

Woodley Assessment System - Guidance

Why do we need a new assessment system?

In September 2014 the government introduced a new National Curriculum for primary schools. The new curriculum replaced the existing curriculum for all children in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5. This will be rolled out for all year groups from September 2015. The introduction of the new curriculum saw the old system of 'levels' being abolished. Schools instead were asked to devise their own assessment system that reflected their own beliefs on how children learn and develop in their schools.

Assessing the new curriculum vs the old curriculum

Due to the changes in the curriculum there is no way to 'translate' the old levels to any new assessment system. However, one thing that is clear: the expectation for pupils in the new curriculum is a lot higher than the old curriculum. Many skills have been moved down one or even two year groups. This will mean that whatever assessment system is used, children who were previously 'Meeting Expectations' may now instead be 'Working Towards Expectations' and children who were 'Exceeding Expectations' may now be 'Meeting Expectations'.

Woodley CE Primary Assessment Principles

Given the challenge of designing a new assessment system we looked at the principles behind why we do assessment. We also thought carefully about what we as teachers needed out of the system and what parents needed to know from the system. These principles were designed to underpin all of that:

- Emphasis should be placed on key skills to allow these skills to support the rest of the curriculum.
- Children do not learn in a linear way always making the same rate of progress all of the time.
- Learning should be deepened to allow stronger foundations instead of just constantly moving onto new skills.
- Some learners may require support for their learning and this should be acknowledged in our assessment so we can give them credit for their effort.

Introducing 'Milestones'

A milestone has always been a key point in someone's life: an important event or moment. At Woodley we decided that nothing could be more important than a moment of learning. This is why we have called our new assessment points 'Milestones'.

As in life, a Milestone doesn't happen all of the time: it takes time, work and effort to reach a milestone and each assessment milestone has a solid foundation of learning needed to achieve it. At Woodley we have three milestones, which are broken down as follows:

Milestone 1: Years 1 and 2

Milestone 2: Years 3 and 4

Milestone 3: Years 5 and 6

As shown, we expect it to take two years to 'achieve' a milestone. They should be rare things to achieve and reflect the amount of effort needed to achieve them.

Focussing on Key Skills

Milestones are great at reflecting the huge achievement behind lots of learning, skill and understanding but one of the principles of our assessment system was a focus on a few key skills. Working within our milestones system is a system of 'Non-Negotiables'. These are broken down into single year groups and, as the name suggests, are skills that must be achieved in that year group: they are 'Non-Negotiable'!

Non-Negotiables enable children, parents and teachers to be clearer on the skills that really underpin the wider curriculum and reflect those things that we really believe will allow children to succeed in the wider curriculum. The Non-Negotiables are taught as a regular part of classroom learning and in maths and grammar are tested on a regular basis to ensure that children are learning the skills required.

Non-Linear Learning



One of the biggest criticisms of the old 'level' assessment system (2B, 4C etc) was that children were expected to make steady progress every single term: one sublevel per term. We all know that learning doesn't happen like that. Children and adults alike can make huge steps in learning in one go and then spend time consolidating and understanding that learning. Under the old system, this would cause comments such as: "They made great progress this year, why aren't they making progress now?" As teachers, we understood that it was because they had made great progress last year that they were consolidating that knowledge now ready for the next step in their learning.



You don't just go straight up 'the wall'

Milestones acknowledge that children are not 'data points'. Each milestone works on a two year timeframe, giving children the time to learn, consolidate and then deepen. Clearly though, only assessing children every two years isn't appropriate so each milestone has been broken down into steps, or points. For example, Milestone 1 looks as follows:

Child enters Y1				Y2 Expected					
1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9

The other milestones are broken down in a similar way. As you can see, the steps are then split into four sections:

Starting: This reflects that the child is only just starting the milestone and has not yet achieved anything from that curriculum (in this example, the KS1 curriculum)

Emerging: The child is showing the skills for the milestone with support and frameworks e.g. Teacher, TA or resources.

Expected: The child is able to show the skills for the milestone, usually independently and with little additional support or resources.

Exceeding: The child is able to independently show the skills and use the skills in a wide range of contexts.

However, this points system creates two concepts that are totally different to the old assessment system which are, at first glance, a little more challenging to understand:

- Children in the first year of a milestone, i.e. Year 1, 3 and 5 are not expected to reach the 'Expected' section of a milestone. The learning takes place over two years, so it is at the end of the two years that children should be at 'Expected'. Instead, children in Years 1, 3 and 5 will usually be working in the 'Emerging' stage.
- It will be rare for children to achieve the 'Exceeding' stage. As the section suggests, we expect most children to achieve 'Expected'. This reflects the level of challenge set out in the new curriculum and shows a high standard of learning. Some children though will exceed that and the 'Exceeding' stage is to show that. However, things in the 'Exceeding' stage of one milestone are covered in the next milestone, so each child will work on those skills in the next phase of their learning.

As discussed, we do not expect children to learn in a linear way. However, for monitoring in school we do obviously need to have a concept of where we expect the 'average' child to be within the milestones at the end of each year of learning.

The current expectations for each year group are as follows:

Year	Milestone
1	1.3
2	1.6
3	2.3
4	2.6
5	3.3
6	3.6

This could be broken down into an expectation of one point per term, but this is obviously then starting to fall back into linear progress, so we are avoiding exact definitions such as that.

Deepening Learning

Under the old National Curriculum, once a child had shown that they could do something, they were immediately moved into another new skill within that aspect. This encouraged a superficial understanding of lots of things. While learning lots of new things might appear to be a good thing at first, we found that as children moved up through the school the foundations in their learning were not solid. They had a basic understanding of lots of things, but as soon as that knowledge was put to the test in new contexts or presented in a different way they couldn't do it.

The new assessment system instead encourages children to deepen their knowledge. After achieving the 'Expected' stage, children are moved into the 'Exceeding' stage. The 'Expected' stage reflects all of the required knowledge that a child should have for their age and is a huge achievement in itself. 'Exceeding' just takes that same knowledge but pushes the child's understanding much deeper. It challenges the children to use the knowledge in a variety of ways in a variety of contexts and provides the huge challenge of applying what they know, independently.

The content in the 'Exceeding' stage allows children to build strong foundations for the next milestone. For those children who do not reach the 'Exceeding' stage, they will cover the content in the next milestone as part of building on their existing skills.

Supporting Learners

Some of the children at Woodley require additional support for their learning. This wasn't acknowledged at all in the old curriculum: they could either do something or they couldn't. The new Milestones use the 'Emerging' stage to acknowledge the support that some children need to develop their understanding.

We have found that all learners, given practise and support, can then work independently and show the skills that they need. As mentioned above: no child learns in a linear way and all children learn differently.

Some of our children will need support for longer than others and need longer to get to the 'Expected' stage for a milestone. This is recognised in the assessment system. Although Milestone 1 is mostly for Year 1 and Year 2, some children in the lower juniors may still work on the skills in Milestone 1. It would make little sense to move a child onto Milestone 2 if they are not yet able to

meet the requirements of Milestone 1. The school is committed to ensuring that pupils are given time to build adequate foundations in their learning.

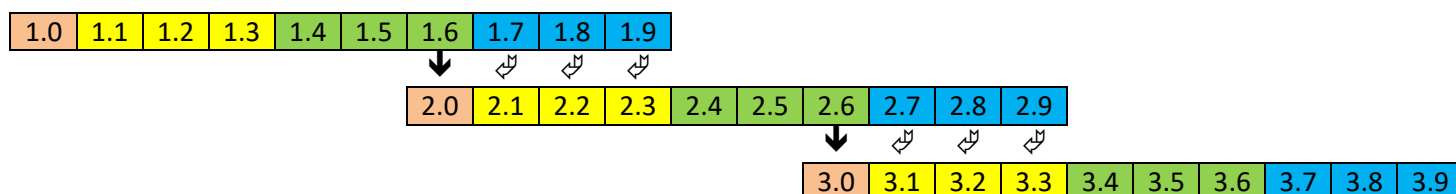
What does it look like?

Having discussed the stages of *Emerging*, *Expected* and *Exceeding* it is important to understand the different knowledge required for each step. Below are the assessment stages for using paragraphs in Milestone 2 (Years 3 & 4). The progression of each stage is clearly visible:

Emerging	Expected	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When examples are provided, paragraphs focus on a theme. ➤ An attempt to create a logical sequence for paragraphs can be seen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When reminders (for example, to produce mind maps) are provided, paragraphs are well organised around a theme. ➤ Paragraphs have a logical order although there may be some examples of paragraphs out of logical sequence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A theme is clearly introduced and developed, and remains consistent throughout each paragraph. ➤ A clear and logical sequence of paragraphs is evident.
The <i>Emerging</i> stage allows for examples	The <i>Expected</i> stage allows for a reminder and some mistakes	The <i>Exceeding</i> stage expects it to be embedded and automatic

How do we measure progress?

One of the challenges of the new system is that most children will 'skip' the *Exceeding* stage of each milestone. This means we can't simply count how many points that each child makes through the school because at the end of Y2 most children will 'jump' from 1.6 to 2.0:



It is also worth noting that although the *Exceeding* knowledge supports the next milestone, children will not move, for example, from 1.8 to 2.2. Children who are *Exceeding* in one milestone have been broadening their knowledge for that milestone and may not have some of the new skills required for the next milestone, so all pupils will move to the start of the next milestone from *Expected* or *Exceeding*. The diagram above merely shows that the *Exceeding* knowledge supports the next milestone and there would be the expectation that a child who was *Exceeding* to quickly progress through *Emerging* at the next milestone.

To show how progress is calculated, below is an example of an 'average' child's progress.

Child	Y1 Aut	Y1 Spr	Y1 Sum	Y2 Aut	Y2 Spr	Y2 Sum	Y3 Aut	Progress Total KS1
Average	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.0	+6

As a rule, year on year progress will be measured in the following way:

Slow Progress	Expected Progress	Accelerated Progress
< 0.3	= 0.3	> 0.3

