

Gosforth East Middle School



Assessment Without Levels

Information for Parents



Assessment: Life Without Levels

November 2015

The Curriculum

What is changing?

There is a new National Curriculum. This affects what is taught and when it is taught.

In what way is it changing?

The subjects taught will remain the same.

The new National Curriculum has a greater focus on knowledge development, along with the opportunity to study the 'big ideas' of a subject in greater depth. English, Maths and Science remain very important and are considered as core subjects. The National Curriculum sets out in some detail what must be taught in each of these subjects, and they take up a substantial part of your child's learning week. Alongside these are the familiar foundation subjects which play a key part in providing a broad and balanced curriculum: Art, Computing, Design & Technology, Foreign Languages, Geography, History, Music, R.E., P.S.C.H.E. and Physical Education. For these foundation subjects, the details in the National Curriculum are significantly briefer; schools have much more flexibility regarding what they cover in these subjects.

The bar has been raised – particularly in English and Maths and particularly in Years 5 and 6.

Much of the publicity about the changes to the curriculum has focussed on 'higher expectations' in various subjects, and it is certainly the case that in some areas the content of the new curriculum is significantly more demanding than in the past. For example, in mathematics there is now much greater focus on the skills of arithmetic and also on working with fractions. In science, a new unit of work on evolution is introduced for Year 6 (work which would have previously been studied later). In English lessons there will now be more attention paid to the study of grammar and spelling, an area which was far less notable in previous curricula.

So what is Gosforth East Middle School doing?

Staff are working together to:

- ensure consistency in what is being taught in each year group.
- ensure that there is clear progression for each child as they move through each year group.

So what is my child being taught now?

Your child is being taught the new curriculum.

Teachers are meeting, tweaking and agreeing all the content of the curriculum for the year.

A booklet will be available for every parent in the Summer term summarising the content for every subject in every year group.



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Assessment

There is widespread change happening in education, including a new National Curriculum, more challenging Key Stage 2 tests and new style assessment.

What is changing in how my child is assessed?

The government have removed levels as the way assessment is reported across Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 nationally. This affects all our pupils.

Where previously children were graded using levels, we have now entered a new period in which national curriculum levels have been removed nationally (often referred to as 'Life without Levels').

So what has the government introduced instead?

It is up to every individual school to decide how they will measure attainment and progress. There is no longer a common format for reporting attainment.

So what is Gosforth East Middle School doing?

Staff are working closely to make sure that we agree what we should expect pupils to be able to do by the end of every school year.

These will be known as Age Related Expectations (ARE) and are based on the national curriculum as well as on what the children are expected to be able to do for their Key Stage 2 tests (SATs) and their GCSEs.

Are the Age Related Expectations the same in every school?

- Yes across all schools in the country for English and mathematics in years 5 and 6.

But if every school could come up with a different system, how will we know how well individuals or groups of children are doing?

A good question! The removal of levels is proving a real challenge for every school (and Ofsted inspector!) However:

- This is a real opportunity to change the way we teach and assess for the better.
- Teachers continue to be clear about what they are teaching and the progression through the knowledge and skills for each subject is being agreed across the whole partnership. This is a really positive step.



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- Pupils will still be clear about what they are learning. They will continue to receive feedback which ensures that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do next.
- Ofsted are absolutely clear that it is up to the school to demonstrate the progress and attainment of all pupils, all individuals and cohorts.

But as a parent, how will I know how my child is doing?

We appreciate that this is very different for parents and whilst levels weren't perfect, it was reassuring to receive regular information about the level that your child was working at. The teachers at Gosforth East Middle School are still working really hard to ensure that your child is reaching their potential and will continue to contact you directly if we have any concerns. In addition:

- By the end of term you will receive a progress update which will enable you to see, for Reading, Writing and Maths, what your child's attitude to learning is and their progress towards the age related expectations.
- In the Spring term you will receive an update on progress towards their 'ARE' and there will be parent evenings where you can discuss your child's progress and attainment and progress with their teacher.
- In the Summer Term their school report will say whether they have achieved their target and are working below age related expectations, working at age related expectations or working above age related expectations.

But my child is in Year 6; surely they will get levels in the SATs tests?

No! Whilst the national curriculum makes it clear what the expectations are for every Year 6 child in English and maths, nobody will know until after they have been trialled this year how many marks will be needed to achieve those 'ARE'.

Informally known as 'SATs', the National Curriculum Tests are still compulsory for children at the end of Year 6, but this year is being treated as a pilot. They will undertake tests in Reading, Mathematics, and Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling. The tests will still be sent away for marking, and results will be reported to schools and parents at the end of the year. Where previously these tests were graded in levels (normally numbering between Level 2 and Level 6 in the middle school), from 2016 the tests will be reported as a scaled score, with a score of 100 representing the expected level for each age group. It has not yet been decided what the range of scores will be.

My child was a Level 3 at Key Stage 1. Surely they will be above Age Related Expectations by the end of the year? Will they start to do work from the year group above?

No. Firstly the bar has been raised and it will be harder to reach those 'ARE'.



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Rather than moving on to the following year group's expectations, all schools will now encourage more in-depth and investigative work to allow a greater mastery and understanding of concepts and ideas. This will really challenge even the most able child.

Gosforth East Middle School has decided to use the following terminology whilst assessing the pupils:

working towards, developing, secure and exceeding. This will inform our teaching.

	Working towards	Developing	Secure (Age Related Expectations)	Exceeding
Definition	Basic awareness.	Correctly using and applying.	Confidently using and applying.	Naturally using and applying.
Cognitive challenge	Low level cognitive demand. Involves following instructions.	Higher level of cognitive demand. Involves mental processing beyond recall. Requires some degree of decision making.	Cognitive demands are complex and abstract. Involves problems with multi-steps and more than 1 possible answer.	Complex and abstract with independent and original learning.
Indicative teaching style	Modelling. Explaining.	Reminding. Guiding.	Coaching. Probing questioning.	Listening and encouraging independent learning.
Types of success criteria	Steps to success.	Remember to include.	Child generated.	Uses initiative and self-manages.
Nature of progress	Acquiring. Refining.	Applying. Practising.	Deepening. Extending.	Can independently adapt to any situation.
Support	High.	Medium.	Low.	Self-support.
Typically pupils will	Name, describe, follow instructions or methods, complete tasks, recall information, ask basic questions, use, match, report, measure, list, illustrate, label, recognise, tell, repeat, arrange, define, memorise.	Apply skills to solve problems. Explain methods, classify, infer, categorise, identify patterns, organise, modify, predict, interpret, summarise, make observations, estimate, compare.	Solve non-routine, appraise, explain concepts, hypothesise, investigate cite evidence, design, create, prove.	Display consummate comprehension and understanding. Display expertise and proficiency in original application and use. Demonstrate finesse, prowess and deftness showing evaluation and self-reflection skills in a wide variety of contexts.



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How do Teachers decide whether my child is working towards their age related expectations?

Teachers will draw on a broad range of information, as they always have done, to form a teacher assessment. This could include day to day assessment, short tests, longer tests, assessed tasks and observations of pupils working in the classroom. Teachers will record progress towards the objectives set out in the year groups on electronic markbooks like these:

Rising Stars NC14 Progression Framework Assessment - Number - Ability Stage 5, Stage 6 - 6.6 Maths JBU - Month - Nov 2015

Save Markbook
Leave Markbook
Export to Excel
Adjust Scores
Up Down

Objective	Pupil 1	Pupil 2	Pupil 3	Pupil 4	Pupil 5	Pupil 6	Pupil 7	Pupil 8	Pupil 9	Pupil 10	Pupil 11
Stage 6 Use Written Calculation 6.2.e.1 Consolidate adding and subtracting whole numbers with more than 4 digits, including using formal written columnar ad...	E	E	A	E	M	A	M	A	M	M	E
Stage 6 Calculate mentally 6.2.b.2 Consolidate knowledge of addition facts and the related subtraction facts, deriving further related facts as required (+).	M	M	T	M	M	A	M	A	M	M	M
Stage 6 Represent Numbers 6.1.b.1 Read and write numbers to 10 000 000 and determine the value of digits (*).	A	M	T	A	A	A	M	A	M	A	M
Stage 6 Order and compare 6.1.c.1 Order and compare numbers up to 10 000 000 (*).	A	M	T	A	A	A	M	A	M	A	A
Stage 6 Calculate mentally 6.2.b.4 Consolidate multiplying and dividing whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1000 (+).	A	M	T	M	A	T	M	T	E	M	M

Information is then collated together and an overall indication is given of how your child is progressing towards their age related expectations. This will be reported as, for example, '7 working towards' (working towards age related expectations for Year 7), or '8 sec' (meaning a pupil has a secure understanding of the Year 8 age related objectives).

This detailed and individualised assessment enables Teachers to both identify the aspects of the curriculum in which pupils need more support and also where pupils would benefit from exploring the curriculum in greater depth.



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Please look out for further details about our information evening on Tuesday 2nd February 2016 which will give you more information about our assessment system in school. This is a time of change in education and we would welcome your views on all aspects of assessment.