

EYFS and Start of Y1 Assessment Guidelines

Introduction and Rationale

This document presents guidance on the processes and methods of assessment in Early Years which may help you to articulate progress and set goals for pupils in EYFS, and manage the transition into Y1 assessment.

It is vital that any assessment system be 'fit for purpose' and have a clear rationale behind it. The EYFS Assessment Working Party have drawn together some recommendations which are articulated below. This guidance has been updated following the release of Target Tracker 15.6.3.49. It also reflects training provided by the Local Authority at previous PLNs, as well as input from LA Advisors.

Baselines

DfE / Commercial Baselines

The DfE have scrapped the commercial providers for baseline. However, in their response to their Primary Assessment Consultation, they are proposing a single baseline provider for EYFS in 2019/2020. For now, schools must use their own systems.

Using Target Tracker for Baseline Tracking

It is imperative that a robust baseline is devised for children as they start, based on a range of evidence, including parental input, information received from previous settings and *early, precise observation of children* on entry. This should ideally be externally moderated.

Measurable starting point assessment on entry should be made in relation to the Early Years Outcomes (EYO). However, these should not be treated as a 'tick list', particularly on entry;

"Children develop at their own rates, and in their own ways. The development statements and their order should not be taken as necessary steps for individual children. They should not be used as checklists."

– Development Matters, p8ff.

For this reason, be cautious about the use of highlighting statements in Target Tracker (i.e. individual statements as red / blue / gold etc.) and using an algorithm or formula to determine where a child 'sits'. Many EYFS practitioners prefer to use the statements in a more general sense, and use Target Tracker only to track step judgements, to avoid the idea of working to a check list of objectives.

In making assessments, including of starting points, practitioners will need to make a best fit judgement of:

- Which developmental band a child best belongs in
- *Where*, within that band a child sits

The developmental bands (and overlaps, see below) are extremely broad. A child working at the early stages of 30-50 looks very different indeed to a child who is securely in the 30-50 range. Therefore, tracking a child's performance relative to their position in the band is vital. Target Tracker provides this option by subdividing the bands into 6 steps (b, b+, w, w+, s, s+) just as in KS1/2.

Thus, Target Tracker's methods for calculating Age Related Expectations are problematic and have serious implications for measuring progress. It is possible to manually alter the 'ARE' expectations, but even this is limited, since it would change the parameters for all pupils, not just for older / younger ones. For more information, contact the TT helpline.

Therefore the EYFS AWP advises caution when working with TT's ARE reports, as these could well generate some confusing data. *For that reason, much of the rest of this document will involve HTs doing manual calculations outside of TT.* Whilst inconvenient, EYFS AWP suggest that this will generate more secure data in this complex area. HTs are, of course, able to ignore this and continue to rely on TT's calculations.

Summative Assessment – What is Typical Attainment?

A challenge at EYFS is that, throughout the year, but particularly at baseline, practitioners need to have an awareness of children's ages in months when determining whether they are 'typical'. This is unlike KS1 / 2 in which the child's ARE is determined by their year group alone (not their birth date within the year).

However, in the summer term / at the end of Early Years, ARE (/GLD) essentially ceases to factor in birth dates, in that the Early Learning Goals are finite, not linked to overlapping age bands in the same way as the early years outcomes. This obviously presents a challenge, which staff need to be aware of when discussing early years data. To truly reflect the organisation and principles of EYFS, discussions of starting points need to factor in birth dates, but the finishing points (ELG / GLD) are not based on age.

A data set looking at 'typical' pupils on entry which is related to age is not directly comparable with a data set defining 'typical' at Summer 2 which is related only to GLD.

'Typical' on Entry

Whilst direct comparison of ARE on entry with GLD on exit is, as stated above, not comparing like for like, it is recognised that schools need to be able to demonstrate that "children make at least typical progress and most children make progress that is better than typical from their starting points" (Ofsted 'Good' descriptor, EYFS).

Therefore, for the purposes of discussing whole cohort data and progress from start to end points, the EYFS AWP have carefully scrutinised what might be considered to be the minimum level of progress which would be considered to be 'typical'.

A child entering Reception will be aged 48-60 months. The youngest pupils could therefore have typical on entry attainment if they were working securely in the 30-50 band, but the majority of pupils would need to be beginning to 40-60 band to be typical. The following could therefore act as a guide

Age on Entry	Typical Starting Point on Entry	Why?
48-50 months	30-50s – 40-60b	Youngest pupils working at the top of 30-50 would still be typical. Due to band overlap, they would also be typical if they were just beginning 40-60.
>50 months	40-60b-40-60b+	Older pupils would need to be out of the 30-50 month band to be typical. They should be at least 40-60b.

Since GLD on exit is a measure of whether a child has met the ELGs in Prime Areas (Communication and Language, Physical Development, PSED) plus Literacy and Mathematics, this would be defined as 'Typical' attainment on exit.

Therefore, a similar system could be used to determine the % of children who were 'Typical' on entry – i.e. *those who were typical according to age in all of the above areas.*

Worked Example: (on entry)

Area	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
	57 months	55 months	53 months	52 months	48 months	48 months
C&L	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	30-50w
PD	40-60b+	40-60b+	30-50s	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b+
PSED	40-60b	40-60b	30-50s	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b
Literacy	40-60b+	30-50s	40-60b+	40-60b+	30-50s	30-50s
Maths	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	30-50s	30-50s
Typical?	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

Cohort: 50% Typical on Entry

Child 1 is typical on entry as they are >50 months and working within the 40-60 band in all key areas.

Child 2 is not typical on entry as they are >50 months and working at 30-50 in Literacy.

Child 3 is not typical on entry as they are >50 months and working at 30-50 in PD and PSED.

Child 4 is typical on entry as they are >50 months and working at 40-60 in all key areas.

Child 5 is typical on entry as they are ≤50 months and working securely at 30-50 or higher in all key areas.

Child 6 is not typical on entry as they are ≤50 months and are not working securely at 30-50 in C&L.

From Bands to ELGs

An additional challenge is that ELGs are not presented in the same format as the bands of the Early Years outcomes, and again, are not entirely linear. Certainly, within Target Tracker, the ELGs are not mapped into the system of progression. Whilst TT allows ELGs to be entered, these sit entirely separate from the bands, and thus are not incorporated for the purposes of progress tracking against start points. On the steps entry screen, the headings now go from '40-60s+' to '1b', '1b+' etc., rather than '40-60s+' to 'ELG Expected'. The ELGs themselves are also very broad, and, as best fit judgements, a child who has *just met* the expected standard will look very different from a child who has *only just missed* the exceeding standard.

Challenges of Overlapping Bands and ELG Assessment

The change in Target Tracker to labelling the steps above 40-60 (which were 'Just above', 'Consistently Above') is consistent with the system's linear progress approach, but inconsistent with the reality of descriptors and practice. The requirements for ELG expected are *higher* than that of 40-60, but *lower* than that of Band 1. There is therefore a 'gap' within the system in this area in terms of *progress* tracking. (You can, of course, still enter the ELG 'Expected' judgements in the dedicated section within TT, but this does not connect at all to your steps through the year).

A key issue therefore how to record during the year (but particularly by late Spring / Summer) those who are beginning to work within the ELGs and those who are increasingly secure with them, but *without* suggesting that those children are working within Band 1 (Y1 objectives).

One possible approach that practitioners may find helpful is to manually alter the 'names' of the steps above 40-60 in Target Tracker EYFS. *This does not, thankfully, amend the names of the steps in KS1, as the two parts of the TT product are discrete from one another and don't 'talk' to each other.* This can help, because rather than using TT's default of 1b, 1b+, 1w etc., you can manually change them to the following.

For example:

Target Tracker Default	Amended Labels	Evidencing ELG?
40-60≤ s+	Unchanged	No (Emerging)
1b	'Just below Expected'	Emerging (some elements of Expected)
1b+	'Expected'	Expected
1w	'Exceeding'	Exceeding

Using the above method would allow staff to begin to track pupils' progress towards ELGs from their starting points on one single report (i.e. this is all within the 'steps' aspect of the product). It would not, however, alleviate the issue around the breadth of the 'Expected' and 'Exceeding' steps, which would still need to be a feature of individual pupil discussions (e.g. Child A has just achieved Expected, whereas Child B has only just missed Exceeding).

To effect this change to the terminology, admin users will need to:

Click File > Options > EYFS Steps > and then rename the point 37-39 according to the above labels.

For the implications

Numerical tracking

It is clear that - as a result of band overlap as described above, and the fact that age in months is relevant to starting points but not to ELGs - assessing pupils' progress is not necessarily a linear process. Again, in this area, Target Tracker is limited, since its progress measurements in terms of steps will be numerical and therefore potentially deceptive.

For example:

Name	Age on Entry	On Entry	Typical on entry?	Summer 2	Typical Progress?	Number of Steps (to ELG / Consistently above)
Child A	48 months	30-50s	Yes	ELG	Yes	9
Child B	56 months	40-60b	Yes	ELG	Yes	7

It is therefore impossible to define a numerical number of 'steps' progress which is good / typical / more than typical etc.

Measuring Progress

As mentioned, the fact that age is taken into account on entry to reception but not at end points presents a challenge.

Please note, there is no perfect algorithm for determining good progress. Neither Ofsted nor the DfE have defined 'typical' progress precisely. What follows is merely a potential way to understand the movement from age related assessment of children on entry to fixed end points (ELGs).

Two options are presented in the tables below. The first would be used for the majority of children, who are >50months on entry, and is based on a typical starting point of ≥40-60b. The second would be used for the youngest pupils, reflecting many will start in 30-50, which would be classed as typical for their age.

This means that, in real terms, the youngest pupils will need to make more rapid progress than their peers, (30-50s to ELG) but that this would still only be classed as 'typical' progress since they would be moving from typical on entry to typical (expected) on exit.

The tables cannot perfectly cover all possibilities. For example, a child who begins well below in 22-36 and ends at emerging may have made insufficient, typical *or* outstanding progress, depending on how close to the ELG they ended. If they went from 22-36b to 40-60s+, this would represent excellent progress. However, if they went from 22-36b to 30-50w their progress would only be typical. In the tables below, there would be no way to see this, since both 30-50w and 40-60s would be simply 'Emerging' at EYFS. Similarly, a very able child may begin the year 'above' at 40-60w. If they achieve 'Exceeding' they may be said to have made better than expected progress, since they finish beyond where they need to be. However, in real terms, if this pupil only just scraped the Exceeding criteria, this could be argued to be only typical progress (i.e. they were so able on entry, that they should be absolutely secure in Exceeding, and working very comfortably at this level).

Such nuanced details should be a feature of practitioner discussion and formative assessment of individual pupils. However, the progress tables below serve as a starting point for tracking cohorts.

Children >50 Months on Entry (Autumn, Spring, Early Summer birthdays)

Autumn 1 (Baseline)		On Entry	Summer 2 (end point)	Progress
Band	Step	Typical?	ELG	
≤ 30-50	≤w+	Well Below	Emerging	Typical
30-50	s/s+	Below	Emerging	Less than Typical
40-60	b/b+	Typical	Emerging	Less than Typical
40-60	≥w	Above	Emerging	Less than Typical
≤ 30-50	≤w+	Well Below	Expected	Better
30-50	s/s+	Below	Expected	Better
40-60	b/b+	Typical	Expected	Typical
40-60	≥w	Above	Expected	Less than Typical
≤ 30-50	≤w+	Well Below	Exceeding	Better
30-50	s/s+	Below	Exceeding	Better
40-60	b/b+	Typical	Exceeding	Better
40-60	≥w	Above	Exceeding	Better (/Typical)

Children ≤50 Months on Entry (Late Summer birthdays)

Autumn 1 (Baseline)		On Entry	Summer 2 (end point)	Progress
Band	Step	Typical?	ELG	
≤ 30-50	≤w+	Below	Emerging	Typical
30-50	s/s+	Typical	Emerging	Less than Typical
40-60	b/b+	Typical	Emerging	Less than Typical
40-60	≥w	Above	Emerging	Less than Typical
≤ 30-50	≤w+	Below	Expected	Better
30-50	s/s+	Typical	Expected	Typical
40-60	b/b+	Typical	Expected	Typical
40-60	≥w	Above	Expected	Less than Typical
≤ 30-50	≤w+	Below	Exceeding	Better
30-50	s/s+	Typical	Exceeding	Better
40-60	b/b+	Typical	Exceeding	Better
40-60	≥w	Above	Exceeding	Better (/Typical)

Progress Indicators

Using the information above, progress can be discussed in one of two ways:

1) Within the Areas of Learning

For example, discussing the numbers of children making typical or better than typical progress in Communication and Interaction.

Progress	Listening and Attention	Understanding	Speaking
Insufficient	10%	0%	5%
Typical	30%	30%	50%
Better	60%	70%	45%

Taking the statement “Children make at least typical progress and most children make progress that is better than this” (Ofsted, Good), the data above could be shown, overall, to represent a Good judgement. Care would need to be taken over ‘Speaking’, since less than half made better than expected progress. However, the overall picture is of 90%+ making at least typical progress, and, in L&A and U, a significant majority making better than typical progress.

2) Across the Areas of Learning (comparing Attainment)

This refers to the comparison with % of children who were typical on entry with % achieving GLD at end. As previously discussed, this is not exactly a ‘like for like’ measure, but is a good indicator of how children have moved forward. Drilling down into this to discuss progress within areas of learning (as above) would still be needed, but this is a general picture.

Taking the worked example from page 4 above, a comparison could be made with the % of children who were typical on entry and on exit.

On Entry

Area	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
	57 months	55 months	53 months	52 months	48 months	48 months
C&L	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	30-50w
PD	40-60b+	40-60b+	30-50s	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b+
PSED	40-60b	40-60b	30-50s	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b
Literacy	40-60b+	30-50s	40-60b+	40-60b+	30-50s	30-50s
Maths	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	40-60b	30-50s	30-50s
Typical Attainment?	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

Cohort: 50% Typical on Entry

On Exit

Area	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
	57 months	55 months	53 months	52 months	48 months	48 months
C&L	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected
PD	Exceeding	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Exceeding
PSED	Expected	Expected	Emerging	Expected	Expected	Expected
Literacy	Exceeding	Expected	Expected	Exceeding	Expected	Expected
Maths	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected
GLD?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Cohort: 83% Typical on Exit / GLD

Whilst somewhat 'clumsy' and imperfect, the above would permit an understandable baseline for tracking children with a broad range of abilities from EYFS into KS1. The children would technically and numerically be 'moving backward' i.e. if they ended EYFS at 'Expected' (38 points), they could be starting at 40-60s (35 points); however, this is not shown or tracked anywhere on the TT system, since the EYFS and KS1/2 elements of the programme do not communicate with one another. Thus, the Autumn 1 KS1 judgement forms the basis of all future tracking, regardless of the Summer 2 EYFS judgement.

An alternative, however, is to simply start all children who achieved 'Expected' at EYFS as '1b', indicating they are at ARE and beginning the KS1 curriculum.

Obviously, if children continue to be working below Band 1, a determination would need to be made as to whether they should continue to be tracked against 40-60 / EY goals, (i.e. for pupils are behind / immature / catching up), or whether to use the P scales (i.e. for pupils who have an identified learning need).

Concluding Remark

One final point to note within this whole area is the intended purpose of the EYFSP, and the genuine issues surrounding assessment in Early Years. Early Excellence National Director Jan Dubiel reminds leaders and practitioners that there is no real way to determine whether children are 'on track' mid year in EYFS, as there are no statutory statements until the ELGs at the end of the year. Equally, leaders and governors need to remember that the stated purpose of the EYFSP is not as a data point to judge schools. The government's own response to the Primary Assessment Consultation states:

"The purpose of the EYFSP has never been to hold individual schools to account for their performance and this will not change. The EYFSP will continue to assess each child's individual progress and development throughout the reception year. It will give a year 1 teacher accurate information about which individual children will need more attention in specific areas of learning as they move through key stage 1. The EYFSP will continue to provide national data to government and local authorities, to provide a picture of provision across the country."

- Primary assessment in England, Government consultation response, September 2017, p8

Guidelines written by R. Campbell, Alliance Assessment Lead.