This article covers the assessment arrangements for pupils in primary education aged 5-11 (in the Foundation Phase [1] and Key Stage [2], ISCED [3] 1).

**Pupil assessment**

Responsibility for pupil assessment is shared.

- The National Assembly for Wales is responsible for the system of statutory national assessment. This is set out under section 108 of the Education Act 2002 [4].

- Estyn, the office of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 [5], is responsible for inspection. In accordance with the Common Inspection Framework [6], primary school inspections evaluate the standards reached by pupils overall and their progress. Inspections also consider assessment practices in the classroom as part of the evaluation of teaching and learning experiences.

- Local authorities (LAs) [7] have a duty to ensure that schools in their area administer statutory assessments appropriately.

- Schools are responsible for planning the whole school curriculum for their pupils, for assessing pupil learning, for informing parents of progress, and for complying with statutory assessment requirements. Responsibility is shared between the headteacher and the school governing body [8].

Primary school teachers use both ongoing formative and summative assessment to evaluate learners’ progress towards planned learning objectives; strengthen their pupils’ learning; and improve their own planning and teaching.

**National assessment arrangements**

Statutory national assessment arrangements in primary education include:

- baseline assessment of children entering the reception [9] class, age 4/5 (in the Foundation Phase)
• summative teacher assessment at the end of the Foundation Phase (Year 2, age 7)

• summative teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 (age 11)

• annual assessment of all pupils in Years 2-6 (ages 6/7-10/11) who take national standardised literacy (reading) and numeracy tests.

National assessment arrangements are statutory in maintained schools in accordance with orders made under the Education Act 2002. Results from statutory summative teacher assessment at the end of the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 contribute to the performance data which is collected and analysed nationally for the school accountability system, the National School Categorisation System.

Foundation Phase assessment arrangements

Pupils in the Foundation Phase in maintained primary schools must be assessed by their teachers when they enter the reception class, age 4/5, and again at the end of the Foundation Phase (Year 2, age 7).

This statutory teacher assessment takes place in accordance with The National Curriculum (Desirable Outcomes, Educational Programmes and Baseline and End of Phase Assessment Arrangements for the Foundation Phase) (Wales) Order 2015. The requirements are described in detail in the document Statutory Assessment Arrangements for the Foundation Phase and End of Key Stages 2 and 3 (October 2018). The subheadings below provide summary information.

Pupils in the final year of the Foundation Phase must also take national standardised tests in literacy (reading) and numeracy. See the subheading ‘National standardised reading and numeracy tests’ below.

Baseline assessment

Teachers are required to carry out a statutory baseline assessment of all pupils within six weeks of their entry in to the reception class in primary school (age 4/5). This requirement was introduced in September 2015.

Teachers must use the Foundation Phase Profile for this assessment. The Profile is based on observations and formative assessments to establish a baseline of children’s development to help teachers to plan the next steps for learning.

This observation-based tool is used throughout the Foundation Phase to support teacher assessment. It is based on the Foundation Phase Framework outcomes (see the subheading below), and consists of a ‘Compact Profile’ and a ‘Full Profile’. Both Profiles contain skill ‘ladders’, which are used to produce a snapshot of a child’s development at the baseline assessment and at the end of the Foundation Phase respectively.

The Compact Profile must be used for baseline assessment. Teachers report a child’s development in four of the Foundation Phase areas of learning:

• personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity
Schools submit the results of this baseline assessment to the Welsh Government as part of the national data collection.

**Statutory teacher assessment at the end of the Foundation Phase**

At the end of the Foundation Phase (Year 2, pupils aged around 7), teachers must also assess their pupils using the Foundation Phase Framework outcomes (see below) in three of the areas of learning:

- personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity
- language, literacy and communication skills in English or Welsh
- mathematical development.

For this, they may use the Full Profile, although its use is not statutory. This assessment must take place not later than 20 working days before the end of the summer term.

Headteachers submit the results of the statutory teacher assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase to the local authority (LA). The LA then sends these to the Welsh Government, which produces national level reports of pupil achievement.

**Foundation Phase Framework outcomes**

The Foundation Phase Profile is based on the Foundation Phase Framework outcomes. These are a series of outcome statements, first introduced in 2008, setting out the expected standards of children’s performance for each area of learning during the Foundation Phase (ages 3-7).

The Foundation Phase Framework outcomes measured for the Foundation Phase Profile are expressed on a six-point scale (outcome 1 to outcome 6, where 6 is high). There is an outcome above outcome 6 for pupils working at a particularly high level. There are also outcomes for children working below outcome 1, expressed at three levels of increasing difficulty - Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The Foundation Phase Framework outcomes for language, literacy and communication skills, and for mathematical development, were revised in September 2015. This was to take account of the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF), and to make the outcomes more demanding. Pupils were assessed against the revised outcomes for the first time in summer 2018.

The outcomes for personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity, which teachers must assess for both baseline assessment and end of Foundation Phase assessment, and for physical development, which teachers must assess in their baseline assessment, are as originally introduced in
Key Stage 2 assessment arrangements

Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6, aged around 11) must be assessed by their teachers in English, Welsh (first or second language), mathematics and science. This statutory teacher assessment takes place in accordance with The National Curriculum (Key Stage 2 Assessment Arrangements) (Wales) Order 2004 [20], as amended. The requirements are described in detail in the Statutory Assessment Arrangements for the Foundation Phase and End of Key Stages 2 and 3 [13] (October 2018) and summarised below.

Statutory teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 is based on observations of pupils’ practical and oral work in the classroom, on written work completed in class, on pupils’ homework and on school-based assessments. It must take place not later than 20 working days before the end of the summer term.

In completing the assessment, teachers make summative judgements of each learner’s performance against the national curriculum [21] attainment targets, and report these in terms of national curriculum levels or level descriptions.

Attainment targets set out the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils are expected to achieve in each subject by the end of the key stage. Some subjects have several attainment targets which relate to aspects of the programmes of study [22]. Welsh at Key Stage 2, for example, has separate attainment targets for oracy (speaking and listening), reading, and writing. The level descriptions are descriptions of performance for each attainment target. There are eight level descriptions of increasing difficulty, with an additional description above Level 8 to help teachers in differentiating exceptional performance.

Expectations for pupil performance in statutory teacher assessment have been raised. Most learners at the end of Key Stage 2 are now expected to achieve Level 5 of the national curriculum levels, rather than Level 4 which was previously the case. This rise in expectations was introduced in line with the revised (2015) national curriculum programmes of study for English, Welsh and mathematics and the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) [19]. It supports Welsh Government policy to raise standards across the school system.

In undertaking statutory teacher assessment, all maintained schools in Wales must participate in ‘moderation cluster groups’. This aims to ensure reliability and consistency in the assessment of pupil progress at the end of Key Stage 2. The groups consist of at least two schools, which are required to develop accurate and consistent standardisation of teacher assessment practices before teachers assess pupils’ work. This is a statutory obligation introduced under The National Curriculum (Moderation of Assessment Arrangements for the Second and Third Key Stages) (Wales) Order 2015 [23].

Teachers submit the results of the statutory Key Stage 2 teacher assessments to the local authority (LA), which submits them to the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government produces national level reports [17] of student achievement.

National standardised reading and numeracy tests

Pupils in all years of Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6, ages 7-11) and in the final year of the Foundation Phase (Year 2, age 6/7) must take national standardised reading and numeracy tests.
The tests aim to gauge pupil progress in these key skills and pupils’ performance is graded using standardised scores. This summative data on pupil performance is intended primarily for teachers’ diagnostic use. Although data from the tests is not included in the set of performance measures used in the National School Categorisation System [11], it does allow measurement of performance and progress at a national level.

The tests were introduced in 2013 under The Education (National Curriculum) (Assessment Arrangements for Reading and Numeracy) (Wales) Order 2013 [24] as part of the Welsh Government’s response to Wales’ poor results in PISA 2012. They are based on the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework [19].

**Reading** is assessed through a 60-minute test available in both English and Welsh. Children in Years 4-6 of primary education (ages 8-11) who are in a Welsh-medium setting take both Welsh-medium and English-medium tests. Children in Years 2 and 3 (ages 6-8) in Welsh-medium settings are only expected to take the Welsh-medium reading test, although schools may choose to let Year 3 pupils (ages 7-8) take the English reading test also.

The **numeracy** test is split into two papers, both of which last 30 minutes: numerical procedures and numerical reasoning. The procedural paper is designed to assess essential numeracy skills such as addition, multiplication and measuring. The reasoning paper assesses how well learners can use what they know to solve numeracy problems they are likely to encounter in their everyday lives.

The tests are administered and marked in schools and must take place during a set period in May – usually around one week for primary schools. Within this period, individual schools timetable them to suit their needs. The tests must be marked and results submitted to the local authority, usually by a date in early June.

When marked, each test produces an age-standardised score and a progress measure for each pupil. The age-standardised score, which compares children of the same age (in years and months), is set at an average of 100. Scores lower than 85 suggest children might need additional support, and those over 115 suggest that a child’s skills are well-developed for their age. The progress score is a measure of a child’s performance compared with that of all other children in the same year group in Wales taking the test.

In May 2017, the Welsh Government announced that online tests would begin to be introduced in phases from 2018/19, replacing paper tests. The new format - known as ‘personalised assessments’ – will automatically adjust the level of the questions to match the individual taking the test, with the aim of challenging each learner as appropriate. The personalised assessments also aim to reduce marking time and administration. They are being phased in as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Numeracy (procedural)</th>
<th>Reading (Welsh and English)</th>
<th>Numeracy (reasoning)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020/21</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government guidance on the literacy and numeracy tests is provided in Statutory Assessment Arrangements for the Foundation Phase and End of Key Stages 2 and 3 [13] (October 2018) and in National Reading and Numeracy Tests – Test Administration Handbook 2018 to 2019 [25].
Pupil records and reports

Schools must provide parents with a written progress report at least once each school year. This is required under The Head Teacher's Report to Parents and Adult Pupils (Wales) Regulations 2011 [26], as amended by The Head Teacher's Report to Parents and Adult Pupils (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 [27].

Reports must include information on the pupil’s progress in subjects studied as part of the school curriculum and a summary of the pupil’s attendance record. Additional requirements are set out below.

- In the final year of the Foundation Phase [1] (Year 2, age 7), reports must include the results of the statutory reading and numeracy tests, along with information on the next steps for the pupil based on this assessment. They must also include a narrative report on the pupil’s progress against the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF), and the results of statutory teacher assessment of the Foundation Phase outcomes.

- In Key Stage [2] 2, reports must include the pupil’s results in the statutory reading and numeracy tests, and a narrative report on the pupil’s progress against the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF). For pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, the annual report should also include the results of statutory teacher assessment expressed as national curriculum levels for English, Welsh, mathematics and science.

At the end of primary education, the pupil’s educational record – in the form of a ‘Common Transfer File’ [28] - is also sent from the primary school to the pupil’s secondary school.

Assessment reform

Assessment Proposals to Inform the Development of Statutory Guidance [29], published by the Welsh Government in April 2019, sets out proposals to underpin assessment in the new Curriculum for Wales [30]. The new curriculum, for 3- to 16-year-olds, is due to be implemented in all maintained schools in Wales from September 2022, and the core proposals for assessment include:

- the passing of legislation to make statutory provision for formative assessment

- the publication of statutory guidance encouraging a focus on assessment for formative rather than summative purposes, i.e. to assess learner progress and inform next steps in teaching and learning

- the assessment of student progress via ‘progression steps’, which will be reference points on a continuum of learning from age 3 to age 16. The progression steps will relate broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16, articulated through a series of achievement outcomes.

It is intended that the new assessment arrangements will be finalised and available in January 2020.
Progression of pupils

Progression of pupils from one class to the next is a matter of custom and practice, rather than a legal requirement. In practice, pupils almost always progress automatically to the next year.

Low attainment of individual pupils is addressed through differentiated teaching and the provision of additional support, rather than by repetition of a year. The same can apply to academically gifted pupils.

Pupils are placed out of their age-related year group only in exceptional circumstances.

Certification

There is no certificate awarded to pupils on completion of primary education. Progression to secondary education is not dependent on certification or completion of primary education.

Article last reviewed September 2019.
[22] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/glossary-77_en#ProgrammeOfStudy