

Mansbridge Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

From Sept 2015 the new national curriculum was introduced for all year groups in school except for the Reception classes where it hasn't changed. At Mansbridge we prepared for this over the past year and our staff have been working very hard to deliver this new curriculum in exciting ways such as introducing more themed weeks. For example this year in the Spring term we will be spending a whole week on 'Food' - where it comes from in the world, how we measure and weigh ingredients, what is a balanced diet and by the end of the week the children will have all cooked or prepared a meal. This will entail a cross-curricular approach involving lots of subjects such as maths, English, geography, science, cookery, history etc.

Assessment levels - how do you know how your child is progressing and achieving ?

This academic year for all year groups the Government has removed the former national curriculum assessment levels (3c, 3b, etc.). The Department for Education commissioned a review of assessment which has just reported its findings. This Commission found that :

'Too often levels became viewed as thresholds and teaching became focused on getting pupils across the next threshold instead of ensuring they were secure in the knowledge and understanding defined in the programmes of study. Depth and breadth of understanding were sometimes sacrificed in favour of pace. Levels also used a 'best fit' model, which meant that a pupil could have serious gaps in their knowledge and understanding, but still be placed within the level. This meant it wasn't always clear exactly which areas of the curriculum the child was secure in and where the gaps were.'

We are therefore in a new era of 'assessing without levels'. There is now no national requirement from the government in how schools should assess and record progress. It is therefore up to each school to develop its own system. As a leadership team we have considered a number of different systems. Our new assessment format allows the teachers to assess the pupils' learning against a variety of progressive statements called performance descriptors. From this the teacher will assess whether your child is **above**, **at**, **working towards** or **below** the national expectation for the year your child is in.

What does this mean for you?

We will no longer be giving a level for a child but we will share with you where your child is at in terms of the national expectation for their year group. At the recent parents evening you will have been given a report detailing whether your child is : **above**, **at**, **working**

towards or **below** national expectation. The new national curriculum is significantly more difficult for the children and we estimate that children are expected to be working at a level at least one year above what was expected in the previous curriculum. An example being that it used to be that children needed to know all of X tables from 1 to 12 by the end of yr 6 - now they need to know them all by the end of year 4. Therefore from now on there could be less children who will be assessed at **above** the national curriculum expectation. Furthermore under the new National Curriculum children should only work on the objectives for their year group and should not be taught content from a higher year group. For those pupils who have reached their end of year expectations, the teachers will provide a range of learning opportunities that offer a greater depth and breadth of understanding specific to their year group. These pupils will be provided with challenging work in different contexts so that they can work at greater depth with the skills and knowledge that they have been taught.

This does not mean that children will not be stretched. We will continue to challenge children who have reached the national expectation for their year group by ensuring that they master the skills in different, stimulating contexts and perhaps also have the opportunity to spend more time on subjects that they do not perform so well in.

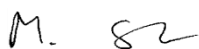
To help you at home, all of the content that children are expected to learn are available are on the school website -
<http://www.mansbridge.southampton.sch.uk/school/currplans.htm>.

I do apologise for the length and complexity of this newsletter but I felt that you need to know what will be changing and there is no simple way to explain the changes and the reasons behind these changes. We have arranged a meeting next week 21/10/15 9.00-10.30 for those who want to understand more about the new curriculum, assessment and how you can help your child.

If you cannot make this meeting and would like to know more about this process or have any questions, please speak to myself, or your child's class teacher. If we have lots of parents requesting more information we will hold another meeting after half-term to explore the changes in more detail.

However can I reassure you that we will continue to provide an excellent education for your children on an everyday basis as we always have and although the Government has removed levels for assessment and raised the expectations we will continue to rise to the challenge.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Sheehan, Headteacher