



Joint ATM / MA Primary Group

Joint MA/ATM Primary Group
259 London Road
Leicester
LE2 3BE

The Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP
House of Commons,
London.
SW1A 0AA

25th June 2015

Dear Ms Morgan,

We are writing on behalf of the joint primary group of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics and The Mathematical Association, whose memberships have particular expertise in primary mathematics education. We are aware of imminent changes to early years' assessment, with the proposed introduction of a Reception baseline check and the ending of the EYFS Profile in 2016. We understand that you are concerned about early years' mathematics education and would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss a refreshed focus on this area, for practitioners and parents, as recommended by the APPG (2014).

We remain apprehensive about the likely effects of the baseline checks on children at the beginning of the Reception year and have previously written to you about this (20/10/14). In David Laws' reply (19/11/14), we were assured that the baseline checks will not be used for monitoring individuals. However, we question how Reception teachers will assess children in order for them to successfully begin Year 1. We feel there is now an opportunity to replace the plethora of items in the *Numbers Early Learning Goal* with the simpler goal of developing children's number sense, which has been shown to predict later achievement and is the focus of early mathematics education worldwide (eg Geary, 2011; EEC, 2015).

We note that you have recently stated: "*Education stands at the heart of (a real) commitment (to social justice). It is the key to ensuring that every young person, regardless of birth or background, is able to achieve their full potential.*" (19th May 2015). We agree wholeheartedly and would like to work with you to ensure that our early years' mathematics education is second to none, by re-assessing our priorities. We look forward very much to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Borthwick

Alison Borthwick
Chair of the Joint Primary Committee of ATM/MA

References/overleaf

References

All Party Parliamentary Group for Maths and Numeracy (2014) Mathematics and numeracy in the early years

http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0CDQQFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nationalnumeracy.org.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fmedia%2Fappg_paper_-_eys.pdf&ei=9IFlVYymIY0t7AaGhoAY&usg=AFQjCNE6eu10RNlJ-KyeosapfQ0gLLQwzQ&bvm=bv.93990622,d.ZGU

Education Endowment Fund (2015) Early numeracy approaches

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/early-years/early-numeracy-approaches/>

Geary, D.C. (2011) Cognitive predictors of achievement growth in mathematics: a five year longitudinal study. Developmental Psychology, 47(6), 1539-1552.