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for Education

Primary assessment in England

Government consultation response

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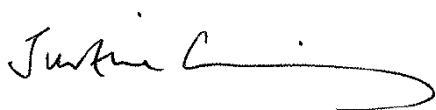
Ministerial foreword

When we launched this consultation back in March, I talked about the need to have a proper debate about the key issues in primary assessment, so that we could work together to build a settled, trusted assessment system that helps teachers and school leaders to support all pupils to succeed. The consultation on the Rochford Review recommendations that we launched at the same time opened a parallel discussion about the best way to assess pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests.

It is vital that so many people from a range of backgrounds and specialisms enthusiastically engaged with these consultations in recent months, presenting a broad and informed range of views. This document provides a summary of the views we heard, and it sets out our policy on statutory primary assessment going forward. Our response to the consultation on the recommendations on assessment arrangements for children working below the level of the national curriculum tests made by the Rochford Review has been published alongside this document.

I am clear that our primary assessment system must be fit for purpose and sustainable. It must produce data that is reliable and trusted, so that progress can be measured fairly and accurately, and it must reflect the fact that we are ambitious for all our children, regardless of their background or any additional needs they may have. It is also important that the system recognises teachers' professionalism in assessing their pupils, and that it is proportionate and places minimal burdens on pupils, teachers and schools. I am confident that the improvements to statutory assessment set out in this document delivers the right approach. The consultation has provided a great deal of expert advice to help us to reach these decisions.

The importance of this is clear. Good assessment supports good teaching and helps to prepare children to succeed at secondary school. As a result, it forms an important part of our commitment to making sure that this is a country that works for everyone.



Rt. Hon Justine Greening MP

Introduction

In October last year, the government set out a number of steps to introduce greater stability in the primary assessment system. They included confirming that there would be no new national tests or assessments introduced before the 2018 to 2019 academic year, and that we would not introduce reading and mathematics resits on a statutory basis. They also included a commitment to consult on the long-term future of primary assessment, so that we could work with the sector to build a stable, trusted primary assessment system.

This consultation was launched on 30 March 2017 and ran for 12 weeks until 22 June. It sought views on a number of key proposals about the future of the statutory primary assessment system. These included assessment in the early years, the starting point for measuring the progress that pupils make at primary school, statutory end-of-key stage teacher assessment and proposals to ensure that we have a proportionate assessment system. In parallel, we consulted on the recommendations made by the independent Rochford Review of statutory assessment arrangements for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests. A summary of responses to that consultation, along with the government's response, can be found [here](#).

In total, this consultation received 4,165 responses. This figure includes:

- 1,102 responses from headteachers
- 400 responses from reception teachers
- 571 responses from key stage 1 teachers
- 997 responses from key stage 2 teachers
- 170 responses from parents or guardians
- 126 responses from early years professionals
- 120 responses from local authorities
- 88 responses from special educational needs coordinators
- 69 responses from governors
- 58 responses from organisations representing teachers, school leaders or early years professionals

The number of people whose views have been considered as part of this process is far greater than 4,165. Representative organisations such as teaching unions canvassed their members, in some cases thousands of people, before responding. People also contributed via consultation events and meetings. As result of this, and the fact that the consultation questions were deliberately framed in an open and discursive manner to encourage full consideration of the issues presented, we have not provided a statistical analysis of responses below; rather this report summarises the consultation responses received to each question, and sets out the government's response.

Preparing children to succeed at school

The early years foundation stage and profile

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework is mandatory for all early years providers. It sets the standards that schools and early years providers must meet to ensure that children are taught and develop well, and are kept healthy and safe in all early years settings from birth to age 5. The 17 early learning goals (ELGs) within the EYFS are the expected levels of development that early years settings must help children to work towards by age 5.

The early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) assessment gives teachers and parents information on how children have developed against the ELGs set out in the EYFS and identifies any additional support that they may require as they progress to key stage 1. At the national level, EYFSP data helps the government to evaluate the impact of our investment in the early years on children's outcomes at age 5.

In the consultation document we confirmed that the EYFSP would remain in place and asked how it could be improved in key areas. These included: how we could make the ELGs better as a measure of child development and school readiness, improving the assessment approach in terms of the scales, and how we could make the administering and moderation process more useful and efficient. We have listened to a broad range of views during the consultation period, through responses to the consultation and beyond. We hosted 3 roundtable events with leading academics, early years experts and practitioners and have also taken views from the wider sector and local authorities. Key findings from these discussions have been in line with responses to the consultation.

We asked

The EYFSP measures a child's development against the ELGs set out in the EYFS statutory framework. Should the profile be improved to better assess a child's knowledge, skill, understanding and level of development at the end of the early years? If so, please describe which elements could be added, removed or modified.

We heard

The broad view from respondents was that the EYFSP is a well-established, valued assessment and should be retained, but that the ELGs should be clarified and refined in a number of areas, in order to better assess a child's development at the end of the early years foundation stage. Key areas identified for improvement include:

ELGs should be better aligned with expectations at key stage 1, particularly mathematics and literacy. A common theme emerging from the consultation was that

teaching approaches for mathematics and literacy ELGs could be in conflict with the methods taught in year 1. We heard that this is particularly the case regarding the use of numbers and phonics, and that more could be done to frame the descriptors and supporting guidance in order to ensure that pupils are best prepared for key stage 1. We also heard a significant number of requests to include vocabulary as a key descriptor in the communication and language ELGs, given the substantial research evidence to support it as a predictor of future attainment.

Reduce the number of ELGs which are assessed, whilst retaining a rounded, holistic EYFS curriculum. Many respondents said that the EYFSP should focus on those ELGs which make up the ‘good level of development’ indicator, which are within the three prime areas: communication and language development, physical development and personal, social and emotional development (PSED), and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy. This will focus attention on areas of education which evidence suggests are the most important predictors of future attainment.

There were, however, mixed views on the ELGs which should make up the ‘good level of development’ indicator. Some respondents felt that the indicator is arbitrary and does not accurately capture the typical level of development at the end of the reception year.

A majority of respondents suggested amendments or clarifications to the content of the ELGs; changes were proposed across all 17 ELGs, but with a particular focus on the 3 prime areas and mathematics and literacy in the specific areas. Many respondents felt that the descriptors underpinning each ELG could set a clearer and more concise expectation. Some ELG descriptors, such as the one for technology, were seen as being out of date. There was also a strong consensus for a focus on the areas of self-regulation and executive functioning. This view was echoed in the feedback from the roundtables.

Government response

We know that the EYFSP is rightly trusted by practitioners as a valued assessment tool which allows them to use their professional judgement, and that there is support for the EYFS’ holistic view of child development. The seven areas of learning and development specified in the EYFS will remain unchanged, as will the number of ELGs underpinning this framework. However, we will explore the feasibility of reducing the number of ELGs assessed and reported upon at the end of the reception year. In addition, in light of what we have heard, we will make the descriptors for a typical level of development against the ELGs clearer, and bring the ELGs in line with key stage 1. To achieve this, we will continue to work with experts and practitioners and assess the latest child development evidence, with the aim of ensuring that all descriptors are clear and focused on the right age-appropriate outcomes. We will ensure that the ELGs are appropriately aligned with the year 1 curriculum, particularly the ELGs for literacy and mathematics. We will also ensure that the ELGs reflect the latest evidence on child development and predictors of future attainment, and we will undertake work to strengthen the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the early years.

We believe that the ELGs in need of the most significant revisions are those relating to the following areas:

- **Communication and language:** we will revise the communication and language ELGs to ensure that there is sufficient focus on increasing depth and breadth of vocabulary.
- **Physical development:** we will ensure that there is sufficient focus on both fine and gross motor skills, given the research evidence around links between physical activity and cognitive development.
- **Personal, social and emotional development:** we will bring the PSED ELGs into line with the latest evidence on self-regulation and executive functioning, given the evidence that it is a predictor of future attainment.
- **Mathematics and literacy:** we will review and revise the mathematics and literacy ELGs to ensure that they support children to develop the right building blocks for learning at key stage 1.
- We will also refine and clarify the ELGs in **understanding the world** and **expressive arts and design**, and bring these up to date with the evidence on child development.
- We will also explore further whether it is feasible to **reduce the number of ELGs that are assessed and limit this to the 3 prime areas (communication and language development, physical development and personal, social and emotional development) and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.** This could potentially reduce the assessment burden and ensure that we are focusing on those areas that have the strongest correlation with future attainment, whilst retaining the breadth of the EYFS curriculum. In light of the consultation feedback, we recognise that this is a sensitive issue, and therefore we will conduct further analysis, working with our stakeholders and our advisory panel in securing the right approach to take forward.

We asked

The EYFSP currently provides an assessment as to whether a child is ‘emerging’, ‘expected’ or ‘exceeding’ the level of development in each ELG. Is this categorisation the right approach? Is it the right approach for children with special educational needs?

We heard

The majority of responses, including those from key stakeholders, did not call for wholesale change to the scales and the view is that the current scales are broadly the right way to capture levels of attainment. However, a significant number of responses called for a change within the ‘emerging’ scale, by splitting this into two bands. Many

respondents felt that this scale was too broad and problematic in terms of accurately reflecting attainment and progress, particularly for children with greater development needs. We also heard that exemplification materials for 'exceeding' need to be improved.

Many respondents also suggested clarifying the descriptors for each of the scales to allow for more accurate and nuanced information to be given to parents and year 1 teachers.

Views were mixed in terms of whether these scales were the right approach for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Some respondents said it was not helpful to say a child with SEND or complex needs is 'emerging', and there was a need for greater granularity to allow practitioners to capture strengths and areas where more attention is needed. Other respondents felt that children with SEND should be assessed in the same way as other children, to eliminate stigmatisation, particularly at such an early age, when in most cases a conclusive diagnosis of SEND only occurs once a child has started school. It is not always appropriate to diagnose a child at an early stage, as they may just be behind within the development cycle and likely to catch up once they begin school.

Feedback from our key stakeholders also suggests that there is some level of confusion on the purpose of the EYFSP, with many believing it is used as an accountability measure for schools. Respondents were clear that the purpose of the EYFSP should be to provide a rounded view of an individual child's progress, including any areas where further support is needed. This is particularly important for supporting the transition to key stage 1, enabling reception and key stage 1 teachers to discuss each child's individual needs.

Participants in the roundtables were clear that the EYFSP should not be about school accountability. In addition, most respondents agreed that more should be done to focus the EYFSP as a low-stakes, formative assessment, in which progress and areas for further development are mapped throughout the reception year, rather than using the EYFSP as a purely outcome-based assessment for end-of-year reporting purposes.

A significant proportion of respondents also said that a more diagnostic method of information-sharing about each individual child's strengths, ways of learning and areas for further development would be particularly helpful to year 1 teachers in identifying clear areas where progress and 'catch up' support is needed.

Government response

The purpose of the EYFSP has never been to hold individual schools to account for their performance and this will not change. The EYFSP will continue to assess each child's individual progress and development throughout the reception year. It will give a year 1 teacher accurate information about which individual children will need more attention in specific areas of learning as they move through key stage 1. The EYFSP will continue to provide national data to government and local authorities, to provide a picture of provision across the country.

We will retain the existing assessment scales ('emerging', 'expected' and 'exceeding'), but we will review whether it is right to introduce an additional band within the 'emerging' scale and we will clarify the descriptors underpinning these scales (particularly for 'emerging' and 'exceeding'). We will also retain the same scale approach for children with SEND, but as set out below, we will explore ways in which reception teachers can share more nuanced information with year 1 teachers and parents about individual progress and future development needs.

We will also explore ways in which individual information on a child's progress and development needs can be captured accurately and efficiently in order for year 1 teachers to be able to make a diagnosis of whether a child needs more focussed attention on particular areas of the curriculum. This should minimise the risk of some children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, falling behind and not being able to catch up with their peers in key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Workload

We asked

What steps could we take to reduce the workload and time burden on those involved in administering the EYFSP?

We heard

Time and workload burdens have been cited as key concerns for the sector in terms of administering the EYFSP. Many respondents felt that evidence-gathering for the EYFSP dominates classroom time, leaving less time for effective teaching and ensuring that children are progressing appropriately. Many respondents called for greater trust in professional judgements. A number of respondents held the view that a disproportionate amount of time is being spent on collecting a mass of evidence which serves little purpose.

Simplifying or reducing the scale of the assessment was also suggested as a way to reduce workload and links to the suggestions raised in response to the previous consultation questions, about reducing the number of ELGs assessed. Respondents were clear, however, that this should not compromise the holistic approach of the curriculum, which should be preserved as a unique feature of the EYFS.

A large number of respondents reported that existing guidance on the EYFSP is confusing and is incentivising the wrong behaviours, such as taking a disproportionate approach to evidencing progress, in turn contributing to increased workload. There were a large proportion of responses suggesting that moving evidence gathering to an online system could make the process more efficient and allow for more qualitative, nuanced and accurate information being exchanged between reception teachers and parents and year 1 teachers.

Government response

We will review all guidance for administering the EYFSP, to ensure that the assessment process and outcomes are adding maximum value to teaching, and that they are proportionate to classroom time. Guidance in scope for revision includes the EYFS profile handbook and supporting exemplification materials. We will also make clear the requirements for evidence and how this should be collected and shared, and aim to dispel myths that have emerged over time. We will work with Ofsted and local authorities to ensure that guidance and messages around evidence-gathering are clear and consistent.

We will explore ways in which we can support the wider use of online tools to collect and share evidence, thus reducing burdens and releasing capacity for teachers to focus on what they do best. We believe that this would also support sharing of information with year 1 teachers and parents, increasing the value of the EYFSP.

Moderation

We asked

How could we improve the consistency and effectiveness of the EYFSP moderation process whilst reducing burdens?

We heard

Most respondents supported the principle of moderation and recognised its value in practitioners' continuous professional development. There was also a broad consensus for retaining both internal and external moderation processes. However, many of the same respondents felt that the moderation process should be improved. The ways in which this could be done included formal training, and clear and concise guidance with examples of effective moderation practices. Standardising the moderation process was frequently suggested as a way of increasing consistency in local authority practice. Similarly, peer-to-peer reviews and local cluster models were suggested as best practice models by a number of respondents.

Another common suggestion was that we should only moderate the ELGs which make up 'good level of development' in the 3 prime areas and in mathematics and literacy, as a way of reducing burdens.

Government response

We will review guidance relating to the moderation of the EYFSP to ensure that it better supports those involved in the moderation process to make professional judgments. We will work with Ofsted, local authorities and the wider sector to dispel myths about moderation and evidence requirements.

We will review the current approach to moderation, to investigate whether alternative models to local authority-led moderation, such as moderating within school clusters, would reduce burdens without compromising the rigour of the moderation process. This will link to the pilot of peer-to-peer moderation at the end of key stages 1 and 2 described below. We will also explore ways to better align internal and external moderation, to make the system more efficient.

We will also explore the feasibility of moderating a limited number of ELGs, working closely with the sector and with local authorities to determine whether this approach would be appropriate.

Over the coming months, we will work with a range of experts and practitioners, and we will establish an advisory panel to review and analyse the body of academic literature in child development to inform the specific changes we will make to the EYFSP, including the descriptors underpinning the ELGs, the assessment and the processes needed to administer and maintain standards of the EYFSP. We will approach this in the clear context that we do not wish to increase workload or burden or compromise the integrity of the EYFS learning and development framework. Any changes to the ELGs will come into effect from the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

The best starting point for measuring progress in primary school

In the consultation document we highlighted the importance of a fair and transparent accountability system that takes into account not just pupils' attainment, but also the progress that the school helps them to make from their starting points. It set out that any baseline requires a starting point that is reliable, robust and trusted, as well as being undertaken as early as possible once pupils have settled in, to cover the maximum amount of a pupil's time in a particular school.

The consultation described the limitations of the current progress measures. First, they are based on end-of-key stage 1 data, which means that they fail to give schools credit for the crucial work they do with pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2; second, concerns have been raised that using the key stage 1 teacher assessments as the baseline is problematic. It also noted that while the teacher assessment frameworks at key stage 1 do provide enough differentiation to create a progress measure, a greater number of categories would provide a more robust and effective measure.

In the consultation document we said that we did not believe that the current key stage 1 assessment approach could be sufficiently improved to provide the baseline that we and the sector want to see in the long-term, without adding undue burdens. As a result, we set out the case for measuring progress from the reception year to the end of year 6, by introducing a new assessment early in the reception year that could be used as a baseline. We said that the assessment would be designed to cover the material which we would already expect children to be familiar with at that stage (including phonological awareness and comprehension in English language and writing, and counting, basic number operations and simple 2D shapes in mathematics).

We set out that the specific uses of data gained from this assessment would need to be agreed, but emphasised that the data should not be used to 'judge' individual pupils or schools on attainment in reception and rather only be used when pupils reach the end of key stage 2, to calculate their school's cohort-level progress measures. We said that data from the assessment in reception could be published at national level, but not at school level, and that school-level data would not be shared with regional school commissioners, local authorities or Ofsted.

We asked

Any form of progress measure requires a starting point. Do you agree that it is best to move to a baseline assessment in reception to cover the time a child is in primary school (reception to key stage 2)? If you agree, then please tell us what you think the key characteristics of a baseline assessment in reception should be. If you do not agree, then please explain why.

We heard

A majority of responses demonstrated clear support for moving the baseline assessment to reception. Those in favour pointed to the benefit of progress measures for accountability purposes rather than pure attainment measures, as being a fairer way to evaluate school performance, particularly for schools in challenging circumstances. They also agreed with the principle that a progress measure should cover as much as possible of the time that a pupil is in a school, including the important years from reception to year 2. Responses from the National Association of Head Teachers and the Association of School and College Leaders expressed their support for a new baseline assessment in reception, arguing that key stage 1 assessments must also be made non-statutory as proposed, to ensure that the assessment burden remains proportionate. Respondents were also clear that any new baseline would need to be carefully designed and delivered to ensure it is an appropriate assessment and does not lead to unintended consequences. The Education Select Committee, following their inquiry into primary assessment, although supportive of the introduction of an improved progress measure, were clear that the department must conduct a thorough evaluation of potential benefits and harmful consequences of introducing any new baseline measure.

Some responses also indicated that although a new assessment in reception should be used as the baseline for measuring primary progress, it should also have some formative benefit to help reception teachers to identify individual needs to inform their on-entry assessments.

Around a quarter disagreed with the proposal to move to a reception baseline. Most of the respondents who disagreed raised concerns about the reliability of an assessment in reception.¹ Some respondents also expressed concerns about the previous unsuccessful attempt to introduce a new baseline for progress measures in 2015.

¹ For example, Miesels (2006) identifies issues with assessment in reception that we will need to be mindful of as we design the new assessment, such as practical problems of measurement and variability in pupil performance.

The contents of a reception baseline that respondents most frequently proposed were early literacy and numeracy skills, followed by socio-emotional skills, communication skills and physical development. It should be noted that there were many respondents who agreed with the proposal to introduce a new assessment in the reception year, but did not comment on what characteristics they thought that the new assessment should have. Although we did not specifically ask a question about the form of assessment, some respondents said they thought that the new assessment should be observational and based on teacher assessment.

Government response

In light of the support in the consultation for the principle of a new assessment in reception, we intend to develop a new baseline as a statutory assessment and to test and evaluate it so that it is ready for introduction in reception by autumn 2020.

We agree that the content, format and uses of the assessment are critical issues to get right in order to ensure the success of the new assessment and progress measures. The Standards and Testing Agency will shortly start the process of engaging a commercial partner to work with them to design and deliver the assessment. Learning from the previous multi-supplier model used for the optional baseline assessments in the 2015 to 2016 academic year, there will be a single supplier for this new assessment. We will continue to engage with stakeholders throughout the design process, and at key sign-off points in the development of the assessment.

As we develop the baseline, we will continue to discuss the detail of the assessment with a wide range of stakeholders, and we will conduct a large-scale pilot and evaluation in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. We are committed to ensuring that the baseline is of a high quality, appropriate for the age of the children taking it, that schools have the necessary training, guidance and support to implement it and that the experience for the child is positive. We understand that this means two statutory assessments will be administered in reception, albeit for different purposes, and we will work with the sector to minimise burdens as far as possible, including by making the new baseline part of existing on-entry assessments. We will also carefully consider how to make the assessment as accessible to as many children as possible, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, and English as an additional language. In addition, we will work with analytical experts to develop the rules around the new progress measures, for example the minimum cohort size required and the minimum proportion of pupils that need to have been in the same school between reception and key stage 2.

The prime focus of the new assessment will be on skills which can be reliably assessed and which correlate with attainment in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, most notably early literacy and numeracy. This was the most frequent suggestion in

the consultation responses and is supported by evidence.² We will also ask the potential suppliers to explore ways in which it would be possible to assess some form of ‘self-regulation’ in their bids,³ for example persistence with a task or following multi-step instructions.

We intend that the pupil’s regular teacher or teaching assistant would carry out the assessment, and we are clear that the assessment should not feel like a ‘test’ or be any different from many of the existing on-entry assessments that schools already undertake with their pupils. Pupils’ teachers, or teaching assistants, will mediate the assessment. We do not intend this to be an observational assessment which is carried out over time, like the EYFSP. As described, however, we will pilot the format of the new assessment, including the experience for the child and how well the assessment works.

We want to be very clear about the limited purpose and use of data from the new baseline assessment. Its purpose will be to establish pupils’ prior attainment as the starting point for calculating progress measures when pupils reach the end of key stage 2. As now, the progress measures and the results of the new assessment would need to have a correlation with end of key stage 2 assessments at a cohort level. They would not be used to judge, label, or track individual pupil progress, to set targets for them to reach, to ‘predict’ the key stage 2 results of individual pupils, or assume that they make linear progress. Furthermore, the data would not be used in any way to measure performance in early years or to hold early years practitioners to account. Ofsted will continue to look at EYFSP information as a rounded judgement of child development as part of their inspections of early years provision in schools, including nurseries.

The new reception baseline will only be used seven years later to make the progress measure at the end of primary school. As now, this information will be published at school and local authority level on performance tables to inform parental choice. We recognise that no single piece of data or measure can be used alone to judge a school’s performance and are therefore clear that no decision regarding intervention can be based on one piece of information alone.

We are clear that the results of the new baseline assessment will not be used to determine inspection outcomes or to determine what improvement action needs to take place in schools. It has been suggested that some teachers and head teachers may like to know what their cohort-level data looks like ahead of receiving their progress scores

² In a meta-analysis of six international studies (Duncan et al, 2007), early skills in reading and mathematics were most closely associated with later academic achievement.

³ Recent research has focussed on the concept of self-regulation and the ways in which it is closely interrelated with cognitive abilities (Blair and Raver, 2015). A review of the literature also found that metacognitive activities including self-regulation are not only important to later academic achievement but are also teachable skills (Whitebread and Basilio, 2012).

seven years later. Therefore, through the trial and pilot of the baseline assessment we will explore whether, and what, numerical data to share with headteachers at cohort level only, in order to be clear that data should not be used to judge individual pupils, teachers or schools.

We have listened to the feedback that if a new assessment in reception is to be introduced, then it would be useful if it could also provide some formative information to help teachers to identify pupils' needs and inform their on-entry assessments. We will ask the supplier to ensure that the assessment can provide a narrative summary of the pupil's strengths and weaknesses to inform teaching. This narrative information would not indicate how well a child was likely to do in future, or suggest their future progress score.

We asked

Our view is that it would be difficult to change key stage 1 assessment in order that it could be used as the baseline for progress in the long term. If you disagree, what could be done to improve the key stage 1 assessments so that they would be sufficiently detailed, and trusted as a fair and robust baseline?

We heard

Most respondents agreed with the view stated in the consultation that it would be difficult to change the current key stage 1 assessment in order for it to be used as a reliable baseline for progress for the long term, as do ASCL and NAHT.

Of the small number of respondents who suggested that key stage 1 assessments could be improved and kept as the baseline for measuring progress, the most common suggestion was to add extra guidelines and increase moderation of the teacher assessments.

Government response

Given the broad consensus amongst respondents that moving the baseline for measuring progress to the reception year is the favoured choice, this is what we are pursuing, as described above, rather than trying to improve the key stage 1 assessments.

We asked

If we were to introduce a reception baseline, at what point in the reception year do you think it should be administered? In particular, we are interested in the impact on schools, pupils and teaching of administering the assessment at different times.

We heard

The most frequently-suggested timing for the reception baseline was at some point in the autumn term (over half of respondents who answered this question), most commonly in the first half-term, to capture as much progress as possible and to give schools full credit for the teaching that they have undertaken. Some of these respondents stressed the importance of pupils having time to settle in before the assessment takes place, but most still argued that this could be within the first half-term. Other respondents also explained the variation in the amount of time that it takes young children to settle into school and so suggested the assessment should take place closer to the October half-term or even in the second half-term. Some responses therefore pointed to the need to have a window of several weeks within which the assessment should take place, with this having the benefit of also helping to manage teacher workload and ensure that the experience for the child was positive.

Government response

We agree that in order for the new measure to give credit for as much of the progress made by pupils as possible in the reception year, the new assessment should be undertaken early in the school year, allowing for time for pupils to settle in. We have reached a view based on the consultation responses that the first half-term (autumn term) of reception is most appropriate, particularly as this enables the new assessment to supplement existing practice of on-entry assessments.

We know that there are a number of pupils who start reception later in the academic year (often in January), and therefore the assessment should be completed for those pupils within the first 6 weeks of them starting reception, to give them time to settle in.

As stated above, we intend to work closely with the sector as the assessment is designed and developed, and to pilot it before introduction. This will include testing whether, to ensure pupils have more time to settle in, we should provide guidance to schools on

when in the first half-term the assessment should normally take place and the window that we envisage for this.⁴

Interim years

In the consultation we set out that if a new baseline assessment were introduced, it would be 7 years after its introduction until the first reception to key stage 2 progress measure could be produced. In the meantime, we proposed continuing to use key stage 1 teacher assessment data as the baseline for pupils who will be completing primary school before that time.

	Start reception in September	Finish KS1 in summer	Finish KS2 in summer	Primary progress measures
Current year 6	2011	2014	2018	KS1 teacher assessment (reported as levels) to KS2 scaled score test
Current year 5	2012	2015	2019	
Current year 4	2013	2016	2020	KS1 teacher assessment (under interim framework) to KS2 scaled score test
Current year 3	2014	2017	2021	
Current year 2	2015	2018	2022	KS1 teacher assessment (arrangements are considered in the section 'Improving end-of-key stage teacher assessment) to KS2 scaled score test *Some schools will take part in the pilot of the new reception baseline
Current year 1	2016	2019	2023	
Current reception	2017	2020	2024	
Current 3 year-olds	2018	2021	2025	
Current 2 year-olds	2019*	2022	2026	
Current 1 year-olds	2020	2023	2027	New reception baseline assessment to KS2 scaled score test

⁴ Lynch et al. (2015) surveyed school leaders and found 27% of respondents planned to schedule the baseline earlier than their current on-entry assessments to maximise the progress demonstrated. We will need to make sure guidance is clear that the baseline needs to take place when pupils are ready.

We asked

If we were to introduce a new reception baseline measure, do you agree that we should continue to use key stage 1 teacher assessment data as the baseline for measuring progress in the interim years before a new measure was in place? If you disagree, what do you think we should use as the baseline instead?

We heard

While the majority of respondents agreed that the current key stage 1 baseline based on the teacher assessment data is not as robust as it could be, there was still agreement that this should continue as the progress measure for the interim years, given the need for as much as stability as possible until the new progress measures are established.

The sector has highlighted that maintaining the status quo as far as possible in anticipation of positive change in the future is important. In the interim period, others have suggested that the data could be improved by encouraging increased local collaboration to compare and moderate teacher assessments, and providing further training to improve the quality and consistency of the assessments.

Government response

In the interim years, we intend to continue using key stage 1 teacher assessment as the baseline for progress measures. As now, these progress measures will continue to have the downside of not covering the first three years of primary school, but we agree with feedback that keeping key stage 1 as the baseline for this interim period is important for stability as we put reception to key stage 2 measures in place. We are also clear that any data is just the starting point for a conversation about how to improve a school, and no single piece of data will determine any intervention action.

We have also taken a number of steps to improve the moderation of statutory teacher assessment, including introducing mandatory training and standardisation for all local authority moderators.

The role of statutory assessments at the end of key stage 1

If we were to move the baseline for measuring progress made at primary school to reception, we would no longer need to use data from assessments taken at the end-of-key stage 1 to calculate progress measures for all-through primary schools in the medium-term. In the consultation document we therefore proposed that, if we were to move the baseline for measuring progress to reception, we would look to make end-of-key stage 1 assessments non-statutory for all-through primary schools once the new assessment had become fully established.

We asked

If a baseline assessment is introduced in reception, in the longer term, would you favour removing the statutory requirement for all-through primary schools to administer assessments at the end of key stage 1?

We heard

Generally, consultation respondents were very positive about this proposal, with the overwhelming majority in favour of removing the statutory requirement for all-through primary schools to administer assessments at the end of key stage 1, should the baseline for measuring progress be moved to reception. A number of those in favour of the proposal commented that it would reduce burdens on pupils and teachers. Some respondents also commented that they would find optional test materials useful. Conversely, a relatively small proportion of respondents disagreed with this proposal. Where respondents were not in favour of removing the statutory requirement, reasons given included that the assessments provided valuable information about pupil performance.

Government response

We will make assessments at the end of key stage 1 (both national curriculum tests and statutory teacher assessment) non-statutory as soon as the reception baseline assessment has become fully established. If possible, we intend to make this change from the 2022 to 2023 academic year onwards. We want to remove the assessments at the end of key stage 1 once possible; however, we would be unable to remove the statutory requirement before this point, as we will still need to use end-of-key stage 1 teacher assessment data to calculate primary progress measures. Before 2023, there will be cohorts progressing through key stage 1 who started school before 2020 and have therefore not taken the reception baseline assessment, and we will need their key stage 1 data to calculate progress measures. This is set out in the table on page 18.

In the summer of 2022, the first cohort of pupils to have sat the new reception baseline assessment will reach the end of key stage 1. Having data from a cohort of pupils who have sat both reception and key stage 1 assessments will enable us to evaluate the correlation between the two assessments and provide assurance that the new reception baseline provides a sufficiently strong correlation to key stage 2. After this point, we would be in a position to make end-of-key stage 1 assessments non-statutory from the academic year 2022 to 2023.

To ensure that parents continue to receive good information about their child's attainment and progress at the midway point in primary school, we will retain the current requirement for schools to report on pupil performance and attainment to parents in more detail at the end of key stage 1. To support schools with this, we will make optional end-of-key stage 1 tests available for schools to use as they see fit. These optional test materials will

enable schools to benchmark pupil performance against national expectations at the end of key stage 1, supporting them to achieve well in key stage 2. We will explore making these tests available through a national assessment bank, which could contain other materials to support schools' ongoing assessment, as recommended by the Commission for Assessment Without Levels⁵ and the Independent Assessment Review Group convened by the NAHT.⁶

Despite not having statutory assessment at the end-of-key stage 1 in the future, we recognise that it will be important that we continue to have an accurate and ongoing picture of standards nationally at the end-of-key stage 1. To achieve this, we will periodically sample key stage 1 assessment data from a small, representative sample of primary schools. This data will be anonymised and will not be attributable to specific schools, or be used to hold schools to account.

School types and assessment

In the consultation document, we set out that the introduction of a new assessment in reception to be used as the baseline for progress measures would impact on infant, first, junior and middle schools. We said we wanted to ensure that we continue to have the most appropriate accountability arrangements for these schools, and set out two broad options.

Option 1 was to have reception to key stage 1 progress measures for infant and first schools, and key stage 1 to 2 progress measures for junior and middle schools. This would require maintaining statutory key stage 1 teacher assessments for pupils in infant and first schools.

Option 2 was to hold all schools to account on the basis of reception to key stage 2 measures, hopefully encouraging greater collaboration between infant, first, junior and middle schools.

We asked

If we were to introduce a reception baseline to enable the creation of reception to key stage 2 progress measures for all-through primaries, what would be the most effective accountability arrangements for infant, middle and junior schools' progress measures?

⁵ [Commission on Assessment Without Levels report.](#)

⁶ [Report of the assessment review group](#), January 2017.

We heard

There was no clear consensus on this issue. Similar proportions of respondents favoured holding schools to account for the particular years that they cover as said that infant and junior schools should be held to account together. Many respondents emphasised that the key principles of the school accountability system should apply to all school types; for example, that accountability should be transparent, fair and include clear incentives to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

Those respondents who favoured the first option of holding schools to account for the particular years they cover tended to highlight the positive of schools being held to account on a measure that reflects the time that pupils are at their school and which they have an ability to influence. Another point raised was the clearer information that this would provide to parents, particularly in the case of infant and first schools, who currently do not have data published. However, this option would require retaining statutory assessment at key stage 1 for infant and first schools only. There was also a strong view from some that it would be unfair to make end-of-key stage 1 assessments non-statutory for some schools, meaning some pupils would have to be assessed against a statutory assessment at age 7 but others would not. Others have expressed concerns about the potential impact on admissions, particularly to infant schools, if key stage 1 remained statutory only for those schools.

The main advantage highlighted by respondents for option 2 is that it would allow a consistent approach to assessment at key stage 1 for all pupils. Respondents who favoured an accountability system that judged all primary schools on reception to key stage 2 progress measures also told us that this has the potential benefit of encouraging joint working between different schools (e.g. infant and junior). However, they also acknowledged that this could lead to greater resentment between these schools in some cases. Others suggested that if we were to have reception to key stage 2 measures for all school types, schools other than all-through primary schools would need to be compared to schools that are the same as them (for example, infant schools compared with other infant schools).

The consultation highlighted that the current accountability system does not work as well as it could for some school types, particularly middle schools, where key stage 2 assessments take place part-way through the pupils' time in their school and where there is no statutory assessment at the point when their pupils start and leave the school.

Government response

We have considered the range of issues raised in relation to the two options and recognise the lack of consensus on this issue. We agree with ASCL that there is no obvious simple answer and that it is right that we take some more time to consider the best approach. As set out above, key stage 1 tests will remain in place until 2023 for all-through schools, so there is some time to create alternative ways to assess progress in these other schools. We recognise the need to give schools clarity as soon as possible

and we will, therefore, work with sector representatives to fully consider the options in order to have a settled position before the new reception baseline has been through its initial first-year design phase – by January 2018.

A proportionate assessment system

Whilst it is inevitable that the administration of statutory assessments places some burden on teachers, pupils and schools, it is important that these burdens are minimal and balanced against the benefits to teachers and pupils. The consultation document considered this balance and made a number of proposals designed to ensure that our assessment system is as proportionate as possible.

Collection of teacher assessment data at the end of key stage 2

Currently, there is a statutory duty for schools to report teacher assessment judgements in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. This information is not used to calculate headline accountability measures, with test data used instead. On this basis, we proposed that removing this statutory duty could reduce assessment burdens on teachers and we sought views.

We asked

Do you think that the department should remove the statutory obligation to carry out teacher assessment in English reading and mathematics at key stage 2, when only test data is used in performance measures?

We heard

Responses were fairly balanced on this question, with a majority of those expressing a clear preference in favour of removing the statutory obligation to carry out teacher assessment in reading and mathematics at key stage 2. A number of organisations representing teachers and school leaders, including NAHT, ASCL, ATL, NUT and NASUWT, were supportive of this proposal. Where respondents felt that the statutory obligation should be removed, this was often related to the impact that this assessment has on teacher workload. A number of respondents also felt that as this data is not used in accountability measures, statutory teacher assessment in these subjects did not represent a good use of teachers' time. Where respondents felt that the duty to carry out teacher assessment should remain, this was often because they valued the role of their professional judgement in the statutory assessment system, or because they felt that teacher assessment had an important role to play in reaching rounded judgements about pupil ability. Other reasons centred on the usefulness of information to teachers, parents and pupils.

Government response

We will remove the statutory requirement for schools to report teacher assessment judgements in English reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 from the 2018

to 2019 academic year onwards, once the relevant legislation has been amended. We believe that removing this duty to report judgements against the statutory teacher assessment frameworks will reduce burdens for teachers. We are clear, however, that this does not undermine the fundamental importance of the ongoing teacher assessment that takes place in the classroom throughout a pupil's time at primary school. Formative teacher assessment informs teaching and has a crucial role in supporting pupils to progress and achieve their full potential. In addition, the statutory requirement on schools to report pupils' attainment and progress to parents remains, as it is important that parents receive regular information on how their children are doing. We will work with partners to consider how the department can best support and promote good quality, ongoing teacher assessment in the future.

Where pupils are working below the standard of national curriculum tests, teachers will continue to have a statutory requirement to assess pupils using the interim pre-key stage standards and to report these judgements. Further details about the future arrangements for assessing pupils working below the standard can be found in the parallel response to the Rochford Review consultation.

Key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test

The English grammar, punctuation and spelling test has been non-statutory at key stage 1 for the last 2 academic years. We sought views on the proposal that this test should remain non-statutory in future years.

We asked

Do you agree that the key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test should remain non-statutory beyond the 2016 to 2017 academic year, with test papers available for teachers to use as they see fit?

We heard

There was clear support for this proposal, with the overwhelming majority of consultation respondents in favour, and only a small minority disagreeing. Organisations representing teachers and school leaders were also in favour of this proposal. Respondents who agreed that the test should remain non-statutory set out a range of reasons for this view, including suggesting that this would have a positive impact on the teaching of English in key stage 1, that it would keep the assessment burden on pupils to a minimum, and that there was not a need for the test to be statutory as grammar, punctuation and spelling are assessed through the statutory teacher assessment frameworks in English writing. Among those who felt that the test should not remain non-statutory, some respondents felt that schools should be required to administer the test in order to measure pupil progress in grammar, punctuation and spelling between key stages 1 and 2.

Government response

Given the broad support for this proposal, we will keep the key stage 1 grammar, punctuation and spelling test non-statutory in future years. We will continue to make optional test materials available for schools to use as they see fit.

Grammar, punctuation and spelling remain important elements of the English national curriculum programme of study at key stage 1, and pupils will continue to be assessed in these areas using the teacher assessment frameworks in writing. We anticipate that the optional key stage 1 grammar, punctuation and spelling test materials will remain a useful resource for teachers in supporting all of their pupils to achieve well in writing and to prepare for success at key stage 2.

Multiplication tables check

We announced in 2016 that we would introduce a check of pupils' ability to recall their times tables, to support all children to master this key foundation for success in mathematics. There is strong evidence to show that being able to recall multiplication tables with fluency plays a crucial role in being able to solve more complex mathematical problems involving division, algebra, fractions and proportional reasoning. The check will help to identify those pupils who have not yet mastered this basic mathematical concept, so that the necessary additional support can be provided. We sought views on the implementation of the check; specifically on the point in key stage 2 at which it should be administered, and on how the check can be implemented in a way that places minimal burdens on pupils, teacher and schools.

We asked

At what point in key stage 2 do you think the multiplication tables check should be administered? Please explain the basis for your views.

- a) At the end of year 4
- b) During year 5
- c) During year 6

We heard

The check being taken at the end of year 4 was the preferred option, with around two-fifths of respondents in favour of this timing. Of the respondents who preferred this option, they cited that it would allow schools to have more time to support pupils after the check. Another common rationale for this timing was that it is in line with the expectations set out by the national curriculum.

Around a quarter of respondents said that they would prefer the check to take place during year 5, and around a tenth were in favour of it taking place during year 6. Some

respondents did, however, express concerns about adding to the existing assessment burden in year 6.

Some respondents did not directly answer this question, and instead questioned whether there was a need for the multiplication tables check to be implemented at all, given existing curriculum requirements.

Government response

We announced in 2016 that the multiplication tables check would be introduced. It will support all pupils to master their times tables, a crucial foundation for success in more complex mathematics. The check will be designed in a way so as to be as non-burdensome as possible (see below also), and in recognition of the introduction of an additional assessment, we have taken a number of steps to make the overall statutory assessment system more proportionate.

The multiplication tables check will take place at the end of year 4. This means that the check will correspond with the point in the national curriculum by which pupils are expected to know their times tables, and will not add to the existing assessments taken by pupils in later years of key stage 2. As consultation responses have highlighted, having the check at this point will ensure that schools have adequate time to support pupils to catch up if necessary, following the check.

We asked

How can we ensure that the multiplication tables check is implemented in a way that balances burdens on schools with benefit to pupils?

We heard

A number of respondents said that the administration of the check should be as brief as possible, both in terms of the time taken to administer the check to pupils, and the requirements around reporting data. A number of respondents commented on the need for the online system to be accessible, with minimal training required, whilst others said that there should be no additional associated costs for schools. It was also suggested that having a longer time window within which to administer the check could reduce burdens, as could there being no requirement to administer the check to all pupils at the same time. Finally, a number of respondents said that burdens could be reduced if outcomes from the check were not used as a high-stakes school accountability measure.

Government response

The check has been designed to place minimal burdens on pupils and teachers. Schools will have a window in which they can administer the assessment, and there will be no requirement for a class to take the check at the same time. The check will be brief, and will be administered online, with an off-line option available for schools without suitable

internet connectivity. The online nature of the check will mean that results are available to teachers instantly, and with no additional data submission burdens. To ensure that the check is suitable for all schools, we are undertaking extensive trialling and will run a large-scale pilot in the 2018 to 2019 academic year, before the check is introduced on a statutory basis in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. Importantly, this extensive trialling will support us to design the check to be as robust and non-burdensome as possible, with a system that is easy for teachers to access and navigate. This pilot will also enable schools to familiarise themselves with the check before it becomes statutory, should they wish to.

It is important to note the way that we intend to use data arising from the check. Whilst we will collect assessment data from the check, this will be published at national and local authority level only, and not at school level. We will make clear to relevant parties, including regional school commissioners and governing bodies, that data from the check should be used only as a starting point for a discussion on how best to help and support schools to raise standards in numeracy. As we said in the consultation, the data will not be used to trigger inspection or intervention.

Reducing burdens within the primary assessment system

We know that the administration of statutory assessment places some burdens on pupils, teachers and schools. It is essential that these burdens are minimised as far as possible, and that they are balanced against the benefits brought about by assessment.

We are committed to considering whether there are additional opportunities to reduce burdens on an ongoing basis. It is for this reason that we sought views on whether there are additional ways, within the context of our proposed assessment system, that we could improve the administration of statutory assessments to further reduce burdens.

We asked

Are there additional ways, in the context of the proposed statutory assessments, that the administration of statutory assessments in primary schools could be improved to reduce burdens?

We heard

We received a broad and diverse range of responses to this question. Around a tenth of respondents commented that removing statutory assessments at the end of key stage 1 would reduce burdens, a small proportion of respondents felt that moving to a more flexible approach in the statutory teacher assessment of writing would have a positive impact on workload. Again, a small proportion of respondents said that the department providing schools with more notice of statutory changes would reduce burdens, whilst a number of respondents suggested that we could explore how technology could be utilised to reduce the burdens associated with administering tests. Other suggestions

included improving the moderation of teacher assessment and providing optional test materials for schools to utilise. In addition, a number of respondents suggested changes that were not related to the administration of statutory assessments in the context of the proposed assessment system.

Government response

We believe that the statutory assessment system that we have outlined in this response document effectively balances the burdens associated with assessment with the need to maintain standards and to recognise the progress that schools make with their pupils. We have taken a number of steps to make the assessment system as proportionate as possible. These include removing the statutory requirement to carry out teacher assessment in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2; keeping the key stage 1 grammar, punctuation and spelling test non-statutory; and making assessments at the end of key stage 1 non-statutory at the earliest possible point.

Many respondents shared views on the burdens associated with the teacher assessment of writing. A number felt that adopting a more flexible approach would reduce burdens to some extent. This was proposed in the consultation document, and our intention to move to a more flexible approach in assessing writing from the 2017 to 2018 academic year onwards is confirmed later in this document. We are publishing revised teacher assessment frameworks for writing alongside this document. Improved statutory guidance and updated exemplification materials will be published later in the autumn term, to support teachers to make judgements against these frameworks.

Some respondents also suggested that the frameworks, guidance and exemplification materials used in other areas of statutory teacher assessment could be improved. We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the other interim teacher assessment frameworks. Revised frameworks for reading and mathematics at key stage 1, and science at key stages 1 and 2, along with updated guidance and exemplification materials, will be published in due course, for first use in the 2018 to 2019 academic year. Based on feedback to this consultation, we will look to provide additional exemplification materials in future years, to ensure that teachers are fully supported in exercising their professional judgement.

A number of respondents suggested that increased use of online testing could reduce burdens. Moving to online testing would require significant lead-in times and resource. The multiplication tables check, which will be an online and onscreen check, is our first online assessment. We will look to build on the development of this check, as we consider how technology could be utilised to reduce burdens associated with assessment in the future.

Some respondents said that government providing longer lead-in times before introducing changes would reduce burdens on schools. We agree, and we will seek to provide schools with as much notice of future changes to statutory assessment as we are able to. The department's workload protocol commits to a year's lead in time for

significant changes to curriculum, accountability or qualifications (including formal assessments). We see an exception to this in the case of changes to the teacher assessment of writing, which we will implement from the 2017 to 2018 academic year, due to strong feedback from the sector that they would like this change to be made as soon as possible (see below also). Some respondents commented on the clarity of guidance and communications around assessment. We will ensure that all communications are clear, timely and as concise as possible.

A number of respondents suggested that schools could be given a longer time window within which they can administer the tests, whilst others suggested that tests could be taken later in the year, to allow more time for pupils to prepare. Schools have a month-long window in which to administer the key stage 1 tests; however, the key stage 2 test window is restricted to a week (with a further week where the test can be sat by pupils who were unable to sit the test in the designated test week, for example due to absence). Due to the need to keep the test materials secure in order avoid the assessments being compromised, we are unable to extend these test windows. Similarly, we require the tests to be taken in May so that pupil scripts can be collected, marked and results returned to schools in a timely manner.

We will continue to evaluate whether there are additional changes we can make to the administration of statutory assessments at primary school to minimise burdens, particularly as recent reforms continue to bed in.

In addition, we are continuing to consider how we can improve pupils' experience of the tests. Some respondents suggested that the key stage 2 reading test could be moved from the first day of test week, to be taken later in test week instead. Given that pupils' attainment in reading forms part of the school-level published data, we agree that there is merit in the test being taken later in the week, when pupils have settled in. From the 2017 to 2018 academic year we will change the day that the reading test paper is sat so that it is no longer the first test that they undertake. As part of our work to improve the test experience, we will also consider how the texts included in the reading test can better incorporate content from the broader curriculum, so that they draw from a rich knowledge base.

Improving end-of-key stage statutory teacher assessment

Where we continue to have statutory teacher assessment at primary school, it is important that it is proportionate and fair, and where data is used for school accountability purposes, that it is reliable and accurate.

Teacher assessment of English writing

Following the removal of levels, we introduced interim teacher assessment frameworks in the 2015 to 2016 academic year, to enable schools to report statutory end-of-key stage teacher assessment. These frameworks were designed to assess whether pupils have a firm grounding in the national curriculum by requiring teachers to demonstrate that pupils can meet every ‘pupil can’ statement, in order to achieve a standard. This aimed to achieve greater consistency between teacher judgements, and to avoid pupils moving on in their education with significant and limiting gaps.

Having gathered feedback on the use of the interim teacher assessment frameworks in their first year, we believe that this approach is broadly appropriate for reading, mathematics and science. It is therefore our intention to maintain this approach to statutory teacher assessment of these subjects in future years. In the case of writing, however, feedback has indicated that this approach is less appropriate due to the creativity involved in pupils demonstrating what they can and cannot do, and the subjective nature of assessing writing. For this reason, we sought views on the proposal to move to a more flexible approach for assessing writing.

We asked

Do you agree that the statutory assessment of writing should afford teachers greater flexibility in determining a pupil’s overall standard of attainment than is currently the case? Please give reasons for your answer.

We heard

Responses to this question were broadly very positive, with the overwhelming majority of respondents in favour of taking a more flexible approach in the statutory teacher assessment of writing. Only a very small minority of respondents disagreed. Where respondents were in favour, they tended to cite the view that the descriptors under the ‘secure fit’ approach were too narrow to accurately reflect pupil performance or that a more flexible approach would have a positive impact on pupils with dyslexia and other special educational needs and disabilities. Other respondents commented that a more flexible approach would have a positive impact on the teaching of writing, that it was important that teachers should be able to utilise their professional judgement when

making judgements against statutory assessment frameworks, and/or that a more flexible approach would produce data that was a more accurate representation of pupil performance.

Where respondents did not agree with the proposal, this was most commonly because they felt that the best-fit approach was too subjective to facilitate accurate assessment.

In addition, a number of respondents said that they would like this change of approach to take effect as soon as possible. Eighty-eight per cent of school leaders surveyed by the NAHT said that changes should be implemented for the 2017 to 2018 academic year.

Government response

Given the overwhelmingly positive response to this proposal, we will move to a more flexible approach for assessing English writing from the 2017 to 2018 academic year onwards. Over the past few months we have been conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the existing interim teacher assessment frameworks in all subjects. This review has involved assessment and curriculum experts, teachers, school leaders, local authority representatives and inclusion specialists.

Whilst the reading, mathematics and science frameworks will continue to use the previous approach, teachers will have more flexibility in how they make judgements using the teacher assessment frameworks for writing. Throughout the consultation document we have been clear that we are committed to creating a stable, sustainable primary assessment system, and providing schools with the necessary lead-in times to manage change is an important part of this. However, in this instance we have heard strong feedback from the sector that they would like changes to the statutory teacher assessment of writing to be made as soon as possible, but for a longer lead-in time to be provided for changes to the other statutory teacher assessment frameworks. We have engaged a variety of stakeholder groups in this process, including Ofqual and the teaching unions, and trialled the revised versions in schools. On this basis, we are responding to this call and the revised statutory teacher assessment frameworks for writing will be used for the first time in the 2017 to 2018 academic year, and are published alongside this document. Updated frameworks in reading and mathematics at key stage 1, and science at key stages 1 and 2, will be introduced from the 2018 to 2019 academic year onwards.

To support the moderation of statutory teacher assessment of writing throughout this change in approach, we will once again run mandatory standardisation training for local authority moderators in the 2017 to 2018 academic year.

Alongside reviewing the mainstream frameworks, we have evaluated the interim pre-key stage standards, to ensure that any changes in the frameworks are reflected in the standards, so that they continue to support progression. We have today also published revised interim pre-key stage standards for writing. As is the case with the mainstream teacher assessment frameworks, teachers will have more flexibility in how they make judgements using the frameworks in the case of writing only. Further information about

the interim pre-key stage standards can be found in the government's response to the parallel consultation on the recommendations made by the Rochford Review.

The sector will appreciate that, having made changes to the statutory writing teacher assessment frameworks sooner rather than later, we have had limited time to make the necessary changes to the supporting exemplification materials in order to reflect these changes. This process is underway and updated exemplification materials in writing will be published later in the autumn term.

Engagement with the sector during this review period has identified a number of areas where we could go even further to improve and strengthen exemplification materials to support statutory teacher assessment, for example by publishing more materials in some subjects. To further support schools, we will look to do this for the 2018 to 2019 academic year; however, we are clear that the exemplification materials that will be available for the 2017 to 2018 academic year will be sufficient to support teachers to make judgements against the frameworks in the summer of 2018.

Supporting and strengthening the assessment of English writing

Whilst we are clear that the approach outlined above will remain for the statutory assessment of writing for the foreseeable future, we sought views through the consultation on robust long-term alternatives that we should explore, to ensure that national statutory assessment of writing is as reliable and useful to schools as possible.

We asked

Please give details of any robust alternative approaches to the assessment of English writing, which the Department for Education should explore.

We heard

This question received fewer responses relative to a number of other consultation questions. A number of respondents were interested in exploring comparative judgement as an alternative approach to assessing writing. A number of responses also stipulated that any alternative approach should allow flexibility. Other suggestions included alternative forms of descriptor-based teacher assessment and portfolio-based teacher assessment, and using only the grammar, punctuation and spelling test to assess English writing. A relatively small number of respondents were interested in exploring a writing test as an alternative form of assessment.

Government response

A significant number of respondents were interested in the potential of comparative judgement as a method for assessing writing. We know that there is promising work

taking place amongst the sector to explore the use of comparative judgement in the assessment of writing, notably the Sharing Standards pilot run by No More Marking. We were encouraged by the results of this year's pilot, which involved 199 schools. We will work with No More Marking to evaluate larger pilots in the near future, to explore the potential of comparative judgement in the assessment system.

Were we to look to make any significant change to the current system of assessing writing in the longer term, we are clear that any alternative model would have to be proven to be robust and reliable through appropriate trialling. Schools would need to be supported to implement any change, with appropriate notice and guidance.

A number of respondents commented that long-term approaches should be more flexible in how they assess writing, with references made to a 'best fit' approach. As set out above, we will move to a more flexible approach of assessing writing from the 2017 to 2018 academic year onwards.

Alternative approaches to moderation

The consultation also sought views on any long-term alternative models of moderation that we should explore.

We asked

Please give details of any effective models of moderation or standardisation of teacher assessment that the Department for Education should explore.

We heard

Like the previous question on alternative approaches to assessing writing, this question received relatively few responses. Nearly half of those who did respond were interested in exploring a peer-to-peer approach to moderation. A number of respondents set out that the current system of local authority-led moderation should be continued, and a small proportion said that this system should be made more rigorous. A number of respondents commented that the exemplification materials designed to support teacher assessment could be improved. Other suggestions included moderation by a different external moderating authority.

Government response

We are clear that we would not make any change to the system of moderation unless an alternative model had been proven to be robust and reliable, and had undergone appropriate trialling. We also recognise that schools would need to be supported with any change of approach, with appropriate lead-in times given for any change, and appropriate training and guidance provided.

Many respondents expressed interest in a peer-to-peer model of moderation that would involve schools working together in local clusters, overseen by a local moderator. It was felt that this approach could further encourage the sharing of best practice, and support teachers' professional development on moderation. To explore this model, we intend to run a small-scale pilot in the 2017 to 2018 academic year. Further details on this, including how schools can express an interest in participating, will be made available in due course.

Many respondents suggested ways that the existing local authority moderation system could be made more reliable. We have taken a number of steps to improve the moderation of teacher assessment judgements in recent years, including working with the NAHT to update guidance, and introducing training for local authority moderators. We will continue to consider how the current system of external local authority moderation can be improved, to ensure that data from statutory teacher assessments is as robust as possible.

Equalities

We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all children and it is important for us to consider the possible impact that consultation proposals could have on different groups. The consultation sought views on whether any of the proposals would have a disproportionate impact on specific students, and if so, what could be done to mitigate this impact.

We asked

Do you think that any of our proposals could have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific students, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics' (including disability, gender, race and religion or belief)? Please provide evidence to support your response.

We heard

The majority of respondents did not answer this question. Of responses received, the majority did not detail specific policies or proposals that they felt would have a disproportionate impact, but some expressed broad concerns that some pupils, particularly those who have English as an additional language and those with special education needs and disabilities, will be unable to show progress under the proposed statutory assessment system. Some respondents also made general comments about the impact of the assessment burden on pupils' wellbeing and a small proportion felt that using a high-stakes accountability system disadvantages certain pupil groups.

We asked

How could any adverse impact be reduced and are there any ways we could better advance equality of opportunity? Please provide evidence to support your response.

We heard

Very few respondents answered this question. A number of respondents said that moving to a more flexible approach of teacher assessment could mitigate any adverse impact of the proposed changes, whereas a small proportion of respondents said that this could be achieved by reducing the number of statutory assessments. A number of respondents also suggested that reducing the stakes associated with the assessment and accountability system could reduce any disproportionate impact. Some respondents referred to the teacher assessment frameworks for writing, specifically recommending amendments to the statements on spelling and handwriting, which they felt discriminated against pupils with dyslexia or physical disabilities.

Government response

We have completed a separate Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) in compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, to assess the likely impact of the changes to statutory primary assessment on pupils with protected characteristics. Points raised in response to these questions regarding the potential impact of the changes on groups with protected characteristics have been taken into account when preparing the EIA and in reaching decisions about the changes to statutory primary assessment. Many respondents referred to equalities issues in other parts of the consultation, and these concerns have also been considered in the decision-making process. The EIA is published alongside this response.

Annex A: List of organisations that responded to the consultation

Amongst those who responded to the consultation were:

- Achievement for All
- Achieving for Children
- Action for Children
- Ark (Network)
- Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment
- Association for Science Education
- Association of School and College Leaders
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers
- Australian Council for Educational Research
- Bath & North East Somerset Council Early Years Service
- Better Without Baseline Coalition
- Blackpool Council
- British Association of Teachers of the Deaf
- British Educational Research Association
- Buckinghamshire Learning Trust
- Busy Bees
- Catholic Education Service
- CBI
- Centre for Early Child Development
- Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring, Durham University
- Cheshire East Local Authority
- Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority
- City of York Council
- Cumbria County Council
- Derbyshire Local Authority
- Doncaster Local Authority
- Driver Youth Trust
- Durham County Council
- Early Childhood Mathematics Group
- Early Education
- Early Excellence Ltd
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Education Policy Institute
- Federation of Leaders in Special Education
- GL Assessment
- Gloucestershire Local Authority
- Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service
- Haringey Council
- Headteachers' Cluster
- I CAN, the children's communication charity
- Independent Association of Prep Schools
- Integrated Early Years Service, Education & Partnerships, Directorate of Children's Services LB Tower Hamlets

- Kent County Council
- Lancashire Assessment Support Team
- Leeds City Council
- Leicestershire Local Authority
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission
- LKMco
- London Borough of Ealing
- Made By Dyslexia
- Mathematics in Education and Industry
- Medway Local Authority
- Merton Local Authority
- Montessori Schools Association
- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
- National Association for Primary Education
- National Association for the Teaching of English
- National Association Head Teachers (NAHT)
- National Association of Mathematics Advisers
- National Children's Bureau
- National Day Nurseries Association
- National Deaf Children's Society
- National Foundation for Educational Research
- National Governance Association
- National Literacy Trust
- North Yorkshire County Council
- Northumberland County Council
- NRIC, Centre for Mathematical Sciences, University of Cambridge
- National Union of Teachers (NUT)
- Ofqual
- OFSTED
- Oxford University Press
- Pacey
- Parents and Teachers for Excellence
- Peterborough City Council
- Poole Borough Council
- Pre-school Learning Alliance
- Public Health England
- Pupils2Parliament
- Rescue our Schools
- Royal National Institute of Blind People
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
- Royal Society
- Royal Society of Chemistry
- Salford Local Authority
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sheffield City Council
- Stockport Local Authority
- TACTYC – Association for Professional Development in Early Years

- The British Dyslexia Association
- The Church of England Education Office
- The Communication Trust
- The Mathematical Association and The Association of Teachers of Mathematics
- The National Association of Advisers in English
- UCL Institute of Education
- United Kingdom Literacy Association
- Voice the Union
- Wandsworth Borough Council
- Warwickshire Local Authority
- Wiltshire Local Authority



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