



Foundation Phase Profile

Frequently asked questions

1. What is the Foundation Phase Profile?

The Foundation Phase Profile (the profile) is an assessment tool that aligns assessment on entry through to the end of the Foundation Phase. The profile has been developed as a national assessment of all children to establish a baseline within the first six weeks of entry into Reception year and will be statutory from September 2015. It will assess children's abilities and development in four Areas of Learning:

- Personal and Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity
- Language, Literacy and Communication Skills
- Mathematical Development
- Physical Development.

Assessment information in the form of observations and other formative assessments will be gathered through holistic activities across the seven Foundation Phase Areas of Learning (six in Welsh-medium settings/schools), through continuous, enhanced and focused provision.

2. What will the Foundation Phase Profile look like?

There are two parts to the profile – a Compact Profile and a Full Profile. Each supports assessment of children's learning and development against a series of skill ladders that are exemplified through guidance.

The Compact Profile has been designed for use as a baseline assessment in Reception and focuses on a specific set of skill ladders. This will provide useful information to support early learning and early identification of potential developmental delay or additional learning needs (ALN). They are also easy to observe in the first six weeks of a child's entry into a setting/school.

The Full Profile has been designed to support assessment throughout the Foundation Phase and at the end of Year 2. The Full Profile includes a wider range of skills that support assessment as a child moves through the Foundation Phase to give a fuller picture of their development. It may also be used to provide more detailed information on children for whom there are concerns, regardless of age.

3. What are the statutory assessment requirements for the Foundation Phase?

From September 2015, it will be a statutory requirement **to use the Compact Profile at baseline**, during a child's first six weeks in the Reception year. This will provide outcomes for Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity; Language, Literacy and Communication Skills; Mathematical Development; and Physical Development. Settings/schools will be required to report the outcomes to the Welsh Government using the normal data reporting methods.

Schools will be required to **assess Year 2 children using the Foundation Phase outcomes** at the end of the summer term. The use of the profile for this teacher assessment will not be statutory, although it may be the preferred approach as it aligns the outcomes from baseline to end of phase.

In 2016 and 2017, the end of phase assessment for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development in Year 2 will be undertaken against the current outcomes (the original outcomes). From summer 2018 the end of phase assessment for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development will be against revised outcomes to take account of revisions to the Areas of Learning that become statutory from September 2015.

4. Why are Year 2 children not being assessed against the revised outcomes for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development until summer 2018?

Revised Areas of Learning for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development are statutory from September 2015. These have been revised to align with, and include, the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF). When the LNF was introduced, the Welsh Government very consciously and deliberately raised the bar in terms of expectations for what learners should be able to do at **all** stages of education. The revised Areas of Learning, and related programmes of study for the other key stages, reflect those higher levels of expectations.

It is sensible to issue revised outcomes for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development in the Foundation Phase so that they are aligned to the skill statements within the Areas of Learning. This will mean that reaching Foundation Phase Outcome 5 will be more challenging overall under the revised Areas of Learning as for some skills the expectations are higher.

It is fair that children should have the opportunity to be taught to the revised Areas of Learning for the whole period of the Foundation Phase before they are formally assessed against the revised outcomes. For that reason, the use of the revised outcomes for the end of Foundation Phase assessment in Year 2 is being phased in. This means that the end of phase assessment on revised outcomes

will be required for the first time in the summer term of 2018. Until that time, the end of phase assessment will be undertaken according to the original outcomes.

This approach is consistent with that for Key Stages 2 and 3 where the performance of schools will not be measured on attainment against the higher expected levels until the summer term of 2018.

5. Why is use of the Foundation Phase Profile only statutory for the baseline assessment?

There was a clear demand for a nationally consistent approach to assessing children in the Foundation Phase, particularly at baseline. For this reason the decision to make the use of the Compact Profile statutory at the start of Reception year was straightforward.

Making the profile statutory before children entered school would be more problematic as not all children attend pre-school provision.

It is for schools to decide how they want to monitor progress and the Welsh Government has provided a tool for practitioners to use in assessing children in the Foundation Phase.

6. How does the Foundation Phase Profile align with the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF)?

The Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development Areas of Learning elements of the profile have been developed using the revised Areas of Learning being introduced in September 2015. The associated revised outcomes for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development, published in the summer term 2015 have also been reflected in the profile. This will allow the profile to be used to track progress against the LNF across the whole of the Foundation Phase.

7. Do the assessments align to Areas of Learning and the Foundation Phase outcomes?

Yes, the skill ladders within the profile were developed to reflect the skills and range of experiences as expressed in the revised Areas of Learning for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development as well as the revised outcomes.

The skill ladders for the Areas of Learning for Personal and Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity, and Physical Development were developed to align with the skills, range of experiences and original outcomes as published in the revised document *Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework* (2015).

8. Will the Foundation Phase Profile mean additional work for practitioners?

The profile should not add to a practitioner's workload. It has been designed in a way that observations and formative assessments are used in order to support judgements and track children's progress. This supports the Foundation Phase pedagogy and practitioners should already be gathering information in this manner, therefore it is not anticipated that workload will increase.

By providing a national approach it is intended to reduce the burden of assessment by eliminating the need to source or develop local approaches.

The trial of the Compact Profile, carried out in spring 2015, showed that almost two-thirds of participants felt that it was manageable with only around one in seven expressing concerns. Moreover, many schools use electronic tools to record information which will lessen the reporting burden compared with the paper-based approach used in the trial.

9. Is the Foundation Phase Profile the same as the Early Years Development and Assessment Framework (EYDAF)?

In short, no. The profile is only one element of a wider programme of work being undertaken by the Welsh Government to produce an Early Years Development and Assessment Framework (EYDAF). In developing the EYDAF we aim to bring together information and approaches from all sectors to develop a unified approach to the assessment of children from birth to age seven and provide practitioners with the information they need to support all children's development and learning. The profile will cover the assessments in the Foundation Phase and these will link to assessments undertaken for children aged 0–3, for example by health visitors and Flying Start practitioners, as well as other available information for three to seven year olds, such as that available from school nurses.

10. Why is Physical Development part of the Compact Profile?

Assessment of children's physical development is vital in order to identify any potential developmental delays that may impact on their overall learning and development. It is also a key component in linking pre-school assessment information to that gathered on the profile as part of the EYDAF.

11. How will the Foundation Phase Profile benefit children, and in turn, parents/carers?

The profile supports effective transition arrangements and enables settings and schools to monitor, track and support children's learning and development on entry until the end of the Foundation Phase.

Children's progress can be tracked and early interventions can be put in place for those children needing additional support or practise of particular skills. The information gathered will aid practitioners' discussions with parents/carers by providing them with specific information on their child's development and how they may support them.

12. How will the Foundation Phase Profile benefit settings/schools, local authorities, regional consortia and the Welsh Government?

The profile will support the consistent collection and sharing of information, including 'value-added' data which will support policy and operational decisions at a local and national level. The profile will support and provide evidence for end of phase assessments which in turn will strengthen the process of transition into Key Stage 2.

13. How have we tested that the Foundation Phase Profile is fit for purpose?

The profile was trialled with settings and schools from January to March 2015. The trial not only looked at the process of using the profile but also the suitability of the skills included within both the Compact and Full Profiles. Feedback was largely positive with practitioners recognising the usefulness of the majority of the skill ladders and how they worked together. Comments on specific areas for change recommended by trial participants have been used to produce the final version of the profile.

The trial comprised four aspects.

- Data trial – over a hundred schools assessed a sample of their children for all years of the Foundation Phase for two of the four Areas of Learning. This provided information on the effectiveness and consistency of the various skill ladders of the profile in assessing the learning and development of children. It informed which aspects needed refining, replacing or dropping for the final version.
- Process trial – around 50 settings and schools assessed all their children for the proposed statutory elements of the baseline (Reception) and end of phase (Year 2), as well as in Nursery. This provided information on the manageability of the assessment process, and informed the final design of the administration of the assessment.
- Link between the Foundation Phase Profile and the Schedule of Growing Skills (SGS) – around 300 children assessed as part of the data trial were also assessed using the SGS assessment, currently used in Flying Start settings and by health visitors in Wales. This informed how the profile can align with the SGS as part of the development of the EYDAF.
- A review of the draft guidance that accompanied the profile, to ensure that this was clear, accurate and supported practitioners in the use of the profile.

Those chosen for the trials were selected to ensure that there was a good representation from all types of settings and schools – for example English- and Welsh-medium settings/schools, and differing levels of children eligible for free school meals (eFSM).

14. What has been learnt from the previous project to introduce the Child Development Assessment Profile (CDAP)?

The Welsh Government is very aware of the need to learn the lessons from the Child Development Assessment Profile (CDAP). We drew on the independent review of the CDAP (*An Independent (Unfunded) Rapid Review of the Child Development Assessment Profile (CDAP) on entry to the Foundation Phase in Wales, 2012*) which we commissioned to ensure that the profile does not experience the same difficulties. In particular, we were very mindful that it should be a nationally consistent approach to assessing and scoring, it should be easier to administer, and there should be a clear link between baseline assessments and end of phase assessments.

15. Who has been involved in developing the Foundation Phase Profile?

The main development of the profile has been undertaken by contractors to the Welsh Government (GL Assessment and Incerts).

A task and finish group comprising representatives from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), Estyn, local authorities, the childcare sector, the teaching profession including headteachers, Flying Start, and maintained and non-maintained Foundation Phase settings have overseen the development of the profile. The task and finish group have reviewed and critiqued the profile and supporting materials throughout the development and have considered the amendments which have been made in response to the results of the trial (see question 13).

Further work has been undertaken with experts on specific aspects of the profile such as language development, additional learning needs (ALN), specific learning difficulties and physical development.

16. What training will be available to practitioners and when?

Full training for the introduction of the profile will take place in the summer term of 2015 and will be supported by Foundation Phase training and support officers. Settings and schools should have been informed of training sessions by their regional consortia or local authority.

17. What guidance material is available to practitioners?

A handbook has been developed which was also tested as part of the trial. The handbook will be used during training in the summer term 2015 and will also be made available on the Learning Wales website, along with other supporting information, before the introduction of the profile in September 2015.

18. How will the Foundation Phase Profile be recorded and will it be paper-based or electronic?

The Welsh Government is working with suppliers of existing school management systems so that their systems will be up to date in order to record information on

the profile from September 2015. It is recognised that not all settings and schools will have access to school management systems or electronic tracking tools. An electronic spreadsheet and paper-based forms will be made available to those who wish to use their own systems of recording assessments.

19. Has the Foundation Phase Profile been aligned to other systems used to track learners' progress in Wales?

No. The Welsh Government is providing information on the profile to all suppliers of tracking software used in primary schools in Wales so that they may adapt their packages to include and align with the profile.

20. How will Professor Donaldson's review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements for Wales impact on the Foundation Phase Profile?

Professor Donaldson has led an independent review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales. His report, *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales*, was published in February 2015 (www.gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/curriculum-for-wales/?lang=en) and the Welsh Government will publish its response to the report in the summer of 2015.

Any changes resulting from Professor Donaldson's review may take some time to implement. Given the need to continue progress on the Foundation Phase, the need to continue to improve literacy and numeracy skills and to meet the needs of schools who have been requesting a national baseline, we have decided to implement the changes to the revised Areas of Learning (Language, Literacy and Communication Skills, and Mathematical Development) and programmes of study (English, Welsh (first language) and mathematics), as part of phase 1 of the curriculum review. These revisions are reflected in the profile.

21. Will assessments in the Foundation Phase be moderated to ensure consistency across Wales?

The extra guidance provided by the profile for assessing against outcome descriptions should support consistency in judgements and moderation. Welsh Government will keep this under review.

22. Will the Foundation Phase Profile provide information on value added?

As the profile is aligned to the same measurement scale for on-entry and end of phase assessments, i.e. the Foundation Phase outcomes, it will be possible to record, track and monitor how children have progressed from the start of Foundation Phase to the end.

23. Will children be assessed in the language of instruction at the setting or school or in the child's home/first language?

The assessments will be carried out in the language of the setting or school.

24. How will the end of phase assessments be aligned with Key Stage 2?

The situation will effectively remain as it is currently, in that the Foundation Phase outcomes broadly cross-reference with national curriculum levels, but there is no direct alignment to the levels used in Key Stages 2 and 3. It did not make sense to make this major change at this point as the whole assessment approach will be considered in detail as part of the Welsh Government's response to the Donaldson Review.

25. Can the Foundation Phase Profile be used for children with additional learning needs?

The profile has been designed to cover all children and supports early identification of potential developmental delay or additional learning needs (ALN). However, it is not the intention that the profile will have sufficient detail to fully assess the nature of children's additional learning needs. Practitioners would need to use the appropriate assessments designed for that specific purpose, such as Routes for Learning for children with the most profound and complex learning difficulties, take advice from ALN coordinators (ALNCo) or special educational needs coordinators (SENCo) and, if required, refer to appropriate professionals with the support and permission of parents and carers.

26. Who can practitioners contact if their questions are not answered here?

For all queries about the Foundation Phase Profile please contact GL Assessment at the dedicated customer service helpline on 01793 516311 or e-mail fpp@gl-assessment.co.uk