

What are P Scales?

The P scales are a set of descriptions for recording the achievement of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) who are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum (level 1).

They are split into eight different levels with P1 being the lowest and P8 the highest. Level P8 leads into national curriculum level 1. Levels P1 to P3 are not subject-specific, as they describe early learning and conceptual development. At these early levels, a curriculum subject offers a specific context for learning.

There are P scales for each national curriculum subject and for personal, social and health education (PSHE), and religious education (RE). The P scales were first developed to enable target setting for groups of pupils with special educational needs who are working below level 1 of the National Curriculum. P level data has been collected from schools on a voluntary basis since 1999. The P scales for all national curriculum subjects were published in *Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties* (QCA, 2001). This publication includes examples of opportunities and activities for each subject at Key Stages 1-4.

(Ref Department for Education, May 2010)

P Level Fact Sheet

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110813032310/http://orderline.qcda.gov.uk/gempdf/1445950359/QCDA115417p_P-Scales_factsheet_v3.pdf

QCDA – National Archive

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110813032310/http://www.qcda.gov.uk/assessment/537.aspx>

Why use P Scales

Why use the P Scales?

The P scales are designed to be used for:

- summative assessments
- best-fit professional judgements, used over a period of time
- measuring linear progress towards NC level 1
- measuring lateral progress – within a P level or across subjects

providing a means to set targets for individuals or cohorts of pupils.

Inclusive benefits of using the P scales

- Recognition of attainment below level 1

- Shared focus/common language across all school settings
- Identification of the progress of individual children
- Provision of a database to support target setting
- Exemplification and moderation processes which provide opportunities for discussion about teaching, learning and assessment.
- Provides a system that shows progress and achievement across whole school population

Tracking Progress and Setting Targets

Tracking pupil progress against P Levels or National Curriculum levels is very important and there are a number of commercially available products which make life easier for the teacher such as:

PIVATS

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?PIVATS/14585>

Connecting Steps – Summative Assessment by B Squared

<http://www.bsquared.co.uk/>

CASPA

<http://www.sgasystems.co.uk/>

CSARS

<http://www.csars.co.uk/>

In addition to monitoring and tracking pupil attainment and progress, setting targets for improved pupil performance is crucial for self-assessment and the school self-improvement cycle as this informs planning at a whole school level. Therefore, it can be seen that setting realistic yet challenging targets for individual pupils drive school improvement and provide impetus to challenge complacency and strive for excellence.

Most special schools and many mainstream schools have pupils whose progress is not reflected in responses to the statutory target setting process. Using P Levels allows the teacher and the school to track pupils' progress and to set targets reflecting the achievement of all pupils including those with SEN.

Schools which use commercially available assessments can group children of similar attainment into cohorts. These cohorts can then be used to set more meaningful targets that can be informed by their ability, past progress and potential to improve. Teachers together with the Head Teacher can then benchmark their own school performance data using P Levels or other forms of tracking for pupils with learning difficulty alongside that of similar cohorts in other schools or settings. This allows schools to contrast levels of progress and attainment by using a common framework and language, which is related directly to the National Curriculum. This will enable the sharing of assessment outcomes and targets for pupils in mainstream and special schools and will facilitate easier movement between schools and settings for pupils with learning difficulties.