

Reinwood Junior School

Assessing without Levels



Introduction

Attainment Targets and levels were introduced with the national curriculum in 1988. A new national curriculum was published in 2014 and statutory assessment arrangements will change in summer 2016 to align with its content and principles. From September 2015, levels will no longer be used for statutory assessments.

The rationale for the removal of levels

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. Progress became all about moving on to the next level, but progress can involve developing deeper or wider understanding, not just moving on to work of greater difficulty. Sometimes progress is simply about consolidation.

Life without levels

Without levels, schools can use their own assessment systems to support more informative and productive conversations with pupils and parents. We can ensure our approaches to assessment enable pupils to take more responsibility for their achievements by encouraging them to reflect on their own progress, understand what their strengths are and identify what they need to do to improve. Focusing assessment on the content of our school's curriculum will allow for communications with parents and carers to provide a clearer sense of how to support your child to build on and consolidate their learning. Removing the 'label' of levels can help to improve pupils' mind-sets about their own ability. Differentiating teaching according to pupils' levels meant some pupils did not have access to more challenging aspects of the curriculum. Following the removal of levels, teachers can aim to ensure they use methods that allow all pupils access to the whole curriculum.

Types of Assessment

Day-to-Day in-school formative assessment

'Day to Day in-School Formative Assessment' is an integral part of teaching and learning. It helps children to measure their own strengths and areas for development. It allows teachers to understand pupil performance on a continuing basis, enabling them to identify when pupils are struggling, when they have consolidated learning and when they are ready to progress. In this way, it supports teachers to provide appropriate support (corrective activities) or extension (enrichment activities to deepen understanding) as necessary and informs progress. It enables teachers to evaluate their own teaching of particular topics or concepts and to plan future lessons accordingly.

In school examples: making use of rich question and answers, marking of pupils' work, observational assessments, regular short re-cap quizzes, half termly assessments, scanning work for pupil attainment and development, discussions with children, pupil self-assessment, success-criteria, peer marking

'In-School Summative Assessment'

In-school summative assessments will be used to monitor and support children's performance. They will provide children with information about how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time, providing feedback on how they can continue to improve. In-school summative assessments will also inform parents about achievement, progress and wider outcomes. Teachers will make use of in school summative assessments to evaluate both pupil learning at the end of an instructional unit or period (based on pupil-level outcomes) and the impact of their own teaching (based on class-level outcomes). Both these purposes will support teachers in planning for subsequent teaching and learning. In-school summative assessments will also be used at whole school level to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, to identify where interventions may be required and to work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and expected attainment.

In school examples: baseline assessments, reading age tests, half termly English & Maths tests, short end of topic or unit tests or tasks, reviews for SEND pupils, end of year assessments

National standardised summative assessment

Nationally standardised assessments will be used to provide information on how children are performing in comparison to children nationally. They will provide parents with information on how the school is performing in comparison to schools nationally. Teachers will have a clear understanding of national expectations and assess their own performance in the broader national context. Nationally standardised summative assessment enables the school leadership team to benchmark the school's performance against other schools locally and nationally, and make judgements about the school's effectiveness. The government and OFSTED will also make use of nationally standardised summative assessment to provide a starting point for Ofsted's discussions, when making judgements about the school's performance.

In school example: National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2

Reinwood's System

At Reinwood Junior School we believe that all forms of assessment should be used to inform planning and teaching. Assessments should be used to ascertain if children require catch up programmes or if they are ready to deepen their learning further. Assessments are used, together with teacher observations, marking and feedback and children's books, to establish a picture of the whole child. Once this has been done teachers input their judgements on to our data system (Integris) where 1= working towards the expected standard, 2= working at the expected standard, 3= working at a greater depth within the expected standard. After this Pupil Progress meetings are held between the class teacher and senior leaders to ensure all children are making progress. Teachers then start the process again as they will use all the information gathered to plan and teach lessons which are pitched correctly and will challenge all children to reach their full potential. Senior leaders then use the school's data to track and monitor the attainment and progress of individuals and groups. Parents are informed about their child's progress through half termly Progress Reports and Parent's evenings.