



## ASK THE EXPERT

# “Get wellbeing right first”

**Crispin Chatterton** from GL Assessment discusses how best to support pupils this September after the pandemic disruption

### Why is transition a particular challenge this year?

The move up to a new year can be both exciting and unsettling for children. Schools have done an excellent job reacquainting pupils with classroom skills since they returned in March, but understanding gaps in knowledge and where to target additional support has been more problematic. With the cancellation of SATs, many schools have been able to plug the data gap using formative assessments to help pinpoint children’s progress and attainment, in turn helping the preparations for the year ahead.

### How has the pandemic affected reading?

Primary children’s reading skills have suffered more than older children according to our figures – but perhaps not as badly as initially feared. Younger year groups have been worst hit – almost certainly because they usually lack the skills necessary to be independent and confident readers. Some children have struggled, others have thrived; teachers have even reported widely different results from siblings in the same family.

### How can we support pupils in the absence of national data?

Good teacher judgement is essential but teachers can’t be expected to do all the heavy lifting. Formative, standardised assessments allow you to benchmark children nationally, offering useful comparisons to other children of the same age around the country. Well-designed assessments can also alleviate teacher workload because they include detailed reports that are automatically generated, without the need for marking, and include next steps for individual children.



#### EXPERT PROFILE

**Name:** Crispin Chatterton

**Job title:** Director of education

**Area of expertise:** Developing services that anticipate schools’ needs

**Best part of my job:** Supporting teachers with high quality tools

### How can I help my pupils to settle in September?

Get wellbeing right first then focus on academic performance. Preliminary figures from our Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) measure indicate that children’s feelings about school and their teachers are remarkably positive. But there are some indications that their attitudes about themselves as learners are less robust. Try tackling these as soon as possible before they begin to undermine confidence. Remember that for many children, academic structure is a route to wellbeing recovery, not an alternative to it – they like challenge and the routine of school life.

### How can I best identify gaps in children's learning?

All educators should be empowered to use data, rather than it just sitting with SLT. Assessment can pinpoint gaps in learning, but as the teacher you are best placed to understand the context and judge appropriate interventions. Formative assessments are suitable for every level, and because they don’t require preparation, they don’t put undue pressure on children.

## ASK ME ABOUT

**TRANSITION** - Preparing for transition at every level with the Cognitive Abilities Test and New Group Reading Test

**PLANNING** - Identifying gaps to aid curriculum planning and pinpoint individual support with the Progress Test Series

**WELLBEING** - Understanding social and emotional wellbeing and addressing issues straight away with the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School

Find out more about transition assessments at [gl-assessment.co.uk/assessments/primary](http://gl-assessment.co.uk/assessments/primary)