



Southeast Inter-LA Group

Five Principles of Effective Assessment

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Introduction

From 2023/24, end of KS1 assessments will no longer be statutory. Progress at the end of KS2 will be measured using the reception baseline which became statutory in 2020/21.

The KS1 teacher assessment frameworks (TAFs) will still be available on the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) website, should schools choose to continue to use these. STA will also continue to produce end of KS1 tests for reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling, but these will be optional.

There is an opportunity for assessment to be broader and more reflective of the school curriculum and the progression across the school from Early Years to Year 6. Assessment should focus on the curriculum as a whole, rather than solely on the statutory frameworks as in previous years.

With this in mind, the Southeast Inter-LA assessment group has developed the following five key principles of assessment to support schools with making accurate and meaningful assessments from reception through to Year 6. These principles have been produced in collaboration with moderation managers and school representatives from the following local authorities (LAs): Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole, Brighton & Hove, Dorset, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Ministry of Defence Schools, Portsmouth, Southampton, and West Sussex.

The most important consideration when designing or implementing an assessment system, is to ensure that it is purposeful. Assessment needs to provide reliable, robust information to teachers and leaders and should always be used to inform teaching and learning.



Stakeholders should consider the following to support a school's rationale for assessment:

- To inform curriculum design to improve teaching and learning.
- To ensure that end of year expectations are ambitious for all year groups and support progress of pupils' achievement over time to ensure readiness for national standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- To support transition within and across schools.
- To ensure judgements are quality assured against the school's curriculum expectations.
- To support the reporting arrangements for the school.

It is worth asking the following questions to check the purpose of assessments:

- What will we use this assessment for?
- How can we ensure that this assessment improves learning?
- What information do teachers/ leaders need this assessment to tell them?
- How will the assessment be quality assured?
- When do we need this assessment?
- What will be reported and to whom?

Assessment Principle 1: Establish expectations

Ensure that your assessment system is linked to your curriculum expectations.

Clarify the following in each subject area:

- What are the minimum requirements to progress in the subject area in each year? Make sure that there is a logical progression of skills and knowledge. Use the National Curriculum document (maintained schools are legally required to follow this) as a guide to ensure the minimum requirements for successful progression are met in all subject areas.
- What is the journey of the learning: within the year; across the Key Stage; across the school?
- How are you going to assess whether or not pupils have achieved the minimum requirements?
- When are you going to assess? (Be careful! More assessment does not necessarily mean more learning!)
- When are you going to revisit/ reassess to check learning is embedded?

There is a range of progression guidance available to support ongoing assessment from the following organisations:

- [NAHT](#)
- [EEF](#)
- [NCETM](#)
- [CLPE](#)

NOTE: the curriculum should drive assessment, rather than assessment driving the curriculum.



Assessment Principle 2: Agree the Language of Assessment

Due to the withdrawal of statutory assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 and the recent changes to the EYFS Profile assessment, it will be necessary for schools to carefully consider the language used for assessment. It will be important that it should meet the school's key principles for assessment and be consistent across all year groups.

It is important that, as far as possible, there is a common understanding of whatever terminology is used to describe pupil attainment. There is no requirement for arbitrary labelling, which may be open to misinterpretation.

It may, therefore, be best to avoid using the language of the statutory frameworks altogether and focus instead on whether or not pupils have secured the essential requirements determined by the school for their year group. Any judgements made should reflect consistent, independent and embedded learning.

For transition, schools should carefully consider what assessment information would be most useful for the receiving school/ teacher. When working with transition teams across schools, it would be useful to agree on a common set of phrases, such as: ready to move on/ requires additional support with x/ exceeding expectations in the following areas...

Therefore, leaders could consider using statements such as:

“Pupil X has secured most of the key skills for Year 2 reading. S/he is still working on making links between texts and higher-level inference.”

OR



“Pupil Y has secured all of the key skills for Year 5 writing and is excelling in the use of accurate punctuation for effect.”

Whatever language the school chooses to use should be consistent across all year groups, so that everyone has a clear understanding of a pupil’s achievements and next steps. Assessment should enable teachers to gain an accurate understanding of each pupil’s strengths and weaknesses. Sharing those with parents and the pupil’s next teachers will be essential.

Assessment Principle 3: Ensure independence

Assessment tasks should require pupils to demonstrate their skills and knowledge independently. If assessment tasks are not sufficiently independent, teachers will not know if learning has taken place.

It is also a good idea to set assessment tasks at a different time from the moment of teaching. This ensures that teachers are aware of pupils who do not retain knowledge over time.

This does not mean that tasks need to be ‘cold’ or done under exam conditions. It merely means that pupils are not supported by an adult to apply the skills and/or knowledge being assessed.

Assessment Principle 4: Draw on a wide range of evidence

Consider as many practical ways of finding and recording evidence as possible, from across the whole curriculum. Remember that not all evidence needs to be written by the pupil, or even written at all - building from EYFS where there is no requirement for physical evidence. Images, voice recordings and video can all provide excellent evidence of pupil learning for assessment.

Remember:

- Base judgements on a wide range of formative and summative assessment opportunities.
- Evidence can be used from the whole curriculum across the full school year.
- The evidence base in different subject areas may vary but should follow the broad principles and be independently produced by pupils.

A note about tests:

If schools are using tests, they should consider carefully what they are using it for and how they will use the results to improve learning and/ or support transition conversations. They should only be a part of the overall assessment processes.

The STA will continue to produce optional tests for end of KS1. There are also independent providers of test materials available to schools that will support with comparative data.

While teachers may indeed find using these and/ or other tests helpful, it is worth remembering that these do not need to be used in the traditional manner. It may be helpful to only set questions that test a particular skill. Or to use a question as a starter or plenary activity. It may also be worth calling tests 'quizzes' to minimise pupil worry and stress. Teachers could also allow pupils to access classroom resources as long as they choose to use these independently.



Assessment Principle 5: Ensure consistency

When considering teacher assessment judgements, the quality of the professional discussion around a pupil becomes even more important. These conversations, supported by purposeful questioning, will ensure a clear focus on the key skills and knowledge that have been embedded across a year, as well as a sharp focus on next steps. This discussion should unpack the year group objectives so that pupils' strengths and misconceptions are clearly identified.

These conversations need to be robust and professionally challenging to ensure that teachers are applying expectations appropriately and are prepared for the rigour of statutory moderation at the end of KS2.

This approach will facilitate a consistent and shared approach to effective transition between year groups and prepare pupils for the next stage of their learning journey. This must be underpinned by rigorous oversight at a strategic leadership level, as well as a consistent approach to the gathering of teacher assessment evidence, thus ensuring that all judgements are arrived at accurately and fairly.