These notes aim to provide support in identifying children’s starting points and making judgements about the rate of children’s progress and attainment through the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Useful documents include:

- Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, July 2014, for use from September 2014, No: 120101
- The Framework for School Inspection, July 2014, No: 120100
- Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2014
- Early Years Outcomes 2013
- EYFS Profile Handbook 2015
- Guidance to support children’s learning and development: Tracking Progress in the EYFS 2014 (NCC)

Early Years Outcomes (September 2013) and Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2012) are non-statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education to help inform understanding of child development through the early years.

Early Years Outcomes includes age band descriptors for 0-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months and 40-60+ months. (The descriptors are the same as listed under the unique child statements in Development Matters).

When evaluating progress, in Northamptonshire we recommend considering three steps within each age band; beginning (B), within (W) and secure (S). Practitioners need to be clear whether children are demonstrating a few, some or the majority of the learning and development statements and apply a ‘best fit’ principle. For example, if there are gaps in the 30-50 month age band with some evidence in the 40-60+ age band then the ‘best fit’ for the child would be within (W) or secure (S) in the 30-50 month band.

Inspectors will be looking for evidence of how practitioners:

1. Identify children’s attainment on entry
2. Judge progress across the EYFS and into Key Stage 1
3. Identify attainment at the end of Reception
1. Identifying children’s attainment on entry

It is recommended that schools make ‘on-entry’ judgements within the first few weeks of the autumn term. These judgements will be made within the context of gathering information from parents, possibly during home visits, and from liaison with early years’ settings during transition visits. Information from all sources will build a picture of each child’s learning and development on entry to school.

There is no national data for attainment on entry to Nursery and Reception and as yet no prescribed methods of assessing children when they start school. The age bands, in Early Years Outcomes, describe the ‘typical development’ for children at that age but schools do not have to use these and they may have other ways of assessing children when they start school. Inspectors should discuss with the schools how they measure children’s starting points and the percentage of children that demonstrate progress that is below what is typical, typical and rapid for their age.

When judging achievement, inspectors must have regard for pupils’ starting points in terms of their prior attainment and age. This includes the progress that the lowest attaining pupils are making and its effect on raising their attainment, and the progress that the most able are making...


Individual children may be:

- Showing a **typical level of development** for their age.
- Operating at a level **above that typical for their age** (indicating the potential to exceed the early learning goals by the end of Reception).
- Displaying the knowledge, skills and understanding that are **less typical for her/his age** but not significantly so (this may indicate a lack of pre-school experience).
- Others may be operating at a level **significantly below that which is typical** for their age. Such children may at risk of delay, or may have a particular disability or special educational need that has already been identified.
2. Judging progress across the EYFS and into Key Stage 1

As there is no official guidance on how to judge children’s progress in the EYFS, it is the responsibility of individual schools to demonstrate to inspectors the progress that children have made. It is left to schools to implement clear systems so that they can:

- Make an assessment of where children are on entry (baseline)
- Plan next steps that challenge all children
- Track the progress of individuals, groups of children and cohorts across the Early Years Foundation Stage and into Key Stage 1
- Identify how much progress is made by individuals as well as groups of children and the cohort

After an individual child’s starting points have been identified across the seven areas of learning and development (Appendix 1) the information needs to be collated across the cohort (Appendix 2 and 4). ‘Guidance for tracking children’s learning and development’ EYIT 2014 (Appendix 3) is a useful supporting document to be read to support completion of these documents.

**The government does not prescribe how ongoing assessment should be undertaken** (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook).

What does Ofsted say about judging progress?

Evaluation of achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage should take account of the proportions of children who have made typical progress or more from their starting points. An example of typical progress for a child would be to start Nursery or Reception displaying the knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for her/his age and then to meet the early learning goals by the end of Reception. Children who meet all the early learning goals but who started at a lower level of development than is typical for their age might be said to be making rapid progress. However a child starting school at a higher level of development who meets all the early learning goals but exceeds none of them is unlikely to have made enough progress. Evaluation of achievement should consider attainment at the end of Reception in comparison with Early Years Foundation Stage Profile national figures and in terms of how well it prepares children for Key Stage 1.

In making a professional judgement about children’s achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage inspectors must consider the proportions that have made typical or rapid progress taking account of staggered entry and full- and part-time attendance and the length of time children have been at the school. They should consider the achievement of different groups of children, especially those who are vulnerable to underachievement, as well as their readiness for Year 1. They should make judgements through:

- discussion with the staff and children
- analysis of assessment records
- observations of children’s dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning)

Inspection is primarily about evaluating how well individual pupils benefit from the education provided by their school. As a school, it is important to pay particular attention to the achievement of vulnerable groups by observing how well you help all pupils make progress and fulfil their potential. Possible vulnerable groups include:

- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs
- Those with protected characteristics, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, as defined by the Equality Act 2010
- Boys
- Girls
- The highest and lowest attainers
- Disadvantaged pupils, including:
  - looked after children (In April 2014, eligibility for pupil premium was extended to looked after children who have been looked after for one day or more and children who were adopted from care or left care under a Special Guardianship or a Child Arrangements Order)
  - pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

Ofsted School Inspection Handbook July 2014, p.34. Paragraph 129

Note that inspectors will ask schools how they use pupil premium funding to support children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and will gather evidence about any differences made to the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils as shown by performance data and inspection evidence (p.45, paragraph 158).
Assessing Individual Pupil Progress in Northamptonshire

In Northamptonshire we advise practitioners to assess whether children are beginning (B), working within (W) or are secure (S) in an age band (see Appendix 3 Tracking progress in the EYFS 2014 NCC).

In Northamptonshire a step is defined as either moving from:

- beginning to within (B) > (W)
- within to secure (W) > (S)
- secure to beginning in the next age band (S) > (B)

By the end of Reception a child who has made 3 steps progress is judged to have made typical progress. For example, on-entry to Reception Jacob is assessed in the listening and attention aspect as beginning (B) in the 40-60+ month age band. He moves one step in the autumn term and is therefore now within (W) the 40-60+ age band. He then moves another step in the spring term into the secure (S) 40-60+ age band (2 steps). At the end of the year he is assessed on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) as achieving the Early Learning Goal (ELG) at the ‘expected’ level (3 steps).

Kylie leaves her pre-school setting secure in the 30-50 month age band. She moves one step into beginning 40-60+ months in the autumn term, she makes accelerated progress in the spring term and moves a further two steps into secure 40-60+ month age band before achieving the ELG in the summer. Therefore Kylie has made four steps progress which can be judged as making rapid progress.

Amit starts Reception working within the 40-60+ month age band. He is judged at the end of the autumn term to be remaining within the 40-60+ age band therefore not making any steps progress. In the spring term he moves one step from within to secure in the 40-60+ age band and he achieves the ELG at the end of the Summer term. Therefore although Amit’s attainment is typical at the end of his Reception year, in terms of progress he has only moved through two steps which may be judged as being below typical progress for his age.

For children whose attainment on entry to Reception is low, practitioners should aim for accelerated progress (in excess of three steps progress) from their starting points, in order for them to make up ground and to consequently narrow the attainment gap.
3. Attainment at the end of the EYFS

The current Reception cohort will be assessed in June 2015 using the EYFS Profile. For each Early Learning Goal (of which there are 17), the practitioner must decide which one of the following three judgements is most accurate as a ‘best fit’:

- **Emerging** (1 point) The child has not yet achieved the ELG but is working within the one of the previous developmental bands of the EYFS framework e.g. 30-50 months
- **Expected** (2 points) The child has achieved the ELG as a best fit judgement
- **Exceeding** (3 points) The child has gone beyond the ELG and is working within the KS1 National Curriculum

This assessment will produce a number/percentage of children emerging, expected or exceeding for each of the 17 Early Learning Goals.

**What is considered to be a ‘good level of development’ (GLD)?**

A child’s achieves a good level of development, as defined by the government, if s/he meets the expected level in the early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language), and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy. This is not the same as making good progress.

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Ofsted School Inspection Handbook July 2014, p.73

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School data should be compared with national outcomes. Inspectors must consider the attainment of children at the end of Reception compared with Early Years Foundation Stage Profile national figures, including the proportion that achieves a good level of development.

**Northamptonshire data compared to national data**

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<td>52%</td>
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**Evaluation of achievement in Key Stage 1**

Evaluation of achievement in Key Stage 1 should take account of the proportions of pupils who have made typical progress or more from their starting points. For 2014/15, as a broad rule of thumb, Year 2 children who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception ought to be reaching at least the expected standard by the end of Key Stage 1 (so attaining at least Level 2b in the 2015 assessments). Children exceeding the early learning goals at the end of Reception ought to be exceeding the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1 and be reaching high standards. Inspectors should take into account of how well pupils with a lower starting point have made up ground, and the breadth and depth of progress made by the most able.

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Ofsted School Inspection Handbook July 2014, p.68