



Understanding Assessment

A Guide for Parents Y1-6

In helping your child to do as well as possible at school, teachers will assess his/her progress and give you feedback from time to time. This feedback can sometimes be hard to understand, especially when the terms used are unfamiliar or unclear. The aim of this leaflet is to tell you about the kinds of assessment we may use and the type of information you may receive as a result.

What will teachers assess?

The National Curriculum in England describes what children aged five and over must be taught while at school. All subjects are assessed, not just English, maths and science. From 2016 teachers have to refer to *age related expectations (ARE)* when describing what children should be able to do at different ages in each subject. You may hear teachers describe a child as “*having reached age related expectations*” – which means they have learned to do all of the things described as necessary* by the DfE according to the stage of education they are at. Teachers judge children’s progress in learning against these expectations by tracking achievements over time.

The national curriculum is for children aged 5 and over. Teachers of younger children, at nursery school or in the reception year, use early learning goals, which describe what the children should learn. Their teachers use these goals to assess how well the children are doing in their early learning.

For most children in primary school their learning develops gradually. Learning is like being on a climbing frame rather than a ladder. Children learn something new (which is like climbing a new step on the climbing frame of learning), then need to spend time finding out more about it or getting better at doing it (which is like exploring the climbing frame sideways). Sometimes they need to climb down a step to build their confidence before going back up to the higher level. When they are confident about what they have learned, they will begin climbing up again to the next new skill or piece of knowledge. This means that learning takes time. Different children climb each frame in different ways and at different speeds. There may be times when your child seems to be making rapid progress and times when progress is less obvious.

How will your child be assessed?

People often think that ‘assessment’ means taking a test, but tests are just one type of assessment. There are many other ways that teachers assess children’s understanding or skills. For example, a conversation with a child about something they are doing in class can sometimes be enough to show what they do or don’t understand. Similarly, watching a child at work or play can give a teacher valuable information about how children approach a task, what they have understood and

** Prior to 2016, teachers were permitted to use a principle of “best fit” against level descriptors and expectations, however that is no longer the case. Unless your child can meet all expectations, they will not be able to report that children are working at ARE.*

what skills they are developing. This is called formative assessment and helps the teacher plan the next lesson.

Another type of assessment is summative assessment, which is used at the end of a topic, term or year, to show what children have learned. Sometimes your child might take a written test, or complete a piece of written work that is used to show what he/she can do. Other assessment evidence a teacher might use includes recordings or photographs to show a child's progress. These methods of assessment can all give valuable information about children's learning and may be used by teachers when telling parents about their child's progress.

Children also have to take Statutory Assessments in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6. These assessments are taken by all children nationally. The Year 6 tests are marked externally.

How will we tell you about your child's progress?

The teacher may talk to you about your child's progress informally as you collect your child from school; or more formally at a parents' evening. From time to time they may also telephone you. We also use a home/school contact book to enable communicate with parents and vice-versa.

Teachers also write reports (or records of achievement) on each child. The timing of these reports differs from school to school – some send a report once a year, others twice. At St Mary's we send *Achievement and Progress* reports in March. In these teachers will describe to you some of the things your child has successfully learned to do, his/her particular strengths or challenges in learning, and what areas need to be worked on next.

We also send home *Attainment and Attendance* reports in July. These contain information about the results of any statutory assessments your child has had during May and June; and may also tell you how other children of the same age perform nationally. Information about how to interpret this information is included. Teachers will also report their end of year judgment about the age related expectations your child is working at; and the school office team produce a registration certificate detailing your child's attendance for the year.

What if you don't understand some of the information?

You can talk to your child's teacher. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Many parents are surprised by the differences between education now and when they went to school themselves. A better understanding of the current system will help you to recognise and encourage your child's progress. It is also important to acknowledge that not all progress is captured by the Age Related Expectations approach!

KNOWLEDGE OF YEAR GROUP CURRICULUM

At St Mary's when we report to parents about your child's progress, we will refer to your child as '**emerging**', '**developing**' or '**secure**' at various points of the year. These terms refer to how the children are progressing through the year group age related curriculum expectations.

Key Stage	Key Stage 1						Lower Key Stage 2						Upper Key Stage 2						Key Stage 3		
Year	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6			Year 7		
End of Term	Au	Sp	Su	Au	Sp	Su	Au	Sp	Su	Au	Sp	Su	Au	Sp	Su	Au	Sp	Su	Au	Sp	Su
Expectations	Y1E	Y1D	Y1S	Y2E	Y2D	Y2S	Y3E	Y3D	Y3S	Y4E	Y4D	Y4S	Y5E	Y5D	Y5S	Y6E	Y6D	Y6S	Y7E	Y7D	Y7S

Children are also assessed against how they use the knowledge they have acquired to be able to further develop their own learning. So that we can monitor how well your child can apply their skills independently (across the curriculum) we are also using mastery ratings using the code '#'.

There are four Overall Mastery Ratings

Overall Mastery Rating 1 [#1] is the lowest and Overall Mastery Rating 4 [#4] is the highest.

Depth and Application of Learning – Overall Mastery Rating			
#1	#2 (expected)	#3	#4 (exceptional)
<p>This is below the expected standard depth of application and understanding. Finds it difficult to apply their learning across the curriculum.</p>	<p>This is the expected standard depth of application and understanding. Average application of learning.</p>	<p>This is above the expected standard depth of application and understanding. Good application of learning.</p>	<p>This is well above the expected standard depth of application and understanding. Very good application of learning.</p>

Putting these two aspects together results in a Teacher Assessment Judgment such as Y2D#2

Note:

This is a new system of assessment; and after many years of working with National Curriculum Levels it is presenting some challenges. However as professionals we work closely with other schools to ensure that our judgements are accurate and consistent – and this skill will become more secure over time as we deepen our own understanding of the new curriculum expectations, mastery and assessment without levels. Please remember, if you are ever unsure about the progress your child is making, make an appointment to see your child's teacher.