



Department
for Education

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 11 October 2013
Your comments must reach us by that date

Primary assessment and accountability under the new national curriculum

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link: www.education.gov.uk/consultation/

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for confidentiality:	

Name: Tony Cotton (Hon Sec, ATM), Adam McBride (Chair, MA)	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation (if applicable): The Association of Teachers of Mathematics (ATM) and The Mathematical Association (MA)	
Address: Association of Teachers of Mathematics, Unit 7 Prime Industrial Park, Shaftesbury Street, Derby, DE23 8YB	
Email: tonycotton@atm.org.uk	

The Mathematical Association, 259 London Road, Leicester LE2 3BE
Email: a.c.mcbride@strath.ac.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the department's '[Contact Us](#)' page.

Please mark the box below that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school head teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school head teacher
<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Other education professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Local authority
<input type="checkbox"/> Governor	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent / carer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Union / professional association
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Please Specify:

This response has been compiled by members of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics (ATM) and the Mathematical Association (MA) including the 65 members of the Joint Association of Teachers of Mathematics (ATM) and the Mathematical Association (MA) Primary Expert Group and has been approved by the councils of both associations.

The ATM and the MA are professional associations with a long history of working with teachers - not as trades unions but as the agents for curriculum and professional development. Their role has been acknowledged and respected by governments for over a century. ATM's guiding principles state that, 'the ability to operate mathematically is an aspect of human functioning which is as universal as language itself' and the MA 'exists to support and enhance mathematics and the teaching and learning of mathematics and its applications'. The associations believe that all learners should have access to high quality teaching and the opportunity to succeed as well as possible. Association members are drawn from across the education community including practising teachers, university lecturers, freelance consultants and employees of national mathematics bodies.

The proposed arrangements for primary accountability and reporting do not seem to be coherent. A 'secondary ready' standard has not been defined and is incompatible with the proposed scaled score, deciles and measure of progress.

The mathematics subject associations are happy to meet with Government representatives, read and respond to any proposals, and offer suggestions for how t ATM and the MA could support the DfE to develop and implement ideas.

Teacher assessment and reporting to parents

1 Will these principles underpin an effective curriculum and assessment system?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

The principles are fine and in line with current arrangements for curriculum and assessment. We believe that National Standards are an entitlement for learners, their teachers and all stakeholders. There should be a clear statement of what is expected at the end of each key stage. Without a national definition of expectations there will be divergent expectations between schools that will undermine transition between schools. This will particularly disadvantage children from vulnerable groups who change schools more often than the norm.

Levels have been used for twenty five years and have defined National standards and enabled a dialogue between all involved in education so there is now a shared understanding of the sorts of things a learner working at a particular level is likely to be able to do and what they are likely to need to do to make progress. We are concerned that to remove levels and say 'the programme of study' defines expectations will mean that many learners will be disadvantaged. We agree that labelling child according to level has in some cases had a detrimental effect but there seems little difference between that and being told you are working at the standard expected of year 2 when you are in year 6 or if you are a young adult with special educational needs. It is possible to tell a child that they are succeeding without labelling them according to level or age. The way in which this is reported to parents should be different.

There should be a clear statement of the expectations associated with 'secondary ready' so that primary teachers know what their children will need to know, understand and be able to do and secondary teachers know what learners are likely to be able to do. At the moment there is no clarity around the expectations

We note that teachers are expected to work at a pace appropriate to their learners. On the basis of international evidence the majority of children will not have mastered everything in the new national curriculum by year 5/6– aiming at year 4/5 may be more realistic. We note that quite a lot of Y5/6 material is repeated in KS3. This suggests that 'secondary read' realistically should be pitched at mastery of the suggested 4/5 PoS, together with some familiarity with year 5/6 material that can be built to mastery during KS3.

2 a) What other good examples of assessment practice we can share more widely?

Comments: We are concerned that DfE is considering sharing specific examples of assessment practice without a clearly articulated set of standards. If this is to happen quality assurance processes must be put in place to ensure the different models offered are consistent with the PoS and of a sufficiently robust quality to be disseminated more widely.

A national set of expectations e.g. level descriptions does not constrain a school into how to assess. Levels were designed to be used in a holistic way, drawing on a wide range of evidence. Schools and children have benefitted from flexibility in the application of levels which set national expectations/standards that particularly aid progression and transition.

We suggest schools should be advised to build on their existing assessment practices rather than starting from scratch. Many schools have already decided that in the medium term they will continue to use 'levels' as these provide a helpful way of monitoring progression in learning.

2 b) Is there additional support we can provide for schools?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments: DfE should provide a clear statement of the standard expected at the end of each key stage.

Professional development support for primary teachers is essential so that they understand and share the implications of the new national curriculum for teaching and assessment and can make appropriate adjustments to their existing schemes of work and assessment practices. Many primary teachers have used schemes of work from the National Strategies and may need support to further develop their skills of independent planning for teaching and assessment.

Alongside a clear statement of the expectations for most learners at the end of each key stage, examples of assessment materials that will be used in the 2016 National Curriculum tests are required. When test outcomes are reported to schools these should be accompanied by detailed feedback about children's performance on test items, both for progression purposes and so that the school can decide for themselves how to adapt its scheme of work for all or some learners.

National curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science

3 Does a scaled score, decile ranking and value-added measure provide useful information from national curriculum tests?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments: This represents an artificial level of precision. The tests are typically out of 100 and the proposal is to scale this to a 80 – 130 scale (ie 50 marks). Tests are fallible, the outcomes represent how the child did on a test at a particular time. If they took a comparable test at a different time they might score very differently. Most parents will not want this level of information – they will want to know ‘has my child made progress, i.e. are they ‘secondary ready’? The tests are not sufficiently fine grained or reliable for the scaled score to be meaningful. Note that children achieving identical scores will have performed differently on the tests. Even those with the highest marks are likely to have different strengths and preferences. Assuming the test outcomes are roughly normally distributed, the decile bands for the middle attainers (60%) are likely to be extremely narrow, so being in neighbouring deciles will be a matter of very few marks. At the top and bottom deciles there will be considerable variability in attainment so the label won’t be particularly helpful. A clear statement of what is realistically expected for the end of the key stage, would suffice. Those who don’t meet the expected standard can be reported as working towards. Those who achieve extremely highly could be labelled as exceptional performance.

Currently schools have the level from the test and test scores. However, break down of performance information, by item, would be more helpful formatively, since it would support targeted follow-up teaching of weaker areas and in identification of areas of teaching that might benefit from adjustment. When children change school the test information alongside teacher assessment should help the new school prioritise curriculum and individual needs.

Unless primary schools use a national standard for assessment and reporting. Secondary schools are likely to subject children to a re-test on entry

An alternative to using a baseline for measuring progress would be to compare outcomes from schools with comparable intakes. However this may not be appropriate for schools with small cohorts.

Baselines to measure progress

4 Should we continue to measure progress from the end of key stage 1, using internally-marked national curriculum tests?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments: Without a clear statement of the expectations at the end of key stage 1 (KS1) it is not clear how KS1 outcomes could be used as a baseline. Assessment at the end of KS1 is preferable to assessment early in Reception. The danger with KS1 outcomes is that schools that cater for KS1 tend to prioritise teaching to that assessment whereas all-through primary schools have an incentive to teach for longer-term assessment (end of year 6). KS1 tests are well established and teachers are familiar with using them alongside their teacher assessment. Any baseline must be through a nationally developed assessment. A baseline may not be necessary if school outcomes at KS2 can be compared with those for schools with similar intakes (e.g. % FSM, EAL, SEN, IDACI index etc.)

5 If end of key stage 1 national curriculum test results are used as the baseline to measure progress, should school-level results be published?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments: Publishing school level results at the end of KS1 is likely to result in further distortion of KS1 results as schools understandably 'play the system'.

6 Should we introduce a baseline check at the start of reception?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments: We strongly advise against introducing a further test of children. Any test early in Reception will be distinctly unreliable as the difference in prior experience and age will have a much greater impact on outcomes than a test when children are older. A test at the end of Year 1 that assesses fundamentals of mathematics in respect of number including ordinality, cardinality, place value, ordering, one more or less may provide a more secure baseline and valuable diagnostic information for subsequent teaching.

7 Should we allow schools to choose from a range of commercially-available assessments?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments: Schools may well choose to use commercially-available assessments but the DfE should not be encouraging schools to do this as a means of obtaining a baseline for measuring progress. Any baseline should be through nationally developed assessments.

8 Should we make the baseline check optional?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments: There should be no baseline testing in Reception.

Accountability

9 Do you have any comments about these proposals for the Department's floor standards?

Comments: The standard expected needs to be clearly articulated. If 85% are expected to meet the standard then it needs to be realistic.

Stating that expectations will be raised and more children must achieve them is ill-advised without considering either the research evidence or the other factors, such as teacher knowledge, within the education system. This will almost certainly lead to a situation in which children, teachers and schools will be labelled as failures. Because high stakes assessment drives what happens in the classroom, a gradual change in National Curriculum tests could reflect a gradual change in national expectations, and it may be more appropriate and constructive to use this to drive improvements rather than attempting a step change in standards.

It is worth noting that according to government data two thirds of all children who currently achieve level 4 achieve GCSE grade C or above. This is encouraging, and should be built on: the development of secure foundations for future learning should not be put at risk by a perceived imperative to teach to over-ambitious tests at year 6.

10 If we take a baseline from the start of reception, should end of key stage 1 national curriculum tests become non-statutory for all-through primary schools?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments: KS1 tests should be continued for all schools rather than introduce new assessments.

11 Should we include an average point score measure in floor standards?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments: This may be helpful for larger schools but for most primary schools with small and very small cohorts an average point score is not a valid measure. Note that in 6.11 reference is made to all schools making 'better than average' progress – this is not possible. An average represents a range of values that will necessarily be both above and below this representative figure.

12 Are there any other measures we should prioritise in performance tables?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments: The proposed reporting arrangements seem excessive and will make less sense to end users than the current system of levels. Levels of attainment are associated with particular things that children know, understand and can do, and provide a language for recognising attainment and progress and setting individual targets. Whilst there has been misuse of levels – children saying ‘I’m level 3b’ rather being able to talk about what they can do and are learning to do – to move away from nationally defined standards is likely to undermine transparency in the system.

Recognising the attainment and progress of all pupils

13 What data could be published to hold schools (including special schools) accountable for the attainment and progress of the lowest-attaining pupils?

Comments: A measure of progress based on teacher assessment using P levels is a good way of recognising progress of the lowest-attaining children. This is well established in special schools and works well. The current National Curriculum levels also provide appropriate targets for children as they progress from P levels. The fact that the current levels are not associated with age related expectations is especially important.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply.	✓
E-mail address for acknowledgement: adminmanager@atm.org.uk ; senioradministrator@m-a.org.uk	

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 11 October 2013

Send by post to
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Qualifications and Assessment Division
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Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
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SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk