



The 'New' National Curriculum – Fact Sheet 4

January 2016 – 'Life After Levels'

With the introduction of a new curriculum, the government has got rid of the old 'levels' system which were aligned to the old curriculum. Although the government have introduced new measures of assessment for the end of each key stage, as detailed in the last curriculum factsheet, all schools have been allowed to devise their own method of assessing children and tracking progress within each key stage.

We are fortunate in Hampshire to have an active local authority whose advisory teachers and inspectors have been working with schools to devise a system of assessment which can be adopted by schools, if they wish. Along with a number of Hampshire schools, we have opted to join the Hampshire Assessment Model (HAM!) project group. We have begun using this system since September to track pupils against the new curriculum expectations, and are meeting with other schools and members of the local authority team regularly to refine how it works and to moderate judgements across schools. In this newsletter, we aim to give an overview of how the HAM system works and how we hope it will be useful in providing detailed information for you about your child's progress.

How is the new system different from levels?

- The levels system was a 'best fit' system – in other words, teachers made a judgement about which level they felt that a child was working at based on which level descriptor fitted them best - it didn't mean they could do *everything* within that level. For example, they could leave Y6 as a 'level 4' in maths (the expected level) but struggle with division or fractions, as they could compensate in other areas of maths. In the new curriculum, the emphasis is on children being able to meet *all* the criteria within the 'Age Related Expectations' (ARE), and therefore our assessment system needs to enable us to pinpoint children's relative strengths and areas for development and address the weaker areas as a priority.
- The level system was used across key stages – in other words, you could have children working at level 3 from Y2 right up in to secondary school. The new system focusses on 'Age Related Expectations' (ARE) which are based on the curriculum content for each year group. If children become sufficiently competent, fluent and independent with the year group curriculum by the end of the year, they will be said to have met the 'ARE'. Eventually, it is hoped that most children will be able to master the curriculum content for the year group they are working in – this is going to be more challenging for pupils in our KS2 classes for the next few years as they have not been taught the new curriculum from Y1 and therefore may have a large number of 'gaps' in their learning which need to be addressed due to the changes and raised expectations within the curriculum content.
- The level system worked well for tracking data – you could show progress by showing how many levels or 'sub-levels' a child had moved. However, levels didn't really help teachers identify next steps for a child or support with planning. The new system is designed to help teachers pinpoint development areas and we hope it will also enable us to share more detailed information with parents about children's learning in the different areas of maths and English.
- Although there are a large number of primary schools who are adopting the Hampshire model, all schools are allowed to choose their own forms of on-going assessment. This means that when a child moves school within primary school, their new school will not necessarily be using the same system.

How does the new system work?

- The Hampshire maths and English teams have mapped out the new curriculum content for every year group (Y1-Y6) into 3 'phases' ensuring the curriculum statements are taught in a logical order, with the content and expectations in each phase building on the previous phase. As a school, we have agreed that phase 1 will go up to the end of November, phase 2 from December to the spring half term break, and phase 3 up to the end of April. The curriculum is mapped so that all new content is introduced by the end of April – in phase 4 (May to July), teachers will revisit the areas of learning which pupils still need to address to be able to meet 'ARE' by the end of the year, and provide children with further opportunities to deepen their learning through application in a range of contexts.

- The maths and English content have been split into a number of ‘domains’, with each domain being covered in every phase. This ensures that children are frequently revisiting aspects of the subject to help consolidate and build on their knowledge.

Maths Domains	Reading Domains	Writing Domains
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and place value • Additive reasoning (includes subtraction) • Multiplicative reasoning (includes division) • Fractions (including decimals) • Measurement • Geometry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word reading • Comprehension – clarify • Comprehension – monitor and summarise • Comprehension – select and retrieve • Reason and explain • Themes and conventions • Inference • Language for effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcription (including spelling) • Handwriting • Composition and effect • Text structure and organisation • Sentence structure • Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.

- At the end of each phase, teachers record a ‘Milestone’ assessment. They have to decide whether pupils are ‘on track’ in each domain to meet ARE at the end of the year. When pupils have only just been introduced to the content, being ‘on track’ doesn’t mean they have to be fluent, competent and independent – they will be considered an ‘apprentice’ and may still have some scaffolding – but they will show that they have grasped the concept sufficiently to be able to move on to the next phase’s content. However, as they move through the phases, children will be expected to move away from being ‘apprentice’ to become more ‘competent’ and hopefully an ‘expert’ within the curriculum content for their year group.
- At each Milestone, teachers will record if a child is ‘secure’ (e.g. ‘on track’), ‘beyond’, ‘close to’ or ‘below’ for each subject domain. If a child is ‘close to’ being on track, this means that the teacher believes that with the right intervention, the child can catch up and be ‘secure’ by the end of the next Milestone. Where a child is ‘below’ in a domain, this signals that they are not currently on track to meet ARE, and will require intervention to support them closing the gap with their peers.
- In the spring term, instead of a mid-year written report, we will be sharing the milestone assessment print out sheets with parents along with targets for reading, writing and maths. This will be done through the March parents’ meetings. Parents will be able to see for each subject area whether their child is ‘on track’ and be able to pin-point their stronger/weaker domains. We hope that once you have seen these sheets, it will make the system clearer for you.
- For a small number of pupils, the year group ARE will not be a realistic goal in one of more subject areas (for example, due to specific SEN). SEN pupils will therefore continue to have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and profile books which give specific targets and show progress, and we are currently introducing curriculum progression maps which will enable teachers to assess and plan next steps for all children who are below the AREs in a particular subject or domain.
- At the end of the year, teachers will make a final judgement about whether each child has met the age related expectations for their year group. This will be shared with parents on the end of year reports, along with written comments about your child’s work in maths and English, and a summary of your child’s attainment in all areas of the curriculum.

We appreciate that this is a lot of information for parents to take in at once, and so we are planning on running a short information meeting for those who would like to find out more about the new assessment system later this term. You will also have the chance to discuss this with teachers at the parents meetings in March.

We hope you will appreciate that there has been a great deal of change for teachers to get to grips with since September, and like all schools, we are refining and developing our new systems as we go along. Teachers are delivering new curriculum content, and also having to assess in a very different way – this will take time for us to master! We hope that you will support us during this period of change, but would also appreciate any feedback regarding the changes which affect you as a parent.