

Assessment Without Levels

From September 2015 the way that children in schools are to be assessed changed. This is because of the introduction a new National Curriculum. Assessment today looks very different to how it has done since 1988.

National Curriculum 2014

The main changes to the key core subjects are highlighted below.

English - The new programme of study for English is knowledge-based. It is characterised by an increased emphasis on the technical aspects of language and has less emphasis on the creative aspects. Appendices give specific content to be covered in the areas of spelling and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. These are set out for each year group across both key stages.

Mathematics - The main areas in the new programme of study for mathematics are number, measurement, geometry, statistics, ratio and proportion and algebra. There is no longer a separate strand of objectives related to using and applying mathematics, however, the aims of the programme of study explicitly state that children should be taught to reason mathematically and solve problems by applying their mathematics. Most of the changes to the mathematics curriculum involve content being brought down to earlier years.

The End of National Curriculum Levels

The children who were in Years 2 and 6, at the end of the last academic year (2014-2015), were the last pupils to be awarded a level in their end of Key Stage tests (Summer 2015).

This is because the Department for Education (DfE) wants to avoid 'The Level Race' where children move through the old National Curriculum levels quickly to achieve higher attainment. The old National Curriculum was sub-divided into levels, but these were not linked to national curriculum year groups. Although Level 4 was the expected standard for the end of KS2, a child in Year 4 could be a Level 3 or even a Level 5. Some children were achieving Level 5 and 6 at the end of Key Stage 2 but were not secure at that level. The feeling from the DfE was that the old national curriculum and the levels system failed to ensure that children had a breadth and depth of knowledge.

Assessing Without Levels

The DfE announced last year that there would no longer be National Curriculum levels and that schools needed to set up their own way of assessing pupils. Age Related Expectations refer explicitly what pupils will know, be able to apply and understand at the end of the academic year. Children can now be described as being "on track" or "not on track" to meet Age Related Expectations.

Along with other schools in our locality, we use the Target Tracker system to monitor the progress of all pupils. Progress and attainment is measured in steps. There are 6 steps in each year group, for example in Year 3 the range is 3B, 3B+, 3W, 3W+, 3S and 3S+.

B means that this child is **beginning** to work within that band.

W means that the child is **working within** that band.

S means that the child is **secure** in that band.

Children are expected to make 5 steps progress over this year in order to meet age related expectations.

EYFS

From this year, we are also required to create a baseline for all children in the EYFS. Following advice from West Sussex Local Education Authority, we have adopted the Early Excellence system of obtaining a baseline based upon EYFS practice rather than testing.

The baseline is not the same as the EYFS Profile (which is completed at the end of Reception). It is similar but is completed within the first 6 weeks of a child entering a Reception class.

It is a snapshot in time of a child, whereas the EYFS Profile is a year-long journey of evidence. It builds on existing approaches and practitioner-led observational-based assessments. Children are not taken out of the classroom for specific “tests”. It is designed to replicate existing good EYFS practice of initial screening and observations.

Key Stage 1

A pupil who has reached the expected standard for a child at the end of Year 2 will be described as having “met” KS1 expectations. Year 2 pupils will take National Curriculum tests in the Summer Term. These comprise two reading comprehension papers, a grammar, punctuation and spelling paper and two mathematics papers: one on reasoning and one on arithmetic.

Key Stage 2

A pupil who has reached the expected standard for a child at the end of Year 6 will be described as having “met” KS2 expectations and will be “Secondary ready”. Year 6 pupils will take National Curriculum tests in the Summer Term. These comprise two reading comprehension papers, two grammar, punctuation and spelling papers and three mathematics papers: two on reasoning and one on arithmetic.

Communicating With Parents and Carers

During the Autumn and Spring Terms parents and carers will have the opportunity to discuss their child’s progress with the class teacher and will be informed whether the child is on track to meet their end of year target and what their next steps are. At the

end of the Summer Term, an annual report is sent to all parents and carers and identifies whether a child has met Age Related Expectations.