



Department  
for Education



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency

# Primary assessment in England

**Government consultation**

**Launch date 30 March 2017**

**Respond by 22 June 2017**

# Contents

Ministerial foreword	4
Introduction	6
Who this is for	6
Issue date	6
Deadline	6
Enquiries	7
Additional copies	7
The response	7
Respond online	7
Other ways to respond	7
1. Current system: statutory assessment in key stages 1 and 2	8
Context	8
Principles	9
Purposes	9
Current system	9
2. Preparing children to succeed at school	11
Assessing a child's development and readiness for school	11
The early years foundation stage and profile	11
Workload	13
Moderation	13
3. The best starting point for measuring progress in primary school	15
Option 1: Capture more progress through the primary phase by moving the starting point for measuring progress to the reception year	15
Option 2: An improved key stage 1 baseline	17
Interim years	18
The role of key stage 1 statutory assessments	20
Monitoring national standards at key stage 1	21
School types and assessment	21
4. A proportionate assessment system	23
Collection of teacher assessment data at the end of key stage 2	23

Key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test	24
Multiplication tables check	24
Reducing burdens within the primary assessment system	25
5. Improving end-of-key stage statutory teacher assessment	26
End-of-key stage statutory teacher assessment	26
Teacher assessment of English writing	27
Supporting and strengthening the assessment of English writing	28
Alternative approaches to moderation	28
Equalities	29

## Ministerial foreword

This government is dedicated to making Britain a country that works for everyone, not just the privileged few. It is hard to overstate how important primary education is in this commitment to social mobility. Teachers and school leaders have a fundamental role to play so that every child can fulfil their potential. Acquiring a good grasp of the basics of English and mathematics, as part of a rich and varied curriculum, is critical for a child's future success.

There has been a lot of change in primary schools in recent years, as we have worked together to raise standards, and I recognise that teachers and headteachers are still adapting to these changes. The new national curriculum, taught since 2014, has led to new assessments and a shift in expectations for all children. Teachers and pupils have responded to this challenge.

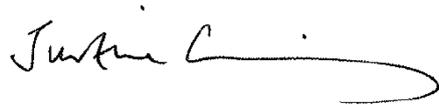
Last October, recognising concerns around the current system, I announced a series of steps to provide greater stability and set direction for the long-term system of primary assessment. I outlined some immediate measures, including a commitment that there would be no new national tests or assessments introduced before the 2018 to 2019 academic year. I also announced that the key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test would remain optional for schools in the current academic year, and that we would not introduce statutory mathematics and English reading resits in year 7. We have also considered how this year's test experience could be improved for pupils and have taken steps to ensure this. In addition, I promised this full public consultation to help us to set out a longer-term, stable and sustainable approach to assessment.

While the short-term measures are important and have helped address some immediate concerns, it is vital that we build on recent steps and establish a settled, trusted primary assessment system. In this consultation, I set out my long-term vision for primary assessment and invite views on the proposals that it contains. This includes critical issues such as the role and operation of teacher assessment and the best starting point for measuring children's progress during primary school, issues recently considered by the independent assessment review group convened by the National Association of Head Teachers.

It is important that we have a proper, considered debate around these proposals so that we can move forwards to a stable, trusted primary assessment system which delivers strong educational outcomes for all children, regardless of their background, ability or any additional needs they may have. I want a system that measures the progress that children make throughout their time at primary school fairly and accurately, a system that recognises teachers' professionalism in assessing their pupils, and a system which does not impose a disproportionate burden.

It is vital that we also have a fair and effective assessment system for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests; statutory assessment arrangements for these pupils are considered in the parallel consultation on the recommendations made by the independent Rochford Review.

I want as many people as possible with an interest in the future of primary education to participate in these consultation exercises and to share their thoughts. In particular, I want to hear the views of teachers and headteachers and to draw on their expertise and experience to continue to improve the way that we assess the attainment and progress of children during their time at primary school.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justine Greening', with a long, sweeping underline.

**Rt. Hon Justine Greening MP**

## Introduction

This consultation is about the approach taken to primary assessment in England. Through this consultation, we will work to establish a settled, trusted primary assessment system, designed to support strong educational outcomes for all children. We will continue to work closely with the sector as we move towards this goal in the years ahead.

This consultation is mainly concerned with statutory assessment – by which we mean the summative assessment, required by the government, which takes place at the end of a period of study, either through externally-set tests, or through teacher assessment. There are currently statutory assessments at the end of reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2. There is also a statutory phonics screening check in year 1. This consultation touches indirectly on the ongoing, formative assessment that is a key component of good teaching and goes on in the classroom all the time, but we see this as part of teachers' own pedagogical approach and something that government should support but not prescribe.

Assessment arrangements for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests are considered in parallel in the separate consultation document on the recommendations made by the independent Rochford Review. We are clear that all areas considered across both consultation documents must work for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## Who this is for

This consultation is for anybody with an interest in the early years, primary education and the way that pupils are assessed in school. This includes:

- schools and school leaders, and organisations representing school leaders
- teachers and organisations representing school teachers
- governors and organisations representing governors
- early years providers and organisations representing them
- parents, carers and young people and organisations representing them
- organisations representing those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- local authorities
- other government bodies and departments

## Issue date

The consultation was issued on 30 March 2017.

## Deadline

The consultation closes at 5pm on 22 June 2017.

## Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the department on 0370 000 2288 or e-mail:

[PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk](mailto:PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk)

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: [consultation.unit@education.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@education.gov.uk) or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

## Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

## The response

The results of the consultation and the department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in September 2017.

## Respond online

To help us analyse the responses, please use the online system wherever possible. Visit <https://consult.education.gov.uk/> to submit your response.

## Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a word document version of the form and email it or post it.

### By email

[PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk](mailto:PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk)

### By post

Assessment Policy Team  
Department for Education  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London, SW1P 3BT

# 1. Current system: statutory assessment in key stages 1 and 2

## Context

Statutory assessment plays an important role in ensuring that every child is supported to leave primary school prepared to succeed. Our primary assessment system has been reformed to help teachers to raise standards, and to give every child the best chance to master reading, writing and arithmetic, which are fundamental in preparing them for secondary school. We believe that it is right that the government sets a clear expected standard that pupils should attain by the end of primary school, and that this standard is ambitious, to ensure schools support all pupils to achieve their potential, regardless of their background. Statutory assessments have been updated to align with the new national curriculum, which was benchmarked against the curricula used in the world's highest-performing education systems.

It is important that we have an accountability system which is fair, inclusive, and properly reflects the work done by teachers to ensure that all children fulfil their potential, including those with additional needs. The new progress measures, introduced in 2016, ensure that schools are recognised for the work they do with all of their pupils, regardless of whether these pupils are high, middle or low attainers. Whilst we are clear that nationally-consistent data, based on robust assessment, has an ongoing place in our accountability system, we are keen to address concerns about the use of data in relation to intervention. As the Secretary of State made clear in her statement to Parliament on 19 October 2016, no decisions on intervention will be made on the basis of 2016 data alone. We are clear that no single piece of data will determine any decision on intervention, in 2016 or beyond. Ofsted, regional schools commissioners, local authorities, governors and parents should look at a range of data, alongside the school's broader context and performance history, rather than focusing on one piece of information alone.

We are also clear that statutory assessment sits alongside a number of other important factors, including the need to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, and the wider pupil experience of attending primary school. Statutory assessment at primary school is about measuring school performance, holding schools to account for the work they do with their pupils and identifying where pupils require more support, so that this can be provided. Primary assessment should not be about putting pressure on children.

The Secretary of State's October announcement set out the steps to introduce short-term stability for primary assessment. We now want to work with the sector to determine a clear pathway to a settled system where our collective focus can be on achieving strong educational outcomes for all children. We know that there are elements of the primary assessment system where changes will not only improve the approach, but also

reduce burdens. This consultation, along with the parallel consultation on the recommendations made by the Rochford Review, is the next stage in a discussion about the best way of reaching this settled assessment system, based on the principles of fairness and proportionality set out below.

## Principles

Our approach to statutory assessment in primary schools is underpinned by a set of key principles. We believe that our assessment system should provide rigorous, reliable and trusted data that can be used, as part of a broader range of information, to measure accurately and hold schools to account for the progress they make with their pupils. It should reflect the fact that we are ambitious for all of our children, regardless of their background or circumstances, and it must be inclusive in its design and operation. It must also be proportionate. Throughout this document, we hold these principles in mind when discussing any proposals to make changes to existing arrangements.

## Purposes

Statutory assessment in primary schools has a key role to play in supporting teachers to improve educational outcomes for all pupils, and fulfils a number of purposes. It provides information about how pupils are performing in relation to other pupils nationally, helps teachers to understand national expectations and enables parents, teachers and schools to benchmark their school's progress against other schools locally and nationally. It also enables the government to hold schools to account for the work they do with their pupils, to monitor national standards and to measure the impact of education policy over time. Statutory assessment also provides a starting point for Ofsted's discussions with schools about their performance, alongside consideration of their context and other evidence of the school's performance. Evidence shows that an assessment system which balances school autonomy with strong external accountability makes a positive difference to pupil achievement,<sup>1</sup> with external accountability particularly important for the least advantaged.<sup>2</sup>

## Current system

Statutory assessment takes two main forms – teacher assessment and national tests. Currently, we draw on teacher assessment in the reception year and a combination of teacher assessment and national tests in key stages 1 and 2.

---

<sup>1</sup> OECD, *PISA 2012 Results IV: What Makes a School Successful?*, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> OECD, *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*, 2012.

**Table A: An overview of the current statutory primary assessment system**

Year group	Statutory assessment
Reception	<p><b>Early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP):</b> The profile summarises and describes pupil attainment at the end of the early years foundation stage. EYFSP data is published at national and local authority level. Individual pupil data is used to understand individual education and development needs and to support transition to year 1.</p>
Year 1	<p><b>Phonics screening check:</b> A light-touch, statutory screening check administered by teachers. The check assesses a pupil's phonics decoding ability to identify pupils needing additional support. School-level data is not published, while national and local authority level results are. Pupils who do not meet the required standard are required to re-sit in year 2.</p>
Year 2	<p><b>End of key stage 1 national curriculum assessments:</b> Teacher assessment judgements are currently made using interim teacher assessment frameworks and reported in mathematics, English reading (informed by internally-marked national curriculum tests), science and English writing. These teacher assessments are externally moderated by local authorities, who sample 25% of schools each year. These assessments form the baseline for measuring progress made between key stage 1 and key stage 2. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in English reading, English writing, mathematics and science are published at national and local authority level, but not at school level.</p> <p>There is currently an optional test in English grammar, punctuation and spelling at the end of key stage 1.</p>
Year 6	<p><b>End of key stage 2 national curriculum assessments:</b> Pupils sit externally-marked tests in mathematics, English reading, and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Teacher assessment judgements are made in English reading, English writing, mathematics and science. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in all of reading and mathematics (based on test data) and writing (based on teacher assessment judgements) are published at national, local authority and school level and are used to calculate the progress that pupils make between key stage 1 and key stage 2. Progress and attainment measures form part of both the floor standard and a new definition of coasting schools, which is used as the starting point for a conversation about whether a school might require additional support.</p> <p>National curriculum test data in English grammar, punctuation and spelling, and teacher assessment judgements in English reading, mathematics and science are published at national and local authority level.</p> <p><b>Science sampling</b> tests are conducted biennially, with the most recent tests in June 2016. The next tests will be administered in June 2018. A sample of approximately 9,500 pupils is randomly selected to sit science tests, based on 5 pupils from 1,900 schools. Results are reported as national data only and individual results are not returned to schools or pupils. This assessment provides an understanding of national performance in science.</p>

For children working below the overall standard of the national curriculum across both key stages, there is a system of statutory teacher assessment. Data from this is published at a national level and these pupils' results are included in school attainment and progress measures. This system is being considered separately in the [parallel consultation](#) on the recommendations of the independent Rochford Review of statutory assessment arrangements for pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum tests.

## 2. Preparing children to succeed at school

### Assessing a child's development and readiness for school

The early years are crucial for children's development and for establishing the foundations for future success. A strong approach in the early years not only ensures that all children have a solid foundation from which to progress, but also brings greater social and economic returns over the longer term.<sup>3</sup> Findings from the Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education (EPPSE) Project suggest that pre-schools have a positive and long-term impact on children's attainment, progress (including 'school readiness') and social-behavioural development.<sup>4</sup>

We want to ensure that every child, regardless of their background or any additional needs they may have, reaches a good level of development at the end of the early years, and is able to progress confidently in key stage 1. The quality of early years provision continues to improve, with 91% of childcare providers being judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted in August 2016.<sup>5</sup> A large part of this success is due to the high-quality teaching professionals in early years settings, including reception teachers, who ensure the smooth administration of the early years foundation stage profile. We are investing a record £6 billion per year in the early years, including free early education entitlements for 2, 3 and 4 year-olds by 2020. This includes over £300 million to increase the average funding rate paid to providers.

### The early years foundation stage and profile

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework is mandatory for all early years providers. It sets the standards that schools and early years providers must meet to ensure that children are taught and develop well, and are kept healthy and safe in all early years settings from birth to age 5. The 17 early learning goals (ELGs) within the EYFS are the expected levels of development that early years settings must help children work toward by age 5. All learning and development areas are inter-related and all have an important role to play in a child's achievements. This includes communication, physical development and personal, social and emotional development, as well as literacy and mathematics.

The early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) is the statutory assessment used to assess a child's level of development and readiness for school at age 5 (the end of the

---

<sup>3</sup> [www.wavetrust.org/sites/default/files/reports/conception-to-age-2-full-report\\_0.pdf](http://www.wavetrust.org/sites/default/files/reports/conception-to-age-2-full-report_0.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/455670/RB455\\_Effective\\_pre-school\\_primary\\_and\\_secondary\\_education\\_project.pdf.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/455670/RB455_Effective_pre-school_primary_and_secondary_education_project.pdf.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> [Childcare providers and inspections key findings as at 31 August 2016](#).

reception year). The EYFSP assessment gives teachers and parents information on how children have developed against the ELGs, and identifies any additional support they may require as they progress to key stage 1. At the national level, EYFSP data enables the government to evaluate the impact of our investment in the early years on children's outcomes at age 5.

In October last year, the Secretary of State for Education announced that the EYFSP would remain in place for the 2017 to 2018 academic year, whilst we consider long-term assessment arrangements. We know that the EYFSP is a well-established, valued and respected assessment, which is why it will remain a statutory assessment for future years. Our discussions with the early years sector and primary schools have told us that, while the EYFSP has many strengths, there are things we could do to improve it further to ensure it is a more rounded and less burdensome teacher assessment of pupil outcomes at the end of the early years foundation stage. We would like to hear views on the extent to which, in its current form, the EYFSP provides information to be able to assess a child's development and school readiness. We would also like to hear views on the way in which it is assessed, associated workload, and the processes around that assessment. We would also like to hear your views on where improvements could be made.

We want to ensure that assessment in reception is reliable and trusted, and that it both demonstrates how children have developed during their early years, and provides a measure of school readiness.

For example, evidence suggests that more can be done to narrow the gap in reading between disadvantaged children and their peers, which is wider in England relative to other developed countries.<sup>6</sup> Refining the EYFSP literacy requirements, for example by being more explicit about what is required, could help to address this disadvantage gap.

Equally, we know that broadening a child's vocabulary is crucial for their development, particularly with regard to their future ability in reading comprehension. International evidence highlights that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have much narrower vocabularies by the time they begin school, putting them at a disadvantage before they arrive.<sup>7</sup> Strengthening the expectations within the EYFSP to take account of this important aspect of child development may support schools to narrow this attainment gap before key stage 1.

---

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/International-inequalities\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/International-inequalities_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf>.

Some academic studies suggest that other factors such as self-regulation<sup>8</sup> can have an important influence on successful early education, including pre-reading skills and early mathematics, and could be given more weight in an improved EYFSP.

We are also aware of challenges around reliability of data obtained from the EYFSP, particularly as the number of children achieving a good level of development has improved year-on-year, raising concerns over potential systematic biases in the way ELGs are scored. We want to explore these issues further as part of the consultation process.

**Q1. The EYFSP measures a child’s development against the ELGs set out in the EYFS statutory framework. Should the profile be improved to better assess a child’s knowledge, skill, understanding and level of development at the end of the early years? If so, please describe which elements could be added, removed or modified.**

**Q2. The EYFSP currently provides an assessment as to whether a child is ‘emerging, expecting or exceeding’ the level of development in each ELG. Is this categorisation the right approach? Is it the right approach for children with SEND?**

## **Workload**

Whilst supportive of the EYFSP as a whole, some teachers have raised concerns about the amount of paperwork and time required to complete it. The department is continuing to look at how to further reduce the workload burden on teachers. While the assessment section of the statutory EYFS is clear that assessment should not be burdensome and paperwork should be limited to what is necessary, we recognise that there could be scope to streamline paperwork or supporting guidance so that it is less onerous.

**Q3. What steps could we take to reduce the workload and time burden on those involved in administering the EYFSP?**

## **Moderation**

Moderation has an important role to play in ensuring that the EYFSP produces trusted assessment outcomes; however, practitioners have told us that the process can be burdensome. We would like to consider how moderation of EYFSP results could be streamlined and improved.

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/early-years-toolkit/self-regulation-strategies/>.

Early years practitioners must report EYFSP results to their local authority, as and when requested. Local authorities are under a duty to collate this data and return it to the department. Providers are also expected to take part in all reasonable moderation activities as specified by their local authority and provide any EYFSP assessment-related material on request. 25% of settings must receive a moderation visit each year and all 17 ELGs must be scrutinised during the visit.

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to set up and carry out moderation arrangements to:

- secure the consistency and accuracy of judgements made by different practitioners
- reassure practitioners that their judgements are accurate, valid and consistent with national standards
- assure that moderation has an acceptable level of accuracy and that validity has been achieved for assessments recorded and reported by the settings for which they have responsibility

Evidence does not need to be formally recorded or documented. The extent to which the practitioner chooses to record information will depend on professional judgement. Paperwork should be kept to the minimum that practitioners need to illustrate, support and recall their knowledge of the child's attainment. The outcome of moderation should be recorded.

**Q4. How could we improve the consistency and effectiveness of the EYFSP moderation process whilst reducing burdens?**

### **3. The best starting point for measuring progress in primary school**

New accountability measures were introduced in 2016 to recognise the progress that pupils make through primary school, alongside the new attainment measures. These measures place greater emphasis on progress as a fairer way of assessing school effectiveness, showing how much progress pupils in a school make compared to other pupils nationally with a similar starting point. This approach means that teachers and schools are credited for the progress that they make with all pupils, including low, middle and high attainers, and it underpins a school system that should be supporting all children to reach their full potential. Importantly, the new progress measures better recognise schools doing well with a challenging intake, whilst also identifying those not doing enough with a high-attaining intake.

Any progress measure needs a reliable baseline, a starting point from which progress will be calculated. Ideally, that baseline should be established as early as possible to cover the maximum amount of a pupil's time in a particular school and therefore ensure that a school receives full credit for the value that it adds. It is also important that this baseline is robust and trusted.

For the data to be considered robust as a baseline for a progress measure, the assessment needs to be a reliable indicator of pupils' attainment and strongly correlate with their attainment in statutory key stage 2 assessments in English reading, writing and mathematics. Any baseline assessment must be appropriate and suitable for pupils, and avoid creating unnecessary burdens or perverse incentives for schools. It is also important that a baseline assessment can differentiate effectively between pupils' differing starting points so that like-for-like comparisons can be made.

The section, therefore, focuses on 2 key issues:

- how to ensure that we have the most appropriate baseline for a primary progress measure
- the point at which the baseline assessment should be taken

#### **Option 1: Capture more progress through the primary phase by moving the starting point for measuring progress to the reception year**

The current progress measures use key stage 1 teacher assessment data as the baseline. The biggest drawback to this is that we continue to fail to give schools credit for their crucial work with pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2. This has been raised by an independent assessment review group, convened by the NAHT, in their recent report which advocated the introduction of a new reception assessment to be used as the

baseline for measuring the progress that pupils make at primary school.<sup>9</sup> We agree that there is a strong case for measuring progress from reception to the end of year 6. We recognise that any new baseline would need careful consideration, but our view is that the case for a baseline in reception is strong.

In the preceding section, we confirmed our plan to retain the early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) and asked how we might improve it so that it better meets its purposes of assessing a child's development and readiness for school.

In theory, one option for a new reception baseline would be to modify the EYFSP further so that this could also be used as the baseline for measuring progress in primary school. This would involve amending its literacy and numeracy content so that it is assessed under more specific conditions (for example, to see if a child can do a particular task at a snapshot in time). However, we do not believe that this would be desirable for the profile overall, as this approach would provide a less rounded view of individual pupil performance in these important areas and would reduce the scope for teachers to input their professional expertise into the assessment. Additionally, given the EYFSP needs to be completed towards the end of the reception year, using this as the baseline would mean missing the important progress schools make with children during the reception year.

We believe that a better option, as advocated by the independent assessment review group, would be to introduce a new assessment earlier in the reception year. We know from research evidence<sup>10</sup> that it is possible to create an assessment of reception age children which is suitable for that age group, sufficiently granular and well correlated with later outcomes such that it could be used as a baseline from which to assess progress. This assessment would need to be appropriately teacher mediated, given the age of the children.

Any new assessment would be designed to cover the material which we would already expect children to be familiar with at that stage (including phonological awareness and comprehension in English language and writing, and counting, number operations at a basic level and basic 2D shapes in mathematics), and so would not result in changes to teaching practice. Were we to proceed with a new baseline assessment in reception, we would work with the teachers and unions to ensure that it would be appropriate for pupils, correlates with key stage 2 outcomes and does not create undue burdens.

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/assessment/assessment-review-group-publishes-report-on-the-future-of-assessment/>.

<sup>10</sup> Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) has been established since 1991 and is a project run by the Centre of Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University which monitors progress through the primary stage.

Both a continuing EYFSP and a new baseline assessment in reception would therefore cover literacy and numeracy elements. We would make sure that a new baseline in reception complemented and aligned with the EYFSP.

The specific uses of the data gained from a new assessment in reception would need to be agreed. A clear message from administering optional baseline assessments in the 2015 to 2016 academic year was that we should not use the data to 'judge' individual pupils or schools on attainment in reception. We strongly agree with this, and we would only make use of the data collected from a new assessment in reception when the pupils reach the end of key stage 2, to create a progress measure that takes into account pupils' starting points. Data from a baseline assessment could be published at national level for transparency, but we would not do so at school level. Nor would school-level data be shared with regional schools commissioners, local authorities or Ofsted.

If we were to introduce a reception baseline, we would need to consider when the best point in the reception year to administer it would be. As the main advantage of a reception baseline is to credit schools for their work throughout the entire primary phase, this suggests the assessment should be carried out towards the beginning of the reception year. This could be after pupils have been given enough time to settle into primary school and become accustomed to their new routines, for example at the beginning of the second half term. This approach has also been recommended by the independent assessment review group, convened by the National Association of Head Teachers.

## **Option 2: An improved key stage 1 baseline**

The only way to give schools credit for the value that they add in the first 3 years of school is for progress to be measured from early in the reception year, which is why a reception baseline is our preferred option. There is a theoretical alternative of continuing to use key stage 1 teacher assessment data as a baseline. Given the increasing importance of progress in performance measures, if key stage 1 were to be used as a baseline in the long term, we would need to improve the assessment to make sure it was sufficiently robust and reliable for this purpose.

Some schools and assessment experts have raised concerns that using the key stage 1 teacher assessments as a starting point for progress measures is problematic, for 2 reasons. First, they were not designed to bear the greater weight of a more prominent progress measure. They argue that incentives have now been created for schools to deflate results at key stage 1 to demonstrate greater progress by key stage 2. To help address these concerns, it would be necessary to significantly increase moderation of teacher assessment at key stage 1, to help schools to operate the framework in a consistent way.

Second, a further concern raised is that the current interim frameworks only allow for pupils to be placed into one of 3 broad teacher assessment categories. This provides enough differentiation to create a progress measure, but a greater number of categories would provide a more robust and effective measure. We could improve this by expanding the number of teacher assessment categories so that pupils' starting points could be more clearly distinguished. However, this would be likely to increase teachers' workload and would run the risk of key stage 1 teacher assessment having a negative impact on teaching practice. We want to avoid this, and therefore do not believe that the current teacher assessment approach can be improved sufficiently to provide the quality of baseline we, and the sector, would want to see in the long term, without adding undue burdens.

An alternative approach to improve the key stage 1 baseline would be to collect the data from the statutory tests which pupils already sit at the end of year 2. This would provide a robust baseline without adding to teachers' workload. It could also provide the opportunity to cease collecting some of the key stage 1 teacher assessment data. However, schools have told us previously that collecting this test data could unnecessarily raise the stakes of the tests for pupils. It is not our intention to increase the stakes of assessment, so we do not see collecting key stage 1 test data as the right long-term solution, but we are open to views.

**Q5. Any form of progress measure requires a starting point. Do you agree that it is best to move to a baseline assessment in reception to cover the time a child is in primary school (reception to key stage 2)? If you agree, then please tell us what you think the key characteristics of a baseline assessment in reception should be. If you do not agree, then please explain why.**

**Q6. If we were to introduce a reception baseline, at what point in the reception year do you think it should be administered? In particular, we are interested in the impact on schools, pupils and teaching of administering the assessment at different times.**

**Q7. Our view is that it would be difficult to change key stage 1 assessment in order that it could be used as the baseline for progress in the long term. If you disagree, what could be done to improve the key stage 1 assessments so that they would be sufficiently detailed, and trusted as a fair and robust baseline?**

## **Interim years**

Any new baseline assessment would not be in place before the 2019 to 2020 academic year, with the first cohort of pupils taking the new assessment reaching the end of key stage 2 in summer 2026 at the earliest. Up until this point, we propose continuing to use key stage 1 teacher assessment data as the baseline for the cohorts of pupils who will be completing primary school before that time, recognising the stability that this would

provide for schools. Subject to final decisions taken as a result of this consultation, the table below illustrates which assessments would be used as the baseline for progress measures in these interim years.

	<b>Start reception in September</b>	<b>Finish key stage 1 in summer</b>	<b>Finish key stage 2 in summer</b>	<b>Primary progress measures</b>
Current year 6	2010	2013	2017	Key stage 1 teacher assessment (reported as levels) to key stage 2 scaled score test
Current year 5	2011	2014	2018	
Current year 4	2012	2015	2019	
Current year 3	2013	2016	2020	Key stage 1 teacher assessment (under interim framework) to key stage 2 scaled score test
Current year 2	2014	2017	2021	
Current year 1	2015	2018	2022	Key stage 1 teacher assessment (under arrangements considered in section 5) to key stage 2 scaled score test
Current reception	2016	2019	2023	
Next year's reception	2017	2020	2024	
Current 3 year-olds	2018	2021	2025	
Current 2 year-olds	2019	2022	2026	New reception baseline assessment to key stage 2 scaled score test

For the next 4 years, we will be using the key stage 1 teacher assessments that have already taken place as the baseline for progress measures. Beyond that point, we have already confirmed the teacher assessment arrangements for the 2016 to 2017 academic year. In theory, there is the option of looking at ways of making the key stage 1 data more reliable and reducing workload in the 2018 to 2019, 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 academic years, for example by collecting key stage 1 test data to use solely as the baseline for progress measures at the point at which the relevant pupils reach key stage 2.

If we were to use test data as the baseline for progress in these 3 years, we could cease to collect key stage 1 teacher assessment data in English reading and mathematics, which could have positive workload implications for teachers. However, as discussed above, we have previously been told by the sector that collecting key

stage 1 test data would unnecessarily raise the stakes of these tests, which is not our intention. For this reason, and given the relatively short length of time involved, we propose that we continue to use key stage 1 teacher assessment data as the baseline for measuring progress in the interim years. We do, however, welcome views on this topic.

**Q8. If we were to introduce a new reception baseline measure, do you agree that we should continue to use key stage 1 teacher assessment data as the baseline for measuring progress in the interim years before a new measure was in place? If you disagree, what do you think we should use as the baseline instead?**

## The role of key stage 1 statutory assessments

Moving to an assessment system where, for school accountability, the progress measure is based on assessments of pupils in reception and the end of year 6, means that we would no longer need to use key stage 1 assessments as a baseline. As a result, we could remove the obligation for schools to assess pupils against statutory teacher assessment frameworks at the end of key stage 1, reducing workload for teachers. We could also look to make end-of-key stage 1 national curriculum tests non-statutory. This would have the significant advantage of reducing the overall burden of statutory assessment for teachers and pupils. We propose, therefore, making end-of-key stage 1 assessments – both teacher assessment frameworks and national curriculum tests – in English reading, English writing, mathematics and science non-statutory for all-through primary schools<sup>11</sup> once a new baseline in reception has become fully established.

We recognise, however, that while key stage 1 assessments will no longer be used as the baseline for progress measures, there is still value in being able to benchmark pupil performance against national standards at this point. These assessments help schools to report pupils' achievements to parents, enabling them to understand how their child is doing against national expectations. Furthermore, nationally-consistent assessments mid-way through the primary phase help schools to manage the performance of their cohort, enabling them to support pupils effectively during key stage 2 assessments.

If we were to make key stage 1 assessments non-statutory, we would still intend to provide schools with test materials, possibly accessed via a new national assessment bank at a future point,<sup>12</sup> which they could choose to use to enable them to benchmark

---

<sup>11</sup> As set out in the next part of this section, we are seeking views on the best assessment and accountability arrangements for infant, junior and middle schools.

<sup>12</sup> In its [2014 report](#), the Commission for Assessment Without Levels recommended that the DfE consider creating a 'national assessment bank' to support formative assessment within schools following the removal of levels.

their pupils against national expectations and inform parents. However, we would not collect, nor publish, data from these assessments at school level.

Were we to make key stage 1 assessments non-statutory, we would continue to expect schools to provide parents with more detailed information about their child's performance at the end of key stage 1, as the midway point in primary school.

Alternatively, we could retain a statutory requirement to administer key stage 1 national curriculum tests to give certainty of nationally-consistent assessment for all pupils at the age of 7.

We are interested in views on whether you think retaining or removing the statutory requirement for schools to administer key stage 1 tests is the right approach.

**Q9. If a baseline assessment is introduced in reception, in the longer term, would you favour removing the statutory requirement for all-through primary schools to administer assessments at the end of key stage 1?**

## **Monitoring national standards at key stage 1**

If we were to make end-of-key stage 1 assessment non-statutory in the longer term, to provide an ongoing picture of national standards we would intend to sample key stage 1 assessment data from a small proportion of schools. This data would be anonymised and would not be used for school accountability purposes. We would work with headteachers' and teachers' representatives and assessment experts to consider the size and frequency of the sample, and how it might be administered so as to minimise burdens for schools.

## **School types and assessment**

The introduction of a new assessment in reception as a baseline for measuring progress would have an impact on infant, junior and middle schools. We want to ensure that we continue to have the most appropriate accountability arrangements for these schools. In 2013, we committed to developing a national progress measure for infant schools (from reception to key stage 1) and retaining progress measures for junior and middle schools (from key stage 1 to key stage 2). Subject to the questions set out in the preceding sections, we will need to reconsider the best accountability arrangements for these types of school.

In keeping with the policy intention of progress measures covering the time within which pupils are in a school, the most logical measures for infant schools would be reception to key stage 1 and, for middle and junior schools, would be to continue with key stage 1 to key stage 2. This would mean that these schools would be judged on a different basis from all-through primary schools and so would need to be compared against each other,

rather than all other schools with key stage 2 provision. For example, pupils in junior schools would not be compared against all pupils nationally with similar starting points, but rather against only those pupils who were in infant schools at the end of key stage 1. This could make it more difficult for parents to compare results.

The alternative would be to hold infant and junior schools to account using a single reception to key stage 2 progress measure, encouraging greater collaboration between infant and junior schools. This, however, presents its own difficulties, as it would involve holding both schools to account for the progress made across the 7 years, rather than just the time the child spends in their school.

We are keen to explore these issues and would welcome views on the approach for infant, junior and middle schools.

**Q10. If we were to introduce a reception baseline to enable the creation of reception to key stage 2 progress measures for all-through primaries, what would be the most effective accountability arrangements for infant, middle and junior schools' progress measures?**

## 4. A proportionate assessment system

In her statement to Parliament on 19 October 2016, the Secretary of State took a number of steps to limit the assessment burden on schools, including committing to introducing no new national tests or assessments before the 2018 to 2019 academic year. We want our statutory assessment system to strike a balance between enabling national standards to be maintained whilst limiting the burdens on teachers and children. We believe that there are a number of potential opportunities to limit the assessment burden within the statutory primary assessment system, without sacrificing our commitment to high academic standards.

### Collection of teacher assessment data at the end of key stage 2

In line with our principles of assessment, we believe that the government should only collect data that is needed for a robust accountability system.

At the end of key stage 2, schools currently report teacher assessment data for English reading, English writing, mathematics and science. Schools also report national curriculum test data in English reading, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Key stage 2 test results in English reading and mathematics are used to measure school performance in these subjects.

Ongoing classroom teacher assessment is a vital part of teaching, and critical to discussions with parents. There is, however, a question as to whether, in the interests of reducing teacher workload, we should continue to require statutory, summative, teacher assessment in key stage 2 English reading and mathematics, when we use only test data for headline attainment and progress measures in these subjects.

Schools have told us that removing the statutory obligation to carry out teacher assessment in English reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 could have some benefits in terms of reducing teacher workload. However, we also recognise the value that teacher assessment adds by incorporating teachers' professional judgement into the statutory assessment system. We would, therefore, welcome views on this topic.

If the statutory obligation to carry out teacher assessment in key stage 2 English reading and mathematics did cease, schools would still be required to report on pupils' general progress and attainment to parents annually, enabling parents to consider key stage 2 test scores in the context of their child's broader performance. This reporting would be based on schools' own approaches to assessing their pupils, and the end-of-key stage teacher assessment frameworks would continue to be available for schools to use as they see fit. We would continue to collect teacher assessment data in science

and English writing, subjects for which there are not statutory national curriculum tests. We would also keep teacher assessment arrangements in place for those pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum (discussed in detail in the parallel Rochford Review consultation).

**Q11. Do you think that the department should remove the statutory obligation to carry out teacher assessment in English reading and mathematics at key stage 2, when only test data is used in performance measures?**

## **Key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test**

The English grammar, punctuation and spelling test was introduced at key stage 1 in 2016. In October 2016, the Secretary of State for Education announced that the test would be non-statutory for the 2016 to 2017 academic year, with tests available for teachers to use as they see fit.

In line with feedback from schools, while we think that teachers would find it helpful to continue to have access to test papers to inform their assessments, we propose that the key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test should remain non-statutory for schools to administer beyond the 2016 to 2017 academic year. We would like your views on this.

**Q12. Do you agree that the key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test should remain non-statutory beyond the 2016 to 2017 academic year, with test papers available for teachers to use as they see fit?**

## **Multiplication tables check**

Knowledge and recall of multiplication tables is essential for the study of mathematics and for everyday life. Mastering multiplication is an important foundation for further learning in a number of aspects of mathematics, including division, algebra, fractions and proportional reasoning. Evidence shows that automatic retrieval of basic mathematical facts, such as multiplication tables, is critical to children's effectiveness in solving more complex mathematical problems.<sup>13</sup> We announced at the start of 2016 that we would introduce a check to make sure that children are able to recall their times tables fluently and, importantly, to identify those who may need extra help and support to do so. In keeping with our commitment to introduce no new tests before the 2018 to 2019 academic year, we plan to introduce a national multiplication tables check from that year, and in a way that imposes as little additional workload as possible.

---

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/willingham.pdf>.

The multiplication tables check will be designed to place minimal burdens on teachers and pupils, and there will be no requirement to administer the check to the whole class at the same time. We envisage that the multiplication tables check will be taken online, with an off-line option available for schools without suitable internet connectivity. Results will be available to schools after the tests have been completed, giving teachers a quick snapshot of how pupils are performing against a national expected standard. This check would not be designed as a school accountability measure. It is designed to support teachers to identify pupils who have not yet learnt all their times tables. As such, results will only be published at a national and local authority level. The data will not be used to trigger inspection or intervention.

An online trial of the multiplication tables check is scheduled to take place in the summer of 2017, followed by a large-scale voluntary pilot in the summer of 2018.

We would like to hear your views on the point in key stage 2 at which the check should take place. The national curriculum sets out that all pupils should know their times tables by the end of year 4. If the check took place at the end of year 4, schools would have all of year 5 to support pupils to catch up, before pupils reach year 6, where focus is on end-of-key stage assessments. Alternatively, the check could take place in year 5. This would still allow a year to provide additional support where needed. The check could also take place in year 6, but we are conscious that this would add to the number of existing statutory assessments taken in this year.

**Q13. At what point in key stage 2 do you think the multiplication tables check should be administered? Please explain the basis for your views.**

- a) At the end of year 4
- b) During year 5
- c) During year 6

**Q14. How can we ensure that the multiplication tables check is implemented in a way that balances burdens on schools with benefit to pupils?**

## **Reducing burdens within the primary assessment system**

We would also like to consider whether there are additional opportunities to reduce burdens for schools and pupils by improving the administration of statutory assessments in primary schools.

**Q15. Are there additional ways, in the context of the proposed statutory assessments, that the administration of statutory assessments in primary schools could be improved to reduce burdens?**

## **5. Improving end-of-key stage statutory teacher assessment**

In the previous chapter, we discussed the possibility of no longer collecting statutory teacher assessment data where it is not used in headline progress and attainment measures. Where statutory teacher assessment is used in the accountability system (for example, key stage 2 writing assessments), it is important that this is proportionate and fair for teachers and pupils, whilst producing reliable and accurate data for school accountability purposes. We are reviewing the operation of statutory teacher assessment for future years, to ensure that it meets these principles. This section of the consultation document seeks your views on how we can achieve this.

### **End-of-key stage statutory teacher assessment**

Following the removal of national curriculum levels, interim teacher assessment frameworks were introduced in the 2015 to 2016 academic year, to enable schools to report end-of-key stage statutory assessment. These frameworks are being used again for the 2016 to 2017 academic year. The interim teacher assessment frameworks were designed to assess whether pupils have a firm grounding in the national curriculum by requiring teachers to demonstrate that pupils can meet every 'pupil can' statement. This approach aims to achieve greater consistency in the judgements made by teachers and to avoid pupils moving on in their education with significant and limiting gaps in their knowledge and skills, a problem identified under the previous system of national curriculum levels.

Having gathered feedback following the first use of the frameworks, we believe that this approach was broadly appropriate for English reading, mathematics and science at key stages 1 and 2. We will maintain this approach for these subjects in future years. However, we plan to review the 'pupil can' statements within these frameworks by working with curriculum and assessment experts to improve them further.

We will use the consultation period to discuss the timeframe for the publication of revised teacher assessment frameworks with stakeholders. We understand that there may be some desire to move quickly on this and introduce changes for the 2017 to 2018 academic year, and we would be open to considering this in light of stakeholder responses. The use of these updated frameworks for statutory teacher assessment will depend on the future role of statutory teacher assessment for different subjects explored through this consultation exercise.

## Teacher assessment of English writing

As the 2011 Bew Review of key stage 2 assessment emphasised, English writing warrants a different approach to assessment, rather than the application of a test. This is due to the creativity involved in pupils demonstrating what they can do and the subjectivity in assessing this. We therefore want to consider how we can address concerns with the interim teacher assessment writing frameworks in the short term, as well as gathering evidence on approaches which may support and strengthen the assessment of writing.

Feedback from the sector has suggested that, in the case of writing, the interim frameworks do not provide sufficient flexibility for teachers to reach judgements which are representative of pupils' overall ability in this subject. While identifying gaps in understanding through assessment remains crucial, due to the creative nature of writing, assessment should take account of both the creative and technical aspects of good writing. Anecdotal feedback from many teachers suggests that the current approach to the statutory assessment of writing could be improved to better support teachers in making rounded judgements about their pupils' attainment.

Whilst the requirement to provide robust supporting evidence would continue, we would like to consider whether there are ways in which we can afford greater flexibility for teachers in making their judgements within the framework for writing. Some of the concerns teachers have voiced centre around what has become known as 'secure fit', meaning that a child must demonstrate every aspect of the framework in order to be deemed to have achieved a certain standard. At the same time, we understand that some teachers may prefer not to see another shift in approach.

On balance, we propose that we should retain a teacher assessment framework to support assessment of writing, but instead of adhering rigidly to the 'secure fit' model we should move to a 'best fit' approach which places greater weight on the judgement of teachers. This would allow teachers greater discretion in determining whether a pupil's writing is at a particular standard overall. We would work with the profession to review the 'pupil can' statements within the writing frameworks to ensure that they support a move to a 'best fit' approach. This change would apply to the assessment of writing at both key stage 1 and key stage 2. We will use the consultation period to discuss the timeframe for the publication of revised teacher assessment frameworks with stakeholders. We understand that there may be some desire to move quickly on this and introduce changes for the 2017 to 2018 academic year, and we would be open to considering this in light of stakeholder responses.

**Q16. Do you agree that the statutory assessment of writing should afford teachers greater flexibility in determining a pupil's overall standard of attainment than is currently the case? Please give reasons for your answer.**

## Supporting and strengthening the assessment of English writing

In addition to adapting our existing approach to the statutory assessment of writing, we will continue to consider and explore other long-term approaches, so that we can be sure that the assessment of writing for national statutory purposes is as robust and useful to schools as possible. We intend, therefore, to gather evidence on, and trial, other approaches to the assessment of English writing, including approaches incorporating elements of comparative judgement<sup>14</sup>, which may facilitate more rounded judgements of writing and help to increase inter-school reliability. We recognise that the sector will have views on the approaches that we should explore, and we welcome these.

**Q17. Please give details of any robust alternative approaches to the assessment of English writing, which the Department for Education should explore.**

### Alternative approaches to moderation

Currently, statutory moderation of teacher assessment judgements operates on the basis of external local authority visits to 25% of schools, validating teachers' judgements by looking at evidence from the classroom. Following feedback from the sector, we have worked to ensure that this model is applied more consistently, introducing new moderation guidance for this year, developed in conjunction with unions and other stakeholders, and by introducing mandatory training for local authority moderators.

We want to explore ways to improve the moderation process further, including through alternative moderation models. We will be piloting a peer-to-peer approach to moderation, in which teachers from different schools will share their teacher assessment judgements and supporting evidence in local groups, overseen by a moderator. We know that many groups of schools already have their own innovative and effective moderation practices, and we are seeking your views on alternative approaches to moderation that we should explore.

**Q18. Please give details of any effective models of moderation or standardisation of teacher assessment that the Department for Education should explore.**

---

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nomoremarking.com/aboutcj>.

## Equalities

We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all children in the education system. It is important to us to consider the possible impact that the proposed policies stated in this consultation could have on different groups. This will help not only to identify, avoid and manage any possible negative impacts, but also to make the most of any opportunities for positive impact. Only then can we provide a world-class education system that allows every child to reach their potential, regardless of their background, their needs or where they live.

We have a duty to promote equality and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions public bodies must have “due regard” to: the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations, in relation to relevant protected characteristics.

The purpose of this section is to ask for your views on the proposals set out above in this consultation, and whether they are likely to have a positive or negative disproportionate impact on any pupils with relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

**Q19. Do you think that any of our proposals could have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific students, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics' (including disability, gender, race and religion or belief)? Please provide evidence to support your response.**

**Q20. How could any adverse impact be reduced and are there any ways we could better advance equality of opportunity? Please provide evidence to support your response.**



Department  
for Education



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency

© Crown copyright 2017

This document/publication (not included logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)

download [www.gov.uk/government/consultations](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations)

Reference: STA/17/7935/e ISBN: 978-1-78644-438-7



Follow us on Twitter:  
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/educationgovuk](https://facebook.com/educationgovuk)