Managing Assessment Information in the EYFS Schools

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Ofsted Inspection of Early Years provision

Within the common inspection framework 2015, maintained schools and academies and non-association independent schools that have Early Years Foundation Stage provision are given a separate grade for that provision as part of school inspections conducted under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. This contributes to the judgement about the overall effectiveness of the school. The framework is accompanied by an inspection handbook for Early Years:


The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS framework is mandatory for all early years providers (from 1 September 2014) - maintained schools, non-maintained schools, independent schools, and all providers on the Early Years Register. The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

In planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners must consider the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
• creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things
Development Matters

Development Matters (March 2012) is non-statutory guidance material that supports practitioners in implementing the statutory requirements of the EYFS. It states that: “Children develop at their own rates, and in their own ways. The development statements and their order should not be taken as necessary steps for individual children. They should not be used as checklists. The age/stage bands overlap because these are not fixed age boundaries but suggest a typical range of development.” These statements can be used throughout the EYFS as a guide to making ‘best fit’ judgements about whether a child is showing typical development for their age, may be at risk of delay or is ahead for their age.

Individual observations may be linked to Development Matters bands as part of formative assessment. It is recommended that, in addition to an approved Baseline Assessment tool, judgements across all areas of learning should be made on entry and at several points throughout the year in order to consider the overall progress a child is making, and whether progress is generally in line with what is typical for a child of that age. Learning and development is compared with the most appropriate band(s) of descriptors and the band which most closely describes the child’s developmental stage is identified.

Using ‘A’, ‘B’ or ‘C’, a level can be awarded within each developmental age/stage band using a ‘best fit’ approach.

- if the child is working just within the band record as a ‘C’ (beginning):
- if the child is working comfortably within the age band record as a ‘B’ (secure)
- If the child is very proficient within the band record as an ‘A’ (high)

Because this is a ‘best fit’ judgement it does not involve recording evidence for or highlighting every single ‘Development Matters’ statement. Rather the child’s key person and the class teacher, in discussion with all others involved with the child, will make professional judgments about which level of development best describes the child at that moment on their developmental journey. These professional judgements will be based upon on-going observational assessment of the child as he/she engages with the environment and interacts in their play and planned activities. It will take account of information from the parents/carers about what the child does outside school.

Baseline Assessment

The new baseline check will be used to assess children starting in Reception in September 2016 and beyond, though many schools have chosen to introduce the assessments from September 2015.

“The content of the assessment will reflect the knowledge and understanding of children at the start of Reception and the idea is to use the assessment as a starting point from which to measure the progress that schools make with their pupils. It will be carried out by reception teachers within the first half term of a pupil’s entry to school.

Schools that use an approved baseline assess assessment in September 2015 will have
their progress measured in 2022 (when these children reach the end of key stage 2) based on either the reception baseline or key stage 1 results, whichever shows the most progress. For schools which do not choose to use the reception baseline in 2015, progress will only be measured from key stage 1 to key stage 2. The reception baseline will be the only measure used to assess progress for children who start reception in September 2016 and beyond. Key stage 1 assessments will remain statutory but will not be used for the progress floor standard of all-through primary schools. The progress of pupils starting reception in September 2016 in all-through primary schools will be measured in 2023 when these pupils reach the end of key stage 2. Schools that choose not to use an approved baseline assessment from 2016 will be judged on an attainment floor standard alone.”

From ‘Reforming assessment and accountability for Primary Schools. Government response to consultation on primary schools assessment and accountability March 2014’


The approved Baseline Assessment tools provide entry assessment information in relation to the Prime areas plus Literacy and Maths. To track and support the development of the whole child it is important that schools identify children’s level of development on entry and progress made throughout the year across all 7 areas of learning within the EYFS curriculum and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

On leaving Reception at the end of the EYFS, national statutory assessment is completed. “The EYFS Profile summarises and describes children’s attainment at the end of the EYFS. It is based on on-going observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and the three characteristics of effective learning.” Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook

Practitioners are required to make a judgement in relation to each of the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as to whether the child’s learning and development is best described by:

- the ‘expected’ description for each ELG;
- not yet at the expected level (‘emerging’); or
- beyond the level expected at the end of the EYFS (‘exceeding’)

To create the most accurate picture of the child’s overall embedded learning, a holistic view of the descriptor should be taken. Practitioners must use a ‘best fit’ approach; they should consider the entirety of each ELG and avoid splitting the descriptor into sections. Because children do not necessarily achieve uniformly, the practitioner should judge whether the description within the ELG best fits the child’s learning and development, taking into account their relative strengths and weaknesses. ‘Best fit’ does not mean that the child has equal mastery or knowledge of all aspects of the ELG.

In making this decision, practitioners must refer to the exemplification of national standards.
The exemplification illustrates the standard expected for each ELG at the end of the EYFS. Practitioners should also refer to the EYFS Profile Handbook which contains information on the ‘exceeding’ level.


Local authorities are responsible for providing a robust moderation process so that practitioner judgements are evaluated in line with statutory requirements. It is important that schools quality assure their data before submitting this to the local authority. The Headteacher is expected to ‘sign off’ the data. Further details on the moderation process can be found in the Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA) for 2016.


From September 2016 the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will no longer be compulsory. It remains a statutory requirement for the academic year 2015-16. The Early Years Foundation Stage itself will continue to be statutory, supporting children to experience a broad and engaging programme of learning in Reception.

National expectations on entry

Ofsted no longer refer to ‘on entry’ benchmarks of 30-50 months for Nursery children and 40-60+ months for Reception. A child entering Nursery at the age of three working proficiently within 22-36 months could be considered as ‘age typical’, depending upon their date of birth. Similarly, a child starting Reception at the age of four working proficiently within 30-50 months could still be regarded as ‘age typical’, depending upon their date of birth. The common inspection framework which comes into effect from 1 September 2015 states:

“Inspectors will take account of current standards and progress, including the provider’s own data, and make a relevant judgement on academic and other learning outcomes for children and learners by evaluating the extent to which they:

progress well from their different starting points and achieve or exceed standards expected for their age”

Individual children may be:

- operating at a level below that typical for their age but not significantly so (this may reflect a lack of pre-school experience)
- showing a typical level of development for their age
- operating at a level above that typical for their age (indicating the potential to exceed the early learning goals by the end of reception).

Others may be operating at a level significantly below that which is typical for their age. Such children may be at risk of delay, or may have a particular disability or special
educational need that has already been identified. The Early Years inspection Handbook 2015 states that:

“The inspector must evaluate

- whether children are working at typical levels of development for their age, including whether they are exceeding or reaching or are likely to reach typical levels of development for their age
- whether children who are disadvantaged or under-performing are catching up quickly”


National expectations on exit

The national expectation at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is for a child to attain a Good Level of Development (GLD).

Defining a Good Level of Development (GLD)

From 2013, children are defined as having reached a GLD at the end of the EYFS if they achieve at least the ‘expected’ level in:

- the ELGs in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and;
- the ELGs in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy

In total there are 12 ELGs within the GLD

Remember: Children are judged to be either at an ‘emerging’, ‘expected’ or ‘exceeding’ level of development in relation to the Early Learning Goals. Point scores are awarded as follows: ‘emerging’ = 1; ‘expected’ = 2; ‘exceeding’ = 3

Please note that a GLD is a measurement of attainment not progress and that for a child to attain a GLD they must score 2 or more in all 12 ELGs identified above.

Please see the ‘EYFS Profile Handbook 2014’ (DfE November 2013) for further information.

Assessing Progress

The Early Years Inspection Handbook September 2015 states that

“Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by evaluating the extent to which:
- assessment information is gathered from looking at what children and learners already know, understand and can do, and is informed by their parents/previous providers as appropriate
- assessment information is used to plan appropriate teaching and learning strategies, including to identify children and learners who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support, enabling children and learners to make good progress and achieve well

Inspectors should take account of all the judgements made across the evaluation schedule. In particular, they should consider:

- the progress all children make in their learning and development relative to their starting points and their readiness for the next stage of their education including, where appropriate, readiness for school”

Where children progress steadily against what is a typical level of development for their age, they can be said to have made typical progress. Children who meet all the early learning goals but who started at a lower level of development than is typical for their age might be said to be making more than typical or rapid progress. However, a child starting school at a higher level of development, who meets all the early learning goals but exceeds none of them is unlikely to have made enough progress.

E.g. A child who enters Reception, at a level ‘typical’ for their age e.g. just beginning to work within the 40-60+ months age banding / working proficiently within the 30-50 months age banding is considered to be on track for achieving the ‘expected’ level at EYFSP. In this case the child will have made ‘typical progress’. If this child attained the ‘exceeding’ level this would signify ‘rapid progress’. A child who enters Reception working below, but not significantly below, the level expected for their age is not considered to be on track to achieve the ‘expected’ level and will need to make ‘rapid progress’ in order to close the gap in their learning.
A methodology of showing ‘typical progress’ in Reception is to:

- Identify the percentage of children who meet all the ELGs and who started Reception working at a typical level of development for their age.
- Identify the percentage of children who meet the ‘exceeding’ level and who started Reception working above the typical level of development for their age.

A methodology of showing ‘rapid progress’ in Reception is to:

- Identify the percentage of children who meet all the ELGs but who started at a lower level of development than is typical for their age.
- Identify the percentage of children who achieve the ‘exceeding’ level but who started at a level of development typical for their age.
- Identify the percentage of children who are working within NC descriptors for Year 1 and who started Reception working above the typical level of development for their age.

Tracking tools

- **Oxfordshire Pupil Tracker (OPT)** is designed to help primary, infant and junior schools record and track pupil development from EYFS (nursery) to KS2—this operates using SIMS or RM Integris.
- Contact the [ICT.Service@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ICT.Service@Oxfordshire.gov.uk) or tel: 0845 052 1000 for more details.
- **eProfile** is designed to help teachers and practitioners record and track development through the Early Years Foundation Stage framework from Birth to 5, using ‘Development Matters’ indicators. It operates using Microsoft Windows.

*N.B. other commercial tools are available such as Classroom Monitor, Insight, and ITrack.*

- Tracking sheets to support more detailed assessment within phonics and number are available from the early education tool kit eg. Reception class tracker by term of birth, Letters and Sounds’ phonics tracker, Numbers and Patterns tracker.

In addition, a range of electronic tools are available for practitioners working in the EYFS to help record observations, photographs and videos, creating Learning Journals/logs such as 2Simple’s ‘2 Build a Profile’, ‘Tapestry’ from Foundation Forum, ‘Fingertips Online’ and ‘Orbit’. Costs vary (some are free). They allow practitioners to involve parents/carers in contributing to the child’s journal electronically.

Identifying and reporting on specific groups of children

**SEN, EAL, Pupil Premium, significant ethnic groups, more able**

Practitioners must identify these children in order to track, monitor and report upon their progress as distinct groups. The [Early Years Inspection Handbook September 2015](http://example.com) states that the inspector should discuss with the provider the relevant children’s starting points,
looking at any assessment evidence the setting provides and the children’s progress. This will include:

- the impact of any early years pupil premium funding on the children’s progress
- whether children who are disadvantaged or under-performing are catching up quickly
- how well disabled children and those with special educational needs are supported to make progress
- how quickly children who speak English as an additional language gain the skills they need to communicate effectively.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

Children within the Early Years Foundation Stage with SEND are entitled to high-quality Early Years provision based on the EYFS framework, its principles and commitments. They should be supported in pursuing unique paths in their learning and development toward the early learning goals. Assessment of their progress should take account of the developmental bands described in Development Matters / Early Years Outcomes, recognising that progress is not linear.

Note that P scales do not relate to the EYFS framework and therefore, P scales and the EYFS are not compatible.

P scales are not an appropriate assessment or monitoring tool for young children and should only be considered for pupils in year 1 at the start of term three unless, after consultation with the SENCO and/or other agencies, there is a clear need prior to this.

**Early Support Developmental Journals**

Developmental Journals are available for young children with very specific needs e.g. Down’s syndrome/autism etc. The Early Years Developmental Journal has been produced to help families find out more about early development and to track change and progress over time. It helps everyone involved with a child to share what they know and discuss how best to work together to support development and learning.

http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/884631/early_years_developmental_journal2013.pdf

http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/884281/how_to_use_the_early_years_developmental_journallv2.pdf provides guidance on use of the early years developmental journal

**Children who speak English as an additional language**

“Children learning to speak English as an additional language is not a special educational need. Practitioners should assess the development of children who speak English as an additional language in their home language as well as in English, where possible. While the children’s skills in communication, language and literacy must be assessed in relation
to their competency in English, the remaining areas of learning may be assessed in any language”. Please refer to Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook for more details.

The booklet Identifying Children who are Learning English as an Additional Language and who may also have Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities provides templates for tracking children’s language development over time.

Responding to analysis of assessment information

After entering and recording data, at each given review point, practitioners should ensure that actions are planned in response to trends identified e.g. intervention groups such as ‘spirals’ for children who are working below their typical level of development in communication and language. A template for recording this can be found on: http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/early-education-toolkit.

Analysing EYFS Profile assessment information

In 2015, the percentage of children in Oxfordshire attaining a Good Level of Development was 66.2% with the National level being 66.3%.

Nationally, the mean average total point score for the lowest attaining 20% continues to improve at a faster rate than for all children. The gap closed from 33.9% in 2014 to 32.1% in 2015. The gap in Oxfordshire has narrowed to 27.4%.

The gap in Oxfordshire between the percentage of pupils attracting Pupil Premium funding and other children in 2015 was 23.7%. The gap in 2014 was 23.9% but the gap nationally was 19%. Although the gap has narrowed very slightly in Oxfordshire, it is still well above national figures.

Co-ordinators should analyse EYFSP data each year. Suggestions for analysis of EYFS Profile:

A Good Level of Development:

- How many children attained a GLD? What is this as a percentage?
- How many of these children were boys, girls, autumn/spring/summer born, EAL, SEND, Pupil Premium, FSM, GRT, LAC, more able, forces families; consider children’s starting points e.g. did they attend an on-site nursery or start mid-way through the Reception year?
- Were there any children who would have attained a GLD had it not been for one or two ELGs? What were these ELGs? Is there a pattern?
- How does the number of children attaining a GLD in your school compare to county and national figures?

The supporting measure:

This is the average point score for a cohort across all ELGs. The average point score is the total number of points achieved for the cohort divided by the number of children.
The national measure will be the average of every child’s total point score.

- What is the supporting measure for the cohort?
- How does this compare to the county and national measure?

Areas of Development and the ELGs:

- Look at those children who have attained ‘emerging’, ‘expected’ and ‘exceeding’ for the ELGs. Are there any patterns in attainment? e.g. few children attaining ‘expected’ or ‘exceeding’ in ‘Writing’ or ‘Numbers’. Are there any correlations between different ELGs such as ‘Writing’ and ‘Moving and Handling’?
- Do children with high outcomes also have high scores in PSED and demonstrate this through the characteristics of effective learning?
- What aspects of breadth/depth of EYFS provision need further development?
- What are the strengths and key aspects for improvement across the areas of learning and development for this year’s cohort?

Other:

- Are there differences in the data between classes (if applicable)?
- What does the data tell us about the attainment and needs of individual children e.g. SEND/EAL/FSM/Pupil Premium/more able?
- How are Year 1 colleagues using the data to inform planning for the start of the next academic year? Do they have copies of ‘Development Matters’/Early Years Outcomes?
- Are APP grids being used for children who are ‘exceeding’ in order to create a Year 1 baseline?
- What does the data tell us about priorities for the EYFS? Add any specific actions in response to data analysis to your Action Plan.

Transition into Year 1

The early learning goals do not translate precisely to National Curriculum. However the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook states that:

“Practitioners and year 1 teachers should work together to ensure that a child’s transition between the EYFS and year 1 is seamless. (Schools) should make sure children’s experiences in the final year of the EYFS are valuable in themselves, and prepare the ground for year 1. It is important that year 1 builds on the successful principles and approach encapsulated in the EYFS.

It is crucial that EYFS practitioners and year 1 teachers are given time to discuss and expand on the information presented in the EYFS profile. In particular, the characteristic of effective learning narratives will give teachers significant details about each child’s learning and development. The narratives must feature in conversations between practitioners and teachers.

Practitioners may provide additional information about each child’s attainment to help teachers plan an effective curriculum and make provision for all children…This will enable
the year 1 teacher to have a fully rounded picture of the attainment of each child in order to plan the curriculum."

There are no national expectations or conversions from the Early Years Foundation Stage data. It should be possible to assess most pupils on entry to KS1 against the National Curriculum criteria through observation and discussion with their previous teacher and using evidence gathered in the Reception year and the first weeks of the autumn term. It is suggested that schools treat this initial assessment, which should be completed as soon as possible, as the baseline and measure pupil progress across the year or key stage from this starting point.

Children who reached a Good Level of Development in the Foundation Stage are considered to be “school-ready” on entry to KS1. However, schools should not assume that they will all be at the same level; some may be higher because there is an overlap between EYFS criteria and NC criteria.

Some children may have missed reaching a GLD by only a relatively small number of measures and may still be working in-line with KS1 National Curriculum criteria in some areas of learning.

Other children may be recorded more accurately as “working towards” KS1 National Curriculum criteria. It may be more appropriate to continue to use the EYFS Profile a little longer for this group (e.g. summer born). This should not be necessary beyond Christmas.

Additional information (i.e. Development Matters ‘a b c’ banding) should be added to support tracking for these children.

References

- Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Early Education May 2012)
- Early Years Outcomes (DfE September 2013)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook (STA October 2014)
- The Common Inspection Framework: education, skills and early years (Ofsted September 2015)
- Early Years Inspection Handbook (Ofsted September 2015)
- Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (DfE November 2016)
- Statistical First Release: Early years foundation stage profile results 2014 to 2015 (DfE September 2015)
- EYFS profile: exemplification materials (DfE August 2014)
- Identifying children who are learning English as an additional language and who may also have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (Oxfordshire County Council January 2009)