self-assessment for pupils with learning difficulties

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NATIONAL LOTTERY CHARITIES BOARD

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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The identity of the case study schools and the teachers and students within them has been hidden in the interests of confidentiality but I would like to express my enormous appreciation of their involvement in the project. Without their participation and cooperation, the work could not have taken place, and the insights, which I hope the report provides, would not have been documented. I am also grateful for the warmth and hospitality that the schools provided to me on my visits. I really enjoyed talking to staff and students and I hope I have accurately recorded some of their views and experiences in this report.

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1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

> *Curriculum planning should focus on activities which encourage students to review and reflect upon their own experience and wishes and to formulate and articulate their views* *(GB. DFE, 1994, para. 6.60)*

1.1. Background

Developments in vocational education and training are increasing the need for young people with significant learning difficulties to be able to assess their own progress and performance. Such self-assessment is a formal requirement of much accreditation in vocational areas, in schemes for young people for whom GCSE is not appropriate and for all young people via the National Record of Achievement. The development of self-assessment as an important skill facilitating independence has been given formal reinforcement by its promotion within the *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (GB. DfE, 1994), particularly in relation to transition issues. Self-assessment is critical to the cultivation of independence skills and, in particular, to empowering people with learning difficulties to plan their own development and identify the progress they are making (Rose, *et al.* 1996).

However, in practice, there is evidence that it is difficult to involve these young people in assessing their own learning. Reports from OFSTED (1995) and the Records of Achievement National Steering Committee (GB. DES and WO, 1989) indicate that pupils across the ability range find it difficult to '*make assessments of themselves which are evaluative rather than descriptive*'. This is likely to be even more pronounced with pupils with significant learning difficulties. For these pupils, there may be additional barriers caused by pupils' own difficulties in understanding what is required, their ability to communicate their views, and their teachers' ability to understand what is being communicated.

1.2 Relevant research

In looking at the research on self-assessment, it is difficult to find a great deal which relates directly to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. Much research on students' assessment of themselves or their peers is

situated in the context of higher education institutions and takes a quantitative approach to the issue. Studies have measured the effects of introducing students' self-assessment practices into the classroom on their attitudes or performance, with generally positive findings. This interventionist approach does not seem relevant to the current study, which is based on an examination of existing practice in schools.

However, within the research literature on the psychology of education, two particular areas appear to relate to the current study: the first is research on achievement motivations and how they are associated with different types of goal orientations. Ames and Archer (1988), for example, suggest that when students are in classrooms in which the focus of achievement is on performance, and normative comparisons are made, students tend to attribute success or failure on tasks to their own level of ability, whereas in classrooms where the emphasis is on the mastery of particular goals, students are more likely to attribute success to their efforts and to the task strategies they adopted. The study found that:

> *A mastery, but not performance, structure provides a context that is likely to foster long-term use of learning strategies and a belief that success is related to one's effort. Similarly, goal setting interventions that are aimed at getting students to establish realistic but challenging goals may be further enhanced when a mastery structure is in place* (p. 265).

In many special schools, this kind of approach to supporting pupils to develop their achievements has long been established, and the focus for each pupil has been on acquiring skills and knowledge directly relevant to their perceived needs.

A second area of research which impinges on the current study is that related to the development of self-concept. Craven *et al.* (1991) describe their study on the '*effects of internally focused feedback and attributional feedback on enhancement of academic self-concept*' (p. 17). They begin by acknowledging the widely held view that a high self-concept facilitates the attainment of other outcomes, such as academic achievement, and go on to discuss their study. They were interested in the hypothesis that praising children in the context of giving feedback on their work encourages the children to feel competent, which then enhances their self-concept. They comment, however, that general praise may not be as effective as more targeted feedback, and cite Brophy's (1981) guidelines for praising effectively, from which they list the following examples of good practice:

- specifying the accomplishment
- ensuring that praise is credible
- providing information to students about their competence
- attributing students' success to effort and ability
- ensuring that praise is delivered contingently and infrequently.

Craven *et al.* (op. cit.) go on to stress that effective praise strategies will only enhance self-concept if they are focused on specific activities and internalised by the child. This aspect of their research is relevant to the interests of teachers working with pupils with learning difficulties since such teachers, while constantly seeking to enhance their students' feelings of self-esteem, may not differentiate sufficiently the praise they give. Munn and Lloyd (1998), in their review of literature on discipline in schools, also examine the use of praise, and refer to work carried out in Scotland by Smith (1998), which reviews praise and reward systems. The latter makes it clear that praise has to be genuine and relevant and not patronising.

Previous research at the NFER (Fletcher-Campbell and Lee, 1996), which looked at assessment for pupils with learning difficulties, found that there was limited evidence of self-assessment practice, with two factors, in particular, inhibiting its further development. First, the focus on encouraging and praising pupils in order to motivate them and enhance their self-esteem may result in the pupils' inability to look at their work objectively and critically. Second, many pupils with significant learning difficulties are working on discrete learning programmes which, though lodged within the broad framework of the National Curriculum, are individualised, thus restricting inter-group comparison and the establishment of group norms which can help young people recognise their progress and achievements relative to those of their peers.

More recently, Rose, McNamara and O'Neil's survey of good practice in involving pupils in their own learning (1996) found that, in schools which had been identified as '*those with established good practice*', activities whereby teachers helped pupils to set their own targets were widespread: in 100 per cent of schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (in the survey); in 50 per cent of schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties; in 75 per cent of schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties; and in 94 per cent of mainstream schools. This study also investigated the extent to which teachers enabled pupils to develop their own criteria for measuring progress and found that although there was evidence of this happening, '*the setting of criteria would appear to present more challenges to both teacher and pupil*' (p.169). Pupil involvement in writing reports was also variable, with schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties having made the most progress in this area.

The young people who were the focus of the current study needed to be able to develop their knowledge and skills in a supportive atmosphere, focusing on mastery (as identified by Ames) and enhancing their self-esteem, but when they reach the final phases of key stage 4 (KS4), they will also need to be able to take a realistic view of their achievements and their future opportunities.

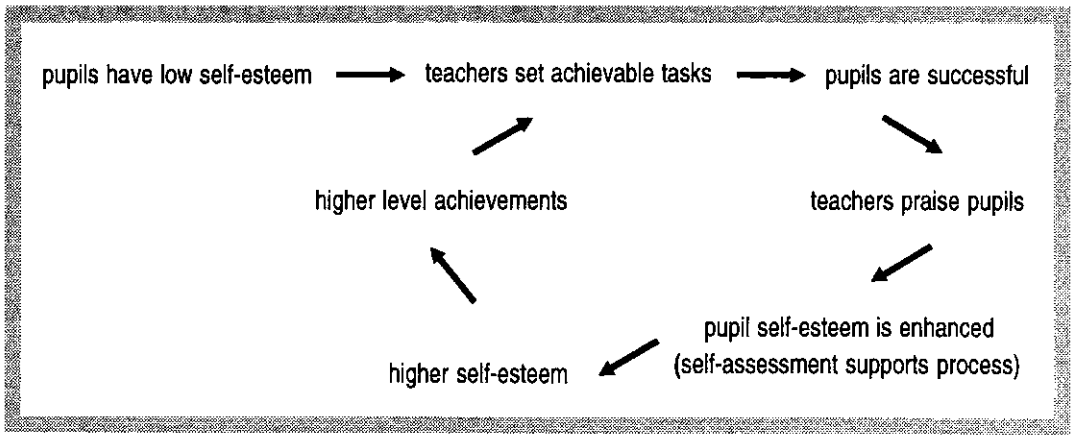
1.3 The NFER research project

The project was funded by the National Lottery Charities Board as part of its programme theme of Health, Disability and Care. The focus of the study was on self-assessment for pupils with learning difficulties of all ages, but with a particular emphasis on students in KS4 or post-16, as they were the students who would appear to have the greatest need for self-assessment skills, as discussed above.

In the context of this project, 'self-assessment' was given a broad interpretation and was looked at in a number of schools. The research aimed to look at the strategies used in these schools to encourage pupils to think about their achievements in relation to their own abilities and interests, and the broader contexts of the National Curriculum and the world outside school. In some instances, such strategies formed part of the overt structures used in teaching and learning practices whilst in other cases they could be seen as the result of more general approaches to interacting with pupils. The research also noted the stage at which schools introduced elements of self-assessment, and how this was developed with older pupils, since introducing such concepts and practice only in KS4 may be too late.

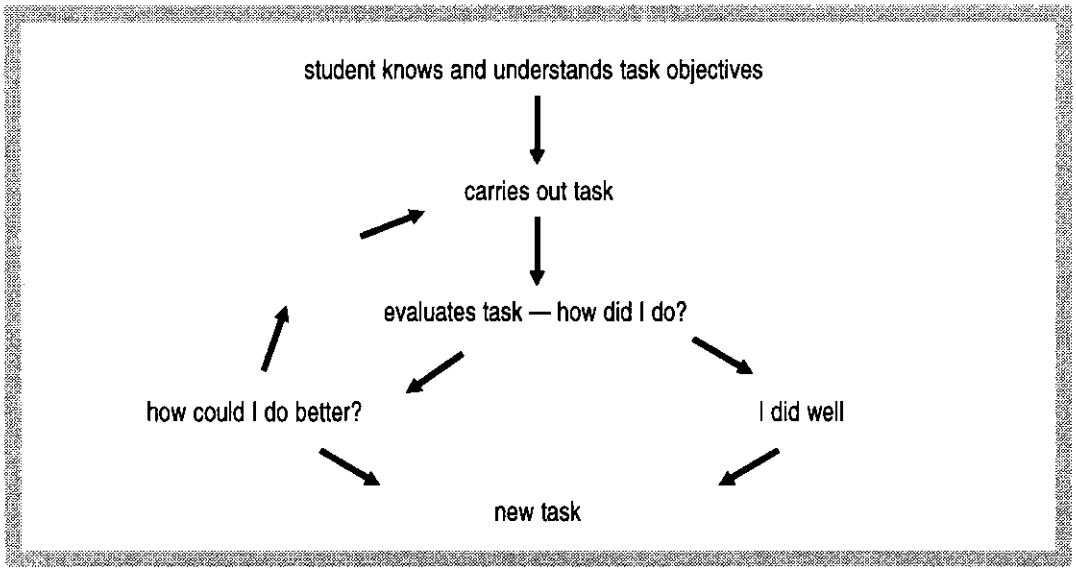
Self-assessment in school is one element of a larger process which is designed to support pupils' personal development and achievements. Figure 1.1 below attempts to show the relationships between the different elements of the process and to highlight the aspects of practice which this study investigated.

Figure 1.1 Links between self-esteem and achievement



The diagram suggests that the links between self-esteem and achievements are strong, and in order that pupils can appreciate their achievements (and thereby continue to develop their self-esteem further), they need to be able to assess them. Self-assessment requires that the learner knows and understands the objectives of the task or activity, attempts to fulfil the objectives, and then evaluates how successful s/he has been, according to criteria which are also known and understood. Having evaluated how well they have achieved objectives, learners can then move on to new tasks or consider how to improve performance on the first task. Figure 1.2 illustrates the self-assessment process.

Figure 1.2 Self-assessment process



The elements of this process were the main focus of investigation in the research project.

1.4 The project methodology

The project started in April 1997, when LEA officers and advisers were invited to identify possible schools in which case study work could be carried out. Criteria for their selection were suggested in the initial letter and subsequent discussions with the LEA contacts. The letter asked for schools which '*see self-assessment as a skill which permeates the curriculum and which is relevant to pupils of all ages*' and indicated that a particular focus of the study would be at key stage 4, '*as students are preparing for new challenges*'.

During the summer term, five schools were identified and preliminary visits made to each. Discussions were held with the headteacher on the aims of the project and to find out more about the school itself and the role of self-assessment within classroom practice. In all the schools there seemed sufficient evidence of relevant activity, and a second visit was made, during which a wider range of staff was interviewed in order to agree on which classes might form the main focus of the case study in each school.

Further visits were made to all five schools during the 1997 autumn and 1998 spring terms. Visits in the autumn term were to interview staff and to observe or participate in classes. The final visits in the spring term involved both classroom observation and discussion with teachers. Details of the five case study schools are provided in Chapter 2.

The aspects of school life on which the research focused were as follows:

- the curriculum and assessment approaches used
- approaches to target setting

- the use of records of achievement
- personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes
- KS4/post-16 activities, geared to leaving school.

All these provided a context for pupil self-assessment to take place.

During the project, interviews were held with headteachers, deputies (where appropriate), class and subject teachers, year group coordinators (especially at KS4), a school counsellor, and pupils. Informal conversations were also held with other teaching and support staff both in classrooms and in the staff room. The researcher visited a number of classrooms and listened to and participated in lessons (where appropriate). Documents examined included: assessment (and other) policy statements, pupil self-assessment sheets, teacher planning sheets, records of achievement, work experience evaluations, progress files.

1.5 The report

This report draws on the case study material to describe and illustrate practices used by teachers to help pupils develop skills of evaluation and self-assessment. It also aims to provide an analysis of the critical features of this practice and to produce a framework for self-assessment activities which might be of help to other teachers.

This chapter has set out the background to the study, referred briefly to other research and described how the project was carried out. Chapter 2 gives brief details of the case study schools, including the curriculum and assessment approaches used in each and the opportunities provided for self-assessment. In Chapter 3, more information is provided on the ways in which schools set targets for pupils and structured their overall curriculum to enable self-assessment. Methods of monitoring pupils' progress, and how pupil assessment was incorporated into that, are reported in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, the focus is on the numerous activities provided in key stage 4 (and in one school, in the post-16 unit) and the opportunities they provide for self-assessment. Although each of the main chapters finishes with a brief summary, Chapter 6 draws together all those points to provide an overall summary and draw some conclusions. In addition, it provides a checklist of questions relating to self-assessment against which teachers can compare their own practice.

Illustrations of materials used in the case study schools are provided in the Appendices.

2. THE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

2.1 The schools

The five schools were all special schools in areas with differing levels of integration of pupils with special needs into mainstream schools. Four of the five schools were recommended by the LEA and the fifth opted to be involved after an invitation by the LEA. The schools were situated in south east England and served a range of different catchment areas. Two were situated in rural areas near to small towns, with predominantly white populations, two were in urban settings, drawing in pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including those from ethnic minorities, and one was located on the edge of a medium-sized town, taking mainly white pupils. The schools have not been identified in the study in order to preserve confidentiality but have been allocated a pseudonym, for ease of reference in the report. Any similarities to the names of existing schools are unintentional.

All the schools but one took in both boys and girls whilst the fifth catered for girls only, and included some weekly boarding accommodation. Three schools were resourced to serve the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties but the headteachers explained how their intake had been changing and they were increasingly taking in pupils with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties in addition to their learning difficulties; this was leading the schools to reassess their overall policies and practices. One school took pupils with the full range of learning and sensory difficulties, including those with profound and multiple difficulties, and those with physical disabilities. The fifth school catered for pupils with severe and profound and multiple difficulties and in its post-16 unit, the focus of the current study, took in several students each year who had formerly attended local schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

Table 2.1. summarises some basic information about the schools and their approaches. Where possible, the same type of information is given for all schools, but in some cases, details were not collected or available.

Table 2.1 Features of practice in case study schools in 1997–1998

Name of school	*Greenbank*	*Redwing*	*Yellowstone*	*Blackbird*	*Bluebell*
School type	12–16 MLD, girls, some residential	2–19 MLD, SLD, PMLD	7–16 MLD	8–16 MLD	11–19 SLD PMLD
Number of pupils	109	300	140	75	61
Curriculum/ assessment materials	Profiles in all subjects. Self-assessment, especially in technology	Curriculum for the Developmentally Young (SLD & PMLD). 14–19 Curriculum with self-assessment	Objectives approach — small steps for NC levels 1–3	Individual and curriculum objectives for each pupil	Individual and curriculum objectives for each pupil
Target setting	Annual review process: pupils involved. Individual Education Plans	Annual reviews and transitional plans. Work experience planning and careers interviews	Annual reviews – Individual Education Plans	Individual Education Plans translated into more focused objectives	Older pupils involved in Annual Review Process
Records of achievement	✓	Work files. Dev. of portfolios	Individual personal profile (IPP)	✓	✓
Personal, social and health education	✓ plus Counsellor	✓	✓	✓ plus Counsellor	✓
KS4 Accreditation	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
KS4/post 16 – other activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

2.2 The main focus of the research

During the initial visits to schools, information about policy and practice was collected and discussions were held about where it would be most appropriate to focus the research. Given the particular need for students nearing the end of compulsory education to become as self-aware as possible and the plethora of relevant activities available for key stage 4 students in

the schools, it was decided in four schools to focus on students in Y11. In the fifth school (for pupils with severe learning difficulties), the class chosen was that which catered for post-16 students, as the curriculum and activities were similar to those of the KS4 students in the other schools. For all five classes, some common issues arose.

The research was able to investigate opportunities for self-assessment in a wide range of contexts, within the KS4/post-16 curriculum. These included work carried out as part of:

- accredited courses followed by students not entering for GCSEs
- activities for personal development
- work experience and community service
- personal, social and health education (PSHE)
- careers education
- the development and completion of the National Record of Achievement.

Chapter 5 describes in detail the contribution of these activities to the development of skills of self-assessment and independence.

2.3 Other focuses

In addition to the KS4/post-16 investigations, it was decided to elicit information on the strategies for developing self-assessment that were in place lower down the school, given the importance of starting such approaches as early as possible. Additional visits, therefore, were made in two schools, to younger classes: a Y5/6 group in one school and several classes of Y8 pupils in another. The class of nine- and ten- year-olds was visited in order that the researcher could see how the school made a start on self-assessment and how this was transferred into skills developed for the older students. In the other school, Y8 classes were working on technology modules which incorporated an evaluation element at the end, and this too was seen as an opportunity to investigate how younger pupils were able to deal with self-evaluation.

The following two chapters report on the whole-school policies and practices relating to the curriculum and assessment which are relevant to this study. They draw on data obtained from discussions with staff across all the schools and participation in the specific year groups referred to above. References to the KS4/post-16 experience are limited, since that area is fully covered in Chapter 5.

3. THE CURRICULUM

Within the school curriculum, there are a number of opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning, behaviour and progress. Self-assessment can be identified as a particular focus of some lessons or can be seen as an integral part of other aspects of the curriculum. Areas which the research identified as opportunities for self-assessment to take place were as follows:

- approaches to target setting
- overall approaches to the curriculum
- the use of records of achievement
- personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes
- the school ethos.

This chapter reports on how these features of practice can support self-assessment, drawing on illustrative material from all the case study schools. It does not deal with the curriculum provided for students in KS4 and post-16 as this is covered in detail in Chapter 5.

3.1 Approaches to target setting

Target setting in schools has been seen as an important part of the process of raising standards and improving schools (GB. DfEE. SEU, 1997), with much of the current focus on pupil performance targets. At the class and individual level, target setting of some kind has to be in place for self-assessment to be introduced, since pupils need to know what it is they are aiming to achieve in order to decide whether they have achieved it or not. For pupils with statements of special educational need, some broad objectives are established through the statementing process, and some short-term educational targets are set. The Code of Practice (GB. DFE, 1994) points out that:

> *Targets should be set by the child's school, in consultation with his or her parents, within two months of the child's placement. The child's achievements in the light of those targets should then be considered at the first annual review and new targets set* (para. 4.28).

Since all the case study schools were special schools, the majority of pupils had statements when they arrived or were provided with them as soon as possible after their entry into the school. The targets for learning and

personal development on the statements were translated into school-based action plans and incorporated into teachers' planning, teaching and assessment in different ways. The annual review meeting was the focus for the process of reviewing targets, identifying further needs and targets, incorporating them into the learning programmes, evaluating progress, and deciding on revised targets.

This process is a key opportunity for pupils to be involved in their own assessment and evaluation of their achievements, and the Code emphasises the importance of their participation:

> *Wherever possible, pupils should also be actively involved in the review process, including all or part of the review meeting, and should be encouraged to give their views of their progress during the previous year; discuss any difficulties encountered; and share their hopes and aspirations for the future* (para. 6.15).

In the case study schools, pupils were involved to a greater or lesser extent in the actual meetings, depending on their perceived ability to understand the purpose of the meeting. Illustration 3.1 below shows how one school included pupils and took action after the meetings.

Illustration 3.1

In ***Greenbank School,*** the annual review process is the responsibility of the pastoral tutor and the headteacher or deputy. The tutor collates all the information from subject staff and others. Most students stay in for the whole of the annual review meeting, or at least for the part where targets are discussed, so that they are involved in the process of reviewing progress and setting new targets. The headteacher felt that *'identifying the targets is the start of them taking control of their own learning'*. Staff meetings are held afterwards at which targets for individuals are discussed. For mathematics and English, because the targets seem to fall within a known range, teachers have produced a bank of statements of targets which can be used for individual pupils. The targets which are related to social or behavioural needs tend to be discussed by staff in terms of more individually tailored responses.

Some of the targets ***Greenbank School*** receives from primary schools are used as a starting point although since pupils come from a range of mostly mainstream primaries, the range of targets set and the way they are expressed mean that they sometimes need to be modified for the special school setting. The school tells parents that they will use them as a starting point for measuring progress made by the time of the next annual review.

Targets are monitored partly through entries made by staff in a daily log book. These refer to individual achievements, problems, merit points issued, and so on. All staff check the book each day to see what colleagues have written and whether it refers to pupils whom they teach or for whom they have a particular responsibility.

Much of the follow-up to targets identified through the annual review process is carried out by teachers, rather than pupils, as it is used to plan programmes of work and activities on a daily, weekly, termly or yearly basis. Many pupils may not be fully aware of their targets except in very broad terms. However, in addition to these targets, many schools working with pupils with learning difficulties set targets in other ways. These may be short-term targets, relating to particular behavioural patterns or specific learning objectives, such as those found in one class:[1]
'bring all equipment to class'
'dress more appropriately for school'
'try and get on better with peer group'.

Teachers and pupils may discuss such targets together, in the light of particular tasks to be completed, and may agree what the targets should be. It is clearly important that pupils know and understand what their targets are, if they are to feel motivated by them, and if the targets are to have an effect on learning and progress.

Some pupils may find it difficult to remember their targets and teachers have to find strategies to remind them. Such approaches could include:

- writing each student's targets or the whole-class targets on a wall chart
- providing a written note for students to keep in the front of their work files
- giving frequent verbal reminders
- reviewing progress at appropriate times of the day or week
- holding regular discussions with individual students and the whole class.

Illustration 3.2 shows how behavioural targets and learning targets were set and discussed in one school.

Illustration 3.2

In ***Blackbird School***, in addition to using the annual review targets, teachers set objectives for pupils' behaviour, using specially designed sheets. As a group, teachers and pupils discuss targets in areas in which they want to improve.

One teacher described how, in her class, these targets were discussed twice a day. Pupils fill in the forms as they go along and indicate their success in achieving them or not. If the targets are not being achieved, the pupils and teacher re-evaluate the targets. The advantage of having the sheets is that pupils can focus on one thing at a time, which, this teacher thought, the pupils seemed to like.

[1] Reported examples of individual and class targets set in the case study schools may not always be SMART, that is, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-related. There was, however, a move towards more sharply focused targets, as some examples will show.

Illustration 3.2 *(continued)*

She described how pupils might say *'Have I been good today?'* to which she would reply *'What do you think?'* She helps them to reflect on their day so that they can learn from the examples of what is good behaviour and what is not so good. She pointed out that:

> *as a teacher, though, you do worry 'Am I doing it right?' and I think you do need to stand back and reflect on it, and check that you are commenting on the action and not on the child. We also need to listen to each other, as staff need to be consistent, especially when there are several of you working in the same class .*
>
> (KS2 teacher)

The approach adopted by this teacher not only enabled pupils to discuss their targets but supported them in developing criteria for, and an understanding of, which actions were appropriate and which were not (the kind of learning reported by Rose *et al.* (1996) as challenging for pupils and teachers to take on).

Illustration 3.3

In the same school, individual files were kept for each pupil, and the researcher was able to look at some of those relating to the Y5/6 class. These included record sheets kept by the teacher which contained the pupil's targets for each subject (individual for some aspects, common for others) and a note by the teacher on progress made within the subject and related to the targets. The teacher explained that the learning objectives for some subjects, such as history or geography, might be the same for the whole class but others were much more individualised, particularly in mathematics, number, English and handwriting. Pupils' behaviour targets were also listed on sheets kept in the file; one pupil's sheet listed the following targets:

I will get on with my work
I will sit at the table with the class
No upsetting/hurting people with words.

By the side of each, the teacher or classroom assistant had put stamps showing *'good'* or *'excellent'* or *'keep it up'* and so on.

In all the case study schools, targets were also reviewed during tutorial time, PSHE lessons, or sessions working on records of achievement, as is discussed in later sections.

3.2 Approaches to the curriculum

Most of the time in school, pupils are working on particular topics or subjects within the National Curriculum. Within the national programmes of study and schools' own planned programmes, there is scope for pupils to be made aware of the aims of their learning, how to achieve them, and how successful they have been. Schools can choose whether to involve pupils in this way or to retain total direction of pupils' learning and the assessment of progress. However, since much research demonstrates that when pupils understand why they are doing something, they are more likely to be successful, it seems appropriate to follow that path. In the 1980s the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) introduced the notion of self-directed learning and assessment to secondary schools and its influence spread more widely. In special education, however, there may be some reluctance to give pupils more autonomy because of the need to provide support to them which takes account of their learning difficulties.

In the case study schools, a range of approaches to organising the curriculum was adopted. Since the schools catered for pupils with a variety of needs, and ages, each school was seeking to take the most effective approach for its pupils. All were following the National Curriculum programmes of study, adapted, where necessary, to meet the needs of their pupils. All pupils had individual targets deriving from their statements and the annual review meetings (as discussed above) but the schools met these in different ways. There was a continuum of approaches from the very detailed objectives approach used in one school, whereby all pupils were on individual programmes for each subject, through to broad programmes for each subject, appropriate for the range of students but not tightly linked to individual targets. This latter approach, illustrated below (Illustration 3.4), is similar to that used in most mainstream schools.

Illustration 3.4

In ***Greenbank School***, a teacher explained that in mathematics, for example, pupils were working individually but in science or history and geography, teachers would teach a common core of material and concepts but differentiate by targeting questions at pupils according to their knowledge of each pupil's abilities and strengths.

The way in which the subject programmes were devised also affected the way in which pupils' progress was monitored. In schools where lessons were more formally structured, with whole-class teaching, assessment tended to take place at the end of a unit or module of work, for all students in the group, rather than on an individual basis (see Chapter 4 for more details). Where learning was more individually tailored, both pupils and teachers could see what learning had taken place and what progress had been made, in terms of those objectives, for each pupil, on a more short-term basis. Illustration 3.5 shows how the individualised approach provided opportunities for evaluation and self-assessment in one school.

Illustration 3.5

In ***Yellowstone School***, an objectives approach is used, whereby the National Curriculum has been broken down into smaller steps. All the pupils are on individual programmes based on the objectives, and all know where they have got to. From age 11 onwards, the pupils keep their objectives sheets in their own files and they can see what stage they have reached, what progress they are making, and what the next step is. The pupils discuss their progress with their form tutor and their subject teachers. The objectives sheets are based on small segments of the programmes of study (levels 1 to 3) and broken down into small steps within each of them.

Pupils' individual learning targets, as identified through the annual review, are linked into the objectives set for that subject or course. Subject coordinators ensure that all those who teach a particular pupil know what his or her targets are within that subject area. In the core National Curriculum subjects, the school also timetables what they call 'foundation time' to work on those areas, given that most of the pupils need a lot of reinforcement in reading, language and mathematics and the relevant annual review targets are usually very specific.

Many subjects have a built in evaluation at the end of each module or unit, to be completed by pupils, with the help of teachers, where required. Most of the comments seen by the researcher appeared to have been written by teachers rather than pupils. A teacher explained that it would take pupils too long to write it themselves, and some might not be able to do it at all, but that all the comments had been discussed with the pupils themselves.

3.3 Records of achievement

Records of achievement (RoAs) are used in schools as a focus for pupils to consider their achievements, and can provide a useful opportunity for discussion between teacher and pupils about strengths and areas for improvement. This enables pupils to think about their own achievements and progress in an explicit way. In order to select items for inclusion in the file or portfolio, there needs to be discussion and consideration of what constitutes an achievement or a marker of progress. Many pupils with learning difficulties are not confident in identifying their strengths, especially if they have low self-esteem, and working on the RoA can be a starting point for them to develop belief in themselves. Pupils need to begin this reflective process in primary school, so that by the time they reach KS4 and are required to assess themselves for their coursework and for the National Record of Achievement, they have acquired the necessary confidence and skills to do so (see Hardwick and Rushton, 1994).

All the case study schools had some system of collating records of achievement, culminating in the National Record of Achievement for those leaving school (see Chapter 5). In two of the schools, a regular time slot

was devoted to updating the RoA, enabling detailed discussion of what pupils had done since the last session, what should be counted as achievements, and what should be included in the portfolio.

Although given different names, each school had a system in which pupils collected a range of evidence of their achievements to put in a folder, a ring binder or a box. Evidence included:

- samples of writing
- examples of art work
- photographs of the pupil carrying out particular tasks
- photographs showing pupils on trips, involved in drama, playing sports
- certificates of achievement in sports, community activities, particular projects, overall work.

Decisions about what should go in the RoA tended to be made jointly by pupils and teacher, thereby enabling discussion of pupils' successes and at the same time, perhaps, requiring them to make value judgements about the relative merits of two pieces of work or two photographs, for example. Illustration 3.6 shows how one school used its RoA sessions.

Illustration 3.6

In ***Blackbird School***, the record of achievement scheme has been in place for some years and policy documents give full details of the purposes and procedures to be followed. The teacher with responsibility for RoAs had also collated a wide range of worksheets to be used with pupils to assess their own work (see Appendix 2) and had drawn on LEA materials for the primary school self-review sheets. The policy document at this school states the purpose of records of achievement as follows:

> *They are supported by evidence and are written by the students. The records present a whole picture, unique to each person, emphasising the aspects the individuals wish to present.*

One of the attractive features of the RoA in this school is the series of photographs of the pupil on the front cover. A new one is added each year they are in the school. Each year the file is updated, as the teacher in charge explained:

> *The examples are also supposed to show development. When they start, pupils tend to put 'I like doing ...whatever' but as they get to understand it more, they write about what they have learnt or things that went well. When they put in the new material, they can take home the old stuff. It's important for them to realise 'I'm moving on' from one year to the next, that it isn't static. So the RoA is not there as a product but as a process.*

Illustration 3.6 *(continued)*

The RoAs of the Y5/6 pupils which were looked at closely by the researcher tended to consist of a first page giving personal information, followed by sheets with photos of something carried out or achieved by a pupil, sometimes with pupils' written comments, often with the teacher's (additional) comments. Samples of drawing and writing were also included. The teacher for this class said that they were due to work on RoAs at least once a term but they tended to do so more like three times a term because there were often things that they wanted to put in. She said they often did *'my favourite'* ... –type activities and she had a number of activity sheets to support this. She explained that *'most things go up on the wall first and, if it's writing, they do three [photo]copies — one to go home, one for the wall, and one for the RoA'*. The pupils select which things should go in the RoA, with guidance from the teacher. For example, they choose which of several photos would be best, and discuss what caption should accompany it.

3.4 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes

Personal, social and health education programmes are an important part of the school curriculum and in special schools, in particular, tend to form a central part of the educative process. Pupils with learning and other difficulties need to be given opportunities to learn about themselves and others, just like all young people, but in addition may need support in understanding how to manage their individual difficulties and to cope with the wider world (see Code of Practice, Sections 6:59 and 6:60). In subject-based lessons, teachers try to ensure that pupils have achievable tasks and can recognise their successes, thereby enhancing their self-esteem. On the other hand, much of the more general work to develop pupils' self-confidence and feelings of self-value may be carried out in PSHE lessons. Such lessons are also often the occasion for activities and discussions which stimulate pupils into reflecting on their own strengths and weaknesses, and the areas that they need to develop.

All the case study schools had carefully planned PSHE programmes which were designed to address the needs of their pupils, and which were linked to pupils' ages and stages of maturity. In one school, the PSHE curriculum covered four areas: health education; sex education; daily living skills; community skills. The policy documents states the aims of the programme as follows:

> *Within these contexts we explore attitudes, values and behaviour. We promote self-confidence and self-esteem which assists in the formation of relationships. We foster sensitivity towards others in conjunction with concern for their own well-being. Students learn strategies to enable them to cope with and enjoy life now and in the future. They are taught to make decisions and solve problems.* (PSE policy statement, Bluebell School)

Although no other policy documents for PSHE were obtained by the researcher, it was clear from discussions with staff that overall aims were similar to those expressed above, and that lessons were used to explore sensitive issues. A teacher in another school, with responsibility for the PSHE programme, explained that self-assessment was central, as such lessons provide:

> *an ongoing opportunity to explore: it's all about yourself — how you are, how you've changed, where you are going. Specifically within the sex education* [course component] *it is an opportunity to think about taking responsibility and how you take decisions ...* [The whole programme] *is about continued self-evaluation.*

3.5 The school ethos

Recent Government policies press schools to inspire their pupils with a desire to work hard and to achieve high standards (GB. DfEE. SEU, 1997). In special schools, in particular, such aims have to be tempered with other considerations. Some pupils may have such significant difficulties that they can never achieve externally valued standards but will, nevertheless, be encouraged to achieve their full potential. In addition, some pupils may have low self-esteem, caused by their perceptions of previous failures (perhaps in mainstream, or in the eyes of other people), leading to a reluctance to try, for fear of further failure.

The study of self-assessment in schools, therefore, has to take account of this context. Fletcher-Campbell and Lee (1996) found that pupils were rarely challenged about the quality of their work or encouraged to take a self-critical approach, and when this issue was raised in the current study, staff tried to explain their approaches.

In the case study schools, teachers were encouraging pupils to become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses through the formal curriculum but, in addition, staff interviewed felt that the ongoing discussions with pupils about their work and behaviour were an integral part of their teaching and that of most of their colleagues. As a head said:

> *It's up to the staff of the school — it goes back to the question of ethos. It's a collective input of staff, working together and I think, no, I know, we're doing that here, by recognising and valuing achievement. It can occur through consensus which can be formalised through policies such as the equal opportunities policy and through individuals and through planning to enable achievement. It's got to be like that — our youngsters compare themselves with others, their brothers and sisters and friends at other schools, and they know they are different and we need to encourage them.*

Encouraging pupils to be critical about their work and behaviour was important although it had to be seen in the context of trying to raise their self-esteem sufficiently for them to feel motivated to try. As one teacher said:

> *... the way we are trying to address that difficulty, of getting them to be critical, is we are trying to improve their self-image so that they believe that anything they do could be better, so you need a baseline... You have to make them realise that the whole group would like to praise them, so they have got to feel that they've got friends, they've got to feel that they are valued, they've got to feel that people really care if they bin their work.*

The schools were mostly trying to establish conditions which would allow their pupils to be successful. At the same time, they were looking for ways of encouraging pupils to try hard, as Illustration 3.7 shows.

Illustration 3.7

A teacher in ***Greenbank School*** explained that she had taken over a mathematics class and in the first lesson said to the pupils:

> *I want you to do the first page of maths in your file as a really good piece of work, your very best. Put a lot into it, make it look good, and if you make a mess of it, have a fresh sheet of paper and do it again. I won't ask you to do this every day but I want you to have this really good piece of work and then at other times, you will know yourself whether you are doing your best or not.*

A headteacher talked about the balance needed between:

> *looking at things they can and can't do. You have to have high expectations in the areas in which they can do things, and not so high in the areas where they can't. Self-assessment is linked to self-esteem, especially in damaged children.*

Once teachers had supported pupils to develop more self-confidence and trust in the teacher and their classmates, pupils were more able to acknowledge the areas in which they had difficulties. Some schools were using Circle Time or similar activities as the opportunity for pupils to talk about themselves in a safe atmosphere and, as pupils got older, this kind of discussion permeated many of their lessons and informal chats with staff. This became particularly important in KS4 or post-16 as students needed to make realistic choices about work experience, in the first instance, and leaving school, subsequently (see Chapter 5 for further details). Illustration 3.8 indicates some discussions held with older students but its tenor is similar to those held with younger pupils in other schools.

Illustration 3.8

In ***Bluebell School***, students in the post-16 unit are encouraged to discuss with each other and with staff, their strengths and their areas for development. Many of the class visited had come from other schools and were dealing with some of the negative experiences resulting from that. For example, one girl said she had been very '*bad-tempered*' at her old school and she didn't know if she had changed. The teacher suggested that she was no longer bad-tempered because she had learned to do things she was good at (such as looking after some of the younger children, in other classes).

A boy was frequently praised for his reading skills, by the teacher and other students, but was also reminded by the teacher that he needed to build up his confidence in talking to people he didn't know very well and in doing things on his own. When asked for ideas for action by the teacher, another student suggested that he be taken to some of the other staff in the school and introduced to them, so that he would feel more confident about speaking to them subsequently.

3.6 Summary

Opportunities for self-assessment were provided in different ways in the case study schools. Schools attempted to make pupils aware of what they were aiming to achieve and how they would travel towards those aims, in a number of different ways, as this chapter has reported. The main features of these approaches and how they encourage pupils to assess and appraise their own work are summarised below.

Target setting

Schools set targets for individual pupils in several different ways: by breaking down the targets listed in the annual review into short-term objectives, related to pupils' everyday experiences; by discussing with pupils their progress in learning and behaviour and jointly agreeing on short-term targets; by breaking down the curriculum into small steps for pupils to achieve as they mastered each element. Ideally, as each objective or target was reached, teachers and pupils reviewed the learning that had taken place, and discussed the next step. Specific learning targets tended to be set and reviewed in subject lessons but more general target setting and reviewing was frequently carried out within the context of tutorial time, PSHE lessons or sessions devoted to the record of achievement (see below).

Approaches to the curriculum

Targets for elements of the curriculum and targets for individual pupils were brought together in two different ways: they were combined into programmes of study for individuals or groups, so that clear objectives were laid out for every aspect of learning; or they ran in parallel, so that lessons or modules were tailored for the class, and individual targets taken account of only where relevant. Opportunities for pupils to assess their progress and achievement of targets were provided to varying extents.

Records of achievement

In all the schools, records of achievement were used as a means of celebrating pupils' achievements. The process of compiling the portfolio of documents was seen as extremely valuable in providing an opportunity for pupils and teachers to discuss pupils' strengths and achievements and their progress and development in both knowledge and skills. It also provided the occasion for teachers to encourage pupils to assess their own work, both in terms of comparisons with previous work, and in order to select which pieces of current work should be included.

PSHE programmes

These timetabled sessions also provided an essential opportunity for teachers and pupils to discuss pupils' personal development, issues which concerned them, and to develop their confidence and self-esteem through specific activities. Role plays and other learning games complemented the attempts made by staff in subject lessons to enhance pupils' self-esteem in order that they would be able to learn. It was in this area of the curriculum in particular that self-assessment activities were a regular feature.

The school ethos

All the staff interviewed in the course of the research stressed the importance of building a positive ethos in the school in order to encourage students to feel a sense of self-worth and to value their own achievements. In addition to the formal strategies described above, teachers worked continuously to praise pupils' accomplishments and give them the skills to cope with their difficulties. They tried to provide a balance of encouraging pupils, without patronising them, and yet leading them towards an understanding of their own needs and how to respond to them.

4. ASSESSMENT

Assessment has long been a familiar feature of life in special schools but with the implementation of the National Curriculum it has been carried out in a wider range of contexts. Most schools use National Curriculum tests or tasks with at least some of their pupils and, at KS4, have developed a range of options which enable students to take GCSE exams, if appropriate, but also provide a range of other accredited courses, some of which involve external assessment. Chapter 5 provides further information.

School-based assessment of pupils' progress can be carried out in different ways. In broad terms it involves:

- daily monitoring of progress against individual targets
- daily monitoring of progress against learning objectives
- end-of-module/topic assessments.

In addition, as described in Chapter 3, pupils' progress is assessed in preparation for the annual review meeting and for annual reporting to parents.

In the case study schools, much of the assessment was carried out by the teachers themselves, but, as the following sections will illustrate, many opportunities were also provided for pupils to assess their own progress, usually with the help of the teacher or other adults. Some assessment procedures were in place which did not '*happen to students, they involve*[d] *students.* [They let] *students into the secrets of assessment by encouraging them to review their own learning*' (Rouse, 1991, p. 308).

4.1 Monitoring of progress against individual targets

Pupils' individual objectives, as identified in their annual review and by other means, provide one focus for monitoring their progress. In some schools, mostly special schools, objectives are incorporated into individual programmes of learning for each pupil, whilst in others (both mainstream or special schools), pupils' targets are taken into account when teachers are planning lessons and tasks within each area of the curriculum, and when they are evaluating the success of those lessons and tasks. For pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, very small steps of

progress are noted and celebrated (see, for example, Fletcher-Campbell and Lee, 1996). For these pupils, self-assessment may not be possible but teachers can note pupils' reactions and responses to stimuli and provide opportunities for pupils to make choices and decisions about their environment and their learning, wherever possible. Such choices and decisions can be seen as the earliest stages of developing pupils' independence and autonomy, even though they are clearly different from most of the aspects of self-assessment discussed elsewhere in this report. Illustration 4.1 shows how one of the case study schools was monitoring progress for pupils with significant difficulties.

Illustration 4.1

In ***Redwing School***, the teacher in charge of KS1 and nursery education explained that they used the IEPs as a basis for identifying tasks, and the pupils' reactions and achievements are recorded in detail. For example, within the sensory curriculum, there are objectives for when pupils are in the multisensory rooms and the member of staff present will note the child's reactions to the activities provided.

This teacher was developing a system for recording pupils' reactions which was focused on experience rather than targets. The record sheets show levels of participation, independence and language use (e.g. passive, active, shows pleasure, etc.). The teacher comments on what the pupil did and their attitude to the activity, using this system of recording, with a key showing 'how they respond to the experience'. The teacher explained that observing what pupils are doing and noting their reactions depend on the child's character and the teacher knowing the child and their reactions. Her hope was that the sheet would show progress in the children's learning and attitudes.

At KS2 and KS3 also, formative assessment for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties involves daily, routine, ongoing observation of what pupils are doing on the task, and this is carried out by the teacher or nursery nurses. It may be direct observation or be on the basis of discussion between staff about what they have observed.

For pupils in the case study schools with less significant learning difficulties, progress against individual objectives was monitored and discussed at annual review meetings, in PSHE lessons, tutorials, RoA sessions, and so on, as discussed in Chapter 3. Much of this assessment was teacher-directed but some self-assessment tended to take place in relation to pupils' individual short-term behavioural objectives. These were often reviewed daily in the context of particular subject areas or record of achievement discussions.

4.2 Monitoring of progress against learning objectives

In both mainstream and special schools, most of the objectives set relate to areas of the curriculum (as discussed in Chapter 3). Individual objectives, relating to literacy or numeracy skills, for example, are taken account of when teachers plan daily, weekly and termly lessons, as are personal development aims. Ongoing assessment can take place as the skilled teacher evaluates how each pupil is reacting to the particular tasks set, and how their responses relate to their individual targets.

In some of the case study schools, such general teacher monitoring and assessment were complemented by some pupil self-assessment. In one school, in particular, self-assessment was an integral part of the structure of each programme of study, as is shown in Illustration 4.2.

Illustration 4.2

In ***Yellowstone School***, all pupils have a list of the specific objectives set for each element of each topic within each subject. Pupils work their way through a series of tasks designed to teach and test their knowledge and skills, related to each of the objectives; teachers provide support and guidance and ensure that pupils are concentrating on the aspects of the subject which are most useful to them. At the end of each objectives sheet, the teacher discusses the objectives with them, checks that they have understood and signs and dates the sheet.

After a few weeks, they are given a formal assessment on all those objectives, which is moderated by another teacher. Assessment can be written, oral, mental, practical or a mixture of methods. If it is a practical assessment, the moderator will participate in the activity. In mathematics, there is an inbuilt assessment programme with which staff can carry out an initial assessment for all new pupils, on all the elements covered in the objectives sheets. The results highlight pupils' strengths and areas which they need to work on.

Since pupils knew from the start of each topic what they were expected to learn, they were in a good position to achieve the desired objectives, as Byers and Rose (1996) state: '*Pupils involved at the planning stage have a clearer view of teacher expectations; can be assisted in identifying areas of work which may cause them difficulties; and have an opportunity to feel valued in the whole learning process*' (Byers and Rose, 1996, p.79).

In other schools, self-assessment activities were introduced as an element in a lesson or series of lessons, according to their appropriateness. Illustration 4.3 shows the kinds of self-assessment that took place in one class.

Illustration 4.3

In ***Blackbird School,*** teachers are engaged in ongoing monitoring of pupils' progress and in one class observed by the researcher (of Y5/6 pupils), the teacher was providing support to pupils which was individually tailored to their needs. Pupil files provided information on each pupil, according to the following headings:

- Individual Learning Objectives
- Learning Objectives for the Term
- Assessment/Achievement against those Objectives.

The teacher had made succinct but highly relevant comments about each child's progress against the subject learning objectives and the associated individual objectives. Also in the file were pupils' own self-assessments on various tasks. For example, one sheet required pupils to comment on a paragraph of their own handwriting using a checklist of questions, as follows:

'This is my best handwriting'
[followed by a paragraph of handwriting and questions for the pupil to complete]:

Is it neat?	*YES/NO*
Is it on the line?	*YES/NO*
Is it the correct size?	*YES/NO*
Are the tall letters tall?	*YES/NO*
Do the tails hang down?	*YES/NO*
Are there spaces between the words?	*YES/NO*
Is it lovely writing?	*YES/NO*

Such self-assessment sheets provide pupils with criteria for evaluating the quality of their work and enable an accurate record to be kept by the teacher of the pupils' actual achievements as well as their self-assessments of the achievements.

4.3 End-of-module/topic assessments

A common approach in most schools (mainstream or special) is to carry out some form of assessment at the conclusion of a module or topic, within a subject area, to check on whether pupils have acquired the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. The results of such assessment also provide the teacher with guidance on how to ensure that the next part of the planned programme takes account of pupils' progress (Byers and Rose, 1996). The emphasis of teacher assessment, therefore, tends to be on how well objectives for learning have been met, whereas when pupil self-assessment takes place, the focus may be different.

The activities observed or reported in the case study schools to enable pupils to assess their own performance tended to fall into three main groups:

1. *Those which assessed the facts*

- what pupils had done, in very broad terms
- which specific activities they had carried out
- what they had learned
- what they would be doing next.

2. *Those which asked for emotional reactions*

- if pupils had enjoyed the activity/experience
- which aspects they had enjoyed
- which aspects they had disliked.

3. *Those which required some evaluation*

- what pupils felt they could do
- what they found difficult
- which aspects they needed to work on/improve in.

The first type of self-assessment was the most common, especially with younger children, and was often prompted by checklists or picture cues (see Examples A2.1–A2.3 in Appendix 2). Eliciting pupils' views on how they felt about tasks and activities was also sometimes carried out by means of self-completion sheets or the use of symbols (see Examples A2.4 and A2.5). There were few written prompt sheets which attempted to explore pupils' views beyond the fairly superficial, by asking *why* they had liked or disliked an activity or found it easy or difficult.

The more evaluative approaches to self-assessment were also stimulated by written sheets and pictures and through discussion with the teacher and classroom assistants (see Example A2.6). Pupils might be reminded by a teacher that they were able to do one thing and could therefore try something else, or, as one teacher was heard to ask a pupil: *'Could you have made it better?'* At KS4, teachers were constantly trying to make students aware of their own strengths and weaknesses so that they could cope with the world outside school, and this process was also well-embedded with younger children.

It is worth noting that teachers were conscious of the need to devise self-assessment sheets which were appropriate to the particular pupils with whom they were working. In one school, a teacher had revised work sheets since the intake of pupils had changed towards more pupils with higher ability levels (but greater behavioural difficulties). She had found that the new intake preferred a more sophisticated approach than that which she had used previously.

The need for self-assessment sheets to be age-appropriate was also stressed, since students of 16 and older may be aware that materials are childish in presentation or topic. Students in the post-16 unit at Bluebell School had been asked by the teacher for their reactions to a series of sheets and had rejected those they thought too simple or too childish (see Examples A2.7–A2.11, which are accompanied by students' comments).

Teachers felt that helping pupils to become more self-critical about their work was a delicate process. Often, pupils who came to special schools had already been in mainstream schools where their self-esteem had suffered, due to their lack of success. In the case study schools, teachers were helping such pupils to regain their self-confidence and the belief that they could achieve worthwhile objectives. This was a vital first stage since, unless and until pupils could feel proud of their work, they could not stand back from it and judge it at all objectively, even against other pieces of their own work, let alone against the work of others. For example, a headteacher explained:

> *... the older pupils, from about 12 onwards, do recognise their reading lack, which is a big demotivating factor for them. For example, in assessment it comes up if you give pupils marks, because it leads to comparisons and then to feelings of failure ... we try to value people for what they are and to make them feel comfortable with that. If they can accept who they are and feel comfortable about it then we have made a breakthrough. There is always a danger of them giving up too soon — there is a phase often used in special education, that someone has 'peaked' but I believe that you never stop learning and you have to get pupils to realise that as well.*

The need for pupils to feel that they have really achieved something to be proud of was recognised by all the case study schools and Illustration 4.4 shows how a school's craft, design and technology (CDT) department had incorporated self-assessment into each module of work in a way which heightened the value of pupils' work.

Illustration 4.4

In ***Greenbank School,*** the craft, design and technology syllabus is organised into themes. In Y8 and Y9, each year group is divided into three classes to work on a common theme by means of different skills. Three themes are followed in the course of the year and all pupils get a chance to try all three skill areas: food technology, textiles and crafts, one for each of the themes. The work in technology is structured so that pupils are taken on a visit to start the theme and subsequent work builds on that visit. Planning sheets are used at each stage and at the end of each lesson pupils complete a diary sheet to evaluate what they have done and to think ahead to what they will do the following week (see Example A2.2).

Illustration 4.4 *(continued)*

One teacher explained how she went through the planning sheet and diary sheets with the class, tending to do some '*brainstorming*' first, then writing their thoughts on the board and then agreeing with pupils on what would be written or drawn on their sheets. Another teacher had provided a checklist of skills for each pupil which they were supposed to fill in as they completed particular activities, or at the end of the lesson (see Example A2.3)

Towards the end of term, when the theme was completed, the researcher observed the final activity: each year group came together for a final evaluation and to present the things they had made. Each teacher worked with her/his own group to review what they had done, why they had chosen those things, how they had done various things, why they had done them in a particular way, and the characteristics of the artefacts produced (see Example A2.12 for the checklist used and for details of what the pupils made). After this preparation, the three groups came together in one room and the pupils presented their work, either individually or as small groups, or in one or two instances, were represented by the teacher. They recapped on the issues discussed above and with questioning and prompting from their own teacher and the others present, they were able to explain and describe their activities and artefacts.

The teachers felt that this was an excellent opportunity for pupils to feel proud of their achievements and for others to appreciate them too. All the pupils took home their artefacts and the teacher took photographs which would go in their files.

As this example showed, pupils were encouraged to discuss what they had done and why they had done it in the way they did, and they received a great deal of praise and positive reinforcement of their confidence in their skills and abilities. The emphasis was on applauding their success, and one of the teachers explained that they made sure that all the pupils did produce something of which they could be proud. Although some pupils were nervous, all could share their class success and none could feel under-appreciated. However, the emphasis was very much on what had been done and achieved, rather than on any evaluation of levels of achievement. The checklist used for discussion and preparation before the presentations was mostly focused on pupils' actions and the skills and knowledge they had acquired, and provided only one opportunity for pupils to express their feelings about their work '*and how you could make it better if you did it again*'.

4.4 Summary

Assessment is very much an ongoing aspect of life in special schools, both through the formal curriculum and through observation of, and discussion with, pupils in the course of the school day. In the case study schools, such teacher assessment was complemented by a range of different pupil self-assessment activities, as summarised below.

Monitoring against individual targets tended to take place on a very frequent basis for pupils with significant learning difficulties and at regular intervals for other pupils. Much of the daily monitoring tended to relate to short-term behavioural targets.

In most of the schools, monitoring of progress against learning objectives was well established and carried out in different ways: in one school, all areas of the curriculum were broken down into small-scale learning objectives against which pupils were assessed; in other schools, progress against learning objectives was assessed by teacher and pupils at appropriate points.

All the schools encouraged pupils to carry out some self-assessment at the end of topics or modules and these activities required pupils to respond in three main ways to what they had learned: factually, emotionally, evaluatively. Most of the self-assessment was factual, asking pupils what they had done, and whether they had enjoyed it or not. Less developed in the schools was the evaluative approach whereby pupils were asked to consider the reasons for their likes/dislikes, or ease/difficulty in carrying out tasks.

The form in which the self-assessment tasks were presented also needed to be tailored to the abilities and needs of the pupils and to take account of their age and levels of maturity.

The need for pupils to have confidence in themselves and their work before being able to make evaluative judgements about it was stressed by all the schools. Opportunities were sought in which pupils' strengths could be emphasised and celebrated as a way of building up their self-esteem to the point where they could feel confident enough to make critical judgements of their own work.

5. KEY STAGE 4 AND BEYOND

At key stage 4 and post-16, the whole of the curriculum is shaped by the fact that the students will be leaving school within a year or two. Staff are conscious of the need to prepare students appropriately for their lives beyond school, and have to take account of the potential destinations of each cohort of students. In the case study schools, destinations included: the post-16 unit of the same school, FE colleges, sixth forms at other special schools, and places on training schemes.

The Code of Practice (GB. DfE, 1994) stresses the importance of student involvement in decision making at this time of transition and suggests ways of encouraging this. The issues which the Code indicates as needing to be addressed are formulated as:

- personal development
- self-advocacy
- the development of a positive self-image
- awareness of the implications of any long-term health problem or disability
- the growth of personal autonomy and the acquisition of independent living skills.

To ensure that they are appropriately prepared for the future, students in Y11 are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of themselves, the standard school curriculum and the wider world. The kinds of activities taking place at this stage are likely to include the following:

- National Curriculum subjects
- work towards accredited courses designed for those not entering for GCSEs
- activities for personal development, interest and enjoyment
- work experience and/or community service
- careers education, college link courses, other external courses
- personal, social and health education
- work on the National Record of Achievement.

In almost all of these activities, students are encouraged or even required (for example, in some externally accredited courses) to assess and evaluate what they are doing, why they are doing it and how successful they have been. Self-assessment in its various forms is a central component of KS4 and post-16 work, as this chapter reports. Each of the above strands of the KS4 and post-16 curriculum is discussed separately, in terms of how it can support students to develop their self-assessment skills and thence their independence and ability to manage their lives.

In the case study schools, all these activities were in place for Y11 students and, where appropriate, for students in the post-16 unit. Table 5.1 summarises the activities provided in each of the schools. In this chapter, although all the schools were carrying out almost all of the activities, examples are drawn from the schools which provide the most effective illustration of the particular point of interest being discussed.

5.1 National Curriculum and GCSEs

The question of whether GCSE is an appropriate form of accreditation for pupils with learning difficulties to aim for has been widely debated (see Fletcher-Campbell and Lee, 1996, for example) but for some students in special schools it may be well within their capabilities to take one or more subjects to GCSE and to obtain worthwhile grades. For many, however, the nature of the courses themselves, and the methods of assessment, may make GCSEs unsuitable and schools have, for some years, been providing alternative forms of accreditation. These are discussed in more detail in Section 5.2.

All the case study schools were following the National Curriculum to age 16, adapted to the needs of their pupils, but they did not necessarily enter their students for GCSEs. However, where it was thought appropriate, provision was made, as Table 5.1 indicates. One of the case study schools was a GCSE centre in its own right and in this school, some pupils did up to four GCSEs, in English, mathematics, science and art. For pupils in three other schools, arrangements were in place to enable them to attend neighbouring mainstream schools to take one or more GCSEs, if they were capable of doing so. A reciprocal arrangement was in place between two of these case study schools and their linked mainstream schools, whereby mainstream pupils occasionally came to the case study schools to follow accredited non-GCSE courses which their own schools did not offer.

Table 5.1 Activities provided in case study schools at key stage 4 and post-16 (1997–1998)

Name of school	*Greenbank*	*Redwing*	*Yellowstone*	*Blackbird*	*Bluebell*
School type	12–16 MLD, girls, some residential	2–19 MLD, SLD, PMLD	7–16 MLD	8–16 MLD	11–19 SLD PMLD
COURSES OFFERED *GCSE*	*On-site*: English, maths science, art	*Other school*	*Other school*	*Other school*	N/A
AEB	Numeracy, literacy	Literacy, numeracy, health, hygiene & safety			
Welsh Cert.	✓		Science, art, music, life skills		N/A
City and Guilds		Skillpower — a pre-NVQ/ Key skills course	Numeracy, communication, cookery	Science, communication, information technology	
Practical skills profile (RSA)	✓	✓ (in Extended Education Dept.)			
Youth Award (ASDAN)	Post-16 planned		✓		✓
Other courses/ accreditation	Whitbread Award (Education/ Business Partnership). NAWCW Child Care Cert.	Leadership Challenge (Education Business Partnership)	Modular courses. English Speaking Board	Herts. Achievement Project	LCCI Preliminary Access Cert. (to 1997). English Speaking Board (1998)
OTHER ACTIVITIES *Work experience/ visits*	Jan–Mar one morning a week. June – 3 weeks	Feb/March – 2 weeks	Nov – 2 weeks May – 2 weeks. Visits	March – 2 weeks	Work experience for some students – visits for others
Comm. service		✓	For $1^1/_2$ terms	✓	
PSHE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Careers ed.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FE links	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.2 Accredited courses

In recent years, a range of courses has been developed for KS4 students who are not taking GCSEs. Teachers of students with learning difficulties tend to choose them for a number of reasons: the appropriateness of their content, the skills which they aim to develop, and teaching and learning approaches with which teachers and students feel comfortable. In addition, the form of certification or accreditation is often expressed in more positive terms than GCSE results, showing how much students have achieved rather than what they have failed to achieve.

The variety of courses on offer in schools can be grouped into three broad types (see SCAA, 1996, for more details and examples):

1. Courses which lead to an externally set examination, sometimes with an additional coursework element.
2. Courses which have externally prescribed specifications but which are taught and assessed by teachers themselves, and moderated externally.
3. Courses which are devised by the school and assessed and accredited by them.

Within the case study schools, all these approaches were to be found. The headteachers explained that although, on the whole, they did not provide GCSE courses, they were keen to offer courses which would lead to formal accreditation. Where students were not able to follow external courses, the schools provided their own syllabuses and certificates.

As Table 5.1 shows, each school was using more than one approach with its students, in an attempt to meet their differing abilities and needs. Four of the schools were providing opportunities for some or all of their students to take courses of the first and second type listed above, as well as the third type, whilst the fifth school focused on the second and third types for students in the post-16 unit. Each type of approach is discussed briefly below.

5.2.1 External courses with an examination

Three schools entered some of their students for examinations accredited by the Welsh Examination Board or the Associated Examination Board (AEB). In one school, for example, it was found that pupils achieved high levels of success in the literacy, numeracy and health, hygiene and safety examinations set by the AEB.

The advantages of these courses over GCSE are twofold: first, the levels of difficulty of the tests are lower, thus enabling pupils to be successful at working through them; second, the results are represented as a percentage mark, showing how much students have achieved. This has been found to be more motivating for students working at low levels than the grade F or G that they might receive at GCSE, with its associated low status.

5.2.2 Externally accredited courses

In common use, both in the case study schools and more widely, are courses which are taught and assessed by teachers but accredited by external bodies, after moderation and other validating procedures have taken place. Many take a vocational angle or include units which are designed to develop students' skills for living independently. Some are aimed at students with learning difficulties whilst others are the lowest levels of schemes which comprise a wide range of levels, suited to students of all abilities.

There are several advantages to non-examination courses for students with learning difficulties. These include:

- the modular approach, which enables areas to be covered in the order appropriate to the particular class
- the range of topics, from which the teacher can select those which are most accessible and relevant to the needs of their students
- the content of the modules, which enables a variety of teaching and learning approaches to be used
- the focus on self-assessment and personal development.

Courses used in the case study schools included the RSA Practical Skills Profile, Skillpower, and City and Guilds and were based on a coursework approach. The Youth Award Scheme (accredited by ASDAN) was established in one school, in its first year in another and to be introduced in a third. This scheme is widely used in both mainstream and special schools and provides opportunities for students at every level of ability to participate (see White, 1997, for further details). It has several levels: Bronze, which is used by younger children or those with learning difficulties; Silver, for older students or those who have achieved success in Bronze; Gold, which is intended for students applying to university. There is also a version designed for students with learning difficulties in further education settings.

Another advantage of this type of course is that learning carried out across the curriculum can be accredited within the schemes. For example, students working towards the Practical Skills Profile can collect evidence of meeting their targets in 'Communication' from classes in several subjects. Students carrying out community service in homes for the elderly or charity work can have it accredited under the relevant unit in the Youth Award Scheme.

The illustrations below show how the accredited courses being used in the case study schools provided opportunities for students to develop relevant skills and to reflect upon their strengths and weaknesses.

Illustration 5.1

In ***Bluebell School***, the post-16 classes had just started using the Youth Award Scheme and the teacher was developing materials for colleagues working with the classes and for the students themselves. They had begun with the module 'Towards Independence' and all staff working with the classes were focusing on aspects of it. For example, when students were out on trips to the shops, the bowling alley or the swimming pool, they would be encouraged to read the signs in each environment and this would be reinforced back at school.

In one class visited, the teacher was reviewing with the students what they had put in their files as 'My strengths' and she went through each of the sections, checking that students understood what the headings meant. Headings included: *Physical Skills, Communication Skills, Caring for Yourself, Leisure Skills, Community Living skills, Social Relationships, Continuing Education.* The students were able to identify things they were good at and areas of difficulty, so that, for example, a few were able to telephone home and knew their number whilst others felt that they could not. When asked what Continuing Education meant, a student suggested that it meant, *'catch up with work'* and, when prompted about what they needed to get better at, she thought it would be *'reading and writing'*.

However, although these students were developing some self awareness, and were all too conscious of their limited (or non-existent) literacy skills, at the same time, they had confidence in some of their abilities. This was sometimes misplaced, as Illustration 5.2 shows.

Illustration 5.2

Later, in ***Bluebell School***, while the students were cooking as part of 'Preparing a Meal', one student told the researcher he was very good at cooking, and had been good at his previous school. The teacher pressed him for details, asking what he had done and what sort of help he had received and it emerged that he had had a lot of help. The teacher explained later to the researcher that his cooking was hopeless and, in the lesson, tried to get the student to realise his limitations in cookery. However, in order not to erode his self-confidence overall, she praised his reading skills and encouraged him to read the instructions on the packet that he was using for his cooking.

This teacher was very conscious of the need to get the right balance between praising students and challenging them, as she explained:

> *They are used to saying 'I can't do it', especially those who have come from MLD schools, so you have to encourage them. On the other hand, because they get lots of teacher praise, they think they can do everything, even when you go through something with them really carefully and explain what has gone wrong.*

In another school, where students used the Practical Skills Profile to accredit their work across the curriculum, students focused on things they had achieved in order to meet their targets. For example, one student described a sailing trip during which a list of target statements had had to be met: for the generic statement 'Following instructions', she had written *'I had to steer the boat'*. The students were pleased to be able to demonstrate what they were able to do, but this appeared to be the sole focus of the scheme. There was credit for achieving a high number of targets but no account was taken of the quality of work produced or activities undertaken.

On the other hand, opportunities to review their actions and how successful they have been are provided for students using the Youth Award Scheme. A pro forma for Action Planning is issued for the scheme (see Example A3.1 in Appendix 3), ensuring that students plan their activities and later reflect on their level of success. Illustration 5.3 describes some Action Plan reviewing in one school.

Illustration 5.3

In ***Yellowstone School,*** in one lesson, students were updating their record books for the Youth Award. They were required to reflect on their level of success, using the following prompt questions:

What I did
Who helped and how
What went well
What could be improved
Skills I actually used [this was followed by a tick list]
(see Example A3.1 for the complete sheet).

However, in the lesson observed, students' comments were not very self-critical. Some had put that 'nothing' could be improved, while others wrote little which was of direct relevance to what they had done. Since each sheet had to be signed off by a teacher, it is possible that these comments would be challenged by the teacher and the students prompted into making more specific points. This stage of the process was not observed.

5.2.3 School-based accreditation

School-based accreditation may be in place for a number of different reasons. For some students with learning difficulties, it may not be possible to complete coursework on schedule or fulfil all the requirements of externally accredited courses. To meet the needs of these students, many schools issue their own certificates showing which aspects of the course students have completed and what they have learned, and celebrating their contribution. In addition, many schools run courses which they feel are entirely appropriate to the needs of their students (perhaps as a means of enhancing their self-esteem, developing their independence skills or making

them more familiar with the wider world) but for which, at present, suitable accreditation systems are not available. In order, therefore, to give a tangible acknowledgement of the students' experience, schools produce their own assessment sheets and certificates of achievement.

In all the case study schools, at KS4/post-16 (and, of course, elsewhere in the school), a range of activities took place which were accredited by the school itself, rather than any external body. Certificates were awarded and kept with others in the students' records of achievement.

In several of the schools, opportunities were provided for students to pursue activities in which they were particularly interested, such as working on the farm, helping in a charity shop, or doing pottery. In one school, a KS4 course provided students with a huge variety of options from which to choose for Friday afternoon sessions, as Illustration 5.4 shows.

Illustration 5.4

In ***Yellowstone School***, the courses included:

- football
- fashion and beauty
- keyboards
- crafts
- conservation
- entertaining
- DIY
- embroidery
- motorcycles
- IT.

(The complete list of activities is shown in Example A3.2).

Students could choose a different option each term. Some modules were accredited within the Youth Award Scheme but at the end of all modules, a student assessment was carried out by the coordinating teacher and each student. The assessment sheet provided a record of the skills developed and the effort put in, students' comments (prompted and scribed by the teacher) and the assessor's comments. Both student and assessor signed the sheet (see Example A3.3).

School trips, both daytime and residential, were also a common feature of the KS4/post-16 timetables, clearly used to support students in developing the skills to cope with a new environment and to foster independence. Many also provided opportunities for students to practise and consolidate their reading, writing and numeracy skills. Illustration 5.6 shows how a school trip placed a wide range of demands on pupils, both in terms of the skills they were expected to acquire and the record keeping and evaluation activities which underpinned the experience.

Illustration 5.6

In ***Greenbank School,*** a sailing trip had been organised for KS4 girls. As well as the detailed preparation the students carried out, requiring them to plan ahead by producing lists and drawings, they also had to write diaries and complete other evaluations of their experience. Much of the learning was subsequently accredited through the Practical Skills Profile scheme: students had compiled (or been given) a long list of the statements they had to meet, and they were required to provide evidence that they had met the statements, in the form of drawings, pictures, and written acknowledgements from staff on the trip.

5.3 Work experience

For all students in KS4, work experience provides a valuable opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of a workplace environment and to extend their view of what kind of future job or training they might be interested in. For students with learning difficulties, it may be particularly demanding, but also very rewarding, as they may be able to demonstrate skills and abilities which have not been apparent in the school context. Schools need to prepare students for the experience and a great deal of discussion takes place about what will happen, what the student will be expected to do, how they should react to particular circumstances, and so on.

This whole process of work experience is of interest to the issue of self-assessment, as at all three stages (advance preparation, the placement itself and the post-experience evaluation) much of the discussion requires students, with the help of staff, to reflect on their areas of strength, skills in which they feel confident, and areas towards which they might feel some uncertainty or anxiety.

The four KS4 case study schools all sent students on work experience in Y11. Table 5.1 shows the different arrangements in place. In one, students spent one morning a week on a placement from January to March and then a three-week placement in the summer term. In two schools, students spent a fortnight in the spring term, and in the fourth school, students did two two-week placements — one in November and one in May.

This section of the report is divided into three subsections, to describe separately:

- the work carried out in the case study schools to prepare students
- the placements themselves
- students' evaluations of the experience.

5.3.1 Preparation for work experience

The schools began to prepare well in advance by working with students on:

- reviewing their interests and areas of strength
- considering what might be involved in different types of jobs
- writing an application
- having an interview
- making an initial visit to find out about the work placement.

An illustration of some of the preparatory discussion in one school is provided in Illustration 5.7. Similar discussions were observed in other case study schools.

Illustration 5.7

Working with Y11 students in ***Redwing School***, the teacher went through a list of employers who had offered work placements to the students from that school. For each job, she asked students if they were interested and asked them to explain what kind of job it would be, what they might be expected to do.

The discussion was quite detailed and the teacher prompted students to consider, for example, what they might do if they were working in a supermarket and a customer asked where an item might be found. Students suggested that the work placement student could *'look for it'* or *'ask another person'*. The teacher asked why they thought one boy would be good at this kind of job, and other students responded that he was *'polite and helpful'*. Some students were encouraged to identify for themselves why they would be good at a job, whilst others listened to their classmates' suggestions.

This pattern was repeated for several jobs, with students beginning to realise what they should be thinking about, such as: what they would actually have to do, their behaviour, their appearance and what they would wear, how to deal with problems, why someone would be suited or not suited to a particular job.

Later, the teacher handed out worksheets which related to some of the placements which the students had provisionally chosen, such as shop assistant and officer junior (see Examples A3.4 and A3.5).

5.3.2 The work experience placements

The placements chosen by the students from those on offer tended to cover a fairly restricted range of work environments. Those which were common for girls included: shops; playgroups, nurseries or primary schools; hairdressers; retirement homes; animal rescue homes or agricultural settings, such as stables. Boys appeared to choose: shops; garages or repair shops

for cars, bicycles or motorbikes; outdoor jobs in country parks or the golf course.

Before the placements began, students made preliminary visits, either for interviews or to find out about the placement, and they prepared their work experience books. Those seen by the researcher required students to ascertain, preferably in advance, basic information about the placement: the name and address of the place, names of key staff, times of work, clothing to be worn, and health and safety information. Whilst on placement, students had to keep a record of their experience using both structured pro formas and diary approaches. In addition, personal targets for the placement were also agreed and noted in work books. Prompt sheets encouraged students to focus on areas such as:

- what tasks they were performing
- what they were learning
- whether they were meeting targets set in advance
- how well they thought they were performing tasks
- what they enjoyed
- what they found difficult.

Students were expected to complete the sheets either every day or at the end of each week.

5.3.3 Evaluating the experience

At the end of the placement, both employers and students completed assessments of how well the placement had gone. Each school had its own system but Illustrations 5.8 and 5.9 show the process in two schools.

Illustration 5.8

In ***Yellowstone School***, in the week after students returned from their placements, a careers education session was used for them to report on and evaluate their experiences. With support from staff, and referring to a prompt sheet (see Example A3.6), the students described where they had been, how they had travelled, what they had worn, what they had done, and the hours they had worked. They also commented on whether they had enjoyed it, and which aspects in particular had been of interest. The teacher also asked whether there had been any aspects they disliked.

The students were all able to give basic information and all appeared to have had a reasonably enjoyable experience. Some were very enthusiastic while others indicated aspects which had been less enjoyable or which they felt could have been better, such as a girl who had worked in a playgroup who felt that the children should have been offered a wider range of toys and activities.

Illustration 5.8 *(continued)*

Some students had been perceived by their employers as having done particularly well. One boy, when prompted by the teacher, explained that: *'They were pleased with me. Other* [work experience] *people just stood around and waited to be told what to do but I went and asked the manager what I could do.'* Other employers had written glowing reports, which the teacher read to the whole class.

As part of the evaluation, the teacher had composed a report of the work experience for each student, based on what they had told him when he visited them, what the employers had said, and the students' own perceptions of their success. Students carried out their own further evaluation as part of their Youth Award activities (see Section 5.2.2).

In this school, as in others, the provision of a prompt sheet for the students to evaluate their experience helped them to understand the aspects of the placement which were important and provided evidence of their activities and their reactions to their immersion in the workplace. The students' notes on the prompt sheets were kept in their files and would eventually contribute to their personal statements in the National Record of Achievement as well as forming a record of their experience which could be used when they were looking for real jobs or training places.

Illustration 5.9

In ***Greenbank School***, a similar discussion was held each week, after the weekly visit to the work placement in the morning. Students described what they had done and how they felt about the different tasks. On the occasion observed, students had just completed their second visit and were gaining confidence in their new environment, after their initial nervousness.

Before they started the placements, students had set targets for what they hoped to achieve. The class had discussed the possibilities with the teacher then chosen those which were relevant to their own needs and the placements to which they were going. One student was doing her work experience in a nursery class. Her targets were:

- *To feel more grown up*
- *To be far more independent*
- *To keep my cool*
- *To be sensible*
- *To listen to new instructions*
- *To meet new people*
- *To gain responsibility.*

Illustration 5.9 *(continued)*

She felt that she had achieved some of these targets: *'I do feel more grown up. Especially, there's a real big difference, going there, then coming back here: 'cos I'm like a teacher there but when I'm coming back here, I'm a pupil. It's really different.'*

After each visit, students had to write up their work experience diary, using a checklist to remind them of aspects to be covered. This included a section on how they had felt about the day. At the end of the term, employers completed a checklist of job-related skills and both employers and students made a written assessment of broader areas, as follows:

- appearance
- relationship with others
- ability to communicate
- skills
- attitude to work

(see Example A3.7).

The assessment sheet was signed by both employer and student. Students' comments were a mixture of comments on what they had done, what they had learned, and how they felt. One student, who worked in a kennels, made an evaluative comment: *'I was good with the dogs and I had a good attitude.'*

Since the students were so closely supervised and assessed by others, they were obliged to reflect upon their own work at all times during the work placements. There was still, however, in the minds of the employers and teachers, the need to balance encouragement to develop strengths with realism about what students could expect to do in the future. Work placements provided a valuable experience in this respect because in the work situation, students had to conform to the demands of the workplace, had to understand and take notice of health and safety provisions, and had to communicate successfully with co-workers and, in some cases, customers. Employers with experience of taking students with learning difficulties tended to give them tasks which were suited to their abilities — challenging at times, safe and easy (and even boring) at others. Students could feel pride in what they had been able to do but had to recognise some of their limitations.

5.4 Personal, social and health education

An important feature on the timetable for all students in the final years of school life is personal, social and health education (PSHE). In KS4 and post-16, it provides the opportunity for students to discuss topics related to their personal development, both physical and emotional, their growing independence and their lives after they leave school. Much of the emphasis is on enhancing pupils' self-esteem and preparing them to deal with new situations, in their capacity as young adults.

In the case study schools, as in many other special schools, there was a particular emphasis on the development of the personal and interpersonal skills students would need in the future. Students were encouraged to acknowledge their areas of difficulty in coping and to learn strategies for dealing with unfamiliar situations. In PSHE sessions, students were encouraged both to talk about themselves and to listen to, and support, other students as *they* talked about themselves, thereby increasing their understanding of their own situations (see Example A3.8 for an illustration of a self-assessment sheet used to underpin such discussions).

Much of the framework for discussion of such issues was provided by activities based on setting and reviewing targets. As described in Chapter 3, all the students had statements in which their difficulties had been identified and targets set, from which Action Plans had been devised. At annual review meetings, the targets and the Action Plans were reconsidered and progress was discussed. By KS4, most students in the case study schools tended to be involved in part or the whole of such meetings and to participate in the process of reviewing and revising their targets. Staff helped students to reflect on the past year and what they had achieved, in order for students to make an effective contribution to the annual review meeting.

However, in addition to these overall targets, the schools helped students to set targets which could be achieved within a much shorter timescale or which were linked to specific events or opportunities. The purpose of these targets too was to give students a focus for their work and to encourage them to discuss reasons for success or lack of success in achieving them. Illustrations 5.10 and 5.11 show ways in which targets were set and reviewed and their effect on students' behaviour.

Illustration 5.10

In ***Blackbird School,*** a whole-school initiative had been started to get students to set weekly goals, and PSHE lessons provided an opportunity to implement the initiative and review it. The KS4 teacher introduced the session by reminding the students about what is meant by a goal, and how to set realistic goals and to evaluate success. Students had a sheet on which they had written their goals, examples of which included:

To stop copying other people's silly behaviour
To improve my reading
To try to stop losing things
To come in when the bell goes
To stop being aggressive.

The teacher explained later that some students could not be persuaded that it was unrealistic to try to improve their reading in a week, and that they should think of things which were realisable in a week. He had tried to get them to think of small steps on the way to bigger goals.

Students had to review their progress towards the goal, using the following checklist:

I was pleased with the way I achieved my goal	*Yes/No*
I think the goal I set myself was too easy	*Yes/No*
I think the goal I set myself was too hard	*Yes/No*
I enjoyed achieving my goal	*Yes/No.*

The students thought that the exercise had been useful, but when prompted by the teacher, one pointed out that it did not ask students to evaluate how or why they had not achieved their goals. The teacher agreed and stressed the importance of doing this, in order to be able to set new goals. He asked students to talk about why they hadn't achieved goals and encouraged one girl, whose target was *'to try to stop losing things'*, to attempt to identify a more manageable target: for example, she could draw up a checklist of the important things she should remember, like bringing her diary to school every day, and concentrate on that. Another student admitted that he had not achieved his goal, which was *'to come in when the bell goes'*, because he *'just didn't want to achieve it'*. The group discussed whether this was a suitable target for him: all agreed, including him, that it was an important thing for him to do, but if he was not motivated to achieve it, then nothing would be gained. Again, a more manageable target was suggested, such as him trying to arrive on time at least once a day.

The teacher in this class played a crucial role in encouraging the students to reflect more deeply on their own behaviour and the reasons for it. The structured sheet formed a useful starting point, but clearly needed to provide a further framework for students to examine more critically their own success or lack of it in meeting their targets. The teacher guided the students to

reformulate their targets in the light of the discussion, so that the revised targets took account of the tension between what might be perceived as ideal behaviour and what was realistic, given their enhanced self-knowledge.

Such discussions encourage students to aim to improve their learning or behaviour patterns but also to take a realistic view of what is achievable for them as individuals. Illustration 5.11 shows the way in which structured target setting activities can be complemented by informal discussions which arise from the tasks being carried out.

Illustration 5.11

In ***Bluebell School***, the post-16 students have targets linked to the Youth Award Scheme, those derived from the annual review, and others linked to their daily activities. For example, in a cookery lesson (in which the aim was that students would choose what to cook and would plan how to do it), students discussed what they were going to do and one wrote on the flipchart, thereby providing an opportunity for practising spelling, writing and reading for all the group. Then, together, and with support, the students filled in the relevant sections of a planning and evaluation sheet, under the following headings:

Name

Date

Plan

What did you do?

How well did it go?

What have you learnt?

After this, the students filled in another sheet on which they wrote their *'personal target for today'*, linked to the cooking activity. The personal targets were related to students' own areas of strength and weakness, so for some students the focus was on planning, for others on cooking, for several, on reading instructions or ingredients on packets.

The teacher and assistant helped students to identify appropriate targets by suggesting *'Try something that is hard for you'*, and then discussed each individual's choice. The teacher asked one student what he had had difficulty with on a previous occasion and when he replied *'Opening tins'*, she suggested he write that as his target. The targets selected were not just related to the current activity, but could be more general: for one student, it was making a telephone call to someone she found it difficult to talk to; for another, very quiet girl, it was *'chatting to your friends'*.

The emphasis throughout was on checking students' understanding of what they were doing, why they were doing it, what they could do unaided and when they should ask for help. The conversation during practical activities was also a continuation of other discussions about the students themselves, as well as dealing with the use of the materials and equipment.

5.5 National Record of Achievement

Another significant part of the curriculum at KS4 and post-16 is the work carried out to produce the final version of the National Record of Achievement. In recent years, most schools (mainstream and special) have devised systems for recording pupils' achievements, through the collection of materials to be kept in record books, boxes or folders. However, in some schools, the focus has remained on the collation of evidence, such as certificates, examples of high-quality work and photographs, rather than on wider discussions about what is meant by an 'achievement'. This is not the case for many special schools, where the emphasis on enhancing pupils' self-esteem and celebrating all their achievements, however apparently small, means that the process of discussing and recording pupils' achievements is considered as important as the amassing of materials.

In Chapter 3, the role of the record of achievement process in developing the skills and confidence of younger pupils was described, and the importance of such activities taking place at an early age was stressed. In the case study schools, all the students had been accumulating records of their achievements for many years, and in Y11 and post-16, this culminated in the need to prepare a final version, in the form of the National Record of Achievement (NRA). The focus of much of the work at this stage was on preparing for and writing the personal statement of achievements which represents an essential part of the NRA, complementing the statement by the school and the array of awards and certificates.

Before students were in a position to write the final statement, a lot of preparation took place. Despite practice at noting their achievements and constant reinforcement of their strengths, students needed support in a number of ways. The strategies adopted by teachers included:

- discussion of what students had achieved in recent weeks and terms, using a range of materials to remind them
- review of the full range of students' activities, covering all areas of the curriculum, including: coursework within accredited schemes, work experience, specific courses or events attended, and achievements in relation to targets set
- prompt questions to encourage students to consider how they might provide evidence of their achievements
- question-and-answer sessions leading to a structure for how students might formulate their achievements
- a written framework to guide students in how to write their statement.

The discussions held reflected many of the other dialogues between teacher and students, reported in earlier sections of this chapter. Students were stimulated to reflect on what they had achieved, any difficulties they had overcome, and aspects of their work and behaviour in which they had been

particularly successful. An important part of this process was for students to assess their weaknesses, as well as their strengths, in order to decide which aspects of their skills and knowledge they wished to highlight for the statement.

As always with work on records of achievement, the emphasis at KS4/ post-16 was on accentuating the positive, and the photographs, certificates and other materials collected by students were a clear demonstration of what they had been able to do. The selection of items for inclusion in the NRA, however, also provided a rare opportunity for students to exercise their critical judgement about their own work. As when drawing up the personal statement, students had to assess their own achievements, albeit at a limited level, by deciding which pieces of work should be included and which rejected, according to their relative qualities or significance.

Schools felt that the NRA was a useful tool for their students to take with them for interviews with potential employers or college tutors. It provided a record of their achievements and served as a reference point for discussion, especially for those students who were lacking in confidence or whose communication skills were limited.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter, it has been shown how central the role of self-assessment is in many of the KS4 and post-16 activities. It does not figure greatly in National Curriculum subjects or preparation for GCSE and other examination-based courses, but appears to be an integral part of most of the other activities.

The schools supported self-assessment through their choice of externally accredited courses, which themselves included frequent opportunities for students to evaluate their work and their progress in both personal spheres and broader topics. The schools also provided a wealth of other options to enable students to follow their interests and to develop skills and knowledge; many of these courses also had self-assessment elements built in.

The preparation for work experience, the placement itself and the subsequent evaluation were all extremely valuable in getting students to focus on what they might be able to do when they left school, having clarified to some extent what their capabilities and limitations might be. Much of the preparation and evaluation was based on developing self-awareness in the students so that they could cope with the challenges they faced.

PHSE and the work carried out to produce the final National Record of Achievement were also designed to stimulate students' critical faculties so that they could take a realistic view of what they might be able to do in the future.

As the above summary points indicate, much of the work going on in the year before students left school was designed to stimulate their self-awareness, and students were clearly benefiting from it in terms of being able to make choices about their in-school activities and their future prospects. However, at times, there could have been more emphasis on the *quality* of what had been achieved, rather than, sometimes, the focus being solely on the achievements in terms of actions or behaviours. When faced with questions about how they might improve aspects of their learning or behaviour, some students needed significant prompting to enable them to identify such areas and it is not certain that they always understood what was being pursued. The strategies teachers used to try and overcome this were to reinforce constantly the main areas for development, to remind students frequently of what they were trying to achieve and to focus on the same issues by means of different activities and topics.

6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Much of what has been reported will be familiar to many teachers working with pupils with learning difficulties but its significance may not have been previously highlighted in the way that this report has attempted to do. The research has shown that schools are using self-assessment as a tool within a variety of contexts and that teachers provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their achievements both as an integral part of the teaching and learning process and through specific activities. The report has shown how teachers see the need for pupils to assess themselves as part of the development of greater self-esteem, thereby leading to enhanced learning.

In this chapter, the findings from the main chapters are summarised and some broad conclusions are drawn. Finally, there is a checklist of questions relating to self-assessment which teachers might find helpful when evaluating their own practice.

6.1 Summary of findings

Opportunities for self-assessment were provided in the case study schools in a number of different ways, as the main chapters of the report have described. For all the pupils, whatever their age or stage of development, a common set of approaches was found. These included:

The use of targets

Setting and reviewing targets were carried out on both a short- and long-term basis, enabling pupils to focus on areas for development and, subsequently, to review how well they had done in achieving the targets.

Approaches to the curriculum

Programmes of study for individuals, groups or whole classes were in place, with clear objectives for each stage of learning, broken down into appropriate steps, against which both teachers and pupils (and parents/carers) could monitor progress.

Assessment activities

As well as regular monitoring of pupils' progress against individual and learning objectives, in which teachers and pupils discussed what had been learned or achieved, the schools conducted more formal assessments. At

the end of a topic or module of work, teachers carried out some assessment activities but also asked pupils to make their own judgements on what they had achieved, and how they had felt about it.

Personal, social and health education programmes (PSHE)

Discussions, role plays and other activities carried out within PSHE programmes provided significant opportunities for pupils to discuss issues which were important to them, to develop a greater awareness of themselves and others and to enhance their self-esteem.

Records of achievement

The process of discussing achievements, collating certificates and other examples of success, and deciding which have the most value provided the space for pupils to develop a greater understanding of what their areas of strength and weakness might be.

The ethos of the school

In all the case study schools, there was a great emphasis on supporting the pupils to develop confidence in themselves and their abilities, in order that they could lead happy and contented lives, but also so that they would be able to learn more effectively. Teachers worked with pupils on their personal development as part of the process of educating them. Pupils' achievements were clearly noted and regularly celebrated.

The summary above shows how schools provided opportunities for pupil self-reflection and review of their activities throughout the curriculum. At key stage 4 and post-16, all these features were present, with the addition of a wide range of activities specifically tailored to meet the need of young people who would soon be leaving school. Many of these activities provided ample opportunities for students to assess their own progress and their strengths and weaknesses in the light of the challenges they would be facing. These additional aspects of the curriculum included:

- externally accredited and school-accredited courses which develop students' personal and social skills as well as more specific areas of learning
- work experience and community service which enable students to experience new situations and to adapt to different expectations
- careers education which provides information on future prospects and the opportunity for detailed discussions of students' interests, abilities and potential
- work on the production of a personal statement of achievement for the National Record of Achievement, the culmination of students' school life.

6.2 Conclusions

One of the initial concerns of the research was to investigate whether pupils could be taught to be critical of their own work or whether the emphasis on praise and encouragement made this inappropriate. In the course of the project, it became clear that, with younger pupils in particular, the need to build up their confidence and self-esteem was paramount and this approach was based on the view that pupils need to feel secure if they are to learn effectively. This attitude, expressed explicitly by some and implied by others in the case study schools, ensured that self-assessment and discussion of pupils' achievements were used as a means of encouraging pupils to feel positive about themselves and their learning potential.

The type of self-assessment activities used with younger pupils tended to focus on those which looked at what tasks had been carried out, what had been learned, and how pupils felt about their experiences. In some cases, the reasons for pupils' likes and dislikes of activities or experiences were pursued, partly to get pupils to explore and express their feelings and views and partly to inform the teacher about pupils' likely reactions to future activities and experiences.

As pupils get older, the need for them to take a more evaluative approach to their learning and behaviour becomes stronger, as they prepare for transition to new environments. At this stage, teachers in the case study schools were still working to build up students' self-confidence, a vital element as the young people pass through adolescence. However, at the same time, staff were helping students to develop a more self-critical perspective, which would enable them to appreciate a wider range of factors when considering their strengths and weaknesses and deciding on their future plans. For example, students were encouraged to look outside themselves and try and imagine how others might feel, or how employers or customers might act and react in a work situation. The emphasis was still very positive, with students focusing on their strengths but with teachers trying to get them to take a realistic view of what they might be doing after leaving school. Getting the balance right was crucial and, in the sessions observed in the course of the research, the teachers were very skilled and experienced in both supporting and challenging their students.

6.3 Checklist for self-assessment activities

Many teachers may not include self-assessment as an explicit feature in their lesson planning, but may nevertheless introduce it at the times when it seems appropriate. However, given its value in developing relevant skills for both younger and older pupils, as discussed throughout the report, it might be appropriate to incorporate it into lessons on a more systematic basis.

The following questions can be used to highlight the ways in which self-assessment might be used and developed, or as a checklist against which teachers could evaluate their own practice. The questions could be used by individual teachers or as a starting point for discussion amongst colleagues. They could also be used as the basis for a workshop or other professional development activity.

- Is there any self-assessment element built into your daily/weekly/ half-termly/termly lesson plans?
- How is it built in to lesson plans?
- What is its purpose?
- When planning to assess pupils' progress, do you regularly include a self-assessment element?
- How often has self-assessment taken place in the last term within your class(es)?
- Over what time period are pupils asked to look back (the lesson/the morning/the day/the week/the term)?

- In which circumstances is self-assessment appropriate and why?
- Have you noticed any short- or long-term benefits from using self-assessment activities with your pupils?
- What kind of evidence do you have that pupils have benefited from self-assessment?
- How do you evaluate self-assessment sessions?

- How do your pupils react to carrying out self-assessment activities?
- How easy/difficult do pupils find it?
- What do they like/dislike about doing it?
- How do you respond to pupils' reactions?

- What kind of self-assessment activities have you used (in what circumstances and with which pupils)?
  - ❑ asking pupils what they have done/learned
  - ❑ asking pupils what they liked/disliked

- ❑ asking pupils what they found easy/difficult
- ❑ asking pupils why they liked/disliked something or found something easy/difficult
- ❑ asking pupils how they could improve something
- ❑ asking pupils how they would do it differently another time and why

- ❑ getting pupils to set targets and consider whether they have met them
- ❑ getting pupils to discuss how they have met targets
- ❑ getting pupils to discuss why they have not met targets
- ❑ getting pupils to set new targets in the light of evaluating success against previous ones

- ❑ asking pupils to think about themselves, through discussion, drawing, writing, drama
- ❑ asking pupils to talk about themselves in a pair or group
- ❑ asking pupils to identify their achievements
- ❑ asking pupils to identify their strengths and areas of difficulty
- ❑ asking pupils to think about their suitability for different kinds of work experience and future work/college.

- ♦ What kind of formats for self-assessment have you used?
  - ❑ discussion
  - ❑ symbols to express, e.g., likes/dislikes or activities
  - ❑ pictures to express, e.g., likes/dislikes or activities
  - ❑ self-completion sheets, e.g., I like cookery because ...
  - ❑ written questions and answers
  - ❑ diary-style writing or drawing
  - ❑ group self-assessment.

- ♦ Are the formats you have used suitable for the age and maturity of the pupils as well as their levels of literacy and understanding?
- ♦ Are self-assessment sheets/activities developed in collaboration with colleagues/circulated amongst colleagues?

- ♦ How do you use the outcomes of any self-assessment activities?
  - ❑ to show progress in pupils' achievements
  - ❑ to record pupils' development in self-assessment
  - ❑ to plan the next set of targets
  - ❑ to plan the next stage of the curriculum.

- Do pupils keep copies of self-assessment sheets?
- Do you keep separate copies of self-assessment sheets?
- How do the pupils' views influence the tasks which you subsequently give to them?

In considering these questions, teachers will be able to draw on some of the examples provided in this report, but also, more importantly, on their own experience. The kind of self-assessment activities carried out, and the timing and the use which teachers make of the results will all, of course, be dependent on the context of the school and the individual pupils in the classes. Nevertheless, this report shows that self-assessment has an important part to play in the development of young people who are self-aware and able to lead fulfilling lives as adults.

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APPENDICES

The examples included in the Appendices have been taken from schools' own documents and, in a few cases, published materials. In the interests of confidentiality, the school examples have been anonymised.

Thank you to both the schools and the publishers for allowing us to use these documents to illustrate points made in the body of the text.

Appendix 1 Examples of RoA preparation sheets

Review questions 1
1. What do you like doing at school?
2. What don't you like doing?
3. What do you find difficult?
4. What do you think you are good at?
5. What would you like to do more of?
6. What are your interests outside school, eg clubs?
7. What do you like doing at school?
8. What would you like to do when you leave school?
9. Is there anything else you want to add?

Review questions 2

1. **What do you like doing at school?**

2. **What don't you like doing?**

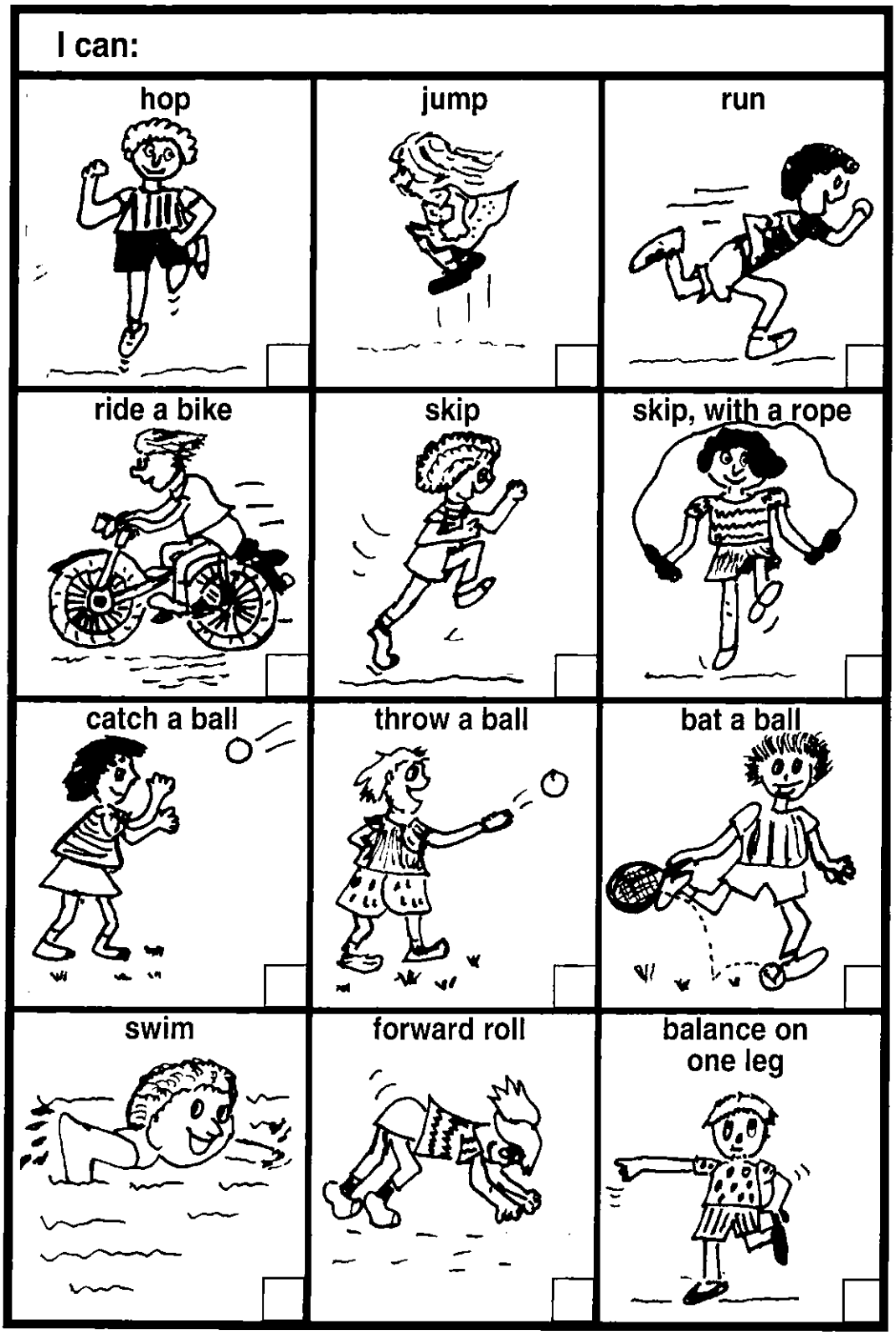
3. **What do you find difficult?**

4. **What do you think you are good at?**

5. **What would you like to do more of?**

Appendix 2 Examples of self-assessment sheets used by schools

A2.1



A2.2

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

DIARY SHEET

THEME: _____ DATE: _____

WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO DO NEXT WEEK?

_____

_____

_____

_____

A2.3

Technology (Textiles) Name Date

Today I have:

(3b) Listened to, talked about, read and brainstormed my profile sheet.

(3a) Looked for ideas, in a book, a magazine, a newspaper, on a visit.

Drawn a picture of what I might choose to make.

(3b) Drawn a detailed plan of what I am going to make.

(3g) Looked at some fabrics and threads and thought about which to use.

(3c) Written a list of everything I will need.

(3f) Talked about my idea to the rest of the group, described how I think it will look and feel and be used when finished.

(3f) Worked out what my idea will cost to make.

(4d) Thought about my pattern. Made a paper pattern for all of the fabric pieces I will need and decided how to join together.

(3i) Revised or learned a basic skill such as pinning, pressing, cutting, tacking, slip stitch, backstitch, hemming, cross-stitch.

(4b) Revised or learnt how to use the pinking shears, scissors, sewing matching, iron, glue gun.

Collected my fabric, thread, beads, sequins, lace, wadding, stiffener.

Cut out my pattern pieces using the pinking shears, fabric scissors.

(4d) Joined two pieces together by pinning,tacking, hand sewing, machining, bandaweb, glueing.

Used the iron to press my work.

Used the fabric paints.

(4g) Embroidered by hand stitching or the sewing machine.

(3l) Thought again about my plan and changed it.

Used the iron to attach the fabric stiffener.

(4a) Attached the stiffening or wadding by hand sewing or machine stitching.

Thought about what I will have to do next week.

Made a list of what I will need for next week.

Collected all my materials and stored them safely ready for next week.

(3h) Finished my project and shown it to the rest of the group giving them information that would help them to make the same.

Next week I will Need

A2.4

HAP's Assessment Sheet

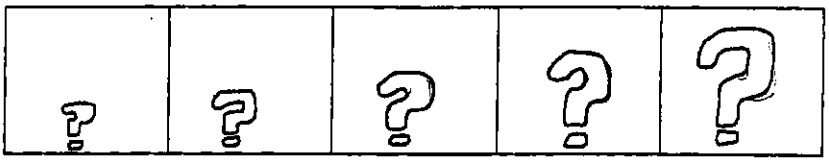
Name

Topic / Module

Date

How much I enjoyed it.

How much I understood.



How much effort I put in.

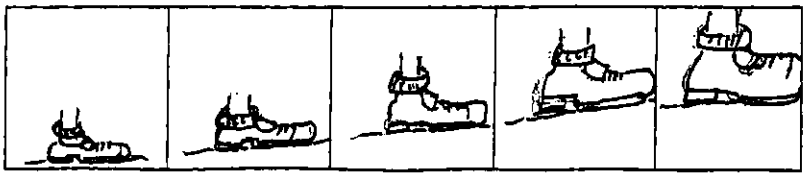
Something I did well.

Something I enjoyed.

Something I needed help with.

How I could improve my next module.

Progress I've been making.



A2.5

Humanities Topic Evaluaton Sheet

Name	Class	Date

Colour in your answers

How hard did you work on the topic?

How much did you understand?

How much did you enjoy the topic?

What did you enjoy most?
Say one or two things you have learnt.

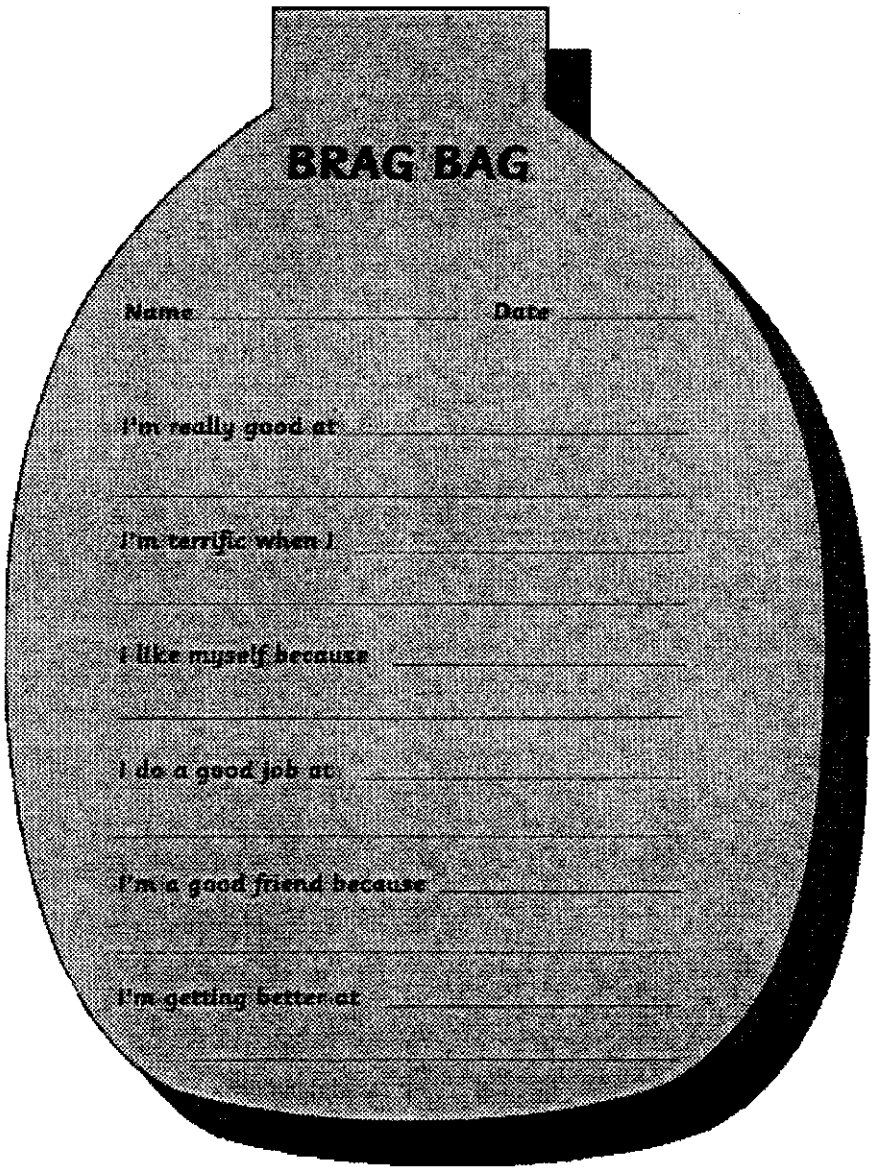
A2.6

BRAG BAG ACTIVITY

GOAL: To build positive self-esteem

DIRECTIONS:

1. Follow instructions given by your tutor as you play the Brag Bag game.
2. Write how you felt as you shared good things about yourself.
3. After playing Brag Bag with the group, complete the sentences in your own bag below.



A2.7

SELF-ASSESSMENT

NAME

P.S.E.
Confidence in between

Own interests Football and Music/Video and Newcastle and Ant a Dec a Robson and Shearer and ~~Geordie~~ Geordie

Likes	Food	Activities	Music/Video
	chocolate Sponge and Custard		Ant a Declan

COMMUNITY SKILLS
Road safety Yes [redacted] cross Roads.

Shopping Yes.. no Problem

Planning/organising Need help with writing and sreading

COMMUNICATION
Talking to friends OK

staff OK

unknown staff hard because I dont know What they think of me

READING } very hard because of My dyslexia
WRITING }

MONEY good

TIME OK

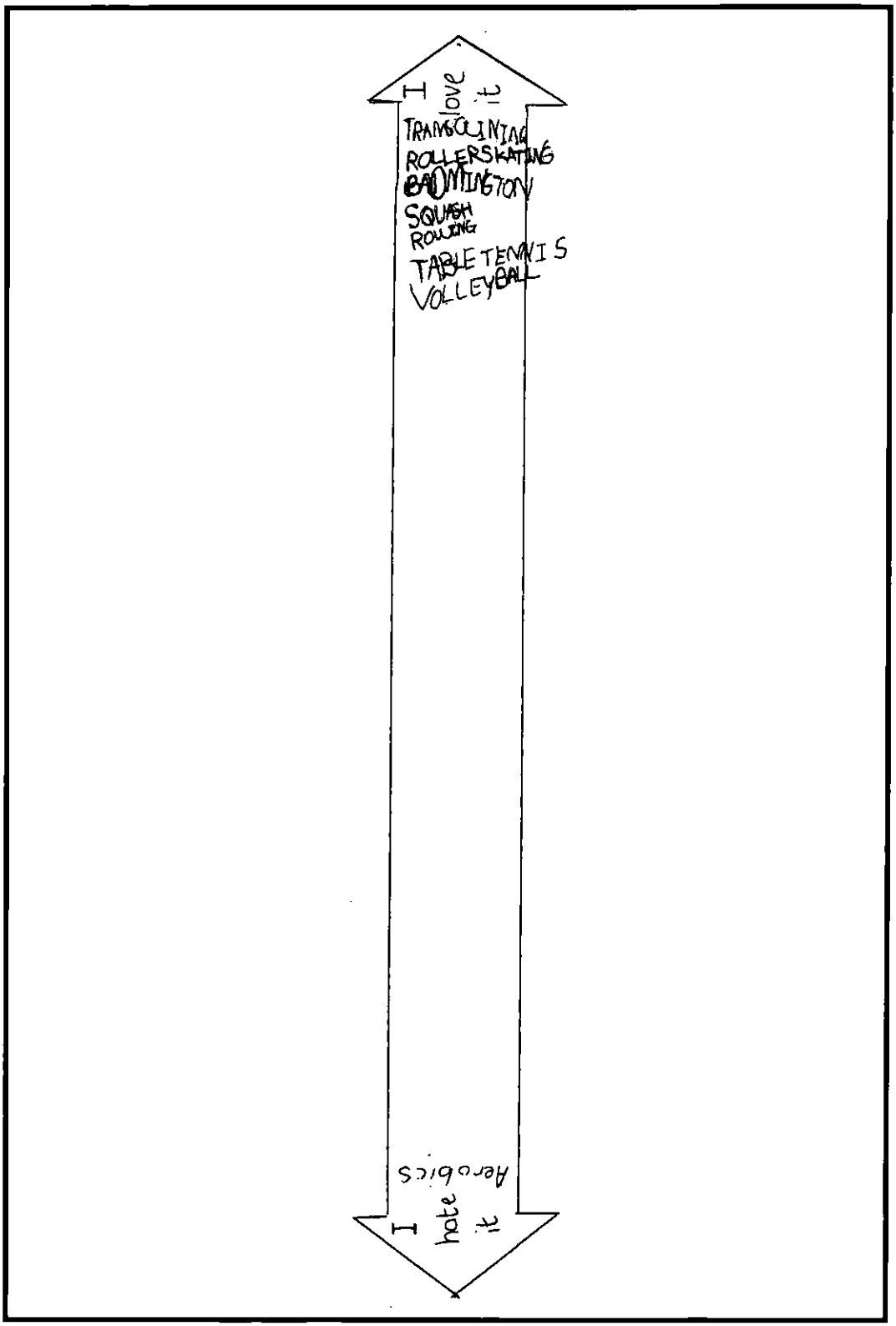
SPORTS nt

SWIMMING excellent

Students' comments

More adult.
More work like.
Good practice copying spellings.
Getting used to my problem.
Liked doing as group.
Easy to get help with.

A2.8



Students' comments

Too little space for writing.

Too plain.

A2.9

ASSESSMENT

Name_____ Date_____

Self Assessment Rating Scale

What are you like at the following?

1. Talking to my friends						
2. Talking to people I don't know						
3. Listening to people						
4. Starting a conversation						
5. Asking questions						
6. Answering questions						
7. Looking at people when talking to them						
8. Not fidgetting						
9. Speaking clearly, not mumbling						
10. Asking if I don't understand something						

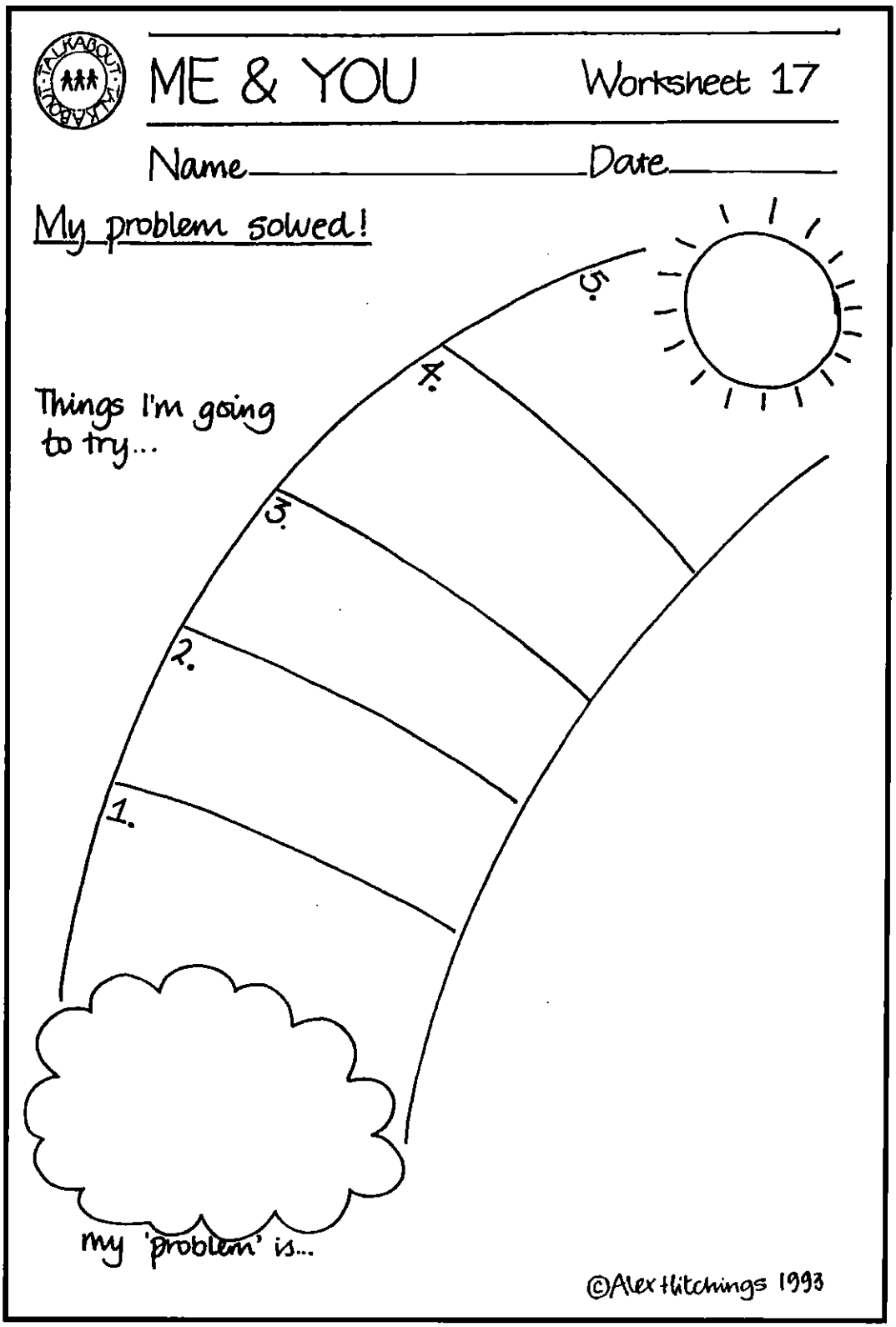
Total _____

Completed by: _____

Students' comments

Faces not needed.
If can't read it's confusing.
Best to have – yes/no
good difficult

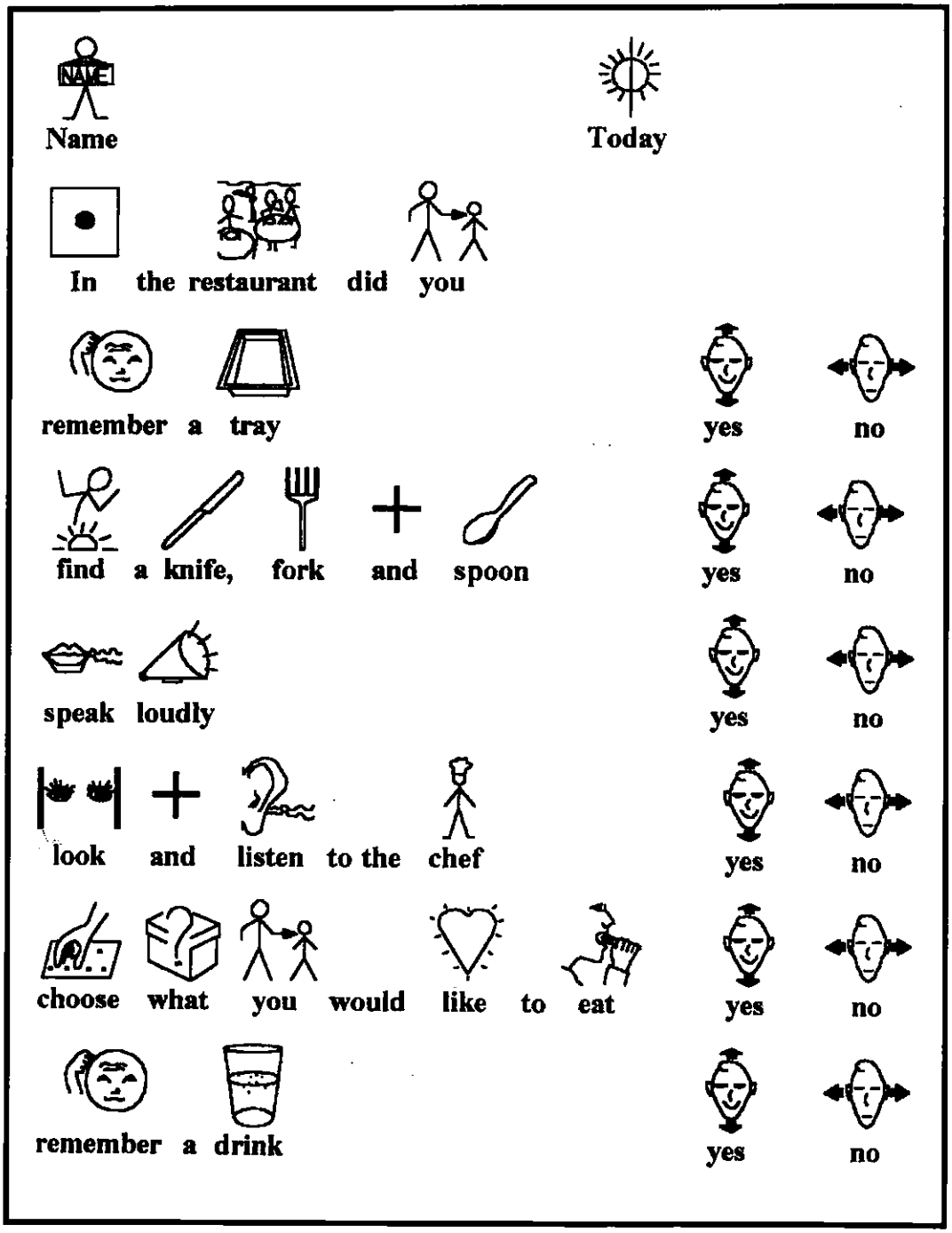
A2.10



Students' comments

Okay but prefer a typed sheet

A2.11



Students' comments

Hard to understand.

Don't like the way it looks.

Too childish – may be okay for some.

Can't understand pictures.

Can read 'like'  *means love by my standards.*

A2.12

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY EVALUATION SHEET

Name ..... Date .....

Class ..... Activity group .....

THEME .....

Please answer the following questions with your teacher.

1. Describe what you have made for this project.

.....

.....

.....

2. What activities did you do at the start of this project that have helped you with your work?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Look at your plans, say how these helped you with your project.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Make a list of the tools you used.

.....

.....

.....

5. Make a list of the materials you used

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 3 Examples of sheets used with KS4 and post-16 students

A3.1

ACTION PLAN

Challenge:

How will I do it:

When:

Where:

Who else is involved:

What will be needed:

Skills I think I will use: ☑

- Communication ☐
- Improving Own Learning ☐
- Working With Others ☐
- Problem Solving ☐
- Information Technology ☐
- Application of Number ☐

REVIEW

What I did:

What went well:

What could be improved:

Who helped and how:

Skills I actually used: ☑

- Communication ☐
- Improving Own Learning ☐
- Working With Others ☐
- Problem Solving ☐
- Information Technology ☐
- Application of Number ☐

Student signature: _____

Tutor signature: _____

Date: _____

Module Grid for Year 11 94–96 (Updated 03-04-96)

Name Date	2/95 7/95	12/94	4/95	7/95	12/95	4/96	7/96
	Careers Service	Keyboards	Textiles	Horticulture	Country Crafts	Conservation	Motor Cycles
	Careers Service	Country Crafts	IT	Cycling	Fashion & Beauty	Leather Crafts	
	Careers Service	Embroidery	Fashion & Beauty	Cycling	Entertaining	Conservation	Music
	Careers Service	Parts	Fashion & Beauty	Cycling	Keyboards	Leather Crafts	Textiles
	Careers Service	IT	DIY	Cycling	Horticulture	Football	Games
	Careers Service	IT	DIY	DIY	Football	Football	Motor Cycles
	Careers Service	Keyboards	Conservation	Needlework	Entertaining	Leather Crafts	
	Careers Service	Sports	Conservation	DIY	Country Crafts	Keyboards	Fitness
	Careers Service	Keyboards	Textiles	DIY	Country Crafts	Football	Fitness
	Careers Service	IT	Textiles	Cycling	Keyboards	Conservation	Motor Cycles
	Careers Service	Sports	DIY	Cycling	Football	Football	Fitness
	Careers Service	IT	Keyboards	Cycling	Football	Football	Fitness
	Careers Service	DIY	Light Craft	DIY	Football	Football	
	Careers Service	Sports	Fashion & Beauty	Horticulture	Country Crafts	Football	Motor Cycles
	Careers Service	Country Crafts	Keyboards	Horticulture	Fashion & Beauty	Music	Motor Cycles
	Careers Service	Embroidery	Conservation	Cycling	Country Crafts	Keyboards	Textiles
	Careers Service	Parts	IT	Entertaining	Football	Keyboards	Motor Cycles
	Careers Service	Sports	DIY	DIY	Football	Football	Fitness
	Careers Service	Embroidery	Keyboards	Horticulture	Football	Football	Motor Cycles
	Careers Service	Parts		Needlework			
	Careers Service	DIY	Keyboards	Cycling	Horticulture	Music	Games
	Careers Service	DIY	Keyboards	Cycling	Entertaining	Fashion & Beauty	Motor Cycles
	Careers Service	DIY	Leather Crafts	DIY			
					Horticulture	Conservation	Careers Service

A3.3

Student Assessment Sheet

Name: _____ Subject Area: D.I.Y.

S.E.R.A. SKILLS

	Effort	Ability		Effort	Ability
Information Handling	A B C	A B C	Problem Solving	A (B) C	A (B) C
Creative/Imaginative	A B C	A B C	Numerical	A B C	A B C
Organisation	A (B) C	A (B) C	Communication	A B C	A B C
Physical/Motor	A (B) C	A (B) C	Social	A (B) C	(A) B C

Subject Area

Students Comments

I enjoyed doing D.I.Y. because it is practical. I want to do a practical job when I leave school ~ car mechanic and panel beating. I felt I learnt new skills on Fridays.

Assessors Comments

You have shown an interest in many of the tasks that we have undertaken during this module and that you have the ability to work very hard at them. You prefer to work with a small team and will often take the lead role, showing that you do have skills that with a little development will be very useful to you in the future. When you are with the right people and in the right frame of mind I have felt able to trust you with tasks that you can perform on your own. You have shown promise during this module, well done!

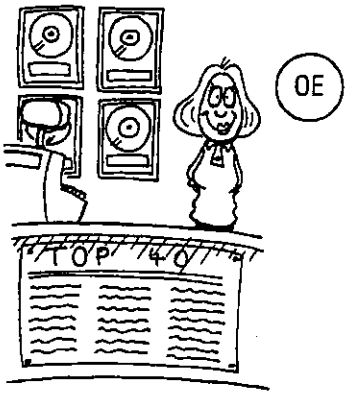
Students Signature: _____ Date: 15-4-97

Assessors Signature: _____ Date: 13:8:97

A3.4

on the SPOT

Shop Assistant



These are some of the things you might work with.

What would you use these for?
Can you think of any other things you might use?


dustpan & brush


hoover


calculator


till


carrier bag


stapler


money

What would I be doing in this job?

Can you do any of these things already? Tick those that you think you can do.

- ☐ Greeting customers
- ☐ Helping customers find things in the shop
- ☐ Showing goods to customers
- ☐ Dealing with complaints
- ☐ Wrapping or packaging goods
- ☐ Using a till
- ☐ Taking payments and giving change
- ☐ Cleaning and tidying
- ☐ Dealing with deliveries
- ☐ Making sure there is very little loss or waste of goods
- ☐ Being patient and friendly with customers

What else would I need to get good at?

Are you good at any of these already? Tick those that you think you can do.

- ☐ Weighing and measuring
- ☐ Counting and checking
- ☐ Working with people of all ages
- ☐ Following instructions
- ☐ Knowing what to do if there is an accident or fire

A3.5

on the spot

Office Junior

CAT

These are some of the things you might work with.

What would you use these for?
Can you think of any other things you might use?


filing cabinet


in and out trays


printer


fan


paper


lamp


mouse


computer


adjustable typist's chair


telephone

Can you do any of these things already? Tick those that you think you can do.

What would I be doing in this job?

- ☐ Sorting out post coming into and going out of the office
- ☐ Taking the post around to different people in the office
- ☐ Filing documents
- ☐ Answering the telephone
- ☐ Making photocopies
- ☐ Sending faxes
- ☐ Typing letters and other documents
- ☐ Taking messages
- ☐ Welcoming visitors

Are you good at any of these already? Tick those that you think you can do.

What else would I need to get good at?

- ☐ Following instructions
- ☐ Using a computer
- ☐ Working as part of a team
- ☐ Counting and sorting
- ☐ Reading and writing
- ☐ Working with people of all ages
- ☐ Following health and safety procedures
- ☐ Knowing what to do if there is an accident or fire

A3.6

Where did I go?

How did I get there?

What duties did I have?

Did I have to wear special clothes?

Did I have to use any special equipment?

What was my favourite part?

What was my least favourite part?

What hours did I work?

How did I get on with others?

Was it what I expected?

Did people help me?

Has it changed my mind?

Would I like to do this sort of work full time?

What have I learned?

What else would I like to try?

Would this work appeal to any of my friends?

If I had been in charge of this job, what would I have done differently?

What advice would I give to the next person to do this job?

A3.7

Work Experience Profile

EDUCATION BUSINESS UNIT
WYCOMBE

ADMINISTRATION & CLERICAL

This is to certify that _____ has completed
a **Work Experience Programme** at
from **22 January 1997** to **26 March 1997**

SKILLS PROFILE *(please tick the appropriate boxes)*	*has gained experience*	*has shown proficiency*	*not applicable*
Communicating with clients	☐	☐	☑
Communicating with staff	☐	☑	☐
Communicating using the telephone	☐	☐	☑
Following rules on health and safety	☐	☑	☐
Following security procedures	☐	☑	☐
Maintaining a clean and tidy work area	☐	☑	☐
Processing mail	☐	☐	☑
Receiving and relaying messages	☐	☐	☑
Operating reprographic equipment	☐	☑	☐
Using a filing system	☐	☑	☐
Word processing	☐	☑	☐
Data processing	☐	☑	☐

Additional skills/Further details:

proved to be a willing student who adopted a flexible attitude and we would be more than happy to consider her again should the situation arise.

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A3.8

10.9.97

SELF-ASSESSMENT

NAME

P.S.E.
Confidence Not Sure

Own interests
music dancing newbolle make up

Likes Food Activities Music/Video boyzone

Home and away Kentucky dancing 911
newbolle Ant and Dec
COMMUNITY SKILLS Swemmen Peter Andr
Road safety Clup
need help make up
Shopping
need help with list and money
Planning/organising
no
COMMUNICATION
Talking to friends
not very good
staff
easy and
unknown staff
difficult
READING
good
WRITING
neat

MONEY
need help with spelling
TIME
ok with hours need help with rest
SPORTS
good
SWIMMING
good

nfer

NATIONAL LOTTERY CHARITIES BOARD

self-assessment for pupils with learning difficulties

Self-assessment skills are important for all young people and are now a formal requirement in many non-GCSE schemes, often used by students with learning difficulties at Key Stage 4. Self-assessment can contribute to the development of independence skills and to empowering young people with learning difficulties to plan their own development and identify the progress they are making.

The research reported on here was funded by the National Lottery Charities Board to investigate good practice. Case studies of five special schools were carried out between June 1997 and January 1998.

The report provides evidence of strategies used in schools to develop self-assessment skills and focuses, in particular, on students at KS4. It explores the many activities in place during this transitional period which provide opportunities for students to develop their self-critical skills. The report describes how teachers try to balance the promotion of students' confidence and self-esteem with the development of self-critical perspectives, so that students can take a realistic view of their strengths and weaknesses and make decisions about their plans for the future.

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