

# How to use P Scales

## Purposes

- assessment of pupils' work is a necessary part of the learning process;
- its purposes include the affirmation of attainment and achievement, the necessary recording and reporting of pupil progress, and helping the pupil to take the next step in learning;
- P Scales provide an important 'criterion-referenced' measure of attainment.

## Planning

- teachers should use the language of the level descriptors to inform the way intended learning outcomes are expressed; language should be directly related to concrete experience;
- teachers should clearly identify the focus and method of assessment from the outset;
- the critical question to address at the planning stage is 'what must I do, in this topic, to enable the pupil to achieve level x?'. Here it is important to note that symbol and ritual have a critical part to play in teaching and learning.

## Gathering evidence

- when gathering evidence teachers will be able to draw on the full range of work produced by pupils, in the normal everyday teaching and learning process;
- teachers should focus on the clarity of evidence collected and on making brief telling annotations in relation to significant attainments.

## Best fit

- more 'a subtle art than an exact science';
- made across a range of work over a period of time;
- in relation to single pieces of work they can be deemed to contribute to the best-fit judgement.

## Making judgements

- teachers will be making professional judgements about pupils' performance almost continuously to ensure further learning;
- these judgements will lead to a cumulative judgement about attainment;
- teachers will need to decide whether a pupils' performance taken as a whole over a period of time has been more one level than another (best-fit judgement);
- the attainment within any level may be described as 'hesitant', 'secure' or 'confident';
- the process of making judgements about pupil attainment will inform decisions about future planning.

## A chart of progression

- the P Scale levels provide a chart of educational progression;
- however, progress through the levels will not be accomplished automatically; appropriate challenge will have to be provided.

## Reinforce good religious education

- addressing the question 'what must I do to enable pupils to achieve a particular level, to demonstrate understanding?' will necessarily promote clearer thinking about the purposes of assessment and their contribution to good religious education.

# P scales

## **Level P1(i)**

Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, for example, startling at sudden noises or movements. Any participation is fully prompted.

## **Level P1(ii)**

Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, for example, becoming still in response to silence. They may give intermittent reactions, for example, vocalising occasionally during group celebrations and acts of worship.

## **Level P2(i)**

Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, for example, briefly looking around in unfamiliar natural and man-made environments. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, for example, leaning towards the source of light, sound or scent. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, for example, touching a range of religious artefacts and found objects in partnership with a member of staff.

## **Level P2(ii)**

Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, for example, showing that they have enjoyed an experience or interaction. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, for example, becoming quiet and attentive during a certain piece of music. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, for example, repeating a simple action with an artefact. They co-operate with shared exploration and supported participation, for example, performing gestures during ritual exchanges with another person performing gestures.

## **Level P3(i)**

Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, for example, prompting a visitor to prolong an interaction. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, for example, stroking or shaking artefacts or found objects. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, for example, when vocalising in a quiet place. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, for example, following a familiar ritual and responding appropriately.

## **Level P3(ii)**

Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, for example, prompting an adult to sing or play a favourite song. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, for example, celebrating the achievements of their peers in assembly. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, for example, choosing to participate in activities. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, for example, contemplating the flickering of a candle flame. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, for example, passing an artefact to a peer in order to prompt participation in a group activity.

## **Level P4**

Pupils use single elements of communication, for example, words, gestures, signs or symbols, to express their feelings. They show they understand 'yes' and 'no'. They begin to respond to the feelings of others, for example, matching their emotions and laughing when another pupil is laughing. They join in activities by initiating ritual actions or sounds. They may demonstrate an appreciation of stillness and quietness.

### Level P5

Pupils respond appropriately to simple questions about familiar religious events or experiences and communicate simple meanings. They respond to a variety of new religious experiences, for example, involving music, drama, colour, lights, food or tactile objects. They take part in activities involving two or three other pupils. They may also engage in moments of individual reflection.

### Level P6

Pupils express and communicate their feelings in different ways. They respond to others in group situations and co-operate when working in small groups. Pupils listen to, and begin to respond to, familiar religious stories, poems and music, and make their own contribution to celebrations and festivals. They carry out ritualised actions in familiar circumstances. They show concern and sympathy for others in distress, for example, through gestures, facial expressions or by offering comfort. They start to be aware of their own influence on events and other people.

### Level P7

Pupils listen to and follow religious stories. They communicate their ideas about religion, life events and experiences in simple phrases. They evaluate their own work and behaviour in simple ways, beginning to identify some actions as right or wrong on the basis of the consequences. They find out about aspects of religion through stories, music or drama, answer questions and communicate their responses. They may communicate their feelings about what is special to them, for example, using role-play. They begin to understand that other people have needs and to respect these. They make purposeful relationships with others in group activity.

### Level P8

Pupils listen attentively to religious stories or to people talking about religion. They begin to understand that religious and other stories carry moral and religious meaning. They are increasingly able to communicate ideas, feelings or responses to experiences or to retell religious stories. They communicate simple facts about religion and important people in religions. They begin to realise the significance of religious artefacts, symbols and places. They reflect on what makes them happy, sad, excited or lonely. They demonstrate a basic

understanding of what is right and wrong in familiar situations. They are often sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and show respect for themselves and others. They treat living things and their environment with care and concern.

### The 'checklist'

These checklists, customised for use in Catholic schools and colleges, break down the P Scale levels still further, identifying the very small incremental steps that LDD pupils make, often with prompts and support. The checklist enables the teacher to recognise and record these small attainments. The checklist proforma also allows the teacher to record the degree of assistance that the pupil had in achieving the level. They have been found by P Scale users to be a very useful, user-friendly and fine-tuned tool for assessment in religious education. Individual checklists for all the P Scale levels can be found on this CD and on the website ([www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk)).

### TRREACLE

Trracle is an acronym which quickly identifies general descriptors for the incremental levels of progress within P Scales. It is used by some special needs teachers to give a quick handle on the level descriptors and to identify a pupil's level of performance.

- T**olerates, explores, encounters, experiences, though the process is fully prompted P1 (i)
- R**eacts, appears alert, begins to focus attention P1 (ii)
- R**esponds with facial expression, body language to stimuli P2(i)
- E**ngages co-actively, shows interest P2(ii)
- A**nticipates, participates. Begins to communicate, demonstrates preferences, begins to be pro-active, examines with interest P3(i)
- C**hooses to get involved, initiates P3(ii)
- L**ink **E**xperiences. P4-8

## Exemplification of work with LDD pupils using P Scales

### Water rite

#### Context

Illustration and example of activities: a 'water rite' linked to the themes of welcoming, acceptance, belonging, being initiated into the faith community, Baptism, which targets AT 1(ii) celebration and ritual and AT 2 (i) engagement with own beliefs and values

#### Pupil's work



#### Evidence of progression

Range of pupil responses – progression based on the 'water-rite'

|    |   |
|----|---|
| P1 | Pupil shows a reflex response after being greeted with a bowl of water  |
| P2 | Pupil shows awareness of the bowl of water offered, responds with a smile and focus   |
| P3 | Pupil shows greater awareness and involvement and after an invitation dips fingers or splashes- shows a degree of enjoyment                                     |
| P4 | Pupil co-operates with group activity by passing the bowl to neighbour with a prompt  |
| P5 | Pupil passes the bowl after a copied silent moment  |
| P6 | Pupil passes the bowl after own unprompted action with water (blessing, touching, sprinkling) following the familiar routines                                   |
| P7 | Pupil goes (unaided), after a request, around the group in turn, offering the bowl of water carefully, silently, to each person                                 |
| P8 | Pupil goes unaided and voluntarily around the group offering the bowl of water and naming each person. Afterwards s/he says how much she enjoyed the experience |

#### Teacher's annotation

At Level P 6, a pupil spontaneously washes his face with water from the bowl, before passing it under guidance, to the next pupil according to the established procedure. The pupils are participating in a 'water rite' experiencing different effects of touching water as they explore symbols associated with initiation into the faith community.

#### Link to website

Further examples can be found on the enclosed CD and will also be found on the aforementioned website [www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk)

In this publication, wherever school work is used, spelling is corrected but the syntax remains that of the pupil.

# Link Experiences

**AT1 (iii) Social and moral practices and way of life**

- understands commands
- engages co-operatively
- evaluates behaviour, acts
- shows sympathy for others
- respects others needs
- is aware of own influence
- links stories to moral meanings
- begins to understand right/wrong, good/bad

**AT2 (i) Own and others' beliefs and values**

- shows enjoyment
- expresses feelings
- responds to others
- engages in activity with others
- communicates feelings with others
- responds co-operatively with partner
- understands others are different

**AT2 (ii) Questions of meaning and purpose**

- engages in activity with others, communicates own ideas
- communicates own feelings
- communicates life events related to religion
- watches involvement of others with interest
- makes purposeful relationships with others

**AT1 (ii) Celebration and ritual**

- joins in by ritual response
- has knowledge that buildings have functions
- makes personal contributions to celebrations
- carries out "ritualized" actions
- uses correct words, signs, symbols

**AT1 (i) Beliefs, teachings and sources**

- recognises stories
- listens to stories
- follows stories
- listens with interest
- begins to understand stories have meaning
- uses word, sign, symbols to retell

**R & C Reflection and contemplation**

- appreciates quiet and stillness
- engages in short periods of quiet individual reflection
- reflects upon own emotions

**C**hooses to get involved, initiates

**A**nticipates, participates. Begins to communicate, demonstrates preferences, begins to be pro-active, examines with interest

**E**ngages co-actively, shows interest

**R**esponds with facial expression, body language to stimuli

**R**eacts, appears alert, begins to focus attention

**T**olerates, explores, encounters, experiences, though the process is fully prompted