

CONNECT



FEATURING

THE ASSESSMENT REVOLUTION



FEATURING

FIRST STEPS
IN COMPUTER
SCIENCE

CEM & CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE

CASE STUDY: KIRK
MERRINGTON
PRIMARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

NICKY MORGAN, EDUCATION SECRETARY, RECENTLY LAID OUT HER VISION FOR EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.

Her priorities will be tackling poor school performance and ensuring there are "lots of good and excellent teachers" across England. How she aims to achieve this will no doubt become clearer in the coming months, but I would urge her to use the best evidence that is available on what works in education.

This issue of CEM Connect gives you a taste of how CEM contribute to that body of evidence and how it plays a vital role in the work that we do with you. We share our

longitudinal study of the impact of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity on children's attainment (below) and reveal the exciting new project to develop software and teaching materials for the new computer science element in the national curriculum (page 3).

BASE, our reception baseline assessment, has been developed from a sound research base and we are proud to be continuing to work with schools who have been with us for over twenty years, but also to be welcoming the new schools who will be joining us (page 4). But BASE is only the start of our provision for pupil assessment and monitoring. We also have ambitious plans for improved all-through assessment which will measure

progress throughout a child's entire education in schools (page 8).

We are always keen to hear from schools who would like to help with trialling new developments or in taking part in our research projects. You can find out more about how CEM trial assessments in schools in our case study, looking at Kirk Merrington Primary School's experience of trialling BASE (page 10).

We hope you enjoy reading our Summer 2015 CEM Connect!

*Katharine Bailey,
Director of Applied Research*



KEEPING UP-TO-DATE WITH RESEARCH

STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF INATTENTION, HYPERACTIVITY AND IMPULSIVITY

An ongoing study at CEM, conducted by Dr Christine Merrell, Professor Peter Tymms and others, looks at the attainment and progress of children who have been identified by their class teachers as being severely inattentive, hyperactive and impulsive at the end of their first year of school. They have followed a large number (approximately 35,000) of children from the start of school to the end of their primary years, aged 11. The analysis has shown that young children who were identified by their class teachers as being severely inattentive tended to fall significantly behind their peers in reading and maths. Those who were impulsive tended to be at an advantage, particularly if they were inclined to 'blurt out answers to questions' in class. The initial findings were presented in April at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association and were well-received. The full analysis will be published soon – watch this space!

FIRST STEPS IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

IN SEPTEMBER 2014 A COMPUTER SCIENCE ELEMENT WAS INTRODUCED FOR KS1 TO KS4 IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN ENGLAND.

The aim of the new element of the national curriculum was to move away from the traditional subject of information technology (IT), and simply learning about utilising technologies, to the exciting and engaging subject of computer science with the development of computational thinking skills which would be useful for everyday life in the 21st century.

However, the introduction of the new computer science curriculum was accompanied by concern from teachers and parents that the vast majority of primary school teachers did not have the background and support to teach the new subject. There was also additional concern expressed over the introduction of the new curriculum to such a young age group.

To try to address some of these concerns, in October 2014, CEM began work on a 6 month feasibility study funded by Innovate UK (formerly the Technology Strategy Board). The aim of the study was to develop software, teaching materials and reports which guided Year 1 teachers and pupils in a structured sequence of learning tasks designed to address the key skills identified in the new computer science element of the national curriculum.

Designing good educational materials is not a simple task and there is a tendency to follow on from other bad practices and produce isomorphs of previous materials, without some critical reflection. This is particularly the case for materials in the Early Years and KS1; 'busy work' is often a large part of the task. Therefore, the foundation of this study was to begin with evidence from research into how pupils develop understanding of programming concepts. This evidence then

informed the design of the teaching materials, software and reports. We also received feedback on the design and functionality of the software from year 1 pupils, teachers, ICT coordinators and headteachers following a series of trials in schools. The key difference between the output of this study and the majority of products already on the market was the introduction of reporting using information gathered automatically behind the scenes from the software about how the pupils approached the activities. This allowed teachers and school managers the ability to review both summary and fine-grained information on a pupil's progress in computer science. The information was then available to aid teachers in tailoring their lesson planning to the needs of their pupils.

We hope to continue this exciting project and are applying for further funding to support the next phase of development.

If you would like any information about the project, please email: research@cem.dur.ac.uk



BASE THE START OF THE JOURNEY

IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS, WE HAVE BEEN TRAVELLING THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF ENGLAND TALKING WITH TEACHERS, HEADTEACHERS AND EYFS LEADERS ABOUT BASE, OUR NEW RECEPTION BASELINE ASSESSMENT.

Milly on Tour!

Following the DfE's announcement of approved reception baseline assessments in February, CEM, along with the other approved providers, hit the road to attend the numerous events organised by local authorities and school cluster groups to inform teachers about their options regarding the new policy.

From formal presentations, to conferences, to marketplace events, and Q&A sessions, we were invited to attend a range of events from Wigan to Woking, from Stockton-on-Tees to Weston-super-Mare, right across the country. For a small team, this proved to be quite a big challenge! Co-ordinating materials, organising attendance and just physically being at all events was a logistical puzzle at times.

However, the period represented a fantastic opportunity to meet so many teachers face-to-face. The discussions we had and the questions we were asked definitely provided food for thought, and we returned to Durham with a deeper understanding and a richer appreciation of teachers' concerns and priorities.

Thank you to everyone who attended an event, to those who spoke with us and those who challenged us! We learned a great deal from the experience, and are keen to ensure BASE is a fantastic and useful experience for all our customers.

Start on the right track, with BASE

CEM developed BASE from over twenty years' experience and over 3.6 million individual assessments with PIPS Baseline, arguably the original reception baseline assessment. We've used this knowledge to create the 'next generation' baseline assessment. BASE has the same

efficient, easy-to-use computer format and adaptive capability as PIPS Baseline, but with an updated engaging interface, as Milly the Bug guides each child through the assessment.

As with PIPS Baseline, BASE is intended to offer much more than just a baseline on entry into reception – it works well beyond the DfE requirements of a scaled score in literacy, communication and maths, and is as insightful for independent schools as it is for maintained schools.

BASE Inspection Ready features our most sophisticated reporting package to date, including interactive functionality, 'A School Like Mine' benchmark reports, next steps advice and inspection guidance.

Reception is just the start of the journey. BASE will be the first step in a new integrated assessment system spanning the entire Primary phase, offering cohesive and responsive progress-tracking from reception to Key Stage 2. The first cohort taking BASE will be the first to take the new Year 1 assessment – we'll keep you updated with new developments, so watch this space for further details of our exciting new system!

TOP 3 QUESTIONS ASKED AT EVENTS:

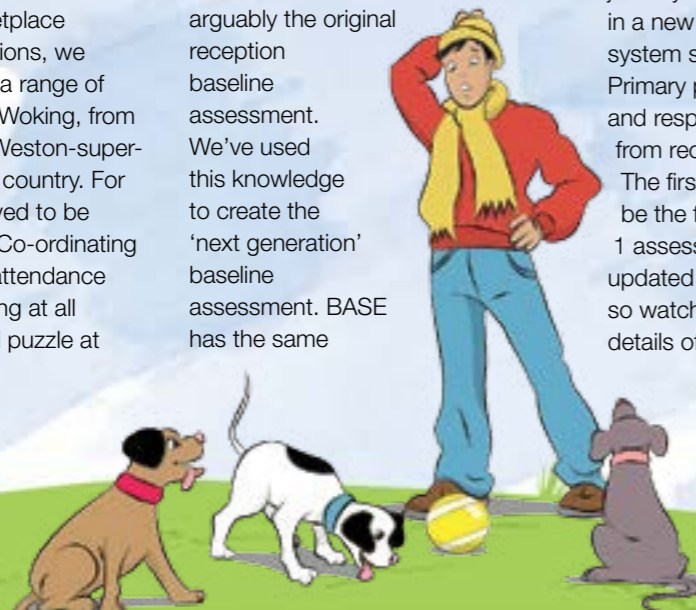
- 1 Can you stop and restart the assessment?**
Yes, you can stop the assessment at any point if required, and restart from the same place.
- 2 What about EAL children who may struggle with the assessment?**
The DfE required an assessment to be carried out in English, the primary language of the classroom in government-funded schools in England. If you feel it necessary, you could translate aspects of the assessment, such as the Maths sections, but not the vocabulary as this is assessing understanding of the English language. Remember, the assessment is measuring a baseline before any teaching has taken place.
- 3 What about children with SEN?**
BASE is designed to be accessible to the majority of children. It is adaptive, which means it adjusts to the appropriate level for each individual child. It starts with very easy questions, such as shape recognition, and will only move onto more difficult questions if appropriate.

If you haven't done so already you can still sign up for BASE until the beginning of September.



MILLY ON TOUR KEY STATISTICS

Towns visited	53
Teachers we met	5,531
Most people spoken to in one day	450
Presentations delivered	87
Webinars run	10
CEM bendy pencils distributed	1,363
Milly the Bug banners left on trains	1



CEM & CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

IN 2008 THE GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED A NEW STANDARD.

The Customer Service Excellence® award replaced the Charter Mark which had been an integral part of the Citizen's Charter programme as an award for organisations that had achieved excellent customer service in the public sector.

Since 2012, CEM have been working closely with one of the Customer Service Excellence® (CSE) accrediting bodies, with a view to making continuous improvements in our customer service, and ultimately gaining CSE accreditation.

The CSE standard assesses in great depth those areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. There is also emphasis placed on developing customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction.

There are several benefits of the CSE process for us and our stakeholders:

- As a driver of continuous improvement - by allowing us to self-assess our capability, in relation to customer-focused

service delivery as well as identifying areas and methods for improvement

- As a skills development tool - by allowing staff and teams within CEM to explore and acquire new skills in the area of customer focus and customer engagement, thus building our capacity for delivering improved services
- As an independent validation of achievement - by allowing CEM to seek formal accreditation to the CSE standard, through demonstrating our competence and identifying key areas for improvement

The CSE standard covers five distinct areas:

Customer Insight

This involves us effectively consulting our customers in a meaningful way and efficiently measuring the outcomes of our service.

The Culture of the Organisation

CEM strives to be a truly customer-focused culture, with a commitment to customer service throughout the organisation, from the strategic leader to the front-line staff.

Information and Access

We aim to provide accurate and comprehensive information with a focus on effective and efficient communication.

Delivery

We at CEM value your comments, feedback and suggestions for improvement, and we use this information to help us make vital adjustments to the way our organisation runs.

Timeliness and Quality of Service

CEM knows that the promptness of initial contact and keeping to agreed timescales is crucial to customer satisfaction. CSE accreditation demands that we provide high quality service, which ensures the best possible result for CEM customers.

We have been continuously working towards CSE accreditation since 2012, with regular external assessments. We have received excellent feedback from these assessments, showing that we have made improvements in many areas, such as:

- Close work with user focus groups helping us shape our service
- A clear complaints/feedback procedure
- Effective monitoring of metrics of customer service
- Streamlined communications with our customers

We will continue on this exciting journey to ensure that CEM can

embed a fully customer-oriented service into all areas of the organisation, thereby continually improving the customer experience. Our ultimate aim is to be regarded as not just a leading provider of world-class assessments, but also as an organisation which provides the blueprint in customer service excellence.

If you have any comments regarding the CSE process, please email: cse@cem.dur.ac.uk

Or for further information about the Customer Service Excellence® standard please go to:

www.customerserviceexcellence.uk.com



THE ASSESSMENT REVOLUTION



A NEW BREED OF ASSESSMENT FOR A CHANGING WORLD

WHEN LEAGUE TABLES APPEARED IN THE 1980S, PROFESSOR CAROL TAYLOR-FITZGIBBON PIONEERED A NEW WAY OF ASSESSING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS.

This was a direct response to the worry that the new league tables would write off the wrong schools as being ineffective. Carol, who led CEM for many years, introduced value-added to enable teachers to make fairer comparisons between students, classes and schools. The mechanism for this was the use of a standardised, independent baseline assessment which measured

progress at a pupil level. Her work challenged education policy at the time and her ideas were eventually adopted, at least in part, by the Government and Ofsted as a fairer method of comparison. We still feel the benefits of her influence today.

We continue to provide baseline assessments to help schools evaluate their own performance in a way that is confidential, objective and supportive. Thousands of teachers continue to benefit from the analyses we provide. But the education system is changing. In England, for example, we have a new curriculum, changes to qualifications and an increasingly fractured support network for schools. Teachers are being given more freedom to conduct

assessments that demonstrate pupil progress in ways that are appropriate for their school and pupils. Many of the international schools that use our assessments face similar changes and challenges but also have unique requirements resulting from their local context and governance.

For us at CEM, this means that the assessments we provide must respond to the changing needs of education. Head teachers and senior leaders will continue to use our assessments for target setting and monitoring right across the school. Increasingly, though, teachers will look to our assessments to give more detailed information at a pupil level. In Scotland, teachers already use our

systems as a way of demonstrating progress across the primary years, a response to the sweeping changes to the Scottish education system four years ago when national assessment was removed.

In response to this need, we will be building on our current assessment provision to deliver a new generation of assessment and reporting system for the current demands of educators. The new system of assessment will provide teachers with the opportunity to deliver multiple assessments throughout the year, assessing pupils when they are ready and allowing teachers to evaluate progress in a much finer-grained way. Measures of literacy and mathematics will be

the cornerstones of the system, with single assessment scales running across the age ranges and providing teachers with evidence of growth right through school. Curriculum subjects will be gradually introduced. We will not only provide information about what pupils know and can do but will take this further to suggest what the next steps might be in moving all pupils on towards better outcomes. Collaboration amongst professionals is crucial and in recognition of this, we will be enhancing our provision for educators to interact with each other through a dedicated online community, sharing ideas and finding support in overcoming challenges.

This year will be the first year of the new system and will start with BASE, our new reception baseline assessment for young children starting school. From these roots, in 2016/17 the system will be extended to cover all the primary years. Following on from this, we aim to extend the same system into secondary and post-16 provision.

CEM's new assessment system will be innovative, sophisticated, and game-changing and we are investing extensive time and expertise in its development. We are excited about these developments and look forward to sharing more details at a later date and continuing to work with educators to use assessment as a powerful catalyst for positive change.



KIRK MERRINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, SPENNYMOOR, COUNTY DURHAM

**A CASE STUDY: PARTICIPATING IN RECEPTION BASELINE
ASSESSMENT TRIALS**

**KIRK MERRINGTON
PRIMARY SCHOOL
HAS A CENTRAL
ROLE IN THE SMALL
RURAL COMMUNITY
IN COUNTY DURHAM
AND HAS BEEN
EXPERIENCING
CONSIDERABLE
CHANGE OF LATE.**

Historically a small school, established around a hundred years ago and serving the immediate village families, it has seen a surprisingly rapid increase in numbers (with a 44% increase in pupils admitted on appeal this year). Additionally, the 'Excellent' Ofsted rating has brought an influx of aspirational families. Now housed in an architecturally striking, purpose-built structure the school is meeting the changes in the educational landscape pragmatically and assertively.

Trialling a new assessment

Current uncertainties regarding policy and the changes in the school's context were just two of the key factors that helped Helen Williams, Headteacher, and her colleagues decide to participate in CEM's reception baseline trials, which took place in 2014.

To ensure that CEM's assessments are of the highest quality, it is important to work closely with educationalists and practitioners to shape our products and services.

The trialling of assessments is an integral part of the assessment development process. CEM's researchers go into schools regularly to conduct trials and to observe how children interact with the assessments. They talk with the children, and their teachers, to gather their views on format and content. This information allows accurate evaluation of how an assessment is performing in terms of reliability and suitability. The information gained from the

schools is then fed back into the assessment-development process.

'CEM's reputation was a large part of the decision. CEM are known to be reliable and robust in their methodology and therefore we can be confident in their results,' Helen Williams explains. 'Our numbers are growing rapidly,' Helen described 'and that means more bodies in the classroom, but also more resources needed, more assessments needed and more time needed. We need something manageable and reliable and it was time to rethink our processes.'

Understanding the requirements of an effective baseline assessment and knowing what you want from it is, of course, a fundamental step in devising a strategy for future success, as Helen explains: 'We hoped the trials would show us a way forward.'

Adding rigour to assessment practice

Supporting professional judgement and observation with an independent, standardised and fair assessment such as BASE, which is delivered in the same way to all children, provides an added dimension and an essential level of rigour to assessment practice. BASE is designed to minimise the variations in assessment experience between pupils that are related to something other than their knowledge or skills.

Importantly, the BASE Progress and BASE Inspection Ready assessments provide that valuable balance between objectivity and teacher observation. While the computer adaptive sections empirically and reliably assess what pupils know and can do in the areas of Literacy and Maths, the Personal, Social and Emotional Development section calls for professional teacher-observation and individual familiarity with each pupil in order to track progress in areas such as Self Confidence and Self Awareness, Managing Feelings and Behaviour.

Each pupil's personal, social and emotional development is recognized as being a prime area in Early Years and provides the context for their progress in school. The PSED section of the BASE assessment can be completed multiple times throughout the year, enabling teachers to monitor the trajectory of a child's distinct journey throughout the whole of the reception year and take full benefit from the wide range of interactive pupil-level and class-level reports. For even closer scrutiny of specific pupil clusters, the reports can be filtered to focus on the progress of core-interest groups of pupils such as those in receipt of Pupil Premium funding, or those with English as an Additional Language, Looked After Children, Summer Births and so on.

Building a detailed picture

The implementation of an objective reception baseline assessment focusses attention on the progress children make rather than simply looking at attainment levels and will provide another strand that will enable teachers to identify early warning signs and monitor progress towards key outcomes. As Sarah Bell, Reception Class Teacher asserts, 'It is useful to compare results from the baseline assessment to existing data and teacher instincts and it gives useful indications to keep an eye on some pupils.'

Ultimately, in order to build up a detailed picture of what each child knows and can do when they arrive in reception, Kirk Merrington can be confident in continuing with their current assessment practices of continuous observation, adapting teaching and learning and setting appropriate targets, with the additional assurance of using an objective and independent assessment system that suits the school's context and is both manageable and reliable, as well as being financially workable.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

EVENTS

CONFERENCES

EXHIBITIONS

Discover how CEM can help you improve standards at your school. Learn how to get the most from CEM systems and learn from colleagues. Come along to one of our regular events or come and meet us at an exhibition or conference. If you are in the UK you are welcome to come and visit CEM at Durham University.

For a full list visit www.cem.org/events

JUN
2015

18th - 19th Berkshire:

Wellington College - Festival of Education

JUL
2015

1st Surrey:

Assessment in the Primary Curriculum with Katharine Bailey

10th Durham:

Baseline Assessment and Accountability with Prof. Peter Tymms

23rd - 25th Glasgow:

Scottish Learning Festival

OCT
2015

10th Cambridge:

Cambridge Assessment Network Event with Prof. Rob Coe

29th - 1st Nov Netherlands:

International Baccalaureate® (IB) Africa, Europe, Middle East regional conference



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Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring

www.cem.org/blog

TRIALS FOR SCHOOLS

The Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University is one of the largest and longest established research groups in the UK, providing assessments for children of all ages. CEM's assessment and monitoring systems have been used by education professionals for over 30 years and are used today in over 90 countries. CEM's methods are research-based and evidence driven and are built on a foundation of non-commercial academic practice.

We are always keen to hear from schools who would like to help with trialling new developments or in taking part in our research projects. Schools who are involved with CEM trialling and research repeatedly tell us that they find the experience enjoyable and mutually beneficial for both them and their pupils, as well as receiving valuable information and insight. If you would like to be added to our list of interested schools, please email CEM's research team at:

research@cem.dur.ac.uk

WHEN DATA MAKES A DIFFERENCE! TELL US YOUR STORY!

CEM's feedback is trusted and used by many schools across the world, but this feedback is often just the first step of the journey. What really matters is being able to improve learning in the classroom and to make a difference to each individual pupil.

Do you have a story to tell?

- Has CEM data helped you to spot a pupil that was struggling?
- Has it thrown up learning issues that might have gone undetected?
- Or has it revealed findings that have conflicted with preconceived notions?

Email us at cem.newsletter@cem.dur.ac.uk and tell us your special stories.