

Evaluating Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

December 2012 Guidance for Schools

Hertfordshire Early Years and Assessment Teams

To be read in conjunction with:

- Ofsted School Inspection Handbook Ref 120101
- Subsidiary Guidance Ref 110166 September 2012
- Statutory Framework for the EYFS
- Development Matters in the EYFS March 2012
- EYFSP Handbook 2013 STA/13/6106/e

As with other key stages, the evaluation of the achievement of an individual child or a cohort in EYFS is based on consideration of their attainment and progress.

Attainment is evaluated in relation to age-related expectations, described in 'Development Matters' learning and development bands. This is the basis for ongoing assessment of pupils in the EYFS. The Development Matters document includes age-band descriptors for 0-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months and 40-60+ months.

At the end of the Reception Year summative judgements must be made using the EYFS Profile (EYFSP). These are the attainment outcomes that are submitted to the DfE via the local authority (LA) to compile the national data against which schools are benchmarked.

When evaluating progress it is helpful to consider three steps in each development matters band. In Hertfordshire we advise practitioners to assess whether pupils are **emerging** into the band, **developing** within the band, or **securing** the band. (These terms are explained further below.)

Progress must always be measured from the child's individual starting point. It is possible that a child with high attainment may not have made the expected amount of progress. Conversely a child may have made good progress whilst remaining below the age related expectation.

Assessing Pupils' Attainment in the EYFS

Is the child emerging, developing or securing within an age-band?

The approach of estimating the percentage of statements met is not viable, because there are now too few statements in the new Development Matters framework. The revised document states that the criteria should not be used as a checklist.

We advise practitioners to consider:

- Is the child demonstrating **a few / some** of the elements of this band (having shown competence in all elements of the previous band)?

- If the answer is yes, this child is **emerging**.

- If competence in the previous band has not been demonstrated the child is **securing** the previous band even if they show some elements of the next.

- Is the child demonstrating **many** of the elements of this band?

- If the answer is yes, this child is **developing**.

- Is the child demonstrating **most** of the elements of this band?

- If the answer is yes, this child is **securing**.

It must be remembered that children do not all progress in the same way – there is no set order or pattern in which different skills will be acquired. Therefore, children might sometimes be showing elements across different age-bands. Judgements made using the Development Matters age-band criteria will always, therefore, be a ‘best fit’, looking at the range of skills children are demonstrating. Evidence from a higher band must not over-ride evidence of significant gaps from the previous band. So, for example, even if a child demonstrates some elements of the 40-60 band, if there are significant gaps in the 30-50 band the child can, at best, be described as securing 30-50 not emerging in 40-60.

As stated in the EYFS Development Matters document on page 3, ‘best fit’ principles should be applied to make the judgement about whether a child is showing typical development for their age, may be at risk of delay or is ahead for their age.

Ofsted Subsidiary guidance September 2012 says:

Attainment on entry to nursery at age three

Most* children are likely to be working within the ‘Development Matters’ band for 30–50 months, having shown competence in the preceding band for 22–36 months. This may be referred to as the age-related expectation at the beginning of nursery. Attainment on entry is likely to be below age-related expectations where a substantial proportion** of children in a school do not demonstrate all of the elements in the 22–36 month band.

Attainment on entry to reception at age four

Most* children are likely to demonstrate some of the elements of skill, knowledge and understanding within the ‘Development Matters’ band for 40–60+ months, in addition to all of the elements in the preceding band for 30–50 months. This may be referred to as the age-related expectation at the beginning of reception. Attainment on entry is likely to be below age-related expectations where a substantial proportion** of children in a school do not demonstrate all of the elements in the 30–50 month band. The statutory early learning goals establish national expectations for most children to reach by the end of Reception year. These are the statements in bold in the 40–60+ month band.

** ‘Most’ means the majority of or nearly all children. Ofsted’s definition of ‘most’ is 80–96%. Therefore there could be up to 20% of children working below the expected band and yet the overall cohort would still be described as in line with the age-related expectation.*

*** ‘Substantial proportion’ means more than 20% i.e. outside the definition of ‘most’.*

Most children's journey, at age related expectations, will be:

From - Entry to Nursery - 30-50 emerging

Exit (June-July) - 30-50 securing / 40-60 emerging

(Taking into account age and time in school)

Entry to Reception (September) - 40-60 emerging

Exit ELGs - EYFSP-Expected level

Assessing Individual Pupil Progress in the EYFS

Progress is measured from the child's individual starting point.

To be able to judge progress across the year, it is essential to capture an accurate baseline of children's attainment as early as possible in the academic year. We advise that during the child's first 2 weeks (10 days) in the class, practitioners should immerse themselves in working, playing and interacting with the children so that they get to know them really well. Taking into account information from the home and /or preschool providers, practitioners should then be well placed to form initial judgements of the pupils' attainment on entry (AoE) in relation to the bands and steps explained above.

If we call progress from 'emerging' to 'developing' a '**step**' (and similarly, progress from 'developing' to 'securing' and from 'securing' to 'emerging' are each one step), we would suggest that 'expected progress', from the Nursery AoE in September to the Reception AoE twelve months later, could be three steps. For children born between March and August and for those who have had only two terms in a Nursery class, two steps of progress may be considered expected progress.

By the end of Reception in June /July a child is likely to have made 5 steps of progress over 5 or 6 terms in school (ie Nursery + Reception).

Where attainment on entry is low practitioners are encouraged to aim for accelerated progress from their starting point to close the gap between their learning and development and that of the rest.

Higher attaining children coming into Reception at 'developing' or 'securing' (40-60 months) could still have made 'expected' progress if they end on the ELG at 'expected'.

NB: 'Best fit' principles will apply to EYFSP. So a child might meet the expected level at ELG with most / not all aspects met. (The new definition of 'a good level of development' has not yet been agreed.) The exceeding level describes children working confidently at NC level 1 or beyond. There is an expectation that this judgement will be moderated in school and agreed with the Y1 teacher at the end of Reception. (EYFSP Handbook 2013)

Assessing Cohort Progress in the EYFS

Evaluation of cohort progress will be based on the percentage of children making at least the expected progress from their starting points. *Ref Subsidiary guidance page 7.14*

On what basis might you evaluate cohort achievement as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'?

There are no national data for progress across EYFS. However the Ofsted expectation is that most pupils will make expected progress in EYFS. The current Ofsted framework (September 2012) states:

Good achievement – “Taking account of their different starting points, the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress compare favourably with national figures. Where the proportion making expected progress overall is lower than that found nationally, it is improving over a sustained period.”

Outstanding achievement – “Taking account of their different starting points, the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress are high compared with national figures”.

Based on conversations with Ofsted inspectors-

Achievement may be evaluated as **good** if:

- **Progress** of most children (80%+) is in line with expectations across the areas of learning or progress is improving over a sustained period (3 year trend)

and

- **Attainment** compares favourably with national expectations ie
 - at end of nursery most children are attaining within or above the 30-50 month band
 - at the end of Reception the percentages reaching the expected level (EYFSP) is in line with or above the national percentages
 - **or** where attainment is low it is improving over a sustained period.

Achievement may be evaluated as **outstanding** if:

- Almost all children (90%+) have made at least expected **progress** across all areas of learning and many children will have made more than the expected amount of progress

and

- **Attainment** compares favourably with national expectations ie
 - The **attainment** of almost all children is likely to be at the expected level, with no significant variation between groups
 - Many pupils (perhaps 40%) will be attaining above the expected level
 - **or** where the attainment of one group is lower, the gap is closing rapidly.

NB: These judgements cannot be made purely from the data – they need to be backed up with what can be seen in the classroom. If a school claims that progress is good, but lesson observations reveal that progress made by children in the classroom requires improvement, the judgement based on the data is unlikely to be upheld.

This guidance will be reviewed in response to national guidance (DfE / STA) and feedback from Ofsted.