



**NAPE**

*National Association for Primary Education*

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## Media Release

### Acknowledging Differences in the Children

The Secretary of State did not accept the advice given by a substantial number of teachers that the baseline assessment of young children early in the admission year should not serve as a reliable measure when progress is assessed some six years later. **This association of parents and teachers reiterates its advice that such assessment should be used to inform education in the primary school and for no other purposes.**

The government intends that baseline assessment should be carried out in the early weeks of entry to the admission class. A few children will have reached their fifth birthday but most children will be four years old at that point and the youngest will not become five until the 31st August, almost a year later.

**We point out that such assessment will not be of educational attainment but will simply be an assessment of the nurturing capabilities of the family.** It is vital that the assessment should be moderated according to chronological age. Those making the assessment must allow for the wide differences in personal development evidenced by children of different ages.

It is high time that the DfE recognised the impact of chronological age when setting out 'expected' levels of achievement. The results of the screening for phonic awareness carried out two years later illustrate this with absolute clarity. **The 'expected' level is the same for all children but 88% of the oldest children who sat the test achieved a pass mark whereas only 74% of the youngest did so. What nonsense to expect the same performance from every child just because they are all in the same class.**

The association affirms its commitment to primary education based on the age, attributes and talents of the children individually and not on the old fashioned view that learning must be related to the organisational stage of the school system.

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