

On-entry assessments of pupils in reception class in schools, 2017/18: Notes

Context

Policy/Operational

Since 2016, children in Wales undergo a statutory on-entry assessment, using the Foundation Phase Profile, during their first 6 weeks following entry into primary school (Reception Class). This is used to determine the stage of development and interests of the child according to the [Foundation Phase Profile and framework](#). Most assessments are undertaken when the child enters reception class at age 4, although schools are encouraged to assess the child on entry to the Foundation Phase, at whatever earlier age that may be.

These assessments are based upon a series of unobtrusive observations of each child following their entry into Reception class. Four areas of learning are observed: Language, Literacy and Communication skills (in either Welsh or English); Mathematical Development; Physical Development; Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity. This approach helps practitioners to understand the child's learning style and interests as well as their developmental stage.

The on-entry assessments are part of the overall Foundation Phase, which has brought together what was previously known as the Early Years (from 3 to 5 year olds) and Key Stage 1 (from 5 to 7-year-olds) of the National Curriculum to create one phase of education for all children aged between three and seven.

Data source and coverage

The on-entry assessments are made up of pupil-level data collected electronically from maintained schools, care of their local authority (LA). Data are not collected from independent schools because the Foundation Phase is not statutory for those schools. All collections are carried out by Knowledge and Analytical Services within the Welsh Government.

The information in this Statistical Headline shows the distribution of the assessed stage of development of pupils in reception class. Data are published for Wales only. To be consistent with the [consultation](#) on future publication of teacher assessments at Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, data at a school, local authority and consortia level is not published in this headline.

In future years we will look to publish this data for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those that are not.

Definitions

On-entry assessments

Since 2016, children in Wales undergo a statutory on-entry assessment, using the Foundation Phase Profile, during their first 6 weeks following entry into primary school (Reception Class). This is used to determine the stage of development and interests of the child according to the [Foundation Phase Profile and framework](#). Most assessments are undertaken when the child enters reception class at age 4, although schools are encouraged to assess the child on entry to the Foundation Phase, at whatever earlier age that may be.

Stage of development

The data reflect the wide range of developmental maturity that we expect at this age, and is well within the normal range for children at entry to school, especially with the age variability at the point of school entry. The general expectation is that the majority of four year olds will be assessed at stage of development 2, with significant numbers also expected at stages 1 and 3 in each area of learning. Further information can be found on page 12 of the [Foundation Phase Profile Handbook](#).

Key quality information

Relevance

The key use of this data is as a formative tool to help practitioners to understand the child's learning style and interests as well as their developmental stage. In future we plan to use this data as a part of the evidence base in support of the [Prosperity for All](#), the national strategy of the Welsh Government

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly.

The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016 and this release includes 1 of the national indicators namely national indicator 6, the measurement of the development of young children, and progress will be tracked using the personal, social development, well-being and cultural diversity area of learning. The annual [Well-being of Wales](#) report which assesses our progress against the 7 well-being goals is published on our website.

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

As a national indicator under the Act they must be referred to in the analyses of local well-being produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas.

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Accuracy

The Welsh Government works closely with schools and local authorities in order to ensure all data are validated before tables are published. Data are collated into an electronic return and submitted to the Welsh Government through DEWi, a secure online data transfer system developed by the Welsh Government. Various stages of automated validation and sense-checking are built into the process to ensure a high quality of data.

Timeliness and punctuality

DEWi was available for uploading files on 8 May 2018, with schools asked to submit data for every pupil on roll at the school on 8 May. The data collection period closed on 29 June 2018.

Accessibility and clarity

This Statistical Headline is pre-announced and then published on the [Statistics section of the Welsh Government website](#). In future it will be accompanied by more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free-to-use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate and download data.

Comparability and coherence

Pupil-level data were collected from maintained schools for the first time in 2015/16. This statistical headline does not present data over time due to the natural variability in the developmental maturity that we expect at this age. Such variability is well within the normal range for children at entry to school, especially with the age variability at the point of school entry.

National Statistics status

This is the first publication of these statistics, and as such they have not yet been assessed by the [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) for designation as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Presently, these statistics are therefore treated as official statistics. However, all official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of Official Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly.

We intend to submit these statistics to the Statistics Authority for assessment against the standards required of National Statistics. A date for this has not yet been decided.

Further details

The document is available at: <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/on-entry-assessments-pupils-reception-class/?lang=en>

Data on outcomes in the core subjects at the end of the Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 and 3 is published in an annual statistical release [Foundation phase outcomes and National Curriculum teacher assessment of core subjects at Key Stages 2 and 3](#). Similarly, outcomes for non-core subjects are published annually in [National curriculum teacher assessments of the non-core subjects](#).

The Foundation Phase is unique to Wales and no comparable data exists for other countries.

Accessing the data electronically

Data tables and charts are published alongside this headline and can be found in this release: [On-entry assessments of pupils in reception class](#). Further data is available on request; please e-mail school.stats@gov.wales.

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