



ASSESSMENT POLICY

SCHOOL INFORMATION

ST GEORGE'S LOWER SCHOOL

August 1, 2016

Authored by: Mr. T Edwards, Assistant Head Teacher

ASSESSMENT POLICY INTRODUCTION

Assessment Without Levels

From September 2015, the Government made a huge change in the way that children in schools were 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 is beginning to look very different to how it has done for the past 20 years. Before we even think about assessment we need to be clear on what changes the new curriculum has brought to subjects that are traditionally assessed.

Curriculum 2014

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 rather than developing skills and understanding. It is also characterised by an increased emphasis on the technical aspects of language and less emphasis on 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.

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.

The End of Curriculum Levels

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

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 long time researching various different methods of assessing pupils,

and we have communicated and moderated with other schools in the area. All schools are assessing in a similar way and this was to take the end of year expectations for each year group and to split this into 3 categories as follows:

- Emerging— Yet to be secure in the end of year expectations.
- Expected—Secure in the majority of the end of year expectations.
- Exceeding—Secure in almost all or 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. 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. They are calling this phase of learning Mastery and Depth. 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 expected, a smaller number of children will reach Year 2 exceeding, and a small number will be Year 2 emerging, or possibly Year 1 exceeding/expected/emerging.

Key Stage 2

Lots of you may have heard of the expression 'Secondary Ready' as the standard children must achieve by the end of Year 6. The DfE have slightly distanced themselves from this phrase and are talking about children reaching the assessment point of Year 6 expected. At St Georges, we only go up to Year 4, so similar to Year 2 there will be some children who may be Year 4 exceeding and some children who are Year 4 emerging. There may also be a small number of children who are still working at a lower level e.g. Year 2/3 exceeding/expected/emerging.

St Georges will continue to use the Assessment & Tracking system that we were using prior to assessments without levels. School Pupil Tracker is a system that we are familiar with and will deliver the targets and recording of results and progress that we require.

The biggest difference is how we will talk to you about how your child is progressing during the year.

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 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/low as they are being judged against the End of Year statements. By using their professional knowledge and judgement 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, emerging, 3D,

developing OR 3S, secure. Some children will be working below and will be given a grade of 2E, 2D or 2S. This will form the baseline for the forthcoming year.

During the year, when we have conversations with you about your child's progress you won't be given an actual definitive position of where they are on this scale. Instead you will be told whether your child is on track to meet their end of year target. It may well be that they are above or below where they need to be, in which case their end of year target may be adjusted.

Why assess?

Children's progress is closely monitored at St George's Lower School in order that we can provide the best possible opportunities and highest levels of support for all children. All assessment activities aim to ensure that the children are able to make excellent progress in their learning whilst taking into account the needs of individual children.

The aims and objectives of assessment in our school are:

- to enable our children to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in their work;
- to allow teachers to plan work that accurately reflects the needs of each child;
- to help our children understand what they need to do next to improve their work;
- to provide regular information for parents that enables them to support their child's learning;
- to contribute towards accountability data.

Aims of the new National Curriculum

Following the announcement, by the Department for Education, of the removal of levels for the attainment and progress of children (2013) and the relaxation of restrictions on centrally led reporting requirements (Department for Education and Gibb, 2015 and Ofsted, 2015), schools have now been given the opportunity to conduct more 'assessment of the right kind', to offer task specific, personalised feedback and to become 'Assessment Professionals' by creating an assessment system that supports the learning of the individual children in their school. (Tim Oates, Chair of the expert panel for NC review).

Ofsted has stated the following:

- Ofsted recognises that marking and feedback to pupils, both written and oral, are important aspects of assessment. However, Ofsted does not expect to see any specific frequency, type or volume of marking and feedback; these are for the school to decide through its assessment policy. Marking and feedback should be consistent with that policy, which may cater for different

subjects and different age groups of pupils in different ways, in order to be effective and efficient in promoting learning.

- Ofsted does not expect performance- and pupil-tracking data to be presented in a particular format. Such data should be provided to inspectors in the format that the school would ordinarily use to track and monitor the progress of pupils in that school.

(Ofsted inspections – clarification for schools, March 2015, No. 140169)

Assessment at St Georges

Staff at St Georges have worked together to develop an assessment system that takes into account the criteria of the new National Curriculum, whilst providing a greater focus on mastery. Assessment takes into account children's strengths as well as areas where they need support. It consists of mainly formative strategies and a range recording methods, as detailed below.

Nursery

Using the EYFS outcome criteria, a baseline is done as and when children have settled into Nursery. We use School Pupil Tracker to establish next step targets and these are monitored weekly. In addition, on-going observations and assessments are gathered through child and adult initiated activities. We do small group phonics for children that are ready and also initial sounds are taught through the Read, Write Inc programme to all children.

Foundation stage profile

When the children have settled into Year R a Baseline Assessment is undertaken which covers the Attitude to learning as well as basic literacy and numeracy skills. Day to day assessment is then undertaken via Narrative Observations, child-led and adult-led activities. The Guidance within "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), " is used to establish the working levels of each child within each of the 17 areas that form the Early Learning Goals. Targets are set and activities planned to ensure that all children have the opportunities to develop in all of the areas. Parents are kept informed of their child's "Next Step" in learning via the Home/School diary, homework, Thursday Morning "Watch Me Learn" meetings as well as Parents' Evenings. The school follows the Government statutory Guidance on "Emerging, Expected and Exceeding" levels and reports all 17 areas to parents at the end of the Summer Term.

Year One phonics check

All children in Year 1 will participate in a phonics check. This assessment will be administered by the Year 1 teacher and Mrs Ravillious. Results are included within the Year 1 end of term report.

SATS

Children in Year 2 are assessed during May. The results of these assessments are reported annually to the parents by the governing body. The national expectation is that children should aim to achieve 'working at the expected standard' at the end of Year 2. In addition, teachers across the school assess regularly and use this information to inform their planning and teaching.

Marking and assessment

We aim to provide feedback to children through marking so that they have specific advice about improvements to their work. Children are given time to read and review their work following marking. Children are encouraged to reply to marking comments when they have finished their work. They are also encouraged to use a green pen to edit their work and to respond to teachers' comments. See separate Marking Policy for more information. Children in the older year groups are encouraged to self-assess their work and to identify next steps in their learning. This is done with the support of the class teacher.

Assessment in Years 1 to 4 is recorded on the school's Pupil Target Tracker system. Children are assessed against the following descriptors:

- No understanding/knowledge
- Emerging - At early stage of development (support needed)
- Securing - Growing ability and independence (prompting needed)
- Secure - Exhibits skill independently
- Mastery - Exhibits skill spontaneously and with confidence

The focus of each assessment will usually be a key performance indicator, mastery statement or National Curriculum criteria. Learning objectives will also be recorded. Each key performance indicator, mastery statement or National Curriculum criteria should be taught on several occasions during the school year. This will enable teaching teams to evidence progress. Targets have been created in child friendly language. These will be rolled out as a school during the first term of 2016.

Most assessment information will be collected through observations, information in books, pupil self-assessment and half termly assessments.

Assessment information will be used to inform planning and to identify children who may need extra support. A summative cohort report will be produced each term for English reading, English writing and maths. This will be based upon the results input into target tracker for each subject. Judgements will be made based on information from the assessment documents, assessment feedback from the children and teaching teams, observations and work contained in books. This will be followed by Pupil Progress meeting discussions to discuss intervention strategies.

Family consultations

Family consultation evenings take place in the autumn and spring terms for children in nursery through to Year 4. Children should contribute to these conversations in either a verbal or written format. If the parents are happy, children can attend the meetings.

Reports to parents

At the end of each year, families will receive a full report detailing progress and achievements across the curriculum. The report will be based on self-assessment by the child and summative observations by the teaching team. Parents / Carers are encouraged to provide feedback to the school.

Inclusion

St George's is an inclusive school and we work hard to meet the needs of all our children. Class teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class. High quality teaching is available to all children, including those with additional needs. We work hard as a school to ensure that all additional support in the classroom is deployed effectively. Where a child is not making the expected progress the class teacher will work alongside the SenCo, parents and external agencies (where appropriate) to plan tailored support. We use Individual Learning plans, where appropriate, which are reviewed with the child and parents termly. We do not label any child by so called 'ability'. All children are encouraged to achieve their best and become confident individuals living fulfilling lives. See separate SEND policy for more information.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Marking Policy
 - Teaching and Learning Policy
 - SEND policy
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- This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on a bi-yearly basis.
 - This policy was reviewed and updated in March 2017.
 - Next review date: September 2019