



Department
for Education

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 11 October 2013
Your comments must reach us by that date

**Primary assessment and accountability
under the new national curriculum**

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link: www.education.gov.uk/consultation/

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.		
Reason for confidentiality:		

Name: Fiona Aubrey-Smith	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation (if applicable): SSAT	
Address: 5 th Floor, 142 Central Street, London, EC1V 8AR	

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the department's '[Contact Us](#)' page.

Please mark the box below that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school head teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school head teacher
<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school teacher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other education professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Local authority
<input type="checkbox"/> Governor	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent / carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Union / professional association
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Please Specify:

SSAT is a national network of schools – our response has been collated on behalf of our member primary schools.

Teacher assessment and reporting to parents

1 Will these principles underpin an effective curriculum and assessment system?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Our national network of member schools have the following comments/questions:

- 1) The language used within the consultation infers that formative assessment sits solely with the teacher. We believe that the most successful classrooms are those where teachers and children share a common understanding of the framework that the child is being assessed within. This leads to the child understanding where they are and where they are going, and that leads to a more purposeful discussion between teacher and child. The SSAT Primary Network is already sharing practice between members on strategies to encourage children to take greater responsibility for their own assessment processes, and the importance of the network of schools in sharing this practice should be encouraged and highlighted.
- 2) During this period of great change, many schools are finding the breadth and depth of changes overwhelming and are consequently looking for simple solutions. This particularly applies to schools which are facing imminent inspection and are thus focusing on short term needs rather than longer term vision. It will be very tempting for schools in this position to adopt alternatives to levels - perhaps those provided by well meaning local authority colleagues or companies looking to capitalise. There is a difference between common approaches (3.6), which facilitate moderation and professional development, and easy-alternatives which disengage the professionalism of assessment processes. Our primary members are working with Dylan William, amongst others, on developing, implementing and extending their own intelligent assessment processes.
- 3) The second bullet point of 3.7, refers to children being on track to meet end of key stage expectations. Linking this to consultation question 6 (about baseline assessments), what is the underlying linking principle – ie; to what extent will baseline assessment be used to predict end of key stage outcomes in both primary and secondary education?

2 a) What other good examples of assessment practice we can share more widely?

Comments:

Given that assessment is in part about *what* is being assessed, part about *when* it is assessed and part about *by whom* it is being assessed, we believe that now the first two aspects have been reviewed, there is significant scope to focus attention next on the latter of these components. Specifically, highlighting good practice of assessment relationships; that is, focusing teacher attention on how to engage their children in understanding assessment frameworks and how to facilitate the children in taking greater ownership over their own learning outcomes by understanding what they are working on and towards, in context of that assessment framework. Many schools use self-review and peer-review as part of their teacher assessment process for example. Many schools focus on the use of feedback and questioning – particularly those focusing on Pupil Premium / Sutton Trust. Other schools focus on developing classroom display to support children's understanding of how their work and progress relates to the assessment framework and what their role within this process is. Some schools engage parents with the detail of their assessment frameworks; that is, parents meetings to introduce concepts such as ladders to show previous (consolidation) and next steps. Other schools encourage specific review activity which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative assessment; ranging from an EY or KS1 child sound-recording their assessed outcome at the end of a piece of work/learning activity, through to a Year 6 child's written self-assessment report which is then peer validated before being teacher marked.

2 b) Is there additional support we can provide for schools?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Our members feel that it is useful to provide publication of case studies by the DfE, and signposting to schools 'as recommended by DfE', but that this can lead to schools trying to replicate an exact copy rather than to embrace specific skill development of their own.

Our members feel that it's most important to be sharing the *process of developing assessment practice* in order to encourage schools to focus on developing staff skills (which is what we understand the underlying emphasis of the principles to be about), rather than adopting another school's or commercial organisation's policy and documentation wholesale. We have engaged Dylan William and Tim Oates amongst others as part of our ReDesigning Schooling work (www.redesigningschooling.org.uk) to support and challenge us in doing this.

National curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science

3 Does a scaled score, decile ranking and value-added measure provide useful information from national curriculum tests?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Our national network of member schools have the following comments:

- 1) Scaled Score (consultation item 4.9): Recognising that learning is not linear, and that during parent/teacher dialogue it is highly likely that a focal point will be the decile in which the child sits, it is very important that when sharing these rankings, to highlight at the outset that these are performances 'at this point in time' rather than a permanent indicator of that child's potential in relation to its peers. Specifically for primary aged children, the understanding of the child and their parents of the child's *potential* to achieve as opposed to their *current attainment performance* can profoundly influence consequent progression. It will be important in any national and media portrayal of these reports to highlight the difference between current performance and potential, as well as reinforcing this locally in schools and during parent/teacher meetings. It should also be noted that the new decile will be a much broader measure than is currently available with the Level 6 Test. It would be good to have a more refined version to identify exceptional extremes.
- 2) We are glad to see the comparative nature with which progress is being measured (consultation item 4.10), which will act as a catalyst for discussions around deviations and be more productive in ensuring consequent action.

Baselines to measure progress

4 Should we continue to measure progress from the end of key stage 1, using internally-marked national curriculum tests?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

See response to question 6.

5 If end of key stage 1 national curriculum test results are used as the baseline to measure progress, should school-level results be published?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

In the context of the purposes of KS2 results being published, we believe that end of KS1 results should equally be published.

6 Should we introduce a baseline check at the start of reception?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Our national network of member schools have the following comments:

- 1) Most schools already undertake a baseline assessment as children begin reception in order to monitor progression themselves, therefore a nationally agreed baseline assessment process would be entirely appropriate.
- 2) Given that this measure will be used to track progress and attainment thereafter, we are mindful that this could be used for school and national projections for end of key stage outcomes across both primary and secondary. The scale of fluctuations in early years development is more so than later stages of education and so this non-linear progression route again needs to be clearly identified when sharing these projections with parents, and the national media in order to manage expectations. Incorrect understanding of potential and rates of progress (either over or under estimating) in these early years can have a significant impact on the *actual* progress and attainment thereafter achieved. It is vital that this is positioned correctly in order to avoid cohorts aspiring too low or falsely high.

7 Should we allow schools to choose from a range of commercially-available assessments?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Our national network of member schools have the following comments:

- 1) We feel that there should be one baseline assessment used in order to reduce the likeliness of perceived inequality. Despite the comprehensive processes that would no doubt take place to ensure equality and consistency across commercially provided offerings, it would be likely that there would be a perception, or potentially a reality, that some offered beneficial outcomes to others.
- 2) As far as measuring progress between ends of Key Stages is concerned, it is not practical to have as many different formative assessment structures as there are schools. Common assessments and means of reporting standards attained and progress made are essential if parents are to understand them and secondary schools are able to make use of them. These might be commercially developed and marketed or developed and shared by some schools within clearly defined (by DfE) parameters

8 Should we make the baseline check optional?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Our national network of member schools have the following comments:

- 1) Given the principles and purpose of the baseline check there should be no reason for a school not to undertake it. Indeed, this is common and good practice across our member schools.
- 2) Significantly for children who are transitioning between multiple primary schools during their early years, a regular and consistent method of identifying progress and attainment is vital.

Accountability

9 Do you have any comments about these proposals for the Department's floor standards?

Comments:

We welcome every effort to raise standards and improve outcomes. As the move from 60% Level 4 to 85% secondary ready in such a short time will result in significant numbers falling below the floor, it is likely that there will be some professional demoralisation. This may make recruitment and retention difficult; particularly for leadership roles which are already facing these difficulties. It is also likely that a number of schools will require significant interventions. Therefore, it would be better to have a more stepped increase, particularly as schools will be simultaneously addressing other changes such as the development of the new national curriculum.

10 If we take a baseline from the start of reception, should end of key stage 1 national curriculum tests become non-statutory for all-through primary schools?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

We believe that baseline and end of key stage tests should be in place for all schools providing education for primary aged children in order to ensure consistency within and across schools. Particularly with regard to larger all-through schools which operate as a set of schools, and with regard to children who transition between schools at end of key stage points, this level of consistency across key stages – regardless of school type – is important.

11 Should we include an average point score measure in floor standards?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

If the floor standard is 85%, and secondary readiness is 100 within the scaled score process, which is relative to the cohort, we recognise that the *actual* floor will continue to rise as results improve. Therefore the average point score measure will be a good way to monitor this within and across schools.

12 Are there any other measures we should prioritise in performance tables?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Our national network of member schools have the following comments/questions:

- 1) Mobility and transition within school years and within key stages should be identified, as this disrupts both the school and the child's education. Curriculum content and delivery, and Assessment process and progression/attainment tracking may be very different between the schools that the child is transitioning to/from, and where there is limited expectation around what is to be sent alongside the child when moving school, this necessitates additional workflow as well as impacting the child's rate of progress (in particular with a child who is adversely affected by the change of school). For some schools cohorts remain largely stable from EY to end of KS2. For other schools a high level of turbulence takes place. These schools are likely to see different performance as a result.
- 2) The peer-comparative method between schools, of measuring progress is a good indicator of whether the issues preventing the child from achieving their potential centre on the child or the school.

Recognising the attainment and progress of all pupils

13 What data could be published to hold schools (including special schools) accountable for the attainment and progress of the lowest-attaining pupils?

Comments:

Our national network of member schools have the following suggestions:

- 1) The extent to which a school supports the attainment and progression through specific plans for lowest-attaining children (eg; IEP or EHC plan targets met) could be a good measure to publish if this is moderated or validated by stakeholders beyond the school to ensure robustness and consistency.
- 2) The P Levels have been a useful tool to show progress for children with learning difficulties who are working below level 1 of the National Curriculum. However, they are very reliant upon physical and communication skills when children move above P3(ii). Consequently, for those children who reach this level and don't have any significant development in their physical skills it means that demonstrating progress against the higher P Levels is extremely difficult. The other

problem with the P levels is that they are broadly developmental and many of the children with profound learning difficulties do not follow 'normal' patterns of development. They will to a certain extent but their developmental pattern would be spiky in nature. Our members would not want to get rid of the P Levels in their entirety, as a lot of work has gone into adapting them to meet the needs of schools. There needs to be greater moderation within and between schools if they were to be used to hold special schools to account.

- 3) A different system may be to use something such as the new Developmental Journal for Children and Young People with Multiple Needs. This has check lists at the beginning in the areas of Personal, Social and Emotional, Communication, Physical and Thinking. The check lists are not developmental so children achieve the skills and knowledge across the lists as they move on. These check lists then cross reference to 'can do' cards which give examples of things the child can do to achieve the score. A baseline could be set at the end of Reception and then average, good and outstanding progress could be set according to how many more areas they achieve as they progress across a key stage (e.g. if you have a score of 2 at the end of Reception and PMLD child might score 2 more for good progress whereas a SLD child might be expected to score another 5).

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply.	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
E-mail address for acknowledgement: fiona.aubrey-smith@ssatuk.co.uk	

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected

- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 11 October 2013

Send by post to
Sue White / Jennifer Conlon
Assessment Team
Qualifications and Assessment Division
Department for Education
Level 2
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: PrimaryAssessment.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk