



St Mary's Church of England School

Infants:

Amyand Park Road
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Friday 16th October 2015

Dear Parents

Assessment without Levels

From September, the government has made huge changes in the way that children in schools are to be assessed. The Department of Education (hereafter referred to as DfE) announced last year that there would no longer be National Curriculum levels and that schools would have to set up their own way of assessing pupils. This is to tie in with the New National Curriculum that started to be used by all schools at the beginning of 2014-2015. This is a new way of thinking for schools, and assessment will look very different as to how it has done for the past twenty years. The aim of this guide is to give you some clear information about all the changes that are happening in Education across the country. Before we even think about assessment we need to be clear on what changes the new curriculum has brought to subjects that are traditionally assessed.

The End of Curriculum Levels

The Department for Education (DfE) have decided that the summer of 2015 will be the last time that children will be assessed with levels.

Why are levels disappearing?

The DfE want to avoid what has been termed 'The Level Race' where children have moved through the old National Curriculum levels quickly to achieve higher attainment. The old National Curriculum was sub-divided into levels, but these were not linked to their national curriculum year group. For example, a child in Year 4 could be a Level 3 or even a level 5. Children were achieving Level 5 and 6 at the end of Key Stage 2, but the DfE thought a significant number were able to achieve a Level 5 or 6 in a test. The DfE felt that the old national curriculum and the levels system failed to adequately ensure that children had a breadth and depth of knowledge at each national curriculum level.

St Mary's Assessment system

We have spent a long time researching various different methods of assessing pupils and have decided to use the current assessment system that we use, 'Target Tracker' which has been updated to **steps** rather than levels:

Beginning
Working
Secure



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Each of these then has a '+' so the class teachers have six steps in which to assess the children in their year group (the word band is used on the software):

Beginning, Beginning +, Working, Working +, Secure, Secure +.

Other systems use the terminology 'Emerging, Expected or exceeding' in the same way as EYFS, however, Target Tracker uses the terms above.

The majority of children In each year group, will start at the beginning of the year on step "B" for Beginning. There are 6 steps to work through in a year. For example, if your child is in Year 3 they may be assessed as 3w+. This does not equate to the old level 3, but the 3 refers to Year 3 and the w+ relates to Working Plus.

Approximately a quarter of schools in Kingston and Richmond use this system, so we can share best practice with them.

The teachers will use their judgement and the statements that are on the programme to judge where a child is at. These statements have been taken from the national curriculum programmes of study, which are available online

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf

Mastery:

Under the old levels system children who were exceeding might have moved into the next level. The DfE now want children who are in the exceeding bracket to add more depth and breadth to their knowledge, and to have more opportunities to develop their using and applying skills. They are calling this phase of learning 'Mastery and Depth.' Children who are unlikely to be secure at the end of the year may work towards the expectations from the year below.

Mastery refers to **all** children being 'secure' in what they are learning. It is, therefore, clearly suggested that children should be taught in mixed ability maths groups rather than by ability. Once children have learnt the concept, their knowledge will be broader and in more depth instead of moving onto the next year's curriculum. This concept will be gradually embedded throughout the school.



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Progress:

We expect all children to progress through to their assessment from the previous year, e.g. a child at the end of Year 3 was working +, so the minimum we would expect them to be at the end of Year 4 was working + for Year 4. Accelerated progress will be demonstrated through mastery and work during the year, with recording of some of this in books.

During the year, when we have conversations with you about your child's progress you won't be given an actual definitive position of where they are on this scale. Instead you will be told whether your child is on track to meet their end of year target and whether they are working below/at/above the expected stage

Assessment of your child's progress in their learning

As you know the school assesses your child's learning and their progress every term; three times a year. We do this in three ways: by setting tests, by assessing their class work and by their teacher's professional judgement. Myself, Tom Holmes and Danielle Maynard along with the SENCos meet with your child's teacher every term to discuss each child's progress and what additional support the teachers are putting in place especially if we feel that a child is not making as much progress as we think they need to realise their full potential. The governors of our school also review the 'data' which shows progress of all the children across the school and this is discussed at our governor meetings.

We will be holding curriculum meetings for parents on the middle site on Thursday 5th November at 7pm and Friday 6th November at 9am. You are very welcome to attend either of these meetings, but not both. There will be a presentation and the opportunity to ask any questions.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Campbell
Headteacher