

Assessment without Levels from 2016 for all pupils

Five key changes to how your child will be assessed

The Government believes that the system of National Curriculum Levels is no longer appropriate and has removed them. Instead, it would be for individual schools to determine what assessment system to use.

Primary schools are focussed on ensuring that as many of its pupils as possible are “secondary ready” by the time they leave. This is defined by pupils achieving the new higher “expected” level of performance in the English and maths end of Key Stage 2 tests

There is a move to scaled scores rather than levels. Scaled scores are used all over the world. The score 100 will always represent the ‘national standard’ – the expected attainment. Therefore schools will be aiming for all pupils to achieve a score of 100+. A child who scores 100 would be considered ‘secondary ready’.

Most schools will use a baseline check within the first few weeks of pupils starting Reception to assess what the children know in key areas when they start school. This will be used to measure progress when they leave Primary school in year 6.

New Interim Frameworks have also been published by the DfE for reading, writing, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. At the end of Year 6, your child’s teacher will assess your child against the standard.

Assessment without Levels

From this September, the Government made significant changes in the way that all children in schools are to be assessed. This is to tie in with the New National Curriculum that started to be used by all schools at the beginning of last academic year. This is a new way of thinking for schools, and assessment will look very different to how it has been completed for the past 20 years.

The aim of this guide is to offer parents some clear information about all the changes that are happening in Education across the country, and what that means for the children in Mansbridge Primary .

Changes to the 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 English and Mathematics are highlighted below.

English - The new requirements for English is characterised by an increased emphasis on the technical aspects of language. 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.

Mathematics - The main areas 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. Most of the changes to the mathematics curriculum involve content being brought down to earlier years.

The End of Curriculum Levels

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. At the end of Key Stage 2, children were aiming to achieve the expected standards of Level 4 or above in the tests. However, the DfE view was children were not always secure at that level. Indeed, the DfE view 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

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. Schools across Southampton have spent a long time researching various different methods of assessing pupils. Almost all of the systems currently use similar formats, which are 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 3 categories as follows:

- Working below the expected standard— yet to be secure in the end of year expectations.
- Working at the expected standards —secure in the end of year expectations.
- Working at greater depth —secure in all the end of year expectations and is able to use and apply their knowledge and skills confidently.

Under the old levels system children who were exceeding might have moved into the next level or keystage. 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 of Maths and English independently in other subject areas like Geography , Science etc. They are calling this phase of learning – working at greater depth.

So how will this look at the end of each Key Stage?

Key Stage 1

Tests

This academic year the DfE is changing the assessment arrangement. In 2016 your child will take tests in May 2016 which assesses the new national curriculum, introduced in 2014.

These tests are designed to help parents and teachers learn more about their child's strengths and weaknesses in Reading, Maths, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Children are tested on what they have been learning at school and to assess the new national curriculum.

At the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) children will be assessed on English grammar, punctuation and spelling (referred to as GPaS or SPAG), Maths and Reading. These tests are designed to enable pupils to demonstrate their attainment and are not strictly timed since the ability to work at pace is not part of the process. Phonic knowledge will continue to be assessed with the Phonics Screening.

In Key Stage 1 there is no set week for the tests to take place but all assessments must be completed and collated by the end of May 2016.

So what level should my child achieve?

There is a move to scaled scores rather than levels. Scaled scores are used all over the world. The score 100 will always represent the 'national standard' – the expected attainment. Therefore schools will be aiming for all pupils to achieve a score of 100+.

Teacher Assessment

New Interim Frameworks have been published by the DfE for reading, writing, mathematics and science. These describe the expected standards for assessing pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 2, your child's teacher will assess your child against the standard. This year, the reading and mathematics tests will contribute to the teacher assessment judgement.

Your child's class teacher will continue to assess your child's progress and attainment throughout the year.

Key Stage 2

Tests

In the summer term of 2016, children in Year 6 will be the first to take the new test papers. These tests in English and mathematics will reflect the new national curriculum, and are intended to be more rigorous. There will also be a completely new marking scheme to replace the existing national curriculum levels.

At the end of Year 6, children will sit tests in:

- Reading
- Mathematics
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar

These tests will take place the week beginning 09 May. They will be marked externally and the results will be used to measure the school's performance.

So what level should my child achieve?

As in Key Stage 1, there is a move to scaled scores rather than levels. Scaled scores are used all over the world. The score 100 will always represent the 'national standard' – the expected attainment. Therefore schools will be aiming for all Year 6 pupils to achieve a score of 100+.

Teacher Assessment

New Interim Frameworks have also been published by the DfE for reading, writing, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. At the end of Year 6, your child's teacher will assess your child against the standard.

Your child's class teacher will continue to assess your child's progress and attainment throughout the year.

During the year, when your child's teacher has conversations with you about your child's attainment you will be told whether your child is on track to meet their end of year expectation. Your child's teacher will also be able to share learning where your child has been successful i.e. progress as well as next step targets

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

Further information

- Scaled scores:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/scaled-scores>
- Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 sample materials:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-2016-sample-materials#key-stage-1>