



Assessment Without Levels

From this September, the Government has made a huge change in the way that children in schools are to be assessed. This is to tie in with the New National Curriculum that started in all schools at the beginning of this Academic Year. This is a new way of thinking for schools, and assessment will look very different to how it has done for the past 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 Swinton Queen Primary School. 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 Department for Education (DfE) has decided that the children who are currently in Years 2 and 6 will be the last pupils to be awarded a level in their end of Key Stage tests (Summer 2015). We will continue to assess using levels for children in these year groups until the end of this academic year.

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 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 (This year this will apply to children in Y1, Y3, Y4 and Y5)

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. The end of year expectations for each year group are split this into 3 categories. We are calling them as follows:

- **Entering** - Yet to be secure in the end of year expectations.
- **Developing** - in the majority of the end of year expectations.
- **Secure** - in almost all or all the end of year expectations and is able to use and apply their knowledge and skills confidently.

(These terms follow on from the Foundation Stage assessment steps of Emerging, Expected and Exceeding)

Under the old levels system children who were 'Secure' might have moved into the next level. The DfE now want children who are in the 'Secure' 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.

The biggest difference is how we will talk to you about how your 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 you what National Curriculum level your child was at.

So how will the new 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 'entering' 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 target of entering, developing or secure. Only very exceptional children will have a forecast from a higher year group.

During the year, when we have conversations with you about your child's progress we will tell you whether your child is on track to meet their end of year target.

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we move over to the new system.