

## **How assessments are changing for your children: Year 1 - Year 6**

(Please note that this information may be subject to change)

In September 2014 National Curriculum levels in English schools will be replaced by a new grading system. We explain what parents need to know about the new assessment levels as well as new KS1 and KS2 SATs from 2016 and the new Reception baseline assessment test.

### **What is the new primary grading system?**

Currently children's progress is assessed using National Curriculum levels. As of September 2014, the government has decided to remove 'level descriptors' from the National Curriculum. Schools will be expected to establish their own assessment systems to suit their children and parents.

### **Why the change?**

The Department for Education feel levels are too vague and complicated for parents and not very good at helping them understand their child's progress. Levels are currently used in school to grade pupils from ages five to 14. At the age of 11, when children leave primary school, they are expected to have achieved at least a Level 4 in English, Maths and Science.

### **So how will children be awarded a grade after September 2014?**

From Summer 2016, there will be more challenging SATs tests to reflect the new curriculum at the end of the Key Stages. The tests will now be marked with a score on a standardised scale, ranging from 80 to 130. A score of 100 is the expected outcome at the end of Year 6, indicating that children are ready for secondary school. Children in Year 1/3/4 and 5 will be assessed against what is expected for their age. Parents will therefore be informed if their children/child is working at 'expected', 'above expected' or 'below expected' and also what progress they have made throughout the year. Children will also be matched against 'performance descriptors' (in other words what pupils are expected to know and be able to do at the time of testing) when being assessed by their teachers at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 to see if they have achieved the expected standard.

### **When will your child be assessed?**

Alongside continuous teacher assessments, there will still be national assessments at regular intervals in primary education:

- Children will undergo a new baseline test in Reception (from September 2016)
- the Phonics Screening Check in Year 1
- the end-of-Key-Stage test in Year 2 (KS1 SATs)
- the end-of-Key-Stage test in Year 6 (KS2 SATs)

### **What are the expected grades for the end of each year group?**

Under the changes, from 2016 the government expects 85% of pupils to reach a 'good level of attainment' in updated Key Stage 2 SATs (as opposed to the current 65% – a massive increase). With levels abolished and the introduction of 'performance descriptors', it looks like there will be a lot less emphasis on expected grades for each year group, but rather a focus on whether a child has acquired the expected knowledge or not. The government will set the precise extent of progress required in each year group once the new Key Stage 2 tests have been set for the first time in May 2016.

### **What about children who are above or below the expected level?**

Of course there will still be children who will not meet the expected standard, and they will continue to be teacher assessed using P-scales (a way of measuring the progress of children who are working below the National Curriculum levels). By assessing children more formally at Reception level (with the new Reception baseline assessment test, due to start in September 2016), the government hopes the children requiring more teacher input will be identified earlier.

### **When will the new assessment levels start?**

Until 2015, the current national tests will assess children against the current curriculum and national curriculum levels. In other words, pupils entering Years 2 and 6 in September 2014 will continue to be taught the current curriculum for primary English, maths and science in order to complete SATs in summer 2015. From 2016 there will be new SATs tests for Y2 and Y6, based on the new primary curriculum. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 5 in September 2014 will be the first to sit the new end-of-Key-Stage tests in May 2016; the outcomes of these tests will not be based on levels.

### **Does this affect the Foundation Stage assessment levels?**

Alongside the scrapping of levels and new tougher end of key stage tests, children will also sit a Reception baseline test in order to assess their progress from when they start school to the end of Key Stage 2. Once that is in place in September 2016, it will no longer be compulsory for teachers to complete an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile on pupils (this is currently given to parents at the end of Reception and is a broad assessment of your child's abilities in all areas of their learning and development).