



Department  
for Education

**Launch date 17 July 2013**  
**Respond by 11 October 2013**  
**Ref: Department for Education**

## **Primary assessment and accountability under the new national curriculum**

# Primary assessment and accountability under the new national curriculum

The consultation on primary assessment and accountability follows publication of the new national curriculum programmes of study, and the announcement that the current system of levels will be removed and not replaced.

We are seeking views on how attainment in national curriculum tests should be measured and reported, where we should take a baseline to measure pupils' progress, and proposals for how schools should be held to account, including through floor standards.

**To** Teaching unions, Ofqual, Ofsted, primary schools, headteachers, teachers, local authorities, employer groups, parents, pupils and others interested in primary education.

**Issued** 17 July 2013

**Enquiries To** If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the department on 0370 000 2288

e-mail: [PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk)

## Contact Details

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: [consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk) or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the department's '[Contact Us](#)' page.

# 1 The case for change

- 1.1** English, mathematics and science form the core of a broad and balanced education. Improving our performance in these subjects will be essential if our country is to match up to the best standards internationally.
- 1.2** The primary English, mathematics and science programmes of study which we published on 8 July set out clear, ambitious expectations for what pupils should be taught by the end of primary education<sup>1</sup>. We believe that it is right that the government should set out in detail what pupils should be taught, prescribe statutory assessment arrangements and hold schools accountable for performance in these core subjects. This consultation sets out our proposals relating to assessment and accountability for primary schools.
- 1.3** We believe that the single most important outcome that any primary school should strive to achieve is making sure as many of its pupils as possible are “secondary ready” by the time they leave. Our reforms to the national curriculum, statutory assessment and school accountability for primary schools are designed to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and that schools do not allow pupils to fall behind. Our current expectations for primary schools (level 4 in English and mathematics) do not guarantee secondary readiness. In 2012, fewer than half the pupils who had only just reached the current expected standard in both of these subjects went on to achieve 5 A\*-C GCSEs at 16, including English and mathematics<sup>2</sup>. In contrast, 7 in 10 of those with a good level 4 in these subjects achieved this GCSE standard<sup>3</sup>. We will set the definition of secondary readiness so that it genuinely means that pupils are on track to succeed at secondary school.

1 - <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/nationalcurriculum2014>

2 - 47 per cent of pupils who achieved a level 4 but did not achieve a level 4b or above in both English and mathematics at key stage 2 went on to achieve 5 A\*-C GCSE grades including English and mathematics in 2012. Levels 4a, b and c are calculated by dividing the marks that level 4 pupils receive in end of key stage 2 tests into three equal parts.

3 - 72 per cent of pupils who achieved at least a level 4b in both English and mathematics at key stage 2 went on to achieve 5 A\*-C GCSE grades including English and mathematics in 2012.

**1.4** Our ambition is that all pupils, excepting some of those with particular learning needs, should be secondary ready at age 11. For that reason, we will expect a very high proportion of pupils to reach the new, higher secondary readiness threshold for a school to be above the floor standard. Nevertheless, the accountability system must judge schools fairly. We recognise that some schools have particularly demanding intakes and, in the short term, will find it challenging to reach the ambitious thresholds that we will set, even with additional resource from the pupil premium. We will therefore continue to look at the progress that pupils make, which will acknowledge the performance of schools whose pupils achieve well despite a low starting-point. This will also help identify coasting schools, whose pupils do not achieve their full potential.

**1.5** Statutory assessment in core subjects at the end of key stages is crucial for robust external accountability<sup>4</sup>. We will continue to prescribe statutory assessment arrangements in English, mathematics and science. In November 2010, Lord Bew was asked to lead an independent review of key stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability. The Bew review's final report, published in June 2011, was widely welcomed, and the government accepted its recommendations in full. Lord Bew recognised that the new national curriculum would require changes to statutory assessment, and therefore outlined a number of key principles to underpin the assessment and accountability system in the future. The proposals in this consultation are based on these key principles:

- ongoing assessment is a crucial part of effective teaching, but it should be left to schools. The government should only prescribe how statutory end of key stage assessment is conducted;
- external school-level accountability is important, but must be fair. In particular, measures of progress should be given at least as much weight as attainment;
- a wide range of school performance information should be published to help parents and others to hold schools to account in a fair, rounded way; and
- both summative teacher assessment and external testing are important forms of statutory assessment and both should be published.

4 - Lord Bew, Independent Review of Key Stage 2 Testing, Assessment and Accountability: Final Report (DfE, 2011).

- 1.6** As we have previously announced, the current system of national curriculum levels and level descriptions will be removed and not replaced. Our new national curriculum is designed to give schools genuine opportunities to take ownership of the curriculum. The new programmes of study set out what pupils should be taught by the end of each key stage. Teachers will be able to develop a school curriculum that delivers the core content in a way that is challenging and relevant for their pupils. Imposing a single system for ongoing assessment, in the way that national curriculum levels are built into the current curriculum and prescribe a detailed sequence for what pupils should be taught, is incompatible with this curriculum freedom. How schools teach their curriculum and track the progress pupils make against it will be for them to decide. Schools will be able to focus their teaching, assessment and reporting not on a set of opaque level descriptions, but on the essential knowledge that all pupils should learn. There will be a clear separation between ongoing, formative assessment (wholly owned by schools) and the statutory summative assessment which the government will prescribe to provide robust external accountability and national benchmarking. Ofsted will expect to see evidence of pupils' progress, with inspections informed by the school's chosen pupil tracking data.
- 1.7** The results of national curriculum tests, along with summative teacher assessment, will continue to be published. This provides important information for parents, governors, Ofsted, the wider public, and the secondary school where the pupil will continue their education. The requirement for schools to continue to report to parents on their child's achievements at the end of each year and key stage will remain, although the best schools give parents much more regular information.
- 1.8** The statutory assessment and accountability system should recognise and celebrate the progress which pupils make. Currently the baseline against which we measure progress is at the end of key stage 1. However, a baseline check early in reception would allow the crucial progress made in reception, year 1 and year 2 to be reflected in the accountability system and would reinforce the importance of early intervention. The EYFS would remain in place but, to avoid increasing the assessment burden, we could make the EYFS Profile non-statutory. We would welcome views on the most appropriate point for the baseline to measure pupils' progress.

- 1.9** New end of key stage assessments will be introduced in summer 2016, after pupils have been taught the new national curriculum for two years. The new accountability arrangements will also take effect at this point. As an interim arrangement, statutory assessments for year 2 and year 6 in summer 2015 will continue to be based on the existing national curriculum. The current programmes of study for English, mathematics and science will remain in force for pupils in year 2 and year 6 in 2014/15.
- 1.10** Academies and free schools are required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, but are not required to teach the national curriculum. Their funding agreements require the academy trust to comply with statutory assessment arrangements as they apply to maintained schools. Pupils in maintained schools, academies and free schools are all subject to the same statutory assessment system and accountability regime.

## **2 Summary of proposals**

### **2.1 Teacher assessment and reporting to parents**

- National curriculum levels will be removed and not replaced. From 2014, our new national curriculum will make no mention of levels.
- The new national curriculum programmes of study set out what pupils should be taught by the end of each key stage. Teachers will develop a school curriculum which is relevant to their pupils. Schools will be able to introduce their own approaches to formative assessment.
- Teachers will continue to track pupils' progress and provide regular information to parents. How they do so will be for schools to decide, suited to the curriculum they teach. We will not prescribe a single system for ongoing assessment and reporting.
- We will work with teaching schools, professional associations, subject experts, education publishers and external test developers to signpost schools to a range of potential approaches to identify and share examples of good practice for schools to draw upon.

## 2.2 National Curriculum Tests

- Statutory national curriculum tests at key stages 1 and 2 will continue. The first tests based on the new national curriculum will take place in summer 2016.
- The new national curriculum tests will be more demanding, with a higher and more ambitious expected standard. This will ensure that pupils who clear the bar are genuinely ready to succeed in secondary education.
- We propose to report national curriculum test results using a scaled score, and compare pupils against the national cohort by decile.
- In order to measure pupils' progress, we will report how each pupil performs at key stage 2 compared to pupils with similar prior attainment.

## 2.3 Baselines to measure progress

- We would welcome views on the most appropriate point for a baseline to measure progress.
- We propose either retaining a baseline at the end of key stage 1 using end of key stage 1 national curriculum tests, or introducing a simple baseline check at the start of reception (making the EYFS Profile non-statutory).

## 2.4 Accountability

- The department's floor standards will focus on threshold attainment measures and value-added progress measures.
- Ofsted will focus their inspections more closely on schools just above floor standards, and inspect schools with good performance on these measures less frequently.
- We will set the key threshold attainment measure at a much higher level. All schools should aim for at least 85% of their pupils to reach the secondary ready standard.
- We will publish a wide range of attainment and progress data, both from national curriculum tests and teacher assessments, through the data portal.

### **3 Teacher assessment and reporting to parents**

- 3.1** Effective assessment is a key part of good teaching in all subjects. The best schools use regular formative assessment to assess what their pupils know and identify where they need additional support. This in turn allows meaningful feedback to individual pupils and parents.
- 3.2** We have already announced our intention to remove and not replace the current system of levels and level descriptions. Teachers have told us that the use of levels for assessment has become burdensome and encouraged crude 'best fit' judgements to differentiate pupil progress and attainment.
- 3.3** The new national curriculum creates genuine opportunities for greater school autonomy over curriculum and assessment, and will focus teaching on the core content rather than on a set of level descriptions. Prescribing a single detailed approach to assessment does not fit with the curriculum freedoms we are giving schools.
- 3.4** The national curriculum programmes of study set out what pupils should be taught by the end of each key stage. In primary English, mathematics and science, these expectations are clear and detailed. Headteachers and teachers, working in partnership with parents, are responsible for designing a school curriculum that guarantees pupils a rigorous and balanced education. This should ensure that pupils meet the end of key stage expectations set out in the programmes of study, but leaves schools free to determine the pace at which the core content should be taught. Schools are required to publish this curriculum on their website<sup>5</sup>.
- 3.5** In turn, schools will be free to design their approaches to assessment, to support pupil attainment and progression. The assessment framework must be built into the school curriculum, so that schools can check what pupils have learned and whether they are on track to meet expectations at the end of the key stage, and so that they can report regularly to parents.

5 - All schools are required to publish their school curriculum for all subjects by academic year, including for English, mathematics and science: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/1124/made>.



- 3.6** We will not prescribe a national system for schools' ongoing assessment. Schools should decide how they assess each subject as they develop their curriculum. Groups of schools may wish to use a common approach, for example across a local area, academy chain or federation. Ofsted's inspections will be informed by the school's chosen pupil tracking data. Statutory national curriculum tests will allow schools to benchmark their performance nationally, locally and against schools with similar intake.
- 3.7** We expect schools to have a curriculum and assessment framework that meets a set of core principles and:
- sets out steps so that pupils reach or exceed the end of key stage expectations in the new national curriculum;
  - enables them to measure whether pupils are on track to meet end of key stage expectations;
  - enables them to pinpoint the aspects of the curriculum in which pupils are falling behind, and recognise exceptional performance;
  - supports teaching planning for all pupils; and
  - enables them to report regularly to parents and, where pupils move to other schools, providing clear information about each pupils strengths, weaknesses and progress towards the end of key stage expectations.

**Question 1: Will these principles underpin an effective curriculum and assessment system?**

**3.8** Although schools will be free to devise their own curriculum and assessment system, we will provide examples of good practice which schools may wish to follow. We will work with professional associations, subject experts, education publishers and external test developers to signpost schools to a range of potential approaches. Outstanding schools and teaching schools have an opportunity to take the lead in developing and sharing curriculum and assessment systems which meet the needs of their pupils. Some schools have already begun to design their own curriculum and assessment systems. Cannon Lane First School in Harrow, the Best Start Federation of schools in Hackney, Culloden Primary School and Old Ford Primary School in Tower Hamlets and South Farnham School, Surrey have done so, based on the expectations of the new national curriculum. Commercial providers and subject organisations may offer curriculum schemes of work with inbuilt assessment, including class exercises, homework and summative tests.

**Question 2: What other good examples of assessment practice we can share more widely? Is there additional support we can provide for schools?**

**3.9** Reporting teacher assessments

At the end of each key stage, schools are required to report teacher assessment judgements in all national curriculum subjects to parents. Teachers will judge whether each pupil has met the expectations set out in the new national curriculum<sup>6</sup>. We propose to continue publishing this teacher assessment in English, mathematics and science, as Lord Bew recommended.

**3.10** Headteachers have a statutory duty to report annually to parents on their child's achievements, general progress and attendance. The best schools give parents far more information. This can be through sending pupils' work home for parents to see, meetings between parents and teachers, reporting the results of tests the school has administered, termly reports, as well as more informal contact such as notes home, text messages, e-mail and phone calls.

6 - The national curriculum programmes of study have a single attainment target: by the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study

- 3.11** Where a pupil moves from one school to another, the school should be able to provide information on their strengths and weaknesses, what they have been taught and how much progress they have made towards the end of key stage expectations.

## **4 National curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science**

- 4.1** Lord Bew recommended that, in addition to the purpose defined in primary legislation<sup>7</sup> (“*to ascertain what pupils have achieved in relation to the attainment targets for that stage*”), there should be three main uses of the data from statutory assessment:

- holding schools accountable for the standard of attainment and progress made by their pupils and groups of pupils;
- informing parents and secondary schools about the performance of individual pupils; and
- enabling benchmarking between schools; as well as monitoring performance locally and nationally.

- 4.2** These uses require more robust data than might be the case where results are not used for school accountability. As Lord Bew recognised, externally-marked tests provide the most reliable and consistent way of assessing pupils across the country against national expectations, and give parents and the public confidence that results are objective.

### **4.3 National curriculum tests**

We propose that statutory national curriculum tests should continue in English and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2. The Standards and Testing Agency will develop new national curriculum tests, to reflect the new national curriculum programmes of study. As Lord Bew recommended, writing composition will continue to be subject to teacher assessment, with external moderation. National sampling will continue in science at the end of key stage 2.

7 - Education Act 2002, section 76.

**4.4** The first new national curriculum tests will take place in May 2016. Since the new national curriculum will be introduced from September 2014, the first cohort will sit the new tests after two years of being taught the new national curriculum. Statutory assessments (including national curriculum tests) for year 2 and year 6 in summer 2014 and 2015 will continue to be based on the existing national curriculum and will report using the current levels system. The current programmes of study for English, mathematics and science will remain in force for pupils in year 2 and year 6 in 2014/15.

**4.5** Schools will continue to administer the phonics screening check at the end of year 1. School-level results will continue to be included in RAISEOnline (and therefore available for the school and Ofsted), but will not be included in published performance tables.

**4.6** Reporting from national curriculum tests

For each pupil, we propose to provide the following information from statutory national curriculum tests:

- a scaled score, which will show whether the pupil has met the expected standard and is secondary ready;
- ranking in the national cohort (by decile); and
- the rate of progress from a baseline.

**4.7** The new national curriculum programmes of study set higher expectations in English, mathematics and science. Therefore, the secondary readiness standard in the new national curriculum tests will be more demanding than the current level 4 threshold.

- 4.8** National curriculum tests need to show not just whether a pupil has met the secondary readiness standard, but also how well. This is essential to encourage high attainment for all pupils and to reflect the progress they make. We propose to report this attainment using a scaled score. Because it is not possible to create tests of precisely the same difficulty every year, the number of marks needed to meet the secondary readiness standard will fluctuate slightly from one year to another. To ensure that results are comparable over time, we propose to convert raw test marks into a scaled score, where the secondary readiness standard will remain the same from year to year. Scaled scores are used in all international surveys and ensure that test outcomes are comparable over time. The Standards and Testing Agency will develop this scale. If, as an example, we developed scaled scores based on the current national curriculum tests, we might employ a scale from 80 to 130. We propose to use a scaled score of 100 as the secondary ready standard.
- 4.9** To show parents how their child's attainment compares with other pupils in their cohort, we propose to report each pupil's ranking in the national cohort by decile (i.e. 10% of the cohort). This will show each pupil's performance relative to their peers nationally.
- 4.10** In order to report pupils' progress through the primary curriculum, the scaled score for each pupil at key stage 2 would be compared to the scores of other pupils with the same prior attainment. This will identify whether an individual made more or less progress than pupils with similar prior attainment.
- 4.11** We do not propose to use national curriculum test results to define specific categories or grades of performance. The combination of scaled score, decile ranking and progress measures will provide clear and detailed information on how each pupil has performed.
- 4.12** Reporting a scaled score and decile ranking from national curriculum tests will make it easy to identify the highest attainers for example using the highest scaled scores and the top percentiles of pupils. We do not propose to develop an equivalent to the current level 6 tests, which are used to challenge the highest-attaining pupils. Key stage 2 national curriculum tests will include challenging material (at least of the standard of the current level 6 test) which all pupils will have the opportunity to answer, without the need for a separate test.

- 4.13** Using this approach, a school might report pupils' national curriculum test results to parents as follows:

*In the end of key stage 2 reading test, Sally received a scaled score of 126 (the secondary ready standard is 100), placing her in the top 10% of pupils nationally. The average scaled score for pupils with the same prior attainment was 114, so she has made more progress in reading than pupils with a similar starting-point.*

*In the end of key stage 2 mathematics test, Tom received a scaled score of 87. He did not meet the secondary readiness standard (100). This places him in the bottom 10% of pupils nationally. The average scaled score for pupils with the same prior attainment was 92, so he has made less progress in mathematics than other pupils with a similar starting point.*

- 4.14** This would not be the only information provided at the end of a key stage. Teachers would also report to parents as described in section 3 above, providing further detail on their child's strengths and weaknesses in all subjects.

**Question 3: Does a scaled score, decile ranking and value-added measure provide useful information from national curriculum tests?**

- 4.15** National sample tests

We will continue with national sample tests in science, designed to monitor national standards over time. A nationally-representative sample of pupils will sit a range of tests, designed to produce detailed information on the cohort's performance across the whole science curriculum. The design of the tests will mean that results cannot be used to hold individual schools or pupils accountable.

- 4.16** We will continue to participate in international comparison studies, including the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, year 5 and year 9) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, year 5) to benchmark the performance of our schools and their pupils against the rest of the world.

## 5 Baselines to measure progress

- 5.1** In order to calculate progress measures as described above, the statutory assessment system needs to measure how each pupil's end of key stage 2 test results compare with the results of pupils with similar prior attainment. This requires a baseline which differentiates a wide range of possible outcomes.
- 5.2** At present we measure progress between key stage 1 and key stage 2. Currently end of key stage 1 teacher assessment, informed by statutory tests and tasks, provides the baseline measure. However, as outlined in section 3, we are removing the current system of levels and level descriptors. In future, a teacher assessment of whether a pupil has met the expectations of the programme of study will not provide sufficient information to act as a baseline.
- 5.3** This is an opportunity to reconsider the structure of statutory assessment early in primary schools. In particular, we are consulting on when we should take a baseline to measure pupils' progress. In the following paragraphs, we make two different proposals; rather than recommend one approach or the other, we would welcome views on which is most appropriate for a baseline to measure progress.
- 5.4** Retain a baseline at the end of key stage 1

We could retain statutory national curriculum tests in English and mathematics at key stage 1. These tests would be developed by the Standards and Testing Agency, be internally marked and subject to external monitoring and moderation. Because key stage 1 teacher assessments will not provide differentiated outcomes to allow us to measure progress, we would collect pupils' test results to provide the baseline for progress measures.

**Question 4: Should we continue to measure progress from the end of key stage 1, using internally-marked national curriculum tests?**

- 5.5** Schools' key stage 1 national curriculum test results are not currently published (though key stage 1 teacher assessment results are published through Ofsted's school data dashboard). We would welcome views on whether, in the interests of making as much information on school performance available as possible, we should also publish schools' key stage 1 test results. Publication would reduce any incentives some schools might have to under-report pupils' outcomes in the interest of showing the progress pupils have made in the most positive light. This particularly affects infant schools, where key stage 1 results provide the main outcome data.

**Question 5: If end of key stage 1 national curriculum test results are used as the baseline to measure progress, should school-level results be published?**

- 5.6** Introduce a baseline at the start of reception

Key stage 1 tests, at the end of year 2, are not a genuine baseline for primary schooling. Measuring a baseline from the end of key stage 1 gives schools no credit for the crucial work they do in reception, year 1 and year 2. There is also a perverse incentive for schools not to focus resources on early interventions, in order to maximise their progress measures. We could instead take a baseline shortly after pupils entered reception. Progress measures would therefore reflect the whole time that a pupil spent in a school, and would reward schools which taught well from the very start. It could also provide valuable national information on the effectiveness of different types of early years provision.

- 5.7** We could introduce a simple check at the start of reception, to be used as a baseline to measure progress and to inform schools about each pupil's strengths and weaknesses on entry. Schools often assess what pupils can and cannot do when they begin school. The baseline check could be administered by a teacher within two to six weeks of each pupil entering reception and would be subject to external monitoring similar to that used at key stage 1. The results of the check would be collected to provide the baseline for progress measures. We would develop or procure a statutory baseline check.



- 5.8** To avoid any increase in the overall assessment burden, if we introduced a baseline check at the start of reception, the EYFS Profile would be made non-statutory. Although schools could still choose to assess using the EYFS Profile, they would not be required to do so. The remainder of the EYFS framework would remain statutory. We would not collect EYFS Profile data or moderate its outcomes.

**Question 6: Should we introduce a baseline check at the start of reception?**

- 5.9** Another approach we could consider is to allow schools to choose and administer a baseline check from a range of providers, and report the results to be used as a baseline. Research studies would be required to ensure that the available baseline checks were comparable and consistent. We could also consider whether the reception baseline check could be optional for schools. Schools that were particularly concerned about the assessment burden at the start of primary could choose not to administer the check to reduce the amount of testing. These schools would be judged by attainment alone in performance tables and floor standards. They would still track pupils' progress internally and make this data available to Ofsted.

**Question 7: Should we allow schools to choose from a range of commercially-available assessments?**

**Question 8: Should we make the baseline check optional?**

- 5.10** If we measured progress from the start of reception, the need for key stage 1 assessments to provide school accountability measures would reduce. End of key stage 1 tests would continue to provide an important accountability measure for infant schools and should remain statutory for them. Infant schools' key stage 1 test results would provide the baseline to measure progress in junior schools. However, we could consider making end of key stage 1 national curriculum tests non-statutory for all-through primary schools. Since key stage 1 tests provide an important way for schools to benchmark themselves nationally and identify pupils at risk of under-performance, the Standards and Testing Agency would continue to make them available for use on an optional basis.

**Question 9: If we take a baseline from the start of reception, should end of key stage 1 national curriculum tests become non-statutory for all-through primary schools?**

- 5.11** We propose to introduce new key stage 1 national curriculum tests in summer 2016; this cohort will complete key stage 2 in summer 2020. We could introduce new baseline checks in reception from September 2015; this cohort would complete key stage 2 in summer 2022. As an interim measure, we would continue to use key stage 1 data, including assessments made under the current system, as a baseline to measure progress.

## **6 Accountability**

- 6.1** Schools improve most when teachers have the autonomy to decide how best to teach their pupils, while being properly held to account for their pupils' education<sup>8</sup>. The most effective education systems around the world are those that have high levels of autonomy along with clear and robust accountability. All schools are accountable to parents, governors, Ofsted and, via the statutory assessment framework, to government. A wealth of data supports this accountability regime. As Lord Bew recommended, a wide range of data should be published, to give parents and the public a balanced picture of a school's achievements. The department will introduce a new data portal in 2015 which will make the information about schools easier to access and analyse.
- 6.2** The department will continue to produce performance tables showing key information about schools. We will also continue to set a minimum expectation, or floor standard, which will identify those schools where performance is unacceptable and urgent intervention is likely to be required. The measures chosen for floor standards are particularly important in focusing schools' efforts. In recent years, we have made the floor both more challenging and fairer, by including a progress element.
- 6.3** The data in performance tables will identify schools that are above the minimum floor standard but could nonetheless be performing better, and will show whether or not they are moving in the right direction. Ofsted inspection will be more targeted to focus on schools just above the floor standard. Ofsted is well placed to determine whether these schools are on course to make improvements, or whether there are significant issues to address.

8 - School autonomy and accountability: Are they related to student performance? PISA in focus No. 9 (OECD, 2011).

#### **6.4** Floor standards

All primary schools should ensure that as many pupils as possible leave secondary ready. The statutory assessment system described above will clearly show which pupils have reached a standard based explicitly on secondary readiness. Importantly, this standard will be more demanding than the current level 4: most pupils who only just reach level 4 do not go on to achieve good GCSE results.

**6.5** At present, the department's floor standards require 60% of pupils in each school to reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been very effective in identifying those schools where performance is unacceptable – the number of schools below the floor has fallen from 1,400 in 2010 to 534 in 2012.

**6.6** We want to raise our expectations about how many pupils can reach the secondary ready standard. At present a school can be above the floor standard even if a third of its pupils have not grasped the basics in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils will have a much lower chance of going on to achieve good qualifications in secondary school and employment later in life. It is crucial that we act so that far more pupils are on track to succeed when they leave primary school.

**6.7** The new national curriculum raises expectations about the content pupils will be taught in primary school. As more teachers raise their aspirations to match the demands of the curriculum, results should rise sharply. We have also provided extra support so that schools can give disadvantaged pupils the help they need. To close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers and to help them achieve these higher standards, the pupil premium will be increased for pupils in primary schools to £1,300 per child in 2014/15, up from £900 per child this year. Schools have the flexibility to spend this money in the best way possible to support each individual child to reach his or her potential.

- 6.8** With this support in place, very few pupils should leave primary schools without being secondary ready. We therefore propose a new requirement that 85% of pupils should meet the secondary readiness standard in all the floor standard measures (including writing teacher assessment). This 85% attainment requirement will form part of the floor standard. This standard challenges the assumption that some pupils cannot be secondary ready after seven years of primary school. At the same time it allows some flexibility to recognise that a small number of pupils may not meet the expectations in the curriculum because of their particular needs, and also that some pupils may not perform at their best on any given test day. A significant number of schools with challenging circumstances already ensure that over 85% of pupils are secondary ready, and we are confident that many more schools can replicate this success.
- 6.9** The accountability system must be fair to all schools. We recognise that some schools have particularly challenging intakes, and requiring 85% of pupils to be secondary ready will be very demanding. It may take time for all schools to reach this standard. We therefore propose that schools would also be above floor standards if they have good progress results. Progress measures mean that the improvements made by every pupil count – there is no perverse incentive to focus exclusively on pupils near the borderline of an attainment threshold. As outlined above, we propose using a value-added progress measure. Each pupil’s scaled score in key stage 2 national curriculum tests would be compared to the scores of pupils with the same prior attainment on a baseline test. This would show whether pupils in the school were making more or less progress than other pupils with similar starting points.
- 6.10** We will set the precise score required on the progress measure nearer to the introduction of the new measures in 2016. However, we expect the value-added score required to be above the floor to be between 98.5 and 99 (a value-added score of 100 represents average progress).
- 6.11** This would put the weakest schools, with substantially below average progress scores and not meeting the attainment target, below the floor. Our modelling suggests that a progress measure set at this level, combined with the 85% threshold attainment measure, would result in a similar number of schools falling below the floor as at present. Over time we will consider whether schools should make at least average progress as part of floor standards.

- 6.12** A school missing the attainment target but meeting the progress element of the floor standard might not be failing, but too many pupils will still be leaving the school without achieving secondary readiness. Ofsted operates a risk-based approach when deciding which schools should be inspected within the inspection cycle. So that all schools focus on pupils being secondary ready, any school which does not reach the 85% attainment target, or is not on a fast upward trajectory to reach this standard, will be more likely to be inspected by Ofsted. Equally, schools where over 85% of pupils attain good results at the end of key stage 2 will be less likely to be inspected by Ofsted.
- 6.13** Ofsted will also consider progress measures when applying this risk-based approach to inspection. Schools in which low, middle and high attaining pupils all make better than average progress will be much less likely to be inspected sooner.

**Question 10: Do you have any comments about these proposals for the department's floor standards?**

- 6.14** Floor standard measures could also include an average point score attainment measure. Schools would be required to achieve either the progress measure or both the threshold and average point score attainment measure to be above the floor. This would prevent schools being above floor standards by focusing on pupils close to the expected standard, and would encourage schools to maximise the achievement of all their pupils. Alternatively we could publish the average point score to inform inspections and parents' choices, but not include the measure in hard accountability.

**Question 11: Should we include an average point score measure in floor standards?**

- 6.15** Published school performance data

The department is currently procuring a new data portal or "data warehouse" to store the school performance data that we hold and provide access to it in the most flexible way. This will allow schools, governors and parents to find and analyse the data about schools in which they are most interested, for example focusing on the progress of low attainers in mathematics in different schools or the attainment of certain pupil groups.

- 6.16** We will continue to publish some key measures in performance tables. Many of these headline measures will be based on schools' key stage 2 national curriculum test results. These measures will show the percentage of pupils meeting the secondary readiness standard, the average scaled score, where the school's pupils fit in the national cohort, and their rate of progress. We will also identify how many of the school's pupils are among the highest-attaining nationally, by including a measure showing the percentage of pupils attaining a high scaled score in each subject.
- 6.17** We will continue to publish schools' end of key stage teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science. Whereas national curriculum tests show a snapshot of performance and give precise results, teacher assessments give a better indication of pupils' performance across a period of time. Both sets of information should be available to parents, inspectors and governors.
- 6.18** As Lord Bew recommended, we will publish all measures as three-year rolling averages in addition to annual results. This will make it easier to identify trends in school performance and make the accountability system fairer for small schools, where the performance of individual pupils can have a disproportionate effect. Once we have three years of data from the new tests we will look to move to three year rolling averages for floor standard measures as well.
- 6.19** We will publish all the headline measures to show the attainment and progress of pupils for whom the school is in receipt of the pupil premium. Although some schools have very few children eligible for the pupil premium, three-year rolling averages will ensure meaningful judgments can be made for the vast majority of schools. Ofsted have indicated that they will pay particular attention to the performance of those eligible for the pupil premium in their inspections. We would welcome views about the best way to hold schools to account for the performance of this pupil group.
- 6.20** We also propose to compare each school's performance with that of schools with similar intake. This will allow schools, parents and the public to benchmark their performance. Ofsted will use this information to identify schools which strive to make sure all their pupils perform to the best of their abilities. A school that performs poorly compared to other similar schools is unlikely to be rated as 'good', and a school that does not excel compared to similar schools is unlikely to be 'outstanding'.

**Question 12: Are there any other measures we should prioritise in performance tables?**

## **7 Recognising the attainment and progress of all pupils**

- 7.1** One of the key objectives of reviewing the national curriculum has been to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of background or circumstance, should have the opportunity to acquire the essential knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in life.
- 7.2** We propose that the current access arrangements for national curriculum tests should be continued. Access arrangements are adjustments based on normal classroom practice for pupils with particular needs (for example significant special educational needs, disability or limited fluency in English) which allow them to access national curriculum tests. Access arrangements do not provide an unfair advantage. Although some questions may be adapted or modified so that the questions do not disadvantage visually impaired pupils, the answers must be the pupil's own.
- 7.3** Our aspiration is for all pupils to reach the high expectations of the new national curriculum. We also want schools to adapt teaching so that as far as possible all their pupils benefit from the full range of national curriculum subjects, regardless of their ability. The new key stage 2 national curriculum tests will be based on the entire key stage 2 programme of study (years 3-6). Even if pupils have not met the expectations for the end of the key stage, most should be able to take the tests and therefore most will have their attainment and progress acknowledged.
- 7.4** As is currently the case, there will be a small minority of pupils for whom the curriculum and assessment will not be appropriate. These pupils currently do not sit the national curriculum tests. Instead, teachers' judgements are reported, for example using P-scales. We will explore whether P-scales should be reviewed so that they align with the revised national curriculum and provide a clear route to progress to higher attainment.

- 7.5 The accountability system must recognise the achievements of all pupils. Inspectors and others will consider the cohort of pupils when making judgements about a school. They will also consider the progress of pupils with very low prior attainment. We should ensure that data is published that will provide information about these pupils' progress wherever possible, subject to protecting individual privacy. Although special schools and pupil referral units are held to account for their pupils' results using the same indicators, floor standards do not apply to special schools.

**Question 13: What data could be published to hold schools (including special schools) accountable for the attainment and progress of the lowest-attaining pupils?**

## 8 How to respond

- 8.1 Consultation responses can be completed online at:

[www.education.gov.uk/consultations/](http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/)

[PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk)

or by downloading a response form which should be completed and sent to:

Sue White or Jennifer Conlon  
Assessment Team  
Qualifications and Assessment Division  
Level 2  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

## 9 Additional copies

- 9.1 Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from the Department for Education e-consultation website at:

[www.education.gov.uk/consultations/](http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/)



## **10 Plans for making results public**

- 10.1** The results of the consultation and the department's response will be published on the DfE e-consultation website in autumn 2013.