Information for parents:

Reception baseline assessment



Standards & Testing Agency

Reception Baseline Assessment

Do you have a child starting reception class from the 2021/22 academic year?

If so, your child will be participating in the reception baseline assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of starting reception.

The purpose of the assessment is to provide the starting point for a new measure that will help parents understand how well schools support their pupils to progress between reception and year 6 / the end of key stage 2.

What is the RBA?

The RBA is a short, interactive and practical assessment of your child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school, using materials that most children of your child's age will be familiar with. It is statutory for all schools from September 2021.

What does participating in the RBA mean for my child?

The RBA is not about judging or labelling your child or putting them under any pressure. Your child cannot 'pass' or 'fail' the assessment. Its main purpose is to create a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils.

'During the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that parents have been pivotal in supporting their child's mental health and wellbeing during this difficult time. I have had the pleasure of observing RBA in practice during the pilot stage and can assure you that the RBA should not be stressful in any way and your child is unlikely to realise they are doing an assessment. The activities undertaken are fun, simple in design, short and age-appropriate. Evidence from the trial and pilot shows that the children were interested in the tasks and enjoyed it, and I'm sure your child will do too.'

Claire Harnden

Deputy CEO, Director of Teaching School Hub
South Farnham Educational Trust

How will the RBA benefit my child?

The RBA will provide an opportunity for your child to have valuable one-to-one time with their teacher at an early stage, so the teacher can get to know your child better. It will provide a helpful snapshot of where your child is when they enter reception, so they can be supported in the most appropriate way. Feedback from the trial and pilot of the RBA has been largely positive, with 84% of practitioners rating the children's interest and enjoyment of the tasks as at least 'satisfactory'.

'As school leaders, we know how important the first weeks of school are to a child and perceive the opportunity for our teachers to take time to sit with each child individually to be hugely beneficial. The RBA helps to facilitate this and our teachers have a better idea of how to design learning for them.'

Claire Harnden

Deputy CEO, Director of Teaching School Hub
South Farnham Educational Trust

How will the RBA benefit me as a parent?

When your child reaches year 6 / the end of key stage 2, you will be able to see how well your child's school has supported the year group in their time at primary school, compared to other schools nationally. This will improve on the current progress measure, which only measures progress between key stage 1 and key stage 2, missing out the crucial work schools do between reception and year 2 / the end of key stage 1.

'In later years, once the new progress measure is introduced, RBA will mean parents are better able to see how well the school is supporting its pupils throughout primary school. Parents will be able to compare the performance of schools nationally based on the progress they make with their pupils, enabling parents to make better, more informed decisions when choosing the school they want their children to attend.'

Claire Harnden

Deputy CEO, Director of Teaching School Hub
South Farnham Educational Trust

How do I prepare my child for the assessment?

You do not need to do anything to prepare your child for the assessment. Your child is unlikely to even know that they are doing an assessment when they are completing the tasks.

What if my child cannot access the assessment?

Your child will answer questions verbally or by pointing at or moving objects. The assessment has been designed to ensure that it is inclusive and accessible to as many children as possible, including those with special educational needs or disability (SEND) or English as an additional language (EAL). The teacher can pause the assessment at any time if your child needs a break. There are also modified materials available for children with visual and hearing impairments.

How will the data be used?

The data from the assessment will only be used by the Department for Education when your child has reached the end of year 6, to provide the baseline to measure the progress of your child's year group from reception to year 6. The data from the assessment, including numerical scores, is not shared with you, pupils, teachers, or external bodies, including schools, and there will be no published scores at pupil, school or national level.

Will I receive feedback on my child's assessment?

Your child's teacher will receive a set of statements which provide a narrative description of how your child performed in the assessment. Schools can choose whether to send these to you directly, but they must provide them to you on your request.

For more information

Your child's teacher will be able to answer any questions about the reception baseline assessment. For more details you can also visit www.gov.uk/STA.

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