



Dear Parent/Carer

Please find attached further information to that distributed at the Pastoral Evenings in October, to explain the changes to assessment from September 2015. We hope that you will find the information contained within this booklet helpful. If you have any further questions or would prefer to speak to a senior member of the team about the changes, we will be holding drop-in sessions at the forthcoming Parents' Evening on Thursday 10th November from 4pm – 5.30pm.

Yours faithfully

Mrs J Minto

Head of School

Hexham Middle School assessment arrangements 2015-16



Introduction

In 2014, a new national curriculum was published and new forms of statutory assessment were developed to align with its content and principles. A number of key points emerge from this, not least that from September 2015, national curriculum levels are no longer used to assess attainment and schools have been asked to design their own system of assessment, ensuring that it closely matches the aims and content of the new national curriculum.

Over the past twelve months, the Hexham Partnership of Schools, that includes the first, middle and high schools, has been working together to agree a new assessment framework following the guidance given to schools. Work has also been undertaken to agree the curriculum content and coverage across age groups. We have played a key role in these discussions and have begun to implement the new assessment framework from this year.

Across the Hexham Partnership, a set of attainment descriptors have been agreed for assessing pupil progress. These are as follows:

Attainment descriptor	What this means
ENTERING (E)	Yet to be secure in the end of year expectations for the subject
DEVELOPING (D)	Secure in the majority of the end of year expectations for the subject
SECURE (S)	Secure in the entire end of year expectations for the subject
MASTERING (M)	Secure in the entire end of year expectations and able to demonstrate a deeper understanding and proficiency in the subject

Assessing your child's attainment

At three points during the year, subject teachers will be making a judgement on whether your child is **entering, developing, secure or mastering**, in relation to the expectations for their age in accordance with the national curriculum. However clearly, at an early stage in the year, it would be impossible for any pupil to be secure in the end of year expectations as they would not have covered the entire curriculum content. For this reason, teachers at Hexham Middle will be basing their judgement on your child's performance in the topic areas studied to date. For example, in PE, if your child had taken part in athletics this term, then the judgement would be based on their attainment in relation to athletics and they may be given a grade of S (secure) in this specific aspect of PE. By contrast however, in maths, your child may have covered only part of the algebra expectations for the year. In this case, the teacher's judgement will reflect this, so they may be given a grade of D (developing) because they are yet to cover the other aspects of algebraic work.

How are teachers assessing attainment?

For each subject, we have specified assessment objectives* that reflect the aims of the national curriculum and are therefore subject-specific. There are between one and six assessment objectives for every subject and examples of these are detailed in the table below. Teachers will make a judgement against each assessment objective* and then also give an overall assessment grade, using the EDSM criteria. Individual teacher judgements are moderated across subject areas both within school and, wherever possible, across the Hexham Partnership of schools to ensure parity of assessment decisions.

SUBJECT	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2	Assessment objective 3	Assessment objective 4	Assessment objective 5	Assessment objective 6
ENGLISH	To read easily, fluently and with good understanding	To develop a habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information	To acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and for spoken language.	To write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting language and style for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences	To use discussion in order to learn; to be able to elaborate and clearly explain understanding and ideas	To be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.
MATHS	To demonstrate conceptual understanding	To be able to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately	To be able to reason mathematically by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and generalizations, and developing an argument, justifications or proof using mathematical language	To be able to solve problems by applying maths to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.		
SCIENCE	To develop scientific knowledge	To develop conceptual understanding	To develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science enquiries that help to answer scientific questions about the world around them	To be equipped with scientific knowledge required to understand the uses and implications of science today and for the future		
HISTORY	Change and Continuity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify events. • Sequence events. • Describe change and continuity. • Explain connections between events. 	Historical Knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of key terms. • Describe events. • Compare and contrast events. • Explain causes and consequences. 	Using Evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify provenance. • Describe evidence. • Analyse usefulness of evidence. • Evaluate reliability of evidence. 	Interpreting History: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate events and create enquiries. • Describe different accounts. • Interpret different accounts. • Evaluate interpretations. 		

* Assessment objectives taken from the aims of the relevant programme of study in the national curriculum documentation and thereby contain public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0

Supporting your child to achieve their potential

Teachers' judgements are informed continuously by their assessments of pupil progress. Assessment can take many forms, for example:

- Questioning in class
- Written work in books
- Observation and dialogue with pupils in class
- Quick tests and quizzes
- Homework
- Pupil/teacher dialogue in response to feedback in books
- Formal testing

What is important for pupils and parents/carers is that next steps in learning are clearly understood. For example, in maths a child who can successfully add and subtract fractions, may move on to multiplication and division of fractions. Similarly in English, a child's written work may improve with correct use of high level punctuation and the selection of ambitious language. Subject teachers are clear about the national curriculum age-related expectations and will be using assessment to communicate next steps with your child. We are currently finalising a document that will also provide a breakdown of the age-related expectations, in order that you can better support your child's learning at home. An extract of the age-related expectations for Year 5 Mathematics is illustrated on the next page.

Once teacher assessments are complete for the term, we will send a summary report home for your information. This will tell you the current attainment grade for your child, using the EDSM criteria.

Extract of the age-related expectations for Year 5 Mathematics

Number and place value

I can work with numbers up to at least 1,000,000 and recognise the value of digits.

I can work with negative numbers in different contexts.

I can read Roman numerals to 1000 (M) and work out years in Roman numerals.

I can approximate and estimate in problems, using skills developed in previous years.

Addition and subtraction

I can add and subtract numbers with more than four digits using the column method.

I can use rounding to check my answers, and solve calculations mentally with large numbers.

I can choose appropriate operations and methods, to solve multi-step problems deciding which methods to use and why.

Multiplication and division

I can identify multiples and factors and find all the factor pairs of a number.

I can use factors to help solve problems with increasingly large numbers.

I can use multiplication and division facts and have remembered them.

I can multiply numbers up to 4 digits by 2 digits using long multiplication.

I can divide numbers up to 4 digits by one digit using short division and interpret remainders.

I can multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1000.

I can solve problems involving multiplication and division and use my knowledge of factors, multiples, squares and cubes.

I can solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and a combination of these.

I can solve multiplication and division problems using scaling by simple fractions and problems involving simple rates.

I can begin to work with prime numbers up to 100, prime factors, composite (non-prime) numbers, square and cubed numbers and develop this vocabulary use.

Target setting

In accordance with the national curriculum, the minimum expectation at Hexham Middle School is that all children will be **Secure** in the age-related expectations by the end of the academic year. Some pupils will naturally demonstrate a deeper understanding and greater proficiency in particular subjects and they will be set a target of **Mastery** by the year end. Pupils will write their targets on the yellow subject sheets at the front of their planners. They will also record their termly assessment grades and next steps in the same place.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that this is a completely new way of thinking for schools, pupils and parents/carers and that it will take time for fluency in the new systems to develop. Our guiding principle is that the new assessment system, first and foremost, supports teachers, children and parents/carers in their knowledge of how secure the child is in the age-related curriculum content and makes clear where any gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding may be.