



# Assessment Policy

September 2021

## **Assessment at Markeaton Primary School**

Assessment is integral to identifying what a child has achieved and where they need to develop and takes place in all subjects. It occurs in many different forms and at Markeaton assessment sits under two main categories:

### **Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment, whether it be scores from a test or marks for a piece of homework, is used to evaluate a child's learning. Summative assessment is generally not used to identify strengths or areas to develop and it tends to deliver a 'snapshot' of achievement.

For example, if a child scored 8/10 in a spelling test it might tell the teacher they have a good understanding of how to spell certain words but it wouldn't necessarily say why certain words were spelt incorrectly or if certain phonic knowledge was missing. This evaluation would be more ably supported by Formative Assessment.

### **Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment is much more of a diagnostic tool and really helps teaching staff to identify concepts that children are struggling to understand, skills they are having difficulty acquiring, or learning they have not yet achieved. From this, adjustments can be made to lessons, teaching techniques and any support that may be required. Sometimes these changes can occur over a week or even a term and sometimes these changes can be made during a lesson. It requires teaching staff to be skilled and responsive.

Formative assessment is ongoing and is a catalogue of observations, verbal/written feedback and questioning; all of which provide the teaching staff with the information they need to plan and deliver an appropriate curriculum which allows all children to make progress.

### **What is Assessment Without Levels?**

A good few years back the Government made some significant changes to the way children in schools were to be assessed. This was to tie in with the New National Curriculum that started to be used by all schools at the beginning of 2014.

### **Why were these changes introduced?**

*"Too often levels became viewed as thresholds and teaching became focused on getting pupils across the next threshold instead of ensuring they were secure in the knowledge and understanding defined in the programmes of study. Depth and breadth of understanding were sometimes sacrificed in favour of pace. Levels also used a 'best fit' model, which meant that a pupil could have serious gaps in their knowledge and understanding, but still be placed within the level. This meant it wasn't always clear exactly which areas of the curriculum the child was secure in and where the gaps were."*

**John McIntosh CBE**

### So, what changes were made?

- Levels, for example 1a, 4b, 5a were removed from being used as a method of tracking, assessing and reporting progress in schools. Levels had been around since the early 90s and were part of the old National Curriculum.
- Once levels had been removed, the emphasis shifted from **rate of coverage** to **depth of coverage**. Essentially, making sure the children were secure in their understanding before moving on to the next stage in their learning.
- Levels were replaced by what is called Age Related Standards.

### What do Age Related Standards mean at Markeaton?

- Age Related Standards are a set of benchmarks which relate to the level of understanding a child has at any point throughout the year.
- They are linked specifically to whichever year they are in. So a child in Y4, at any point in the year, will be assessed on how well and how much of the Y4 curriculum they have achieved.
- Children will no longer be taught content from the year(s) below (in the past some children may have been taught content from the year(s) below in order to help them 'catch up') and no longer will children be taught content from the year(s) above (in the past some children may have been taught content from the year(s) above in order to challenge them).
- Every child in that class, with the exception of identified children and/or groups (see later in the policy), will be taught the content for their year group from the National Curriculum.
- At Markeaton, there are four main descriptors that we use to describe a child's level of knowledge and understanding: beginning (B), working towards the Age Related Standard (WT), working at the Age Related Standard (WA), working at greater depth within the Age Related Standard (GD). These mirror the terminology which is used nationally. So a child in Y4, at the end of the Autumn term, might be Y4B. This means they are beginning to understand the Y4 curriculum.

### How is pupil progress monitored at Markeaton?

Although assessment takes place in all subjects, there is an expectation nationally that assessment is reported in more detail in Reading, Writing and Maths. How pupils are progressing at Markeaton is something teaching staff and other professionals will discuss constantly. However, at the end of every term each department will meet together and complete a Pupil Progress Booklet for their class in these subjects. Once completed, this helps them to have an overview of progress and allows them to identify vulnerable groups, any additional support that is required and any interventions that need to be put in place. It also allows teaching staff to support one another and share best practice. By doing this a more collective responsibility can evolve and teachers can become more aware of children in

different year groups and/or those children who may be coming up to their year group in September.

As you would expect, there are certain 'markers' that we use throughout the year to help us gauge whether they are 'on track' to meet the Age Related Standard and these form part of any Pupil Progress Meetings. These 'markers' are likely to have also been discussed during Parent/Carer Consultations:

End of Autumn Term				
Start of the year	Beginning	Working Towards	Working At	Greater Depth
<i>All Pupils</i>				

At the end of the Autumn Term a child who is on track to make the Age Related Standard by the end of the year will be **Beginning**.

End of Spring Term				
Start of the year	Beginning	Working Towards	Working At	Greater Depth

At the end of the Spring Term a child who is on track to make the Age Related Standard by the end of the year will be **Working Towards**.

End of Summer Term				
Start of the year	Beginning	Working Towards	Working At	Greater Depth

At the end of the Summer Term a child who is on track to make the Age Related Standard by the end of the year will be **Working At**.

## **What is Greater Depth?**

At the end of the year there will be some children who achieve Greater Depth. This means they are working above the Age Related Standard and their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for that year group is secure and likely to be 'locked in' as they move up the school.

\*Remember, the emphasis is on depth of knowledge not how quickly they have progressed. If a child is Greater Depth at the end of the year it does not mean they have had access to a different curriculum or more challenging content, it just means that their understanding is at a more secure level. A good way for teachers to establish this is to see if children are able to transfer skills from one context to another; for example, if a child has a secure understanding of place value then are they able to put populations of cities in numerical order in Geography or can they arrange historical dates. Or, if they have a secure understanding of ratio then are they able to draw a repeated pattern in Art. Another good way is to see if they can remember how to do something later on in the year! **Or via 'Fast Four'...**

### **'Fast Four'**

Fast Four is something the children will see at the beginning of every lesson. It is usually a grid with four questions in it relating to that lesson. One question relates to the previous day's learning, one question relates to the previous week's learning, one question relates to the previous topic and one to the previous year. This is used to help children retain their understanding and also helps them make links from one subject to another.

## **Challenge**

When levels were removed and the new National Curriculum stated that children could only be taught the content from their year group, some parents/carers were concerned that their child would not be appropriately challenged. In the past their child may have been given 'harder' work from the year above that would have 'stretched' them. At Markeaton we have worked hard to communicate a different message when it comes to challenge. Yes, they will be no longer be taught content from the year above and/or be in a different set; now they will be encouraged to secure their understanding via a range of different activities e.g. self-assessment, peer-assessment (evaluating someone else's work), figuring out another way to solve a problem, teaching the class and many more. All of these strategies help learning become more embedded and increases the likelihood of sustained progress throughout their time at school. In Maths, as an example, this make take the form of what is called a 'Deepening Star'.

## **What if my child is working below the Age Related Standard?**

As stated earlier in the policy, there are some children who may be working below or significantly below the Age Related Standard. In which case, these children, depending on their level of need and the support they require, will have access to a more tailored curriculum and assessment framework. This may also mean that their progress is reported in a slightly different way as their developmental steps are smaller and more gradual. At Markeaton we utilise the [Birmingham Toolkit for Assessment](#) following training in Autumn 2021.

If your child is working below or significantly below the Age Related Standard, then you are likely to have already had this conversation with your child's classroom teacher and they will be able to talk you through the progress your child is making using whichever model/language is most appropriate. If your child is on the Special Educational Needs register then any progress will be reported using the Birmingham Toolkit alongside their MEP (Multi Element Plan) and/or EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) targets. **Please refer to the [SEND Policy](#) on the website for more details about MEPs and EHCPs.**

### **What statutory assessments take place in school?**

At certain points throughout your child's time at Markeaton they will be part of some statutory assessments which are reported by the school on the website and contribute towards a national picture. Sometimes the children will not be aware that they are being assessed and we try to 'shield' them as much as possible from any undue anxiety or worries about these assessments.

*Click on the links below to find out more:*

- [Reception](#)
- [Y1 Phonics](#)
- [KS1 SATs](#)
- [Y4 Times Tables Check](#)
- [KS2 SATs](#)

### **Assessments in other subjects**

As stated earlier in the policy we do assess a child's level of knowledge and understanding in all subjects; with a particular emphasis on Reading, Writing and Maths.

However, what we also try to do is find the right balance between unnecessary workload for teaching staff and assessment data that means something. If every subject had to be assessed with the same level of detail as Reading, Writing and Maths then teaching staff would have no time left to teach! At Markeaton we are extremely proud of [our curriculum](#) and we would not want any over complicated or unnecessary assessment procedures to impact on the quality of our provision. That said, we know it is important to show progress in these subjects so there is a much more pragmatic approach to this which complements our creative methodology. This means that your child will receive a judgment in their end of year report in all of the other subjects but any supplementary notes, assessments, test scores, observations, homework projects etc will be recorded, communicated and used at the teacher's discretion.

At Markeaton we recognise the importance of showing progress in all subjects but we equally value the vibrancy and enjoyment of an engaging curriculum which allows children to explore their potential.



*It is also important to remember that showing progress does not always take the form of a number or a word, an increase in confidence or self-esteem brought about by completing a certain task in a certain subject does not necessarily need to be measured and is just as important.*

### **And finally...**

At Markeaton we have worked hard to ensure that many of the changes we have made to teaching and learning, the curriculum and assessment link together and help secure the best possible outcomes for the children. The removal of levels, the introduction of Markeaton Minds, no setting, changes to feedback and marking and a greater emphasis on academic and personal resilience have all helped to create a strong ethos in school and a blueprint for success which the children can really relate to.

