

Assessment Without Levels

From September 2014, the Government made a huge change in the way that children in schools were to be assessed, tying in with the New National Curriculum that started to be used by all schools at this time. This was a new way of thinking for schools, with assessment looking very different to how it had been done for the previous 20 years. The aim of this guide is to hopefully give you some clear information about all the changes that are happening in Education across the country, and what that means for the children here at The Coppice Primary School.

Before we can even think about assessment though, we need to be clear on what changes the new curriculum has brought to subjects that are traditionally assessed:

Curriculum 2014

So, what are the changes to the curriculum?

It would take far too long to cover the whole curriculum, particularly in any great depth, but the main changes to the key core subjects are highlighted below.

English - The new programme of study for English is knowledge-based; this means its focus is on knowing facts as well as developing skills and understanding. It is also characterised by an increased emphasis on the technical aspects of language in addition to the creative aspects. English is set out year by year in Key Stage 1 and two-yearly in Key Stage 2. Appendices give specific content to be covered in the areas of spelling and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. These are set out yearly across both key stages.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335186/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_-_English_220714.pdf

Mathematics - The main areas in the new programme of study for Mathematics are called domains. These are number, measurement, geometry, statistics, ratio and proportion and algebra. Two of these, number and geometry, are further divided into subdomains. The way that the curriculum is organised varies across the primary age range – every year group has a unique combination of domains and subdomains. There is no longer a separate strand of objectives related to using and applying mathematics. Instead, there are problem-solving objectives within the other areas of study. Most of the changes to the mathematics curriculum involve content being brought down to earlier years.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335158/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_-_Mathematics_220714.pdf

The End of Curriculum Levels

The Department for Education (DfE) decided that the children who were in Years 2 and 6 (2014-15) would be the last pupils to be awarded a level in their end of Key Stage tests (Summer 2015).

So why are levels disappearing?

The DfE want to avoid what has been termed 'The level Race' where children have moved 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 their national curriculum year group. For example, a child in Year 4 could be a Level 3 or even a level 5. Children were achieving Level 5 and 6 at the end of Key Stage 2, but the DfE thought that a significant number were able to achieve a Level 5 or 6 in a test—but were not secure at that level. The feeling from the DfE was that the old national

curriculum and the levels system failed to adequately ensure that children had a breadth and depth of knowledge at each national curriculum level.

Assessing Without Levels – what it looks like:

The DfE announced last year that there would no longer be National Curriculum levels and that schools would have to set up their own way of assessing pupils. We have spent a lot of time researching various different methods of assessing pupils. Almost all of the systems used the same format, which was similar to the system used in the Early Years and Foundation Stage. This was to take the end of year expectations for each year group and to split this into three categories as follows:

- **Emerging**— No more than a third of the end of year expectations have been achieved.
- **Developing**—Between one third and two thirds of the end of year expectations have been achieved.
- **Secure**—Almost all of all the end of year expectations have been achieved and the child is able to use and apply their knowledge and skills confidently.
- **Greater Depth (Mastering)** – All of the end of year expectations have been achieved and the child is now working on ‘Mastery’ or ‘Depth of learning’; i.e. applying their learning in new and unfamiliar situations.

Under the old levels system, children who were exceeding might have moved into the next level. The DfE now want children who are in the exceeding bracket to add more depth and breadth to their knowledge, and to have more opportunities to develop their using and applying skills. These phases of learning are called Mastery and Depth of learning. Only exceptional children will move into working towards the end of year expectations from the year above. Similarly, children who are unlikely to be emerging at the end of the year may work towards the expectations from the year below. So how will this look at the end of each Key Stage?

Key Stage 1

It is anticipated that the majority of children will reach the assessment point of Year 2 *Secure* (2S), a smaller number of children will reach Year 2 *Mastering* (2M) and a small number will be Year 2 *Emerging* (2E) (or possibly Year 1 *Emerging/Developing/Secure/Mastering*).

Key Stage 2

The majority of children should reach the assessment point of Year 6 *Secure* (6S). Similar to Year 2, there will be some children who may be Year 6 *Mastering*(6M) and some children who are Year 6 *Emerging* (6E). There may also be a small number of children who are still working at a lower judgment band (e.g. Year 4/5 *Emerging/Developing/Secure/Mastering*).

Assessing Without Levels

The biggest difference is how we will talk to parents about how their child is progressing during the year. With the old National Curriculum levels, each year, children were given a target for the end of the year, and during the year we would tell parents what National Curriculum level their child was at.

For Example: A child could finish Year 3 with a level 3a, and in Year 4 would have a target of a 4b for the end of the year. At Parents' Evenings throughout the year parents may have been told that they have moved to a 4c and then on to a 4b.

We could use the levels system this way because there was no correlation between a level and a child's year group, and this can be seen in the way that in a Year 6 class there could be a range of levels, from level 2 to a level 6. However, the new National Curriculum sets out expectations for each year group, and children will be assessed against those every year. So a child in Year 4, for example, will always be judged in the first instance against the expectations for the end of Year 4.

So how will the process in school work?

In each Autumn term, by October/November the teachers will have had an opportunity to assess how the children are working. At the start of each year group, every child will be emerging as they are being judged against the End of Year statements. By using their professional knowledge and judgment, teachers will know what the children can already do, and what they think the children can achieve. They will then give a forecast as to where they think a child will be by the end of the year. So, for example, children in Year 3 could be given a forecast of 3E, 3D or 3S. Only very exceptional children will have a forecast from a higher or lower year group. As far as we are aware, Year 6 *Secure* (6S) is likely to be the highest grading for the end of Key Stage 2.

During the year (using the assessment systems outlined below), when we have conversations with parents about their child's progress, they will not be given an actual definitive position of where they are on this scale. Instead, they will be told whether their child is on track to meet their End of Year target. It may well be that the child is above or below where they need to be, in which case their end of year target may be adjusted.

We hope that you find this guide useful to help you understand why assessment has changed and how assessment has changed.

How assessment judgements are arrived at at The Coppice Primary School:

Nursery/Reception (EYFS):

All EYFS children are continually assessed, throughout Reception, against the age band descriptors in the document *Early Years Outcomes - Development Matters*.

On entry to Reception, a baseline assessment for each pupil is carried out using the *Early Excellence Baseline Assessment Programme* (this began with the 2015 cohort). At the end of the Reception year, each pupil is assessed against the *Early Learning Goals*, to assess if they have not achieved / achieved / exceeded the Early Learning Goal (17 areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum). This information is reported to parents in the end of year report.

Between baseline and the end of year assessments, each area of learning is assessed. The curriculum has 17 areas, each with key objectives that the children are taught throughout the Foundation Stage. Assessment consists of the teachers and teaching assistants observing the children in their child initiated learning, planned assessment activities as well as drawing on in-depth knowledge of the children in their classes. Judgements are made by the class teacher regarding whether each child has securely achieved each taught objective. Within each age related band a judgement is made to whether the child is just *Emerging* (low), *Developing* (mid) or *Secure* (high).

This is recorded on our *SPTO*. Evidence is gained either in the form of an observation or recorded work. All assessments, many with photographs, are uploaded onto *SPTO*, where the child's teacher will check that the child is making at least the age related progress steps and if each pupil is on track for their age.

In the EYFS we recognise parents and carers have the most knowledge of their children and we welcome their input to our assessments of the children. Online learning journals will also be accessed by parents and they will be able to add comments relevant to their child's learning.

Assessment in Key Stage One and Key Stage Two:

Writing

At the Coppice, assessment is central to our curriculum and delivery for writing.

Evidence is collected from pieces of children's independent writing. At the start of each writing unit, children complete a *Cold Writing Task*, where they 'have a go' at writing in a given style, before any teaching of specific skills. Then, this writing is assessed and used to plan to meet the needs of the children. At the end of each unit, children complete a *Hot Writing Task* to apply all of the skills that they have been taught, and demonstrate the progress that they have made. This writing is then assessed and recorded on *School Pupil Tracker Online (SPTO)* in order to analyse gaps in the learning of groups and individuals.

For each assessed piece of writing, teachers search for evidence of the children applying the skills described in our assessment statements. The statements, which are derived from the 2014 New National Curriculum, are broken into four sections:

- Transcription
- Handwriting
- Composition
- Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation.

For each statement, teachers will record a judgement of *working towards*, *mostly achieved* or *achieved*, based upon the evidence available in *Hot Writing Task* and in *Cold Writing Tasks*, and their own professional judgement of the child's learning. Each time the children complete a *Hot Writing Task*, teachers will update the judgements according to the progress demonstrated. From these judgements, we can see whether a child is *Emerging*, *Developing*, *Secure* or *Mastering* in relation to their age-related expectations.

Reading:

Moving forward with the New National Curriculum we will be regularly testing the children using our new online assessment tool. This will aim to give us a Reading Age, and highlight specific areas of reading that the children are strong in and those which they need to develop further. This will help us to plan our teaching in a highly focused way and to monitor the progress of the children against the end of year expectations. Using the book selector tool, we will be able to either tailor interventions best suited to the specific child's needs and monitor progress every half term.

Meanwhile, throughout the half terms, we will be delivering ERIC (Everyone Reading in Class) based sessions daily that will be differentiated and focused on objectives based around the New National Curriculum. These ERIC sessions will involve developing all aspects of reading behaviour and reading strategies as well as modelling to the children how to answer comprehension questions.

The children will then have time to practise these skills before they are assessed through an independent mini assessment. Children will then be judged as to whether they are *Emerging, Developing, Secure* or *Mastering* in regard to the end of year expectations as outlined earlier.

Home reading and the monitoring of it will also be key to the teaching and developing of reading skills.

Maths assessment

Maths assessment and tracking will all take place in conjunction with the 'Assertive Mentoring' skills checks and tests.

All children in Year 1 through to Year 6 will carry out a skills check every two weeks (or three per half term). The results of these checks are entered onto children's individual assessment sheets, showing their success against each individual objective. At the end of the half term each child will complete a half-termly test, the results of which are also recorded on their individual assessment sheets. At the end of each term a judgement is then made for each objective (*W -working towards M - mostly achieved A - achieved*) using the evidence from the skills checks and the half-termly tests.

At the end of each term, this data is transferred onto the *SPTO* where the information is used to create success judgements (*Emerging, Developing, Secure* or *Mastering*).

Mastery can be achieved when an objective is securely being met and evidence is collated to show this objective being applied in a wide range of contexts.

ICT:

The Coppice Primary School follows the *Switched on Computing* Programme of Study. Each unit of work includes a number of assessable outcomes, presented in the format of 'all', 'most' and 'some'. These are mapped to corresponding end of year expectations from the programme of study.

This means that a unit of work could allow pupils to demonstrate learning relating to several objectives from the National Curriculum programme of study. In the 2015/16 academic year, we will begin to use the Rising Stars 'badge' awards to track progress. In addition, staff will be trained on how to use Screencasting as a tool for pupils to use in order to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their learning.

We hope that you find the above guide to assessment at The Coppice useful. However, if you would like further detailed information on day-to-day assessment, please refer to our school assessment policy.