

The National Curriculum levels explained

Several parents at the end of last year's report comment sheets asked for an explanation of the level system within the National Curriculum and how this relates to their child's attainment. As I have mentioned on many occasions we welcome feedback and where possible will respond to any suggestions.

From Year One on in their school life, all children are assessed against the National Curriculum Levels; children in Early Years follow a different curriculum called the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Below is an explanation of what the 'average' attainment is expected to be at the end of various year groups. I have put 'average' in inverted commas as we believe at Old Heath Primary School that every child is an individual, and should be treated as such, however the government used the term average to measure attainment so this is how we have to express the information. All assessments recorded on your child report are called teacher assessments and therefore rather than based on the one-off test they are a true reflection of your child's attainment over a period of time.

Pupils in Early Years:

The following information is provided to give parents a guide to the average attainment levels their child should achieve at the end of Early Years.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is split into **6 'Areas of Learning'**, these are identified below by being underlined. Within the six Areas of Learning there are **13 'Assessment Scales'**.

Personal, social and emotional development

- Dispositions and attitudes
- Social development
- Emotional development

Communication, language and literacy

- Language for communication and thinking
- Linking sounds and letters
- Reading
- Writing

problem solving, reasoning and numeracy

- Numbers as labels accounting
- Calculating
- Shape, space and measures

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Physical developments

Creative development

'Average' Attainment →

Scale Point 9
Scale Point 8
Scale Point 7
Scale Point 6
Scale Point 5
Scale Point 4
Scale Point 3
Scale Point 2
Scale Point 1



Children are scored out of nine in each of the 13 assessment scales. Each point relates to a different ‘skill or characteristic’ that has been observed during the child's independent working.

Scale points are not necessarily achieved in order so scale point 6 could be achieved before point 5.

However, scale points 1 to 3 must be achieved before a child can progress to point 4 and beyond.

Scale point 9 can only be awarded once all other eight points have been achieved.

A score of point 6 is considered average for the end of Early Years.

Good attainment is judged as achieving a combined and score of 78 points or more with a score of at least six points in each of the Personal, Social & Emotional and Communication & Literacy areas.

Throughout Early Years children are continuously observed by staff to inform their judgements. The evidence of these observations is available for you to see on request. Judgements for the scale points are based on 80% child initiated evidence and 20% adult directed.

Pupils working below Level 1:

This is how the National Curriculum levels progress.

W (P Levels)	1c	1b	1a	2c	2b	2a	3c	3b	3a	4c	4b	4a	5c	5b	5a
Lowest															Highest

The National Curriculum levels go from W (for pupils working towards level 1) to level 5 in primary schools. Where children are working below level 1 your child’s teacher will give them a ‘P’ level which splits up the W level into smaller pieces so that progress can be seen. The P levels go from P1 (lowest) to P8 (highest).

Pupils working at Level 1 or above:

The table below shows which level ‘average’ children should be achieving in each year group. With the exception of Year 2 and 6 these are general expectations because few children develop at an even pace. There is also a difference between levels in the different key stages; for example a Level 3 in Key Stage Two isn’t quite the same as a Level 3 in Key Stage One.

The letter beside the number is used to split each whole level up into three smaller sections to tell you exactly whereabouts your child attained within the whole level. For example Level 3a is a high level three, 3b is a mid-level three and 3c is just in level three.

Year Group	‘Average’ Level
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Year 1	1b
Year 2	2b
Year 3	2a/3c
Year 4	3b
Year 5	3a/4c
Year 6	4b

In addition to the teacher assessments pupils in Year Two and Six receive additional test levels with the reports. Whilst usually these are the same as the teacher assessments on some occasions the levels can vary due to the test being a snapshot of that child at that moment on that day. In year six the test results are not separated into a, b or c and just left at whole levels. This is also the case for Year Two tests in Science and Speaking & Listening.

Please remember children are not robots and do not progress at exactly the same rate every year as the governments 'average' measure of attainment would suggest. During some years children will have accelerated progress and other years the progress will be less, often this is the case at the beginning of a new Key Stage.

I hope this helps you to understand where your child is, in terms of attainment. If any parents need further clarification please do not hesitate to contact the school.

J Hallum
Headteacher