



Whiting, C. and McKay, D. (2021) Assessment without levels – tracking progress in key stages 1-3, *BERA Annual Conference*, London, UK [online], 13 - 16 September 2021.

ResearchSPAce

<https://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/>

Your access and use of this document is based on your acceptance of the ResearchSPAce Metadata and Data Policies, as well as applicable law:- <https://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/policies.html>

Unless you accept the terms of these Policies in full, you do not have permission to download this document.

This cover sheet may not be removed from the document.

Please scroll down to view the document.

ASSESSMENT WITHOUT LEVELS – TRACKING PROGRESS IN KEY STAGES 1-3

Caroline Whiting c.whiting@bathspa.ac.uk

Darren McKay d.mackay@bathspa.ac.uk

Bath Spa University

EXPECTED LEVELS

	Expected standard		Expected standard	Expected standard+
Key Stage 1	1c-2c	Year 1	1c-2c	
		Year 2	2b-2a	Level 3
Key Stage 2	3c-4a	Year 3	2b-3c	
		Year 4	3c-3a	
		Year 5	3a-4c	
		Year 6	4b-4a	Level 5
Key Stage 3	4b-6c	Year 7	4b-5c	
		Year 8	5c-5a	
		Year 9	5b-6a	

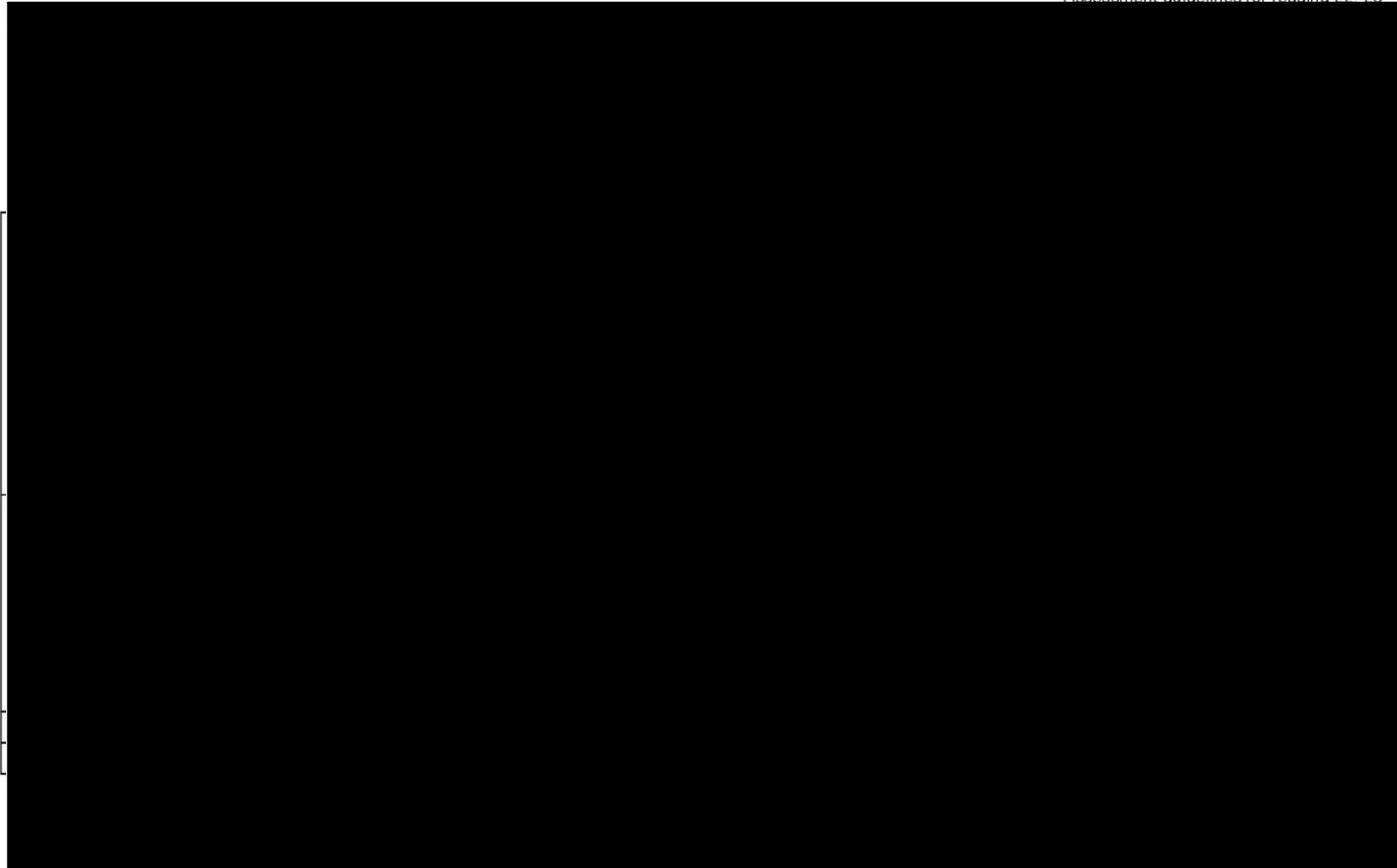
EXPECTED PROGRESS

Mathematics

% of pupils		Key Stage 2 Level								Percentage achieving expected progress	Percentage achieving more than expected progress
		Other or no KS2 result	W	1	2	3	4	5	6		
KS1 test level	Other or no prior available	1	2	2	10	13	41	25	6	57	
	W	X	25	16	33	16	8	1	X	57	24
	1	0	0	1	16	42	38	2	0	83	41
	2C	0	0	0	2	24	66	8	0	74	8
	2B	0	X	0	0	7	67	25	1	93	26
	2A	0	X	X	0	1	40	53	6	99	59
	2	0	0	0	1	8	56	32	3	91	35
	3	0	X	0	0	0	9	56	35	91	35
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	95	95		

ASSESSMENT SCAFFOLDS

The National Strategies | Primary | Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics
Assessment guidelines for reading L2, L3



NEW NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Assessment should focus on whether children have understood these key concepts rather than achieved a particular level.

Every child needs to be capable of doing anything dependent on the effort they put in and how it's presented to them. Levels get in the way of this

NO NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR YRS 1,3,4,5

- National curriculum:
- *The programmes of study for mathematics are set out year-by-year for key stages 1 and 2. Schools are, however, only required to teach the relevant programme of study by the end of the key stage. Within each key stage, schools therefore have the flexibility to introduce content earlier or later than set out in the programme of study. In addition, schools can introduce key stage content during an earlier key stage, if appropriate. All schools are also required to set out their school curriculum for mathematics on a year-by-year basis and make this information available online.*
-
- STA

ASSESSMENT WITHOUT LEVELS MASTERY

CAWL report:

It is about deep, secure learning for all, with extension of able students (more things on the same topic) rather than acceleration (rapidly moving on to new content). Levels were not consistent with this approach because they encouraged undue pace and progression onto more difficult work while pupils still had gaps in their knowledge or understanding. In developing new approaches to assessment, schools have the opportunity to make “mastery for all” a genuine goal.... Pupils are required to demonstrate mastery of the learning from each unit before being allowed to move on to the next, with the assumption that all pupils will achieve this level of mastery if they are appropriately supported. Some may take longer and need more help, but all will get there in the end

DfE:

The Commission’s definition of mastery in assessment is particularly helpful and reflects an underpinning principle of the new curriculum that pupils should achieve a secure and deep understanding of the whole curriculum content before being moved on to new content. It is important that schools, and those who support schools, have a clear and singular definition of mastery.

ASSESSMENT WITHOUT LEVELS

THREE FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

DfE

There will be a clear separation between ongoing, formative assessment (wholly owned by schools) and the statutory summative assessment

CAWL

There are three broad overarching forms of assessment, each with its own purposes

Day-to-day in-school formative assessment, for example: • Question and answer during class • Marking of pupils' work • Observational assessment • Regular short re-cap quizzes • Scanning work for pupil attainment and development

In-school summative assessment, for example: • End of year exams • Short end of topic or unit tests • Reviews for pupils with SEN and disabilities

Nationally standardised summative assessment, for example: • National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 • National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1

ASSESSMENT LED BY STATUTORY ASSESSMENT

CAWL:

- *Despite being intended only for use in statutory national assessments, too frequently levels also came to be used for in-school assessment between key stages in order to monitor whether pupils were on track to achieve expected levels at the end of key stages. This distorted the purpose of in-school assessment, particularly day-to-day formative assessment.....*
- *Levels were used to measure both end of phase achievement and lesson-by-lesson formative progress, but they had not been designed to fulfil the latter purpose, with the result that formative assessment was often distorted.*
- *In-school summative assessment should not be driven by nationally collected forms of statutory summative assessment. What works best for national accountability purposes does not necessarily work best for supporting teaching and learning or for monitoring pupil progress.*
- *formative assessments do not have to be measured using the same scale that is used for summative assessments. For this reason, the Commission urges schools to guard against designing or purchasing assessment systems modelled on statutory arrangements for teacher assessment*

DfE

The removal of levels was based on the principle that schools are best placed to develop their own high-quality formative assessment systems, which are diagnostic and which are not necessarily nationally referenced. The intention of the performance descriptors is to provide summative assessment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 only. They are not intended to inform ongoing assessment.....

ASSESSMENT IS STILL LED BY STATUTORY ASSESSMENT

NFER (2018)

The influence of statutory national is still clearly apparent in schools' non-statutory assessment and continues to be the main driver for formative and summative assessment

House of Commons select committee (2018)

National curriculum levels were removed without enough support in place for schools to implement their own assessment systems successfully. Many schools have now adopted ineffective assessment systems.

NAHT (2018)

It is all too easy for statutory assessment to become entangled with in-school assessment... in-school assessments inevitably take on the form of statutory assessments, in order to produce compatible data, however inappropriate this form may be to support teaching and learning

WHAT ARE OFSTED LOOKING FOR?

Ofsted blog:

You know what's right for your pupils and we trust you to design systems that reflect their achievement.....

[I think there is] too much reliance on meaningless data; and too little meaningful assessment of the right things at the right point in the curriculum.....

'Expected progress' was removed as an accountability measure in 2015 by the Department for Education.....

The assessment that schools carry out – including formative assessment, in-school summative assessment and nationally standardised summative assessments – all do different jobs. But the key reason for all assessment is to ensure that teaching and learning are working well.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

then	now
Schools assessment is driven by statutory assessment	School assessment is often still driven by statutory assessment, often underpinned by commercial assessment packages
levels	Age Related Expectations based on whole key stage curriculum content which can be taught at any time (AREs)
Tracking systems based on standardised year group expectations	Tracking systems based on AREs
Labels: 2c child, level 5 child, borderline child	Labels: greater depth child/non greater depth child
All schools are doing much the same	All schools are doing much the same

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

- What do schools understand as the intentions of the removal of National Curriculum levels?
- What influences schools in their decision-making around assessment and tracking of pupil progress; what sources of advice, support or resources are drawn upon?
- What challenges or problems have arisen in setting up new systems of school assessment? What changes have they made for 2020-21, or may in 2021-22 and why? Has the pandemic changed their thinking? What are the implications for KS2-3 transition and tracking in Key Stage 3?
- Do school practices in assessing and tracking pupil progress in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 fulfil the stated intentions of the 2014 National Curriculum, the Commission for Assessment Without Levels report and the government's response?
- What are school staff's attitudes to the systems they have in place (purpose, effectiveness, impact on pupil progress, workload and personal investment in the process and outcomes)?