

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 3

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.

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

In particular, this edition of Assessment Matters includes information about:

- Foundation Stage Assessment and Moderation
- Key Stage 1 Level 3 and moderation support
- Key Stage 2 Additional Time Applications Deadline

☐ NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY (NAA)

- Please remember the main contact details for the National Assessment Agency (NAA) remain as follows:
 - Phone the Helpline using 08700 60 60 40
 - Visit the newly re-designed website www.naa.org.uk/tests

☐ FOUNDATION STAGE PROFILE (FSP)

Assessment

- We anticipate that most schools with YR classes will have completed an initial assessment under the Foundation Stage Profile by early November and that plans for teaching and learning have been adapted based on the information which this assessment has provided.
- As staff continue to build up a picture of achievement and progress, they will find it helpful to be aware of some of the key findings which emerged from the 2007 Foundation Stage profile Moderation procedure:
 - a. 80% of assessments should be based on observation of child-initiated or child-selected activity. This is naturally harder to achieve in classrooms where everyday practice is not reflecting the principles and practices expected for the Foundation

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Stage. Where too much time is spent on teacher-led activity, children lack to time and opportunity to consolidate and demonstrate their learning in self-initiated activity.

- b. The 2007 national guidance regarding the extent of the challenge involved in achieving scale point 9 in all areas of learning remains valid. On the whole this level of achievement is to be used to identify children significantly ahead of national expectations.
- c. In South Gloucestershire we would expect a substantial proportion of children to achieve Scale Point 8⁺. Nationally this was broadly between 20% and 40% depending on the area concerned. (e.g., lower in Writing, but higher on Numbers for Label and Counting)
- d. Moderation evidence suggests that some children who were probably operating at 8 in a particular scale might have been recorded and reported as 7 because:
 - the teacher had not provided appropriate opportunities for the child to demonstrate their learning (This was often the case, for example, in assessing aspects of problem-solving as some teachers provided too much scaffolding or did not plan enough time for child-initiated activity.); or
 - some teachers either did not spend enough time observing children's self-initiated play to accumulate the right kind of evidence or they failed to recognise the significance of what they had observed. This was particularly true for teachers new to Foundation Stage Profile assessment and/or those who had not taken up the opportunities provided by the LA for training and agreement activity.
- e. There were dips in some significant aspects of learning. For example it was reported that a growing proportion of children knew the sounds but not the names of letters. This may be because some teachers were still interpreting "most" letters as 20+, even though the local LAs have agreed and published their interpretation of "most" as 14+ (ie, more than half). Early evidence suggests that recent strengthening of phonics teaching, including good use of Letters and Sounds, has increased children's readiness for this area of learning.
 - It is important that assessments are used to inform planning on a daily and weekly basis. Data generated about the cohort should be regularly analysed so that provision can be matched to the needs of the children. This should involve both adult-led group work and play opportunities designed to extend and challenge children's thinking.

To support Foundation Stage Profile assessment, the following events have been planned

- This year we are maintaining the model of 50% of schools attending a moderation meeting and 50% receiving visits. Schools have been notified by both email and letter about which type of moderation activity they will take part in for 2008.
- On **19 June** we will be offering a **Moderation Surgery** from 1.00 – 5.00 pm so that teachers can seek clarification of any remaining concerns prior to data being submitted. Places can be booked via Sue Green 01454 863355.
- Should you or your teachers have any concerns about the moderation process please contact Rachel Webb – rachel.webb@southglos.gov.uk or 01454 863355.

□ KEY STAGE 1

Level 3

- Schools are reminded that both national and local guidance for Level 3 is unchanged: When assessing children at the end of key stage 1, teachers should be reminded that there are no sub levels for either level 1 or level 3. Consequently, if an assessment is made that a child is working beyond level 2A, just into level 3, then their attainment should be reported as a level 3. This is in line with the 'best fit' model of assessment.

- In order to support Year 2 teachers with accurate teacher assessment of Level 3 we are offering individual school appointments with the Literacy and Numeracy Teams on either June 2nd and June 5th. A flyer with more details will be sent into school in term 4.

□ KEY STAGE 2

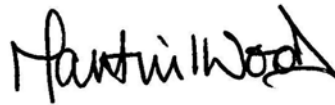
Additional Time - Online applications

- The **deadline** for all additional time applications is **5pm Monday 3rd March 2008**.
 - Due to the need to protect sensitive data about identifiable children, neither the LA nor the NAA will notify you of the result of individual applications.
 - To check the status of your applications, log onto the NAA Testforms website and check all three lists (Awaiting Decision, Decision, Incomplete forms).
 - If you are asked for more information, enter it onto the screen and re-submit your form. When the LA has considered your updated application you will find the outcome by going to the "Decision" tab.
- **Headteachers are advised to check the progress of their schools applications frequently and respond promptly if asked for more information.**
- ***If you made an application, you need only to re-visit the website to check the status of any application which will be clearly shown on screen.***

Yours sincerely



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