OPTIMUS EDUCATION

SEND assessment: an SLT briefing

What's changed?

1. The government has published its response to the consultation following the final recommendations of the Rochford Review.

    - P scales no longer align with new assessment systems which replace levels.
    - The interim key stage standards are to become permanent and are to be used for assessing pupils engaged in subject-specific learning.
    - The government is piloting the assessing of pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning against the seven areas of engagement recommended in the Review.

2. Accountability for assessment will change. We will not be expected to provide assessment data for pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning, but we will have to be able to evidence attainment and progress through appropriate discussions with key stakeholders.

3. Our school will continue to use P scales to assess all pupils, engaged in subject-specific learning or not, until any final decisions are made after the pilot year.

4. However, we must be prepared to decide our own approach to using the seven areas of engagement to assess pupils with more complex needs.

P scales 'no longer fit for purpose'

- The government's response signals its intention to remove the requirement for teachers to use P scales to assess pupils engaged in subject-specific learning. This will take effect from the start of the 2018 to 2019 academic year.

- The interim pre-key stage standards will be made permanent, and extended to cover all pupils engaged in subject-specific learning (who had previously been assessed using P scales). This is to avoid a loss of 'common framework and language' between schools.

Seven areas of engagement to be piloted

- Statutory assessment of those pupils not engaged in subject-specific (for example, those with profound and complex needs) should be consistent with all four areas of need described in the SEND Code of Practice.
- The Review's recommended approach to assessing pupils with the seven areas of engagement of cognition and learning will be piloted over the 2017 to 2018 academic year. The aim of the pilot year is to determine whether or not schools are able to apply the engagement profile method in their own assessment models.

Progress-based assessment

- There will be no statutory duty for our school to submit to the DfE data collected from assessing pupils against the seven areas of engagement. However, we will need to provide the number of pupils who are not engaged in subject-specific learning.
- When reporting the progress that pupils are making in the area of cognition and learning, school leaders are advised to consider what progress pupils are making in the other three areas of need:
    - physical and sensory functions
    - communication and interaction
    - social, emotional and mental health.

The main questions

- How will we ensure the school can provide two different assessment models; one for pupils engaged in subject-specific learning and one for those who aren't?
- How can we retain a common language when reporting progress to parents?
- How will changes affect inspection of your SEND provision under the new Common Inspection Framework?

What this means to us?

We need to:

- continue using P scales to assess pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning until the 2019-2020 academic year
- consider how we can keep the needs of pupils at the heart of our assessment methodology
- be prepared to change our assessment system when the pilot review concludes, and seek further guidance from other schools if possible.