

# 'Key Points on lateral progress from Guidance Documents'



Both these recent documents and Ofsted guidance discuss the importance of lateral progress whilst emphasising -

- The need for robust systems of observation and assessment .
- Challenging judgements and discussing progress .
- Having high expectations

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## Using the P scales to assess pupils' progress (QCDA 2011) <sup>i</sup>

### Page 6 Considers aspects of lateral progress

For many pupils with learning difficulties, progress within or across the levels is as important as progress to higher levels. You can acknowledge lateral progress where pupils begin to generalise the skills and understandings they've gained in one area of learning into new contexts and to develop a more even profile of responses.

It recommends reference to in '**Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties**'<sup>iii</sup> -guidance materials available on the QCDA website -*Suggesting these materials might prompt you to ask a series of questions about lateral progress, where there is insufficient evidence of progress to next P levels*

### Talking points suggested by the document

- When discussing the nature of progress, you might consider the following:
- Is a pupil responding with less support or prompting?
- Are pupils using secure or established skills more confidently or independently?
- Can a pupil apply established skills in new contexts or settings or with different people?

- Are pupils more willing to negotiate their learning?

**Some other points**

- Is it necessary for the pupil to develop greater fluency and consolidation of recently acquired learning
- Is the pupil generalising skills and knowledge connecting and applying it to wider contexts and circumstances
- Is the pupil adapting skills and knowledge, recognising the need to apply them in different or new ways

**Pg 7 Considers Individual learning profiles**

Some pupils may demonstrate progress in unusual ways. Many pupils with learning difficulties (for example, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, multi-sensory impairments and complex physical disabilities and medical conditions) tend to develop uneven or spiky profiles of development across subjects, in different aspects of subjects or in different contexts. *When this is the case* you can focus on raising attainments in specific areas to *compensate* or secure lateral progress. Though some pupils will retain their uneven or spiky profiles, since these may result from particular peaks or islands of ability or aptitude or from particular aspects of their disability or condition.

*This writers comment*

*All guidance reflects that in such cases schools should be showing awareness and attention to factors affecting individual learning. Schools should be accommodating them within both their assessments of progress and objectives for individual learning programs. It is evident that, for pupils with very special needs, objectives seeking lateral progress are often appropriate particularly where the P scale descriptors are inadequate to describe the fine grain of pupils needs. Remember for some such pupils very small steps too small to be represented in P scale descriptors and associated data, are in fact very significant achievements.*

**The progression guidance update from Department for Education**

**Progression 2010 -11iii**

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110809101133/nsonline.org.uk/node/488907>

Pg 6 Key principles High expectations and good progress are entitlements for all learners. Although age and prior attainment are starting points to inform target setting, care must be taken to make sure we do not import low expectations

Targets and provision should match learning needs to enable learners to catch up and maximise their achievement. It is therefore important that the three principles are taken together rather than in isolation and that a strong focus is maintained on higher attainment as well as progress measures.

It can be challenging to develop appropriately high expectations of learners who are starting a key stage well below their peers and who may not make two National Curriculum levels of progress over that key stage.

**Pg 7** To set high expectations we need to know what good progress looks like for learners on a range of different trajectories. We need to be able to recognise the progress of learners who are working just below age-related expectations at each key stage and those working at the lower P levels throughout their school career. For younger children and at earlier levels, in particular, progress may be slower and, for a planned period of time, involve consolidation and generalisation of newly acquired skills within a single level. This is sometimes described as horizontal or lateral progress.

However, the data indicates that at every key stage and every P level, the majority of learners progress to the next level. nb *The 'majority' includes SEN pupils in mainstream settings.*

For some learners, and at some stages, for example those with a life-limiting condition during a period of deterioration, preventing or slowing a decline in performance may be an appropriate outcome. In every case, the school needs the evidence to support this judgement. We need to ensure that we do not compromise our expectations of the progress of any learner.

**Pg 19** Pupils may be making good progress even if they remain within the lower quartile. A few learners may not make any measurable progress or may regress across a key stage. High rates of absence can make it difficult for learners to progress. It is important to provide a more bespoke curriculum for these learners to meet their unique learning needs and to set small-stepped targets to enable them to generalise their skills in new contexts.

**Pg 19** It is noted that some children do not learn in a linear way. They have uneven attainment profiles and will be making good progress even if they remain within the lower quartile. A few learners may not make any measurable progress or may regress across a key stage. High rates of absence can make it difficult for learners to progress. It is important to provide a more bespoke curriculum for these learners to meet their unique learning needs and to set small-stepped targets to enable them to generalise their skills in new contexts.

Person-centred planning provides an excellent vehicle for a structured conversation with parents and their child about the nature and pace of progress. 'Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties' provides some useful prompts when considering lateral progress.

## **Ofsted Subsidiary guidance - Supporting the inspection of maintained schools and academies from January 2012**

**Pg 8 para 21** It is not appropriate to evaluate progress according to a pupil's type of disability or special educational need, or their stage on the Code of Practice. Available national data on progress made by low attaining ( *progression guidance and RAISE online* ) pupils should contribute to the evaluation, alongside any additional rigorous analyses of progress undertaken by the school. These

analyses should be considered alongside the broader range of evidence of learning and progress obtained during the inspection. There is not an expectation that all of these pupils will make two levels of progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, and three levels of progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.

**Pg 29 – para 109** consider how well the curriculum helps to:

raise aspirations and provide realistic progression opportunities enable progression at all the necessary levels and ensure that learning activities and resources are age-appropriate and are different from those used in earlier years, even when pupils' attainment remains at low levels; this is a particularly important consideration in all-age special schools.

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<sup>i</sup> **Using the P scales to assess pupils' progress (QCDA 2011)**  
[https://orderline.education.gov.uk/gempdf/1849624011/qcda-11-4841\\_Using\\_the\\_p\\_scales\\_to\\_assess\\_pupils\\_progress.pdf](https://orderline.education.gov.uk/gempdf/1849624011/qcda-11-4841_Using_the_p_scales_to_assess_pupils_progress.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> **Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties' guidance materials** available on the QCDA website at [www.qcda.gov.uk](http://www.qcda.gov.uk).

<sup>iii</sup> **The progression guidance update from Department for Education**

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