



Policy paper

# Changes to assessments in primary schools

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## Contents

[Reception baseline assessment \(RBA\)](#)

[Teacher assessment](#)

[Using the data](#)

[Evidence for RBA](#)

[Comparing cohorts \(year groups\)](#)

All state-funded primary schools with a reception cohort (year group) will need to carry out the reception baseline assessment (RBA). The RBA is scheduled for introduction in September 2020.

Over 9,600 schools are participating in the reception baseline assessment (RBA) pilot in autumn 2019.

Schools will no longer have to carry out key stage 1 (KS1) assessments from September 2022, following the scheduled statutory introduction of the RBA.

You can read more about the development of the [reception baseline assessment \(RBA\)](#) in the guidance from the Standards and Testing Agency.

## Reception baseline assessment (RBA)

The RBA is a short assessment carried out by a teacher in the first 6 weeks of reception. Teaching assistants and other qualified school staff, such as early years leads and special educational needs co-ordinators, can also carry out the assessment with individual pupils.

It is similar to the on-entry checks that many schools already conduct when children start school.

The RBA takes about 20 minutes per child and is not a timed assessment. We recommend teachers do the assessment in 2 separate sessions (approximately

10 minutes each).

It is an assessment of a child's early:

- language
- communication
- literacy
- mathematics

## **Teacher assessment**

Children will provide answers by speaking, pointing or moving objects.

By using a variety of short, practical tasks in a familiar environment, the children should not be aware that they are sitting an assessment.

Teachers can pause the assessment at any point if they feel that the child is losing interest or concentration. The child can then resume the assessment at another time, when the teacher feels it is appropriate.

The teacher inputs yes or no answers onto an online system for each task. The child does not interact with the digital platform.

Teachers will receive a series of short, narrative statements that will tell them how the children performed in the assessment. This may be helpful to inform teaching in the first term. We will not share the numerical scores.

Teachers can use the assessment to spend valuable one-to-one time with each of their new pupils in the first weeks of school. They can also use the information on the children's performance in the assessment to support all pupils in their reception year.

The RBA gives a snapshot of each child's starting point when they begin school.

## **Using the data**

We will collect the data from the assessments to create school-level progress measures for primary schools, showing the progress schools make with their pupils from reception to the end of year 6.

We will use the data at the end of year 6 to measure pupils' progress from reception to the end of key stage 2 (KS2). The RBA will not be used to track individual pupils or as a performance measure for early years providers.

Schools will get credit for the important work they do with their pupils between reception and year 6.

The key stage 1 (KS1) assessments in year 2 will be made non-statutory from the academic year 2022 to 2023.

## Evidence for RBA

All aspects of the assessment's development have been informed by extensive evidence based early years research.

We have developed the RBA with a range of stakeholders including:

- early years practitioners
- schools
- early years education experts

We carried out voluntary trials between September and October 2018 with a group of nationally representative schools to help inform test development and implementation. We will further refine the RBA during the pilot this year to ensure it is robust.

Early years settings and parents will not need to prepare children for the RBA in any way.

## Comparing cohorts (year groups)

Not all children attend reception with a September intake, which means the number of pupils in a cohort may change. To account for these changes, the teacher can do the RBA at any time in the first 6 weeks of a pupil starting reception.

This includes children who join in January or April, where the school takes admissions at the start of the spring and summer terms. By the end of the year, the cohort will contain enough information to make a reliable, statistical comment in comparison with the KS2 data 7 years later.

The progress measure compares the progress for pupils with similar starting points regardless of age. If summer-born children achieve lower scores than autumn-born children, we will not compare them.

If you require any further information or have any questions, please contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email [assessments@education.gov.uk](mailto:assessments@education.gov.uk).

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