

Parents Information Sheet:

The "P" Scales. (P = Performance)

What are they?

They are descriptions produced by QCA (Qualifications & Curriculum Authority) which outline early learning and attainment before level 1 of the National Curriculum.

The performance descriptions can be used by teachers in the same way as the National Curriculum level descriptions which can be used to recognise a pupil's attainment and to inform the teacher how to structure their teaching. They can be used to -

- ✚ decide which description best fits a pupil's performance over a period of time and in different contexts
- ✚ develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long-, medium- and short-term planning
- ✚ track **linear** progress - where pupils move from one level to a higher level towards attainment at National Curriculum level 1
- ✚ identify **lateral** - progress within a level or across subjects by looking for related skills at similar levels
- ✚ record pupils' overall development and achievement, for example, at the end of a year or a key stage.

For pupils with learning difficulties it can often be unhelpful to think of progress only in linear or upward terms. Progress should be thought of in other ways - as well as developing new skills, knowledge and understanding pupils may make progress when

- they show the same achievement on more than one occasion so that learning is maintained;
- strengthen or refine their achievements so that they can use their skills more fluently or with less support;
- combine existing skills, knowledge or understanding in new ways;

- gain confidence in their achievements so that they can use their learning in new or different circumstances;
- apply their learning to new tasks in new contexts -it is particularly important for pupils to apply what they have learned to real-life settings

In recent years the progress of most pupils with Special Educational Needs has been described using the catch-all phrase 'W1' (i.e. working towards Level One of the National Curriculum) - which meant very little! These levels were reported to the LEA and to parents. The P scales now allow progress in all National Curriculum subjects (see appendix 1 for list of National Curriculum subjects), together with Religious Education and Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship, to be described using a series of statements ranging from 'P level 1' through to 'P level 8'. This is similar to the National Curriculum which goes from Level 1 to Level 8. Pupils generally work up through the levels although it should be recognised that for many of our youngsters they may well remain on a particular P level for a considerable length of time. This does not mean that they are not making progress - the progress they are making might be across a P level rather than moving up to the next one.

The first three P levels are common to all subjects. These first three levels are broken down into 6 steps P1(i), P1(ii), P2(i), P2(ii), P3(i) P3(ii). They describe reflexes and reactions which are particularly relevant for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties. P levels 4 - 8 are subject specific and indicate the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in the particular subject. (See appendix 2 for an example of P levels in English). There will be youngsters in mainstream schools who are working on these levels too.

The 'P scale' descriptors are quite broad and can be broken into component parts and teachers have to make '**best fit**' judgements when applying them to pupils.

It is likely that pupils will have strengths in some subjects and their p-levels may well be higher in these. It will be quite unusual if, as pupils move up the p-scales, they have an even profile across all subjects.

There have been a number of changes in the P levels since their first introduction in 1998 and in JUNE 2004 they were again changed - the most significant of these changes being that in English - Speaking and Listening have been spilt into separate strands. This does make sense as pupils understanding of speech and language is

often in advance of their ability to use sounds/signs/symbols and speech to communicate and this allows us to show this. Parents will see that on Annual Review reports speaking/expressive communication and listening/receptive communication will be reported on separately. In some cases because of the changes made to the national P levels in the past few years, a child's reported level might have changed from one year to the next. This does not necessarily mean that the child has regressed but the criteria for assessment has changed.

It has been recognised that the P scales have been open to personal interpretation and this has meant that in some instances pupils may have changed if they moved classes / schools. One teacher might have interpreted the p levels differently from their colleagues and there have been instances where pupils have then been awarded a lower or higher P level assessment. This is a problem that has been recognised within schools, between schools and across the country nationally. The DfES (Department for Education and Skills) have just produced guidance on moderating the P levels and various Local Education Authorities (including Kent) have been providing training for staff (from both mainstream and special schools) along with various guidance materials to ensure consistency of judgements. This includes moderation both within school, within clusters of schools and county-wide. This will mean that a P level 4 is the same for all teachers within a school and hopefully when compared with other schools.

Achievements reported in annual reviews at Five Acre Wood are those levels which have been **achieved** by a youngster at a particular time. However, they may well be working on other skills from higher p levels but these will not be reported during the review as the whole P level might not have been achieved. Within our current system to achieve a P level statement the Pupils will have achieved 76% of it.

Appendix 1:

List of National Curriculum Subjects

CORE SUBJECTS: (*The separate strands are in italics*)

English - *Speaking/Expressive; Listening/Receptive; Reading; Writing*

Maths - *Using & Applying; Number & Algebra; Shape Space & Measure; Handling Data.*

Science - *Scientific Enquiry; Life Processes; Materials & their properties; Physical Processes*

ICT

FOUNDATION SUBJECTS:

Art & Design

Careers & Work Related Learning (from Key Stage 3 upwards)

Geography

History

Modern Foreign Language

Music

Physical Education

Personal Social Health Education including Citizenship

Technology

Religious Education has to be taught in all Key Stages but parents can request that pupils are withdrawn from these lessons.

Appendix 2:

Examples of P levels in English. (English contains 4 strands i.e. Speaking /Expressive Communication; Listening / Receptive Communication; Reading and Writing.

(P1i-P3(ii) are the same across all subjects and strands)

Listening/Receptive Communication Descriptor
<p>P1(i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, <i>for example, startling at sudden noises or movements</i>. Any participation is fully prompted.</p>
<p>P1(ii) Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, <i>for example, attending briefly to interactions with a familiar person</i>. They may give intermittent reactions, <i>for example, sometimes becoming excited in the midst of social activity</i>.</p>
<p>P2(i) Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, <i>for example, withholding their attention</i>. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, <i>for example, smiling at familiar people</i>. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, <i>for example, focusing their attention on sensory aspects of stories or rhymes when prompted</i></p>
<p>P2(ii) Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, <i>for example, reaching out to a favourite person</i>. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, <i>for example, vocalising or gesturing in a particular way in response to a favourite visitor</i>. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, <i>for example, showing pleasure each time a particular puppet character appears in a poem dramatised with sensory cues</i>. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, <i>for example, taking turns in interactions with a familiar person, imitating actions and facial expressions</i>.</p>
<p>P3(i) Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, <i>for example, pointing to key objects or people</i>. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, <i>for example, reaching out and feeling for objects as tactile cues to events</i>. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, <i>for example, listening to their own vocalisations</i>. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, <i>for example, following the sequence of a familiar daily routine and responding appropriately</i>.</p>
<p>P3(ii) Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, <i>for example, prompting another person to join in with an interactive sequence</i>. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, <i>for example, pre-empting sounds or actions in familiar poems</i>. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, <i>for example, by nodding or shaking their heads</i>. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods,</p>

for example, turning the pages in a book shared with another person. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, for example, bringing an object to an adult in order to request a new activity.

P4

Pupils demonstrate an understanding of at least 50 words, including the names of familiar objects. Pupils respond appropriately to simple requests which contain one key word, sign or symbol in familiar situations, for example, 'Get your coat', 'Stand up' or 'Clap your hands'.

P5

Pupils respond appropriately to questions about familiar or immediate events or experiences for example, 'Where is the ball?'. 'What are you doing?'. 'Is it yellow?'. They follow requests and instructions containing at least two key words, signs or symbols, for example, 'Put the spoon in the dish', 'Give the book to Johnny'.

P6

Pupils respond to others in group situations, for example, taking turns appropriately in a game such as 'Pass the parcel'. They follow requests and instructions with three key words, signs or symbols, for example, 'Give me the little red book'.

P7

Pupils listen, attend to and follow stories for short stretches of time. They follow requests and instructions with four key words, signs or symbols, for example, 'Get the big book about dinosaurs from the library' They attend to, and respond to, questions from adults and their peers about experiences, events and stories, for example, 'Where has the boy gone?'.

P8

Pupils take part in role play with confidence. Pupils listen attentively. They respond appropriately to questions about why or how, for example 'Why does a bird make a nest?', 'How do we copy this picture?'.

National Curriculum 1C

Pupils understand and respond appropriately to straightforward comments or instructions directed at them. They convey meanings, including some relevant details to a range of others.

National Curriculum 1B

Pupils communicate clearly and in simple correct grammatical form about matters of interest to individuals and groups, for example, she gave the dog a biscuit. They follow what others say and respond appropriately to straightforward comments. They convey meaning, making what they communicate relevant and interesting to the listener.

National Curriculum 1A

Pupils communicate clearly about matters of interest, taking turns in a range of situations and groups. They follow what others say and usually respond appropriately. They convey meaning, sustaining their contribution and the listeners' interest.

Speaking/Expressive Communication Descriptor

P4

Pupils repeat, copy and imitate between 10 and 50 single words, signs or phrases or use a repertoire of objects of reference or symbols. They use single words, signs and symbols for familiar objects, for example, cup, biscuit, and to communicate about events and feelings, for example, like sand dislikes.

P5

Pupils combine two key ideas or concepts. They combine single words, signs or symbols to communicate meaning to a range of listeners, for example, 'Mummy gone' or 'more drink'. They make attempts to repair misunderstandings without changing the words used, for example, by repeating a word with a different intonation or facial expression. Pupils use a vocabulary of over 50 words.

P6

Pupils initiate and maintain short conversations using their preferred medium of communication. They ask simple questions to obtain information, for example, 'Where's cat?'. They can use prepositions, such as 'in' or 'on', and pronouns, such as 'my' or 'it', correctly.

P7

Pupils use phrases with up to three key words, signs or symbols to communicate simple ideas, events or stories to others, for example, 'I want big chocolate muffin'. They use regular plurals correctly. They communicate ideas about present, past and future events and experiences, using simple phrases and statements, for example, 'We going cinema on Friday'. They contribute appropriately one-to-one and in small group discussions and role play. They use the conjunction *and* to link ideas or add new information beyond what is asked.

P8

They link up to four key words, signs or symbols in communicating about their own experiences or in telling familiar stories, both in groups and one-to-one, for example, 'The hairy giant shouted at Finn'. They use an extensive vocabulary to convey meaning to the listener. They can use possessives, for example, 'Johnny's coat'. They take part in role play with confidence. They use conjunctions that suggest cause for example, 'cos,' to link ideas.

National Curriculum 1C

Pupils understand and respond appropriately to straightforward comments or instructions directed at them. They convey meanings, including some relevant details, to a range of others.

National Curriculum 1B

Pupils communicate clearly and in simple correct grammatical form about matters of interest to individuals and groups, for example, 'she gave the dog a biscuit'. They follow what others say and respond appropriately to straightforward comments. They convey meaning, making what they communicate relevant and interesting to the listener.

National Curriculum 1A

Pupils communicate clearly about matters of interest, taking turns in a range of situations and groups. They follow what others say and usually respond appropriately. They convey meaning, sustaining their contribution and the listeners' interest.

Reading:**P4**

Pupils listen and respond to familiar rhymes and stories. They show some understanding of how books work, for example, turning pages and holding the book the right way up.

P5

Pupils select a few words, symbols or pictures with which they are particularly familiar and derive some meaning from text, symbols or pictures presented in a way familiar to them. They match objects to pictures and symbols, for example choosing between two symbols to select a drink or seeing a photograph of a child and eye-pointing at the child. They show curiosity about content at a simple level, for example they may answer basic two key-word questions about a story.

P6

Pupils select and recognise or read a small number of words or symbols linked to a familiar vocabulary, for example, name, people, objects or actions. They match letters and short words.

P7

Pupils show an interest in the activity of reading. They predict elements of a narrative, for example, when the adult stops reading, pupils fill in the missing word. They distinguish between print or symbols and pictures in texts. They understand the conventions of reading, for example, following text left to right, top to bottom and page following page. They know that their name is made up of letters.

P8

Pupils understand that words, symbols and pictures convey meaning. They recognise or read a growing

repertoire of familiar words or symbols, including their own names. They recognise at least half the letters of the alphabet by shape, name or sound. They associate sounds with patterns in rhymes, with syllables, and with words or symbols.

National Curriculum 1C

Pupils can recognise familiar words or symbols in simple texts. They identify initial sounds in unfamiliar words. They can establish meaning when reading aloud simple sentences. They express their response to familiar texts by identifying aspects which they like and dislike.

National Curriculum 1B

Pupils can read a range of familiar words or symbols and identify initial and final sounds in unfamiliar words. With support, they use their knowledge of letters, sounds and words to establish meaning when reading aloud. They respond to events and ideas in poems, stories and non-fiction.*

National Curriculum 1A

Pupils use their knowledge of letters, sounds and words to read simple texts with meaning. They comment on events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction.

Writing:

P4

Pupils show they understand that marks and symbols convey meaning, *for example, placing photographs or symbols on a timetable or in a sequence.* They make marks or symbols in their preferred mode of communication.

P5

Pupils produce meaningful marks or symbols associated with their own name or familiar spoken words, actions, images or events, *for example, contributing to records of their own achievements or to books about themselves, their families and interests.* They trace, overwrite or copy shapes and straight line patterns.

P6

Pupils produce or write their name in letters or symbols. They copy letter forms, *for example, labels and/or captions for pictures or for displays.*

P7

Pupils group letters and leave spaces between them as though they are writing separate words. They are aware of the sequence of letters, symbols and words, *for example, selecting and linking symbols together, writing their names and one or two other simple words correctly from memory.*

P8

Pupils show awareness that writing can have a range of purposes, *for example, in relation to letters, lists or stories.* They show understanding of how text is arranged on the page, *for example, by writing or producing letter sequences going to left to right.* They write or use their preferred mode of communication to set down their names with appropriate use of upper- and lower-case letters or appropriate symbols.

National Curriculum 1C

Pupils produce letters and words or symbols to convey meaning. Commonly used letters are correctly formed but may be inconsistent in their size and orientation.

National Curriculum 1B

Pupils structure some phrases and simple statements using recognisable words to communicate ideas. At least half the letters of the alphabet are correctly formed and orientated.

National Curriculum 1A

Pupils use phrases and simple statements to convey ideas, making some choices of appropriate vocabulary. Some words are spelt conventionally. Pupils make some use of full stops and capital letters. Letters are clearly formed, correctly orientated and sit on the line.

