

Department for Children and Young People

Head Teachers and Assessment Coordinators
of Primary, Junior, Infant and Special Schools
and the PRU

Date: 10th September 2007
Your Ref:
Our Ref: LT/lmc
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DI Ref: B300-2-279-07
Enquiries to: Liz Thomas/ Martin Wood
Tel: 01454 863193
Fax: 01454 868967
E-mail: liz.thomas@southglos.gov.uk
martin.wood@southglos.gov.uk

Dear Colleague

ASSESSMENT MATTERS 2007- 8: No 1

The purpose of this letter is to provide a brief update on local and national developments in the formal assessment undertaken at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2.

KEY STAGE 1

Circular 40 Ordering of tasks and test for Key Stage 1 2008

Your school should have received a letter confirming arrangements for ordering tasks and tests for 2008 for Key Stage 1. The new contractor for Key Stage 1 is ETSEurope. The letter should confirm your login details needed to access the 'test orders' sections of the National Assessment Agency (NAA) website <http://www.naa.org.uk/tests>.

As in 2007 you will **only** be able to order tasks and tests **online**. Your school will be able to choose between ordering either 2007 or 2005 tasks and tests. The deadline for submitting test orders for **Key Stage 1 is 28th September 2007**. Your order cannot be changed after this date - so it is important that correct orders are made by this deadline. Delivery of tests will be January 2008. If your school already has enough tests for 2008, you still need to visit <http://www.naa.org.uk/tests> and submit a '**nil**' return to indicate that you do not require any test materials.

- If you do not receive your letter by **Friday 14th September 2007**, then please contact the **ETSEurope** help desk on **0870 161 4529**.
- For other queries on **test orders** please contact **NAA help 0870 241 3540** or email helpdesk@nctest.naa.org.uk

Therese Gillespie, Director for Children and Young People,
South Gloucestershire Council, Bowling Hill, Chipping Sodbury,
South Gloucestershire BS37 6JX Tel: (01454) 868686 Fax: (01454) 863263

Implications for Teaching and Learning Posters 2007

Following a recent review, the NAA has decided not to continue with the Implications for Teaching and Learning project and will not produce the subsequent posters and web products. Previous years posters are available on the QCA website at <http://www.qca.org.uk/itl>

FOUNDATION STAGE PROFILE

Initial assessment

Headteachers are reminded that we recommend completing an initial assessment under the Foundation Stage Profile by:

i. **making as much use as possible of assessment information from pre-school settings**

A large majority of settings use the Stepping Stones booklets and visits to pre-school settings are showing increasingly reliable judgements.

ii. **undertaking observation-based assessment across all thirteen scales**

The Foundation Stage Profile was developed very carefully to measure all significant aspects of a child's development. Selective use of the scales (especially reading, writing, mathematics and personal development) runs the risk of distorting this crucial assessment.

iii. **making a record of this assessment by mid-November**

Some schools already complete this process by the end of Term 1. We have set our suggested deadline a little later because of variable patterns of part-time attendance and to give staff a little more time after the break to complete or confirm their assessments.

In making these assessments, Foundation Stage staff are reminded that assessment is based on ongoing observation, not one-off events.

In principle this is understood by teachers and head teachers alike. In practice, two things may undermine this process.

• **Some teachers may still be setting up too many situations which they carefully structure in order to assess the children.**

Usually this is done for the best reasons and due to a very conscientious desire to be thorough. However, in broad terms, teachers should aim for a 80:20 split – 80% observation of child-initiated activity and 20% observing activities where adults have a conspicuous presence.

• **Some schools may be tempted to use one-off tests to supplement observation-based assessment.**

There are a number of commercial firms currently developing or actively marketing resources which they claim reduce the workload of Foundation Stage Profile assessment. Generally such resources set up one-off assessments with an inevitably limited (and therefore highly scaffolded) range of possible responses. **However informally presented (e.g., as games, interactive on-screen activities or puzzles etc) such practices are not compatible with the observation-based assessment principles of the Foundation Stage Profile.** They do not represent good practice in assessing young children and do not provide reliable evidence.

- **Head Teachers are asked to bring this letter to the attention of all staff involved in Foundation Stage Profile assessment and to exercise great caution when evaluating any marketing material from commercial organisations.**

TEACHERS NEW TO FOUNDATION STAGE AND KS1 ASSESSMENT

We are keen to make sure that teachers new to undertaking teacher assessment in YR and Y2 have the opportunity for appropriate support and training. A letter was sent last week with a survey form to identify new YR and Y2 teachers.

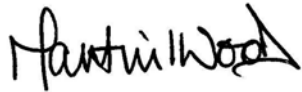
- **Headteachers of all schools with YR and Y2 children are asked to**
- **return this survey (even if it is a “nil return) by Monday 17th September; and**
 - **support these teachers by enabling them to attend relevant training.**

As ever, we are always willing to offer further on issues covered by Assessment Matters letters.

- For queries about assessment in Key Stages 1 and 2, please contact Liz Thomas.
- For queries about Foundation Stage Profile assessment please contact Martin Wood

This is the last hard copy of Assessment Matters, as of term 2 all letters will be emailed into schools directly for the attention of Headteachers and Assessment Subject Leaders. Copies of the letters will also be available on the Learning and School Effectiveness Website, under the heading School Effectiveness, Primary see the following weblink below
<http://www.learningwithsouthglos.org/Primary/index.htm>

Yours sincerely



Martin Wood
Senior Adviser (Early Years)



Liz Thomas
Teaching and Learning Adviser
(Numeracy & Resources)