Introduction to pupil assessment for governors

All governing bodies, whether in the maintained or academy sector, and no matter how many schools they are responsible for, have three core functions:
1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governing bodies have a duty to know, and continually monitor, the educational performance of the school and its pupils to ensure the best possible education and opportunities for the children.

Governors will need to understand the basics of how the key stages of school life are assessed in order to understand the data presented to them by Headteachers and School Leadership Teams (SLT) on the educational performance of the school and its pupils. This will help to formulate searching questions about performance, strengths and areas for focussed improvement. This information then provides a basis for discussions and decisions to inform strategic plans and policies that shape the school and drive forward school improvement for all.

Assessments/examinations/tests help the teachers find out what the pupils can and can’t do. Pupil assessment information must be used to plan appropriate teaching and learning strategies, including to identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support, enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Governors at a strategic level have a duty to ensure that those pupils who need additional support are provided with every opportunity to progress at every school level.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team must work effectively and openly together with the governing body in order to secure school improvement. Headteachers should welcome and enable appropriately robust challenge from governing bodies by providing any data as requested, explaining the data, and responding positively to searching questions by governors.

School Inspection
School inspection (Ofsted) is primarily about evaluating how well children and learners benefit from the education provided by the school. Inspection tests the school’s response to individual needs by observing how well it helps all children and learners to make progress and fulfil their potential. Upon inspection, governors will be asked about the educational performance of the school and its pupils.

When focussing on teaching, learning and assessment, inspectors will consider whether governors:
• provide a balance of challenge and support to leaders, understanding the strengths and areas needing improvement at the school
• understand the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the progress of pupils currently in the school
• ensure that assessment information from leaders provides governors with sufficient and accurate information to ask probing questions about outcomes for pupils.

School Standards
The government sets minimum requirements, known as floor standards, for schools. A school comes under additional scrutiny through inspection if it falls below this minimum standard.

The new National Curriculum programmes of study are designed to raise expectations and improve pupil outcomes. The government has made it clear that assessment of pupil performance will set a higher bar (floor standard), with an aspirational aim that 85% of pupils will achieve the new expected standard by the end of primary school.
The new floor standard will be based on the progress made by pupils from reception to the end of year 6. A school will fall below the floor standard only if pupils make less than expected progress and fewer than 85% of them achieve the new expected standard.

In order to achieve such a shift in expectation, some schools will need to do things differently with planning and assessment to ensure progress is at the same pace.

### Key Stages of School Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Key Stage</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Early Years Foundation Stage</td>
<td>Nursery</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
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<td>Reception Year</td>
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<td>5-6</td>
<td>Key Stage 1</td>
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<td>14-15</td>
<td>Key Stage 4</td>
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<td>15-16</td>
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<td>16-19</td>
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### Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Schools are required by law to publish information online so that parents can understand both the progress and standards that the school achieves. (GB Legal Duty). Question to ask of SLT.

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</table>

Over the first two years teachers and early year’s practitioners assess the child’s progress across these areas:

- **Communication and language development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

The DfE has asked schools to assess children on three levels of their learning and development. The levels are ‘Emerging’, ‘Expected’, and ‘Exceeding’.

The Headteacher and senior school leaders are required to share with governors the progress made in the key focus areas, with literacy and mathematics given as a percentage.

**Governing Body Challenge – Questions to ask in your school**

What is being done to ensure that children are working mostly in the expected level?

What is being done when a child is exceeding or beyond?

How are pupils monitored and developed?

How are teachers monitoring SEND, FSM and pupil premium?

How does our data compare locally and nationally?

What are the trends over time?

**Key Stage 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Key Stage</th>
<th>Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>5-6</td>
<td>Key Stage 1</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this Key Stage (over two years), children are assessed for reading, writing, mathematics, science and spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG).

The DfE requires teachers to assess children **working towards** expected standard (WT), **working at** the expected standard (WA), and **working at greater depth** within the expected standard (GD).

The Headteacher and senior leaders should report to governors on the percentages of children working at each of these levels.

**Governing Body Challenge – Questions to ask in your school**

What percentage of children are working at the expected level and working at greater than in all the assessed areas?

Can you tell us how well SEND, FSM pupils and pupil premium children are achieving?

If there is a discrepancy, what is being done to narrow any gaps?

Is there a difference between achievement in genders and if so, in which areas?

How does our data compare locally and nationally?

What are the trends over time?
#### Key Stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
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<td>10-11</td>
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<td>Year 6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In this Key Stage (over four years), children are assessed for reading, writing, mathematics, science and spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG).

The DfE requires teachers to assess children working towards expected standard (WT), working at the expected standard (WA), and working at greater depth within the expected standard (GD).

Senior leaders should report to governors on the percentages of children working at each of these levels.

**Governing Body Challenge – Questions to ask in your school**
- What percentage of children are working at the expected level and working at greater than in all the assessed areas?
- Can you tell us how well SEND, FSM pupils and pupil premium children are achieving?
- If there is a discrepancy, what is being done to narrow any gaps?
- Is there a difference between achievement in genders and if so, in which areas?
- How does our data compare locally and nationally?
- What are the trends over time?

#### Key Stage 3

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Year 7</td>
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<td>12-13</td>
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<td>Year 8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Schools have chosen to use their own internal levels of progress at this Key Stage. There will be a variance between all schools.

The compulsory national curriculum subjects are:
- English
- maths
- science
- history
- geography
- modern foreign languages
- design and technology
- art and design
- music
- physical education
- citizenship
- computing

Schools must provide religious education (RE) and sex education from key stage 3, but parents can ask for their children to be taken out of the whole lesson or part of it.

Assessment is based on progress made by children across these areas.

**Governing Body Challenge – Questions to ask in your school**
- How is the school ensuring the progress is continued from the KS2 results?
- Can the Senior Leadership team (SLT) explain how we measure this in our school (e.g. use of CAT scores to set/group children)?
- Can you tell us how well children are doing as the following groups: gender, SEND, FSM and pupil premium?
How does our data compare locally and nationally?
What are the trends over time?

**Key Stage 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Key Stage</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>13-14</td>
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<td>Post 16</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Key stage 4**

During key stage 4 most pupils work towards national qualifications - usually GCSEs. The compulsory national curriculum subjects are the ‘core’ and ‘foundation’ subjects.

Core subjects are:
- English
- maths
- science

Foundation subjects are:
- computing
- physical education
- citizenship

Schools must also offer at least one subject from each of these areas:
- arts
- design and technology
- humanities
- modern foreign languages

They must also provide religious education (RE) and sex education at key stage 4.

Some schools are still maintaining grades A*, A, B, C, D, E, F, G to assess and level children. There is a temporary point score introduced for 2016 which some schools are using. The points system is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A*</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>6.00</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>5.00</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>2.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please note that from 2017 the DfE will be introducing a different grading system.

**Governing Body Challenge – Questions to ask in your school**

*Which system of reporting is the SLT using to report to governors and parents?*

*How many by grade type / how many by points?*

*Can you tell us how well children are doing as the following groups: gender, SEND, FSM and pupil premium?*
How does our data compare locally and nationally?  
What are the trends over time?

The ‘Who’, ‘Why’ and ‘How’ of Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Purpose – What do they need to know?</th>
<th>Actions and assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pupil       | What do I know?  
What do I need to do next?  
How am I getting better?  
Am I as good as everyone else? | Marking  
Feedback  
Ipsative/self-assessment  
Test Scores |
| Teachers    | What do I need to teach?  
Where are they in relation to where they should be?  
What do they need to do next?  
What progress have they made?  
I need assessments to be practical and not time consuming. | Curriculum planning  
Marking and evaluation  
Subject knowledge  
Formative assessments  
Pupil voice  
Use of professional judgement |
| Parents     | How do I know what they can do?  
What do they need to know next?  
How are they doing in relation to others?  
How can I help?               | Reports  
Parents evening  
Target setting  
Home/school communication  
Sharing resources |
| Leaders     | How do I know what is going on in my school?  
Can I demonstrate and track progress?  
How can I evaluate the quality of teaching?  
How can I improve standards? | Summative assessments for data analysis  
Performance reporting  
Performance projections (SDP/SIP)  
Collation of evidence  
End of key stage testing |
| Governors   | Is sufficient governance in place to ensure quality and consistency of assessment practice?  
Is the vision and ethos aligned with the needs of pupils in the school?  
Does assessment practice support the individual needs of pupils? | Clear assessment principles  
Clear assessment policy, documented practice guidelines for staff  
Data analysis  
Performance reporting  
Performance projections |
| Ofsted      | How is assessment used to;  
* Improve teaching  
* Raise attainment  
* Identify pupils falling behind | Clear assessment principles, policy, documented practice guidelines for staff  
Curriculum coverage and alignment of assessments  
Data analysis  
Performance reporting and projections  
Clear communication to parents and pupils  
Evidence that teachers know what their pupils can do and what they need to do next |

Extract from Info Mentor 2014 - A practical guide to Assessment after Levels