



# Primary Assessment Consultation briefing notes

**Do you agree that the reception baseline assessment should not go ahead?**

**The Primary Assessment consultation is a great opportunity to raise your concerns with the Government. These notes will support you to make your views heard.**

The consultation can be found here: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/assessment-policy-and-development/primary-assessment/>

**It closes on the 22nd of June at 5pm.** You can respond to any questions you choose, and do not need to offer responses to all the questions.

Feel free to include the points raised in this briefing in your response – but it will have the most impact if you express your points in your own words.

On the consultation website, you will be asked to complete sections with your

- name
- email address
- organisation (complete if relevant to you)
- role (parent, teacher, school leader, governor, academic, organisation, etc.)

Following some background information, you will find **Questions 6 - 9 relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile** -- including possible revisions, workload and moderation -- to which you may also want to respond.

**Baseline assessment consultation begins on Page 7 of the website, entitled 'The best starting point for measuring progress in primary school'**

## Question 10

**10. Any form of progress measure requires a starting point. Do you agree that it is best to move to a baseline assessment in reception to cover the time a child is in primary school (reception to key stage 2)? If you agree, then please tell us what you think the key characteristics of a baseline assessment in reception should be. If you do not agree, then please explain why.**

**We do not agree. Our top concerns are:**

- **Baseline assessment is an invalid way of holding primary schools to account**
  - the difficulty in making valid and reliable assessments of very young children
  - the inability of early assessments to predict later attainment
- **Baseline assessment is harmful to children**
  - the risk that children with low scores are indiscriminately labelled as low ability
  - early labelling is particularly damaging to children from deprived backgrounds and those in the early stages of learning English

- tests distract from the priority of building relationships and settling children into school
- high-stakes accountability has a negative impact on early years practice, in both preschool and reception
- **It is a poor policy which has already been tried – and abandoned**
  - the policy has already failed
  - most schools have rejected baseline assessment, even when offered the schemes for free
  - the DfE would be ill-advised to rush a new assessment through for September 2019, without proper development and trialing

Question 11 also relates to baseline assessment. Assuming that the policy were to go ahead, it asks when it should take place. We suggest using this opportunity to again state your opposition to it being administered at any point in the reception year.

**Question 11**

**11. If we were to introduce a reception baseline, at what point in the reception year do you think it should be administered? In particular, we are interested in the impact on schools, pupils and teaching of administering the assessment at different times.**

**Better without Baseline believes the DfE’s proposals for reception baseline assessment are problematic and the policy should not go ahead. The DfE has not addressed the failure of reception baseline assessment in 2015 and lacks a clear vision for this policy.**



TACTYC – Association for Professional Development in Early Years

Early Education – British Association for Early Childhood Education

Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA)

The Primary Charter

Early Childhood Forum (ECF)

The National Union of Teachers (NUT)

Association of Teacher and Lecturers (ATL)

Professional Association for Childcare and the Early Years (PACEY)

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)

London Early Years Foundation (LEYF)

Save Childhood Movement (SCM)

Unison Education and Children’s Services

University of Sheffield School of Education

Cambridge Primary Review Trust (CPRT)

The UK Assessment Reform Group

The Association of Teachers of Mathematics (ATM)

The Mathematical Association (MA)

The British Educational Research Association (BERA)

National Association for Primary Education (NAPE)

Mothers at Home Matter (MAHM)

What about the Children? (WATCH)