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Assessment of children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs

This brief guide for teachers aims to provide a structure to assessing a child's social and emotional strengths and needs. It links with the Essex Provision Guidance to enable you to plan the provision needed to help this child to learn.

It is important to hold foremost in your mind that 'behaviour' is a descriptor of the messages/communication by the child about his/her feelings in any given situation.

We cannot assume anything by a child's behaviour. It is however the information we read first and using this guide in a methodical way will support you in gathering the information needed for analysis.

Assessment should be seen as a problem-solving process (*Whitcomb & Merrell, 2013*), which is solution focused, where information is gathered and aggregated from multi-methods, multi-sources and multi-settings and is focused on finding a solution (desired outcome) to the identified difficulties.

Considerations:

Your current perceptions of the child can lend a bias to the methods you use and the information you gather. When a child's behaviour gives us cause to be concerned we usually recognise this by our own feelings and stress levels.

Reading a child's behaviour objectively requires us to think reflectively in order to strengthen our attunement and develop our relationship with the child. It is important to be open and curious as well as cautious about possible causal factors.

The Code of Practice (2015) advises that:

In identifying a child as needing SEN support the **class or subject teacher**, working with the SENCO, should carry out a clear analysis of the pupil's needs. This should draw on the **teacher's assessment** and experience of the pupil, their previous progress and attainment as well as... behaviour... the **views and experience of parents, the pupil's own views ...'**

Firstly consider the characteristics of the pupil as described below:

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL and MENTAL HEALTH – High Quality Teaching (HQT)

Social Behaviour	Emotional Behaviour	Learning Behaviour
<p>If High Quality Teaching is happening pupils largely ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behave respectfully towards staff members. • Show respect to other children in the school. • Seek attention appropriately. • Are physically peaceable. • Respect possessions or property. • Learn and socialise well in a group situation. • Are receptive and responsive to authority. 	<p>If High Quality Teaching is happening pupils largely ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show empathy. • Show social awareness. • Are happy. • Are confident. • Are emotionally stable and show self-control. 	<p>If High Quality Teaching is happening pupils largely ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are attentive and have an interest in schoolwork. • Show good learning organisation. • Are keen to be at school. • Are emotionally stable and shows self-control. • Are able to settle well into a variety of learning environments and are ready for learning.

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL and MENTAL HEALTH – Additional School Intervention & Support (ASI)

Social Behaviour	Emotional Behaviour	Learning Behaviour
<p>If Additional Intervention and Support is necessary, pupils ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have difficulty in forming positive relationships. They will struggle to make and keep friends. This may then prevent them from being able to cooperate with other peers or adults; • May have a neurodevelopmental condition which has been diagnosed that helps in the understanding of the behaviour and thus in the planning of intervention. 	<p>If Additional Intervention and Support is necessary, pupils ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May struggle to manage and accept change in systems and routines. • May not be able to see the changes that they can make with support in order to make progress. • May find it hard to express themselves verbally and instead may communicate their thoughts and feelings through their behaviour. • May sometimes be anxious, distressed or aggressive, or they may withdraw from the situation be that a social or learning situation. • May view themselves negatively at times and make deprecating comments. They are likely to give up easily when there is a challenge facing the child. 	<p>If Additional Intervention and Support is necessary, pupils ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May find it hard to develop the behaviour for learning skills needed to attend, to start and to complete tasks • May have particular difficulty in keeping their attention on one thing (directed adult tasks) • May find their progress is being inhibited (though this may be in certain areas only and sporadic) and their actions may also be hindering the learning of others • May find some subjects difficult (for example literacy) in that they are not motivated by the learning • May show some observable and known occasions in which these pupils are more successful. May find it easier or harder to learn, which can be addressed through careful planning.

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL and MENTAL HEALTH – High Needs (HN)

These difficulties may be displayed through the pupil becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as through their challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour.

These pupils

- may experience difficulty in successfully participating within the whole class group for a significant part of the school day
- will have significant and enduring difficulties in managing learning, their emotions, their behaviour and social situations

There is evidence over time that they need the support of a cohesive and planned approach where skilled adults are needed to help the child to overcome the significant difficulties that they have in participating in school life.

Some of the specific difficulties will be within the following areas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Control – managing and responding to a child who needs emotional regulation | <input type="checkbox"/> Motivation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude to Learning/School and subsequently attendance | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Development - interactions and working with others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resilience | <input type="checkbox"/> Empathy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Development and Wellbeing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment Style |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attention | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Concept |

The information above asks you to consider the child in depth. However, it is important to remember that behaviour is contextual, so all aspects of a child's environment should be considered. As such, a graduated approach is likely to be helpful.


The following diagram presents an overview of the **assessments** within this reflective process and is presented in line with the table above and the **Essex Provision Guidance**.

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL and MENTAL HEALTH – High Quality Teaching (HQT)

Teacher assessment – key curriculum areas		Literacy/Numeracy skills	
Strengths / Pupil's views	Needs / Pupil's views	Reading / Spelling – any marked strengths / difficulties?	Marked strengths? Any particular concerns with mathematical skills?

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL and MENTAL HEALTH – Additional School Intervention & Support (ASI)

ENVIRONMENT	PUPIL VIEWS	OBSERVATION
Identify areas for action within the learning and social environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole School Environment Checklist Environment Checklists for pupils with SEMH Additional Needs Baseline assessment checklist in Time to Talk (KS1) / Socially Speaking (KS2) [LDA Learning] 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete What's working/Not working / Talking Mat / Likes/ Dislikes about school with the child. <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Three Comment Question (Enabling Pupil Participation p53) Any concerns?	In class: Verbatim; On-task behaviour; Engagement Observing Children with Attachment Difficulties In the playground: Non-verbal (social communication): Select different school environments and different times of day.

STAR or ABC Analysis When a number of STAR / ABCs have been analysed refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional Behavioural Analysis Framework STAR Analysis online training presentation. Request Support for Specialist Teacher consultation with class teacher 	 <p>How is the child feeling?</p> <p>Can the child name basic feelings? Use feelings faces to ascertain understanding. Apps: Emotions by Alligator Apps - reading and naming emotions. Emotions/Facial Expressions Prag 1 (Black Sheep Press)</p>	Discuss completed observations of the child with SENCo or colleague. Are there any striking patterns? Are the child's skills age appropriate? Any social difficulties evident? Does the child present with anxiety/ reluctant speaker/ Selective Mutism? If so click here .
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Meet with parents/carers. Invite their views. Discuss strengths and needs.
 The [Resilience Framework](#) can be useful to look at the whole child and identify strengths/ needs, protective/risk factors.
 A [One Page Profile](#) could be completed from the information at this point.
 Set a review meeting date with parents/ carers or additional Home/School communication to monitor progress.

Summary of Strengths	Summary of Needs
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Making sense of the information:

- a. Where are the gaps?
- b. Which of the gaps can be addressed most easily and immediately?
- c. Any specialist input required? Consultation / Staff training?

	Now	This term	Next term
Whole school procedure/action?			
Staff professional development?			
Pupil focussed action?			

Have you accessed the Essex Provision Guidance (and [extension materials](#))? Feedback on these is welcome. Click [here](#).

With support from the School SENCO:

- Select priority areas of need and through One Planning agree on Outcomes and Steps to Outcomes.
- Review progress towards these steps within two terms. It's helpful to also review the [Resilience Framework](#).
- If the child's level of engagement with learning continues to cause concern within this period further assessment may be required.

Specialist assessments for SEMH in the additional files within the Provision Guidance Toolkit – SEMH

[Request Support from Specialist Teaching](#) if support is required when proceeding with specialist assessments.

Information about specialised assessments:

The Specialist Teaching Team does not endorse any of the following providers of assessments. The team can provide advice about their use and reliability. Follow the guidance in the assessment.

PUPIL VIEWS:

Explore further the views of the child to engage the child as the key agent for change in this process.

Complete [What's working/ Not working](#) / Talking Mat/ Likes/ Dislikes about school with the child.
Any new concerns? Unmet needs?

[Picture Me](#) (R Merrick)
This resource includes four illustrations designed to support children in discussions regarding their everyday communication. For use with children aged 5-10 years.

[Drawing the Ideal Self](#) is a simple technique to use and takes the form of a conversational approach, supported by drawing and writing.

[Myself as a Learner Scale 8-16+ by Robert Burden | Waterstones](#)
This brief 20 item scale contains such statements as 'I know how to solve the problems that I meet' and 'When I'm given new work to do, I usually feel confident I can do it'. It is easy to administer, score and interpret.

ASSESSMENTS

Learning eg Reading processes/ comprehension of language;

[Speech and Language Framework](#)

Descriptors of speech and language skills including social interaction.

[Progression Tools](#) provide information to help decide whether children would benefit from a targeted intervention or whether they need specialist assessment and support. From 3- 18 by age group.

[The Engagement Profile](#) is a classroom tool developed through SSAT's research into effective teaching and learning for children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities. It allows teachers to focus on the child's engagement as a learner and create personalised learning pathways. It prompts student-centred reflection on how to increase the learner's engagement leading to deep learning.

Measures of Well-Being

[Measures of Children's Mental Health & Psychological Wellbeing | GL Assessment](#)

This portfolio consists of 7 topics addressed in 7 different booklets, each with at least 6 measures of the topics :

- Belonging
- Distress
- Enjoyment
- Healthy Living
- Resilience
- Responsiveness
- Social Behaviour

It gathers of a range of perspectives in order to triangulate evidence and inform intervention.

View of Self

[PASS - Pupil Attitudes to Self and School | GL Assessment](#) is an all-age attitudinal survey that provides a measurement of a pupil's attitudes towards themselves as learners and their attitudes towards school. Suitable for pupils aged 4 to 18+.

[Butler Self Image Profile](#). This is a self-report to be completed by the child and measures self-image and self-esteem to provide a comprehensive understanding of self-functioning.

Emotional and Social Skills

[The Boxall Profile | The Nurture Group Network](#) completed with school staff. It can identify the main types of developmental (experiences) and diagnostic (internal characteristics) issues that may underpin social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Scores are then clustered in groups. A profile can identify specific difficulties.

[Emotional Literacy: Assessment and Intervention | GL Assessment](#) **Is a diagnostic tool** (CD Rom/ paper questionnaires) used to understand and develop a pupil's emotional literacy - *Primary* covers ages 7 to 11 years, *Secondary* 11-16.

[Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire](#) is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire about 3-16 year olds. It includes questions for children and young people, parents and staff and allows a group profile to be considered.

Through One Planning:

1. **Evidence:** Collate assessment results and triangulate with other evidence using person-centred tools and person-centred planning.
2. Identify **Strengths and Needs.**
3. **Select priority areas to target** – agree outcomes with child and family.
4. **Plan provision** - refer to accompanying resources and strategies with the assessment eg [Beyond the Boxall Profile](#); [Emotional Literacy: Assessment and Intervention](#) | [GL Assessment](#)

Example:

ONE PLAN			
	Evidence	Outcomes (+ Steps)	Provision (to meet outcomes)
Strengths	<i>Observations</i> <i>Checklists</i> <i>Resilience Framework</i> <i>Views</i> <i>Informal and formal assessments</i>		Planning for pupils with SEMH needs
Needs			

References:

Whitcomb, S and Merrell, K W, 2013. *Behavioral, social, and emotional assessment of children and adolescents*. Routledge.

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