

**October
2015**

Assessment

**Changes to the way we and the government
assess your child's progress and achievement**

BALDWINS GATE CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Assessment at Baldwins Gate CE(VC) Primary School

Changes to the way we and the government assess your child's progress and achievement

What has changed?

As you may be aware, the government have removed the national assessment system for Years 1-6 (formerly known as 'levels of attainment') and asked schools to develop their own systems. As of September 2015, all schools are required to have their own systems in place.

Why has it changed?

The government conducted a review of the national assessment system (Years 1-6) and concluded that it was 'not fit for purpose'. This video clip of Tim Oates (Chair of the expert panel appointed by the government and Group Director of assessment, research and development at Cambridge University) summarises the reasons why the government made the changes and further explains the rationale behind the government's changes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=-q5vrBXFpm0

What has stayed the same?

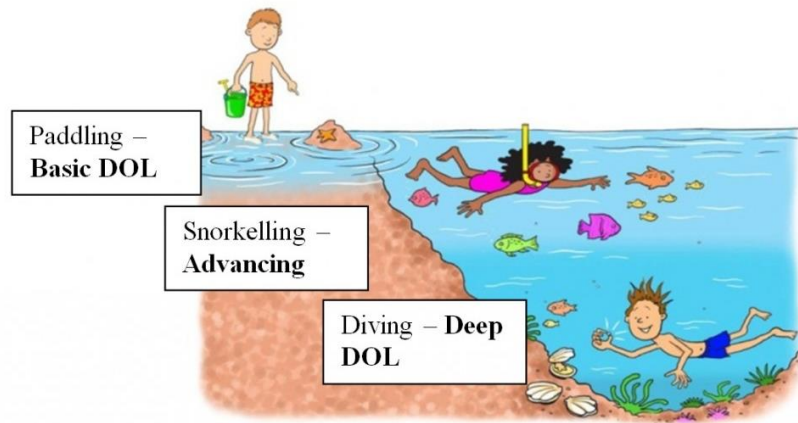
The government has kept **Statutory Assessments** in Years 2 and 6. In Year 2, this remains as a Teacher Assessment (informed by tasks and tests) and in Year 6 is based on tests in Reading, Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar and Mathematics and Teacher Assessment in Writing. Outcomes of these statutory assessments will no longer be reported in levels. The information we have from the government at the current time is that the outcomes will be reported as a number on a scale and indicators of whether your child has met the national standards or has achieved above/below will be shown. Further information on this will be available to our Year 2 and Year 6 parents later in the Spring term.

What assessment system has Baldwins Gate Primary School chosen to use? How does it work?

The new National Curriculum, introduced in September 2014, which we have to ensure we cover as a part of our school's curriculum, has seen increased expectations of attainment for all year groups and additional content has been introduced. The emphasis, from the government, is now on deepening and securing children's basic skills in English and Mathematics, rather than accelerating them through different levels. The children will revisit learning concepts throughout their years here but at different depths of challenge.

At Baldwins Gate, we have always had very high expectations of all of our children and they have achieved well (often well above the nationally expected standard). With a shift in emphasis, we have looked for an assessment system that will support with maintaining the highest possible standards whilst also supporting all learners on their journey through school, from their individual starting points, to become confident, independent thinkers and learners. As a Building Learning Power school (BLP) we have always given this aspect high importance and we do not want to lose this.

We have chosen to adopt an assessment system developed by Chris Quigley (a well-regarded educational professional) called 'Depth of Learning' (DOL).



Imagine starting to learn something for the first time. You are a bit like a child paddling their toes in the water. You may need someone holding your hand; showing you what to do; instructing you. You probably don't feel very sure of yourself. At this stage in learning, we may regard the learner as being at a **Basic depth of learning (DOL)** and heavily dependent on a range of support.

As you begin to deepen your understanding and gain in confidence and skill, you start to be able to use the new learning to do more e.g. problem solve; interpret; categorise; organise; classify and compare. This is a bit like being able to snorkel i.e. you can swim on the surface (you've acquired the skill) and you are confident to move away from the shore (the support on offer). At this **Advancing depth of learning (DOL)**, there is less reliance on support, although reminders and guidance will still be needed and there is greater cognitive (thinking) challenge.

Beyond this, higher order thinking skills are needed. Learners are able to be more independent in their thinking, need little support and are asked more probing questions or are being coached by staff or peers to develop deeper understanding. They will tackle more complex and abstract problems/tasks, perhaps requiring many steps and which may have many possible solutions. They will be able to explain concepts; investigate; hypothesise; design; create; prove and use evidence and reasoning to support their ideas. When a learner is operating at this stage, they are at a **Deep depth of learning (DOL)**, much like a confident swimmer who can dive to the sea bed without support, in order to search for pearls.

The journey for learners has been divided into 3 parts called **Milestones**. Milestone 1 is for Years 1 and 2; Milestone 2 is for Years 3 and 4 and Milestone 3 is for Years 5 and 6. Over each two year Milestone, learners will work on acquiring key skills and concepts and deepening their learning. Their progress will be tracked by teachers against **Basic, Advancing and Deep**.

It is expected that a child starting school with an average starting point, will progress to reach an **Advancing DOL** by the end of each Milestone. This equates to the nationally expected standard for a child of this age. **Deep DOL** by the end of a milestone will equate to above the nationally expected standard.

All children are different and do not all start at the same points nor make progress at the same rates as others. Age and maturity also play a part in children's progress and development. Children will be supported to make the progress they are capable of with the aim that all children will catch-up and reach Advancing DOL by the end of **Milestone 3** i.e. the nationally expected standard. This means that your child is ready academically for the next phase in their education.

What next?

To help you understand the changes to our assessment system, we will be providing further support over the course of this year but please don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

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