

Rochford Review

Response of the Association of School and College Leaders

- 1 The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents more than 18,500 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of state-funded and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL members are responsible for the education of more than four million young people in more than 90 per cent of the secondary and tertiary phases, and in an increasing proportion of the primary phase. This places the association in a strong position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of schools and colleges of all types.
- 2 ASCL welcomes the recommendations of the Rochford Review. They appear to have coherence with the SEND Code of Practice. They also embrace many of the principles underpinning the 2014 National Curriculum, applying them to pupils for whom the p-levels (as a feature of the pre-2014 National Curriculum) were initially developed.
- 3 The recommendation that the pre-key stage standards are extended, to include a wider range of learners, is a promising one. There are a significant number of learners whose attainment would fall below the existing interim pre-key stage standards who are also able to engage in subject-specific learning with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. It is imperative however that any extension of the pre-key stage standards avoids rewriting the p-levels but represents something distinct from them, which is simplified, summative and meaningful.
- 4 The emphasis within the review on non-linear progression is very enabling for those teaching in diverse classrooms. Through the 7 areas of engagement and learning generated from the Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities research project, teachers have a tool for evaluating non-linear progression, and plan for greater personalisation in learning.
- 5 The final report of the Rochford Review projects very high expectation of teachers and is very ambitious for the profession. This is a highly positive thing. The implementation of the recommendations of the review (as partly outlined in the recommendations themselves) have exciting implications for the professional learning of school staff, school-to-school support and initial teacher training. The Rochford Review is therefore a welcome step towards further developing a skilled workforce for our changing school system, able to work with greater complexity.
- 6 We note that there is a concern about a potential gap between the pre-key stage standards and the standards assessment. We understand that experts working in the sector think that the pre-key stage standards are likely to be of most value for learners working around current P8 or P7 levels but note also that it is intended that they are used for those children and young people working at P4 and above. We are concerned that the pre-key stage standards may have limited value for children and young people currently performing at p scales 4-6 and for those children the standards are unlikely to support meaningful measurement of progression.

- 7 We understand that there is some controversy over whether schools should report the results of statutory assessment for children working on non-subject-specific learning. Profiles within the Engagement Scales are likely to be individual, 'spiky', and not a reliable predictor of future progress trajectories. There is therefore concern that reporting this data nationally may lead to inappropriate pressure on schools to show 'expected' progress. On the other hand reporting these results would demonstrate that they are valued within our education system. And the problem is not with the reporting as such but the possibility that the results will be misused when it is clear that benchmarking in this instance is meaningless. On balance ASCL would support the reporting of these results provided that that is coupled with a clear statement that they cannot sensibly be used to evaluate the performance of individual schools or teachers.
- 8 I hope that this is of value to your consultation, ASCL is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way that it can.

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Association of School and College Leaders
24 June 2017