment tools below are used in the initial phase of testing:

Literacy:

Hertfordshire reading test: sentence level reading up to 15.0 years

New Group Reading Test: reading comprehension at three chronological levels
Blackwell spelling test: standard spelling assessment up to 15.0 years

Numeracy:

Ten Ticks level tests: worksheet-based assessment to determine NC level
Standard Attainment Tests: year 6 and 9 assessments up to level 8
DoIT Profiler (Maths): basic numeracy assessment allied to literacy skills

This formative testing provides a **snapshot** only but enables the correct level of assessment to be pursued more accurately in the next phase of the programme.

DoIT Profiler

Do-IT Profiler is a web-based screening system that provides age-appropriate assessments, advice and support thus helping every learner to achieve their potential. It provides the school with a means to make data-driven decisions, based on accurate and up to date information and deliver learner-centred, personalised guidance. It saves time with no data entry and no marking and provides instant results with practical guidance. The DoIT profiler:

- Can screen learners to identify different cognitive, emotional and learning profiles and provide a quick view to aid lesson planning
- Supports our headteacher to identify and support your 'learners of concern'
- Takes a whole-child view including their neurodiverse profile, wellbeing and study skills
- Considers neurodivergent traits associated with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia (DCD), ADHD, Autism Spectrum Conditions and Language and Communication challenges
- Gives detailed child-centered individual reports that are automatically generated
- Saves time with no data entry and can see data at learner, class, school and clusters if required

Repeat progress testing

Formal assessment of English, mathematics and science will be introduced following the initial snapshot work and discernment of whether a learner is operating at a chronologically appropriate level. Many of the learners who attend the school have fractured educational histories and this is reflected often in below expected levels.

All assessment results are recorded in the learner's **assessment monitoring schema** noting date, type and with a narrative providing quantitative information alongside the data. Planning for future sessions will then be evaluated with the focus on remedial work to assist learners in catching up on missed elements of their education. If the learner is working at an age-appropriate level with few gaps, then a standard progression through the necessary work for examination will be pursued. The learning pathways are outlined in the updated **curriculum policy**. The repeat assessment sessions will also be recorded and the two sets of results evaluated to determine if learning and progress is taking place.

Accompanying the summative assessment programme are end of module learning tests that are completed during the normal school timetabled lessons. The results of these mini-

assessment are recorded in each learner's **tracker** and inform the summative assessments with greater precision detail. The details of **all** assessments are included in the summative assessment report at week 26.

Science and Humanities

The science curriculum is delivered using Developing Experts across both keystages. The humanities curriculum follows the Oak Academy programme. Both have end of module assessments and the results of these will be recorded in the learner assessment profile. This in turn informs the interim and summative reports.

NON-CORE SUBJECT ASSESSMENT

Sport & Recreation

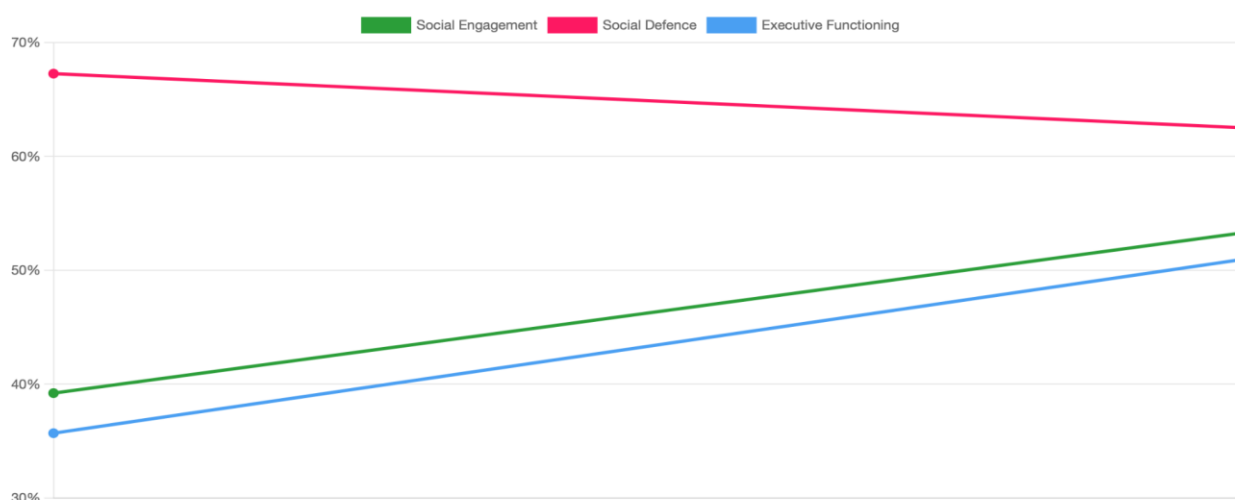
Sport and recreation forms an integral component of the education programme at the Potteries School. Most of the learners enrolled have reduced levels of fitness, minimal exposure to exercise and poor body self-image. The school offers at least two sessions per week and these are delivered with support and assistance from support workers in the home under the guidance of the headteacher. Where possible, those staff with relevant training in health and fitness assist with planning, delivery and outcomes for the activities.

Life & Independence Skills

Akin to sport and recreation, L & I Skills are part of the curriculum fabric especially as many of the learners have experienced poor nurturing often as result of their chaotic home lives. To redress this discrepancy in experiencing simple domestic tasks, community activities and maintenance, the school offers a number of discrete units covering these areas S & R/L& I skills are assessed dynamically using the 'can-do' assessments offered by the AQA Unit Award Scheme. Unit Awards at pre-Entry, Entry Level and Level 1 and 2 are available and certificated when the learner completes the criteria for assessment.

Motional

Motional measures different emotional systems in the brain linked to **Social Engagement** (Care, Seeking and Play) and **Social Defence** (Rage, Fear and Panic/Grief) and add this to **Executive and Social Functions** (Emotional Regulation, Thinking and Concentration, Sense of Self, Relationship with Others, and Emotional Literacy) - to give a whole brain picture of a child's emotional and mental wellbeing. The school creates a baseline snapshot in week one and then again at weeks 8, 18 and 26. An example of the developmental timeline is shown below:



REVIEW

This policy and procedures will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure continued compliance with The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2024 and relevant guidance issued by the DfE and Welsh Government.

This document will be next reviewed on 20/01/2027