

Note for inspectors: use of assessment information during inspections in 2014/15

All schools, academies and free schools are required to publish, in relation to each academic year, the content of the school's curriculum for each subject and details of how additional curriculum information may be obtained.

From 1 September 2014, all maintained schools will be required by law to teach the relevant national curriculum programmes of study by the end of the key stage. Schools can teach the elements in the programmes of study in any order, even where they are written for separate year groups.¹ Academies and free schools do not have to teach the national curriculum.

National curriculum levels will be removed from September 2014. In 2014/15, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils will not be taught the new 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 levels.

In 2014/15, most schools, academies and free schools will have historic performance data expressed in national curriculum levels, except for those pupils in Year 1. Inspectors may find that schools are tracking attainment and progress using a mixture of measures for some, or all, year groups and subjects.

¹ There is an expectation that the new history national curriculum is taught chronologically.

As now, inspectors will use a range of evidence to make judgements, including by looking at test results, pupils' work and pupils' own perceptions of their learning. Inspectors will not expect to see a particular assessment system in place and will recognise that schools are still working towards full implementation of their preferred approach.²

However, inspectors will:

- spend more time looking at the range of pupils' work to consider what progress they are making in different areas of the curriculum
- talk to leaders about schools' use of formative and summative assessment and how this improves teaching and raises achievement
- evaluate how well pupils are doing against relevant age-related expectations as set out by the school and the national curriculum (where this applies)³

² Further advice and guidance to support schools in selecting an appropriate system may be found by following the links below:

Assessment principles: school curriculum, DfE, April 2014:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessment-principles-school-curriculum.

Schools win funds to develop and share new ways of assessing pupils:

www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-win-funds-to-develop-and-share-new-ways-of-assessing-pupils.

National curriculum and assessment: information for schools, DfE, March 2014:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-and-assessment-information-for-schools.

Assessment Commission Report, NAHT, February 2014, www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/assessment/assessment-commission-resources/.

Case study One - Assessment without levels, www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.139FCCAF-54DA-416D-B67D2FA2149B6BA7.html.

Case study Two - Assessment without levels <http://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.8A5E3F46-2082-416E-928E83DAA69E3AB0.html>.

³ Schools are likely to use a combination of relevant national curriculum expectations and performance descriptors where they apply (see below), and expectations set by the school for other (continued in the footnote below) subjects and age groups through the chosen assessment system. For the end of each key stage, the government will set the expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In between, it is for schools to determine where pupils must be in relation to that standard. For Key Stage 1, the DfE will provide performance descriptors for expected national standards in mathematics, reading and writing. It will provide a single descriptor of the expected standard for science. For Key Stage 2, the DfE will provide performance descriptors for expected standards in writing. For science, reading and mathematics, it will provide a single descriptor of the expected standard. The DfE will publish the draft performance descriptors in autumn 2014. At both key stages, tests will be reported against scaled scores rather than levels.

Key Stage 4 programmes of study for English and mathematics will be published in August 2014 for teaching from September 2015. Science will be published for teaching from September 2016.

- consider how schools use assessment information to identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support to reach their full potential, including the most able
- evaluate the way schools report to parents and carers on pupils' progress and attainment and assess whether reports help parents to understand how their children are doing in relation to the standards expected.

Leadership and management

In arriving at judgements within leadership and management, inspectors will usually consider how well:

- a suitably broad and balanced curriculum and the system of assessment set out what pupils are expected to know, understand and do, and by when
- the assessment system is linked to the school's curriculum
- information about what is taught in the curriculum is shared with parents and carers, including by meeting the legal requirement to make curriculum information available on the school's website
- the school uses detailed formative and summative assessment to ensure that pupils, teachers and parents know if pupils are achieving the expected standard or if they need to catch up
- assessment information, including test results, are used by leaders and governors to improve teaching and the curriculum for all pupils.

Accuracy of assessment

In evaluating the accuracy of assessment, inspectors will usually consider how well:

- any baseline assessment, teacher assessment and testing are used to modify teaching so that pupils achieve the expected standards by the end of year or key stage
- assessment draws on a range of evidence of what pupils know, understand and can do in the different aspects of subjects in the curriculum, for example, through regular testing
- teachers make consistent judgements and share them with each other; for example, within a subject, across a year-group and between adjacent year-groups
- leaders ensure the accuracy of assessment through internal and external standardisation and moderation
- governors assure themselves of the rigour of the assessment process

- schools adopt the best practice of working together to moderate assessment for year groups and the end of key stages, and to develop common understanding of attainment and share records at points of transfer (within the context of the revised common transfer file).

Progress

In arriving at judgements about progress, inspectors will usually consider how well:

- pupils' work shows that, where possible, they have the knowledge, understanding and skills expected for their age as set out by the curriculum and assessment system
- all pupils are set aspirational targets and that they are on track to meet or exceed these expected standards by the end of each key stage
- assessment, including test results, targets, performance descriptors or expected standards are used to ensure that all pupils make the progress their teachers expect and that more able pupils do work that deepens their knowledge and understanding
- progress in literacy and mathematics is assessed by drawing on evidence from other subjects in the curriculum, where this is sensible
- pupils' strengths and misconceptions are identified and acted on by teachers during lessons, and more widely, to:
 - plan future lessons and teaching
 - remedy where pupils do not demonstrate knowledge or understanding of a key element of the curriculum
 - deepen the knowledge and understanding of the most able.

Reporting

In evaluating the effectiveness of reporting, inspectors will assess the way the school reports on the progress and attainment of pupils to parents and carers. Inspectors will consider whether reports help parents to understand how well their children are doing in relation to any standards expected.