Baseline Assessment:

On the 7th April 2016, the DfE confirmed that the Reception Baseline would not be used as a starting point to measure children's progress – the purpose for which it was designed. A comparability study commissioned by the DfE found that the 3 Baseline products were ‘not sufficiency comparable to create a fair starting point from which to measure pupils ‘progress. As a result, the results cannot be used as the baseline for progress measures, as it would be inappropriate and unfair to schools.’

However, schools will have the option to use the Baseline in 2016-17 academic years, as part of their ‘on entry assessment’ for children starting school, and will be funded by the DfE to do so.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile:

In March 2014, the DfE set out its vision of assessment in primary schools – they stated that ‘From September 2016 the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will no longer be compulsory. The Early Years Foundation Stage itself will continue to be statutory supporting children to experience a broad and engaging programme of learning in reception.’(Page 8, Reforming assessment and accountability for primary schools DfE March 2014). The reasoning behind the Profile no longer being compulsory was due to the Baseline being in place.

However, we now know that the Baseline is not statutory so how do we assess children in the EYFS?

The Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2014) is still in place ‘today’ and is compulsory. It clearly states:

‘2.6 In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile must reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

2.7. Each child’s level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals (see Section 1). Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels (‘emerging’). This is the EYFS Profile.

2.8. Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child’s skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning (see paragraph 1.10). These should inform a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child’s stage of
development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1.

2.9. Schools must share the results of the Profile with parents and/or carers, and explain to them when and how they can discuss the Profile with the teacher who completed it. For children attending more than one setting, the Profile must be completed by the school where the child spends most time. If a child moves to a new school during the academic year, the original school must send their assessment of the child’s level of development against the early learning goals to the relevant school within 15 days of receiving a request. If a child moves during the summer term, relevant providers must agree which of them will complete the Profile.

2.10. The Profile must be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with special educational needs and disabilities must be made as appropriate. Providers should consider whether they may need to seek specialist assistance to help with this. Children will have differing levels of skills and abilities across the Profile and it is important that there is a full assessment of all areas of their development, to inform plans for future activities and to identify any additional support needs.

**Information to be provided to the local authority**

2.11. Early years providers must report EYFS Profile results to local authorities, upon request. Local authorities are under a duty to return this data to the relevant Government department. Providers must permit the relevant local authority to enter their premises to observe the completion of the EYFS Profile, and permit the relevant local authority to examine and take copies of documents and other articles relating to the Profile and assessments. Providers must take part in all reasonable moderation activities specified by their local authority and provide the local authority with such information relating to the EYFS Profile and assessment as they may reasonably request. (pages 14, 15, The Framework for EYFS, 2014)

The Framework for the EYFS has not changed and therefore suggests that arrangements for statutory EYFS Profile will remain the same in 2017. An amended version of the Framework for the EYFS may be published however, Oxfordshire are recommending the following:

The Oxfordshire Early Years Board unanimously agreed that the current assessment and reporting arrangements should continue in Oxfordshire for the academic year 2016-17, whatever happens nationally.

- The EYFS remains statutory, including the Early Learning Goals; schools will therefore need to continue to assess children using the existing system at the end of Reception

- Assessment of children on entry to reception continues to be vital so that schools can support children to make progress throughout the year. The Oxfordshire Early Years Board strongly suggests that schools
continue using the Development Matters age and stage bands. Evidence of attainment and progress can therefore inform on-going self-evaluation and can also be provided to Ofsted if the school is inspected.

Oxfordshire LA will:

- Provide opportunities for schools to moderate their judgments with trained EYFSP Moderators (agreement trialling meetings and visits to schools)
- Provide training for all newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the EYFS
- Provide guidance and support for assessment in the EYFS including the Profile
- Collect the EYFSP data at the end of the academic year 2017. This will create an Oxfordshire Good Level of Development (GLD) for 2017 and give schools the opportunity to compare themselves to the Oxfordshire average.
- Work closely with other LAs such as those involved in the LA Cross Moderation Group, to compare GLDs and moderate judgments across counties.

*It is likely that the DfE will make an announcement about assessment arrangements for 2016-17 in due course.*

**Future of assessment in the EYFS:**

The DfE are working on devising a ‘school readiness test’ as yet this is at early stages of development and would have to be piloted before becoming compulsory in September 2017/18.

**Further Reading:**

- TACTYC  Association for Professional Development in Early Years – this organisation has written a number of papers on Baseline Assessment and has recently petitioned the government to continue with EYFS Profile [www.TACTYC.org.uk](http://www.TACTYC.org.uk)
- Reception baseline comparability study (April 7th 2016) DfE [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

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