



October 2015

NEW ASSESSMENT MODEL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Last year we started teaching a new National Curriculum which is being described as a 'mastery' curriculum. Schools are encouraged to extend higher attaining children through deepening their understanding of content within their year group, rather than moving to 'higher levels' or content from the following National Curriculum year group.

Assessment Changes

The Department for Education (DfE) has decided that Summer 2015 was the last time that pupils would be awarded a level in their end of Key Stage SAT Tests. Children will continue to sit national tests (SATs) in Years 2 and 6 in Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar, Maths and Reading. We have not yet been given full details by the DfE about how children's performance in these tests will be measured and reported but we know that each child will be given a 'scaled score' (more on this later).

So why are levels disappearing?

The DfE want to avoid what has been termed 'the level race' where children have moved through the National Curriculum levels quickly to achieve higher attainment. The old National Curriculum was sub-divided into levels, but these were not linked to national curriculum year groups. For example, a child in Year 4 would often be working at a Level 3, but could be a level 4 or even Level 5. Some children were achieving Level 5 and Level 6 by the end of Key Stage 2, but the DfE thought that many of these children 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 and understanding at each national curriculum level in order to excel through secondary school and beyond.

The new curriculum is a mastery curriculum, as described above, and incentivising pupils and schools to race through levels, as league tables and Ofsted have done, goes against a mastery approach.

The DfE have left it to schools to decide how best to measure the progress and attainment of children through their time at school. At St Helen's, we have worked with other schools across the local authority and identified for each year group checkpoints in reading, writing and maths which a child needs to master to be secure with that year group curriculum content and to have firm foundations for learning in future year groups. Your child's teacher will track progress against these on an ongoing basis, and will be able to talk to your child (and you) about areas they need to work on as the year progresses. Conversations at parents' evenings will focus around this.

Three times per year, we will make a judgement about whether a child is

- **Emerging** (beginning to work towards year group expectations)
- **Developing** within the year group expectations, i.e. mastering concepts as they are being taught
- **Secure** in the year group expectations, and able to work with these concepts at a deeper level.

St Helen's CE Primary School

Greenhill, Alveston, Bristol, BS35 2QX



At the end of the year, instead of giving your child a level we will tell you whether they are Emerging, Developing or Secure in relation to their year group content for reading, writing and maths.

For a few children it will be appropriate for them to work on the curriculum from a previous year group. You and your child will already be working closely with the class teacher and the SENCO so everyone has a clear and defined understanding of progress at the appropriate level.

We know the most important aspect of any meaningful assessment is for your children, their teachers and you to know about the necessary next steps in your child's learning. We hope that these changes to assessment will refocus conversations around what each of our children need to do in order to deepen their understanding and to make further progress.

National Tests

Children will sit national tests (SATs) in Years 2 and 6 in Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar, Maths and Reading. We have not yet been told full details by the DfE about how children's performance in these tests will be measured and reported.

We know that each child will be given a scaled score. A score of 100 will indicate that a child is working at the expected level for their year group, with scores spreading out above and below that, indicating how secure they are in their year group curriculum. However, we don't yet know how it will be decided what level of performance in the tests will equate to a score of 100 and the final details of this will not be set until the children in Year 2 and Year 6 have taken the tests in summer 2016. Schools will also be required to make a teacher judgement about how the child is performing against year group expectations in Writing, Reading and Maths.

We are aware that there is a lot of information here but felt that the changes being made need to be set in the wider context in order to make some sense. We will keep talking to you about these changes through the year, for example in the conversations we have at parents' evenings.

We hope this information sheet has been a useful starting point for you.

Andy Spens, Richard Adams, Kelvin Chappell and Wendy Boffin
Senior Leadership Team