



Dinnington First School

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Dear Parents,

Following the introduction of a new National Curriculum in September 2014, National Curriculum levels in English schools are to be replaced by a new grading system. At Dinnington First School, we plan to work with parents over the course of the year, to explain what you need to know about the new assessment levels as well as new KS1 SATs from 2016 and the new Reception baseline assessment.

What is the new primary grading system?

Historically, children’s progress has been assessed using National Curriculum levels. The current government decided to remove ‘level descriptors’ from the National Curriculum. Schools are expected to establish their own assessment systems to suit their children. In doing so, we are working closely with the Gosforth Trust schools to ensure that we all follow the same principles and achieve the best possible outcomes for our children.

Starting from this year, children in Years 1/2/3/4 will be assessed by class teachers against what is expected for their age. Parents will therefore be informed how their child is performing, against what is expected of a child of that age and also what progress they have made throughout the year.

Stages of learning in each year group

STAGE	DEFINITION
Not Year Group Ready (Below Expected)	No knowledge or understanding
Emerging / Entering	Little knowledge and understanding of topics covered.
Developing	Topic information makes sense but children have limited knowledge
Securing (Desired by the end of the year)	Topic information makes sense and there is a growing / good level of knowledge.
Mastering	Excellent topic knowledge is combined with an ability to explain ideas and transfer their learning to other situations.

As with previous years, the Y1 phonics screening check will remain, with children who do not reach expected in Year 1 being re-tested in Year 2.

From summer 2016, there will be more challenging SATs tests to reflect the new curriculum at the end of the Key Stage 1. Later in the year we will be running parent workshops for children currently in Year 2, which will outline the content and structure of these tests and how you can support your child in preparing for them. These tests will be used alongside the day to day assessments that teachers are making continually, when working with your child in class. The following link will take you





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to the exemplar material provided by the government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-2016-sample-materials>

Why the change?

The Department for Education felt that levels were too vague and complicated for parents and did not help them understand their child's progress. In addition, the new guidance on assessment without levels makes it clear that racing through the curriculum is no longer an acceptable measure of progress and attainment, but instead a measure of 'mastery' of the curriculum is the way forward. With this in mind each year group at Dinnington will focus purely on their own year group objectives *¹- building an increasingly secure knowledge of age appropriate material.

(*¹) *SEN children may be taught and monitored using a different year groups targets as appropriate for their level of development*

What about testing in Reception?

Alongside the removal of levels and new end of key stage tests, children will also be assessed during their first half term in Reception. At Dinnington First School, we have opted to use an observational assessment developed by Early Excellence known as EExBA-R and approved by the DFE. This assessment involves practitioners observing children playing, learning and interacting as normal and making an assessment judgment from these observations. It is a broad assessment of your child's abilities in all areas of their learning and development. It does not involve any predetermined tasks or tests.

When will your child be assessed?

In conjunction with continuous teacher assessments, there will still be national assessments at regular intervals during your child's time at Dinnington:

- baseline assessment in Reception (from September 2016)
- the Phonics Screening Check in Year 1
- the end-of-Key-Stage test in Year 2 (KS1 SATs)

It's going to be a busy year with lots of change. We will update you as necessary as the year goes on, however in the meantime please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

A Farrar

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