

Department for Children and Young People

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

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Dear Colleague

ASSESSMENT MATTERS 2007-08: No 2

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.

This edition contains important information for Head Teachers on:

- Changes to South Gloucestershire's **Key Stage 1 Moderation plan**
- New arrangements for **Key Stage 2 administration**
- New guidance on the use of **Foundation Stage Profile** to predict future performance

As well as offering information about recent and future developments, the letter highlights key actions for schools, shown by an arrowhead bullet point (➤)

☐ KEY STAGE 1 ASSESSMENT

Changes to KS1 moderation 2008

In summer 2007 our Key Stage 1 moderation process was evaluated by the NAA as part of their routine monitoring schedule. The NAA's report was extremely positive and included a few recommendations to bring further improvement to our work. These were presented to the Primary Heateacher's Executive which supported all the LA's proposals.

The following changes have been agreed:

- We have introduced a "Meet the Moderator" meeting for all Year 2 teachers and Heads of all schools being moderated.
- School moderation visits will take place in term 4 with a possible follow up visit in term 6.
- Schools are requested if possible to release a Year 1 or Year 3 teacher to be present during the moderation visit.
- All moderated schools will be asked to complete an evaluation of the process from their point of view.
- We will maintain the practice of the Lead Moderator attending all school moderation visits; our Lead Moderator is Liz Minson.

Therese Gillespie, Director for Children and Young People,
South Gloucestershire Council, Bowling Hill, Chipping Sodbury,
South Gloucestershire BS37 6JX Tel: (01454) 868008 Fax: (01454) 863263

The moderation sample for 2008

As required by QCA, 25% of schools will receive moderation visits. In South Gloucestershire we have selected our sample from: schools not moderated since 2005; some schools visited in 2007; schools where the only Year 2 teacher has little or no experience of KS1 assessment; and a random selection of schools. **Schools in the moderation sample will be informed by letter and email before the end of term 2.**

Twilight Moderation Meetings

In order to support all our year 2 teachers we will be offering twilight moderation support meetings throughout terms 4, 5 and 6. This will focus on borderline pupils at level 1/2c and level 2a/3. The dates for these will be circulated early in term 3.

➤ **Local Authority collection date for Key Stage one data is Friday 13th June 2008.**

KEY STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT

➤ ***The major changes are outlined in the attached document called Changes to ARA KS2 2008 (see attached). Please make note of the following key changes.***

Changes to the test order process:

- KS2 – schools are now required to confirm the quantity of test materials needed

Online attendance register

- Paper marksheets have now been replaced by an online attendance register which will contain both the pupils' name and their subjects. The online register can be printed. Instructions on how to use the online register will be sent to schools by April 2008.

Additional time applications

- From 2007, data captured from the QCA optional tests, and previous national curriculum tests can no longer be used as evidence when making an application for additional time as these tests are not designed to assess pupils eligibility. Further information on guidance test eligibility can be at www.qca.org.uk/qca_12280.aspx and making an application can be found in section 12.4 of the ARA.

Easter term dates and closures:

- Schools will need to provide Easter holiday dates by visiting the 'Test orders' section of the NAA website.
- In addition Schools also need to notify any dates the school will be closed Delivery dates KS2 April 21st to May 2nd 2008.

Test forms and Scripts

➤ **Headteachers can now add up to four additional users accounts for those that need access to the 'Test orders' section of the NAA website (further details can be found in section 8.1 of the ARAs) For details of how to set up colleagues as users please see the attached *Quick guide to Accessing the test forms website October 2007.***

All queries re test forms and log in issues should be made directly via email

testforms@naa.org.uk FAO: Eve Parmiter

FOUNDATION STAGE PROFILE ASSESSMENT

1. Assessment on entry

Since autumn 2006, South Gloucestershire has recommended that schools do the following:

- Make as much use as possible of assessment information from pre-school settings.** A large majority of settings use the Stepping Stones booklets; visits to pre-school settings are showing increasingly reliable judgements and we plan to introduce moderation activity during 2006-7 to take this further.
- Undertake 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 and we know from experience of the Avon baseline, PIPs and other similar systems that it is the whole picture of the child which gives the most accurate view of their development. Selective use of the scales (especially reading, writing, mathematics and personal development) runs the risk of distorting the assessment, especially for children whose pre-school experiences (childcare and home) may have given them particular advantages in these aspects of learning. Exploratory work by the National Assessment Agency revealed relatively weak statistical association between performance in FSP Reading and later achievement in KS1 Reading and the association was similarly weak for Writing and Calculating.

- iii. **Make 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 during this period and because some teachers have expressed a desire to have a little more time after the break to complete or confirm their assessments.

➤ **Head Teachers are asked to check that appropriate assessment on entry has been undertaken across the full range of the EYFS.**

2. Foundation Stage Profile 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 it also involves additional work and may, inadvertently, upset the balance of evidence. 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, especially but not exclusively software companies, 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 evidence which can be used to support profile assessment judgements.

In 2006 the National Assessment Agency issued very explicit guidance on this issue and South Gloucestershire entirely endorses that guidance.

If you would like a copy of the NNA's guidance please refer to Assessment Matters 0607 No1 or contact Martin Wood by email or on 01454 863355.

➤ **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.**

As ever, we are always willing to offer advice and Head teachers or Reception teachers and leaders should contact Martin Wood or Rachel Webb (Early Years Consultant) with any queries about Foundation Stage Profile assessment. Both can be contacted on (01454) 863355.

➤ **3. Using Foundation Stage Profile data to predict KS1 results**

There is an understandable desire to use data from the end of the Foundation Stage to predict KS1 results, but considerable caution needs to be taken. At this stage, the Local Authority would offer the following advice and guidance.

- The accuracy of predictions for KS1 on the basis of FSP data is undermined by a number of factors:

- The two systems (FSP and NC assessment) are measuring different things.
 - A large scale study by Fischer Family Trust in 2006 showed that there was insufficient reliability in any predictions to make them worthwhile.
 - FSP is still strongly influenced by gender and date of birth – factors which gradually reduce as children grow older.
 - The FSP (quite properly) has a very wide range of measures, compared with the basic three subjects at KS1 and there are significant variations among individual children who achieve the same or very nearly the same scores on FSP. As yet there is no meaningful profile of an average child or an average level of achievement across the 13 scales.
 - There is a real danger that such predictions unintentionally set limits to aspiration.
- For all these reasons, the LA suggests a modest approach to forward projection of future achievement. In brief South Gloucestershire believes that it is reasonable to suggest that:
 - children whose end of Foundation Stage achievement is broadly within **1-3 points** (with maybe a few 4s) may need some additional support to reach the nationally expected standard (Level 2) by the end of KS1;
 - children who achieve generally within the **4-7** range might be expected to be on course for achievement broadly in line with national expectations at seven (ie, within Level 2);
 - children achieving **8s and 9s** at the end of the Foundation Stage are demonstrating levels of development which are likely to equip them for achievement above national expectations (probably Level 3).

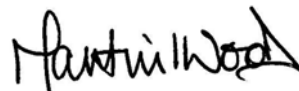
This will help you reach some very provisional views about the general strengths and weaknesses of the cohort and broad proportions of Levels 1, 2 and 3 that they might go on to achieve.

- Year 1 teachers will need to take full account of each child's YR achievements across the areas of learning and ensure that teaching plans for Year 1 are firmly based on what children have been able to show that they know, understand and can do.
 - A broad analysis of the patterns of achievement at the end of the Foundation Stage, combined with careful attention to individual needs, should be sufficient to help design appropriate learning for the early stages of Year 1. A number of schools are already extending their use of the EYFS areas of learning through the autumn of Year 1 as a secure basis for continued learning which then merges into the National Curriculum programmes of study and Renewed Primary Framework.
 - Assessment against National Curriculum criteria is not going to provide helpful information during the early weeks of Year 1.
 - During the course of Year 1 (and certainly by the end of Term 3) most children should have made enough progress to support valid assessment in terms of National Curriculum levels.
 - Assessing attainment and progress by the end of Year 1, in the context of everything else that is known about each child, should then provide a reasonably secure basis for predicting the results which these children should achieve at the end of Year 2.
- Headteachers are advised to take this guidance into account when making early predictions of future achievement and to ensure that Year 1 staff understand the implications of Foundation Stage achievement for individual children.

Yours sincerely



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Martin Wood,
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