



Koinonia Group

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RESEARCH PAPER 3/22

Primary phase assessment

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Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the school leaders who responded to this quick and general investigation into assessment in the primary phase.

Executive Summary

- Primary leaders have responded practically and swiftly to changes in assessment
- Primary leaders are confident, or very confident, in the accuracy of their assessment, particularly where this is supported by [i] frequent, but not *too* frequent internal assessment and [ii] external moderation and benchmarking.
- Some leaders see some challenge in moving from EYFS to KS1 tracking
- A range of products and approaches are employed
- The extent to which the assessment regime meets the needs of SEND children remains an open one, and further longitudinal study is necessary
- Employing approaches which are meaningful to children and their parents / carers is high on the list of priorities for school leaders.

Introduction

This small-scale research came out of discussion within the [Koinonia group of schools](#) [and others] where it was seen to be helpful to take a view as to how schools were responding to the need to assess at EYFS – KS2.

1. The assessment landscape in 2022

What follows below will be well known to school leaders, but is a brief summary for other readers.

1.1 EYFS and assessment

The [EYFS framework](#) sets the statutory standards for the development, learning and care of children from birth to age 5. The EYFS framework sets the standards that all early years providers, including schools with early years provision, must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The statutory EYFS framework requires the EYFS profile assessment to be carried out in the final term of the year in which a child reaches age 5, and no later than 30 June in that term. The EYFS profile is intended to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of each child's development at the end of the EYFS. It is made up of an assessment of the child's outcomes in relation to the 17 early learning goal (ELG) descriptors.

Practitioners are expected to use their professional judgement to make these assessments, based on their knowledge and understanding of what the child knows, understands, and can do. The EYFS profile is a statutory assessment of children's development at the end of the early years foundation stage.

Day-to-day informal checking of what children have learnt will inform teaching and learning on an ongoing basis throughout the final year of the EYFS. This will include identifying areas where children may be at risk of falling behind, so that practitioners can provide rapid, effective support.

Reliable and accurate assessment at the end of the EYFS is:

- Practitioners using knowledge of children.
- Summative
- Informed by a range of perspectives
- Inclusive
- Underpinned by a broad curriculum and effective pedagogy (DfE, 2022)

1.2 KS1 and assessment

Changes for 2021/22

All existing statutory KS1 assessments will return in 2021/22, following their usual timetable. This includes:

- the end of KS1 assessments
- the phonics screening check
- statutory trialling

1.2.1 Phonics screening check for year 2 pupils

Cancellation of the phonics screening check in June 2021 means that year 2 pupils did not take the check when they were in year 1. In the 2021/22 academic year, schools had to administer a past version of the phonics screening check (from 2017, 2018 or 2019) to year 2 pupils during the second half of the 2021 autumn term (excluding any pupils who meet the exceptions listed in section 8.2) and return results to their geographical LA by the end of the autumn term. Year 2 pupils who achieve the expected standard in the autumn 2021 check were not required to complete any further statutory assessments in phonics. Year 2 pupils who do not meet the expected standard in the autumn 2021 check were expected to take the statutory check in June 2022.

1.2.2

The engagement model replaces P scales 1 - 4 and is a new statutory teacher assessment tool for pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum and not engaged in subject-specific study. It should be used to assess pupils' learning regularly throughout the year, enabling these pupils' achievements and progress to be measured over time. Schools must report which pupils have been assessed using the engagement model when the pupil is at the end of KS1. This is so the DfE is aware of how many pupils are not engaged in subject-specific study and where they are being educated. (DfE, 2021)

1.3 KS2 and assessment

All existing statutory KS2 assessments will return in 2021/22, following their usual timetable. This includes:

- the end of KS2 assessments (including tests and teacher assessment)
- the year 4 multiplication tables check
- statutory trialling

1.3.1 Performance tables in 2022

DfE has announced that school-level data from the KS2 national curriculum assessments will not be published in performance tables in 2022. Results will be shared securely with primary schools, academy trusts, LAs and Ofsted for school improvement purposes.

1.3.2 Multiplication tables check

From the 2021/22 academic year, the MTC is statutory for all year 4 pupils registered at state-funded maintained schools, special schools or academies (including free schools) in England.

1.3.3 The engagement model

The engagement model replaces P scales 1-4 and is a new statutory teacher assessment tool for pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum and not engaged in subject-specific study. It should be used to assess pupils' learning regularly throughout the year, enabling these pupils' achievements and progress to be measured over time. Schools must report to STA which pupils have been assessed using the engagement model when the pupil is at the end of KS2. This is so the DfE is aware of how many pupils are not engaged in subject-specific study and where they are being educated. 4

1.3.4 Science sampling

There will be no science sampling in 2021/22. The DfE will confirm arrangements for 2022/23 in due course.

1.3.5 Teacher assessment moderation training

Online self-guided teacher assessment (TA) moderation training in English writing were added to the Primary Assessment Gateway on Monday 1 November 2021.

2. At the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), what approaches are being undertaken to track pupil progress?

In some cases 'Development Matters' is the product of choice. In others, Tapestry and Target Tracker is being employed. One school valued the extent to which parents could contribute to the Tapestry system. Several schools stipulated they assessed three times a year.

One school ran a Focus Child system, including bespoke meetings with parents/carers of those children to discuss both academic and pastoral progress.

In one school, regular tracking is undertaken using the school's own assessment tracking document, which details expected progress throughout the year as it moves towards early learning goals. Children have 'spotlight weeks' per year for a deeper assessment focus and these are discussed with parents during meetings.

In another school, teacher assessments are recorded on an Integrus markbook 4 times a year. This is regularly analysed by the Head Teacher and SENCO/Early Years leader for Pupil Progress meetings with Reception and Nursery class teachers, where progress of individual and key groups of pupils is discussed in detail and strategies/interventions put in place as needed.

Another school takes an observation-based approach to identify what a child is able to do and what are the next steps. Expected attainment milestones are identified to support staff to identify children not on track and enable support to be put in place as needed.

3. How effective is your EYFS tracking and how do you know?

Several schools found the transition to KS1 tracking to be tricky. Some schools felt there in-year tracking was efficacious in that it coherently led to credible outturns at the end of the year.

External accreditation/visits are effective in some schools and add to the credibility of the process, aid teacher training and offer parents and Governors additional reassurance. Senior staff, including the Head and SENCO, play a part in quality assurance, though the most valuable asset is an experienced EYFS teacher.

One school reported that its approach has changed, in line with the new EYFS framework. They are working alongside other school to ensure it is a robust approach, but also following the intentions of the new framework whereby it frees up the adult time to spend alongside the children, moving their learning forward. This is being reviewed this regularly .

The school using Development Matters statements break them down into small steps, which are easy to assess.

Leaders expressed an openness to school-to-school collaboration as part of quality assurance.

4. At KS1/2 what approaches do you take to tracking pupil progress?

Generally, this is undertaken with a range of target tracing solutions, including similar approached to that used in EYFS. One school uses termly standardised tests- Pira (reading), Puma (maths) Pira (reading). This is then tracked on their data tracker (D Tracker). Other assessments used include Rising Stars.

One school uses its own bespoke markbooks on Integris which reflects the content of their target cards for reading, writing and maths.

One school uses the Balance system to record "Professional Judgements" (Above, At, Below, Well Below) for Maths, Reading and Writing (Terms 1,3 and 5). Science and RE (Terms 2,4 and 6). Other subjects end of Term 6.

One school uses the LA assessment model, which is effective [Hampshire LA].

5. At KS1/2 how effective is your tracking and how do you know?

Respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the processes they were adopting. External assessment data was used to benchmark accuracy, allowing planning and curriculum development to be effective. Schools felt their systems correlated with ongoing improvement in attainment, though some felt more bespoke tools for SEN children were needed.

One school commented that its end of year results are benchmarked using SATS or NFER tests, which match in year tracking and external moderators from the LA (year 2 & 6) or across the local partnership, who are always impressed with the level of knowledge of children and their progress shown by teachers 'who are all highly experienced and know the primary curriculum well.'

Another school changed from Target Tracker to Balance to make it simpler for staff to submit data, while still retaining the key information they needed. The most important part of the process, for this school, is the conversation with staff and children. The data is a tool rather than an end in itself (which it was starting to become under the previous system).

Concluding note

Schools are approaching assessment from a broadly similar perspective, though using a range of technology. The importance of ensuring the process is meaningful for children and parents is clear, as is the need for external, as well as internal, quality assurance.

School leaders appear broadly comfortable with the accuracy of their assessment approaches, though three years of longitudinal data at least will be required to generate further data.

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Notes

Department for Education (2021) Key Stage 1 assessment and reporting arrangements [2022 key stage 1 assessment and reporting arrangements \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94422/key-stage-1-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-2022.pdf)

Department for Education (2022) Early years foundation stage profile [Early years foundation stage profile handbook 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94422/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-handbook-2022.pdf)