



Consultation on targets for English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 in 2004

Overview

The proposed new targets for achievement at KS2 by 2004 are that:

- 85% of pupils in England should achieve Level 4+ in English and mathematics at KS2;
- 35% of pupils in England should achieve Level 5+ in English and mathematics.

We also invite comments on the proposal that schools with Key Stage 2 pupils should additionally set school targets for the percentage of pupils to achieve Level 5+ in English and mathematics.

We are consulting a sample of 1000 maintained schools but encourage all schools to consider the proposals.

Action required

The closing date for responses is Friday 14 December 2001. We expect to announce the outcome of the consultation in January 2002.

Please send your response to:

Consultation Unit
DfES Level 1B
Castle View House
PO Box 12
Runcorn
Cheshire WA7 2GJ

Further information

Email: target.setting@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
Tel. 020 7925 6703

Copies of the consultation

It is on internet at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultation and www.standards.dfes.gov.uk Paper copies from the Department's Publications Centre on 0845 60 222 60 quoting reference DfES 0541/2001.

**Headteachers,
Chairs of Governors,
Local Education
Authorities and other
relevant bodies**

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Date of Issue:

September 2001

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Related documents:

Circular 11/98

Target setting in schools

Consultation on targets for English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 in 2004

Introduction

1. In May 1997, the Government set ambitious national targets that by 2002, 80% of 11 year olds would achieve the expected standard for their age in English and 75% would do so in mathematics. These targets were rightly viewed as extremely challenging. Since then, very many primary and special schools have transformed their teaching of English and mathematics, supported by the programme of professional development – materials, training and consultancy support – provided by the strategies. The remarkable achievements of heads, teachers and pupils are evident in the improved Key Stage 2 (KS2) test results over the last four years. Since 1998, there has been a 10% point rise in the English results from 65% to 75% and in mathematics a 12% point rise from 59% to 71%. The achievement gap between Local Education Authorities (LEAs) has also narrowed. In English, for example, no LEA now has below 62% of its pupils achieving Level 4+ compared to 1997 when the average across all LEAs was just 63%. That is an impressive achievement.

2. These higher results are not the only evidence of the success with which schools have introduced the strategies. Teachers have worked hard to put the Literacy Hour and daily mathematics lesson in place, and this is confirmed by Ofsted's judgement that the strategies are having a profound effect on the teaching of literacy and mathematics. Importantly too, secondary schools across the country have noticed the difference in pupils now starting with them in Year 7 and are appreciating more than ever the skilled contribution of their primary colleagues.

3. But, with just one year to go, the 2002 targets still represent a considerable challenge. This year's overall KS2 results did not show further improvements on last year's, leaving us with 5% points to go to achieve the English target and 4% points to go to achieve the mathematics target. We know, however, that heads, teachers and pupils, supported by their LEAs and the literacy and numeracy strategies, will be working hard over the coming year to achieve those targets. On that basis, we remain confident that these targets can be met.

4. We now need to remind ourselves of the long-term goals set by the Literacy and Numeracy Task Forces at the outset of the strategies: for virtually all children to reach the expected standards for their age. It is clear there is still a long way to go to achieve these ambitions. This consultation paper proposes the targets for 2004 as a further step towards these aims.

National targets for 2004

Level 4

5. The complete benefits of the literacy and numeracy strategies have inevitably not yet impacted fully on the KS2 results. The first children to have benefited from the Literacy Hour from the start of Year 1 will not take their KS2 tests until 2004, and it will be 2005 before the first children to have been taught the daily mathematics lesson throughout their primary schooling reach the end of Year 6. The White Paper, *Schools: achieving success*, said that we would pursue the strategies, refine them and continue to invest in professional development for primary teachers through until at least 2004. Working together, we want to ensure that every child is either on track to achieve Level 4+ or receiving additional targeted support to help them towards that. With that sustained investment and continuing commitment from the teaching profession, even better performance at Key Stage 2 is achievable. The Green Paper, *Schools: Building on Success*, said that we would consult on the following national targets for 2004 at Key Stage 2:

- 85% of pupils in England should achieve Level 4+ in English;
- 85% of pupils in England should achieve Level 4+ in mathematics.

6. There is no doubt that they would be demanding targets. Across the country it would mean virtually all those pupils attaining Level 2C at age 7, and in English some of those attaining Level 1, going on to achieve Level 4 at age 11. Last year, 72% of pupils achieving Level 2C on average at Key Stage 1 went on to attain Level 4+ in English and 62% did so in mathematics. It would also mean that the mathematics results would have to rise more quickly than the English results, given the current gap of 4% points.

7. We believe that, with continuing funding, support and training, and with a clear focus on achievement, national targets set at 85% for 2004 can be met. We would welcome your views. A final decision on these targets will be taken in January in the light of the consultation responses.

Level 5

8. We want all children at every level to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. There were some who argued that more able pupils would suffer from the concentration on Level 4, but since 1998 the number of children achieving Level 5 has also risen impressively – by 12% points in English to 29% and by 9% points in mathematics to 25%. That is very welcome news. We want to build on this and so propose to introduce new national targets for Level 5. The Green Paper said that we would consult on the following national targets for 2004 at Key Stage 2:

- 35% of pupils in England should achieve Level 5+ in English;
- 35% of pupils in England should achieve Level 5+ in mathematics.

9. This is the first time that national targets for Level 5 have been proposed, and we would welcome comments on whether they should be set at 35% for 2004.

The process of target setting

10. As part of the Education Development Plan process over the past three years, targets have been agreed between the Department and all LEAs, and these in turn have guided LEAs in their discussions with individual schools. It is of course the case that schools themselves have the statutory responsibility for setting their own targets.

11. We believe that process has generally worked well and should continue to lie at the heart of target setting for 2003 and 2004. Through our Education Advisers and Regional Directors, we will be discussing appropriate LEA level targets for 2004 with authorities in the first half of the Autumn Term 2001, as a basis for LEAs' discussions with their schools. Schools should then be in a position to set their 2003 statutory targets in December of this year, as the stepping stone to 2004, taking account of their knowledge about the potential of the pupils in their current Year 5. Schools are already required to set Level 4 targets in this way, and we would welcome views on whether they should also be required to do so for Level 5.

12. If introduced, the intention would be for schools to set their Level 5+ targets at the same time as those for Level 4+ i.e. by the end of December for the tests to be taken five terms later. However, the timing of this consultation means that it would not be possible to require schools to set 2003 targets for Level 5+ by the end of the coming December. Subject to responses, we therefore propose to require schools to set 2003 Level 5+ targets by the end of April 2002 with targets for future years being set by the end of December. In the meantime, we encourage schools to give careful consideration to Level 5+ targets for 2003 this term, at the same time as their Level 4+ targets.

Support for schools and Local Education Authorities

13. Setting the national targets at these proposed levels will present a real challenge for the education service and will require a continuing programme of support from the Government. February's Green Paper gave a commitment to maintaining the level of investment in the strategies at an average of £190 million each year for the next three years.

14. The 'investment return' on the strategies will continue to grow as more pupils benefit from the Literacy Hour and daily mathematics lesson throughout their primary schooling. We will continue to support a programme of professional development. In literacy, it will continue to focus on priority areas such as phonics, spelling and writing. In mathematics, we will carry on offering the five-day course to those teachers who would like to improve their mathematical subject knowledge. We know that teachers have found the networks of literacy expert teachers and leading mathematics teachers and literacy and numeracy consultants valuable, and we remain committed to them and other strategies for building local capacity.

15. We want to help teachers provide the additional support that some children, including those with special educational needs, must have. We have produced guidance for mainstream and special schools on including pupils with special educational needs in the strategies. The targeted support programmes such as Additional Literacy Support, Springboard 5 and Booster classes that teachers and teaching assistants are already providing are helping those children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 who have fallen behind to catch up with their peers. Work has already begun on expanding the range of intervention programmes. Springboards 3 and 4 are being introduced this year for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and we are now developing Further Literacy Support for pupils in Years 5 and 6. In the longer term, we shall see the benefits of early identification and intervention following the introduction of the revised SEN Code of Practice and the Early Literacy Support programme nationally. This is a long-term investment to help schools ensure that virtually all children leave primary school with the essential literacy and numeracy skills they need – the first full cohort of children to have benefited from Early Literacy Support will not take their Key Stage 2 tests until 2006.

16. We shall also continue to support teachers of those pupils who are capable of achieving Level 5+ and beyond. We are working with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on exemplification materials, building on the guidance for more able pupils published last year, to help teachers identify the levels of work achievable by gifted and talented pupils. Other action includes the forthcoming world class tests in mathematics and problem solving for pupils aged up to 9 and 13, further guidance for gifted and talented pupils on the National Curriculum and a range of local initiatives within Excellence in Cities and Excellence Clusters areas.

17. Some LEAs and their schools face greater challenges than others. We are considering how best to distribute the relevant Standards Fund grants to provide equitable support to all LEAs and their schools that reflects this.

CONSULTATION ON KEY STAGE 2 TARGETS FOR ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS

Response form

Please use this form for your response, adding continuation sheets if necessary. Please indicate here if you do not wish your response to be made public.

NAME _____

ORGANISATION _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

Please indicate the type of organisation that you represent:

Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Education Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher union	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diocese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please give details)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Proposal 1 – the Government proposes that, with the sustained implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, 85% of 11 year olds should achieve Level 4 or above in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 by 2004.

Question 1a:	Do you agree with the proposed national target that 85% of 11 year olds should achieve Level 4+ in English at Key Stage 2 by 2004?	Yes	No
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Comments and suggestions:

Question 1b:	Do you agree with the proposed national target that 85% of 11 year olds should achieve Level 4+ in mathematics at Key Stage 2 by 2004?	Yes	No
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Comments and suggestions:

Proposal 2 – the Government proposes that, with the sustained implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, 35% of 11 year olds should achieve Level 5 or above in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 by 2004.

Question 2a:	Do you agree with the proposed national target that 35% of 11 year olds should achieve Level 5+ in English at Key Stage 2 by 2004?	Yes	No
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Comments and suggestions:

Question 2b:	Do you agree with the proposed national target that 35% of 11 year olds should achieve Level 5+ in mathematics at Key Stage 2 by 2004?	Yes	No
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Comments and suggestions:

Proposal 3 – the Government proposes that the governing bodies of all maintained schools whose pupils take Key Stage 2 tests should be required to set and publish separate school targets for the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 or above in English and mathematics. Schools would be required to set the first Level 5+ targets by the end of April 2002 for the tests in 2003.

Question 3:	Do you agree that governing bodies should be required to set separate school level targets for the percentage of their pupils achieving Level 5+ in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2?	Yes	No
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Comments and suggestions:

Please send your response to:

**Consultation Unit, DfES Level 1B, Castle View House,
PO Box 12, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2GJ**

Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Written Consultation – consultation criteria

1. Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.
2. It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.
3. A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.
4. Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.
5. Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.
6. Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.
7. Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.

All criteria have been or will be complied with.