

Ottery St. Mary Learning Community : Statement on Assessment October 2014

Moving Assessment on in Ottery St. Mary Learning Community Schools

Our vision statement:

'We are a family of like-minded schools working together as a community of learning to improve the life chances of the children within our care, and to celebrate their successes.'

In September 2014, a new National Curriculum was introduced for all schools. National curriculum levels were also removed. These were the levels which teachers used to report on a child's progress and attainment (ranging from a 1C in Year 1 to an expected level of 4B and beyond at the end of Year 6.)

In 2014/15 Year 2 and Year 6 pupils will not be taught the new National Curriculum. The 2015 Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessments and tests will be on the old National Curriculum and will be the last to be reported on against the levels system.

By removing levels the government hopes to give teachers greater flexibility in the way that they plan and assess. All maintained schools are free to develop a curriculum and assessment system relevant to their pupils. However, this leaves all schools in the situation where they have no starting point and the potential risk of developing a system different to other schools, making it difficult to benchmark against other similar schools or to check that the teachers are making accurate judgements.

Schools were advised by the Department for Education to 'adopt local solutions for local problems'. In response to this the Ottery St. Mary Local Learning Community (a cluster of schools comprising Feniton, Ottery St Mary, Tipton, Payhembury and West Hill Primary Schools and The King's Secondary School) is currently working together on a shared system for assessment which is appropriate to all our schools.

We will have a new system aligned with the new curriculum fully in place for September 2015 for all Year Groups 1 - 6. In the meantime, there will be no change for Years 2 and 6 and for Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 teachers will be planning lessons which teach to the expectations of the new curriculum. Each school will report to parents, according to their own specific reporting procedures, on whether their children are meeting the expectations of this new curriculum or whether they are falling below or exceeding the expectations for their age.

The old and new curricular both have different content. Many objectives in the old curriculum have been shifted to lower year groups in the new curriculum. It is to be expected that many pupils will see a dip in attainment and progress as teachers re-assess children against the new, more rigorous national Curriculum. This is to be expected as they are now being assessed against a wholly new framework - one for which they have not been taught the previous years' objectives and content, and so there will be a time of transition between the old and the new sets of data. For example, a child currently attaining Level 4B will not have been taught the new content or explored the methods in which they can apply their knowledge in the ways expected by the new National Curriculum. This means it is not possible to have an exact correlation between a level that is the outcome of the old National Curriculum assessment and the re-assessment of a child in the new National Curriculum. As a consequence, pupil attainment will appear to dip due to this increased expectation of the new curriculum. Ofsted is aware that schools will be going through this transition as they '*recognise that schools are still working towards full implementation of their preferred approach.*'

In this time of change our principles for assessment will remain unchanged.

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We shall:

- create a system, linked to our school curriculum, which sets out what pupils are expected to know, understand and do, and by when;
- ensure all pupils make the progress their teachers expect;
- set aspirational targets so that pupils are on track to meet or exceed expected standards by the end of each key stage;
- identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support to reach their full potential;
- provide work for more able pupils to deepen their learning and understanding;
- identify and act upon pupils' strengths and misconceptions during lessons through high quality teaching which meets the needs of all individuals;
- use detailed formative and summative assessment to ensure pupils, teachers and parents know if pupils are meeting the expected standard;
- report in a way which will help parents to understand how well their children are doing in relation to the expected standards;
- make consistent judgements about pupils' attainment and progress, drawn from a range of evidence and the accuracy of the assessment will be confirmed through internal and external standardisation and moderation;
- Ensure assessment information continues to be used by leaders and governors to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum;

We will also be referring to Assessment Principles, the *recommended principles for schools to effectively assess their pupils' progress against their school curriculum*, published by the DfE in April 2014. This document is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304602/Assessment_Principles.pdf

Each school thanks you for your patience and understanding in this time of considerable change in the world of education. We will provide further information to keep you up to date with developments. In addition, individual schools will let you know about Parents' Evenings/Meetings, information events or reporting procedures through their school newsletters.

With our very best wishes,

The Headteachers of Ottery St. Mary Local Learning Community:

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The Otter Valley Federation

Mrs. A. Parsons,
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Mrs. Penny Hammett,
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Tipton St. John Church of England Primary School, (The Otter Valley Federation)

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