



Standards
& Testing
Agency

Reception baseline assessment and reporting arrangements

May 2021

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1 Summary

1.1 About this guidance

This guidance sets out the statutory requirements for the reception baseline assessment and the associated reporting arrangements for the 2021/22 academic year. It is produced by the [Standards and Testing Agency](#)¹ (STA), an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE), and is relevant until the end of the 2021/22 academic year.

The assessment and reporting arrangements (ARA) apply to the following schools with a reception cohort:

- maintained schools (including maintained special schools)
- academies (including free schools)
- Service Children Education (SCE) schools

1.2 Who is this guidance for?

- all staff responsible for administering the RBA
- headteachers and senior leadership teams
- governors and trustees

1.3 Legal status

The ARA contains provisions made in terms of article 3 (as amended) of [The Early Years Foundation Stage \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) and Childcare Fees \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)². These Regulations are made by the Secretary of State under powers provided for by [section 42 of the Childcare Act 2006](#)³. This document gives full effect to the provisions made in the Regulations concerning reception baseline assessments and has effect as if made by the Regulations. The ARA also contains guidance and information that does not form part of the law. Section 11 contains further guidance on legal requirements and responsibilities.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/organisations/standards-and-testing-agency

² www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/432/contents/made

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/section/42

2 Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

2.1 Overview of the RBA

The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of early mathematics and literacy, communication and language. It is delivered in English and is administered within the first six weeks of a pupil starting reception. The assessment has two components, each consisting of practical tasks using physical resources. There is an online scoring system for the practitioner to use as the pupil engages with the tasks. The RBA will be used to create school-level progress measures for primary schools which will show the progress pupils make from reception until the end of key stage 2.

2.2 Assessment framework

The [Reception baseline assessment framework](#)⁴ is written for assessment developers, though it may also be of interest to schools.

The framework sets out:

- what is assessed by the RBA
- assessment design and delivery

Teachers should not use the assessment framework to guide teaching and learning. Schools should continue to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage and Early Learning Goals until the end of the reception year.

2.3 Delivery of assessment materials

Schools do not need to order standard materials for the assessment. Materials are sent to schools based on an estimation of cohort-size based on the autumn school census data from the previous academic year.

Schools will receive their assessment materials in June 2021. If schools have not received assessment materials by 30 June 2021, they should contact the RBA helpline on 0330 088 4171.

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-baseline-assessment-framework

2.4 Making adaptations to the assessment

The RBA has been developed to be an inclusive assessment, accessible to the majority of pupils on entry to school. It has been designed so that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and those learning English as an additional language can participate.

Practitioners can make adaptations to the resources if they deem this necessary, for example enlarging these to a size appropriate for the pupil. Any adaptations should be based primarily on normal classroom practice and should not advantage or disadvantage individual pupils.

More information is available in the administration guide.

2.5 Modified assessment materials

Modified materials are available for pupils with visual impairments where adjustments to the standard resources would not be sufficient. These materials can be requested through the 'Resources' area of the Baseline ePortal (BeP).

More information on modified materials is available in the administration guide.

3 Important dates for 2021

These dates may be subject to change. Any changes to dates will be communicated to schools through the STA's assessment update.

Date	Action
Monday 17 May	Schools receive an email asking them to complete a confirmation form
Friday 18 June	Deadline for completing confirmation form
Monday 7 June to Wednesday 30 June	Delivery of assessment materials to schools, including administration guidance
Monday 28 June	Schools receive password for the BeP Practitioners can begin to use the BeP to upload pupil data and access training materials
Start of the autumn term	Schools can administer assessments with pupils from the start of their autumn term
Wednesday 25 August	Headteacher's declaration form (HDF) available to schools on BeP
Monday 20 September onwards	Narrative reports for pupils who have completed both assessment components are available for practitioners to download
Monday 1 November	Deadline for headteachers to submit the HDF on the BeP

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Headteachers' responsibilities

All references to headteachers include acting headteachers or anyone with delegated authority in the absence of the headteacher.

Headteachers have a duty to ensure that:

- the requirements outlined in the ARA are implemented in their school
- teachers and other staff comply with the ARA
- the deadlines in the ARA are met
- the needs of all pupils are considered and suitable arrangements are put in place to enable pupils to take part in the assessment, where possible (see section 6.1)
- parents are issued with a [privacy notice](#)⁵ that explains how pupils' personal data is processed

Headteachers must:

- work with practitioners to identify which pupils will take the RBA and whether there are any who should be disapplied from the assessment
- discuss with practitioners whether any pupils will need modified versions of the assessment and, if so, place an order through the BeP
- keep all assessment materials secure and confidential
- ensure that those administering the assessment have been given sufficient opportunity to become familiar with the assessment and are appropriately trained
- ensure that those administering the assessment do so according to guidance and online training materials
- ensure that assessments are administered in the first six weeks of participating pupils starting reception
- ensure that any pupils not participating in the assessment have an appropriate assessment status recorded in the BeP (see section 6.1)
- notify STA of any incident that may have affected the integrity, security or confidentiality of the assessment

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-and-privacy-privacy-notice

- complete and submit the RBA HDF on the BeP by Monday 1 November 2021

If headteachers do not comply with the provisions of this ARA and other published guidance, this could result in the school being investigated for maladministration.

Headteacher's declaration form

The HDF confirms that all assessments have been or will be administered according to guidance or that any issues will be reported to the RBA helpline on 0330 088 4171.

The HDF will be available from Wednesday 25 August and must be submitted by Monday 1 November. Failure to complete the HDF by the deadline may result in a maladministration investigation.

If you cannot complete the HDF, or have made errors in your submission, you should also notify the RBA helpline.

4.2 Teachers' responsibilities

Teachers and other practitioners administering the RBA must comply with the provisions of this ARA, along with [Annex B](#)⁶ of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, when carrying out assessment and reporting functions.

If practitioners do not comply with the provisions of this ARA, and other guidance, this could result in the school being investigated for maladministration (see section 8 for further details).

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

5 Assessment administration

5.1 When to administer the assessment

Practitioners must complete the RBA for participating pupils in the first six weeks after they enter reception.

5.2 Staff administering the assessment

The assessment must be administered on a one-to-one basis by a practitioner who is known to the pupil. This does not need to be the class teacher- it could also be a reception teaching assistant or suitably qualified practitioner, such as an early years lead or Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

Practitioners should familiarise themselves with the preview assessment and assessment training videos on the BeP and the administration guide delivered with the assessment materials. This should be completed before administering the RBA to their pupils. Training can be completed individually, in groups, or across schools.

5.3 Uploading pupil data

Schools must upload pupil data to the BeP before carrying out any assessments. The 'system guide', available via the 'Help' button on the BeP, gives detailed instructions on how to do this.

It is recommended that practitioners use a Common Transfer File (CTF) to upload pupil data onto the BeP. The BeP will ask for pupil's personal details including a Unique Pupil Number (UPN). A temporary UPN can be uploaded if a pupil does not yet have a permanent UPN.

5.4 Data collection and reporting

Practitioners must record a pupil's answers on the BeP. While administering the assessment, the practitioner must select 'Yes' if the pupil answers correctly or 'No' if the pupil answers the question incorrectly. The data will be submitted automatically but practitioners should make sure to press the 'End' button at the end of each assessment component.

Narrative statements on how pupils performed in the assessment, across both components, will be available for practitioners to download through the reporting section of the BeP from Monday 20 September.

No numerical score will be shared and assessment data will only be used to calculate the progress measure.

5.5 Security of assessment materials

Headteachers must ensure that confidentiality of assessment materials is maintained so that no pupil has an unfair advantage. Schools must follow the confidentiality requirements on how to keep materials secure included with the assessment materials.

Assessment materials must not be used for any other purpose other than administering the assessment.

5.6 Administration guidance

The assessment must be administered in accordance with the administration guide, which is delivered with the assessment materials. This is to ensure that assessments are delivered consistently and fairly. The administration guide contains assessment-specific content and must be kept securely.

Schools should check that their operating systems and internet browsers are compatible with the BeP and familiarise themselves with the online system guidance available in the 'Help' section.

Suitable operating systems include:

- Windows 8.1+ (Windows 10 preferred)
- iOS 12.1+
- Android 8+
- Chrome OS

It is strongly recommended that schools use the latest version of Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge to access the BeP. However, Firefox and Safari are also suitable.

6 Assessment participation

6.1 Participating pupils

Headteachers make the final decision about whether it is appropriate for a pupil to take the RBA. In exceptional circumstances, headteachers may decide that a pupil is unable to participate, even when making appropriate adaptations to resources, and should therefore be disapplied. In these cases, a headteacher should:

- discuss the pupil's circumstances and needs with their parents and teachers
- consult, if appropriate, with the school's SENCO, educational psychologist, medical officer or other specialist staff to consider whether modified resources may make the assessment accessible

The headteacher should use their area of the BeP to disapply a pupil. This must be done before the assessment begins, and the headteacher must confirm that the pupil cannot access either component of the assessment. Please see the 'system guide' for more detail on how to do this.

Pupils who should not take the assessment

Practitioners must complete the RBA for each pupil in the first six weeks after they enter reception, unless:

- the headteacher has made the decision to disapply a pupil from the assessment
- the pupil has changed schools and has already completed the assessment at the previous school

Assessment statuses

Six weeks after entering reception, each pupil should have one of the following assessment statuses assigned on the BeP:

- assessment complete
- disapplied
- pupil has left the school without completing assessments
- pupil uploaded in error/did not join the school

Within the headteacher functionality on the BeP, there is also the option to indicate that a pupil's assessment has been delayed, for instance by illness or prolonged absence.

Pupils who have completed the assessment, after being marked as delayed by the headteacher, will have an assessment status of 'delayed complete'.

7 Quality monitoring

To ensure that the assessment is being administered according to the guidance, quality monitors will observe administration of the assessment. Schools will be contacted if they are going to receive a quality monitoring visit and must arrange a mutually convenient date and time for the visit.

Quality monitoring visits will be used to ensure that practitioners have sufficient understanding of how to administer the assessment. Quality monitoring will not be carried out by local authorities (LAs).

8 Maladministration

The term 'maladministration' refers to any act that:

- affects the integrity, security or confidentiality of the RBA
- leads to an outcome that does not accurately reflect a pupil's independent achievement

Potential maladministration can arise from misunderstandings about how to administer the RBA. To help avoid this, practitioners should ensure they are familiar with the training materials and must administer the assessment in accordance with the guidance.

Allegations of maladministration can be received from various sources, including parents, school staff or external organisations, for example, Ofsted. STA logs all allegations of maladministration and anyone reporting an allegation is asked for as much detail as possible so cases can be fully investigated. All information collected will be processed and retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

9 Reporting to parents

Schools should inform parents that they will be administering the RBA with all participating reception children. Schools have access to model [privacy notices](#)⁷ they can use as a basis for their own. Privacy notices should be shared with parents at the beginning of the school year. There is no legal requirement for schools to report RBA narrative statements to parents, although it may be helpful to use them as the basis of any feedback to parents. However, schools must share a pupil's RBA narrative statements with the child's parents if they request them.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-and-privacy-privacy-notices>

10 Keeping and maintaining records

10.1 Pupils' educational records

Maintained schools and non-maintained special schools must ensure that educational records are maintained and disclosed to parents on request, as prescribed in the [Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005⁸](#). Educational records include information about pupils (and former pupils):

- processed by, or on behalf of, the governing body or a teacher
- originating from, or supplied by, LA employees
- originating from, or supplied by, teachers or other employees of the school

Information processed by a teacher solely for the teacher's own use is excluded from the definition of educational records.

Maintained schools and non-maintained special schools must also keep curricular records on every pupil. Curricular records form a 'subset' of a pupil's educational record. They are a formal record of a pupil's academic achievements, skills, abilities and the progress they make at a school. These records must be updated at least once every academic year.

Under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the [Data Protection Act 2018⁹](#) (DPA), schools are responsible for ensuring that the collation, retention, storage and security of all personal information they produce, and hold, meets the provisions of the Act.

This includes:

- personal information appearing in a pupil's educational record
- any other information they hold that identifies individuals, including pupils, staff and parents

Schools must consider the implications of the DPA, under which they are required to [register¹⁰](#) as a data controller with the [Information Commissioner's Office¹¹](#) (ICO). Many schools consult their legal advisers for guidance on their responsibilities under the DPA

⁸ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1437/made

⁹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents

¹⁰ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/480/contents/made

¹¹ [//ico.org.uk/](http://ico.org.uk/)

11 Legal requirements and responsibilities

11.1 How the arrangements apply to different types of schools

Maintained schools

This ARA applies to maintained schools, including maintained special schools, with pupils in a reception cohort.

Academies and free schools

This ARA applies to all academies and free schools with pupils in a reception cohort.

Service Children Education schools

This ARA applies to all SCE schools with pupils in a reception cohort. Overseas schools which are not SCE schools cannot participate in the RBA.

Maintained nursery schools

This ARA does not apply to maintained nursery schools, even if a nursery has pupils of reception age.

Independent schools

This ARA does not apply to independent schools or nurseries. Independent schools cannot opt into the RBA, even if the school has pupils of reception age.

Home-educated children

This ARA does not apply to children who are being educated at home.

11.2 Special educational provision

Schools must use their best endeavours to ensure that special educational provision is made for those pupils who need it. Schools must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to their peers.

11.3 Regulatory concerns

If you have any regulatory concerns that have not been fully addressed by STA in line with the published procedures, you can raise them with the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). Ofqual regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

12 Further information

12.1 Useful website and link

RBA guidance is available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/reception-baseline including information on:

- RBA equality impact assessment
- RBA information leaflet
- RBA validity report
- RBA assessment framework
- RBA information video

12.2 General enquiries

For general enquiries about the administration of the RBA, please contact the RBA helpline on 0330 088 4171 or email receptionbaseline@nfer.ac.uk.

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