



Changes to Assessment and Reporting.

At the beginning of the academic year 2015/16, the Department for Education (DfE) scrapped National Curriculum Levels as a way of assessing children in primary and secondary schools.

Instead of suggesting a replacement system, the DfE gave schools the freedom to assess children, and report on their achievements, in whichever way they wished. This now means that many schools across the country assess and report in a variety of different ways, potentially causing confusion for parents and carers.



The purpose of this document therefore, is to make clear the ways in which we assess your child here at Coleridge and to explain why these changes have come about.

What was wrong with levels?

National Curriculum levels (2c, 2b, 2a, 3c, 3b, 3a etc.) will be familiar to any parent whose child has attended school in the last 20 years. Levels were the link between the old curriculum and assessment, specifying criteria that pupils needed to demonstrate in order to progress. Each so-called 'level descriptor' was a step up in difficulty from the previous one and children could move up the scale at any age, provided that their teacher deemed it appropriate.

Many educationalists believed that this assessment system was responsible for creating gaps in children's understanding, as some schools hurried children through the curriculum in pursuit of ever higher grades and quicker rates of progress.

They also believed that levels pigeon-holed children by ability, and that the processes of labelling children with letters and numbers distracted from the more important assessment information that would help to move the child forward in their learning.

What's changed?

The DfE wanted schools to *deepen* children's understanding rather than to *stretch* it, and so redesigned the curriculum so that objectives were arranged by year group rather than by level. Guidance on the new curriculum stipulated that able children should not be rushed into content from the year above, but should instead be challenged to deepen their understanding through extension work around objectives for their own age group. Less able children, unready to take on age-related objectives, would continue to work on curriculum content from the years below until ready to progress.

How is attainment reported to parents at Coleridge?

Each child at Coleridge will follow the curriculum objectives of a certain year group. For many, this will be the curriculum of the school year that they are currently in – for example, a Year 4 child will be working on the Year 4 curriculum. However, some children may need to spend time consolidating objectives from previous year groups, meaning that a Year 4 child might be following a Year 3 curriculum.

Which year group curriculum your child is covering should be made clear to you at parents' evenings and on your child's report at the end of the school year. It is possible that your child may be covering different curriculums in different subjects, depending on their ability. For example, a child could be following a Year 5 maths curriculum, but a Year 4 English one.

At the end of each year, children will be assessed against the expectations of the year group curriculum that they have been covering. One of the following mark statements will be issued in each of the different subject areas:

- **Working below age-related expectation**
- **Working towards age-related expectation**
- **Working within age-related expectation ***
- **Working above age-related expectation**
- **Working significantly above age-related expectation**

*this is the national expectation, not the national average.

This system is more akin to the grading for musical instrument exams where learners are simply awarded a pass, merit or distinction for each grade. Provided the budding musician gains at least a 'pass' then they can progress to the objectives of the next grade. At school, children must now attain at least 'Working within age-related expectation' before they are able to progress into the next year of objectives. Even then, some time may be spent deepening and consolidating learning from the previous year.

How do teachers at Coleridge make these judgements?

Throughout their time at school, your child is constantly being assessed by their teachers. These assessments are conducted through observations, conversations, questioning and by marking work. Tests may also be used at points throughout the year in order to help inform the teacher's judgements.



Though the majority of assessments take place in an informal and naturalised way, they are recorded in assessment documents that help to build a complete picture of your child's development over time. Each child has an electronic assessment sheet for each subject area, and these are filled in on a frequent basis when small milestones of progress are observed.

The assessment sheets are designed to be accessible to teachers and parents, making clear where the child is now, and what they need to do next in order to progress.

Information contained within the child's assessment sheet is then linked directly to an electronic assessment database, where year group leaders and senior staff members can spot patterns and trends in the data produced. This is the 'school office' side of assessment, which helps the Senior Leadership Team to make decisions and set priorities around school improvement.

By far the most useful information about your child's development, attainment and progress can be gathered by talking to your child's teachers. There are several parents' evenings throughout the course of the year when you can do this, but we also encourage parents to make appointments with teachers if ever they wish to discuss any aspect of their child's development.