

TITLE	Assessment Arrangements for Primary Schools
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 July 2014
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Judith Ramsden, Director Children's Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To work in partnership with schools in developing transition arrangements for assessment from September 2014.

RECOMMENDATION

To note and support the proposed actions

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The report provides a briefing on the current plans for working with primary schools. This is in line with future arrangements for pupil assessment which do not use National Curriculum (NC) levels but link into the new national curriculum which commences in September. The issues do not apply to secondary schools to the same extent as students are assessed according to GCSE criteria, which are not changing.

Background

- Schools have for some years assessed pupils against national curriculum levels and sublevels which enable them to track and analyse progress and attainment precisely
- The majority use sophisticated software packages which enable them to provide a wide range of analyses for management and for inspections.
- From September 2014 new national arrangements allow schools to determine their own methods of internal assessment; national summative assessment at the end of KS1 and KS2 will remain. There will be a greater emphasis on tests at KS1 but it is not yet clear whether these will have greater weighting than teacher assessment.

Analysis of Issues

Current situation nationally:

- WBC schools, represented by their assessment coordinators, were unanimous in deciding in early March that they wished to delay decisions regarding new methods of assessment until there was more information available nationally.
- A national competition was organised by the DfE to propose different models to assess pupils and nine winning schools were given money to further develop them.
- All schools were given the opportunity to consider these models, but, as information regarding the methods used by the nine pilot schools has been limited and the timescale for their responses not clear, Wokingham schools expressed a preference to work together with the Local Authority on next steps.

Action:

- Following recent consultation with assessment coordinators and headteachers, the Head of School Improvement decided that the LA will convene a working party to lead a borough wide approach to assessment to support each school.
- Having considered a range of other approaches, schools are clear that their preferred approach is to adapt the established system of NC levels to match the new national curriculum. This will maintain a high level of precision regarding pupil assessment so pupil progress can be demonstrated.
- A workshop for all assessment coordinators will take place on Friday 11th July. Issues with reading and writing will be comparatively simple; mathematics will be more problematic because of differentiated changes to the new curriculum. Further support for schools will be agreed at the workshop.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	Operational costs	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	Operational costs	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	Operational costs	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services and priorities?)**Reasons for considering the report in Part 2****List of Background Papers**

None

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