

## Reception baseline: criteria for potential assessments

This document provides the criteria that will be used to evaluate potential reception baselines. Suppliers will need to provide evidence against these criteria in order to be accepted onto the approved list of reception baselines. Details of the process that suppliers will need to follow in order to submit a potential reception baseline for evaluation will be published in June 2014. The first deadline for submission of evidence will be in November/December 2014.

Section A of this document provides the criteria against which potential reception baselines will be evaluated.

Section B of this document contains questions which we will ask of suppliers when they submit their evidence but which will not be used to evaluate the potential reception baselines.

### Section A

#### Purpose

The purpose of the reception baseline is to support the accountability framework and help assess school effectiveness by providing a score for each child at the start of reception which reflects their attainment against a pre-determined content domain and which will be used as the basis for an accountability measure of the relative progress of a cohort of children through primary school.

- The assessment must demonstrate that it meets the purpose defined by the Department.

If a reception baseline is accepted onto the approved list, the relationship with key stage 1 assessments will be reviewed once children have reached the end of year 2. Reception baselines with a poor relationship will be considered for removal from the approved list.

#### Content domain

- The assessment must have an age-appropriate content domain that is suitable for the range of children's attainment at the start of reception and can be delivered in English.
- The clear majority of the content domain must be clearly linked to the learning and development requirements of the communication and language, literacy and mathematics areas of learning from the EYFS<sup>1</sup>, appropriate for children's age and experience at the start of reception and must demonstrate a clear progression towards the key stage 1 national curriculum in English and mathematics.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-outcomes>

- The Provider must provide evidence that the assessment measures what it purports to measure (validity).

## Specification

- The assessment may be linear or adaptive.
- The Provider must publish a specification for the assessment.

## Administration

- The assessment must be accessible to as many children as possible (at least 99%), although not all children will be able to complete all elements of the assessment.
- The assessment must be available in suitable modified formats to support children of reception age with SEN and disabilities.
- The assessment must be administered within the first half term of the child starting either full or part-time in reception.
- The Provider must provide some form of external monitoring of the processes used by schools to quality assure the data provided to the Department. (Formal monitoring will be undertaken by the Department who will also be responsible for taking any appropriate action should maladministration be determined.)

## Scoring

- Each assessment item must require a single, objective, binary decision to be made by the scorer, though this may be based on observation rather than just responding to a given item.
- The assessment must report a score for each child on a single scale.
- The scores from the assessment must not be age-standardised.
- The scale on which scores are reported must ensure the full range of attainment is appropriately distributed across the range with fewer than 2.5% of children achieving full marks.

## Reliability

- Data from the assessment must demonstrate that it is able to provide a sufficiently stable measure that is replicable [eg 95% of second administrations should be within two standard errors of measurement (SEM) of the first administration].
- Data from the assessment must demonstrate that it is able to provide a sufficiently stable measure regardless of who is administering and scoring the assessment [eg values of Cohen's Kappa of above 0.8].
- Data from the assessment must demonstrate sufficient levels of internal consistency [eg values of Cronbach's Alpha of above 0.85].
- Data from the assessment must demonstrate that the confidence intervals around the observed scores are minimised across the reporting scale.

## Minimising bias

- The Provider must demonstrate that the assessment does not unduly discriminate against sub-groups of the population such as gender, ethnicity, disability, etc. (this may be evidenced through qualitative means, such as cultural reviews, as well as statistical analysis, such as differential item functioning (DIF). A particular focus should be given to pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) to ensure that the progress measure is not unduly beneficial to schools with high proportions of EAL children.

## Commercial and security

- The Provider must provide data to the Department in the specified formats at the appropriate time.
- The Provider demonstrate how data and assessment materials will be kept secure and meet data protection legislation requirements through the completion of the Cabinet Office security assurance document.

- The Provider must be able to demonstrate that personnel have a track record in the development and delivery of assessments.
- The Provider must demonstrate that their product provides value for money

## Section B

Supporting information in addition to the criteria:

- What process has been/will be used to develop the assessment and what were the credentials/experience of those involved?
- How does the assessment build on research evidence in relation to the assessment of reception age children?
- What steps have been taken to ensure that the tests are engaging for children of this age group to ensure they maintain focus on the tasks?
- How regularly will the assessment be updated or the item bank refreshed?
- How long will the assessment take to administer and what is the total administration time (including all administrative tasks) to administer to a class of 25 pupils?
- What statistical models are being used to undertake analysis and can the assumptions of those models be demonstrated?
- What administrative guidance is being produced and what is the communications plan for this guidance (eg training)?
- For the sample of schools involved in any trials, how has the supplier ensured that they are broadly representative of the national population, for example, for protected groups?
- What customer support would be provided to schools to support delivery and ensure consistency?
- What additional services would suppliers offer to schools to provide additional value over and above the basic baseline requirements?
- Does the assessment provide information to assist schools in the identification of special educational needs?

- Would suppliers be willing to share item level data with the Department for inclusion in the national pupil database for research purposes?
- What guidance will suppliers provide to schools in order to enable them to interpret the results and report them to parents in a contextualised way, for example alongside teacher observation?
- What is the maximum number of schools to which the supplier could deliver?
- What will the cost of the basic baseline requirements per pupil, excluding any additional services that may be offered to schools?
- Does the Provider have a long term commitment to offering a reception baseline to schools?