

# Beaufront First School

Nurturing happiness, achievement and respect

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## Assessment: Life without Levels

Dear Parents and Carers,

This past year has seen a significant change in education. There are changes nationally to both the curriculum and to assessment. This leaflet aims to provide you with information about what is changing and how it will affect your child.

## The Curriculum

*What is changing?* There is a new National Curriculum. This affects what is taught and when it is taught.

*In what way is it changing?* The subjects taught will remain the same.

The new National Curriculum has a greater focus on knowledge development, along with the opportunity to study the “big ideas” of a subject in greater depth.

**English, Maths and Science** remain very important and are considered as **core subjects**. The National Curriculum sets out in some detail what must be taught in each of these subjects, and they take up a substantial part of your child’s learning week. The bar has been raised in English and Maths. The emphasis has shifted towards the children gaining a very secure grounding in the **key knowledge** (not just understanding) that they will need to become very secure in these key subjects. The aim for the end of each academic year is that the children will be ready for the next stage in their educational journey.

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Alongside the core subjects are the familiar foundation subjects which play a key part in providing a broad and balanced curriculum. These are **Art, Computing, Design & Technology, Foreign Languages, Geography, History, RE, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)**.

For these foundation subjects, the details in the National Curriculum are significantly briefer, schools have much more flexibility regarding what they cover in these subjects.

*So what is Beaufront First School doing?* We are working closely with the Hexham Partnership of Schools to:

- Ensure consistency in what is being taught in each year group
- Ensure that there is clear progression for each child as they move through each year group

*So what is my child being taught now?* Your child is being taught the new curriculum.

Beaufront First School staff are putting the finishing touches to medium term plans over a 2 year cycle to ensure coverage of all the foundation subjects in a way that will engage the children (and the staff!) and will reflect the nature of our school.

We are following the National Curriculum for the core subjects very closely.

## The Curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The focus on the development of the 'whole child' continues, with the areas of learning remaining as communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; creative arts and design.

The Early Years Curriculum has retained its focus and emphasis on developing excellent characteristics of learning (play and exploration, active learning, and creative and critical thinking) meaning that a broad, varied and interesting curriculum is developed and provided in a meaningful and differentiated way for all children.

the main areas of learning (in focus for assessment) are all of the above, less understanding the world, and creative arts and design.

In line with the National Curriculum there is a big emphasis on literacy, including phonics, and mathematics.

To reach a 'Good Level of Development' (national expectation for all children at the end of Reception) children will demonstrate at least secure (expected) knowledge, understanding and skills with regard to communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy; mathematics.

Further changes are due to be made to the Early Years Profile (which may affect the curriculum requirements and assessment arrangement) towards the end of this academic year.

## Assessment

*What is changing in how my child is assessed?* Life without levels — The Government have removed "levels" as the assessment method by which each child is measured against the national curriculum. This applies across Key Stages 1,2,3.

*So what has the government introduced instead?* It is up to every individual school to decide how they will measure attainment and progress. There is no longer a common format for reporting attainment.

The National Curriculum states that 85–90 % of pupils will be secure in the knowledge and skills taught that year. This means that 85–90% of pupils will reach age-related expectations for that year.

For the end of Year 2 and 6 (Middle School) we have been given some guidance on these expectations.

*So what is Beaufront First School doing?* The Hexham partnership of schools has agreed an assessment policy and the terminology within that policy is being used in school. Beaufront staff have contributed to this policy. (See below)

Beaufront First School has bought into an assessment scheme that is being used by a majority of schools in the partnership. This assessment scheme is called the PET tracker and it allows teachers to use their professional judgement to assess the children against the age related expectations for each year group's programme of study (within the National Curriculum).

You will be given a blank version of the assessment sheets for reading, writing and maths, so that you know what your child is working towards.

Terminology for assessing children against the age related expectations is as follows:

Entering	Developing	Secure	Mastery
E	D	S	M
Yet to be secure in the end of year expectations.	Secure in some of the end of year expectations.	Secure in the majority of the end of year expectations.	Secure in all of the end of year expectations and able to use and apply their knowledge and skills confidently

Beaufront First school teachers are working closely with other partnership (and wider) colleagues to discuss the assessment scheme and support each other with our assessments of the children's work against the National Curriculum.

We are also introducing a variety of tests in the core subjects in order to validate our judgements and to increase the children's confidence in a more formal way of assessment.

It is important to understand that any assessment system is only important within the overall cycle of Planning, teaching and assessing the children. We have a huge range of "ongoing" assessment that we use in school and which directly feed into our planning. The formal assessing via the PET sheets is one part of this.

I hope you find this information useful. I feel sure it will throw up more questions than it answers. We will follow up with an assessment "drop in" later in the year.