

DFE Up-dates in September 2015

The DFE released their Interim Teacher Assessment frameworks in September this year which identified the expectations for the end of Year 2 and end of Year 6.

The language used by the DFE is a child is ***working towards the expected standard*** or ***working at the expected standard*** or ***working at greater depth within the expected standard***.

Our tracking reporting system in all year groups will mirror this, identifying children who are below, working at or above expectations and it will be reported to parents like this at the end of the year.

During the year, at Parent Consultations, we will share the progress your child has made against the objectives learnt so far and what is being learnt next – these will be their targets.

'Life Without levels'

There have been some major changes in education over the past few years, representing a shift in key areas of thinking such as a new curriculum and the removal of fully embedded leveling systems and descriptors.

This leaflet offers an outline of the changes to assessment practices, giving an insight into the reasons behind such shifts and how we, as a school are responding to these changes.

On the final page you will find our vision for assessment that is meaningful, effective and delivers clarity of purpose. High expectations for progress and achievement remain at the heart of all we do.

**'Life without levels':
what does this mean
for our school?**

**Federation of
Yatton Schools**



Together is better



Life without levels - a new way of assessing

Introduction:

When the Government launched a new curriculum, they also asked an 'Expert Panel' to review the national assessment strategies and procedures of schools. They particularly

looked at the level descriptors.

As a consequence of their findings, the Government has removed level descriptors and the very notions of levels has changed, especially for Maths and English.



What did the Expert Panel

find?

Tim Oates, who lead the panel, reported these key findings:



- Levels resulted in children labelling themselves.
- Levels created an 'undue pace'—focus was on getting children to move quickly through levels, whereas the focus should be on ensuring children have achieved deep understanding—longer, stronger focus on key content.
- Levels are an odd idea—a child overall can average out at a level, so validity is low.
- Best-fit matching was flawed and so pupils moved on inappropriately or thresholds meant a child might only just be inside a level.
- Levels can convey the wrong idea of ability, need to switch to a different conception of ability.
- The core principle shared by the Expert Panel was namely: 'Fewer things in greater depth', rather than moving through the levels at pace being a reflection of good teaching or learning.

See for yourself via the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5vrBXFpm0>

What does this mean for The Federation of Yatton Schools?

Every school has been encouraged to develop an assessment system that is fit for purpose and as ever we have responded positively, with an open mind that seeks to find the best methods possible for pupils, staff and parents. It means that previous level headings (such as 1C, 2A or 3B) will be phased out and will no longer be reported to you in this way. However, we will continue to report progress and our high expectations for every pupil will remain the foundation for all we do.

Where are we currently?

- We have begun the year assessing against the new national curriculum objectives onto a national assessment tracking system called Target Tracker.
- We have attended Local Authority training and collected their ideas.
- We have met as a staff team to explore our ideas for assessment and how this links in to teaching and learning.
- We have identified key areas of learning that we Believe will prepare each child for the next stage of their learning.
- We have begun to share the concept of 'mastery' and how this will look for each objective within the new NC.
- We have organized moderation with other schools to ensure that our assessments match those locally in the core subjects.



Our vision – we believe:

- Assessment descriptors should be clearly defined, meaningful and shared with pupils and parents.
- Assessment should allow teachers to effectively move learning on at the right pace.
- Assessment descriptors should place a focus on 'depth' of learning not simply on 'pace' of progress. We refer to this as 'mastery' of skills and knowledge.
- Each year group should provide a strong learning platform for the pupil in readiness for the following year group. Year 6 should ensure every child is Secondary ready.
- Assessment pictures should accurately reflect where an individual pupil is and identify where gaps in skills and knowledge are.
- Teaching and learning must be closely linked to what is assessed, although assessment descriptors must never limit a child's love of learning.

