

This email was sent to all Hertfordshire Primary, Middle and All-through school Headteachers and Administrative Staff on Thursday 3rd December 2020

Subject: [FYI] Primary Assessment Breaking News and Related Items

Dear colleague

As you have no doubt heard, the DfE has announced today some significant changes to assessment for this academic year, to 'improve fairness and prevent disruption'. The full statement from Gavin Williamson is [here](#).

The Assessment and Reporting Arrangements documents have also been released today (links below), which offer further clarification. I summarise below what we know so far and the implications.

Key Stage 2 (Year 6):

KS2 tests in Reading and Maths will go ahead, but Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test is scrapped.

SATs tests will be 'more flexible', with schools being able to administer the tests across 2 weeks (up to Friday 26th May).

The official timing of the tests is now as follows:

- Monday 10th May - English reading
- Tuesday 11th May - Mathematics: Paper 1: arithmetic; Paper 2: reasoning
- Wednesday 12th May - Mathematics Paper 3: reasoning

If schools need to vary the test timetable, they must still do this via the Primary Assessment Gateway. The key change this year is that the timetable variation can be up to 10 school days.

It should be noted that Eid falls within this test window, so this may necessitate timetable variations.

Unannounced monitoring visits of KS2 SATs will still take place.

Teacher assessment of writing remains statutory, but science TA is removed.

External statutory moderation of writing will still take place this year.

KS2 Performance Tables for the above data will not be published. However there has been no mention of data in ASP or IDSR (which are not in the public domain), therefore my assumption is that 2021 data will still be produced in these reports.

Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check:

The KS2 ARA document confirms that this check will be optional this year.

Key Stage 1 (Year 2):

There will be no KS1 tests this summer; however, teacher assessment of reading, writing and maths remains statutory. (Teacher assessment of science is not required this year.)

External statutory moderation will still take place this year.

Key Stage 1 data is never published in the public domain, so the announcement about removal of performance tables data has no bearing on this key stage. My assumption remains that KS1 data will be released in ASP and IDSR.

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check (and Year 2 where required):

The 2021 Phonics check will still take place, although there is now a 3-week window in which to administer it (i.e. between Monday 7th – Friday 25th June).

Year 2 children who do not reach the threshold score of 32 marks in the Phonics Screening Check that is being administered this term (using any previous year's check materials) should be included in the check in Summer 2021, along with all Year 1 children. (Further information about the check this term below.)

Unannounced monitoring visits of Phonics Screening Checks will still take place.

Early Years:

Early Years assessment is unchanged by today's announcement. Arrangements for this year are still as follows:

- some schools (which have already informed DfE that they wish to be 'early adopters' of the new EYFS Reforms) will submit assessment against the new EYFS Profile. There is no statutory external moderation for these schools;
- schools which are not 'early adopters' of the new EYFS Reforms will make their judgements against the existing EYFSP. Statutory moderation still applies to these schools.

If there are any further announcements regarding the EYFS, we will of course inform you. For Early Years queries please contact the Early Years team on earlyyearsteam@hertsforlearning.co.uk

Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA) documents

These documents, which set out all the statutory assessment requirements, have been released today:

[Key Stage 2 ARA](#)

[Key Stage 1 ARA](#)

[Early Years ARA](#)

Implications of today's announcement

Clearly, whilst the DfE's announcement has introduced some flexibility into the system, it is not a removal of accountability measures, such as we saw in Summer 2020. Teacher assessment is still in place, and of course it continues to be our central message that high quality formative assessment will be absolutely crucial in enabling teachers to effectively get their children 'back on track' in their learning.

Opportunities for further CPD

Throughout much of November, the Assessment team ran digital moderation clusters for Year 6 teachers, focusing on writing. Over 200 Y6 teachers attended one of these clusters, and the feedback has been extremely positive.

Next term, we are running [similar events for teachers in Years 2-5](#), again focusing on writing. Given the continued importance of teacher assessment in writing, we hope that schools will still value these opportunities. Places are limited so book early!

I would also like to take the opportunity to flag up our assessment training for NQTs which is taking place early in the Spring term. Each course is spread over 2 afternoon webinars:

[Years 1 and 2](#) – Wednesday 6th and Tuesday 12th January (1:30pm – 4:00pm: delegates attend both sessions)

[Years 3 and 4](#) – Monday 11th and Thursday 14th January (1:30pm – 4:00pm: delegates attend both sessions)

[Years 5 and 6](#) – Thursday 7th and Wednesday 13th January (1:30pm – 4:00pm: delegates attend both sessions)

Early Years

In order to support and help prepare schools for the implementation of the EYFS reforms and continue to help practitioners make accurate professional judgements against both the new EYFS profile and current profile, the Early Years team have a range of CPD opportunities that will meet schools' varying needs.

Early Adopter schools (invitation only) - Understanding and using the EYFS profile Early Learning Goals – Wednesday 24th March – (1:00pm – 3:00pm)

[Implications for the new EYFS reforms – what this means in practice](#) – Monday 22nd February (1:00pm – 3:00pm)

Moderating Early Years outcomes for children - [Tuesday 9th March](#) (9:30am – 11:30am) and [Wednesday 10th March](#) (1:00pm – 3:00pm)

Submission of Year 2 Phonics Screening Check results from this term

A reminder that all Year 2 children are expected to have been given a Phonics Screening Check this term, using any past year's materials. As they are previously released materials, we know that the threshold score is 32.

The data from this term's check will not be published in ASP, but it is statutory to submit the data. It should be returned to the local authority as a CTF file via AnyComms Plus (by the last day of term).

There is guidance on submitting data using AnyComms Plus in [this document](#) on the DMS Portal. (You will need to be logged in to view it.)

'Easy Tracking' development - EYFS

A large number of Hertfordshire primary schools have started to use our simplified summative assessment tracking tool, 'Easy Tracking'. We are in the process of further developing this to extend it into the Early Years. This will become particularly important next academic year, when all schools will be required to put the EYFS assessment reforms into place. The system we are developing will enable schools to record simple summative snapshot data across the Early Years Foundation Stage and will then seamlessly feed into Key Stage 1, enabling smoother transition. We are working with a pilot group of schools and settings to develop this and ensure it meets schools' needs. More information on this will follow next term.

For schools currently using Easy Tracking, the Assessment team and Data Management Services teams are jointly hosting a [live webinar](#) for one hour on Monday 14th December, 3.30pm - 4.30pm. The aim of this is to deal with any queries that may have arisen over the course of this term, regarding making best use of the system. Please sign up to join in with the live discussion.

As further information becomes available on any of the above topics, we will endeavour to provide timely updates. Don't forget to follow [@hertsassessment](#) on Twitter for the latest news.

If you have any queries regarding assessment at Key Stages 1 and 2, please do [contact the assessment team](#).

Kind regards

Ben

Ben Fuller

Lead Assessment Adviser

Herts for Learning Ltd

Robertson House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, SG1 2FQ

M: 07741 500726

T: 01438 544464

E: ben.fuller@hertsforlearning.co.uk [@hertsassessment](#)

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