



# Benhurst Primary School Policy Statement

*Only my best is good enough for me'*



<b>Policy</b>	<b>Assessment Without Levels</b>
<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>October 2014</b>

## Assessment Without Levels

From September 2014, the Government has made a huge change in the way that children in schools are to be assessed. This is to tie in with the New National Curriculum that has started to be used by all schools at the beginning of this Academic Year. This is a new way of thinking for schools as levels have been removed. The aim of this guide is to hopefully give you some clear information about all the changes that are happening in Education across the country, and what this means for the children at Benhurst Primary School. To understand changes to assessment we need to understand what changes the new curriculum has brought to subjects that are traditionally assessed.

## Curriculum 2014

It would take far too long to cover the whole curriculum in any great depth. However, the main changes to the key core subjects are highlighted below.

**English** - The new programme of study for English is knowledge-based; this means its focus is on knowing facts rather than developing skills and understanding. It is also characterised by an increased emphasis on the technical aspects of language and less emphasis on the creative aspects. English is set out year by year in Key Stage 1 and two-yearly in Key Stage 2. Appendices give specific content to be covered in the areas of spelling and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. These are set out yearly across both key stages.

**Mathematics** - The main areas in the new programme of study for mathematics are called domains. These are number, measurement, geometry, statistics, ratio and proportion and algebra. Two of these, number and geometry, are further divided into subdomains. The way that the curriculum is organised varies across the primary age range - every year group has a unique combination of domains and subdomains. There is no longer a separate strand of objectives related to using and applying mathematics. Instead, there are problem-solving objectives within the other areas of study. Children should be encouraged to make connections across mathematical ideas to develop fluency, mathematical reasoning and competence in solving increasingly sophisticated problems. They should also apply their mathematical knowledge to science and other subjects. Most of the changes to the mathematics curriculum involve content being brought down to earlier years.

## The End of Key Stage Levels

The Department for Education (DfE) has decided that the children who are currently in Years 2 and 6 will be the last pupils to be awarded a level in their end of Key Stage tests (Summer 2015).

## Why have levelled gone?

The DfE want to avoid what has been termed 'The level Race' where children have moved through the old National Curriculum levels quickly to achieve higher attainment. The old National Curriculum was sub-divided into levels, but these were not linked to their national curriculum year group. For example, a child working at national expectations in Year 6 would be a Level 4. Children were achieving Level 5 and 6 at the end of Key Stage 2, but the DfE thought that a significant number were able to achieve a Level 5 or 6 in a test—but were not secure at that level. The feeling from the DfE was that the old national curriculum and the levels

system failed to adequately ensure that children had a breadth and depth of knowledge at each national curriculum level.

### **What will Assessing Without Levels look like?**

The DfE announced last year that there would no longer be National Curriculum levels and that schools would have to set up their own way of assessing pupils. We are currently researching various different methods of assessing pupils, and we are looking at various commercial software tracking systems, as well as looking at how our current software package (SIMs Assessment Manager), is being adapted to meet these changes. Almost all of the systems we have researched so far use the same format, which is similar to the system used in the Early Years and Foundation Stage. This system takes the end of year expectations for each year group and splits it into 3 categories as follows:

Emerging— Yet to be secure in the end of year expectations.

Expected—Secure in the majority of the end of year expectations.

Exceeding—Secure in almost all or all of the end of year expectations and is able to use and apply their knowledge and skills confidently.

Under the old levels system children who were exceeding might have moved into the next level. The DfE now want children who are in the exceeding bracket to add more depth and breadth to their knowledge, and to have more opportunities to develop their using and applying skills. They are calling this phase of learning Mastery and Depth. Only exceptional children will move into working towards the end of year expectations from the year above. Similarly, children who are unlikely to be emerging at the end of the year may work towards the expectations from the year below.

### **How will this look at the end of each Key Stage?**

#### **Key Stage 1**

It is anticipated that the majority of children will reach the assessment point of *Year 2 Expected*, a smaller number of children will reach *Year 2 Exceeding*, and a small number will be *Year 2 Emerging*, or possibly *Year 1 Exceeding/Expected/Emerging*.

#### **Key Stage 2**

In the past the DfE have used the phrase 'Secondary Ready' as the standard children must achieve by the end of Year 6. The DfE have slightly distanced themselves from this phrase and are talking about children reaching the assessment point of *Year 6 Expected*. Similar to Year 2 there will be some children who may be *Year 6 Exceeding* and some children who are *Year 6 Emerging*. There may also be a small number of children who are still working at a lower level e.g. *Year 4/5 Exceeding/Expected/Emerging*.

Currently, with the Early Years Tracker the terms Low, Secure and High are used, so it makes sense to carry that language through. Essentially, Low = Emerging, Secure = Expected and High = Exceeding.

How will we communicate with you about how your child is progressing?

With the former National Curriculum levels, each year children were given a target for the end of the year. During the year we would tell you the National Curriculum level at which your child was working.

For Example: A child could finish Year 3 with a level 3a, and in Year 4 would have a target of a 4b for the end of the year. This child's mid-year report may inform his/her parents that they have moved to a 4c and then, on the child's end of year report, that they have moved to a 4b.

We could use the levels system this way because there was no correlation between a level and a child's year group. This can be seen in the way that in a Year 6 class there would be mixture of children working at a range of different levels, from level 2 to a level 6. However, the new National Curriculum sets out

expectations for each year group and children will be assessed against those every year, so a child in Year 4 will always be judged in the first instance against the expectations for the end of Year 4.

Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress during each term against their year group End of Year statements. At the start of each year group, children will be expected to be emerging/low as they are being judged against the End of Year statements for their year group. By using their professional knowledge and judgement, teachers will know what the children can already do and what they think the children can achieve. They will then give a forecast as to where they think a child will be by the end of the Year. So, for example, children in Year 3 could be given a forecast of 3L, (3 Low), 3S (3 Secure) OR 3H (3 High). By the end of the academic year each child is expected to be secure against their current academic year End of Year statements. For example children in Year 3 are expected to achieve 3S, children in Year 4 are expected to achieve 4S etc. Children working above National Expectations will be working at high against their current academic year End of Year statements. For example children in Year 3 working above national Expectations will be assessed as 3H. Only very exceptional children will have a forecast from a higher or lower year group. As far as we are aware Year 6 Exceeding (High) is likely to be the highest grading for the end of Key Stage 2.

During the year, when we have conversations with you about your child's progress you won't be given an actual definitive position of where they are on this scale. Instead you will be told whether your child is on track to meet their end of year target. It may well be that they are above or below where they need to be, in which case their end of year assessment target may be adjusted.

You have the opportunity to view your child's work every half term. The school holds two formal parents evening per year and teachers write two written reports about each child per year - one in the Spring Term and one in the Summer Term. In addition, you are able to request further informal meetings with your child's class teacher, where necessary.