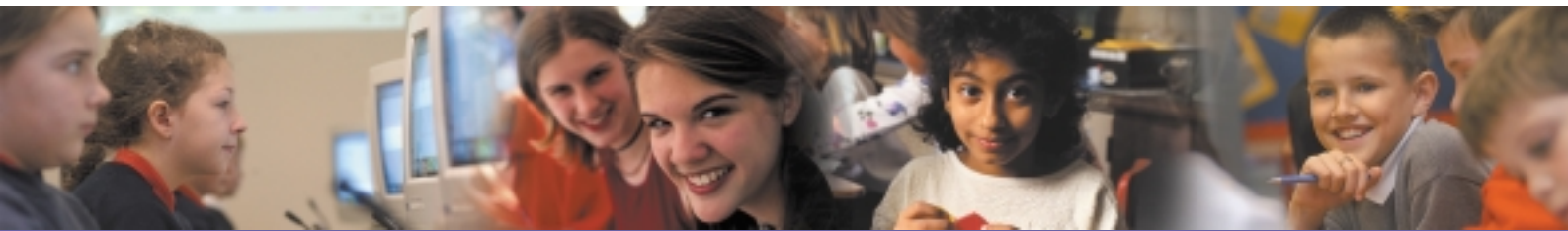


assessment, testing and reporting 3-14

our response



REFLECTIVE LEARNERS



HELPFUL FEEDBACK

DEPENDABLE EVIDENCE

SHARED STANDARDS



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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our response

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our response assessment, testing and reporting 3-14



We are committed to ensuring that every young person receives the best education possible. The interests of the pupil will always come first and the developments proposed here, for assessment, testing and reporting policy for 3-14 year olds, reflect this.

Since 2002, the Assessment is for Learning development programme has sought ways of developing practice in assessment. Good feedback is essential to inform improvement at all levels in the education system, and the programme is built upon this principle. The framework to support this has three linked parts: assessment FOR learning, which is concerned with day-to-day classroom interactions and feedback that are focused on the learner and sensitive to his or her individual needs; assessment AS learning, where pupils' participation in assessment and reflecting on their learning helps them to become better learners; and assessment OF learning, which is concerned with determining how much individuals or groups have learned, at what level, and how well. In order for a system to work, these aspects need to complement and support each other. Our proposed actions are designed to enable this to happen.

The consultation

- › ***Educating for Excellence (2003), the Executive's response to the National Debate on Education, provided the basis for the commitments in A Partnership for a Better Scotland (2003) relating to assessment, testing and reporting in Scottish schools. These commitments are intended to deliver a system which fits the needs of the children, which supports effective learning and teaching and which places accountability at the most appropriate level. The consultation Assessment, Testing and Reporting 3-14 (2003) sought the views of the educational community, including parents, on aspects of assessment policy relating to these three goals***



Over 1,000 responses were received and were independently analysed by researchers at the University of Strathclyde. We have now given careful consideration to the views expressed about the consultation options.

We propose to respond by taking a number of actions which include:

- › **providing guidance on good annual reporting for every child to meet parents' rights to sound information on their children's learning and based on an effective process of personal learning planning**
- › **replacing the current provision of national tests with a national bank of assessment resources**
- › **reporting annually on a new Scottish Survey of Achievement to replace the annual survey of 5-14 attainment levels provided by schools**

The following section summarises the consultation responses to the questions asked and outlines in more detail how we propose to respond. More detail on the consultation process and responses is provided on the Scottish Executive website.

1. Annual Progress Plans linked to Personal Learning Plans

Aim

To support teachers in providing a high quality of feedback to pupils and parents, and pupils' involvement in their own learning.

Consultation results

54% of respondents were in favour of developing Annual Progress Plans/redesigned reports to a common framework, but with scope for local adaptation. From their written comments, respondents felt that existing reports already often had the features required for Annual Progress Plans. They also felt that any national arrangements for annual reporting should be developed only when the position on developing Personal Learning Planning was clearer. Views on whether there should be a single format for future reports, or a framework with scope for local adaptation, were more or less evenly divided. Classroom teachers* who responded favoured retaining (and possibly adapting) familiar existing reports, whereas school managers, parents and other organisations more often favoured moving to a common reporting framework with scope for local adaptation.

Response

We are convinced of the value of a process of personal learning planning as a way of involving and motivating learners, and on which to base high quality reports to parents. We want these to be a natural part of classroom life, and to focus on the process, not the paperwork. There will therefore be no prescriptive national format for reports or for plans – schools and education authorities should have flexibility in the way that reports are used to record pupil progress and needs. We will take immediate actions which will continue over the next two years to:

- › **support developments and continuing professional development for teachers in formative assessment, through local authority activity combined with central guidance and support materials**

* Teachers referred to in this summary were disproportionately from four local authorities: Aberdeenshire, City of Edinburgh, North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire



- › support the development of personal learning planning to reflect best practice, taking full account of evaluations and concerns about manageability and workload, as a way of encouraging pupils to take a fuller part in managing and evaluating their own learning
- › issue guidance on annual reporting, to build on best current practice, when personal learning planning becomes more established
- › ensure that in both personal learning planning and annual reporting full account is taken of developments on partnership with parents and Additional Support for Learning legislation

2. Replacing the current provision of National Tests with a National Assessment Bank to support and confirm teachers' professional judgements

Aim

To rebalance the emphasis in assessment towards good quality assurance of teachers' judgements, through local moderation and the use of 'benchmarking' as part of self-evaluation, so that assessment judgements are robust and reliable and standards can be shared, without negative impact on classroom practice.

Consultation results

82% of respondents wished to use the National Assessment Bank to deliver new National Assessments to schools, for use in the same way as before to confirm teachers' judgements. Opposition to national testing was clear. School and authority managers favoured extending the range of assessment materials in the bank, while teachers did not, expressing concerns that assessment would come to dominate classroom practice. 58% also wanted support to be provided to schools and authorities to introduce local moderation arrangements. There was significant support from school and authority managers for local moderation, but some teachers felt that this would be potentially difficult to implement or contrary to the notion of a national standard.

Response

It is clear that teachers' own professional judgements of the levels of attainment of their pupils, made on the basis of assessment as part of the teaching process, are essential in the planning for the next steps in a child's learning. They also make an important contribution to monitoring of attainment and activity to improve attainment at school and local authority levels. To be effective, these judgements need to be based upon good evidence and a shared understanding of standards.



To support this, we will start immediately and roll out actions over the next two years to:

- › **further develop the new electronic national assessment bank to provide more tools for teachers to use to help to confirm their professional judgements, in collaboration with local authorities, Learning and Teaching Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority**
- › **make local moderation a particular focus of the Assessment is for Learning programme in 2004-2005, extending existing projects on gathering and interpreting evidence and local moderation, and developing materials for schools and local authorities to use to assist shared understanding of standards of attainment**
- › **develop continuing professional development activities for school and local authority managers on managing assessment policy and on using evidence and data as part of their quality assurance**
- › **extend the national assessment bank to include practical assessments used in the Assessment of Achievement Programme (AAP), Core Skills assessments, and science assessments**
- › **develop further guidance on good practice in assessment to support learning**

3. Measuring improvement in overall attainment through a Scottish Survey of Achievement, rather than relying on the annual 5-14 survey

Aim

To develop a national monitoring system based on sampling that provides sound and comprehensive information about attainment which local authorities, schools and Ministers can use for purposes of quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement, without negative impact on practice in schools.

Consultation results

68% of respondents were in favour of introducing the Scottish Survey of Achievement (SSA) to monitor national attainment, replacing the annual 5-14 Survey. There was significant opposition to moving away from the current AAP survey cycle (English, Maths, Science, Social Subjects Enquiry Skills), although there was evidence that many respondents had little awareness of the current AAP survey. Teachers who responded expressed reservations about the proposed survey more often than senior managers, with concerns that it would be expensive in human and financial resources or that the data collected might be put to inappropriate uses.

Response

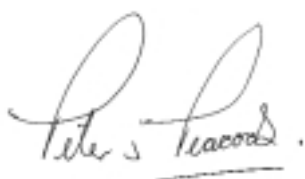
We are firmly of the view that we need a more robust and reliable system for assessing levels of attainment at local authority and national levels than the current 5-14 survey. Starting immediately we will take the following actions over the next two years:

- › **Discontinue the Executive's collection of school and pupil attainment data in the Annual 5-14 aggregation of results from all schools. The June 2004 survey will be the last**
- › **Reaffirm that teachers, schools and education authorities have important responsibilities in monitoring levels of attainment**



- › From May 2005, introduce a new Scottish Survey of Achievement. This will build upon the more limited Assessment of Achievement Programme. It will use a representative sampling approach to assess pupils' attainments and provide an overview of attainment levels in each education authority and at national level
- › The new survey will report on attainment in key areas of the curriculum, and core skills in the context of each key area, beginning with English language in 2005 and continuing on a four-year cycle to include mathematics, science and social subjects
- › From 2006, take steps to link and report survey data with information from international studies and from HMIE inspections, thus making full use of all available forms of information about the attainment of Scottish pupils, including those in the most vulnerable groups
- › Support education authorities in benchmarking their own attainment data with those of other authorities as part of their work to raise attainment

Taken together, these actions will improve the arrangements for assessment 3-14 so that it fully supports children's learning, and also provide the robust and reliable information on the attainment of children in Scotland which we need in order to bring about further improvements.



Peter Peacock

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