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Guidance

# Optional key stage 1 teacher assessment guidance 2025

Updated 1 October 2024

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## 1. The purpose of this guidance

Following the announcement that, from the academic year 2023 to 2024 onwards, end of key stage 1 (KS1) assessment will be non-statutory, this guidance supports the recommended approach for schools to carry out optional KS1 teacher assessment (TA). It also provides guidance to help with internal moderation of KS1 teacher assessment.

The phonics screening check remains statutory. Please refer to the [Phonics screening check assessment and reporting arrangements](#) to see how phonics should be delivered.

### 1.1 Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- headteachers, teachers, school staff and governing bodies in maintained

schools, academies, free schools, special schools, pupil referral units, maintained nursery schools, Service Children's Education schools and independent schools

- local authorities who provide support or have a working relationship with schools in relation to KS1

## 2. Different forms of assessment

For KS1, there are 2 recommended forms of assessment in schools. These are:

- day-to-day formative assessment – to inform teaching on an ongoing basis
- in-school summative assessment – to understand pupil performance at the end of a period of teaching

A school's assessment policy forms the basis of a teacher's judgements about what pupils know and can do. If you wish to use the KS1 TA frameworks for the purpose of informing classroom practice and understanding pupil performance, the school's assessment policy should detail what evidence teachers need to make judgements against the TA frameworks.

## 3. Making teacher assessment judgements

### 3.1 Overview of teacher assessment

TA at the end of KS1 is optional. If schools wish to use the KS1 TA frameworks to inform classroom practice, we recommend doing so using a broad range of evidence from across the curriculum and knowledge of how a pupil has performed over time and in a variety of contexts. Teachers can consider the pupil's:

- written, practical and oral classwork
- results from the optional KS1 tests in English reading and mathematics, if taken

### 3.2 What teachers can assess

Teachers can make their TA judgements using the:

- [KS1 TA frameworks](#) in English reading, English writing, mathematics and

- science – for pupils who have completed the KS1 programmes of study and are working at the standard of national curriculum assessments
- [pre-key stage 1 standards](#) in English reading, English writing and mathematics – for pupils who are working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and are engaged in subject-specific study, or who have not completed the relevant programme of study
- [engagement model](#) – for pupils who are working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and not yet engaged in subject-specific study

### 3.3 Teacher assessment frameworks

The frameworks contain ‘pupil can’ statements. Teachers can follow the guidance for each subject in the frameworks when making their judgements.

For the most accurate judgements, teachers should be confident that pupils have met the standards preceding the one at which they judge them to be working. However, they are not required to have specific evidence for the preceding standards. Pupils’ work that demonstrates they are meeting a standard is sufficient to show they are working above the preceding standards.

#### Frameworks for English reading, English writing and mathematics

The frameworks contain 3 standards:

- working towards the expected standard
- working at the expected standard
- working at greater depth

#### Framework for science

The KS1 science framework contains one standard: working at the expected standard.

This framework is designed so that a pupil who has completed the programme of study can be judged as either ‘working at the expected standard’ or ‘has not met the expected standard’.

### 3.4 ‘Pupil can’ statements

‘Pupil can’ statements are performance indicators. They give a snapshot of a pupil’s attainment at the end of the key stage. Each statement describes what a pupil working at that standard should be able to do. Teachers can follow the specific guidance for each framework to reach their judgements about whether a pupil has met a standard.

Qualifiers are used in some statements to indicate the extent to which pupils demonstrate the required knowledge or skill. Where qualifiers are used, they have consistent meaning:

- ‘Most’ indicates that the statement is generally met with only occasional errors.
- ‘Many’ indicates that the statement is met frequently but not yet consistently.
- ‘Some’ indicates that the knowledge or skill is starting to be acquired and is demonstrated correctly on occasion but is not yet consistent or frequent.

Some of the statements also include examples to clarify the required knowledge or skill. These examples do not dictate the required evidence, but illustrate how that statement might be met. Teachers can refer to the national curriculum to exemplify the statements and can use exemplification materials to support them if they choose (see section 3.8).

### 3.5 Gathering evidence

Evidence can come from day-to-day work in the classroom and can be drawn from a variety of sources. The teacher frameworks make it clear that:

- a pupil’s work in the subject being assessed may provide sufficient evidence to support the judgement, although evidence from other curriculum subjects may further support the framework being assessed
- teachers will see multiple statements evidenced across a collection of work but sometimes a single piece of work can provide evidence for multiple statements, depending on the statements and the nature of the evidence
- pupils’ work which demonstrates they have met a standard is sufficient to show they are working above preceding standards, but teachers should also be confident that a pupil has met all the standards preceding the one at which they judge them to be working at – this will help assure teachers that the pupil is working at the correct standard they are judging them against
- in English reading, discussion with a pupil about a single book that the pupil has read independently, at the right level, may provide a teacher with evidence that the pupil has met all the statements within ‘working at greater depth’
- in English writing, a single, comprehensive example of writing may be sufficient to show that a pupil can, for example, write about personal experiences and real events
- in mathematics, it might be evident from one exercise that a pupil can recall multiplication and division facts for 2, 5 and 10, and use them to solve simple mathematics problems, demonstrating an understanding of commutativity as necessary

In science:

- one piece of work might show that a pupil can describe basic needs of both plants and animals, while grouping and classifying things and carrying out

### simple comparative tests

- there is no requirement to have evidence from the classroom showing that pupils have met statements relating to science content taught before the final year of the key stage
- year 2 teachers are not expected to reassess the science content taught in year 1 of the national curriculum – where possible, we recommend that teachers draw on assessment judgements that were made by year 1 teachers in determining whether the pupil has grasped that science content

The optional end of KS1 tests will continue to be available and can be a useful indicator of a pupil's overall attainment. However, it depends on the subject and statement whether this evidence is sufficient on its own:

- For English reading and writing, discrete test questions will only supplement evidence that pupils have met statements – for example, a spelling test or handwriting exercise can provide additional evidence for these statements in English writing, but a teacher should also see these skills applied in the course of the pupil's writing.
- For mathematics and science, a single test question may be sufficient to show that a pupil has grasped the knowledge or skill – for example, a pupil's answer in a mathematics test might show that they can read the time on the clock to the nearest 15 minutes.

## 3.6 Pre-key stage standards

We recommend that schools use the [pre-key stage 1 standards](#) for the optional assessment of pupils at the end of KS1 who are working below the overall standard of national curriculum assessments and are engaged in subject-specific study, including those who:

- have not completed the KS1 programmes of study but are still moving onto key stage 2 with their current year group
- cannot communicate in English

The pre-key stage standards follow the same principles as the TA frameworks. They contain 'pupil can' statements which teachers can use to assess and provide evidence against, to show that pupils have met the standard they have been awarded. Teachers can follow the guidance for each subject in the pre-key stage standards when making their judgements.

The pre-key stage 1 standards for English reading, English writing and mathematics range from standard 1 to 4.

## 3.7 The engagement model

We recommend that schools use the [engagement model](#) to assess pupils who are working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and not engaged in subject-specific study at the end of KS1.

It is formed of 5 interrelated areas of engagement:

- exploration
- realisation
- anticipation
- persistence
- initiation

We recommend that schools follow the published guidance for best practice on how to use the engagement model to support teachers and staff involved in the optional assessment of these pupils at the end of KS1.

Schools can use the engagement model as and where they feel it is required, but we recommend that they use it to assess pupils regularly throughout the academic year. This approach will help schools demonstrate whether the pupil is able to sustain the new skills, concepts and knowledge over time, rather than reflecting a snapshot of one activity or observation.

### 3.8 Exemplification materials

[Exemplification materials](#) may help teachers when they use the optional assessment frameworks to make judgements. Teachers can use the materials to help make their own TA judgements or to validate other judgements across the school. If teachers are confident in their judgements, they do not need to refer to the exemplification materials.

Exemplification materials only illustrate how ‘pupil can’ statements in the frameworks might be met. They do not dictate a particular method of teaching, as this will vary from school to school.

## 4. Assessing pupils with disabilities

Under the [Equality Act 2010](#), a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. All schools are required to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities.

When teachers assess pupils against the ‘pupil can’ statements, they can base their judgements on what a pupil with a disability can do when reasonable

adjustments are in place – for example, reducing anxiety by providing a quiet area or allowing more time to process instructions.

If a pupil has a disability that prevents them from demonstrating attainment in the way described in a ‘pupil can’ statement, their individual method of communication or learning is applicable – for example, using a visual phonics system for a pupil with a hearing impairment, or using a computer for a pupil with a visual impairment because they cannot read back their handwriting.

If a pupil has a disability that physically prevents them from demonstrating a ‘pupil can’ statement altogether, even with reasonable adjustments in place, these statements can be excluded from the TA judgement – for example, statements relating to handwriting if the pupil is physically restricted when writing, or phonics if a pupil is hearing impaired and unable to make use of a visual phonics system. We recommend teachers use their professional discretion in making such judgements for each pupil.

## 5. Possible teacher assessment outcomes

Below we have summarised the different possible KS1 TA outcomes. They can support teachers who choose to carry out internal moderation and would like to record an outcome against their pupils for internal monitoring and tracking.

The optional tracking outcomes for English reading, English writing and mathematics are:

- GDS: working at greater depth
- EXS: working at the expected standard
- WTS: working towards the expected standard
- HNM: has not met the expected standard
- PK4: pre-key stage standard 4
- PK3: pre-key stage standard 3
- PK2: pre-key stage standard 2
- PK1: pre-key stage standard 1
- EM: working below the level of the national curriculum and not yet engaged in subject-specific study

The optional tracking outcomes for science are:

- EXS: working at the expected standard
- HNM: has not met the expected standard

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