



“Community with learning, is a community with heart”

“Cymuned a’i chynefin, sy’n chymuned â chalon”

Branas School

Assessment Policy & Framework

2025 – 2026

Article 3

Adults should always do what is best for you.

Article 6

You have the right to life, to grow up and reach your full potential.

Article 28

You have the right to an education.

Article 29

You have the right to be the best you can be. Education must help you develop your skills and talents to the full.

Procedure/Guidance

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Reviewed by: G Ashley/G Evans

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Description and Ethos of Branas School

OUR CULTURE AND ETHOS

Branas school is an independent special school for boys aged 11 – 18 years who have a history of harmful behaviours. The school is registered for up to 25 young people and consists of KS3, KS4 and 5 classes. As a community we are able to support young people with early childhood trauma and additional learning needs. We offer a secondary education which includes English, Maths, Science, Humanities, Art, PE, Careers, Music, PSHE and Careers. Specialist teachers offer individualised sessions for young people who have gaps in their learning. We are a registered AALA centre which enables our young people to develop their self-esteem and confidence, learning skills outside of the traditional curriculum through climbing, hill walking and kayaking. All young people access a range of qualifications including GCSE's, Functional Skills and AQA Awards. Careers lessons prepare them for life beyond school and transition in to college.

Branas Isaf is an integrated model of care which incorporates Education, Therapy and Care as a support system for young people. Therapy includes the Good Lives Model (GLM) which is grounded in the ethical concept of human dignity and universal human rights, and as such, it has a strong emphasis on human agency.

OUR SCHOOL

Branas School is committed to developing respectful and supportive relationships with all young people. We recognise that our young people bring different experiences, interests and strengths, and we understand these will influence the way they learn. Therefore, we take a child-centred approach to education that recognises and responds to individual need. We celebrate effort and achievements and set high expectations. We are here to help our young people learn the skills they need to become successful, motivated and resilient young adults who are fully equipped to make a positive contribution to society.

OUR PUPILS

All young people at Branas School have a history of harmful behaviours and social, emotional and mental health needs often accompanied by a range of additional learning needs.

Most of the young people have had interrupted histories in education and care. There are a wide variety of attainments on admission. All have fragile self-esteem and demonstrate difficulties with authority and a lack of trust in adults. Many have experienced loss and trauma, leading to attachment difficulties. As a result, many experience difficulties in forming and maintaining appropriate, positive relationships with others and have a limited ability to work cooperatively.

Young people are:

- aged 11 to 18;
- boys only;
- placed within the residential setting of Branas Isaf;
- residents from placing authorities throughout the United Kingdom;
- all present a range of harmful behaviours;
- most are in receipt of an EHC plan or an IDP.

THE VISION

BELIEVE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE, ASPIRE

BELIEVE IN OUR TEAM AND IN OUR LEARNERS

EMPOWER OUR LEARNERS TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES AND THEIR PERSONAL JOURNEY

NURTURE OUR LEARNERS TO **ACHIEVE**

AND **ASPIRE TO BE THE BEST THEY CAN BE.**

The school moto is at the heart of everything we do at Branas School -

“Community with learning, is a community with heart”

“Cymuned a’i chynefin, sy’n chymuned â chalon”

INTRODUCTION

At Branas school we believe that the key aim of assessment is to check if young people have been able to engage with the curriculum in a way that has enabled them to retain their learning and to retrieve it to support their achievement and progress. Through our assessment and reporting practice we aim to:

- Enable young people to understand what they must do to reach the end of lesson, topic, theme, module academic year and key stage expectations.
- Allow teachers to determine what a young person knows and to help them plan future support to fill any gaps in knowledge and understanding.
- Help set targets, record skills development, and involve young people in their own learning.
- Give parents/carers a clear idea of what their young person can do and what they need to do to progress.
- Provide information that can be used to evaluate teaching and learning practice.
- Give young people effective feedback so they know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

Aims

At Branas School our assessment involves academic learning and our extended curriculum that helps develop those attitudes and behaviour that allow our young people to engage in learning and make consistent progress over time.

We aim to provide:

- Baseline assessments to understand our young people's individual needs, to get a measure of their aptitude for learning and their potential, as well as to track progress from their starting points.
- Assessment as a supportive measure that allows all progress, no matter how small
- Assessment of the holistic curriculum by assessing academic and extended curriculum and all aspects of a young person's life.
- Assessment that is used as a tool to inform planning and assists with the development of quality of teaching strategies which motivate young people.
- Assessment that is used as a tool to inform target setting and intervention and supports the identification of barriers to learning and the development of strategies to overcome these.
- Assessment that is used to raise standards overall
- Assessment that is accurate and consistent across the school using a range of evidence and strategies

- Information to families/homes of their young person's experiences, achievements, attainment and progress over time are reported in half termly reports, termly review days and annual reviews where appropriate.

Types of Assessment

Summative assessment is assessment of learning. It is used mainly to measure performance and progress and clearly identifies a standard of the young person's attainment. It is carried out at the end of a period of learning for example:

- External examinations
- Internal school examinations and assessments
- End of topic tests
- Happens after the learning
- Proves learning has taken place
- Assists in measuring learning
- Is done to learners
- Is externally referenced
- Is focused on the outcome

Formative assessment is assessment for learning. It is ongoing and provides evidence of and for progression in learning. It supports learning through identifying difficulties, providing feedback and diagnosing future learning priorities.

Formative assessment

- Happens during the learning
- Helps to improve learning
- Assists in growing learning
- Is done with learner
- Is personally referenced
- Is focused on the process

During the Referral Process

Pre-placement Information

As part of the transition process to Branas School, education information on the young person is requested from the Placing Authority prior to the onset of a placement. This data may include:

- National Curriculum Levels from testing in Year 2, 6
- Teacher assessments in KS3 and 4
- IDP, Statement of Educational Needs or EHCP
- School reports, certificates and teacher observations
- Educational Psychology or clinical reports
- Samples of learner work
- Risk Assessments
- Individual Education Plans
- Personal Education Plans

This information allows the Head Teacher to build a baseline assessment programme that takes into account prior learning. However, often the information from previous educational settings is scant. This is often a result of the fractured nature of a young person's educational history rather than inefficiency on behalf of the Local Authority.

Young people's access to the curriculum is dependent on individual needs for learning, identified at point of admission to school through a comprehensive suite of baseline and diagnostic assessment tools, covering literacy, numeracy, cognitive skills and personal-social development. These baseline assessments support the adapting or differentiation of teaching approaches and materials, leading to an individual learning pathway for each young person.

Progress in learning is regularly monitored through termly baseline testing in English and Mathematics and internal subject assessments. Progress is also measured in core subjects against key performance indicators which are mapped to examination outcomes or worded descriptions.

Initial Assessment on Admission

On admission to the school all young people undergo a baseline assessment process in the areas of curriculum, cognition and well-being. This is completed within the first two weeks of being admitted to the school. The young people participate in a 16 week assessment which includes psychometric tests. The tests measure ability across 5 cognitive domains that impact performance. Teachers use the information when planning and adapting work to alleviate any identified areas of difficulty. As a matter of course, are tested for examination access arrangements as soon as possible on arrival if they do not have an IDP, Statement of Educational Needs or EHCP. The combination of qualitative and quantitative information collected on admission and induction form a profile of the young person's cognitive ability.

Assessment of prior attainment and understanding

In order to maximise the precision of assessments and minimise young people's resistance to 'tests', when possible baseline assessments are incorporated into the weekly timetable.

These can happen:

- In discrete lessons solely for subject testing;
- During 1:1 intervention session;
- As an element of the planned lesson to confirm learning;
- As a section of the lesson devoted to assessment;
- Observations by teaching staff of attitudinal aspects of performance;
- As part of teacher assessed work.

The process requires skilled judgement from the teaching team, as to the likelihood of success for the young person. Marking is responsive and a feedback session follows the assessment activity.

English, Mathematics, Science and I.T. are all assessed through the above scheme in order to determine current working levels, examination potential and learning pathways, and gaps in learning need of targeted intervention.

English: BKSBS Literacy
NGRT – Single Word Reading
NGST – Single Word Spelling

Maths: BKSBS Numeracy

Cognitive Profiling / Neurodiversity

Cognitive profiling is carried out by the therapy team who assess all new learners using WISC(V) test as part of their initial 16-week assessment. The WISC-V yields a number of scores which include a Full-Scale IQ (Intelligence Quotient) where possible, and five composite index scores. The index scores provide a more refined exploration of a learner's cognitive abilities in regard to cognitive functioning across a broad range of areas. The areas are: Verbal Comprehension (vocabulary, general knowledge, verbal reasoning, verbal comprehension), Visual Spatial (organising and thinking with visual symbols and patterns), Fluid Reasoning (reasoning, visual intelligence, simultaneous processing, abstract thinking) Working Memory (attention and concentration, processing information, sequencing ability, mental mathematical skills, holding and manipulating information in mind) and Processing Speed (thinking speed, motor speed, reaction time, visual scanning speed). Results are shared with the Head Teacher as soon as they are available and are used in conjunction with the other tests to help build a profile of their strengths and weaknesses.

Completion of Baseline Assessment Period

Using this information, teachers will map out an individual learning pathway that leads to the most suitable accreditation outcomes for the end of KS4.

At the end of the 2-week baseline assessment period, the school will update the young person's Individual Learning Plan with subject specific targets which are tracked and reviewed half termly. Progress against the targets is measured in termly examinations. A copy of this will be sent to the placing Local Authority, the Care team and therapist.

Ongoing Assessment

Teachers use assessments to:

- Identify and discuss progress in specific areas across the curriculum
- Plan and assess literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum for each individual young person
- Use their results to analyse progress of groups, classes, young people and areas of the curriculum in their subjects
- Inform planning
- Recognise the underachievement of young people and target these gaps in IDPs/EHCPs in interventions and lessons
- Recognise more able young people and target appropriate learning

Subject Leaders use assessment to:

- Subject leaders are responsible for monitoring planning and assessment within their subject area to ensure progression and consistency for each young person across school
- Complete subject self evaluation with actions for improvement relating to these areas
- Self evaluate and inform actions for school development
- Report in teaching and learning meetings
- Identify individual young people and groups that may need targeting for gaps and raising attainment
- Identify whole school needs to raise standards
- Identify trends across the school that can become actions in the school evaluation and improvement plan
- Raise standards and improve outcomes for young people
- Monitor for allocation of extra support and training

Accreditation

At Branas School all young people are given the opportunity to receive accreditation for their achievements in school. It is often impossible to predict the length of a placement, or the future for a young person once they leave the school. Therefore, we seek to provide all with a wide range of available accreditation, across all areas of the curriculum, at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, appropriate to age and abilities. Likewise, wider curriculum opportunities and vocational activities are linked to recognised summative accreditation when possible.

We offer the following routes to accreditation:

- GCSE;
- L1/L2 Awards: Functional Skills, Vocational Awards;
- Entry Level Awards Edexcel;
- AQA Unit Awards;
- ASDAN: Bronze/Silver Awards and Short Courses;

All learners develop a portfolio of accreditation to evidence their academic and non-academic achievements. This prepares them for their next steps in education or training and for life as an adult in Wales and the world.

Recording and reporting learner progress

Recording and reporting ensures regular and relevant communication of learner attainment and progress to learners, teachers, parents/carers and other appropriate external stakeholders. This is linked to formative and summative methods of assessment and the recording and reporting of individual learner assessment outcomes is the responsibility of each teacher.

Recording

Consistent record keeping by all teachers allows the effective monitoring of learner progress. Teacher records can inform reporting, both formal and informal, to learners, parents/carers, staff and other appropriate external stakeholders.

Teachers update their subject trackers on a weekly basis. They use this information to monitor how learners are progressing towards their targets. Learners who are making below expected progress in literacy and numeracy are identified for targeted intervention to help them catch up. Learners making above expected progress may be put onto a different learning pathway towards more stretching targets at the end of KS4.

ILP targets relating to Literacy and Numeracy are reviewed and evaluated every half term.

Reporting

All learners will receive a progress report at the end of each half term and a full report at the end of each term. This will inform them about their progress in all curriculum areas and will include feedback on a target connected to social and behavioural aspects of development.

Copies of this report will be sent to:

- the placing Local Authority through the Social Worker and Virtual School who will be responsible for sharing a copy with the parents;
- the Registered Manager of the learner's care home
- the Care Team responsible for the young person.

Monitoring

- The school leadership will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout the school.
- The Head teacher is committed to the highest quality of education through regular scrutiny and monitoring.

This policy will be reviewed by the Head Teacher every 12 months. The date of next review will be **September 2026**.

Links to other Policies and Procedures

For further information on aspects of this policy please refer to:

- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Examinations Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Subject Development Plans

Appendix A: Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Teachers at our school integrate the following AfL strategies into their teaching and learning.

Features of good AfL Teaching strategies

Sharing learning objectives with learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson and, where appropriate, during the lesson, in language that learners can understand • Use these objectives as the basis for questioning and feedback during plenaries • Evaluate this feedback in relation to achievement of the learning objectives to inform the next stages of planning
Helping learners to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show learners work that has met criteria with explanations of why. • Give learners clear success criteria and then relate them to the learning objectives • Model what it should look like, for example exemplify good writing on the board • Ensure that there are clear shared expectations about the presentation of work • Provide displays of learners' work which show work in progress as well as finished product
Involving learners in peer and self-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give learners clear opportunities to talk about what they have learned and what they have found difficult, using the learning objectives as a focus • Encourage learners to work/discuss together, focusing on how to improve • Ask learners to explain their thinking: 'How did you get that answer?' • Give time for learners to reflect upon their learning • Identify with learners the next steps in learning
Providing feedback that leads learners to recognising their next steps and how to take them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value oral as well as written feedback • Ensure feedback is constructive as well as positive, identifying what the learner has done well, what needs to be done to improve and how to do it • Identify the next steps for groups and individuals as appropriate
Promoting confidence that every learner can improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify small steps to enable learners to see their progress, thus building confidence and self-esteem • Encourage learners to explain their thinking and reasoning within a secure classroom ethos

Appendix B: Marking

Teachers use the following strategy for written feedback on learners' work. This will be supplemented by additional comments specifying what the learner has done well, and what they could do to improve it further.

How is my work marked? What do I need to do about it?

Your teacher will use:

WWW
"What went well..."

A comment telling you what you have **done well** in the piece of work, pointing out what is **good** about it and giving you some **praise**.

EBI
"Even better if..."

A comment telling you how that piece of work could have been **even better**, giving you advice about **what to do to improve** your work in the future.

You need to:

AP

"Action Points"
A specific task, question or activity for **you** to do immediately to **improve your work**.

1. Find the AP symbols (s)
2. Read the tutor's comments
3. Make the improvements
4. Ask if you are not sure what to do.

