

# Assessment beyond Levels



The old National Curriculum Levels had come to be seen as ends in themselves, rather than descriptors of progress, and explained little about a young person's strengths and areas for improvement. The system had become focused on moving children as quickly as possible through the levels: maximum progress over maximum understanding.



Labelling and ability-grouping can be unhelpful – with the risk that children become pigeon-holed as 'struggling' in the eyes of the school.

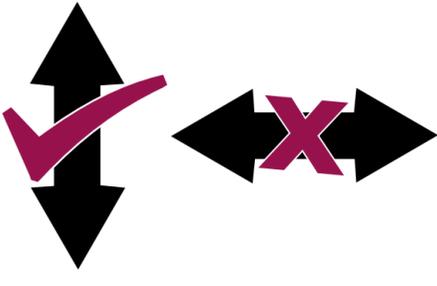
*"We need a different concept of children's ability - that each child is capable of anything (with hard work and good teaching) - not labelled according to the level they happen to be in."* Tim Oates



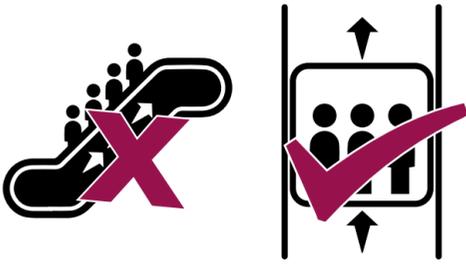
High performing jurisdictions focus on ensuring children have deep, secure understanding of key concepts, ideas and knowledge.

Reflecting this, the 2014 curriculum focuses on fewer things in greater depth, so assessment should be focused on whether a child has really understood and **mastered** these key skills.

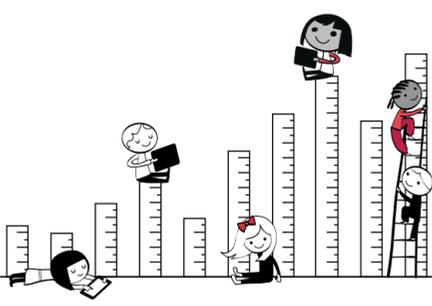
## Defining Mastery...



The most important thing about mastery is "time". The length of time spent on a topic should alter according to how long it takes for the class to master it. The expectation is that all children can achieve when given the time and support to do so. Extension is therefore by depth and breadth rather than acceleration onto a new topic and intervention is critical to ensure that children who are not grasping a concept are given the support they need.



An analogy is that in the old world of levels children were on an escalator where they were all at different levels but the key was the number of steps they rose. In the new world of mastery the expectation is that children are in a lift and that the lift doesn't move on until the majority grasps the topic to avoid gaps in learning.



Regular assessment is central to the mastery approach, so teachers can be sure that pupils have grasped the core objectives to the required standard before they move on – and if they have not, can respond accordingly.

### What's good enough?

That's the million dollar question until we get performance descriptors and see where the 'national average' 100 mark of the scaled score falls when the first batch of tests has been marked.

The EEF Mathematics Mastery Primary Evaluation Report estimates that a mark of around 80% typically indicates mastery.

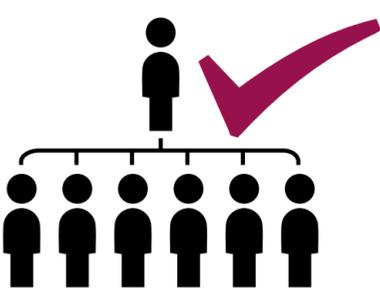
However Expert Blogger and Deputy Head, Michael Tidd, postulates that the 'national standard' will be equivalent to a score of around 60% in Maths (based on his analysis of the sample test papers marking schemes, and test framework).

The DfE has recently downgraded its target for the number of children reaching the floor standard - from 85% to 65% reaching the national standard, which to our understanding, is still approximately equivalent to a 4b in old money.

# 80%

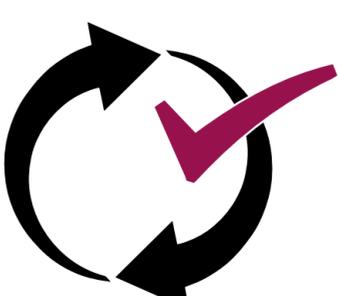
# 4b

## What Ofsted is looking for



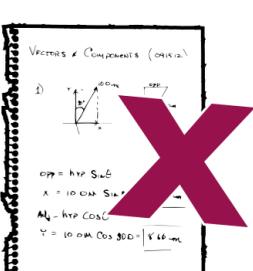
### A policy!

A consistent and agreed approach across the school, and a leadership team that is informed and engaged.



### Closing the loop

How you use your assessment to modify your teaching and feed back to individual pupils to help them with specific concepts they are struggling with.



### It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it...

While they're not looking for any particular approach to assessment – they will be looking for rigorous, well-presented evidence of pupil progress and attainment.