



# **South Avenue Primary School**

Parent's guide to Curriculum  
and Assessment in school

Since September 2014 some major changes to what your child learns (the new National Curriculum) and how this is measured (forms of assessment) have come into force. We would like to share these with you so you understand why the information we will be sharing with you about your child has changed.

## **What is the curriculum? Why have things changed?**

The curriculum is essentially all the skills and knowledge that your child learns during their time in Primary school. From September 2014, the Department for Education published a new primary curriculum which the majority of schools have to deliver by Law. Academy schools, like ourselves, can choose not to deliver this curriculum, but at South Avenue we follow the DfE issued National Curriculum.

Schools have the freedom to decide how these skills are taught, the topics that are covered and the broader experiences such as trips, sports events and other opportunities which develop your child in a holistic way. Teachers plan topics which not only cover the content of the curriculum, but are topics which are interesting and motivating for your children.

The overview of our curriculum can be found on our website.

## **Assessment**

It is important for teachers, TAs, children and parents to know where a child is in their learning – what they know, what they can do and what they need to do next – this is called assessment. There are 2 methods of assessment – tests that children take (such as SATS) and every day assessment which school adults and children make about their learning. We look at children's work, listen to them read, watch them carrying out their learning tasks and make ongoing assessments. Teachers use this method of assessment to fill gaps in children's knowledge and skills and to continually extend their learning forward so they develop the knowledge and skills they need. Children are part of this process through assessing their own work and challenging their learning so they know what they need to do next to move their learning on.

Assessment in year R is slightly different – this is ongoing each week by year R staff, as well as the contributions that year R parents make in their child's home learning book. This evidence is gathered together into a profile at the end of the year to form the overall assessment for a child in their 17 strands of learning.

In our recent survey carried out during the weeks of parent consultations, you confirmed that it was important to you to know what your child had been learning, how well they were doing and what they needed to do next so you could support them at home. So we have been working on improving our system to give you even more of this information than before. More of that a bit later...

Previously children have worked in curriculum levels in Key Stage 1 & 2 such as 1a, 2c, 3b, 5a etc. Your child's achievements would have been reported using a level which matched a set of statements which your child matched in that subject area. Progress was also reported which is the amount of levels that your child had moved through over a given period of time. However, these levels have now been removed in line with the removal of the old curriculum.

## Why has this changed?

The DfE wanted to move away from what was known as the 'Level Race' in Key stage 1 & 2 where children moved up through the national curriculum levels to reach higher attainment. However in many cases these levels (particularly in year 6) were based purely on test performance and so not a reliable indication of depth of knowledge, understanding and application. This could mean a child achieving level 6 in maths could pass the test but without having secure, deep knowledge of using the skills at that level. This made the transition to Secondary school more difficult for these children.

Additionally, the old levels were not linked to the year group that a child worked in. For example a child in year 4 could be a level 3 or a level 5 which has less relevance to parents and children than an understanding of whether they are working at a level you would expect for a child in their year group.

The feeling from the DfE (and many school professionals) was that the old national curriculum levels failed to adequately ensure that children have a broad, deep knowledge of skills and how to apply these.

## Does this affect every year group?

No. Year R will continue to have their Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum which is not affected by these changes. Year 2 and 6 are the last year groups to take the SATS in their current form for which they are given a level. From September 2015 the old curriculum will no longer be taught in any school.

## What will be in place of the old levels system?

The DfE announced last year that they would be scrapping the old levels and that schools would be expected to create their own methods of assessing children.

The majority of schools have a similar approach which is to create the expectations for a child to reach at the end of a particular year group. Children will then be assessed according to their knowledge and skills against these expectations. Broadly speaking a child will be assessed at the end of the year as:

- Emerging (working towards these expectations)
- Expected (secure in the majority of these expectations)
- Exceeding (secure in all or almost all of the expectations and able to apply and use their knowledge independently and with confidence)

Under the old levels system, children who would now be assessed as Exceeding would be moved into the next level. With this new system, children assessed as Exceeding will be given more depth, breadth and opportunities to use and apply their knowledge – this will become Mastery level.

Only a few, very exceptional children will move into the end of year expectations for the year above. Similarly children who are unlikely to be Emerging at the end of the year may well be working within the expectations from the year below.

## Formal testing

Formal tests (similar to SATS) will still take place at the end of year 2 and 6. At present these are in pilot in some National schools, so as yet we do not have any detail as to what these will look like.

It is expected that the majority of children at the end of year 2 (the end of Key Stage 1) will be assessed as Expected with a smaller number Exceeding and Emerging. There are no national figures available for this at present.

Children at the end of year 6 will also have formal testing to be “Secondary Ready”. The National target is that 85% of children will meet this level of attainment and will take the form of a scaled score (where 100 is expected to be the average). At present, no other guidance has been released by the DfE.

We know that any child starting in year R from September 2016 will be assessed (in conference with parents/carers) and this point forms the starting point of their education. Their progress from this point to that at the end of year 6 (in 2023) is how progress for that child will be measured overall.

## What will we be doing at South Avenue?

At South Avenue, we wanted to design a system of assessment which would show the development of all aspects of children, not just how well they are doing in maths, reading and writing. We consulted with you in the parent survey to ask whether you supported our idea and the resounding answer was Yes!

We have taken the principle used in EYFS (year R) to develop all aspects of a child which can be seen below:

Personal, Social & Emotional Development **	Communication & Language**	Physical Development **	Literacy **	Maths **	Understanding the world	Being Imaginative
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At the end of the year, children are assessed as Emerging, Expected & Exceeding. If a child gets Expected in the areas marked \*\* they are given what is known as a Good Level of Development (GLD).

We have adapted this EYFS approach to meet the needs of children in year 1-6. This shows how the new National Curriculum has been collected broadly within the same headings as EYFS.

Social skills, Personal Social & Health education (PSHE)	Speaking & Listening skills. Social communication skills	PE/sport & healthy lifestyle skills	Reading, Writing, Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar skills, Phonics	Maths	History, Geography, Science, Computing, Religious education & French	Art, Design Technology, Music & Drama
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We will use the following headings to assess children under:

Learning & Social Skills **	PE/Sport & Health **	Reading ** Writing **	Maths **	History, Geography, Science, Computing, RE & French	Art, Design Technology, Music & Drama
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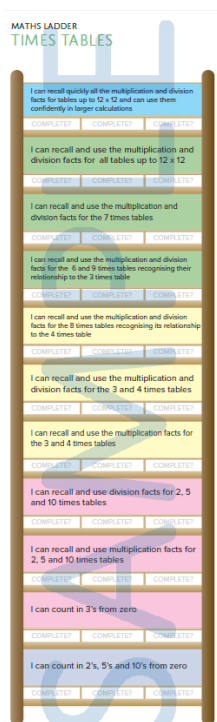
We will continue with the idea of GLD – so children meeting the end of year expectations in Learning & Social Skills, PE/Sport & Health, Reading, Writing & Maths will be awarded GLD. We are aiming to develop well rounded children who have skills to adapt and meet the future needs of their lives, as well as having academic skills.

We will also be assessing whether children are meeting the end of year expectations in Computing & Science, but these will not be part of the GLD criteria.

## Ensuring children know their next steps for learning

It remains important that children know what their next steps for learning are – these are their targets. We use targets from year 1 as even the youngest children enjoy taking responsibility for improving and extending their learning.

In order to make targets very clear for children and to ensure a clear system for tracking their skills and progress towards the end of year expectations, we are investing in a computer based system called Learning Ladders.



Learning Ladders organises the skills your child will learn into a series of rungs on a set of ladders – such as times tables, spellings, maths etc. Your child will be encouraged to discuss with their teacher when they feel they have achieved a rung on the ladder so that this can be recorded. To ensure this skill is secure it would need to be evidenced at least 3 times. The child will then continue by working on the next rung on their ladder. Only **in-school** evidence will be used so that it can be assessed and submitted as part of your child’s school portfolio of evidence.

An example of a ladder can be seen to the left. We will be creating ladders which will cover all aspects of Learning & social Skills, PE/Sport & health, Reading, Writing, Spelling, Maths, Computing & Science.

We are confident that this system provides very clear information for children about their next steps of learning. This will clearly be supported for younger children who are not reading yet.

The new curriculum encourages children to keep improving their own learning – it's not about competing against others to get the highest levels since all children have different strengths. With this in mind, children will not be told which year group 'rungs' they are working on (although their teachers will know this). Obviously it could be damaging to a child's self esteem to be working on a lower year group rung than their friends and so we are sure that you will support us to encourage your child to keep improving without making comparisons to other children in their class.

## How will this be reported?

The vast majority of you told us that you would like to know how your child is doing at school each term, and that you would like more information about supporting your child at home.

Learning Ladders has a portal whereby you will be able to login on your computer/tablet/phone and look at which ladders and rungs your child has been working on, how secure they are (how many times the teacher has seen evidence) and how they are getting on. You will also be able to see whether they are working within their year group expectations.

Once you login – if you have more than one child in school, you can choose which child to look at, then you choose which subject you would like to look at:

## Your Ladders

### Year Group Legend



### Notes

The Year Group label to the right of your child's name represents the current year of your child. Click this toggle to display rungs related to the current year.

### Subject Filter

Click on a subject button directly below to toggle the ladders that only belong to that subject.

A screenshot of the 'Your Ladders' interface. On the left is a vertical ladder icon. To its right is the child's name 'Ellie Smith' and a 'YEAR 2' toggle button. Below the name are three subject-specific ladders, each with a plus sign and a title: '+ Maths - Times Tables', '+ Maths - Addition', and '+ Writing - Super Spelling Target'. Each ladder has four rungs, but they are currently empty.

Then you can look at the rungs in the ladder to see how your child is getting on:

Rung: I can spell 10 words with contractions (it's, can't, won't, they're etc.)

2/3

Rung: I can use the possessive apostrophe for a singular person- the girl's book

3/3

Rung: I can add the suffices -ed, -ing, -er, -est, -ly, -y to root words

3/3

The teacher can also load examples of your child's work which you will be able to look at:

Rung: I can use controlling techniques for a specific purpose, sustained throughout a piece of text

3/3

VIEW  
CLASSWORK

You can also click on a rung and then choose to look at documents which help you support your child at home with that particular skill. These articles are available in 40 languages.

Rung: I can add 2 digit numbers and 3 digit numbers using column addition



Use knowledge of addition and subtraction facts and place value to derive sums and differences of pairs of multiples of 10, 100 or 1000.

by Andrew Coulson | Curriculum Articles, Key Stage Two Lower, Maths

Children are taught how to use their knowledge of addition, subtraction, number bonds and place value to work out sums and differences of multiples of 10, 100 and 1000. School Explained's Andrew Coulson explains what this means in plain English. There are activities to practise sums and differences of multiples of 10, 100 and 1000 and 'Teacher tips' for overcoming common misunderstandings in...



Develop and use written methods to record, support or explain addition and subtraction of two-digit and three-digit numbers.

by John Bullen | Curriculum Articles, Key Stage Two Lower, Maths

This learning objective is about your child being able to write down and explain his or her thinking about how to solve addition and subtraction number sentences and word problems involving two- and three-digit numbers. School Explained's highly experienced teacher and Maths Coordinator, John Bullen, explains how this may be taught in schools and offers useful activities for your child to do...



These articles also include other websites that you can use at home and games you can play.

We are planning a coffee, cake and Learning Ladders workshop for later in term 6 so that you can confidently use our new system. We will also clarify some of the finer detail of reporting at this session.

## **Future plans**

We intend to connect homework to skills that children are learning, so that both children and parents know which skills are being developed.

We know that not all children will meet Expected at the end of each year group, but will make lots of steps of progress forward, for example children who have Special Educational Needs. We don't think that their achievements should be considered as less valuable, so we are looking at developing a Good Level of Progress (GLP) model so that we can celebrate those children who make significant progress but remain below their end of year expectations. This has not been finalised yet but we will share this with you in due course.

To have truly holistic development, we plan to include assessment for The Arts over the next year or so, but this will not form part of the GLD criteria.