

Baseline Assessments at RAPS:

For the past 3 years Ramsgate Arts Primary School (RAPS) has had children starting school at both Reception and Year 3. The children come from various different settings so it is important that we establish our own Baselines in order to measure accurate progress. From next year, RAPS will only take children starting school from Reception.

Timing of Baseline

In order to ensure that our Baseline is accurate, the timing is key. At RAPS we recognise that if you baseline within the first 2 weeks of the autumn term children in Reception or Year 3 are not familiar with their learning environment and therefore they will not show their true ability. In light of this we choose to finalise our baseline in mid-October. This gives us a much more realistic argument with regards to an accurate level.

Reception Baseline:

Baseline data is key for schools to be able to show the picture of progress within their own schools. At Early Years, schools need to show whether their children enter their school below, in line or above national expectations. With reference to the Development Matters document, at RAPS we say that a 'typical' child will enter their Reception year working within the 40-60 month band having achieved the 30-50 month statements. Therefore we can say that a child entering 40-60 months band is at the age expected level; a child working above this level is above the age expected level and a child working below the 40-60 month band is below the age expected level.

How do we baseline?

In ascertaining an accurate picture of the level a child is entering their Reception year at, it is vital to take into account information provided by a range of stakeholders. We firstly take on board the information given to us by the child's nursery setting. We meet with all nursery settings/child minders in the summer term. During this meeting we gain a pen portrait of the child. We also ensure we gain the development matters band the child is working at during the summer term. For those children attending a child minder or setting not tracking using development matters, we will arrange an extra meeting to support them in making a judgement with us.

We will also ask parents for information in order to help us level a child's baseline. We do this in two ways. Firstly we have a questionnaire we ask parents on the home visit. This questionnaire is carefully written to give us key information we need to complete a baseline assessment of the child. In addition we give parents 'All about me' sheets.

Having gained an insight of the child from their previous setting and the knowledge of their parents we then spend the first five weeks of their schooling establishing their baseline. This

is done in a range of ways. Firstly, we use observations to begin to gain a picture of the child. All adults in the Reception classes have been trained in how to record an observation and the key information we need to be recording. They will complete long observations, short observations and take photographs that will be added to the child's learning journey.

Secondly, we have a baseline assessment portfolio that each child will complete on a 1 to 1 basis with the class teacher. This assesses more specific skills from each area of learning e.g. the sounds and numbers the child knows, accuracy of counting, pen grip used and ability to understand instructions.

The third assessments used to inform our baseline assessments are the Language Link Screening Results. At RAPS we have a dedicated Speech and Language Therapist who works weekly within the school. She supports TAs to screen all of the reception pupils. From this we get a very detailed picture of the children's speech and language skills that can inform our judgement.

By mid-October the class teacher will then give each child a baseline level for each area of learning using the development matters ages and stages.

Moderation

Moderation is key for ensuring our baseline judgements are accurate. We engage in Internal Trust Moderation and External moderation. Our class teacher meets with the Chilton Primary School staff in order to ensure baseline judgements are accurate and then engage in external moderation with other schools in the local area.

Year Three Baseline

How can we prove our baseline data is 100% accurate?

When children enter RAPS we use a range of assessments to ensure that the final baseline level is accurate – this evidence is key as we need to be able to prove firstly the progress made and also that we have the correct provisions in place for these children. We used the following methods:

Liaison with Local Feeder Schools

This is embedded, as well as transition visits and conversations with the class teacher, the Year three teacher also observed the children in the classroom and had opportunities to discuss the children's work. The class Teacher and HoS had opportunities to meet with the SENCO to discuss individual needs.

Reading Assessments in the first 3 weeks at school

In the first few weeks as part of their transition all pupils are assessed based on their key stage 1 reading levels – in this process we are able to check phonics understanding and reading for meaning. We also used the Burt reading test to establish their correct reading age. Children flagged up with concerns are raised with the SENCO/HoS and the assessment evidence is examined.

Writing Assessments

Writing is assessed over the period of the first term to enable the child to settle and also so we can gain a portfolio of evidence in their books. Assessments are made using our compass grids, this is then moderated across the school and with other schools in the Trust to ensure that our baseline is accurate.

Maths

Maths is also assessed over the period of the first term to enable the child to settle and to gain a portfolio of evidence from a range of mathematical skills. Assessments are made using our compass grids, this is again is moderated across the school and with other schools in the Trust.

Speech and Language

Our Speech and Language Therapist screened the year 3 pupils who are raising concern using Language Link. From this we get a very detailed picture of the children's speech and language skills that can inform our judgement.

Deciding the final level

Deciding the final level-we combine the range of evidence and reach the conclusion of a best fit. This was done mid-October looking at each source of evidence.

The Year 3 teacher, SENCO and HoS ensured rigour in the decision-making process.