

The New National Curriculum and New Assessment without Levels

In 2014 the curriculum (all the skills and subject knowledge) that primary schools teach was changed for the first time since 2000. In 2015 the way we assess children was also changed with levels being taken away. This has been a lot for children and teachers to adapt to. This information sheet is designed to explain some of the changes.

The New National Curriculum is a mastery curriculum. This means there is one set of skills, knowledge and concepts for all children. It keeps the class working together on the same topic whilst addressing different needs. Rather than moving up to the next year group's curriculum children are expected to master the skills in their own year group. This means having a full understanding of knowledge, skills and concepts so that they can apply them in unfamiliar situations. With the old curriculum children often came back to school with things they could do in July seemingly forgotten. This is because they hadn't properly mastered the work. A good test of having mastered a skill is if you can teach it to somebody else because it means you understand it well enough to break it down into small parts and to explain the process.

In a mastery curriculum most children are expected to learn the content in their year and to use and apply this content before learning something new. The curriculum assumes that given time and quality teaching all pupils can, and eventually will master the content. However, some children will require longer than others to do so.

In the classroom:

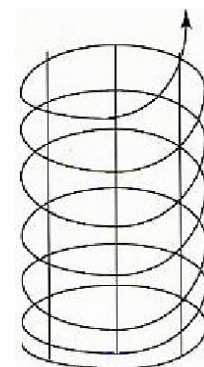
1. Everyone is taught the new learning.
2. Then the teacher assesses the children
3. Some children need more time, support or teaching
4. Some children have mastered the learning and now need opportunities to deepen and enrich their understanding.

The Old Curriculum



Children move onto new skills continually. These may be skills in year groups below or above their age.

The new Curriculum



Children revisit skills throughout the year to make sure they are embedded.

Assessment without Levels

Because all children are working on the curriculum for their year group now there are three statements about achievement.

1. Working below the expected level (working below)

This means that they have not yet understood and mastered the skills and concepts for their year group.

2. Working at the expected level (working within)

This means they have understood and mastered the skills and concepts for their year group.

3. Working deeper within the expected level (working above)

This means they have understood and mastered the skills and concepts for their year group but in a more difficult or demanding setting (e.g. a more complicated text). They have deepened and enriched their understanding by applying the skills to unfamiliar contexts. They have been able to explain to others. They have not moved into the curriculum of the year group above.

When using levels, a large percentage of children may have been working at a higher level than expected.

below	expected	above
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In the new curriculum, most children should fall into the expected range. A few children will be working below and these are usually the children who have received extra support. A much smaller percentage of children are expected to be working above expectations and these would have been the children who were well above previously.

Below	expected	Above
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Many children who fell into the above bracket last year will now be in the expected bracket. This does not mean they are not achieving as well as previously.

If you have any further questions about the New National Curriculum or the new assessment system, please do not hesitate to contact school.