

### **Arrangements for undertaking the end of Foundation Phase assessments for 2017-18**

The Foundation Phase Profile was introduced in September 2015 and it is statutory for schools to use the Profile to undertake baseline assessments of children at the start of Reception Year. I am aware that many schools are using the Foundation Phase Profile to track children's progress throughout the Foundation Phase and are intending to use it to undertake the end of Foundation Phase assessments in the summer term, 2018. It is, however, not compulsory to use the Foundation Phase Profile for the end of Foundation Phase assessment. **Schools should continue to use an approach of best fit against the outcome descriptors,** using the results from the Foundation Phase Profile to inform their judgement as they feel necessary.

2017-18 will be the first year that the end of Foundation Phase assessments will be undertaken against the revised outcome descriptors for the revised Areas of Learning for Mathematical Development and Language, Literacy and Communication Skills introduced in September 2015. It is unclear, at this point, what will be the effect of introducing what are intended to be more challenging Areas of Learning. I hope that schools will be able to maintain similar levels as they have had time to work with their children on the revised AOLs over several years. Although there may be the need to revise targets in the short term, our expectation would be that schools would identify the gaps in provision which are preventing pupils from achieving the revised outcomes and address these accordingly.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that future assessment arrangements give priority to supporting and improving teaching and learning. As the recommendations of Successful Futures are implemented over the next few years there will be a renewed emphasis on Assessment for Learning as a natural and integral feature of learning and teaching and a move away from gathering information about children and young people's performance on a school-by-school basis for accountability purposes.

Assessment's prime purpose is to provide information that can guide decisions on how best to progress pupils' learning and should be used in the best interest of all pupils to adjust their learning strategies to suit their individual progress. The Welsh Government is working with the profession and all stakeholders and partners as part of a fundamental review of the accountability system, and in moving to an environment where key decisions are taken at the local level, it is vital that distorting effects that can arise from external performance and reporting requirements are avoided.