

Independent Review of Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability

**Government
Response**



Department for Education

**Independent Review of
Key Stage 2 testing,
assessment and
accountability**

Government Response

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Education
by Command of Her Majesty

July 2011

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Introduction

We all want each and every child to have an excellent education, to have a sound grounding in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics, and to develop into a rounded individual with a lifelong love of education. Many of our primary schools are doing an outstanding job for the children in their care; but it is clear that more must be done to raise standards and narrow attainment gaps. We remain resolute and determined to address these issues and ensure that all children, especially the least advantaged, have the opportunity to succeed.

We believe that schools and teachers should be free to set their own direction and that high levels of school autonomy must be combined with robust accountability. Key Stage 2 tests and assessments have an important role in the accountability system and provide vital information for parents, pupils, head teachers and the tax payer. Of course, we need to ensure that the accountability system is based on fair and robust principles.

We have listened carefully to head teachers' and teachers' concerns about the current system. Seven months ago, we commissioned Lord Bew to conduct an independent review to see if there is a better approach which would improve the system while still holding schools to account and giving parents the information they need.

We are grateful to Lord Bew and his panel who have listened to a wide range of evidence and considered many different options during the course of the review. We believe that Lord Bew has recommended a number of intelligent, practical and fair improvements which are underpinned by a compelling set of principles, based on what is right for children and schools. The Government accepts all of the recommendations.

Lord Bew and his panel have recommended substantial improvements to the current Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability system. We want to act as quickly as possible to take forward these recommendations. However, we recognise that change of this scale needs to be implemented carefully to ensure that the positive impact of the recommendations is realised for all involved. We will implement the recommendations as quickly as is practicable.

Our approach to testing, assessment and accountability will need to continue to evolve and develop, particularly as we move towards a new and improved National Curriculum. However, as well as accepting the short term recommendations, we accept fully the clear, long term principles that Lord Bew and his panel have set out. These principles will shape Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability in the long term.

Specific Responses to the Review's Recommendations

Purposes of Statutory Assessment

Main Uses of Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment Data

Lord Bew and his panel have put forward a compelling underpinning rationale for our approach to statutory assessment. We agree with Lord Bew that the principal uses of end of Key Stage 2 statutory assessment should be to:

- hold schools accountable for the attainment and progress made by their pupils (including specific groups of pupils);
- inform parents and secondary schools about the performance of individual pupils; and
- enable benchmarking between schools, as well as monitoring performance locally and nationally.

Each of these principal uses is important and should be appropriately reflected through the design of our statutory assessment and accountability system.

We welcome the fact that Lord Bew and his panel have identified a range of potential secondary uses to which Key Stage 2 statutory assessment data can be applied. We believe it is right that, while statutory assessment data will still prove useful for these secondary uses, the report makes clear they are not the principal uses.

Accountability

Schools should be held accountable for the education of their pupils. Lord Bew and his panel have highlighted the strong evidence that external school level accountability is important in driving up standards and pupils' attainment and progress. It is right that we provide the public with access to a wider range of data so that parents and others can find the information that is most important to their individual needs or local interests.

We agree that external accountability needs to be fair and should give a rounded, representative picture of a school's performance. We agree that more information should be published, in line with our commitment to transparency and making as much information available to the public as possible.

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We also agree with the other recommendations that Lord Bew and his panel have made regarding an increased focus on progress, allowing absent pupils to sit tests within an extended time frame, reporting to parents and secondary schools, and publication of summative teacher assessment judgements. We believe they provide for strong accountability, ensuring that data is presented in a fairer way for schools, and in a way that provides parents with the information they want.

A Greater Focus on Progress

As Lord Bew recommends, the school accountability system should focus on both attainment and progress. Any overall judgement of a school made by Government will in future give at least as much weighting to progress as to attainment.

We will set out more prominently in the Performance Tables (and RAISEonline) how well all pupils progress, regardless of their starting point.

Our recent Schools White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* introduced a new floor standard for schools, which now incorporates a progress measure. A progress measure will remain in future floor standards. We believe it encourages schools to think about the performance of all their pupils, rather than focusing only on those who could help the school rise above the attainment threshold.

As the response to the 'Ofsted Inspections' recommendation makes clear later in this section, Ofsted currently judges pupil achievement by focusing on both attainment and progress. As Ofsted moves to a new inspection framework to be implemented from 2012, there will be an even sharper focus by inspectors on the progress of particular groups of pupils and individual pupils when coming to this judgement.

Ensuring a Focus on the Progress of all Pupils

We will put greater emphasis on the progress of every child. We will publish a new indicator of progress focused on the lowest attaining pupils and will publish further details by the end of the year. In addition, there will be new indicators showing the progress of pupils in the Year 6 cohort who were middle and high attainers at the beginning of Key Stage 2.

The Review makes a specific reference to the recent Green Paper on special educational needs (SEN) and disability. It suggests that the outcomes of the consultation need to be considered with a particular focus on ensuring the achievement of all pupils with SEN is appropriately recognised and celebrated within the accountability system. The formal consultation for the Green Paper, *Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability*, closed on 30th June 2011. As part of this process we have asked for views on what information would help parents, governors and others, including Ofsted, assess how effectively schools support disabled children and children with SEN. We will publish a formal response to the consultation, along with more detailed plans on the implementation of our reforms, by the end of this year.

We welcome the Review's endorsement of the importance of supporting the progress of the most able primary pupils and the new level 6 test. The test has been available to schools to use on an optional basis for the first time this year. In accordance with the Review's recommendation it will continue to be optional for schools to use and it will be for schools to decide whether to enter pupils for the test. However, we also believe that it is right that schools which use the test, and successfully support their highest attaining

pupils, are given credit for doing so. We shall also therefore consider how best to incorporate this measure in the accountability system. This means that in 2012 the test will be externally marked, and, as with level 3-5 national curriculum tests, taken on a specified date (though subject to the time extension for absent pupils explained later in this section).

Key Stage 1: Baseline to Measure Progress

We want to ensure that the Key Stage 1 baseline is robust and credible. The Standards and Testing Agency will set out the way in which we expect all local authorities to approach Key Stage 1 moderation in the future, i.e. carefully targeted so that schools where attainment and progress at Key Stages 1 and 2 are inconsistent are prioritised and moderated more frequently. We realise that many local authorities already follow this approach and we want this to be the case consistently.

Ofsted Inspections

Ofsted currently judges pupil achievement in school inspections. This judgement is a combination of the evaluation of standards of attainment in National Curriculum Tests and of pupils' progress from their starting points when they joined the school. Inspectors consider both attainment and progress measures over time, using a three year trend alongside evidence about the attainment and progress of pupils who are currently educated at the school. As we introduce a new school inspection framework, to be implemented from January 2012, inspectors will continue to take a balanced view about progress and attainment data when judging achievement. There will be an even sharper focus by inspectors on the progress of particular groups of pupils and individual pupils when reaching this judgement.

Rolling Averages

The introduction of rolling averages, in addition to annual data, will help take into account the volatility of individual cohorts and will provide a sense of achievement over time. We will publish three year rolling averages in the 2012 Performance Tables for the headline performance indicators.

Pupil Mobility

We recognise that schools are currently held accountable for pupils who join very late in a Key Stage. We will develop additional attainment and progress measures for pupils who have completed the whole of Years 5 and 6 within the school. These indicators will be included in the 2012 Performance Tables.

School-Level Measures in Reading and Writing

We will continue to provide an overall English measure. When Lord Bew's recommendations for writing assessment are implemented, this will take into account the reading test, teacher assessment of writing composition and the writing skills test. Teacher assessment judgements in English will also be published, which will incorporate teacher assessment of speaking and listening.

We will make statutory assessment results in reading and writing available to give a more rounded picture of a school's performance in English. We will publish this year's reading test and writing test results as soon after the publication of the 2011 Performance Tables as possible.

Additional Measures and Contextual Information

We agree that publishing additional measures and contextual information can help give a more rounded picture of a school's performance. This approach aligns with the Government's transparency agenda.

We will include additional information in the 2011 Performance Tables, such as the attainment and progress of pupils on Free School Meals and Looked after Children, compared with other pupils in the school. In the 2012 Performance Tables we will go further, for example publishing measures showing attainment and progress by gender and for pupils with English as an additional language.

In line with commitments we have already made, as well as publishing more data, we will develop a website which is more user-friendly and enables parents and the public to find the information they consider to be important.

Allowing Absent Pupils to Take Tests Within a Given Time Frame

We agree that schools and pupils would benefit from extending the time frame in which pupils who are absent on the day of a test can sit it, and will trial an extension to a week. This trial will apply to all pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012. An evaluation at the end of the test cycle will determine whether the extension should become permanent.

The Standards and Testing Agency will set out revised processes for the way in which schools make applications for pupils who are absent to sit the tests in 2012.

The Publication of Summative Teacher Assessment Judgements

We agree that teacher assessment results should continue to be published in the Performance Tables, and the 2011 tables will give more information than the 2010 tables. In addition to showing the percentage of pupils assessed as attaining level 4+ and level 5+ in English, mathematics and science, the tables will also show the percentage assessed as attaining level 3 or below in each of these subjects.

We will move the deadline for schools to submit teacher assessment judgements so it falls before the return of test results, which will increase the emphasis on teacher assessment. We will publish the new deadline in the Key Stage 2 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements which will be sent to schools by early November.

Reporting Pupil-Level Results to Parents and Secondary Schools

We agree that pupil-level information provided to parents and secondary schools should be easier to interpret and more detailed.

A fundamental review of the pupil information regulations is underway. We intend to simplify the regulations and to move towards a model that places broader requirements to ensure parents get the information they need on their child's educational progress. We believe this will help lead to more easily interpretable information, as primary schools will have greater freedom to provide the information in the format they believe is most useful to parents and secondary schools.

In response to Lord Bew's final report, we propose to include a reference in the regulations to the need for outcomes of statutory assessments to be reported both across overall subjects and their component parts (schools already have a statutory

obligation to make these assessments). We believe this will help to give parents and secondary schools a better picture of a child's strengths at the end of Key Stage 2 as well as the areas on which he or she needs to focus in order to improve.

We will implement these changes at the earliest possible date, which is likely to be September 2012.

Parental Surveys

We welcome Ofsted's proposal in its consultation on a new inspection framework to engage with parents outside of the inspection process. We believe this proposal will encourage schools to gather the views of parents regularly, as many schools already do.

National Curriculum Levels

The existing National Curriculum levels will be retained in the short term as a means of measuring pupils' progress and attainment.

The National Curriculum Review will consider how we report statutory assessment in the long term, including how the National Curriculum can support the provision of more helpful advice and information to parents on their child's progress. A new National Curriculum provides an opportunity to make changes to the whole system as opposed to focusing on a single Key Stage.

Enabling Benchmarking of Schools

Effective benchmarking by schools is essential and will require additional tools and analysis. We will continue to develop RAISEonline as a resource to support self-analysis and school improvement. In the 2011/12 autumn term, RAISEonline will be further expanded to include a wider range of data and national comparators.

Data tools to ensure schools can benchmark themselves against schools with similar circumstances should be made available. We have been working with schools to see how the 'Families of Schools' publications data tool can be improved to meet schools' needs. This feedback will form part of the wider decision about how this kind of data will be made available, potentially through the schools performance website in the future.

International Comparison Studies

We welcome the importance the Review places on international comparison studies and the recommendation that we continue to participate fully in them. As the report acknowledges, there is a proposal in the current Education Bill to make participation in international studies mandatory for those maintained schools selected in the samples for the studies.

Statutory Assessment

Lord Bew and the panel have focused on statutory summative assessment and we have followed this approach in our response to their final report. We have always been clear that statutory assessment at key points in a child's education is very important. External tests and teacher assessment by teachers who are uniquely well placed to know each child as an individual are both valuable forms of assessment.

We believe it was right that Lord Bew and his panel considered each subject from the point of view of what is educationally most appropriate. We welcome the recommendations for each subject, and agree that mathematics, reading and writing skills should be externally tested, but that writing composition should be teacher assessed.

A number of the recommendations for statutory assessment require changes to test development (either the development of new tests, or changes to their current design). We will implement the changes as quickly as possible, but as the final report recognises, we will need to allow enough time in each case for new assessments to be carefully developed and trialled, given the importance of validity and reliability.

Confidence Intervals

Confidence intervals could help promote greater understanding of the outcomes of statutory assessment. However, some feedback suggests they are not currently well understood by parents and the public. We believe further investigation is needed before we publish confidence intervals more widely.

We will consider whether confidence intervals can be used effectively in relation to performance indicators to promote greater understanding.

Reading

We believe it is right that reading should be externally tested and so reading tests will continue.

It is important that reading tests are fair for all pupils and are genuinely tests of reading. The Standards and Testing Agency will consider Lord Bew's recommendations as it develops future reading tests, to ensure they are appropriately accessible to pupils. As Lord Bew notes, this could be achieved for example through adjusting the balance of text and reading time, or putting text and questions in clear order of difficulty. In future reading tests the number of questions requiring a written response will be kept under review to ensure that the test is, as far as possible, a test of reading. However, it will be important to ensure that changes to the reading test do not pose risks to quality, validity or reliability.

We will consider the skills which should be assessed by the reading test and will ensure these skills are brought out clearly in the design of future tests that assess the new National Curriculum.

Writing

We agree that pupils should leave primary school having mastered essential writing skills such as spelling, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. The Standards and Testing Agency will therefore develop a test of these writing skills and consider the potential to include an assessment of handwriting in the test. We will work closely with teachers, heads and other partners in the design, implementation and administration of this test.

The process for developing National Curriculum Tests impacts on how quickly a new writing skills test can be introduced. While it is relatively straightforward to develop new test questions, it is important that they are trialled in order to set standards and ensure that the questions are not easier or harder for particular groups of pupils. As the test results will contribute to school accountability, it is vital that they have demonstrably high validity and reliability. Since new tests must be trialled at the same point in the teaching year as the 'live' test, so that pupils are at a comparable stage in their education, this requires a minimum of a year's lead-in time. The test of writing skills will be trialled and pre-tested in 2012 so that it can be introduced for all schools in 2013.

Criticism of the current writing test is widespread and we agree that writing composition should be subject to summative teacher assessment only. This will encourage a broad range of writing over the course of Year 6, and will allow Year 6 pupils to demonstrate what they can do.

External moderation of teacher assessment of writing composition will be important to ensure it is perceived as reliable and robust. We will consult on proposals for moderation, including who will be responsible for it, how many schools will be subject to moderation each year, and the process for resolving disagreements. We will develop and trial moderation in 2012 ahead of full implementation on a statutory basis in 2013.

We share the concern of Lord Bew and his panel that a shift towards teacher assessment should not increase teachers' workload. We realise this is a view shared by many head teachers and teachers. We want to ensure this is not the case. Teacher assessment of writing composition should be based on the ordinary written work completed over the course of Year 6, which teachers will already assess. Teachers should not be required to produce additional written work or assessment 'portfolios' purely to support teacher assessment.

Teacher assessment judgements of writing composition will form the greater part of any overall writing judgement once the new arrangements are in place from 2013 onwards.

We want to move towards the new writing arrangements as quickly as is practicably possible. However, given the long lead-in time to develop the new test of writing skills and to establish a system to moderate teacher assessment of writing composition, an interim arrangement will be needed for 2012. These arrangements should be in line with the principles set out in Lord Bew's report and should ensure that results are as reliable and robust as possible. Teacher assessment judgements of writing composition will make a significant contribution to the overall writing results. We also believe some external testing will be required alongside teacher assessment. We will discuss the detailed arrangements for 2012 with the profession and confirm them to schools at the start of the new school year.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening skills are extremely important, and teacher assessment of speaking and listening will continue in the future. It should be reported to parents and secondary schools and should inform schools' overall teacher assessment of English, which will continue to be published.

The National Curriculum Review will consider how best to reflect the importance of speaking and listening in the new National Curriculum, and proposals will be published for consultation early next year.

Mathematics

We believe it is right that mathematics should be externally tested and so mathematics tests will continue.

It is important that mathematics tests are accessible to all pupils and do not unfairly disadvantage weaker readers. The Standards and Testing Agency will review all future National Curriculum Tests in mathematics to ensure that they remain accessible to all pupils, and that they are primarily tests of mathematics rather than reading.

Science

We accept Lord Bew's view that teacher assessment is the most appropriate form of assessment for science at the end of Key Stage 2, so pupil and school level data will continue to be based on teacher assessment judgements. It is important that national performance in science should continue to be monitored. The Standards and Testing Agency will continue to develop and administer national sample tests in science.

Subject to the outcomes of the National Curriculum Review, we will look to the Standards and Testing Agency to develop a system of pupil-level science sampling. This will provide much greater detail about the attainment of pupils nationally across the whole science curriculum.

Coherence Between Statutory Assessment and the New National Curriculum

We agree that greater coherence is required between the National Curriculum and its statutory assessment, and will seek to build in greater coherence following the National Curriculum Review.

The National Curriculum Review will consider the suggestion from Lord Bew and the panel for statutory assessment to be divided into two parts in the future, with a 'core' of essential knowledge that pupils should have learnt by the end of Key Stage 2.

Delivery of Testing and Assessment Arrangements

Cluster Moderation to Support Professional Development

We want to encourage schools to collaborate and share experience to develop their assessment skills. We understand the value of groups of teachers from a range of schools meeting on a regular basis to take part in cluster moderation of teacher assessment judgements.

There is already good practice in this area, and we wish to build upon it, particularly in light of the changes to writing assessment.

Transition to Secondary School

We are concerned by evidence presented to the Review which suggests how little Key Stage 2 statutory assessment data is used by many secondary schools.

We believe that secondary schools will receive better information as more detailed pupil-level teacher assessment data will be provided earlier in the summer term. We will encourage secondary schools to make wider use of this data to support transition of new Year 7 pupils.

We agree that cross-phase moderation of Year 6 pupils' work would support teachers' continuing professional development, building a shared understanding of the importance of assessment and delivering more meaningful data for secondary schools. We will encourage all secondary schools (and Year 7 teachers in particular) to join with Year 6 teachers in moderating Key Stage 2 teacher assessment judgements, particularly with regard to writing composition.

Transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2

We agree that the same principle of cross-phase moderation should apply to infant and junior schools. We will encourage moderation of Key Stage 1 teacher assessment judgements involving both Year 2 and Year 3 teachers.

Timing of Tests

We recognise that changing the timing of the end of Key Stage 2 tests to the beginning of Year 7 is a feasible option. However, based on the evidence and feedback analysed by Lord Bew and the review panel, we accept that it is not the best solution to the problems with the current system. Tests will therefore remain at the same point in the summer term.

On-Screen Marking

We agree that considerable benefits could be realised through a full roll-out of on-screen marking. The Standards and Testing Agency will consider how and when it could be introduced for full cohort tests, in addition to the science sample tests.

We are mindful that on-screen marking must be introduced in a way which safeguards delivery of results to schools and pupils, through full end-to-end testing of proposed systems.

Computer-Administered Testing

We recognise the potential of computer-administered testing in the long term and agree that it needs to be piloted with appropriate preparatory work before it can be used for

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statutory assessment. We will explore computer-administered testing and how it might be piloted in the future.

Computer Adaptive Testing

We believe that computer adaptive testing also has great potential. We will explore the possibility of introducing it in the long term, including by considering the relative suitability of the system for assessing specific subjects.

Testing When Ready

We will consider the principle of 'testing when ready' following the review of the National Curriculum. We accept the view of Lord Bew and his panel that it is not the best way of achieving the purposes of statutory assessment under the current National Curriculum, but recognise that it may fit better with computer-administered testing if it is introduced in the future.

Annex – Summary of Recommendations (for reference)

Purposes of Statutory Assessment

Main Uses of Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment Data

We believe that, in addition to the main statutory purpose of summative assessment (*“to ascertain what pupils have achieved in relation to the attainment targets for that stage”*), the following principal uses of statutory end of Key Stage 2 assessment data should apply:

- a. Holding schools accountable for the attainment and progress made by their pupils and groups of pupils.
- b. Informing parents and secondary schools about the performance of individual pupils.
- c. Enabling benchmarking between schools, as well as monitoring performance locally and nationally.

We expect that statutory assessment will be used for some secondary uses in addition to the primary uses. However, **we would like to be clear that, while the information from statutory assessment will still prove useful for secondary uses, they are not the principal uses for which the system has been designed.** This will have important implications for the confidence with which such inferences can be made.

Accountability

A Greater Focus on Progress

We recommend that the school accountability system should focus on both attainment and progress. Attainment and progress should be the two headline published measures, and any overall judgement of a school by the Government, local authorities or Ofsted should give at least as much weighting to progress as attainment.

Ensuring a Focus on the Progress of all Pupils

A greater emphasis on progress should apply at individual pupil level as well as school level. We believe there should be a strong focus on the progress of every pupil.

We therefore welcome the Government’s commitment to introduce an additional published indicator of progress focusing on the lowest attaining pupils. We believe

¹ Education Act 2002, section 76.

this additional measure will help ensure schools focus on maximising the progress of every child, and will make it less likely that any schools focus on pupils at the level 3/level 4 borderline to the detriment of other pupils. It will help give schools that do a good job at accelerating the progress of the pupils with low prior attainment credit for the work that they do.

We are aware that ensuring the progress and attainment of pupils with Special Educational Needs is maximised is an extremely complex challenge, currently being addressed in depth through the proposals which are being consulted on through the Green Paper, *Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability*². We do not believe this challenge can be tackled effectively through the statutory assessment system in isolation, and we therefore do not wish to make any recommendations concerning pupils with Special Educational Needs, since we feel they should be considered alongside a wider package of changes. **However, we recommend that the Government should consider the outcomes of its consultation with a particular focus on ensuring that the achievement of all pupils with Special Educational Needs is appropriately recognised and celebrated within the accountability system. This needs to be the case both in mainstream schools and in special schools.**

We believe that the Government should continue to provide level 6 National Curriculum Tests for schools to use on an optional basis, whose results should be reported to parents and secondary schools. If, following the review of the National Curriculum, any changes are made to the current system of levels, alternative arrangements should be put in place to ensure the most able pupils are challenged.

Key Stage 1: Baseline to Measure Progress

As a result of the greater focus on progress and, given that Key Stage 1 results count towards the baseline for progress measures, **we recommend the moderation process at Key Stage 1 is developed further to be more consistently rigorous. We suggest moderation at Key Stage 1 is better targeted so that schools where attainment and progress at Key Stages 1 and 2 are inconsistent are prioritised and moderated more frequently. We realise that many local authorities already target their moderation very carefully and we believe this should consistently be the case and made a formal requirement.**

We believe that to measure progress robustly there needs to be a clear link between Key Stage 1 statutory assessment and Key Stage 2 statutory assessment. **We recommend that, in the long term, the Government should ensure that Key Stage 1 statutory assessment reflects changes at Key Stage 2 and the introduction of a new National Curriculum.**

Ofsted Inspections

In its consultation document, *Inspection 2012*³, Ofsted set out its initial proposals for judging pupil achievement in future. This includes giving particular attention to how well pupils learn, the quality of their work and the progress they have made since joining the school, as well as pupils' attainment by the time they leave school.

2 Department for Education, *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability* (2011).

3 Ofsted, *Inspection 2012: proposals for inspection arrangements for maintained schools and academies from January 2012* (2011).

We recognise that Ofsted currently takes account of more than just test data in forming its judgments. We welcome the proposal to place greater emphasis on pupils' progress in the inspection process.

Rolling Averages

We recommend that the main published statutory assessment data should be presented with rolling averages as well as annual data. This would take into account the volatility of results of individual cohorts and provide a sense of achievement over time. We believe that, because rolling averages take account of the results of a much larger cohort of pupils, they are particularly useful for small schools, where the size of each year's cohort means that average results will be more significantly influenced by the attainment of individual pupils.

We recommend that rolling averages should be over three years, as data analysis suggests that there is little reduction in volatility when moving from 3 to 4 or 5 year rolling averages, even for small schools.

We recommend the introduction of additional attainment and progress measures for pupils who have completed the whole of Years 5 and 6 within the school. However, we do understand this may not always be possible in small schools or schools where fewer than 10 pupils have left or arrived, as the cohort could be too small to avoid the identification either of the pupils who have completed the entire Key Stage, or of those who have not. We hope that also providing a three-year rolling average may make this data available for more schools.

Pupil Mobility

We understand that mobility is a complex issue, and within the category of pupils who move school during Year 5 or Year 6, some move school more than once. We recognise also that 'mobile' pupils can come from some of the most disadvantaged communities, and we also need to ensure that there are no perverse incentives discouraging schools from meeting their particular needs. **We recommend that data on the 'mobility' of pupils who have joined in Years 5 and 6 should be published.** This data should best reflect the mobility of pupils in each cohort, reflecting both the proportion of pupils who are 'mobile' and how often those pupils move school.

School-Level Measures in Reading and Writing

We believe that measures across English as a whole subject are too broad to give a full picture of a school's performance. It would be much more helpful to publish separate measures of reading and writing. **We recommend that schools' statutory assessment results in reading and writing should be published separately, to allow schools to present a more rounded picture of their performance in English.**

However, we recognise that a composite English level may be necessary, in particular to provide a baseline against which to measure progress made at secondary school.

Additional Measures and Contextual Information

If an overall English measure is necessary, we suggest that options are explored for how it could be generated from a combination of the results of the reading test, teacher assessment of writing composition, and the proposed new test of spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary.

We welcome the Government's decision to publish other measures to help to give a more rounded picture of a school's performance. We suggest that additional contextual information could also include the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, or the proportion of those pupils eligible for the pupil premium in each Year 6 cohort. Schools will therefore be able to refer to a greater range of published data when explaining their pupils' performance.

Allowing Absent Pupils to Take Tests Within a Given Time Frame

We realise that pupils who are absent for a valid reason can currently take a National Curriculum Test within two school days. However, we do not believe an extension of two days goes far enough to resolve this problem. We see the benefits to both schools and pupils of allowing a pupil who is absent on the day of the test to take the test within an extended time-frame (not exceeding one week), subject to checks to ensure reasons for absence are genuine and the necessary security measures are in place. **We recommend that the Government trials such a scheme in 2012, examines the impact, and considers whether to make this a permanent change.**

The Publication of Summative Teacher Assessment Judgements

We believe a school's summative teacher assessment provides useful information which the accountability system should take into account. As well as ensuring that teacher assessment judgements for each pupil are reported to parents and secondary schools, **we recommend that teacher assessment results in each school should continue to be published in Achievement and Attainment Tables, as has been the case since 2010.**

We recommend that schools should submit summative teacher assessment judgements ahead of receiving any test results, and that these summative teacher assessment judgements should be published. We believe this would put greater emphasis on teacher assessment.

Reporting Pupil-Level Results to Parents and Secondary Schools

We believe that pupil-level data both across each subject and on its component parts should be provided to parents and secondary schools. Information provided to parents and secondary schools at pupil-level should be considerably more detailed than the published school-level information. Schools are already required to determine teacher assessment levels in each attainment target in English, mathematics and science, and to submit an overall subject level. **We recommend that schools should be required to submit teacher assessment levels both for the overall subject and for its attainment targets (or any equivalent in the future), and that this data should be provided to secondary schools.**

Parental Surveys

We note Ofsted's proposal in its consultation on a new inspection framework⁴ to engage with parents outside of the inspection process. **We welcome this proposal and also encourage schools to gather the views of parents regularly, as many schools already do.** We support this approach as we believe parental feedback is very valuable and adds to the picture given by results, data and information presented by schools themselves.

⁴ Ofsted, *Inspection 2012: proposals for inspection arrangements for maintained schools and academies from January 2012* (2011).

National Curriculum Levels

In the short term, we believe we need to retain levels as a means of measuring pupils' progress and attainment. Key Stage 1 continues to be reported by levels, and therefore to measure progress robustly Key Stage 2 results should be reported in the same way. We believe this is the case because it is important that progress is measured in a way that is meaningful to those who use the information and a change to levels in the short term is likely to put this at risk.

However, in the long term, **we believe the introduction of a new National Curriculum provides an opportunity to improve how we report from statutory assessment. We believe it is for the National Curriculum Review to determine the most appropriate way of defining the national standards which are used to categorise pupils' attainment.**

In England, we currently use National Curriculum levels as a scale against which to measure progress. However, concerns have been raised as to whether the levels, as they currently exist, are appropriate as a true vertical scale. **We recommend that, as part of the review of the National Curriculum, consideration is given to creating a more appropriate 'vertical scale' with which to measure progress.**

Enabling Benchmarking of Schools

We believe that facilitating effective benchmarking by school managers requires additional tools and analysis. We feel that Raiseonline is an invaluable resource for school managers because of the detailed information it provides.

We welcome the Government's commitment to publish 'families of schools' data⁵, which group schools into 'families' of 10 to 15 schools with similar intakes on the basis of prior attainment and socio-economic factors. We believe that schools and Ofsted should look to use this tool as they see fit.

International Comparison Studies

We recommend that England continues to participate in the main international comparisons studies.

We understand the Government proposes to make it a statutory duty for maintained schools to participate in international comparisons studies such as PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS and TALIS if selected in the samples. This is to ensure that participation rates for the studies are always met and data is not invalidated – on a number of occasions, England has struggled to secure sufficient schools and pupils to take part in international comparison studies. **We welcome the proposal in the 2011 Education Bill to make participation in international comparison studies mandatory for those schools selected.**

Statutory Assessment

Confidence Intervals

In determining the reliability of assessments and ensuring appropriate inferences are made from the outcomes, some have argued that the use of confidence intervals might be helpful. Confidence intervals are a way of demonstrating the impact of measurement error on results and are used in the international comparison surveys to enable

⁵ Department for Education, *The Importance of Teaching: the Schools White Paper 2010* (2010).

comparisons between participating countries. However, there are concerns that confidence intervals may be confusing for schools and parents. **We recommend that further work is carried out to determine whether the use of confidence intervals would promote greater understanding of the outcomes of statutory assessment.**

Reading

The feedback we have received suggests that, while specific issues must be addressed, there are no fundamental concerns with an externally-marked test of reading. **We believe it is legitimate to use an externally-marked test to establish how well a pupil can read and comprehend a passage of text within a finite period of time.** If pupils are to access the secondary curriculum, it is essential that they are confident and fluent readers. **We recommend that reading should continue to be subject to externally-marked testing.**

We recognise the concern that the current reading tests may not allow lower-attaining pupils to demonstrate fully what they can do. We believe that the reading test should be accessible to all pupils. It may be possible to achieve this by adjusting the balance of text and reading time, putting texts and questions in a clear order of difficulty, and ensuring that the texts themselves are accessible to all pupils. **We recommend that, as new reading tests are developed, these suggestions should be incorporated in the new test design.**

In addition, we feel that the reading test should be, as far as possible, a test of reading rather than writing. At present many questions can be answered by marking the relevant choice, but some require longer answers to demonstrate more advanced comprehension of the text. **We recommend that the number of written responses in the reading test should be kept under review so that the test is, as far as possible, a test of reading.** We do acknowledge that some written responses may be needed, particularly in more demanding questions.

We believe it is most important for every pupil to leave Key Stage 2 as a fluent and confident reader, ready for secondary education. We believe that the most crucial aspects of reading at the end of Key Stage 2 are accuracy (decoding familiar and unfamiliar words correctly), fluency (speed and confidence) and comprehension (drawing meaning from text). Therefore the end of Key Stage 2 reading test should demonstrate each pupil's accuracy, fluency and comprehension. **We recommend that the Government should consider the skills which should be assessed by the reading test and we recommend that these skills should be brought out more clearly in the design of future tests that assess the new National Curriculum.**

Writing

We recognise that there are some elements of writing – spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary – where there are clear 'right' and 'wrong' answers, which lend themselves to externally-marked testing. A spelling test currently forms 14% of the writing test. Internationally a number of jurisdictions conduct externally-marked tests of spelling, punctuation and grammar (sometimes termed 'English language arts'). These are essential skills and **we recommend that externally-marked tests of spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary should be developed.** We suggest it may be appropriate for handwriting to be assessed in this externally-marked test too.

We believe that it can be legitimate to assess writing composition through an externally-marked test. However, we share many of the significant concerns that have been expressed about the inherent challenge of marking writing tests, the impact of the choice of genres, and the feeling that, in comparison with other subjects that are tested externally, it is less valid to measure pupils' attainment on the basis of one test paper in May. **We recommend that writing composition should be subject to summative teacher assessment only.** This will encourage a broad range of writing over the course of Year 6, while avoiding the perverse incentives of the current system. It would allow Year 6 pupils to demonstrate what they can do across a range of genres, and would remove the inevitable disagreements about the marking of individual pieces of writing.

We are very conscious of the need for teacher assessment to be reliable and command public confidence. **We recommend that teacher assessment in writing composition should be subject to external moderation. We recommend that, if the moderator has concerns over the accuracy or reliability of the sampled teacher assessment judgements, they should be able to scrutinise additional evidence and, if they consider it appropriate, require the school to change the reported levels.**

We therefore recommend that writing should be assessed through a mixture of testing and summative teacher assessment. Due to its importance, we believe that **writing composition should always form the greater part of overall writing statutory assessment.** We recognise that we are recommending a very significant change to the statutory assessment of writing, addressing the profession's strongly-held concerns.

Speaking and Listening

We have heard no evidence to challenge the current arrangements of summative teacher assessment in speaking and listening. We acknowledge that its assessment has a relatively low profile in many schools when compared to reading and writing. **We recommend that teacher assessment of speaking and listening should continue.** It should be reported to parents and secondary schools and should continue to inform schools' overall teacher assessment of English. In view of the nature of speaking and listening, we do not feel that external moderation arrangements would be appropriate or proportionate; therefore, while speaking and listening should contribute to an overall teacher assessment of English, it may not be sufficiently reliable to be used as a measure of school accountability.

We recognise the importance of speaking and listening and the need for all pupils to be articulate by the end of Key Stage 2. **We recommend that the National Curriculum Review should consider how best to reflect its importance in the curriculum.**

Mathematics

We have not received any evidence to suggest that there are significant issues with an externally-marked mathematics test. We recognise that it is relatively straightforward to create a valid and reliable test of mathematics, and we feel that the current mathematics tests achieve this. **We believe that it is legitimate to use a test to establish how well a pupil can perform a range of mathematical operations within a finite period of time. We recommend that mathematics should continue to be subject to externally-marked testing.**

We acknowledge the concerns that results in the mathematics test should not be determined by ability in reading. **We recommend that in the development of future tests the amount of reading in the mathematics test should be kept under review, to ensure that weaker readers are not unfairly disadvantaged.** In addition, we believe that the current principle that questions should be placed in order of difficulty should be carefully adhered to in future mathematics tests.

We feel that it would be helpful for parents and secondary schools to receive detailed information on pupils' attainment within mathematics. Schools are currently required to make separate teacher assessment judgements for each attainment target in mathematics (use and application; number; shape, space and measure; handling data). **We recommend that summative teacher assessment in the mathematics attainment targets should be reported at pupil level to parents and secondary schools.**

Science

We acknowledge that it is possible to create a valid and reliable test of scientific knowledge. However, we recognise that it is difficult to measure scientific enquiry (an important part of the curriculum) through an externally-marked test and that a focus on what can easily be tested risks distorting science teaching. As the current statutory assessment arrangements in science are relatively new, their effectiveness is not wholly clear, but we think the arguments for removing the test were justified. We therefore **recommend that pupil-level outcomes in science should continue to be based on summative teacher assessment.**

We believe it is important that national performance in science should continue to be monitored alongside schools' teacher assessment. **We recommend that sample testing in science should continue.**

We feel that it would be helpful for parents and secondary schools to receive detailed information on pupils' attainment within science. Schools are currently required to make separate teacher assessment judgements for each attainment target in science (scientific enquiry; life processes; materials and properties; physical processes). **We recommend that pupil-level summative teacher assessment in the science attainment targets should be reported to parents and secondary schools.**

In the long term, the Government should continue to seek feedback from schools and the science community as to the appropriateness and effectiveness of the current arrangements, particularly in view of changes to the curriculum. **We recommend that the current arrangements should be looked at again following the National Curriculum Review to ensure they are educationally appropriate for the new science National Curriculum.** We recognise that a specifically-designed sampling system could provide much more information than the National Curriculum Test papers currently in use. If the current arrangements are continued in the long term, **we recommend that a system of pupil-level sampling should be introduced,** because this would allow a greater coverage of the science curriculum than school-level sampling.

Coherence Between Statutory Assessment and the New National Curriculum

We would encourage the Government to seek greater coherence between the National Curriculum and its statutory assessment as an integral part of the design following the National Curriculum Review, without giving rise to a situation where statutory assessment can distort or narrow the curriculum.

In the longer term, we feel it may be helpful for statutory assessment to divide into two parts. All pupils could be expected to master a ‘core’ of essential knowledge by the end of Key Stage 2, concentrating on the basic literacy and numeracy which all pupils require if they are to access the secondary curriculum. This ‘core’ could be assessed through a ‘mastery’ test which all pupils should be expected to pass (only excepting cases of profound Special Educational Needs), providing a high minimum standard of literacy and numeracy at the end of primary education.

Delivery of Testing and Assessment Arrangements

Cluster Moderation to Support Professional Development

We understand the value of groups of teachers from a range of schools (including secondary schools) meeting on a regular basis to build a shared understanding of educational standards and to discuss their assessment of pupils’ work. **We would encourage schools to form clusters in this way to moderate teacher assessment judgements with the aim of learning from each other and developing the assessment skills of the teachers involved.** Many schools already participate in such networks, and we feel that other schools could benefit from adopting this approach.

Transition to Secondary School

Given the improvements to the information secondary schools will receive, we encourage secondary schools to make wider use of the pupil-level data available from Key Stage 2 to support transition of new Year 7 pupils. However, we recognise that even if statutory assessment data is provided in greater detail, earlier in the year, and used effectively by all secondary schools, it is still only part of the information secondary schools need. Primary schools will be able to send additional information based on their knowledge of pupils.

Given the greater focus on teacher assessment information, we feel there is potential in encouraging cross-phase moderation of Year 6 pupils’ work. We believe Year 7 teachers should be involved in the moderation of teacher assessment judgements of Year 6 pupils’ writing composition work in particular as moderators themselves. We encourage secondary schools to engage with this approach and also recommend that the Government should consider what incentives can be put in place to encourage Year 7 teachers to join in moderation exercises with Year 6 teachers designed to support professional development.

Transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2

Feedback to the Review has suggested that similar transition problems can occur to an extent between infant and junior schools. We believe these problems could be partly tackled through cross-phase moderation where it does not already happen. **We believe the same principle of encouraging cross-phase moderation should apply to infant**

and junior schools, and we encourage moderation of Key Stage 1 teacher assessment judgements involving both Year 2 and Year 3 teachers from infant and junior schools. Cross-Key Stage moderation of Key Stage 1 teacher assessment judgements gives Year 3 teachers a better understanding of their new intake. We welcome the fact that this is already common practice in many schools.

Timing of Tests

The evidence and feedback to the Review suggests that changing the timing of end of Key Stage 2 tests to the beginning of Year 7 is a feasible option, but we believe is not the best solution to the problems with the current system. We therefore recommend that the timing of tests remains as it is.

On-Screen Marking

We believe that on-screen marking should be considered for other Key Stage 2 tests. We recommend that the Government should learn from the evidence from science sample tests and plan what further trialling is needed with the aim of moving to a full rollout of on-screen marking.

Computer-Administered Testing

Considerable as these challenges may be, we feel that the Government should consider the potential of computer-administered testing in the long term. There will need to be thorough piloting and preparatory work over a number of years. **We recommend exploration and piloting of computer-administered testing.**

Computer Adaptive Testing

We believe the potential of computer adaptive testing should be explored further, including the relative suitability of the system for assessing specific subjects, with a view to exploring the possibility of introducing in the long term.

Testing When Ready

We are not convinced that moving to a 'testing when ready' approach is the best way of achieving the purposes of statutory assessment under the current National Curriculum. **We suggest that the principle of 'testing when ready' should be considered in the future following the National Curriculum Review.** We believe that the principle of 'testing when ready' may fit well if computer-administered testing is introduced, making it easier for each pupil to sit his/her own personalised test at any point in time when teachers deem him/her to be ready.



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