



Department
for Education

Reception baseline research: views of teachers, school leaders, parents and carers

Research report

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Executive summary

Introduction

In March 2014, the Department for Education published its response to a consultation on reforming assessment and accountability in primary schools. The response set out the Department's intention to change the way it will be holding primary schools to account, by introducing a reception baseline assessment, which will be the only measure used to assess the progress of children from entry (at age 4-5) to the end of key stage 2 (age 10-11), alongside an attainment floor standard of 85 per cent. From the reception cohort in 2016 onwards, all schools that wish to demonstrate progress for accountability purposes will have to adopt an approved reception baseline scheme. In 2023, when this cohort of pupils reaches the end of key stage 2, the reception baseline will be the starting point used to measure pupil progress for all-through primary schools. Schools can opt to use an approved baseline assessment from September 2015 if they wish to do so.

The Department commissioned research to inform its approach to implementation of the reception baseline and to identify effective ways of communicating the results to parents¹. The research comprised two strands. The first was a randomised control trial carried out in the autumn term 2014 by the Department in partnership with the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University, which aimed to investigate schools' behaviour changes in response to the accountability reforms and to evaluate the effectiveness of different report formats for parents.² The second strand was a qualitative study undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) which is reported here. The qualitative study aimed to explore the accountability context of the reforms and to investigate the reporting formats that stakeholders find most useful. This summary sets out the key findings which are drawn from the qualitative study.

Methodology

The research involved: a) an online survey of senior managers and reception teachers in schools (based on a representative sample of 1000 schools including 156 schools which were involved in the CEM trial). The survey yielded 356 responses, including 101 from staff in schools involved in the CEM trial (53 in the treatment group and 48 in the control group). The 356 responses represented 296 schools, including 81 schools participating in the CEM trial. The responding schools were broadly representative of schools nationally; b) telephone interviews with 51 staff (including 22 in the CEM group); and (c) focus groups with 47 parents from ten schools (including five involved in the CEM trial). The fieldwork took place between October – December 2014.

Survey data was analysed by producing basic frequencies for the whole sample of 296 *schools* and 356 *respondents* and cross-tabulating the data to explore the relationship between some

¹ 'Parents' includes primary carers throughout.

² Results from this study are published on https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?keywords=&publication_filter_option=research-and-analysis&topics%5B%5D=all&departments%5B%5D=department-for-education&official_document_status=all&world_locations%5B%5D=all&from_date=&to_date=

survey outcomes and factors such as school type, existing on-entry assessment approach, and involvement in the CEM trial (or not). Where any differences between subgroups emerged they have been reported, but no statistical significance testing was carried out.

Key findings

- Forty eight per cent of respondents to the survey said that they understood the new accountability measures very well. Just under half (49 per cent) said that they only 'somewhat' understood the measures.
- The majority of respondents (60 per cent) were positive to some extent about the introduction of the reception baseline. Although there were also nearly a third (30 per cent) of respondents who were *not* in favour of it, almost all were going to implement the baseline (only ten per cent/25 schools were undecided about whether to do a reception baseline or not).
- All of the schools surveyed were already using some form of on-entry assessment and two-thirds were doing this in a formal way (i.e. assessing all pupils against identical items, such as scales or tasks, in order to either produce a score or to make a best fit decision about how to allocate a child to a particular ability group/band).
- A quarter of schools (27 per cent) carried out observations only; if the reception baseline products made available are more formal, this may result in more change for this group.
- Most schools were using the outcomes as evidence for accountability (including for Ofsted inspections), but the uses of the data were evidently broader. While the reforms focus primarily on the accountability at a school-level, most schools were already using on-entry assessments for purposes beyond the aims of the reception baseline, such as to inform targeted teaching at an individual pupil-level, to inform what and how to teach the whole class, and to verify data that early childhood education settings provided when pupils started school .
- Schools participating in this study also took a wider view by being interested in comparing their performance with other local schools. In this context, some respondents were concerned about consistency of administration, which could impact on comparability between local schools.
- There was *some* evidence to suggest that schools may adopt a conscious 'gaming' approach i.e. change their current assessment practices to maximise the opportunity for progress, including by carrying out assessments at the earliest opportunity to minimise any learning gain. A 'gaming' approach could be harmful for learning, if teachers minimise learning opportunities at the start of reception in favour of concentrating on the administration of the assessment and on keeping scores low at baseline.
- However, few schools planned to change the level of support given to pupils during assessments and only a small minority reported that they would be more cautious about judgments (i.e. not giving benefit of the doubt about a pupil's answer when they might have before), in order to keep scores low or depress results. Variations in the extent of 'gaming' across schools could impact on the reliability of accountability data.

- Staff would prefer to communicate the outcomes of the reception baseline to parents orally, because this would give them the opportunity to contextualise the results. If a written report was considered necessary, staff and parents felt the report should include information on a child's personal development and next steps.

The following sections summarise the main themes explored in the research in more detail.

Were schools already administering on-entry assessments?

All of the 296 schools which responded to the survey were already doing some type of on-entry assessment. For more than two-thirds of schools, their combination of assessment approaches included assessing pupils against identical items (such as tasks or scales), either to produce a score or to help make a best fit decision about how to group/band a child. Just over a quarter of schools (28 per cent) were *only* carrying out these arguably more 'formal' types of assessments, while others combined this 'formal' approach with observation of normal classroom activities to assess pupils' capabilities. Almost three-quarters of schools (71 per cent) carried out observations to assess pupils when they started school. Most did observations in combination with more 'formal' methods of assessment, although 27 per cent of schools carried out observations only; if the reception baseline products made available are more formal, this may result in more change for this group.

Over a quarter of schools (75 schools/27 per cent) had finished on-entry assessments by the end of the third week of the new autumn term; a further two-fifths (115 schools/41 per cent) had completed by the end of the fifth week. However, a considerable proportion of schools completed assessments later (48 schools/17 per cent had not finished until weeks seven or eight). The average duration was two and a half weeks overall (but two weeks for schools involved in the CEM trial). Interview data confirmed that the timing of on-entry assessments varied across schools, although it was most common for assessments to take place in the first two weeks, or at least by the end of September (by the fourth week) to establish a '*true baseline*'.

Most schools (97 per cent) used the outcomes as evidence for accountability (including for Ofsted inspections) and to contribute to the process of monitoring progress (98 per cent), although evidence suggests that the uses of the data were broader. While the reforms focus primarily on the accountability at a whole school level, most schools are likely to take a wider view, as they have been using the outcomes of existing on-entry assessments to inform teaching and learning practices. For example, almost all schools (98 per cent) used the outcomes to inform targeted teaching and/or early interventions. Most also used the outcomes to inform *what* and *how* to teach the whole class (94 per cent and 85 per cent respectively). More than three-quarters (79 per cent) also used the on-entry assessment data to verify information that early childhood education settings provided when pupils started school.

Did staff understand the reception baseline and were they in favour of it?

Around half (48 per cent) of the 356 survey respondents reported that they understood the change to primary school accountability measures 'very well'. However, a similar proportion (49 per cent) only understood it 'somewhat'. Three-fifths (60 per cent) were in favour of the reception baseline

as an accountability measure at least 'to some extent', whereas just under a third (30 per cent) were 'not at all' in favour. Respondents in local authority maintained schools were more likely to be 'not at all' in favour compared with those in academies (31 per cent compared with 17 per cent). The majority of the 51 staff interviewed did not see the introduction of a reception baseline as a particular *disadvantage* for their school. Most were either positive (considering it as beneficial to monitor pupils' progress) or were indifferent (because they were already carrying out on-entry assessments).

Will schools use an approved reception baseline?

Responses from senior managers in 243 schools suggest that most (89 per cent) anticipated using a reception baseline; more than half (56 per cent) from 2015. Only ten per cent (N=25) were undecided. A minority of the 51 interviewees said that their school was undecided about whether to use a reception baseline as they were waiting to review the DfE-approved products before making a decision, as one headteacher said: *'We'll take a look at what's available when it's available and make decisions from there'*.

How are schools preparing for the reception baseline?

Interviews with staff suggested that schools were preparing for the reception baseline by:

- researching new products
- discussing the policy and products among local partnerships of schools (aiming to be 'joined up' for consistency and comparability at a local level)
- having discussions with feeder early childhood education settings (if the feeder was part of the school/on-site, the results of the reception baseline were a reflection on internal staff, or because feeders had concerns about their own outcomes not being reflected in the baseline assessment);
- discussing the changes with staff, governors and parents.

Staff said that the most important factors influencing their choice of a reception baseline were: ease of administration; format (including a practical element to enable staff to assess a child's independent learning), content (to include personal development), reliability (so the output is useful for planning), and value for money (not necessarily just cost).

Do schools expect to change on-entry assessment practice when the reception baseline is introduced?

The most common anticipated change was for schools to provide training for staff administering the reception baseline (47 per cent would definitely do this; 27 per cent might). Interviews with staff suggested that the training would relate to ensuring staff understand how to administer the baseline assessment product and that they do so consistently.

More than a quarter (27 per cent) reported that they would *definitely* schedule the reception baseline earlier than previous on-entry assessments and a similar proportion (29 per cent)

reported that they *might* do this. This is an indication that some schools could be adopting 'gaming' strategies to maximise room for pupil progress.

Overall, 17 percent of schools had definite plans to change how they communicate with parents *before* the implementation of a reception baseline and 21 per cent had definite plans to do this *after* the baseline assessment had taken place. A larger proportion of schools also said they *might* change communications with parents before and after (see below for further discussion).

A notable minority (28 schools/13 per cent) said they definitely would or might change their entry approach by *introducing* a staggered start to reception, for example when entry is phased and some pupils start on different dates than others. In contrast, eight schools reported that they definitely will or might *remove* their existing staggered start.

What challenges do schools anticipate?

At the time of the interviews (November-December 2014), most schools were waiting for information about the shortlisted Department-approved products and so were unsure about the changes to practices or challenges ahead.

Overall there was no evidence of any overriding concerns, but the most common challenges foreseen by a minority of interviewees were:

- **time** to administer the reception baseline (for example, '*getting accurate assessments of the children in the time*'). Some staff were also worried about the time the administration of the reception baseline will take away from settling-in activities when pupils start school.
- **how to choose a product** (schools were waiting for information and many would then be making joint decisions with other local schools). School staff wanted *information* about the products and then wanted *time* to review and compare the different options.
- a possible lack of consistency across teachers using the same product (for example, in the way questions are interpreted, answers are recorded, and the amount of time given to an assessment), either within a school or across schools.

What is the most effective way of reporting outcomes of the reception baseline to parents?

Of 132 teaching staff (survey respondents who were not managers) in schools that undertook on-entry assessments, 91 (69 per cent) already reported the outcomes to parents, but most often orally rather than by distributing a written report. Staff were cautious about using a written report and pointed out that pupils may not have settled fully into school (and therefore not show their true potential); and that the on-entry assessment only shows a 'snapshot' of their achievements at a particular point (it does not show the progress that pupils may be making).

As part of the CEM trial, schools involved were given access to new reporting materials (they were assigned one of three different reporting groups; descriptor only; descriptor with a graphic; and descriptor, graphic and teacher comment) although CEM recommended that the reports were communicated to parents face-to-face to give teachers the opportunity to add context and allow

parents to ask questions. Of staff interviewed in 22 CEM-trial schools, nearly all of them had verbally summarised the reports for parents and only nine had given out written reports.

A small sample of parents linked to ten schools (some involved in the CEM trial, others not), were interviewed to gather their views on all three versions of the reports and on the important features of reports in general. Opinions were divided: while some favoured the format with the graphic others preferred the teacher comment, even though they were aware of the extra work that this would cause for teachers. If required to provide a written report, staff and parents interviewed felt it would be important to include information on personal development of the child and next steps in their learning.

Of 214 surveyed schools overall, 37 (17 percent) *will* change how they communicate with parents *before* the implementation of a reception baseline and 46 (21 per cent) had definite plans to change communication afterwards. The introduction of the reception baseline is a policy change that will directly impact on pupils. For some schools this could be the first time they use a formal assessment in reception. It is likely therefore that schools will want to communicate this to parents before and/or after the assessment has taken place.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that primary schools will be able to facilitate the introduction of the reception baseline. The extent of change to practice necessary will depend on how different the chosen product is from the current approach. The next step will be for local authorities and school partnerships (e.g. clusters, trusts and academy chains) to support schools in reviewing and making choices about which assessment product to use. Most schools will face a change in their assessment tool, and some will be using a formal approach for the first time.

Most schools had broad uses for their existing on-entry assessments - to inform teaching and learning practices, to target interventions, and to validate data received from early years providers. Teachers may still want to carry out their own assessments to give them broader outcomes for planning purposes, which could have implications for curriculum time.

In addition to teaching and learning use, the evidence suggests that schools will want to compare their performance with other local schools and schools nationally. They are therefore concerned about consistency in the administration of the reception baseline. This presents a challenge for policy makers to address this concern and explain to school staff how the reception baseline will be quality-assured and moderated.

There was *some* evidence that conscious 'gaming' might occur (for example, some schools planned to carry out assessment earlier, possible to maximise room for progress). Few schools, however, anticipated giving pupils less support during assessments and only a small minority reported that they might be more cautious about judgments in order to keep scores low or depress results. A variation in approaches to administering the reception baseline, and in the extent of 'gaming', could have an impact on the reliability of the data being used for accountability purposes. Therefore, moderation of the administration of the reception baseline is likely to be important.

There is a need for baseline providers and leaders at the local level to facilitate training and the sharing of practice across schools, to minimise any challenges and impact they could have on

learning. School leaders considered that dialogue with school governors, staff and parents; nursery and pre-school feeders; and local school partnerships was going to be essential for managing this change.

As regards the reporting formats that stakeholders find most useful, some schools did not like the idea of sending out a written report. If schools are to be encouraged to provide reports, it was thought important to contextualise the results so that parents gain a full understanding of their children's educational progress. However, staff were aware that including teacher comments in *written* reports would have implications for teachers' workload. Staff and parents preferred oral feedback (for example, provided at a parents evening) which give teachers an opportunity to explain the results face-to-face.

School staff and parents were keen for the next steps to be included in any report, so that teachers and parents understand what actions they can take to support the education of the child.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and policy context

In March 2014, the Department for Education published its response to its consultation on reforming assessment and accountability in primary schools (DfE, 2014). The response set out the Department's intention to change the way it will be holding primary schools to account, by introducing a reception baseline assessment from 2016, which will be the only measure used to assess the progress of children from entry (at age 4-5) to the end of key stage 2 (age 10-11), alongside an attainment floor standard of 85 per cent. Currently primary school accountability is based on attainment at the end of key stage 2 and the progress pupils make between the end of key stage 1 (at age 6-7) and the end of key stage 2. The reception baseline will score each pupil against the knowledge and understanding typical for children at the start of reception. It will be linked to the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) and to the key stage 1 national curriculum in English and mathematics. Additional areas of learning may be covered at the discretion of the individual reception baseline providers. Although the EYFS will continue to be statutory, from September 2016 the EYFS Profile will no longer be compulsory. Key stage 1 assessments will remain statutory but will not be used to measure progress for accountability purposes in all-through primary schools.

The aspiration is that at least 85 per cent of children should achieve the new expected attainment standard by the end of primary school. The new progress standard will be based on the progress made by pupils from reception to the end of primary school (underpinned by the new reception baseline). A school will fall below the floor only if pupils make poor progress and fewer than 85 per cent of them achieve the new expected standard.³

From the reception cohort in 2016 onwards, all schools that wish to demonstrate progress for accountability purposes will have to adopt an approved scheme.⁴ In 2023, when this cohort of pupils reaches the end of key stage 2, the reception baseline will be the starting point used to measure pupil progress for all-through primary schools. Schools can opt to use an approved baseline assessment early, from September 2015, if they wish to do so. When this cohort of pupils reaches the end of key stage 2 (in 2022), their progress will be measured by either the reception baseline to end of key stage 2, or the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2, whichever is better. For schools that do not use a baseline assessment in 2015, pupil progress for that cohort will be measured, as now, from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2.

³ Note that the baseline assessment will also allow the Department to monitor the progress of pupils in infant schools (from 2016, they will be able to measure pupils' attainment from reception year to the end of key stage 1 for the first time, although there will not be a floor standard for infant or first schools which do not have a key stage 2).

⁴ There is a list of approved baseline assessment tools and the providers will send school-and pupil-level data from the assessments to the Department. All suppliers on the Department's approved list will have had to provide evidence that they meet the stringent criteria for baseline assessments.

Although the use of a reception baseline assessment has not been made mandatory, there is a strong incentive for schools to do so. Under the new accountability arrangements, a school will be considered to be above the floor if it meets either the progress standard or the attainment standard. In 2023, schools that did not use an approved baseline assessment in 2016 will be judged solely on the attainment of their pupils at the end of key stage 2, i.e. they will have to meet the attainment floor standard of 85 per cent. The extent of progress required to meet the standard will not be known until after the new end of key stage 2 tests are administered for the first time in summer 2016.

A child's baseline assessment will have to be administered in their first half-term in a reception class (full-time or part-time attendance). For most pupils, this will be in the autumn term but for some pupils later (some schools have a January intake, for example). The assessment can be administered by a teacher or teaching assistant. Administration guidance will be provided by the scheme providers. The Department plans to announce how results from the reception baseline might best be communicated to parents⁵ and how such results should be contextualised. The Department has indicated that it will not insist on a report for parents – rather, it is seeking views on examples that providers, schools, and parents might find useful.

The Department is interested in whether the accountability context will lead to a change in how schools administer on-entry assessments. In theory, schools may see the context as an incentive to depress scores in order to enhance progress measures. This could be part of a conscious 'gaming' strategy. An evaluation of the baseline assessment system introduced in England in 1998 (Lindsay *et al.*, 2000) revealed some indirect evidence of this sort of behaviour. Interviews with teachers and school leaders revealed a clear awareness of the benefit of low baseline scores for value-added purposes and the implications of this for the timing of the assessment within a half-term window. Interviewees tended to prefer delaying the assessment so that they had more time to get to know the pupils and recognise their achievements. At the same time, however, they realised that later assessments could reflect the gains in achievement made in the first few weeks of school, and thus over-estimate attainment at baseline, leading to lower progress measures. A variation in approaches to administering the reception baseline, and in the extent of 'gaming', could have an impact on the reliability of the data which will be used for accountability purposes. Therefore, moderation of the administration of the reception baseline will be important, and could be informed by this research.

1.2 Research study

In its response to its consultation on reforming assessment and accountability in primary schools, the Department set out plans to study schools which were already using a baseline assessment in autumn 2014 (DfE, 2014). It should be noted that, collectively, schools use a variety of on-entry assessments, which vary in their content and formality. This research study is intended to inform the Department's approach to implementation of the new policy and identify effective ways of communicating the results of a baseline to parents. The research comprises two strands: a quantitative study, which was carried out by the Department in partnership with the Centre for

⁵ 'Parents' includes primary carers throughout.

Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University; and a qualitative study which was undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

The purpose of the quantitative study was to investigate schools' behaviour changes in response to the reforms in the accountability system in primary schools and to explore the implications of different formats for reporting assessment results to parents. Participant schools in this randomised control trial were assigned randomly to treatment and control groups and asked to administer an assessment based on CEM's Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) On-Entry Baseline assessment.⁶ The two groups were given different guidance on ways to use the assessment data, though no differential and enforceable rules were applied to their behaviour in practice. The treatment schools were given guidance on how to use their data for accountability purposes prior to the DfE introducing the use of reception baseline assessments. The control group were given guidance on how to use the data to help guide their teaching and learning practices.

Schools were also assigned randomly to three reporting format groups. Each group was given a different style of report to inform parents of a pupil's results: a description-only report; a report with description and graphic; and a report with description, a graphic and space for teacher comment (to add context). CEM recommended to schools that the reports were communicated to parents face-to-face rather than being sent home by post or email. It was felt that this would ensure that any risk of misinterpretation was reduced and parents had the opportunity to ask questions or talk about any anxieties they may have had. CEM acknowledged that some schools may choose to hold individual parent-teacher conferences, while others might choose to hold a general parent group meeting with time for questions at the end.

CEM collected and anonymised the assessment results from participant schools and passed the data to the Department for quantitative analysis. The outcomes of this study will be published by the DfE later this year.

The over-arching purposes of the qualitative study, reported here, were:

- **to complement and help interpret the findings of the quantitative study**, gathering the views of school leaders, teachers and parents on how informative and useful the different assessment report formats used were and to analyse views of baseline assessments in an accountability context. This involved exploring schools' response to the reception baseline, in terms of their perceptions and the changes made in their approaches during the study. For example, with high stakes riding on the results (as the reception baseline will be the only measure of progress from reception to the end of key stage 2) the research aimed to establish whether schools saw an incentive to depress scores in order to enhance progress

⁶ PIPS works as a chain of assessments giving year-on-year comparisons of progress for both individuals and classes as they move through school. The On-Entry Baseline assessment at the start of Reception links with assessments at the end of Year 1, 3, 4 and 5 and in January for Years 2 and 6. Using the assessment year-on-year provides a school with information about a pupil's progress and measures value-added at pupil, class and school level.

measures. This could be part of a conscious 'gaming' strategy, or it could inadvertently arise from differences in teachers' familiarity with the pupils or interpretation of the assessment differences, for example, in how many observations of an achievement are seen as necessary for the judgement to be regarded as reliable; and

- **to survey the current use of on-entry assessment in primary schools more generally and explore how that might be affected by the policy.** In particular, investigating the approaches currently taken to and resources invested in conducting assessment, the purposes schools saw for it, the way results were communicated to stakeholders, and how staff expected to or planned to respond to the reform.

NFER conducted the research between June 2014 and March 2015. Further details of the study are presented below.

1.3 Aims and methodological approach

The aims of the quantitative DfE/CEM research strand were to:

- explore the accountability context within which the reforms are being introduced in order to inform policy decisions about the detailed nature of the requirements for the baseline assessment schemes
- contribute to an understanding of the reporting mechanisms and formats that stakeholders find most useful.

The objectives of the qualitative research reported here were to:

- add context to the results of the quantitative strand
- identify, through fieldwork, additional metrics to test the presence of gaming in the quantitative strand
- understand leaders' and teachers' (in quantitative study schools and elsewhere) perceptions of baseline assessments
- explore teachers' and leaders' understanding of how assessments will be used for accountability purposes
- inform the Department's approach to monitoring
- explore schools' behaviour in response to accountability systems
- understand teachers' and parents' perceptions of different reporting formats, and how reporting formats influence wider perceptions
- identify potential implementation issues for reception baseline assessment.

The methodology was designed to capture a wide range of school leaders' and teachers' views on the reception baseline assessment and reporting formats, to gain in-depth school leaders' and teachers' perspectives, and to gather parents' feedback on reporting formats. The study team carried out the following research activities:

- A strategic consultation with senior managers at the Department to understand the policy context of the introduction of the reception baseline assessment.

- An online survey of senior managers and reception teachers in schools. A representative sample of 1000 schools in England was drawn from NFER's Register of Schools, stratified by region, school type and performance at key stage 2. The sample included 156 schools which were involved in the CEM trial. The survey yielded 356 responses, including 101 from staff in schools involved in the CEM trial (53 in the treatment group and 48 in the control group). A total of 249 respondents were senior leaders and 107 respondents taught reception pupils. The 356 responses represented 296 *schools*, including 81 schools participating in the CEM trial. The responding schools were broadly representative of schools nationally (see Appendix A for the profile of schools). Where more than one response was received within a school, the most senior person's response was taken if a school-level response was considered more appropriate (for example, if the question sought factual information about school practice). The survey included questions on current practice in on-entry assessment, the implementation of the reception baseline, views on the reception baseline and reporting to parents.
- Telephone interviews with a sub-sample of survey respondents. A total of 51 staff were interviewed, including 22 in the CEM group, and 17 who taught reception pupils. The interviews explored the survey questions in more depth.
- Focus groups with 47 parents from ten schools (including five involved in the CEM trial). The focus groups explored parents' awareness of their children's assessment and gathered their views on different reporting formats.

As shown in Appendix A, the sample of schools surveyed was broadly representative of primary schools in England in terms of school type (e.g. academy and publicly funded schools), key stage 2 performance, the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, and Ofsted inspection ratings. The school sample was over-represented in the North West owing to including CEM schools (which are concentrated in the North West). It was not considered necessary to weight the data, given that the sample was broadly representative of most criteria.

1.4 Analysis

Survey data

We analysed the survey data by producing basic frequencies for the whole sample of schools and respondents and for each question and cross-tabulating the data to explore the relationship between some survey outcomes (if considered relevant) and:

- role of respondent (e.g. headteacher, assessment coordinator and reception teacher)
- school types (e.g. academies and publicly funded schools, schools with and without a nursery, and those with and without a Year 6/key stage 2)
- current type of on-entry assessment
- schools involved and not involved in the CEM trial
- treatment (accountability) and control (teaching and learning) sub-groups within the CEM group
- the three CEM parent report groups.

We carried out statistical significance tests (chi-square/p values) on data where the numbers were large enough for the tests to be conducted accurately. However, in most cases numbers were small. For example, for analysis by school-type, there were only 37 academies in the responding sample to compare with 258 mainstream schools.⁷ Similarly, there were 106 schools with a nursery (which would allow for a comparison with schools without one), and 49 schools which did not have a Year 6/key stage 2 (which restricted comparisons somewhat). Where differences between groups looked interesting they have been reported, but they should be treated as indicative only, because of small numbers. Differences were not statistically significantly different.

Interview and focus group data

We analysed the data from the telephone interviews with school leaders and teachers by summarising their responses in a template referenced to the main research question themes. We cross-tabulated responses by CEM and non-CEM school groups.

We analysed the data from the focus groups of parents by summarising their responses in a template referenced to the main research question themes. We compared responses according to whether parents' children were in CEM schools or non-CEM schools.

1.5 Report structure

Chapter 2 examines current on-entry assessment practice including the types and timing of assessment used. The chapter compares schools' practice in academic year 2014-15 with the previous academic year 2013-14.

Chapter 3 explores respondents' understanding of the change to primary school accountability measures and whether they are in favour of the change. It also reports on the extent to which schools plan to introduce a reception baseline.

Chapter 4 presents the views of staff interviewed on how their school will prepare for the reception baseline and the factors which they considered important when choosing a product.

Chapter 5 examines expected changes in on-entry assessment in the context of the reception baseline becoming the only measure used to assess the progress of pupils from entry to key stage 2.

Chapter 6 presents findings relating to any challenges faced, or predicted, by schools when introducing a reception baseline. It also discusses how staff felt they could be supported to overcome any challenges.

Chapter 7 presents evidence on the reporting of on-entry assessment outcomes to parents and their preferences for different styles of report format.

⁷ The remaining school did not match to the Register of Schools for information on school-type.

The final chapter presents conclusions and key messages from the research. Appendix A gives an overview of the profile of the responding survey sample and its representativeness in relation to schools nationally.

2 Current on-entry assessment practice

Key findings

All of the schools represented in the survey were already doing some type of on-entry assessment.

More than two-thirds (70 per cent) of schools were carrying out combinations of approaches which included assessing pupils against identical items (such as tasks or scales), either to produce a score or a best fit decision about the best grouping/banding for a child. This formal approach was often coupled with observation of classroom practice.

Just over a quarter of schools (28 per cent) were *only* carrying out the arguably more 'formal' types of assessments including identical criteria, tasks and/or scales for each pupil. However, the same proportion of schools carried out observations only, and therefore the change to a more formal reception baseline could mean more change for these schools.

Over a quarter of schools (75 schools/27 per cent) had finished on-entry assessments by the end of the third week of the new autumn term; a further two-fifths (115 schools/41 per cent) had completed by the end of the fifth week. However, a considerable proportion of schools completed assessments later (48 schools/17 per cent not until weeks seven or eight). The average duration of the assessment period was two and a half weeks overall (but two weeks for schools involved in the CEM trial).

Most schools used the outcomes as evidence for accountability (including for Ofsted inspections), but the uses of the data were evidently broader. Most schools were already using on-entry assessments for purposes beyond the aims of the reception baseline, such as to inform targeted teaching, to inform *what* and *how* to teach the whole class, and to verify data provided by feeders. Therefore, as well as influencing school behaviour due to a change in accountability measures, the introduction of the reception baseline could have an impact on teaching and learning.

This chapter explores the on-entry assessment practices in schools in the academic year of the research (2014-15) and the previous year (2013-14). This provides context for their views on the implementation of the reception baseline, as recent practice could determine the level of preparation required and the extent of any challenges faced by schools.

2.1 Existing on-entry assessment practice

All of the schools represented in the survey were doing some type of on-entry assessment. Almost three-quarters carried out observations of normal classroom

activities in order to make decisions about a child's stage of development. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 On-entry assessment practice in the last academic year (2013/14)

Type of on-entry assessment	% of schools	N
A. An on-entry assessment of each child against identical 'items' (criteria, tasks, scales, etc), each requiring a single objective binary decision (e.g. yes/no). The assessment resulted in a numerical outcome / score for each child	24	72
B. An on-entry assessment of each child against identical 'items' (criteria, tasks, scales, etc) in order to make a best-fit decision about the child's broad age / stage of development. For example, based on teacher-led activities. The assessment resulted in the placement for each child into an age-band, broad group (e.g. emerging / expected / exceeding) or similar	58	172
C. Observations of normal classroom activities during the first half term in order to make a best-fit decision about the child's broad age / stage of development	71	210
D. No assessments on-entry – we relied on information from our feeder settings / parents	-	-
Other	4	11

Total N = 296 schools

A multiple response question so percentages do not sum to 100

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

More than half (58 per cent) carried out an assessment which included identical items for each child which resulted in a decision about age-bandings (type B in Table 1), while just under a quarter did an assessment with identical items which resulted in a numerical outcome or score for each child (type A). Type A would include commercially available products such as the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPs) assessment used by schools involved in the CEM study and other schools. Interestingly, there were 81 schools involved in the CEM study represented in the survey, yet only 55 of them reported doing assessment type A. Of the 26 CEM schools which did not report doing type A, 21 of them did type B (so there could have been misinterpretation of categories) and 16 did observational type C (this was a multiple response question).

Of the schools doing type A assessments, six were academies; of those doing type B, 24 were academies.

Note that this was a multiple response question and schools overall were carrying out various combinations of types of on-entry assessments, as shown in Table 2. More than two-thirds (70 per cent) of schools were carrying out combinations which *included* types A or B, which are assessments against identical items (such as tasks or scales) for each pupil, either to produce a score or a best fit decision about the best grouping/banding for a child. Just over a quarter of schools (28 per cent) were *only* carrying out these arguably more 'formal' types of assessments. However, the same proportion of schools carried out observations only; if the reception baseline products made available are more formal, this may result in more change for this group.

Nine per cent reported using all three types. The extent of change to practice necessary when introducing the reception baseline will depend on the approach adopted by the product chosen by schools.

Table 2 Combinations of on-entry assessment approaches in the last academic year (2013/14)

Type of on-entry assessment (see Table 1 for description of type)	% of schools	N
A only	7	20
B only	20	59
A and B	1	3
A and C	7	21
C only	27	79
C and B	26	77
A, B and C	9	26
Other combinations	3	11

Total N = 296

A multiple response question so percentages do not sum to 100

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

Just under a third of 296 schools (31 per cent) had used a commercially purchased assessment scheme. However, more than half (57 per cent) had developed their own;

while a fifth (21 per cent) used an assessment developed by the local authority (note that this was a multiple response question as schools could have used different types of schemes). This shows that a considerable proportion had not used a commercial product before.

2.2 Timing of existing on-entry assessments

The survey explored the timing of on-entry assessments (the week of term they started and finished, which allowed for a calculation of duration). The outcome of later assessments could reflect learning that had taken place in school, leading to lower progress measures. As expected, there were various combinations of approaches. As shown in Table 3, 75 schools (27 per cent) had finished assessments by the end of the third week of the new autumn term; a further 115 schools (41 per cent) had completed by the end of the fifth week. However, a considerable proportion of schools completed assessments later (48 schools/17 per cent not until weeks seven or eight). Note, though, that the timings reflected in Table 3 relate to on-entry assessments carried out *prior* to the change in accountability measures; Chapter 5 explores any expected changes to timing following the introduction of the national system.

Table 3 Combinations of on-entry assessment timing

Start week of term (number of schools)		Finish week of term (number of schools)						Total start N	
		2	3	4	5	6	7		8
	1	23	35	23	16	8	6	10	121
	2	-	17	24	15	10	4	4	74
	3	-	-	14	13	14	7	4	52
	4	-	-	-	10	5	7	1	23
	5	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	4
	6	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	3
	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total finish N		23	52	61	54	40	27	21	

N=278 (all schools for which information on timing was available)

Note that not all schools provided information on both start and finish so total numbers are not equal.

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

In terms of duration, a quarter of 278 schools (25 per cent) took just one week to complete assessments; 28 per cent took two weeks and 21 per cent took three weeks. Others took longer (including four per cent who took seven weeks). Overall, the average duration was two and a half weeks.

Among the CEM trial sample, there was no difference between the treatment and control groups in terms of when assessments started. But treatment schools completed assessments earlier (38 per cent of 77 CEM schools who provided relevant information finished on-entry assessments by the end of the third week of term and 70 per cent by the end of the fourth week, compared with 30 per cent and 57 per cent of control schools respectively). The duration of the assessment period was the same for both groups (two weeks, on average, so slightly less than the two and a half weeks taken by schools overall). The difference is not statistically significant.

Interview data confirmed that the timing of on-entry assessments varied across schools, although it was most common for the administration to take place in the first two weeks, or at least by the end of September (by the fourth week) so a 'true baseline' can take place. Comments included:

We need to carry it out as early as possible, otherwise by October half term we've taught them quite a bit... so it wouldn't be a true baseline.

We start phonics almost immediately... the child who is [assessed] last may have learnt 15 sounds by then.

A minority of teachers discussed the dilemma of having to decide between obtaining a true baseline or letting pupils settle before assessments were carried out. For example:

Your heart says one thing and your head says another. You want to do it as early as possible, but you also want them to settle in first and have a good experience of school.

A minority of staff suggested that a baseline assessment carried out early would be good for measuring progress, as pupils might not yet be confident, leading to depressed scores. For example:

Children are anxious when they start school, so might know the answer but not be able to say... they might come out poorer than they actually are, which is good for progress.

Staff were asked about the order in which they assess pupils on entry. The most common approach was to assess the oldest pupils first, but staff reported that this was because older pupils would be more confident and 'able to cope' (particularly with a one-to-one assessment), rather than because it maximised room for progress. Other schools ordered pupils alphabetically, randomly, or chose a child depending on the child's 'mood

on the day'. Expected changes to the timing of on-entry assessments are discussed in Chapter 5.

2.3 Use of on-entry assessment outcomes

As shown in Table 4, most schools used the outcomes of existing on-entry assessments to inform teaching and learning practices. For example, almost all (98 per cent) used the outcomes to inform targeted teaching (for example, gifted and talented/special educational needs) and/or early interventions. Most also used the outcomes to inform *what* and *how* to teach the whole class (94 per cent and 85 per cent respectively). More than three-quarters (79 per cent) also used the on-entry assessments to verify data provided by early years settings. Having a nursery on site did not make this more likely – 81 per cent of schools with no nursery compared to 73 per cent of schools with a nursery used the outcomes of assessments to verify data from early years feeders (although this difference was not significantly different).

Most schools (97 per cent) did also use the outcomes as evidence for accountability (including for Ofsted inspections) and to contribute to the process of monitoring progress (98 per cent). This evidence suggests that schools were already using on-entry assessments for purposes beyond the aims of the reception baseline, which has a focus on school-level accountability. Therefore, as well as influencing school behaviour due to a change in accountability measures, the introduction of the reception baseline could have an impact on teaching and learning.

Table 4 Use of existing on-entry assessment outcomes

	To a great extent	To some extent	Not at all	No response
	%	%	%	%
To inform targeted teaching (for example, gifted and talented/special educational needs)	84	14	0	2
To evidence entry levels for accountability purposes (including Ofsted inspections)	82	15	1	2
To contribute to the process of monitoring progress	78	20	0	2
To inform early interventions	75	23	0	2
To inform discussion with parents	56	39	3	2
To inform what to teach the whole class	52	42	4	2

	To a great extent	To some extent	Not at all	No response
	%	%	%	%
To inform how to teach the whole class	39	46	13	2
To verify data provided by feeder setting	29	50	18	3
To meet requirements of local network / cluster / academy chain	6	35	54	4

N=294 schools responded

A series of single response questions

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

3 Views on the reception baseline

Key findings

Overall, three-fifths of survey respondents (60 per cent) were in favour of the reception baseline as an accountability measure at least to some extent, while just under a third (30 per cent) were not at all in favour.

School types most likely to be in favour of the reception baseline to a great extent were those involved in the CEM trial and/or which were already carrying out 'formal' on-entry assessments (although numbers were small so these findings are not statistically significant).

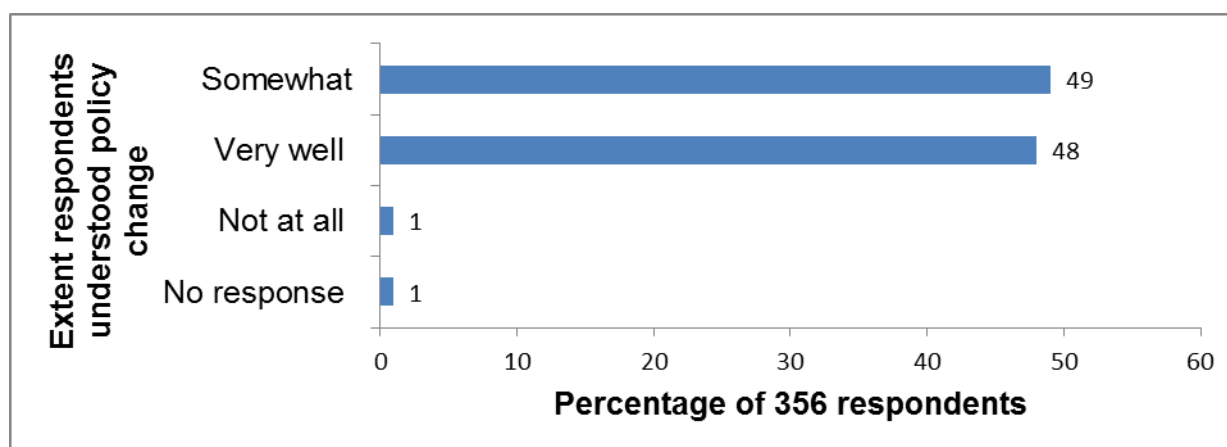
Most (89 per cent) of respondents anticipate using a reception baseline and only ten per cent (N=25) were undecided (interviews suggested that undecided schools were waiting to see the available products).

This chapter explores respondents' *understanding* of the change to primary school accountability measures (namely that from 2016 a reception baseline will be used to assess the progress of pupils from entry to the end of key stage 2) and whether they are *in favour* of the change. It also reports on the extent to which schools plan to introduce a reception baseline.

3.1 View on the reception baseline

Around half (48 per cent) of the 356 survey respondents reported that they understood the change to primary school accountability measures very well. However, a similar proportion (49 per cent) only understood somewhat, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 How well do you understand the change to primary school accountability measures?



Total N = 356 respondents

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Table 5 shows the extent to which survey respondents were in favour of the reception baseline.

Table 5 To what extent are you in favour of a reception baseline as the only measure used to assess the progress of pupils from entry to the end of key stage 2?

In favour?	% of respondents overall	% respondents involved in CEM study	% respondents not involved in CEM study
To a great extent	13	20	11
To some extent	47	46	48
Not at all	29	31	29
Not sure	10	4	12
Total N=	356	101	255

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Overall, three-fifths (60 per cent) were in favour of the reception baseline as an accountability measure at least to some extent, while just under a third (29 per cent) were not at all in favour. Respondents involved in the CEM study were more likely to say they were in favour to a great extent compared with other schools (20 per cent compared with 11 per cent) but all numbers are small so this is not statistically significant. Just under a third (31 per cent/N=31) of the CEM group were not at all in favour of the reception baseline (of these, 16 were in the treatment group and 15 in the control group).

Staff in schools which already carried out a 'formal' on-entry assessment (including identical items and resulting in a numerical outcome for each child), were more likely than those in schools which did not do this type of assessment, to be in favour of the reception baseline to a great extent (22 per cent compared with 12 per cent). A possible explanation of this is that these staff expect less change to their practices. It should be noted that numbers were small so these results are not statistically significant.

In relation to school type, a similar proportion of respondents in local authority maintained schools and academies were in favour of the reception baseline to a great extent/to some extent (60 per cent and 66 per cent respectively). However, those in local authority

maintained schools were more likely to be not at all in favour (31 per cent compared with 17 per cent in academies), while they were less likely to be unsure (nine per cent compared with 17 per cent).⁸

Schools with a nursery might see the results of a reception baseline as a reflection on internal standards and thus view the policy differently than schools with no nursery. However, there was no difference in the proportion of respondents in schools with and without a nursery⁹ in relation to whether they were in favour of the reception baseline. As the reception baseline measures progress from reception to the end of key stage 2 (Year 6), schools without a Year 6 might view the policy differently. Similarly, though, there was no difference between schools with and without a Year 6.¹⁰

Most of the staff interviewed did not see the introduction of a reception baseline as a particular *disadvantage* for their school. Most were either positive (considering it beneficial to monitor progress) or were indifferent (many were already carrying out on-entry assessments, as discussed in Chapter 2). A minority specifically commented that their school would benefit as results of the reception baseline would be low, allowing room for progress. However, they suggested that an early baseline result would not always be a true reflection of a child's ability, as the child could be anxious about starting school and not yet feel confident conversing with a teacher during an assessment.

3.2 Plans to introduce a reception baseline

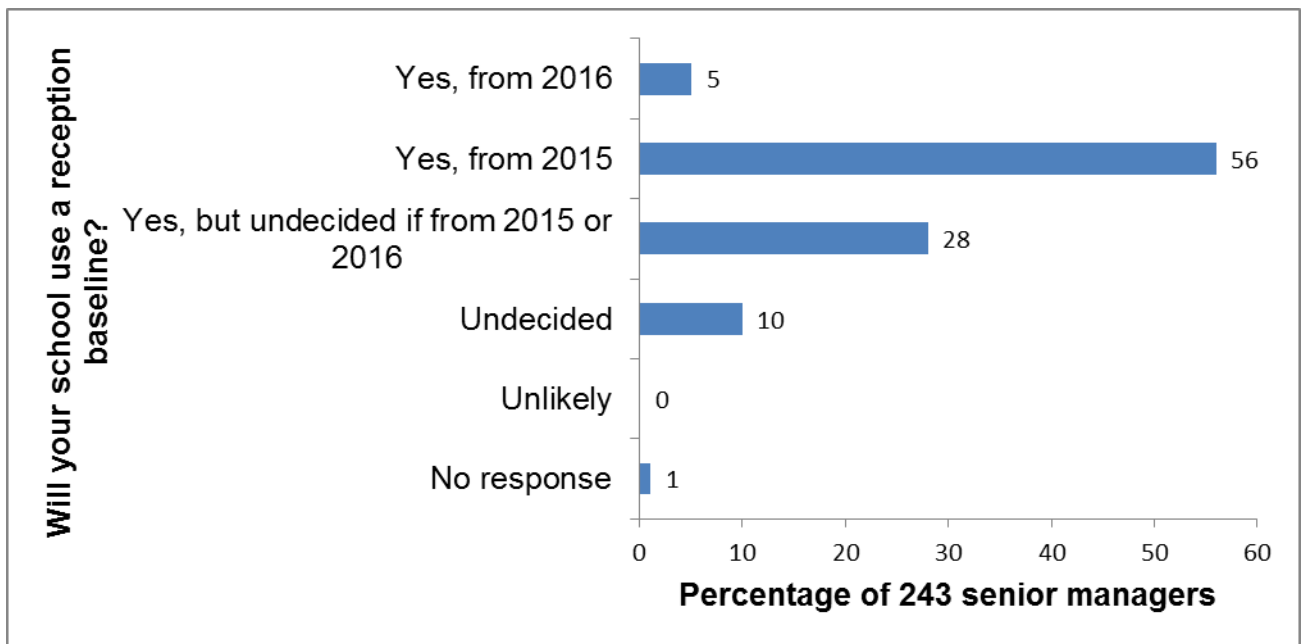
Responses from senior managers in 243 schools suggest that most (89 per cent) anticipate using a reception baseline (see Figure 2). More than half (56 per cent) plan to do so from 2015, which is one year earlier than schools are being asked to for the new accountability policy (see Chapter 1). Schools with a nursery were more likely than those without one to plan to use a reception baseline from 2015 (64 per cent compared with 52 per cent). Only ten per cent (N=25) were undecided about whether they would use a reception baseline (21 did not have a nursery, four were academies and eight had no Year 6).

⁸ It should be noted that the number of respondents in academies (41) was much smaller than in maintained schools (313).

⁹ A school with a **nursery** is defined as a school which has an *attached* nursery according to the Register of Schools (ROS) and had at least one pupil on the school roll whose fourth birthday fell within the academic year AND had a statutory minimum age of 3.

¹⁰ A school with **Year 6** is defined as a school which had Year 6/Key Stage 2 pupils according to ROS and had at least one pupil on the school role whose eleventh birthday fell within the academic year AND had a statutory maximum age of 11.

Figure 2 Do you anticipate using a DfE-approved reception baseline to support the calculation of pupil progress to the end of key stage 2



Total N = 243 senior managers

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Only a minority of the staff interviewed said that their school was undecided about introducing a reception baseline and most of those (eight) said they were waiting to review the Department-approved products. A typical response was: *'We'll take a look at what's available when it's available and make decisions from there'*.

4 Preparing for the reception baseline

Key findings

Interviews with staff suggested that schools were preparing for the reception baseline by: researching new products; discussing the policy and products among local partnerships of schools and with pre-school feeder settings; and/or discussing the changes with staff, governors and parents.

Factors important for schools when choosing a reception baseline were: ease of administration; format; content; reliability; and value for money.

This chapter summarises the views of staff interviewed on how their school will prepare for the reception baseline and the factors which they considered important when choosing a product.

4.1 Preparation for the reception baseline

Most of the 51 staff who participated in a telephone interview reported that their school planned to introduce a reception baseline and so were asked how their school will prepare for its implementation. Comments were grouped into themes and the most common are summarised below (but note that none of the themes was mentioned by a majority of interviewees):

- **Researching new products:** interviews took place in autumn 2014 and the Department-approved reception baseline shortlist of products was due to be announced in January 2015. At the time of the interviews, comments included: *'I'm in the dark at the moment as to what the assessments will entail'*. A third of interviewees intended to prepare by researching and comparing the products (this included some staff involved in the CEM trial who wanted to compare PIPs, if shortlisted, with other products). Some suggested that there might be a need for staff training, depending on the chosen product.
- **Discussions among local school partnerships or clusters:** around a quarter of the interviewees referred to the perceived need to be *'joined up'* with other local schools, such as those in a cluster, pyramid or trust. This mainly related to using the same product, to ensure comparability of progress across local schools. Comments included, *'we would meet as a cluster, evaluate it [a product] as a cluster, dry run it this year, ready to implement it from 2016'*, and *'we [cluster schools] would have discussions between us [about a product] so we can moderate between us'*.
- **Discussions with pre-school feeder settings:** a minority of staff mentioned that they would have discussions about the reception baseline policy and chosen

product with early years feeders. This was the case if the feeder was part of the school/on-site, which would mean the results of the reception baseline were a reflection on internal staff. There were also comments which related to concerns among feeders about their own outcomes not being reflected in the baseline assessment i.e. the feeder/school assessments not being consistent. One respondent said, *'our main feeder wants all schools to use the same product'* (likely so they know what it contains). Another teacher said, *'there is always some difference between nursery outcomes and our baseline... it would be helpful if feeder settings knew what [pupils] were being assessed on'*.

- **Discussions with staff, governors, and/or parents:** to raise awareness about the policy change and the fact that pupils would have a reception baseline assessment. Comments included, *'They [staff and governors] will have a lot of questions and we just don't have the answers yet'* and *'it can throw parents into real disarray. It's important to make sure that they understand the purpose of the baseline'*.

Staff in the schools not involved in the CEM trial made more comments about preparation. Those involved in the CEM trial tended to feel their involvement was helping them prepare; all schools involved in the trial had a history of using the PIPs on-entry assessment. Some of the staff involved in the CEM trial planned to research alternative products to compare with PIPs, although most commented that they would be happy to continue using PIPs if it was shortlisted.

4.2 Choosing a reception baseline product

Staff interviewed were asked what factors would be most important to their school when choosing a reception baseline product. No particular factors were mentioned by a majority, but the most common related to:

- **Ease of administration:** just under half of those interviewed referred to the product needing to be 'manageable' and not too time consuming. There was some concern about having to do one-to-one assessments (possibly among those who might have previously just carried out observations of normal classroom activities).
- **Format:** just under a third of staff desired a product that included some practical element or assessment via observation, to provide an opportunity to assess a child's independent learning and problem-solving. Some individuals also felt that a formal 'test' approach could be stressful and not give a true reflection of the child.
- **Content:** around a fifth of staff interviewed felt it was important that a product assessed all areas currently in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), or at least that it covered areas other than language, literacy and mathematics (such as personal development). There was mention, although only among a minority, that a school could seek a product which would give the lowest starting point (to maximise room for progress), as illustrated by this teacher's comment:

'people could look for the hardest one so that they will get a low score.... it's certainly what I would do'.

- **Reliability:** around a fifth of staff commented that the product should provide an output that is robust and reliable. This was considered important for teachers to be able to use it for planning purposes, rather than to minimise the possibility of bias or manipulation of results.
- **Value for money:** around a fifth of interviewees referred to value for money (rather than cost, although cost was a factor for some). As one interviewee explained: *'Not the cheapest if the cheapest isn't a good measure of a child's abilities'*.

It should be noted here that of the 22 staff interviewed in schools involved in the CEM trial, half (11) said they would be happy for their school to continue to use the PIPs assessment if it was shortlisted (this was without being asked directly so does not mean the other half would not be happy to do so). Schools were keen to continue with PIPs as they were familiar with how to implement it and had historical data to use for trend analysis. However, if the PIPs product changed at all (or if CEM produced a different product for the reception baseline which was shortlisted) then trend analysis could not be continued.

5 Change in on-entry assessment practice

Key findings

Typically, schools planned to provide training for staff administering the reception baseline. Interviews suggested that the training would relate to ensuring staff understand how to administer the baseline assessment product and that they do so consistently.

More than a quarter (27 per cent) said they would *definitely* schedule the reception baseline earlier than previous on-entry assessments and a further 29 per cent *might* do this. This is an indication that schools might be thinking about minimising the opportunity for learning that had taken place in school to be reflected in the outcome, thus maximising room for progress (conscious 'gaming').

Similar proportions of respondents also reported that they would *definitely* or *might* dedicate more time to the assessments. Interviews suggested that this could be because they might *have* to do so, particularly if they had previously observed regular classroom activities and would instead have to carry out one-to-one assessments.

A notable minority (13 per cent) said they definitely would or might change their entry arrangements by introducing a staggered start to reception, for example when entry is phased and some pupils start on different dates than others.

Many suggested that communication with parents would change, both before and after assessments.

From 2016, the reception baseline will become the only measure used to assess the progress of pupils from entry to the end of key stage 2, and that measure will be used to hold schools to account. For this reason the reception baseline is likely to be considered a high-stakes assessment for schools. Given this context, the research explored any expected changes to practice in schools – the accountability context could give schools an incentive to implement the baseline in a way that minimises opportunity for any early gain in attainment in order to maximise room for the school to identify progress. Such changes could include: carrying out the baseline earlier/as early as possible; increasing staffing to complete the baseline quicker; removing 'staggered starts' so that all pupils start reception at the same time and the baseline is not delayed; and becoming stricter in marking or giving pupils less support in order to depress scores as much as possible. This chapter explores changes to practice in this context.

5.1 Changes to on-entry assessment practice among the CEM study group

A total of 81 schools represented in the responding survey sample were also involved in the CEM trial (see Chapter 1), which means they had been asked to administer the PIPs assessment in the first half term of 2014-15. All schools involved in the trial had

administered PIPs previously (and likely other forms of on-entry assessment as described in Chapter 2), but the survey explored any changes to their assessment practices in the current academic year, which *could* have been the result of participation in the trial. Any change (particularly among the treatment group, which were given guidance on how to use their data for *accountability* purposes) might reflect patterns of on-entry assessment practice in an accountability context and might suggest how the reception baseline will be implemented when it is introduced nationally.

The most common change was to how they would communicate with parents after the assessment (29 of the 81 schools; 36 per cent). This might be expected, as CEM gave schools access to new reporting materials. CEM recommended that reports were communicated to parents face-to-face, rather than being sent home by post or email, to ensure that any risk of misinterpretation was reduced and parents had the opportunity to ask questions. Written correspondence that CEM sent to schools also acknowledged that some schools may choose to hold individual parent-teacher conferences to discuss the findings while others might choose to hold a general parent group meeting with time for questions at the end. This guidance and suggested approaches could have prompted schools to communicate with parents differently than they had before. Schools were not, however, given specific *instructions* on how they *must* report to parents.

A quarter of schools (20 schools/25 per cent) scheduled on-entry assessments earlier in the term. Schools were asked by CEM to complete assessments by 10th October 2014. This would have been approximately the fifth week of term (start dates vary across the country), which might have been earlier than they previously completed assessments (as reported above, a number of schools finished assessments later than this). Alternatively, assessments might have been carried out earlier to minimise the time available for learning and hence maximise room for progress.

A quarter of the CEM schools (20 schools/25 per cent) also dedicated more time to assessments and a fifth (16 schools/20 per cent) changed the staff who administer on-entry assessments.

As shown in Table 6, the treatment schools were not apparently more likely to have made these changes than schools in the control group, which could be because all schools involved in the trial were given the same guidance on how to administer the assessments (including the deadline for administration and how to report to parents) which caused them to change aspects of their approach in the same way). It was not possible to rigorously test that in this study.

Table 6 Most prevalent changes made to on-entry assessment practices CEM trial schools

Change to on-entry assessment practice	% of CEM trial schools	N of CEM trial schools overall	N in each of the CEM groups
Changed communication with parents <i>after</i> the on-entry assessments	36	29	15 Treatment 14 Control
Scheduled on-entry assessments to take place <i>earlier</i> in the school term	25	20	11 Treatment 9 Control
Dedicated more time to completing on-entry assessments	25	20	7 Treatment 13 Control
Changed who administers on-entry assessments	20	16	8 in both groups

N=81 schools in the CEM trial

A multiple response question

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

5.2 Expected change in on-entry assessment practices

Staff in 214 schools across the whole sample (not those just involved in the CEM trial) where senior managers had reported that their school would be introducing a reception baseline, were also asked whether they anticipated making certain changes to their practices when it is introduced. At the time of the survey (autumn term 2014), the Department had not announced the approved shortlist of reception baseline products, so survey respondents could have been speculating about possible changes to practices (interviews with staff suggested that they would not be sure of the extent of change until a decision had been made about which product to use). However, Table 7 shows the most common expected changes to assessment practices in reception.

Table 7 Expected change to on-entry assessment practice, most prevalent responses

Change to on-entry assessment practice	Schools which will <i>definitely</i> do this	Schools which <i>might</i> do this
Give staff administering on-entry assessments training	101 (47%)	57 (27%)
Schedule on-entry assessments to take place earlier in the school term	58 (27%)	63 (29%)
Dedicate more time to completing on-entry assessments	53 (25%)	68 (32%)
Change the way you communicate with parents after on-entry assessments	46 (21%)	96 (45%)
Change the way you communicate with parents before on-entry assessments	37 (17%)	62 (29%)
Allocate more practical resources to delivering on-entry assessments (e.g. computers, space etc)	22 (10%)	63 (29%)
<i>Introduce</i> a staggered entry to reception classes in first term (e.g. part-time attendance or different start dates)	17 (8%)	11 (5%)
Increase number of staff administering on-entry assessments	16 (7%)	50 (23%)
Change focus of activities in class prior to on-entry assessment	12 (6%)	36 (17%)
Increase staffing allocation within the reception class	11 (5%)	36 (17%)

Total N = 214 or 215 schools, depending on the item (note that the number of individuals who were asked each item varied slightly due to answers to previous questions)

Missing respondents are those who did not respond, which could suggest no change was expected

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

The most common anticipated change was for schools to provide training for staff administering the reception baseline. Note though that of the 101 schools with definite plans to do so, 90 were not involved in the CEM trial, (suggesting CEM schools were not as likely to think there was a need for training). Interviews with staff suggested that the

training would relate to ensuring staff understand how to administer the baseline assessment product and that they do so consistently. As one manager commented, ‘we want to make sure we’re doing it properly and ensure everyone is working towards the same expectation’.

More than a quarter (27 per cent) reported that they would *definitely* schedule the reception baseline earlier than previous on-entry assessments and a similar proportion (29 per cent) reported that they *might* do this. Of the 58 schools which were definitely going to do this, 38 of them were not involved in the CEM trial. This is an indication that some schools could be adopting ‘gaming’ strategies to maximising room for pupil progress. A ‘gaming’ approach could be harmful for learning, if teachers minimise learning opportunities at the start of reception in favour of concentrating on the administration of the assessment and on keeping scores low at baseline. Moreover, variations in the extent of ‘gaming’ across schools could impact on the reliability of accountability data.

Similar proportions also reported that they would definitely or might dedicate more time to the assessments. Interviews with staff suggested that this could be because they might *have* to do so, particularly if they had previously observed pupils during regular classroom activities but anticipated that they would have to carry out one-to-one individual assessments with each pupil in future.

Respondents also indicated that communication with parents would change in many schools, both before and after assessments (see Chapter 7 for a discussion on how schools suggest the outcomes of the reception baseline should best be reported to parents).

A total of 85 schools reported that they would either definitely or might need more practical resources (note that most/70 schools were not involved in the CEM trial, who presumably felt better equipped). Interviews with staff revealed that some schools might need more computer equipment if assessments required computers, and that there was concern in small schools about a lack of quiet space in which to conduct the assessments.

A notable minority (28 schools/13 per cent) said they definitely would or might change their entry approach by *introducing* a staggered start to reception, for example when entry is phased and some pupils start on different dates than others (note that eight schools will or might *remove* a staggered start). Interviews with staff did not help to clarify *why* schools might amend entry arrangements (but those *introducing* staggered starts might do so in order to have smaller numbers in school which could make administration of the baseline more manageable, while those *removing* staggered starts might want all pupils in together to carry out the baseline during the same period). One teacher specifically said they might need to ‘*look at the part-time admissions and how I mix up those children, and how many I admit.... it will make a difference to how the children are initially admitted to school*’.

Expected changes in staffing were reported in some cases; interviews with staff suggested that this would include deploying more teaching assistants to cover classes while teachers administer one-to-one assessments with individual pupils.

Few schools represented in the survey planned to change the level of support given to pupils during assessments (although six definitely will and 15 might). Only a small minority of interviewees suggested staff might apply more caution in an accountability context, to maximise opportunity for progress. The following remark illustrates this approach: *It is inevitable some might be [more cautious in attributing higher 'marks'] but depends on the culture of school and whether 'hire or fire' is based on the outcomes'.*

6 Expected challenges and support needs

Key findings

At the time of the interviews (November-December 2014), most schools were waiting for information about the shortlisted Department-approved products and so were unsure about the changes to practices or challenges ahead.

No specific challenge was predicted by a majority of interviewees, but the most common challenges foreseen were: the time needed to administer the reception baseline; how to choose a product; and consistency in administration within and across schools.

This chapter summarises interview data relating to any challenges faced, or predicted, by schools when introducing a reception baseline. It also discusses how staff felt they could be supported to overcome any challenges.

At the time of the interviews (November-December 2014), most schools were waiting for information about the shortlisted Department-approved products and so were unsure about the changes to practices or challenges ahead. The most commonly predicted challenges and possible solutions/support needs are summarised in the sections below.

It should be noted that possible challenges were more often raised by staff *not* involved in the CEM trial; this is likely to be due to the fact that those involved in the trial felt better prepared for the reception baseline because they were already carrying out a 'formal' on-entry assessment).¹¹

6.1 Time to administer the reception baseline

Around a fifth of staff were concerned about the time it would take to administer one-to-one assessments, particularly in the short period of time necessary to obtain a true baseline. As one interviewee said, her concern was simply: '*getting accurate assessments of the children in the time*'. A minority were also worried about the time the administration would take away from settling-in activities. A comment from one teacher captured this view: '*It is difficult to juggle time to administer the assessment against ensuring that children have a successful settling in period*'.

6.2 Choosing a product

Around a fifth of staff expected that it might be challenging to decide which product to use. For some, decisions were going to be made at a local level (for example, within a

¹¹ A minority mentioned potential challenges such as space, consistency in product used across schools, and time (all discussed in the following sections).

local authority, cluster, pyramid or trust). It was common for partnerships of schools to want to opt for the same product, so results for the reception baseline and progress could be compared across schools (even though the policy aim focuses on accountability for *individual* schools). A minority were concerned that allowing schools a choice of schemes would result in a lack of comparability at a national level, (again, this is not the policy aim, but some comparison will be possible across schools using the same product and each baseline assessment provider is required to achieve participation from a minimum number of schools to enable this).

Possible solutions/support needs

School staff firstly wanted *information* about the products to enable them to make comparisons. Secondly, they wanted *time* to review and compare the different options (for some this would involve local meetings/networking to discuss what was on the market and also trialling products). This was encapsulated by this teacher's comment: *It would be useful for providers to be able to provide us with some materials to try and use before we buy them and be available to talk it through*'.

6.3 Consistency in administration

Around a third of staff interviewed pointed to a possible lack of consistency across teachers using the same product (for example, in the way questions are interpreted, answers are recorded, and the amount of time given to an assessment), either within a school and/or across schools.

Possible solutions/support needs

Staff commented that the extent to which inconsistencies could occur would depend on product design (for example, the level of teacher interpretation required could have an impact), so choosing the right product was considered important to minimise inconsistency. Other suggestions to ensure consistency included: training/online support with examples of how to administer the assessment; internal monitoring/observation of teachers; the need for moderation; and using a single teacher to administer the assessment in a school. As one teacher suggested, *'It needs to be the same person in a school and they need to meet together across schools to discuss*'.

6.4 Other challenges

A few individuals anticipated other challenges which are noted below (as these might be faced by schools outside of the interview sample):

- how to track progress from the reception baseline to the end of key stage 2 (some suggested a need to link the baseline to tracking systems used throughout the school and the need for mid-point assessments)
- finding space to do one-to-one assessments, particularly in small schools

- availability of resources, such as computers if the baseline is administered online
- engaging with parents to explain the purpose of a 'formal' assessment so early in their child's school career
- staffing (for example, schools might need more teaching assistants to cover the class while teachers are carrying out assessments).

7 Reporting on-entry assessment outcomes to parents

Key findings

Most staff who reported the outcomes of existing on-entry assessments to parents gave oral feedback; only a minority distributed a written report.

Just over a fifth of schools had definite plans to change how they communicate with parents about on-entry assessments due to the introduction of the reception baseline.

Both parents and teachers thought that written reports would need to be contextualised.

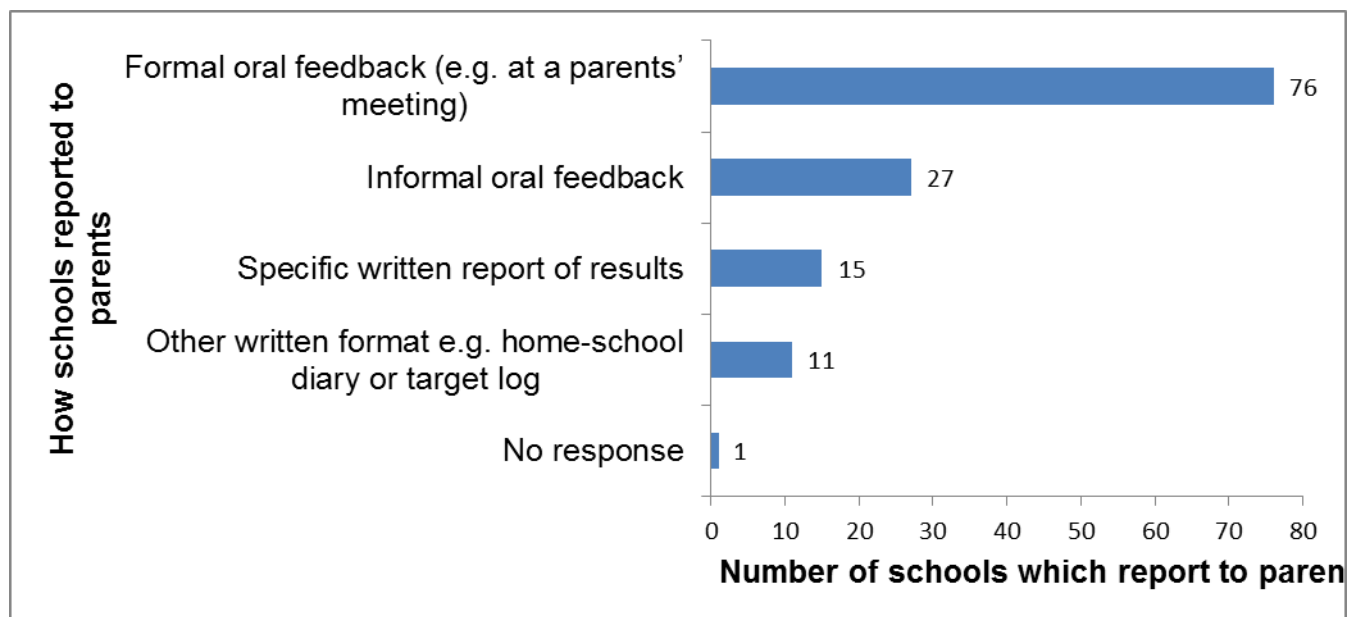
This chapter summarises how schools currently report outcomes of on-entry assessments to parents and how schools will or might change their communication with parents before and/or after the reception baseline has taken place. Views of both staff and parents were collected on example written reports, which were developed for the CEM trial (see Chapter 1 for further information).

7.1 Current reporting practice

Both the survey and the interviews contained questions to ascertain how schools currently reported to and communicated with parents about on-entry assessments. Of 132 *teaching staff*¹² who undertook on-entry assessments, 91 (69 per cent) had already reported the outcomes to parents. Of the 91, 77 (85 per cent) reported to *all* parents and ten said that they only reported in specific cases (the others only reported to parents if asked). As shown in Figure 3, of the 91 who did report to parents, most (76 or 84 per cent) gave oral feedback, only 15 (16 per cent) provided a written report.

¹² Survey respondents who were not managers.

Figure 3 How schools reported to parents



Total N = 91

A multiple response question so percentages do not sum to 100

Source: NFER reception baseline research survey of school staff (October-December 2014)

The findings from the interviews further supported the fact that staff preferred to give oral feedback during a parents meeting during the first term. Although many discussed the *outcomes* of the baseline, a few staff expressed concern over this, as this remark indicates: 'You have to be fairly guarded about how much you make of the baseline outcomes'. This caution was due to a variety of factors: pupils were new to school and may not have settled fully (and therefore not show their true potential); and teachers commented that the baseline only showed a 'snapshot' of pupil's achievements at a particular point – it did not show the progress that pupils may already be making.

Several interviewees discussed the next steps for pupils and the progress that they were making. Some felt that baseline results would need to be contextualised in this way. As one teacher commented: 'It's better to have a holistic discussion about the child with the parents'.

7.2 Communicating results of the reception baseline to parents

As reported in Chapter 5, the most common change to assessment practices made in the current academic year by schools involved in the CEM trial (which *could* be due to participation in the trial) was to the way they communicated with parents after the assessment (29 of the 81 schools; 36 per cent). This might be expected, as CEM gave

schools access to new reporting materials and guidance on how to disseminate the outcomes of the PIPs assessment to parents, as discussed in Chapter 5).

Over the whole sample, schools were considering making a change in how and when they will discuss on-entry assessments with parents once the reception baseline is introduced. Overall, of 214 schools for which information was available, 37 (17 percent) said they *will* change how they communicate with parents *before* the implementation of a reception baseline. Of these 37 schools, 13 were involved in the CEM trial (of these, five were treatment schools and eight were in the control group). A further 62 (29 per cent) *might* change how they communicate with parents *before* the reception baseline.

The interview data confirmed that schools were likely to discuss the nature of the baseline assessment with parents before the assessment is carried out, although the amount of detail that schools would give to parents varied. Given that the introduction of the reception baseline is a policy change that will directly impact on pupils (and the fact that it has high stakes attached), and the fact that for some schools it could be the first time that they will be using a formal assessment in reception, schools are likely to want to inform parents. As one Deputy Headteacher explained:

You would discuss the format of the test and what the information is being used for. You may give examples of the content more to put people's minds at rest because it will be all over the press.

Some interviewees gave further information about when they would discuss it with parents:

When I do the meeting in the summer term before the children start, I'll mention it then. I won't mention it in September. I'll tell them that it will happen and reassure them it's not a paper and pencil test.

One teacher thought this might have consequences for parents: '*Parents would actually do something with children over summer. It could improve the school readiness of the children*'.

More schools were considering changing how they communicate with parents *after* the reception baseline has taken place. Of the 214 schools, 46 (21 per cent) had definite plans to do this; of these, 17 were involved in the CEM trial (seven in the treatment group and ten in the control group). This change could be because, for some, the outcomes of a more formal assessment will be available, and/or because parents may be more aware that an assessment has taken place.

7.3 Important features of a report to parents

From the interviews that took place with staff, some expressed concern over the appropriateness of written reports. Although this was a minority view, staff were concerned about the effect that written reports could have on building relationships with parents. As one interviewee said:

I think at this stage in a child's school career it's unhelpful to be labelling their child, as that could be quite damaging for their relationship with the school, but it's useful to know what the school will do to support their child.

If there were to be a report, the areas that were seen by staff as being important to include were Personal Social and Emotional Development, in particular how the child had settled into school. As one member of staff explained, '*It's what matters to the parents*'.

Another aspect that was identified by staff as desirable was a clear outline of an individual pupil's next steps and what the school and parent can do to support the child. In addition, some staff mentioned that a clear graphic would be useful for parents. However, they were aware that it might not appeal to all schools, as this comment illustrates: '*I know this might cause concern for some schools, but I think it's important to be quite straight with parents early on*'.

As part of the CEM trial, schools involved were given access to new reporting materials (they were assigned one of three different reporting groups; descriptor only; descriptor with a graphic; and descriptor, graphic and teacher comment). CEM recommended that the reports were communicated to parents face-to-face to give teachers the opportunity to add context and allow parents to ask questions. CEM acknowledged that some schools may have chosen to hold individual parent-teacher conferences to discuss the findings while others might have held a general parent group meeting with time for questions at the end. The purpose of the exercise was to identify what seemed important to parents, and to investigate their views on the general use of graphics, descriptors and teacher comments, rather than *testing* the specific CEM examples. Of interviewees in 22 schools, nearly all of them verbally communicated results to parents in order to add context, as suggested by CEM (either through handing them out at parent's evening or by sending an additional explanatory letter). Only nine had given out the written reports to parents.

From the survey data collected from 81 schools, around half thought the written reports were clear/detailed enough overall, while a third thought the coverage of next steps was poor. A small sample of parents linked to ten schools (some involved in the CEM trial, others not), were interviewed to gather their views on all three versions of the reports and were asked to comment on important features of reports in general. Opinions were divided as to the advantages and disadvantages of each format, while some favoured the format with the graphic, others preferred the teacher comment, even though they were

aware of the extra work that this would cause for teachers. The most widely held view was that a section to explain 'what to do next' would be the most useful for them.

Some staff interviewed considered that it would be beneficial or even necessary to contextualise written reports for parents. This was supported by the responses from staff in schools involved in the CEM trial who had been asked to give a written report to parents.

Some parents in the CEM sample of schools were asked their opinion about how they received the reports. In one case a parent had received the report as part of a parents meeting and felt that she understood the content of the report: *'We had time to discuss the report on a 1:1 with the teacher. This was both useful and re-assuring'*. However, one parent who had received the report prior to the parents evening, without much explanation, felt differently about the reporting format: *'Information was too general and the graph too vague, it made me wonder 'is there an issue?'* This comment indicates the challenge of providing a written report which explains baseline outcomes clearly for parents.

8 Conclusions and key messages

The final chapter of the report presents the conclusions and key messages of the qualitative study of the reception baseline. The chapter also suggests some ideas for future research on this topic.

The aims of the study were to:

- explore the accountability context within which the reforms are being introduced in order to inform policy decisions about the detailed nature of the requirements for the baseline assessment schemes
- contribute to an understanding of the reporting mechanisms and formats that stakeholders find most useful.

8.1 The accountability context and reform implementation

The planned use of a reception baseline was widespread and the findings suggest that primary schools will be able to facilitate its introduction. All of the schools surveyed were already using some form of on-entry assessment, although the extent of change to practice necessary when introducing the reception baseline will depend on how different the chosen product is from the current approach. The next step for schools was to choose a new product – they wanted information about how the shortlisted schemes compared and they wanted *time* to review the different options. This suggests that there is a role for local authorities and school partnerships (e.g. clusters, trusts and academy chains) to support schools in reviewing and making choices about which assessment product to use.

It is probable that, for most schools, the outcome of the review of products will lead to a change in their assessment tool. Many schools did not currently use commercial products, opting instead for in-house assessments which often included observations of classroom practice. A change may even be necessary for those already using commercial products. A change in tool will likely bring a change in outcomes, leaving possible gaps in information which teachers previously used for planning (depending on coverage of the new tool). The research indicates that schools had broader uses for the results of the on-entry assessments than is intended for the reception baseline – namely to inform teaching and learning practices, to target interventions, and to validate data received from early years providers. Therefore, the policy change could have implications for assessment practice, teaching and learning and, in turn, possibly attainment. Teachers may still want to carry out their own assessments to give them broader outcomes for planning purposes (and many had been monitoring trend data which would otherwise be disrupted). For accountability use, the outcomes of the reception baseline will be aggregated at institutional level, while at pupil-level it is likely that teachers will want to use the result alongside other information (such as observation) to make

judgements. This could have implications for curriculum time and possibly attainment in the long term.

In addition to teaching and learning use, the evidence suggests that schools will want to compare their performance with other local schools and schools nationally. They are therefore concerned about consistency in the administration of the reception baseline. This is understandable given school leaders' awareness of the potential impact of results on parental choice of a primary school for their children – a lack of consistency might result in unfair comparisons between schools. This presents a challenge for policy makers to address this concern and explain to school staff how the reception baseline will be quality-assured and moderated.

Some schools were planning to make changes to their on-entry assessment arrangements. There was *some* evidence that this might be due to conscious 'gaming' i.e. changes in assessment practice in order to depress baseline scores and enhance the opportunity for progress (including carrying out assessment earlier). Few schools, however, anticipated giving pupils less support during assessments and only a small minority reported that they might be more cautious about judgments (i.e. not giving benefit of the doubt about a pupil's answer when they might have before), in order to keep scores low or depress results. Change in practices might therefore be explained by teachers wanting to ensure that the new reception baseline is implemented as carefully as possible and that enough time is allowed to carry out one-to-one individual assessments with each pupil. A variation in approaches to administering the reception baseline, and in the extent of 'gaming', could have an impact on the reliability of the data being used for accountability purposes. Therefore, moderation of the administration of the reception baseline will be important.

A minority of staff were concerned about the time it would take to administer one-to-one assessments, particularly in the short 'window' of time necessary to obtain a true baseline, before schools have time to impact on pupils' learning. Some staff were also worried about the time the administration of the reception baseline would take away from settling-in activities when pupils start school. This suggests that there is a need for system leaders at the local level to facilitate schools' sharing of practice on the practicalities of implementation. It could also extend to joint provision for training staff to ensure that they understand how to administer the reception baseline products and to administer them in a consistent way. Product providers could make a useful contribution to the training of staff.

At the time of the research, schools were making plans to manage the introduction and implementation of the reception baseline. School leaders considered that dialogue with school governors, staff and parents; nursery and pre-school feeders; and local school partnerships was going to be essential for managing this change. Again, local system leaders can provide support and help schools to network and exchange approaches to implementing the reception baseline including strategies for addressing practical issues.

8.2 Reporting mechanisms and formats

It should be noted that reports for parents are not compulsory under the reception baseline policy and some schools did not like the idea of sending out a written report. If schools are to be encouraged to provide reports, it was thought important to contextualise the results so that parents gain a full understanding of their children's educational progress. However, staff were aware that including teacher comments in *written* reports would have implications for teachers' workload. Staff and parents preferred oral feedback (for example, provided at a parents evenings) which give teachers an opportunity to explain the results face-to-face.

School staff and parents were keen for the next steps to be included in any report, so that teachers and parents understand what actions they can take to support the education of the child.

8.3 Suggestions for further research

We consider that there would be merit in further developing the evidence base on the reception baseline. We suggest that the Department should commission research to identify and disseminate good practice in delivering the reception baseline, once it has been implemented. This could include exploring what has worked well and why and how individual schools and groups of schools have addressed challenges and difficulties. There is an opportunity to carry out such research with schools which start using a Reception baseline from 2015, which could be considered a pilot year. This would also give an opportunity to explore the actual extent of change to practice and the reasons for change, which could help to further investigate the issue of gaming.

There would also be value in carrying out research to explore the relationship between previous practice and attainment, compared with any *change* in practice and future attainment, to see how the introduction of the reception baseline affects attainment. The relationship between different approaches and results could be explored. Note that change in policy and practice should be considered when carrying out any trend analysis.

9 References

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Appendix A Sample Representativeness

The table below shows that the responding sample was broadly representative in terms of school type, key stage 2 performance, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, and Ofsted effectiveness ratings. However, the responding schools were slightly over-represented in the north of England, likely because the sample included schools involved in the CEM trial which was over-represented in the north.

Table 8 Profile of responding sample compared to schools nationally

		Schools nationally		Responding schools	
		N	%	N	%
Government Office Region	North East	840	5	15	5
	North West/Merseyside	2358	15	69	23
	Yorkshire & The Humber	1684	11	34	12
	East Midlands	1488	10	22	7
	West Midlands	1648	11	28	9
	Eastern	1789	12	30	10
	London	1610	10	25	8
	South East	2252	15	33	11
	South West	1736	11	39	13
Total		15405	100%	295	100%
School type	Infants	1256	8	26	9
	First School	564	4	14	5
	Infant & Junior (Primary)	11441	74	218	74
	Academy	2144	14	37	13
Total		15405	100	295	100

		Schools nationally		Responding schools	
		N	%	N	%
School type					
Academy		2144	14	37	12
Community School		7793	51	143	48
Foundation School		212	1	1	0
Voluntary Aided School		3098	20	72	24
Voluntary Controlled School		2158	14	42	14
Total		15405	100	296	100
Key stage 2 overall performance band 2013 (av. point score)	Lowest 20%	2466	21	41	18
	2nd lowest 20%	2187	18	47	20
	Middle 20%	2364	20	49	21
	2nd highest 20%	2227	19	42	18
	Highest 20%	2714	23	54	23
Total		11958	100	233	100
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	2670	18	60	21
	Good	9259	63	184	64
	Requires improvement	2625	18	41	14
	Inadequate	159	1	1	0
Total		14713	100	286	100
% pupils eligible for Free School Meals 2012/13 (5 point scale)	Lowest 20%	3158	21	69	24
	2nd lowest 20%	3116	21	59	20
	Middle 20%	3038	20	57	20
	2nd highest 20%	2913	20	67	23
	Highest 20%	2687	18	38	13
Total		14912	100%	290	100

Region	North	4882	32	118	40
	Midlands	4925	32	80	27
	South	5598	36	97	33
Total		15405	100%	295	100%

Note that there were 296 responding schools, but that not all matched to each criterion so the matched number does not always sum to 296



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