

## South East Inter-LA group Assessment Recommendations for 2020/21

In light of the cancellation of statutory primary assessments for the second time, the South East Inter-LA assessment group has developed this guidance to support schools with making accurate and meaningful assessments in the current context. These recommendations have been written in collaboration with the moderation managers and representatives from the following local authorities (LAs): Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Portsmouth, Southampton and West Sussex.

The recommendations below are based on the principles that assessment should be:

- complementary to and supportive of learning
- valid
- consistent and reliable
- fit for purpose and manageable
- supportive of teachers' professional judgements
- inclusive and equitable<sup>1</sup>

For Key Stage 1 & 2, in their statement published on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, the Department for Education (DfE) acknowledged that, in spite of the cancellation of statutory primary assessments, "schools will continue to use assessment to inform teaching, to enable them to give information to parents on their child's attainment in their statutory annual report and to support transition of KS2 pupils to secondary school. We strongly encourage schools to use [past test papers](#) in their assessment of pupils."

For Early Years, in the announcement made on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, the DfE said: "EYFSP is a valued assessment by teachers and early years professionals and is a crucial tool in supporting children's development and the transition from reception to year 1. It is for that reason we are requiring teachers and early years practitioners to use their **best endeavours** to still complete the EYFSP for children in the summer term, if at all possible, and to provide this important information to parents and to year 1 teachers, should the situation at the time allow.

Schools that complete the EYFS profile in the summer term will not be subject to statutory moderation. There will be no requirement to submit data to the local authority or to confirm whether or not you have completed it to the Department for Education."

It is important that, when using or reviewing assessments made by teachers this year, leaders bear in mind the fact that any assessments made will not be comparable to previous years and should not be used for accountability purposes. All stakeholders will need to be reminded of this at regular intervals.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from [What are the fundamental principles and purposes of assessment? \(aiaa.org.uk\)](https://www.aiaa.org.uk/what-are-the-fundamental-principles-and-purposes-of-assessment/)

## **Our recommendations for making assessments in 2020/21**

### **Recommendation 1: Set your expectations**

Using the National Curriculum (NC) or Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) as a guide, determine what you feel are the minimum requirements for successful progression in each subject/ area of learning under the current circumstances. (For KS1&2, you may find the DfE maths progression guidance, published last year, useful for this: [Mathematics guidance: key stage 1 and 2.](#)) Share these minimum requirements with staff and parents. Remind everyone that it will not be possible (or desirable) to try to assess everything you would normally have assessed.

Early Years teachers and practitioners should continue to use the Characteristics of Effective Learning to make their assessments.

Then establish what has and has not been covered for each year group/ class. Ensure that any of the minimum requirements that have not been covered are addressed. Share any aspects that have not been covered by the end of the year with all relevant stakeholders.

### **Recommendation 2: Determine the purpose**

With the removal of the statutory accountability purpose, there is an opportunity for schools to determine their own purpose for teacher assessment (TA) this year. There is scope for TA to look and feel very different from those which have been driven by tracking systems.

It is worth asking the following questions:

- What will we use this assessment for?
- How can we ensure that this assessment improves learning?
- What information do teachers need this assessment to tell them?
- How can this assessment support transition?
- How will assessments be quality assured?
- What will be reported and to whom?

## **Recommendation 3: Mind your language**

### **FOR EYFS**

The best fit model remains in place for judgements within the EYFS. The judgements made will reflect consistent independent and embedded learning. Any judgements made this year will not be comparative with previous years due to the different experiences that children will have had. If schools use their 'best endeavours' to complete the profile the language of emerging/ expected/ exceeding<sup>2</sup> can continue to be used, and this important information should be provided to parents and Year 1 teachers should the situation at the time allow. Early Years teachers and practitioners should continue to use the Characteristics of Effective Learning for reporting to parents.

### **FOR KS1 and KS2**

There is an opportunity, this year, for assessment to be broader and more reflective of the national curriculum as a whole, rather than the focus on the statutory frameworks as in previous years. Because the frameworks do not allow for a 'best fit' model, any judgements made using the frameworks could be inaccurate (due to limited coverage) and may lead to incorrect comparisons with previous years' assessments.

It would, therefore, be best to avoid using the language of the frameworks, and the language related to outcomes from any past papers used, altogether and focus instead on whether or not pupils have secured the minimum requirements determined by the school (see recommendation 1) for their year group.

Therefore, you could consider using statements such as:

"Pupil X has secured most of the key skills for year 3 reading. S/he is still working on making links between texts and higher-level inference."

OR

"Pupil Y has secured all of the key skills for year 6 writing and is excelling in the use of accurate punctuation for effect."

In 2020, there was no requirement to report to parents using the frameworks. This is highly likely to be the case again this year. Nevertheless, gaining an accurate understanding of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses, and sharing those with parents (and the pupil's teacher for September 2021) will be an important activity.

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<sup>2</sup> PLEASE NOTE: there is no 'exceeding' judgement for early adopters of the new EYFS framework

## **Recommendation 4: Consider independence**

Do your best to ensure that work produced for assessment purposes is as independent as possible. Understandably, this is more difficult with remote learning, but that should not prevent teachers from using work produced at home as evidence for assessment.

Consider how much support was given for assessment pieces, and compare work produced at home with any examples of work produced in class. Allow teachers to use their professional judgement here.

## **Recommendation 5: Draw on as wide a range of evidence as possible**

Consider as many practical ways of finding and recording evidence as possible. Remember that not all evidence needs to be written by the pupil, or even written at all - especially in EYFS where there is no requirement for physical evidence. Images, voice recordings and video can all provide excellent evidence of pupil learning.

There is no need to reinvent the formative assessment practices you already use; just modify familiar practices so they work remotely where needed. Remember to base your judgements on a range of formative and summative assessment opportunities, including those produced during home learning.

<https://www.learningscientists.org/downloadable-materials>

### **A note about tests:**

The DfE has stated that they, "...strongly encourage schools to use [past test papers](#) in their assessment of pupils."

While teachers may indeed find using tests helpful, it is worth remembering that these do not need to be used in the traditional manner. It may be helpful to only set questions that test a particular skill. Or to use a question from a previous paper as a starter or plenary activity. It may also be worth calling tests 'quizzes' to minimise pupil worry.

If teachers are using tests, they should consider carefully what they are using them for and how they will use the results to improve learning and/ or support transition conversations.

## **Recommendation 6: Ensure consistency**

Although statutory moderation has been cancelled, it is still important that within and between year groups, there is a consistent understanding of how assessments are made and what the next steps are for each pupil. This is especially true for transition arrangements. Under the present circumstances, it will be even more important to hold quality discussions with staff in receiving schools/ year groups to discuss and share pupils' assessment information, together with a broader picture of each pupil.

## **Recommendation 7: Seize the opportunity**

Take this opportunity to review and reflect on your assessment practices. What have you had to adapt, and what has worked better than expected? Consider how you will build this learning into future assessment practices.

## **WHERE TO FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

[School Planning Guide 2021 | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)

[Our work in education | British Council](#)

[AAIA | Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment | AAIA](#)

[Remote education research - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Rapid Evidence Assessment summary.pdf \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

[2021 early years foundation stage: assessment and reporting arrangements \(ARA\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Early years foundation stage profile handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Early adopter schools: EYFS profile handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)