

Assessment without Levels

The Government has made a change in the way that children in schools are to be assessed. This is to tie in with the New National Curriculum that started to be used by all schools at the beginning of 2014-15.

The End of Curriculum Levels

The Department for Education (DfE) has decided that the children who were in Year 2 and 6 in 2015 were the last pupils to be awarded a level in their end of Key Stage tests.

So why are levels disappearing?

The DfE want to avoid what has been termed 'the level race' where children have moved through the old National Curriculum levels quickly to achieve higher attainment. The old National Curriculum was sub-divided into levels, but these were not linked to their national curriculum year group. For example, a child in Year 4 could be a Level 3 or even a level 5. Children were achieving Level 5 and 6 at the end of Key Stage 2, but the DfE thought that a significant number were able to achieve a Level 5 or 6 in a test—but were not secure at that level. The feeling from the DfE was that the old national curriculum and the levels system failed to adequately ensure that children had a breadth and depth of knowledge at each national curriculum level.

Assessing Without Levels

The DfE announced last year that there would no longer be National Curriculum levels and that schools would have to set up their own way of assessing pupils. We have spent a long time researching various different methods of assessing pupils. Almost all of the systems used the same format, which was similar to the system used in the Early Years and Foundation Stage. This was to take the end of year expectations for each year group and to split this into 3 categories as follows:

- Emerging— Yet to be secure in the end of year expectations.
- Developing —Pupils have achieved the majority of the end of year expectations (most children will achieve this standard).
- Secure—Secure in almost all or all the end of year expectations and is able to use and apply their knowledge and skills confidently.

Under the old levels system children who were secure in the age expectations might have moved into the next level. The DfE now want children who are in the secure bracket to add more depth and breadth to their knowledge, and to have more opportunities to develop their using and applying skills. They are calling this phase of learning Mastery and Depth. Similarly, children who are unlikely to be emerging at the end of the year may work towards the expectations from the year below. So how will this look at the end of each Key Stage?

Key Stage 1

It is anticipated that the most the children will reach the assessment point of Year 2 developing (they have achieved most the year group objectives), and a minority will be either Year 2 secure (they have achieved virtually all the objectives) or a very small number will attain the Year 2 emerging **standard or will be using the Year 1 expectations.**

Key Stage 2

Lots of you may have heard of the expression 'Secondary Ready' as the standard children must achieve by the end of Year 6. The DfE have slightly distanced themselves from this phrase and are talking about children reaching the expected standard at the end of Year 6. Similar to Year 2 most children will be Year 6 developing (achieved most objectives), there will be some children who may be Year 6 secure (achieved virtually all objectives) and some children who are Year 6 emerging (achieved a minority of objectives). There may also be a very small number of children who are still working at a lower level e.g. Year 4/5 expectations.