

Assessing Without Levels

From September 2015 children are no longer assessed against national curriculum levels and it has been left to individual schools to determine how they want to track, describe and report progress across each year.

We use the Sheffield Tracking and Assessment Tool. Teachers make periodic assessments against each of the separate national curriculum statements for reading, writing, maths and grammar, punctuation and spelling to decide how well each child is performing in each of those subject areas. These outcomes are then reviewed to ensure the children are on track to meet end-of year expectations and ultimately end of key stage (year 2 and Year 6) expectations.

For any given skill we now think in terms of children as 'entering' – encountering something new for the first time, and therefore needing considerable input from adults to support their learning – or 'developing' – showing greater understanding and independence, with significantly less adult help required – or 'secure' – demonstrating a confident, wholly independent, level of skill. By the end of each school year we expect that almost all the children will be within the developing stage with a sizeable majority at 'secure.' Most schools have adopted this, or a very similar system, but may use slightly different terms.

At the end of the primary phase, different descriptions are used. There are 5 possible outcomes.

Below expectation	Working towards	National Expectation	Above Expectation	Mastery
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The government expects that the vast majority of children will reach 'national expectation' (although this represents a higher standard than previously.) For some children, reaching the expectation may be too challenging, whilst for others it would indicate underachievement, lack of challenge and slow progress across Years 3 – 6.) Each child's progress from their starting point (end of Y2 outcomes) is also judged. This will be measured by comparing their individual performance against the average performance of similar children nationally.

2016 is the first year in which this new system takes place, and the differences will be most noticeable for those parents and carers with older children. From this year, children will be given a score, not a level. Whilst it is as yet unclear about where the thresholds will fall for each of the five bands above, a score of 100 will indicate that national expectations have been achieved. It will be easier to explain all of this once the first set of data is received.