

Assessment within BGE 2020/21

June 2020

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The purpose of this guidance is to support practitioners think through how they will approach assessment as part of their planning for learning and teaching as they move into the phased return to school and a blended learning period beginning in August 2020.

The guidance has two sections.

Section 1 offers a checklist of factors that need to work well in order to support learners make progress while they experience a blended model of learning.

Section 2 offers a practical guide to support assessment of children and young people's progress.

The guidance builds on well-established approaches to assessment across Scotland, on the advice published in May 2020 – [Assessment: what is working well?](#) and is informed by early research and feedback emerging from a range of pandemic commentators. Practitioners will already have established assessment tools and approaches in their own learning communities to use and adapt to meet their learners' interests and needs and the challenges and opportunities presented by a blended model of learning. During school closures between March and end June 2020, practitioners will have developed skills in designing and supporting 'remote learning' that can be built on for blended learning as schools re-open. The following **principles** underpin the assessment guidance that follows:

- Class teachers will continue to have responsibility for planning and organising learning.
- Paying attention to children and young people's engagement with learning and their health and wellbeing will be an ongoing priority. Time will be taken as needed to re-establish and build trusting relationships.
- Approaches will build on the experiences and progress of children and young people before, and since, March 2020 and will use a strengths-based approach – building on what children and young people can do and not what they can't do or 'have missed'.
- A dialogic approach – listening, talking and observing – will be used as a first stage in gathering formative information about children and young people's learning needs on their return to places of learning.
- There will be variations in children's and young people's experiences of learning since March 2020 and that will impact on their progress in different areas of the curriculum.
- A shared understanding that assessment and feedback are integral to learning and teaching and that assessment approaches will need to capture progress in learning wherever it takes place.

Further guidance is available through the range of recently published resources such as the [Early Level Play Pedagogy Toolkit](#), [Transitions in 2020](#) and [Scotland Learns](#) as well as the [moderation/ learning teaching and assessment cycle](#).

Section 1: What needs to be in place to support learners make progress?

1. Using direct contact time in class with your learners to build and strengthen relationships, maximise teaching time, check progress and set next steps.

- Take time to build relationships and establish a positive and inclusive climate. Ongoing evaluation of progress in children's health and wellbeing is an essential part of helping children and young people to make an effective transition back into school. Use of the [Health and Wellbeing: Responsibility of All](#) resource may be a helpful starting point.
- Ensure children and young people are clear about what they will be learning when in school and what they will be doing away from school.
- Ensure children and young people have access to the resources they need to undertake tasks and activities set when learning at home. Use tools and approaches that will enable children and young people to plan and assess their own learning – see point 3 below.
- Ensure that timescales set for completion of tasks and activities are reasonable and allow for flexibility and variation in family circumstances.
- Clarify communication links for children, young people and their families when learning at home.
- Facilitate learner conversations to help children and young people evaluate their own progress and agree next steps. Encourage peer and self-assessment.

2. Using assessment approaches that will allow your learners to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding, connecting learning that takes place both in school and away from school.

- Use approaches to explore children and young people's knowledge and understanding within the level you think they should be working taking account of learning that will have taken place prior to and since March 2020. Be aware that this may vary due to context and experiences.
- Follow the learning, teaching and assessment cycle (moderation cycle) to plan next steps in learning based on the assessment information. Use E&Os to construct learning intentions and success criteria and to plan what will be assessed.
- Ensure children and young people are clear as to how they will demonstrate and share their learning from the tasks and activities they undertake. Give regular feedback on progress being made.

3. Strengthening the ability of your children and young people to plan and assess their own learning.

- Encourage children and young people to follow patterns and routines that will support their learning at school and at home. Make sure children and young people know when work will be 'allocated' and the timescales for completion, with clear success criteria.
- Spend time initially developing skills that will support children and young people to tackle work at home independently.

- Create space for children and young people to make choices about how they will learn. Support their ability to evaluate their own work through co-constructing the success criteria, checklists or goal setting.
- Consider ways of creating or encouraging interactions amongst families and peers when away from school to aid motivation and increase opportunities for learning and assessment.
- Where possible and appropriate, support the development of discussion forums to provide opportunities for children and young people to engage with each other on learning activities.
- Use [experiences and outcomes](#) with children and young people to develop and maintain confidence, positive attitudes and dispositions.

4. Enabling and building on parents' and carers' role in supporting children and young people's learning.

- Keep the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families central to expectations and decisions made. Be mindful of the time available to parents to support learning at home.
- Ensure parents know how the rhythm and routine of the phased return/blended learning will work and how they can contact school/ practitioners if needed.
- Ensure parents know the purpose/intention of the learning, what is to be learned, how the learning will be shared (e.g. learning logs) and how they can support/be actively involved.

5. Establishing how you will record the progress being made by learners in session 2020/21.

- Agree expectations between and across staff teams as to how documenting and recording progress will be adapted and developed to meet current demands.
- Continue to use a range of formative and summative assessment strategies to build up an accurate picture of strengths, gaps and areas for further development.
- Develop and establish online moderation and planning between and across practitioner teams.

Section 2: Assessing learners' progress

Step 1: Deciding what to assess

- Choose the area / organiser(s) you want to focus on.
- Choose a stimulus appropriate to your context.

Step 2: Planning for assessment

- Identify relevant Experiences and Outcomes and consider any relevant Benchmarks for that area.
- Identify the key concepts and the knowledge, understanding and skills you expect learners to have.
- If available, use previous years' forward plans, previous assessments, learning activities and tasks - including those carried out during the period of remote learning - to support initial assessment of learner progress.
- Use school or local authority progression frameworks to identify the specific knowledge and understanding children and young people might have and use these to plan your discussions.

Step 3: Identifying what learners can do and what their next steps will be

- A range of approaches, including **peer and self-assessment**, can be used to identify what learners can do and what their next steps in learning are.
- Encourage learners to **make notes** as they take part in dialogue.
- Consider where **individual or small group work** with learners is most effective in enabling you to assess levels of understanding.
- **Questioning** is a key part of good dialogue between practitioner and learner. The range and style of questions you use will need careful planning.
- Use **starter questions** linked to previous learning to promote dialogue and support deeper thinking. Examples of these are:
What can you tell me about...?
How could you sort these?
Why have you done it that way?
What happens when we...?
What can be done when...?
Give an example of...
- More **in-depth questions** may follow to identify what learners know and clarify next steps in learning. You may wish to refer to Blooms Taxonomy to support your design of higher order thinking skills (HOTS) questions. Below are some examples:
 - Remembering: List, define, describe, show, name, what, when.
 - Understanding: Summarise, compare and contrast, estimate, discuss.
 - Applying: Apply, calculate, complete, show, solve, modify.
 - Analysing: Separate, arrange, classify, explain.
 - Creating: Integrate, modify, substitute, design, create, what if..., formulate, generalise, prepare.
 - Evaluating: Assess, rank, test, explain, discriminate, support.

- A next stage might be to plan opportunities to allow learners to demonstrate **application** of their learning.
- Spend time with children and young people discussing and explaining their **thinking**. This will be beneficial as it will allow you to see where the starting point is for each learner to **support planning for next steps** at this level and whether or not they need further reinforcement at the previous level.
- The use of effective feedback that informs next steps in learning is crucial. Plan and provide opportunities to support self and peer **reflection and review**. Learners could note, for example, what they could do with ease and what problems they found more challenging in relation to specific activities. Develop practice that can be sustained when away from school and continued when learning at home.

Step 4: Planning next steps

- From your discussions with learners you will have a good idea of what they can do and which areas need reinforcement.
- Next steps may be different for each child or young person depending on their experiences of learning since schools closed in March.
- A bespoke programme of work may be beneficial for a short period of time to reinforce different areas of learning for some learners.
- Learners should be at the heart of planning learning, teaching and assessment. For example, learning intentions should be shared with learners and they should be involved in the co-creation of success criteria.
- Engage in professional dialogue with colleagues (stage/level partners) to moderate and plan collegiately at all stages of the moderation cycle.

USEFUL INFORMATION

[Health and wellbeing resources](#)

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Support Materials

[Moderation Hub](#)

Numeracy Resources

[Numeracy and Mathematics Professional Learning Community](#)

[Mathematics Principles and Practice Papers](#)

[National Numeracy and Mathematics Progression Framework](#)

[Higher Order Thinking Skills in Maths](#)

Literacy Resources

[National Literacy Professional Learning Community](#)

[Literacy Principles and Practice Papers](#)

[Literacy across learning in secondary schools](#)

[Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource \(POLAAR\)](#)

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