



Changes to assessment
and reporting
at
Norfolk House School





Context

The 2014 National Curriculum and life beyond levels:

- New NC 2014 was introduced in September 2014.
- More rigorous with greater challenge in all year groups.
- Government removed levels as they were 'misleading' for schools and parents.
- Professional trust for schools to determine their own assessment systems.

- The new NC is more focused, with many objectives moving a year earlier.
- Children are expected to have a deeper understanding of objectives before moving on and schools should focus on enriching the curriculum before teaching the curriculum from the year or KS above. There are circumstances where it is appropriate to do so. NH focuses on ensuring broader enrichment across the year group, which we will come to later in the presentation.
- Levels have been described as misleading for many years within the profession: A level 3 in Y2 is very different to a level 3 at Y6. One level spanning 5 year groups.
- National change - has far reaching impact for all schools; as we broadly follow NC we still need an external benchmark, even though we don't adhere to all of the outcomes of the NC 2014, any changes will always have a direct impact. Schools across the country both state and private are redesigning their assessment systems.



We have reduced prescription of assessment, focusing instead on a limited number of tests in primary and on public examinations in secondary education. There needs to be more assessment, not less - but not centrally determined and not high stakes. Schools need to develop their own assessments which provide clear evidence of attainment and progression, focused on real things: the reading of the pupil, the specifics of what they know and can do in maths, their understanding of key concepts in science and events in history. We need more assessment, but of a different kind.

Nick Gibb (Minister of State for Schools) outlines here the government's position on assessment and the move away from centrally prescribed assessments and towards greater autonomy for schools.



It is for the professionalism of schools and their teachers that drives how they ensure their pupils reach those standards. The steps towards those goals will be varied and will depend on the pupils and the curriculum and the approach of the school.

The government have placed their trust in the professionals that work with the children day in, day out to decide the best ways to assess students. This allows us to tailor assessment to suit our curriculum and our students.



How and why does this impact us at Norfolk House?

- All assessment systems need to be externally validated - to ensure they are accurate and allow for comparison.
- At NH we *broadly* follow the NC 2014 so our previous assessment system was linked to NC levels, which are now obsolete.
- The NC 2014 has become more rigorous so we have to adapt our curriculum to reflect this.
- We have to design a new system that ensures excellent progression and allows us to track pupil progress.

Assessment systems need to have some form of external validation to ensure accuracy and allow for comparison. Our previous assessment system was based on the old levels, which are now obsolete. So we can continue to ensure accuracy and make valid comparisons we need a new system that we can externally validate.



What are children assessed against?

- Objectives that should be achieved by the end of the year. More incremental steps.
- The Norfolk House average - set higher than national average and reviewed annually to ensure challenge.
- Increased expectations - working above average last year may well be working at expectation this year.

How are children assessed?

- Combination of formative and summative assessments.
- Internal and external assessments.

Each year group has its own end of year objectives, rather than end of key stage attainment targets. Each year is broken down into six incremental steps moving towards the achievement of the end of year objectives so that we can internally monitor pupil progress at a focused level. As in the previous system, at NH we set our benchmarks above the national average expectation to ensure challenge. This is reviewed annually to ensure the appropriate level of challenge. Assessments are used for a range of purposes and this determines their type and frequency.



What is the purpose of assessment?



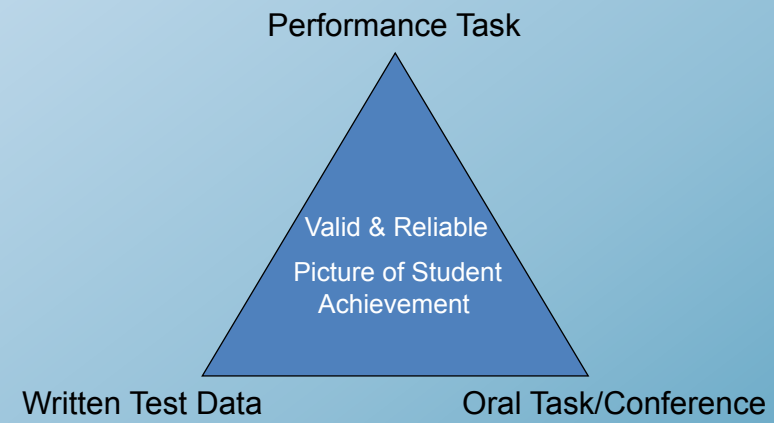
Formative assessment: Assessment *for* Learning
The main purpose of assessment must be to move learning forward - feedback. Carried out on a daily basis and identifies successes and next steps.

Summative assessment: Assessment *of* Learning
The purpose of summative assessment is calculate attainment at a given point in time. These can be formal or informal and take a range of forms from exam style tests, oral conferencing and performance tasks.

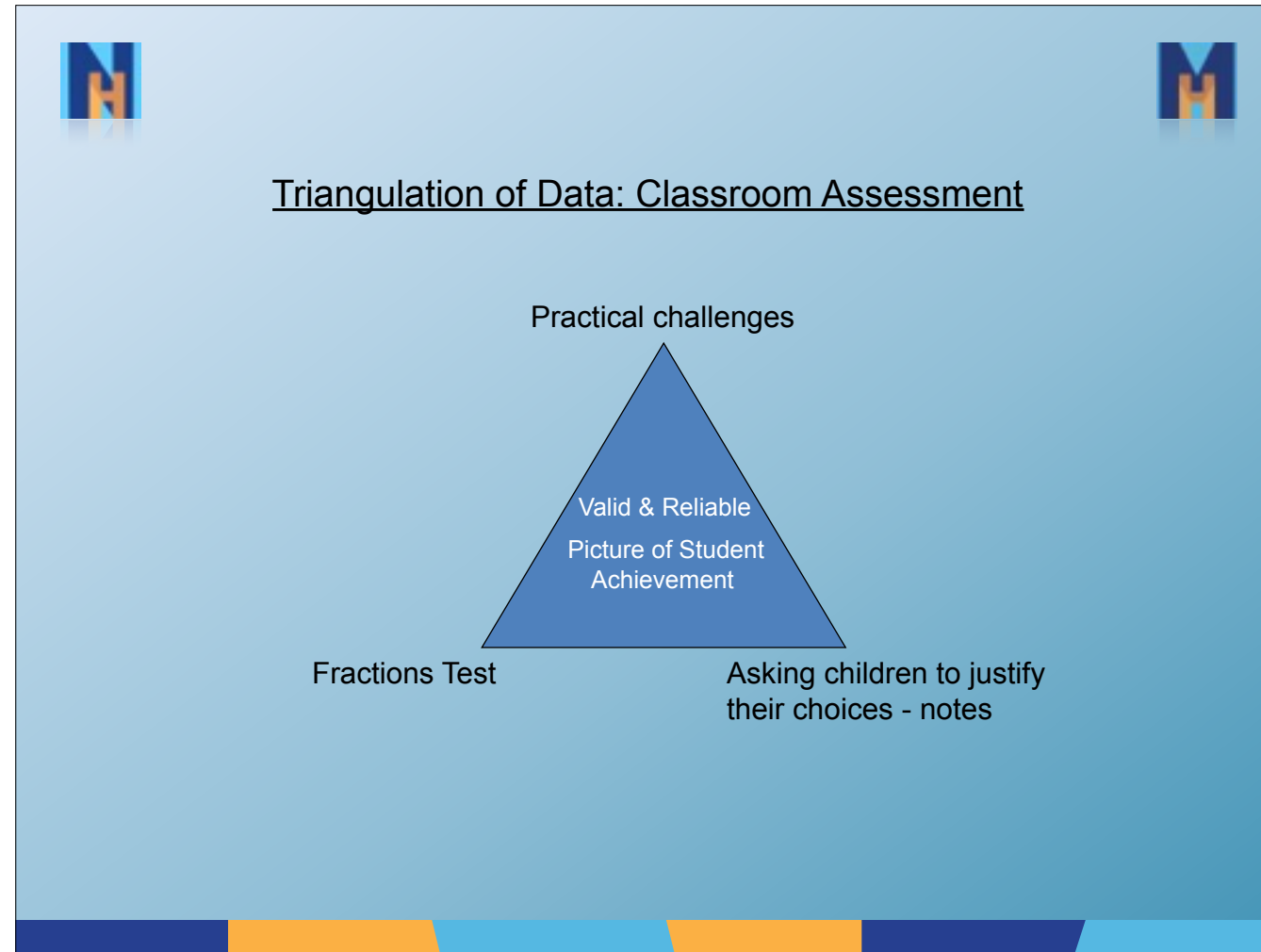
It is important to differentiate between *assessment* and *testing*. Assessment takes many different forms and is carried out in an environment where pressures are minimised to allow pupils to demonstrate those strengths in a more natural way for the purposes of moving the learning forward or to provide a valid picture of attainment at a given point in time. Testing does not allow for this to happen as naturally because to demonstrate strengths, pupils must first develop effective exam technique - a set of skills that are required to access the material in the test and help the pupil make decisions about how to gain the highest number of marks possible under timed conditions. Also tests only measure performance on that given day, so environmental factors and chance can cause pupils to underperform or over-perform. Testing often provides grades to describe pupil attainment which does not explain to pupils how to move forward, whereas assessment provides detailed feedback identifying successes and next steps. More assessment does not mean more testing. At NH, when pupils reach Form 5 and Form 6 we have a robust prep programme which helps students to develop the exam techniques for the testing they will face in order to enter secondary school.



Triangulation of Data: Classroom Assessment



Research tells us that children need to have to opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a range of ways - not just on paper. Children at NH are being assessed more, not tested more. Assessments take place at natural points in a pupil's learning, such are at the end of units/topics; not necessarily at the end of the term.



Above is an example of a triangulation of assessment that I carried out with my Form 5 maths class at the end of our fractions unit. We had the traditional paper test where students were required to solve word problems, order fractions, add fractions and find equivalence etc. In addition to this children had a number of practical challenges (assessments) to complete:

- Filling a range containers with the correct percentage or fractions of water. Children had access to different size measuring cylinders and whiteboards to help them.
- Ordering fraction cards. Starting of at a fairly basic level with additional cards being added in to present additional challenge.
- Sharing practical equipment to represent fractions and expressing the remainders as a fraction. Children had cubes and whiteboards to support them.
- Calculating a discount for items on sale with prices starting less than £1 and becoming more complex. The discount started at 10% and then increased to 35% to allow the more able children to be challenged.
- Making statements about the year group using fractions, decimals and percentages. Children generated their own statements i.e. 33% of Form 5 have blue eyes, $\frac{2}{3}$ take part in after school clubs.

During the practical tasks I made notes of what the children were saying and the strategies they used to solve problems. I also conferenced with individuals or pairs to challenge their decisions and get them to justify their choices. This provided a huge amount of data and a great understanding of where they are and what the next steps will be when we return to fractions next time.



How has the assessment system been designed at NH?

- Bellevue assessment policy - collective expertise within the group.
- September INSET - developing formative assessments. *More and different* assessment: triangulation of assessments to provide valid and reliable picture of pupil achievement.
- Ongoing training throughout the year.

Members of the leadership teams from schools across the group have had input into a new Assessment Policy. Collective expertise designing an assessment framework to support schools. Benefit from being part of a group and also have the autonomy to tailor the policy to meet the needs and abilities of our students. Referring back to the *more and different* assessment mentioned by Nick Gibb - the main focus of our September training days was triangulation of assessments and impact on learning including feedback. Further training on assessment is planned throughout the year.



How are we tracking pupils?

- New assessment tracking software that includes the objectives from the NC14. Objectives can be modified to tailor it to NH.
- Termly meetings with leadership to monitor progress.
- Moderation of pupil work to ensure consistency of judgements.

As well as levels becoming obsolete, so did our previous computerised tracking system. So we have a new system that staff have been trained on. The key difference is the way it is being used to inform future teaching i.e. used formatively. The previous system was only used in a summative way. Each term teachers and leadership meet to discuss individual pupil progress and throughout the year staff meet to moderate work in English and mathematics to ensure judgements against objectives are consistent. Our recent moderation of English writing, against the objectives of the NC2014, across the school has led to the decision to adapt these objectives to fulfil the needs of our context. We found there was a lack of focus within the objectives on actual composition and effect, so to ensure our pupils are not producing very dry, mechanical pieces, we have decided to add in additional objectives to ensure writers that leave NH have creativity and flair - something that the schools they progress to are looking for.



How are we quality assuring?

- EYFS Early Excellence Baseline.
- New external standardised assessments for Forms 1 - 6 (dovetail with CATS).
- CAT scores in Forms 4 - 6.
- As a measure of overall achievement of NH pupils we look at the entrance to selective secondary schools in comparison to their CAT scores.

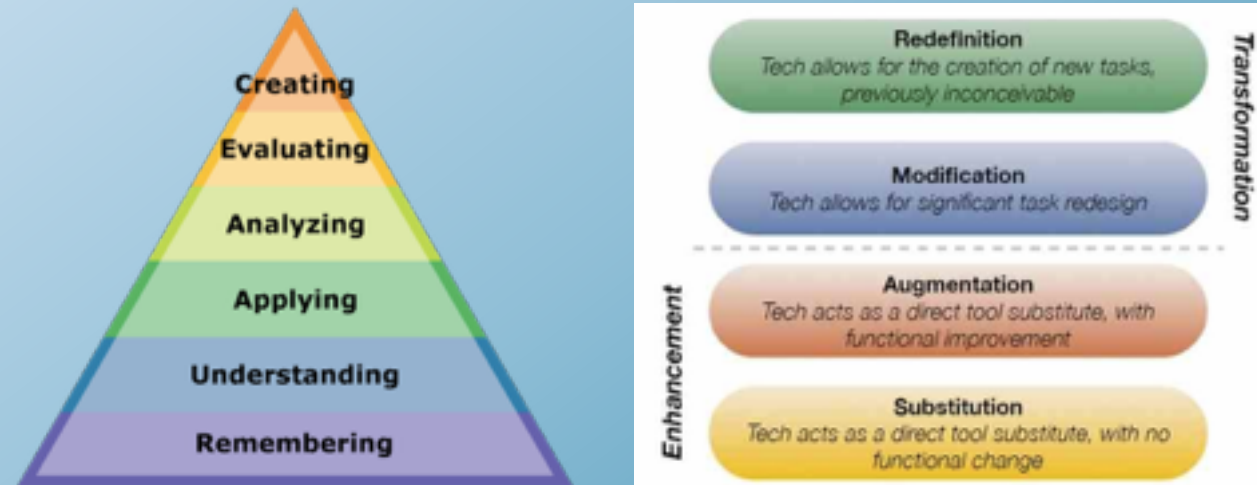
As mentioned before, we still need external validation. So to do this we are using some existing assessments that are still current and others that are new.



How does this impact pupils?



- Renewed focus on higher order thinking skills to ensure enrichment - Bloom's Taxonomy/SAMR
- Transitional year - expectations have increased some students that were working above expectations may be graded as working at.
- Removal of End of Key Stage National Assessments (SATs)



Children will benefit from an enriched curriculum that focuses on depth of understanding and higher order thinking skills. At NH we use Bloom's Taxonomy to ensure immersive learning and mastery. Below is a link if you would like to learn more about Bloom's Taxonomy and why it is important for learning.

<http://www.exquisite-minds.com/idea-of-the-week/blooms-taxonomy-critical-thinking-skills/>

Another model, related to the use of technology is the SAMR model. Example of the SAMR model: Substitution - word processor replaces hand-written assignment, Augmentation - word processor with a text-to-speech function allows the text to be read to the reader. Modification - the document with the text-to-speech function is shared on a blog and can receive feedback, Redefinition - instead of a written piece, students convey analytical thought through the use of multimedia tools.

At NH the vast majority of students sit the 11+ as their entrance into selective secondary schools. Some go on to state maintained schools who also asked students to sit their own assessments. Secondary schools ask for CAT scores and references, but they do not ask for SAT scores as they are not transferable between key stages.



How does this impact parents?



Reports will include achievement against end of each year's outcomes. 5 statements:

- Working At Expectation (NH not national)
- Working Above
- Working Below
- Working Well Above
- Working Well Below

As with previous reporting, a pupil making *expected progress* will receive the same statement in subsequent reports.

Pupils working at the Norfolk House expectation means they are working within their year group for the new national curriculum, but above the national expectation. For a child to be working well above expectation they need to be working confidently at least one year above the national curriculum for their year group (remember the new national curriculum is almost a year more challenging). Moving away from letter grades and using statements helps parents to understand where their children are in relation to expected achievement and also removes the 'ceiling' that letter grades create for more able students - if a student receives an A grade, how do they improve? Why should they? There is no upper limit with statements.