

## St. Patrick's Primary School

### Assessment Without Levels

In September 2014, the Government made a huge change in the way that children in schools are to be assessed. This was to tie in with the New National Curriculum that has been used by all schools since the beginning of this Academic Year. This is a new way of thinking for schools, and assessment will look very different to how it has done for the past 20 years. The aim of this guide is to hopefully give you some clear information about all the changes that are happening in Education across the country, and what that means for the children here at St. Patrick's.

#### Curriculum 2014

So, what are the changes to the curriculum?

The main changes to the key core subjects are highlighted below.

**English** - The new programme of study for English is knowledge-based; this means its focus is on knowing facts rather than developing skills and understanding. It is also characterised by an increased emphasis on the technical aspects of language and less emphasis on the creative aspects. English is set out year by year in Key Stage 1 and two-yearly in Key Stage 2. Appendices give specific content to be covered in the areas of spelling and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. These are set out yearly across both key stages.

**Mathematics** - The main areas in the new programme of study for mathematics are called domains. These are number, measurement, geometry, statistics, ratio and proportion and algebra. Two of these, number and geometry, are further divided into subdomains. The way that the curriculum is organised varies across the primary age range - every year group has a unique combination of domains and subdomains. There is no longer a separate strand of objectives related to using and applying mathematics. Instead, there are problem-solving objectives within the other areas of study. Most of the changes to the mathematics curriculum involve content being brought down to earlier years.

#### The End of Curriculum Levels

The Department for Education (DfE) has decided that the children who are currently in Years 2 and 6 will be the last pupils to be awarded a level in their end of Key Stage tests (Summer 2015).

#### **So why are levels disappearing?**

The DfE want to avoid what has been termed 'The level Race' where children have moved through the old National Curriculum levels quickly to achieve higher attainment. The old National Curriculum was sub-divided into levels, but these were not linked to their national curriculum year group. For example, a child in Year 4 could be a Level 3 or even a level 5. Children were achieving Level 5 and 6 at the end of Key Stage 2, but the DfE thought that a significant number were able to achieve a Level 5 or 6 in a test—but were not secure at that level. The feeling from the DfE was that the old national curriculum and the levels system failed to adequately ensure that children had a breadth and depth of knowledge at each national curriculum level.

## Assessment Without Levels

The DfE announced last year that there would no longer be National Curriculum levels and that schools would have to set up their own way of assessing pupils. We have spent a long time researching various methods of assessing pupils. At St Patrick's we use Classroom Monitor as our tracking System and Liverpool SIP to aid with our judgements. Students at St Patrick's will be graded using the statements below.

**Emerging**— Yet to be secure in the end of year expectations.

**Expected**— Secure in the majority of the end of year expectations.

**Exceeding**— Secure in almost all or all the end of year expectations and is able to use and apply their knowledge and skills confidently.

Under the old levels system children who were exceeding might have moved into the next level. The DfE now want children who are in the exceeding bracket to add more depth and breadth to their knowledge, and to have more opportunities to develop their using and applying skills. They are calling this phase of learning Mastery and Depth. Similarly, children who are unlikely to be emerging at the end of the year may work towards the expectations from the year below.

### **So how will this look at the end of each Key Stage?**

#### **Key Stage 1**

It is anticipated that the majority of children will reach the assessment point of Year 2 expected, a smaller number of children we hope will reach Year 2 exceeding. SATs will still happen in May and will consist of a reading test, spelling, grammar and punctuation test for English. In Maths the children will complete an arithmetic test and a reasoning test. However, it will continue to be the careful judgement of the teacher to award your child their level and not solely on the test.

#### **Key Stage 2**

You may have heard of the expression 'Secondary Ready' as the standard children must achieve by the end of Year 6. The DfE have slightly distanced themselves from this phrase and are talking about children reaching the assessment point of Year 6 expected. Similar to Year 2 there will be some children who may be Year 6 exceeding and some children who are Year 6 emerging. There may also be a small number of children who are still working at a lower level e.g. Year 4/5 exceeding/expected/emerging. The biggest difference is how we will talk to you about how your child is progressing during the year. With the old National Curriculum levels, each year children were given a target for the end of the year, and during the year we would tell you what National Curriculum level your child was at. We could use the levels system this way because there was no correlation between a level and a child's year group, and this can be seen in the way that in a Year 6 class there could be a range of levels, from level 2 to a level 6. However, the new National Curriculum sets out expectations for each year group and children will be assessed against those every year, so a child in Year 4 will always be judged in the first instance against the expectations for the end of Year 4.

SATS will still remain and happen in May and will consist of a reading test, spelling, grammar and punctuation test for English. In Maths the children will complete an arithmetic test and a reasoning test. These tests will provide your child with their level and will be sent off. There are no level 6 tests.

We hope that you find this guide useful to help you understand why assessment has changed and how assessment has changed.