



Changes to Assessment and Reporting - 2016

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 reorganised the objectives in the 2014 National Curriculum by year group rather than by levels. Guidance on the 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 will attainment be reported to parents at Coleridge?

All children will now be assessed against the objectives for their own year group (or age-related expectations) rather than on a continuous rising scale as before. At the end of each year, inside the school report, parents will receive one of the following mark statements for each subject area, describing how well their child has performed relative to what is expected of them at that age:

- **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 not the national **average, but the national **expectation** for children at this age.*

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 and by marking work. By far the most useful information about your child's attainment and progress can be gathered by talking to your child's teachers.



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, 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. Parents can arrange a time to meet teachers to look through these assessment sheets should they wish to do so.

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.

What about testing?

Though we do not endorse a culture of testing at Coleridge, children in Year 2 and Year 6 are obliged to undertake National Curriculum Tests (also known as SATs) in the summer term. 2016 saw the introduction of a new set of tests, designed to be more rigorous and to reflect the more challenging content of the new primary curriculum introduced in 2014.



In Year 2, children must undertake tests in maths, reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling. The tests are administered in an informal, naturalised way and are marked by your child's class teacher. The results of the tests are then used to help the teacher make an overall judgement as to where your child is with their learning and understanding. The result for each subject will then be reported to you through one of the mark statements previously described.

In Year 6, SATs tests are administered in a more formal manner in accordance with strict guidance from the DfE. As in Year 2, children in Year 6 undertake tests in maths, reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling, but these tests are marked externally rather than by your child's class teacher.

How will Year 6 SATs test results be reported to parents?

As this is the first year of the new SATs tests, the results will look different from those of previous years and cannot be compared with them directly. Your child's results in each test will now be reported using a scaled score. A scaled score of 100 represents the expected standard for each test. If your child gets a scaled score of 100 or more it means they are working at or above the expected standard in the subject. If your child gets a scaled score of less than 100 it means that they may need more support to reach the expected standard. The highest scaled score possible is 120, and the lowest is 80.

If you want to see how your child's test scores compare with the national average, you can do this online at www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-key-stage-2

Your child's test scores will be included in their school report, along with overall teacher assessments for each subject area.

Once again, it is worth reiterating that by far the most useful assessment information about your child's learning and achievements can be gathered by talking to their class teacher. Teachers at Coleridge are always available to discuss any aspect of your child's development should you wish to do so.

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