

Evaluation of the Single Level Test (SLT) pilot

Final report

PWC

This research report was written before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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Executive Summary

Introduction and background

In November 2009, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) was commissioned by the former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to evaluate the Single Level Test (SLT) pilot. This report presents the findings of the entire evaluation, and reports findings from the full set of research activities undertaken between November 2009 and July 2010.

SLTs are externally marked tests for Key Stage (KS) 2 pupils. They cover three subject areas: mathematics, English reading and English writing. Each test paper covers one National Curriculum Level from Level 3 to Level 6. Pupils are entered for a SLT (at a particular Level) when they have been assessed as working at that Level and, having achieved that Level in the test, progress to the next Level and are tested again when they are deemed to be ready.

There are 225 primary schools involved in the SLT pilot across 10 Local Authorities (LAs). The evaluation gathered evidence on how the staff, parents/carers and pupils in these schools view the tests and, in particular, the extent to which the arrangements in place were viewed as being manageable in terms of workload and sustainable over time.

Aims of the Research

The evaluation set out to gather information on a number of research questions. These are presented below and are structured under the main section headings of this report.

Test entry

- *Pupil selection*: which pupils are entered for SLTs and why?
- *Teacher Assessment (TA)*: what role does TA play in deciding test entries?
- *Test processes in schools*: how are SLTs organised and administered?

Test preparation and revision

- *Test preparation*: was any test preparation carried out for (the December and June) round of SLTs? What impact does having access to past SLT papers have on test preparation?

Impact on schools

- *Impact on school behaviour*: what impact do SLTs have on, for example, the curriculum?
- *Tracking and monitoring progress*: what impact do SLTs have on tracking and monitoring of pupil progress?

Impact on pupils, parents and carers

- *Impact on pupils and their parents/carers*: what impact do SLTs have on the engagement or motivation of pupils and parents/carers?

The evaluation also analysed the level of awareness which key stakeholders have about the tests. These findings are presented under 'Test awareness'.

Methodology

There were two Phases to this evaluation. Phase 1 covered the period October 2009 to January 2010. Phase 2 covered the period April to July 2010. The research for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 was undertaken with all schools in the Pilot.

Phase 1 of the evaluation included six teacher focus groups, four pupil focus groups, four parent/carer focus groups as well as a postal survey of school staff in all Pilot schools. The postal survey achieved an overall response rate of 26%, with 50% of schools in the Pilot returning at least one fully completed questionnaire.

Phase 2 of the evaluation included 10 teacher focus groups, six pupil focus groups, six parent/carer focus groups as well as a postal survey of school staff in all Pilot schools. The postal survey achieved an overall response rate of 22%, with 48% of schools in the Pilot returning at least one fully completed questionnaire.

Findings from Phase 1 were presented in an Interim Report submitted to the former DCSF in February 2010. This is the final report from the evaluation and it presents the full set of findings from research activities undertaken in both phases.

Evaluation findings

Test awareness

Awareness of SLTs varies across the different stakeholder groups and is largely dependent on their involvement with the test. For teaching staff and support staff, the inclusion of mathematics test results in the Achievement and Attainment Tables (AATs) has contributed to an increase in awareness across the school. Findings from the teacher focus groups suggest that awareness amongst governors has increased slightly over the course of the evaluation, which was attributed, in part, to the change in the accountability context.

Consistent with findings from Phase 1, parents'/carers' awareness of SLTs was very much dependent on their level of engagement with their child's learning. Findings from pupil focus groups suggest that, pupils who sat a test (and particularly those in Years 5 and 6) were most knowledgeable about the test.

Test entry

Almost all schools (97%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident in the quality of their TA and its ability to be able to predict pupil performance in the June test round. Whilst TA continues to be the most important evidence source used in deciding test entry, an additional element of teacher professional judgement is also applied, taking into consideration both home environmental factors and the emotional maturity of the pupil. A large proportion of school survey respondents indicated that their school had put moderation processes in place to ensure TA consistency across the school.

As with Phase 1, class-based teachers are most likely to be involved in pupil selection decisions. This was closely followed by the assessment coordinator, and to a lesser extent, the headteacher.

The inclusion of mathematics in the AATs appears to have impacted on test entry decisions as schools adopt a more ambitious entry approach, particularly for pupils with a banked SLT Level¹. This was particularly the case for Year 6 pupils, where schools reported that they took 'greater risks' by entering borderline, i.e. sub-level c pupils for the higher Level.

While schools agreed that the administration associated with entry for SLTs was greater than for National Curriculum Tests (NCTs), this was not necessarily regarded in negative terms as survey respondents felt that it was both manageable in terms of workload and sustainable over time.

¹ A banked level is a reportable level achieved in a previous test session. As notified to schools this covers SLT outcomes achieved from December 2008, June 2009, December 2010 test rounds.

Test preparation and revision

A greater proportion of respondents reported that they prepared pupils for the test as opposed to helping them to revise for the test. For example, over one-half of respondents reported undertaking *preparation* activities for both English reading and English writing in comparison to over two-thirds of respondents who reported undertaking preparation activities for mathematics. However, the majority of those respondents indicated that they invested only 'A little time' in such activities. By comparison, a lower proportion of respondents (28% English reading and English writing and 46% in mathematics), stated that they invested time in helping pupils to *revise* for the June 2010 SLTs. Overall, most respondents said that the amount of time invested in preparation and revision had not changed since the beginning of the SLT pilot. However, there does appear to be more revision activity for the June 2010 compared to December 2009 test round. This could be linked to the end of the academic year and the timing of NCTs and other class tests.

As with NCTs, class-based teachers were largely responsible for making decisions about test preparation and revision for SLTs, but the senior leadership team and assessment coordinator are often involved in this decision-making process as well. Overall, the amount of Year 6 time invested in revising for SLTs in June 2010 was less than the time invested in revising for NCTs in 2009.

The inclusion of the Year 6 mathematics results in the AATs does appear to have resulted in an increase in the proportion of schools investing time in preparation and revision activity.

Impact on schools

The majority of respondents said that SLTs were given the same or greater importance in their school, compared to NCTs. With slightly more importance placed on the mathematics SLTs, this is likely to be as a result of the new accountability arrangements for mathematics.

The majority of respondents felt that SLTs do contribute to a broader and more balanced curriculum across KS 2, and particularly in Year 6, by freeing up more class time to enable: more of the curriculum to be covered; more validation of TAs to be undertaken; and more effective differentiation/personalisation of the curriculum to suit the needs of individual pupils or groups of pupils.

The use of SLTs and Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) materials together had positively impacted on how the vast majority of respondents teach their pupils, because it contributed to better identification of pupils' needs, improved target setting and enabled greater personalisation of the curriculum. All of these impacts are expected to be sustainable over time.

Respondents also agreed that SLTs had contributed to improved tracking and monitoring of individual pupils' progress. This was said to have had a positive impact on most KS 2 pupils, but particularly for the more able and motivated pupils. However, there was a perception amongst some survey respondents (c. 10%) that there was the potential to negatively impact pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or those who may be less confident in a test situation. This was a closed question and no explanations were provided as to why this might be the case. A possible explanation though may be that SEN pupils may not be entered alongside their peers or may be entered at a lower level.

Impact on pupils, parents and carers

Pupils appear to be more aware of SLTs as the Pilot has progressed. In particular, older year groups appear to have a better understanding of SLTs and how they differ from NCTs. The findings suggest that SLTs have had a limited impact on pupils' attitudes towards tests, but findings from all focus groups suggest that pupils tend to be less stressed sitting the SLTs when compared with NCTs. Teacher focus group participants reported an increase in pupils' interest in what they needed to do to reach the next Level.

Teacher focus group participants reported limited cases of increased awareness from parents/carers and this finding has remained relatively unchanged over the course of the evaluation. However, schools have begun to share more information with parents/carers on pupil progress, in particular their APP profile.

Overall conclusion from the evaluation

The overarching conclusion from the evaluation is that there is broad support amongst Pilot schools for SLTs and the principles which underpin the tests, in particular testing pupils when they are ready and using the test to validate TA. It appears that the introduction of the SLT mathematics results has had some impact on schools in terms of test entry, test revision and the significance of SLTs within schools. However, the findings indicate that, from a school's perspective, the overall benefits of SLTs outweigh any additional workload associated with the administration of the tests. Given that Pilot schools have now entered pupils for up to six test rounds (under both the SLT Pilot and Making Good Progress (MGP) Pilot), it appears that schools have successfully integrated SLTs into their existing school processes and that these processes are now well embedded.

Section 1: Introduction

Background

In November 2009, PwC was commissioned by the former DCSF to undertake an evaluation of the SLT Pilot. This is the Final Report of the evaluation.

SLTs are externally marked tests for KS 2 pupils in mathematics, English reading and English writing. A number of key principles underlie SLTs, including: testing pupils when they are ready; more closely aligning testing to teaching and learning activities; and, placing an emphasis on TA in appropriately selecting pupils for test entry including making best use of APP materials. In addition, and unlike statutory end-of-key-stage tests, each SLT is designed to cover one National Curriculum Level only and pupils may only take a particular test Level when they have successfully completed the previous Level and when their teacher believes the pupil is working at the Level for which they are being entered.

There have been a total of six SLT test sessions, which took place between 2007 and 2010 on a six-monthly basis (December 2007, June 2008, December 2008, June 2009, December 2009 and June 2010). The tests were undertaken as part of the MGP Pilot up to June 2009 by schools in ten LAs. The December 2009 and June 2010 test rounds were undertaken as part of the SLT Pilot, which involve a total of 225 primary schools. In 2010, mathematics SLT results will be used in place of NCTs in the AATs.

Aims of Research

This evaluation has been undertaken in two phases: Phase 1 between October 2009 and January 2010, and Phase 2 between April and July 2010. The output of Phase 1 was an Interim Report submitted to the former DCSF in February 2010. For each of the areas listed below, PwC analysed focus group and survey data to examine the impact of the SLT Pilot on school behaviour, in addition to examining specific differences by subject area between mathematics (which will be used in school performance tables), English reading and English writing (which are currently not planned to be used in school performance tables). The research questions below are illustrative of the areas explored with research participants:

- **Pupil selection:** which pupils are entered for SLTs and why?
- **Test processes in schools:** how are SLTs organised and administered?
- **Test preparation:** was any test preparation carried out for this round of SLTs? What impact does having past SLT papers have on test preparation?
- **TA:** what role does TA play in deciding test entries?
- **Impact on school behaviour:** what impact do SLTs have on, for example, the curriculum?
- **Impact on pupils and their parents/carers:** what impact do SLTs have on the engagement or motivation of pupils, parents/carers?

Structure of this report

This final report presents the summative findings from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the evaluation. The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Methodology;
- Test awareness;
- Test entry;
- Test preparation and revision;
- Impact on schools;
- Impact on pupils, parents and carers; and
- Conclusions.

Section 2: Methodology

Introduction

This section of the report details the methodology used for delivering the SLT evaluation. It includes details of the types of research activities undertaken; the numbers of individuals interviewed/surveyed along with associated timings.

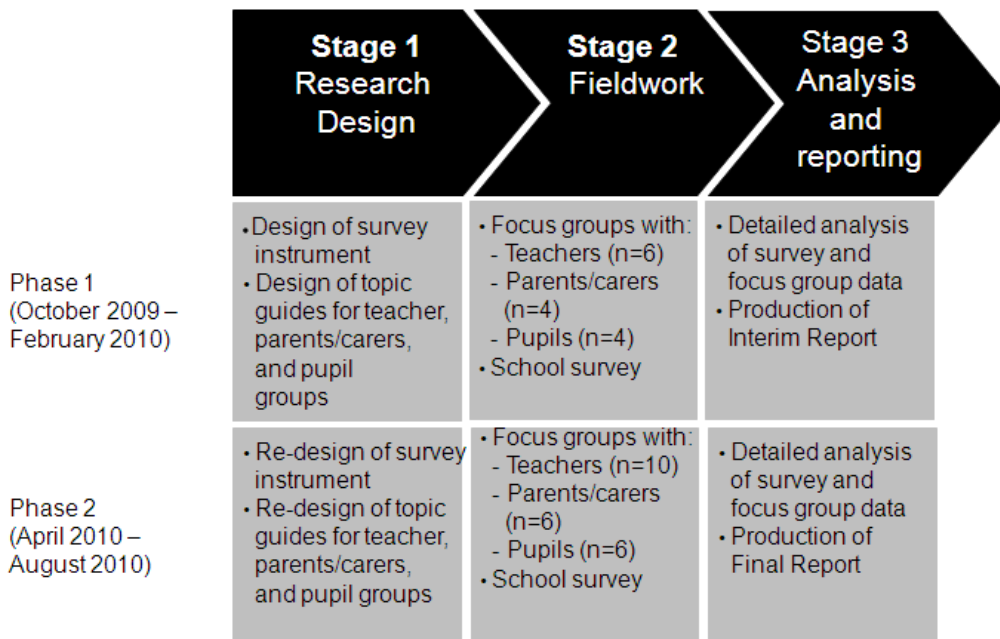
This section is structured under the following headings:

- Overview;
- Research activities; and
- Characteristics of survey respondents.

Overview

Figure 2.1 below provides an overview of the research activity undertaken for both phases of the evaluation.

Figure 2.1: Overview of evaluation activities



Research activities

Table 2.1 provides details of the methodology for this evaluation. It includes the full range of sub-activities undertaken, along with an indication of the scale of the research and associated timings.

Table 2.1: Evaluation research activities

Stage	Sub activities	Phase 1		Phase 2	
		Detail	Timing	Detail	Timing
Stage 1: Design	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of teacher survey instrument. Development of three topic guides for teachers, parents/carers and pupils focus groups. 	Oct–Nov 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign of teacher survey instrument incorporating insights from Phase 1. Redesign of three topic guides for teachers, parents/carers and pupils focus groups, incorporating insights from Phase 1. 	Jan–Mar 2010
Stage 2: Fieldwork	Teacher focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four focus groups, held in four LAs. A total of 29 participants attended the groups. 	Nov 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 focus groups, held in ten LAs. A total of 66 participants attended the groups. To maximise attendance, a courtesy telephone call was made to teachers who had agreed to attend one of the sessions. 	Apr–Jun 2010
	Pupil focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four focus groups, held in four LAs. A total of 36 Year 3-6 pupils participated in the focus groups. 	Nov 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six focus groups, held in six LAs. A total of 53 Year 3-6 pupils participated in the focus groups. 	Apr–Jun 2010
	Parent/carers focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of four focus groups conducted with parents/carers of those who took part in the pupil focus group. A total of 28 parents/carers participated in the focus groups. 	Nov 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of six focus groups conducted with the parents/carers of those who took part in the pupil focus group. A total of 26 parents/carers participated in the focus groups. 	Apr–Jun 2010
	School survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory letter sent to all schools in the Pilot (n=230) Five copies of the questionnaire distributed in a pack to all pilot schools (n=230 schools). In total, 1,150 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, 217 schools agreed to participate in the survey, resulting in an effective sample of 1,085 (217 x 5 questionnaires). Each survey pack was addressed to the headteacher who was instructed to distribute four of the five copies of the questionnaire to class-based teachers and other members of the school staff (e.g. Assessment Coordinator) and complete the remaining one him/herself. To maximise response, a cover letter was sent to all schools involved in the Pilot prior to the questionnaires being dispatched, and two reminder calls to all non-responding schools were undertaken. 	Dec 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory letter sent to all schools in the Pilot (n=225). Of these schools, a total of 212 agreed to participate in the survey. Five copies of the questionnaire were distributed in a pack to each of the 212 schools. In total, 1,060 questionnaires were distributed. Each survey pack was addressed to the headteacher who was instructed to distribute four of the five copies of the questionnaire to class-based teachers and other members of the school staff (e.g. Assessment Coordinator) and complete the remaining one him/herself. To maximise response, three reminder calls to all non-responding schools were undertaken. Separately, LA Pilot Leaders issued an email reminder to encourage response. 	Apr–Jun 2010
Stage 3: Analysis & Reporting	Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group interviews written up verbatim; entered into analysis template and analysed thematically. Survey toplines for each question, with additional analysis undertaken using a number of cross-break variables (e.g. by subject, by staff member role.) 	Jan–Feb 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group interviews were written up verbatim; entered into an analysis template and analysed thematically. Survey toplines for each question, with additional analysis undertaken using a number of cross-break variables (e.g. by subject, by staff member role.) 	Jul–Aug 2010

Characteristics of survey respondents

Table 2.2 below provides an overview of the survey sample along with details of the number of returns and achieved response rate for both phases of the evaluation. In summary:

- A total of 284 completed surveys were returned in Phase 1, resulting in an achieved response rate of 26%; and
- A total of 230 completed surveys were returned in Phase 2, resulting in an achieved response rate of 22%.

Table 2.2: Survey sample and response rates

Phase	Total number of schools in Pilot*	No. schools agreeing to participate in the survey	No. questionnaires per school	Effective sample	No. questionnaires returned	Response rate
	A	B	C	D=BxC	E	F=E/D
1	230	217	5	1,085	284	26%
2	225	212	5	1,060	230	22%

* A total of five schools withdrew from the Pilot between Phase 1 and Phase 2

Table 2.3 illustrates the number of schools that returned completed questionnaires. In summary:

- Responses were received from 115 schools in Phase 1 representing 50% of those participating in the Pilot at the time the survey was undertaken; and
- Responses were received from a total of 102 schools in Phase 2 representing 48% of those participating in the Pilot at the time the survey was undertaken.

Table 2.3: Number of returns per school

Number of returns per school	Phase 1		Phase 2	
	Number of schools	Number of returns	Number of schools	Number of returns
A	B	C=AxB	D	E=AxD
1	41	41	42	42
2	23	46	20	40
3	22	66	21	63
4	14	56	10	40
5	15	75	9	45
Totals	115	284	102	230

Source: PwC SLT pilot school survey, 2009 and PwC SLT pilot school survey 2010.

Table 2.4 illustrates the role of survey respondents within their school. It is important to note that this was a multiple response question and respondents tended to have more than one role within the school. As expected, the highest proportion of respondents were class-based teachers, who accounted for over one-half (51% in Phase 1 and 55% in Phase 2) of the total number of returns. This was followed by Member of the Senior Leadership Team (other than the headteacher) who accounted for 34% and 37% of the total number of survey returns for Phase 1 and Phase 2 respectively.

Table 2.4: Role of survey respondents within their school

Role	Phase 1		Phase 2	
	Number of respondents	Proportion of respondents	Number of respondents	Proportion of respondents
Headteacher	85	31%	55	24%
Member of Senior Leadership Team (other than the headteacher)	95	34%	83	37%
Assessment Coordinator	48	17%	42	19%
Class-based teacher	142	51%	125	55%
Other	14	5%	14	6%

Source: PwC SLT pilot school survey, 2009 and PwC SLT pilot school survey 2010.

This is a multiple response question in both Phase 1 and Phase 2, therefore totals will sum to more than 100%.

Table 2.5 illustrates the total number of surveys distributed and returned by schools in each of the ten LAs participating in the Pilot. In summary:

- The LA with the highest overall response rate was LA8 with an achieved response rate of 46% in Phase 1 and 35% in Phase 2;
- The LA with the lowest overall response rate was LA7 with an achieved response rate of 16% in Phase 1 and 6% in Phase 2;
- LA6 was the only LA to record an increase in the achieved response rate between Phase 1 and 2. The response rate increased by 8 percentage points (pp) from 19% in Phase 1 to 27% in Phase 2.
- LA10 had the largest decrease in the achieved response rate between Phase 1 and 2. The response rate decreased by 27 pp from 40% in Phase 1 to 13% in Phase 2.

Table 2.5: Breakdown of survey returns by LA

LA	Phase 1			Phase 2		
	Number of surveys distributed	Number of surveys returned	Achieved response rate (%)	Number of surveys distributed	Number of surveys returned	Achieved response rate (%)
	A	B	$C=(B\div A)\times 100$	D	E	$F=(E\div D)\times 100$
LA1	85	16	19%	90	17	19%
LA2	115	35	30%	105	27	26%
LA3	140	38	27%	160	30	19%
LA4	115	21	18%	105	18	17%
LA5	115	38	33%	110	28	25%
LA6	185	36	19%	190	51	27%
LA7	90	14	16%	90	5	6%
LA8	100	46	46%	85	30	35%
LA9	95	22	23%	85	19	22%
LA10	45	18	40%	40	5	13%
Totals	1085	284	26%	1,060	230	22%

Source: PwC SLT pilot school survey, 2009 and PwC SLT pilot school survey 2010.

Section 3: Test awareness

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to explore the awareness levels of SLTs amongst the key stakeholder groups – school staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils. The findings presented in this section are based on evidence from focus groups with teachers, parents/carers and pupils. School survey findings are not presented here as the survey instrument contained no questions relating to awareness of SLTs.

This section is structured under the following headings:

- School staff;
- Governors;
- Parents/carers;
- Pupils; and
- Summary.

School staff

Findings from Phase 1 suggested that awareness levels amongst teaching staff were dependent on the year group they taught. Findings from Phase 2 suggest that while this continues to be the case, schools indicated that awareness levels have begun to increase amongst teaching staff across all year groups.

“When we first introduced it, it was for the upper end of KS2 who had more of an awareness [of SLTs]. Now awareness is right across the KS and all the staff... There is also growing awareness of it within the wider school community.”
(Teacher focus group participant)

The inclusion of the Year 6 mathematics test results in the AATs appears to have increased levels of awareness of the test amongst teachers generally. The majority of participants reported that teaching staff are more conscious that test results for pupils in Years 3-5 are becoming increasingly important with schools planning to undertake greater levels of banking of SLT test results. Teaching staff with older year groups are impacted most by the recent changes and consequently have the highest level of awareness and knowledge of SLTs. While there is a level of awareness further down the school actual knowledge of SLTs was, to some extent, questioned by a number of respondents.

“The teachers all know they happen but probably Year 4, 5 and 6 teachers are the ones that know the most about it because they’re the ones that have been part of its administration.” (Teacher focus group participant)

The findings suggest a mixed level of awareness of the test amongst support staff. Almost two-thirds of teachers in the focus groups indicated that their school used support staff for test administration in one form or another. This contributed to an increased level of awareness amongst support staff.

“There has been full engagement from support staff as well. Most of our support staff input the data and also help if they [the school] need readers or mathematics writers.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Governors

As highlighted in Phase 1, school governors were informed of the SLTs at the beginning of the pilot when they were required to agree to the schools participation in it. Findings from this phase of the research indicated that participants felt governors’ level of awareness was good. In part, this was attributed to the change in the accountability context.

“The governors had to agree to [our school’s] participation in the maths test results being used as a measure of

accountability... at that point they got more involved than they probably were before.” (Teacher focus group participant)

As before, governors’ level of engagement was very much dependent on their general level of engagement with the school. Furthermore, schools indicated that governors with a remit for curriculum were likely to be most aware and have a greater understanding of SLTs. Some participants mentioned that governors had attended information events for parents/carers while others were kept informed through presentations from the headteacher.

“Some of our governors came to our meetings that we ran for parents[/carers]. Some of them know more than others.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Parents/carers

Findings from Phase 1 indicated that the level of awareness which parents/carers have about the tests was dependent on their level of engagement with their child’s learning. Findings from Phase 2 teacher focus groups suggest that this remains the case and is supported by findings from the parent/carer focus groups.

“To parents[/carers] it’s just another test and as long as your children aren’t completely wound up by the process then you’re okay with it.” (Parent/carer focus group participant)

Findings from teacher focus groups suggest that schools purposefully limit the amount of information to parents/carers to ensure that the tests continue to remain ‘low key’, which is likely to impact on the awareness levels amongst this group. However, the findings suggest that since the inclusion of the mathematics test results in the AATs, schools have made efforts to increase parents’/carers’ awareness of the tests.

“We’ve deliberately not gone overboard with its profile with [parents/carers] because we wanted it to be less of a big deal.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Pupils

Schools continued to adopt a ‘low key’ approach to SLTs. Notwithstanding this, findings suggest that a greater number of pupils are becoming more aware of SLTs, with Year 4-6 pupils most aware of the tests. Furthermore, in contrast to findings from Phase 1, pupils tended to use the term ‘Single Level Tests’ in the pupil focus groups. Approximately one-fifth of teacher focus group participants mentioned talking to pupils specifically about what SLTs meant and why they were sitting them. This was reflected in findings from pupil focus groups where approximately one-half or more of pupils could recall their teachers explaining SLTs and could articulate a deeper understanding of them and how they differed from NCTs.

“We only put in Year groups 4, 5 and 6. We don’t put any from Year 3 in at all... so even though the [pupils] in that year group have an idea of it, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are engaged because they’re sitting the tests.” (Teacher focus group participant)

“They said to us that if you’re doing a SLT it’s because you’re already working at that Level and they have confidence that you can pass it because you’re working at that standard.” (Pupil focus group participant)

Teachers suggested that pupils in year groups further down the school had little or no awareness of SLTs. This was attributed to the fact that they had not sat a test. However, one teacher mentioned that as test certificates are given out at assembly the whole school population would be aware of the tests.

“It depends if they’ve done a test, some of the younger [pupils] haven’t yet and they perhaps know that we do it but it has little relevance to them.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Summary

In summary, the findings suggest that awareness of SLTs varies across the different stakeholder groups. For teaching staff and support staff, the inclusion of mathematics test results in the AAT has helped to increase awareness across the school. Findings from the teacher focus groups suggest that awareness amongst governors has increased slightly. This was attributed, in part, to the change in the accountability context. Consistent with findings from Phase 1, parents'/carers' awareness of SLTs was very much dependent on their level of engagement with their child's learning. Findings from pupil focus groups suggest that pupils who sat a test were most knowledgeable about the test. As with teaching and support staff, this was predominantly pupils in the older year groups.

Section 4: Test entry

Introduction

This section explores a number of areas relating to test entry. This section draws upon data collected through the school survey, the teacher focus groups and, to a lesser extent, data from the parent/carer and pupil focus groups.

This section is structured under the following headings:

- Teacher Assessment and pupil selection;
- Test entry administration; and
- Summary.

Teacher assessment and pupil selection

Findings from Phase 1 suggested that approximately two-fifths (41%) of survey respondents indicated that their school had a test entry policy, though it was unclear whether respondents were referring to a formalised policy for test entry or to a set of informal procedures. Phase 2 explored this area further and found that approximately one-sixth (16%) of schools have a test entry policy. However, findings from teacher focus groups suggest that, in addition to using TA data, schools also use a number of informal test entry criteria, which differs between schools.

“Our policy of putting in for tests is based on TA. [In addition,] there is a discussion with the class teacher and the teaching assistant as to whether they are mature enough to be entered.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Consistent with findings from Phase 1 of the study, the results from the Phase 2 school survey illustrate that TA continues to be central to test entry decisions, with 97% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that TA was given most weight in deciding test entry. Furthermore, the majority agreed or strongly agreed (97%) that they were confident in their schools’ TA data and believed that it will reliably predict pupil performance in the June round of SLTs.

Following on from this, school survey respondents and teacher focus group participants were asked to consider whether pupils were being entered for the Level their TA suggested they should. Overall, findings suggest that pupils are entered for the Level their TA suggests, although approximately one-half of focus group participants indicated their school still remained cautious about entering pupils working at sub-level c. Whilst the guidance is clear that all eligible pupils (whether they are operating at sub-levels a, b or c) ought to be entered, just over one-tenth (11%) of survey respondents indicated their school had entered ‘All’ sub-level c pupils for the test, while four-fifths (80%) indicated that they applied the discretion allowed by the system, and entered ‘Some’ sub-level c pupils. The most commonly cited reason for this was because they wanted to ensure, as far as possible, that a particular pupil was ‘secure’ in a Level before being entered for the test. Almost one-tenth (9%) of schools indicated they had chosen to enter no sub-level c pupils.

Findings from the teacher focus groups are consistent with the point made above, with over one-half of participants indicating they were not entirely comfortable with entering sub-level c pupils for the test. For pupils that were not operating securely within a particular Level, these schools expressed concern about the potential for over-testing these pupils should they have to re-sit the test and thought there to be the potential for an adverse affect on pupils not achieving a Level. Furthermore, schools stated they had experienced a drop in the observed relationship between TA and test results once they had begun entering pupils operating at sub-level c.

"I made a mistake... I did enter the [pupils] at 3C and our success rate went from 97% to 83% and the ethos of the SLT and MGP pilot was always that the test would be used to confirm TA." (Teacher focus group participant)

Notwithstanding the points made above, and in contrast to Phase 1, schools appear to have a higher level of awareness of the guidance relating to test entry of pupils working at sub-level c.

Almost all (97%) survey respondents indicated that their school used in-school moderation to validate the consistency of TA. Furthermore, just over three-quarters (78%) of survey respondents indicated that their school also participates in some form of cross-school moderation within their LA area. Findings from teacher focus groups suggest that moderation procedures focus on APP and TA to ensure that teachers are consistent across the school in terms of their TA Levels. Schools appear to have found this process helpful in developing confidence in TA judgements and in gaining greater knowledge of their pupils' progress.

"Once there's a lot of moderation you get into a position where APPs become more and more accurate... we're finding there's very close correlation between TAs and the results of SLT so it's helping teachers to plan their next steps and know exactly where [pupils] are in terms of their Levels of achievement." (Teacher focus group participant)

Findings from the survey and the focus groups suggest that schools apply a broader knowledge of the pupil to determine test entry. Consistent with findings from Phase 1 of this study, schools indicated that factors taken into consideration include the emotional maturity of pupils and home environment factors. Of schools that indicated additional factors were taken into consideration²:

- Just over one-quarter (28%) of these respondents indicated that they take individual pupil circumstances, including their SEN status, well-being and family background into account when deciding test entries; and
- One-third of respondents indicated that they use class testing and associated test results when making test entry decisions. The majority of which were cited as general class tests (including practice tests). In addition, one-third (of those respondents who indicated that they use tests and test results to inform entry decisions) stated that optional Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) were used in the decision-making process.³

"Knowledge of the [pupil] definitely affects test entry. We discuss that and ask ourselves: is it the right thing for them to do? It's not make or break until you get into Year 6." (Teacher focus group participant)

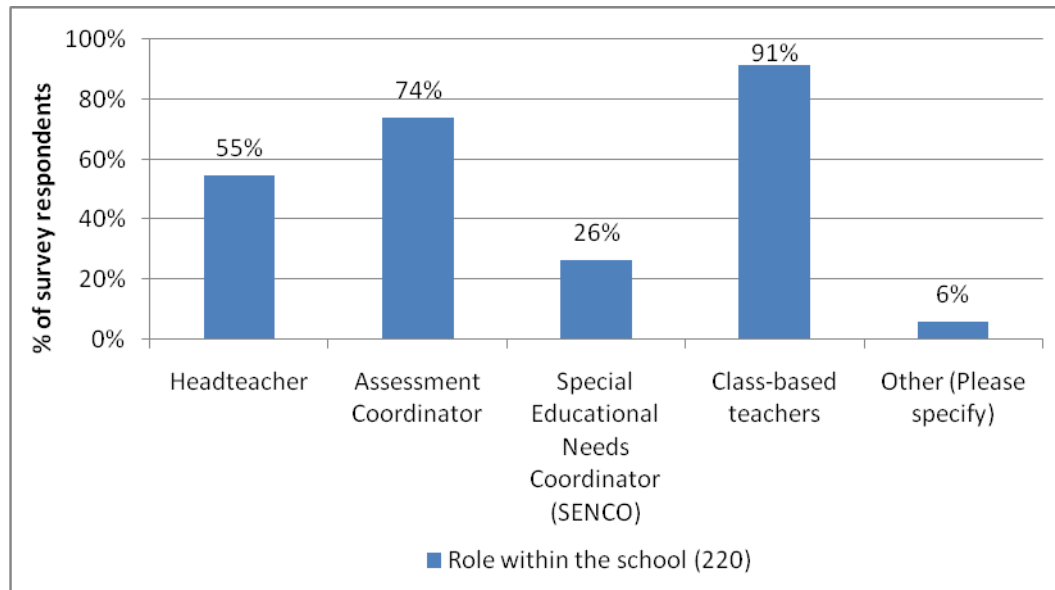
"It's also the home situation. This [pupil] is going through a rough period now and we ask ourselves whether they are going to be in the mindset to do the test. This [assessment] is important." (Teacher focus group participant)

Figure 4.1 illustrates the individuals that were reported to have been involved in test entry decisions. Just over nine-tenths (91%) of respondents indicated that class-based teachers were involved in test entry decisions. In addition, the assessment coordinator and the headteacher were also heavily involved in the decision making process. These findings are consistent with those from Phase 1.

² A total of 105 respondents indicated that in addition to TA they took into account other factors when deciding test entry.

³ Please note that as this was an open-ended question, respondents could provide more than one answer.

Figure 4.1: Who was involved in deciding pupil test entries?⁴



Source: PwC SLT Pilot School Survey, 2010.

Note: Totals will sum to more than 100% due to multiple response.

Figure 4.2 outlines the proportion of pupils entered for the June 2010 test round that had also been entered for a test in December 2009. The results indicate a significant proportion of overlap in pupil selection between the two test rounds. For example, 49% and 45% of schools indicated that they entered more than 10% of pupils for both test rounds in English reading and English writing respectively. Furthermore, 69% of schools indicated they entered more than 10% of pupils for both test rounds in the mathematics tests.

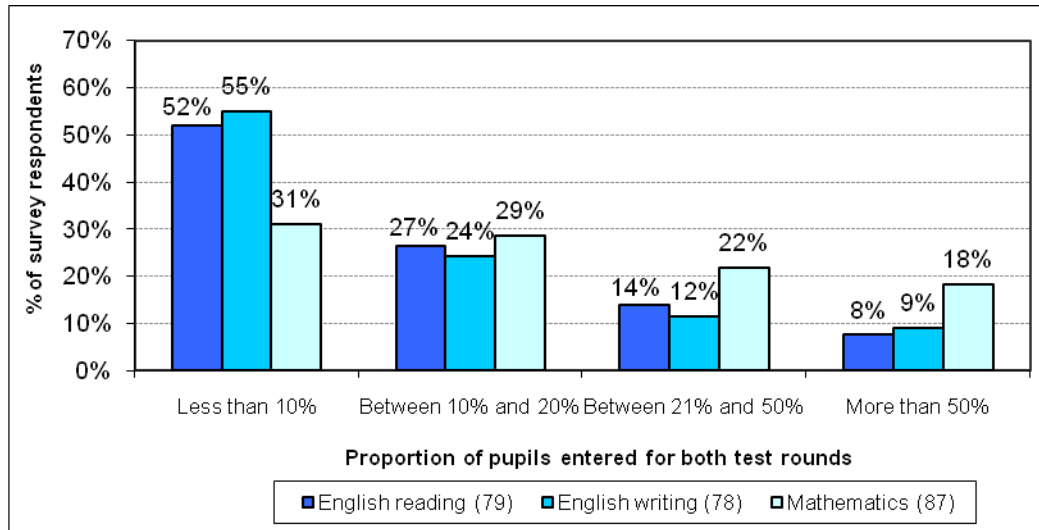
The most commonly cited explanations for this included:

- The pupil did not achieve December test and was re-entered in June (69%);
- The pupil passed the December test and had made one Level of progress in the intervening period (66%); and
- June entry was exploratory because the pupil had already passed the December test (39%).

When this area was explored as part of the teacher focus groups, participants cited a re-sit as the most common explanation for a pupil being re-entered for the same subject.

⁴ Other includes: SLT pilot leader, and deputy headteacher.

Figure 4.2: Proportion of pupils entered for June 2010 test round also entered for December 2009 test round



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.

Note: Totals will not sum to 100% due to rounding.

More specifically in relation to Year 6 pupils, over one-half of survey respondents indicated that more than 50% of Year 6 pupils were entered for mathematics in each test round. Consistent with the findings presented above, the most common reason cited for this was that pupils had made one Level of progress between test rounds. Findings from the teacher focus groups suggest that some participants felt pupils can make significant progress between December and June, though this proportion is nonetheless higher in comparison to the overall group.

In contrast to findings presented above, while almost nine-tenths (86%) of survey respondents indicated that test entry criteria did not differ between subjects, when explored in greater detail there did appear to be some variation in test entry between subjects for the December and June test rounds. For English reading and English writing, 18% and 16% respectively, of respondents indicated that test entry criteria differed between test rounds; in mathematics, just under two-fifths (39%) of respondents stated the test entry criteria differed between test rounds. These findings suggest that this variation was due to the change in the accountability context which meant a greater proportion of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were entered for the June test round to ensure they had banked the highest Level. Survey respondents indicated that just over one-half (51%) of respondents indicated that their schools took a different test entry approach for Year 6 pupils.

Considering these results and evidence from the teacher focus groups, this overlap between the December and June test entry rounds and between subjects may reflect a tendency on the part of schools to adopt a more ambitious entry approach for pupils that had already banked a Level in the previous test round. This may be driven by the inclusion of mathematics in the AATs which has led a number of schools to take, what they perceive, as greater risks with pupil selection.

“If they’ve banked a 4 but might probably not get a 5, we will give them a go [at the test].” (Teacher focus group participant)

Test entry administration

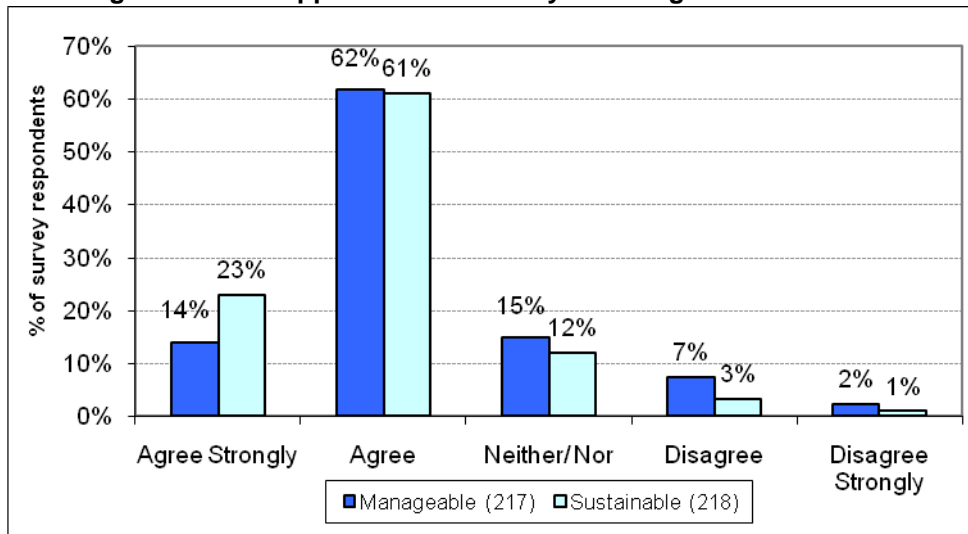
The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (86%) that the test entry approach is well known and understood in their school. When this is examined in greater detail by respondent’s role, it suggests that the assessment coordinator (90%) was more likely to strongly agree or agree with this statement.

To enter a pupil, schools are required to predict the Level at which a particular pupil will be operating at the time he/she takes the test. Approximately one-quarter of teacher focus group participants expressed a degree of concern with the time between test entry and a pupil sitting the test, suggesting that it could perhaps be slightly shorter. However, a number of schools felt that their ability to accurately predict pupil progress had improved over time and it is likely this will continue as the process further embeds.

“You’ve got to predict the Level of progress between now and the day the [pupil] takes the test... I think that’s quite hard for [a] teacher [to do]... a lot of teachers lack confidence in putting [pupils] forward, because they don’t want the figures coming back saying the [pupils] haven’t got the score... and that’s quite daunting.” (Teacher focus group participant)

The findings from the school survey also pointed to relatively high levels of agreement that the approach to test entry in their schools was both manageable in terms of workload and sustainable over time, with 76% and 84% respectively agreeing or strongly agreeing with these statements. Figure 4.3 presents these findings.

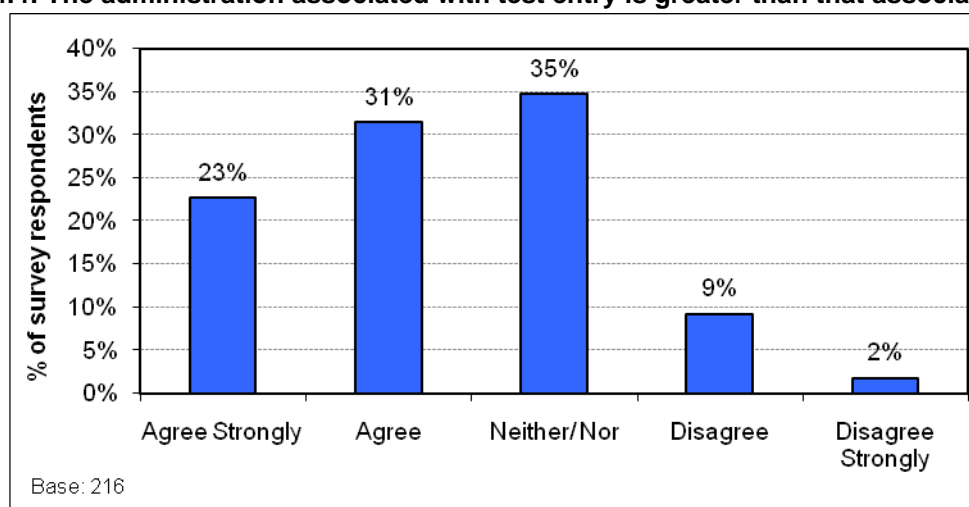
Figure 4.3: Our approach to test entry is manageable and sustainable



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010
 Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Respondents were asked to comment on the level of administration associated with test entry for SLTs. Figure 4.4 illustrates that the majority (54%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the administration associated with test entry was greater than that associated with NCTs whereas 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 4.4: The administration associated with test entry is greater than that associated with NCTs



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding

This is consistent with teacher focus group findings, which suggest that as test entry is completed on an individual pupil basis, the time taken to complete it is greater.

“Yes, [it is more burdensome] than NCTs because you don’t have to do anything [for NCTs] you just check the list and press the button. You don’t actually have to make any professional judgements.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Notwithstanding this, the majority of focus group participants felt they had successfully incorporated this process into their test entry approach and found it less burdensome as time had progressed and as the test entry procedures had become more embedded. Furthermore, a number of schools viewed the process positively as it provided them with an opportunity to get greater insight into individual pupil’s attainment Levels.

“The SLTs are much more personalised and that requires more thought to be given to the test entry but that’s worth it because you’re dealing with the [pupil] and their real TA rather than just entering them for a test.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Furthermore, just over four-fifths (81%) of survey respondents felt that the benefits of SLTs outweigh the administration associated with the test entry. This is supported by the findings from the teacher focus groups in which participants agreed that overall the SLT approach outweighed any additional workload.

Finally, the vast majority (91%) of survey respondents indicated that their school had no plans to change their test entry approach.

Summary

There is a high level of confidence in TA and its ability to be able to predict pupil performance in the June test round. While TA continues to hold most weight in pupil selection decisions, an additional element of teacher judgement is also applied by taking into consideration home environment factors and the degree of pupil maturity. A large proportion of teacher survey respondents indicated that their school had put in place moderation processes to ensure TA consistency across the school.

As with Phase 1, class-based teachers are most likely to be involved in pupil selection decisions. This was closely followed by the assessment coordinator, and to a lesser extent, the headteacher.

The inclusion of mathematics in the AAT appears to have impacted on test entry decisions with schools adopting a more ambitious test entry approach for pupils who had already banked a test Level. This was the case particularly for Year 6 pupils.

While schools appeared to have successfully incorporated the test entry approach into their existing process, they agreed that the administration associated with entry for SLTs was greater in comparison to NCTs. However, this was not necessarily regarded negatively and survey respondents felt that it was both manageable in terms of workload and sustainable over time.

Section 5: Test preparation and revision

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to examine the extent of preparation and revision activity which takes place in pilot schools, including the impact that having access to past papers has had on schools' behaviour. This section draws on evidence from the SLT school survey and pupil, parent/carer and teacher focus groups.

It is important to note that while Phase 1 of the research focused on revision activities undertaken by pilot schools, Phase 2 expanded upon this by exploring both test preparation and revision. The following are the working definitions for test preparation and revision which have been used for Phase 2 of the research.

- **Test preparation** includes activities such as familiarising pupils with the structure and/or layout of the test paper; providing pupils with test completion instructions and familiarising them with the location for the test; and
- **Revision** is any activity or set of activities that involve helping pupils to review material in advance of them sitting the test(s) - this is in addition to time spent with pupils consolidating their learning as part of normal teaching and learning.

This section is structured under the following headings:

- Preparation and revision activity;
- Changes to preparation and revision activity over time;
- Comparing revision and preparation activities for SLTs and NCTs; and
- Summary.

Preparation and revision activity

The research findings on the extent to which schools were preparing pupils for the tests were mixed. Preparation activities were more common for the June 2010 mathematics SLTs than for either English reading or English writing; 69% of respondents had invested time preparing pupils for mathematics compared to 56% for English reading and 55% for English writing. This suggests that the inclusion of the Year 6 mathematics results in the AATs may have resulted in increased preparation activity for the mathematics tests. Of respondents who were preparing pupils for the tests, most said that they invested only 'A little time' (89%, 90% and 81% for English reading, English writing and mathematics SLTs) in such activities, rather than 'A lot of time'.

Analysing these findings by job role showed that, in comparison to headteachers and assessment coordinators, class-based teachers were more likely to report that they had invested 'A lot of time' in test preparation. In addition, members of the Senior Leadership Team (other than the headteacher) were also more likely to report they invested 'A lot of time' which may reflect the fact that many retain a teaching role within their school.

"We try to give the [pupils] the skills to deal with a test situation. I think as the SLTs embed, [pupils] will have that experience of doing a test that they are comfortable with." (Teacher focus group participant)

Evidence from parent/carer focus groups indicated that they felt this level of preparation was appropriate.

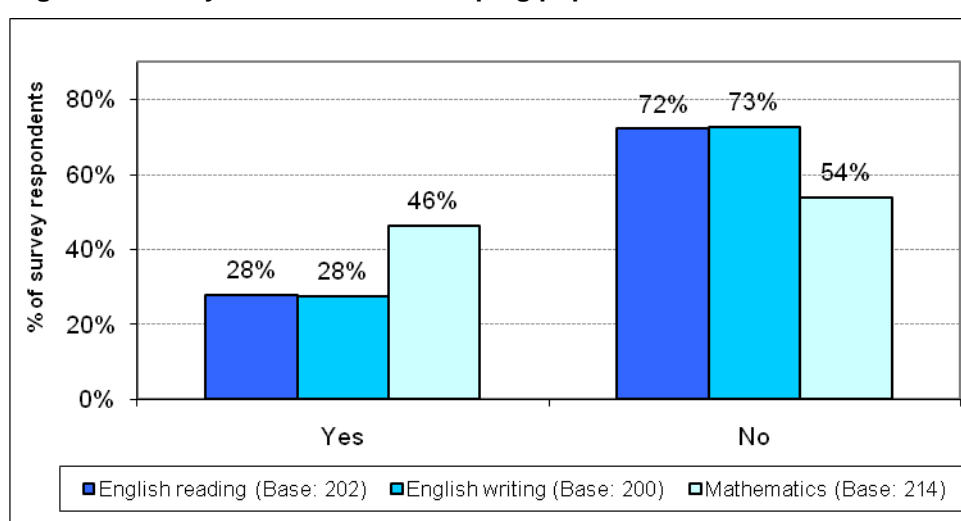
“Teaching pupils how to time themselves, how to move on; if the question has got one mark move onto a question that’s got five marks... I think [this] is really important in Year 6.” (Parent/carer focus group participant)

As Figure 5.1 shows, although the majority of respondents said that they did not invest time in helping pupils revise for the June 2010 SLTs, considerably more respondents were investing time in helping pupils to revise for mathematics SLTs (46%) compared to either English reading or English writing SLTs (both with 28%). This represents a marked increase in comparison to Phase 1, where 26% of respondents indicated that they were investing time in helping pupils to revise for mathematics SLTs. These figures have also increased for English reading and English writing, although to a lesser extent than for mathematics.

“...in Year 6 and because of the use of that data in league tables... you are going to prepare them as you would do for normal NCTs.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Getting pupils to sit past test papers and/or optional SATs was the most common method of revision reported by survey respondents. Others revisited the subject matter and practiced test style questions or focused on specific areas/weaknesses through booster classes and/or group work. Some respondents said that revision activities focused on Year 6 only.

Figure 5.1: Did you invest time in helping pupils revise for the June 2010 SLTs?

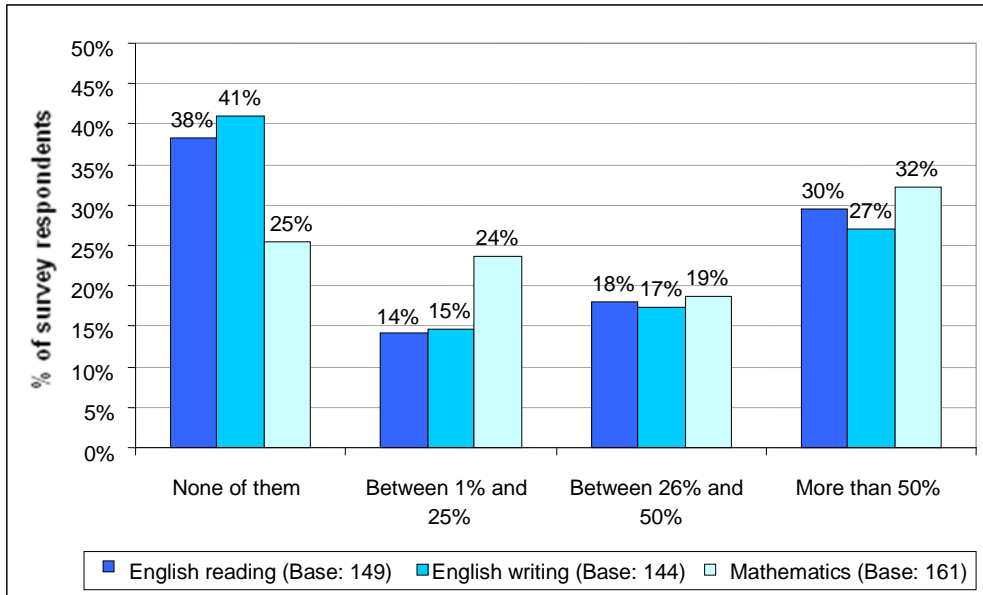


Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Past papers can be used for preparation for example, by familiarising pupils with the language and layout of the tests or for revising the content. As Figure 5.2 shows, a considerable proportion of respondents stated that none of the teachers in their school used past papers in advance of the June 2010 SLTs. Where test papers were used, their use was more widespread in mathematics than in either English reading or English writing, suggesting that the inclusion of the Year 6 mathematics results in the AATs may have impacted, at least to some extent, upon teachers’ behaviour in the run up to the tests. The fact that approximately one-half of respondents said that past papers were used by more than 25% of teachers in their schools in advance of the June 2010 tests, would imply that this behavioural change has affected more than just Year 6 teachers.

Figure 5.2: Approximately what proportion of teachers in your school used past papers in advance of the June 2010 SLTs?



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The proportion of respondents reporting the use of past papers in their school for all three subjects appears to have increased from Phase 1 where, at that time, approximately one-quarter (27%) of respondents reported that their school was using past papers in advance of the December 2009 test round. Respondents reported the following uses for past papers:⁵

- Familiarising pupils with test layout (79%);
- Familiarising pupils with the language used (73%);
- Helping pupils with test timing (70%);
- Familiarising pupils with the test instructions (68%);
- Familiarising pupils with the test conditions (57%); and
- Revising content (43%).

The pupils who attended the focus groups expressed mixed views about test revision as illustrated in the following quotations.

“Yes I like revision for maths because... it’s not like we have to sit down and do a test without talking, we discuss things and we do fun things, but it does help us.” (Pupil focus group participant)

“I don’t like revising for the test because it’s boring... the teacher says you made a mistake and it makes you feel like you’re not as good as you thought you were.” (Pupil focus group participant)

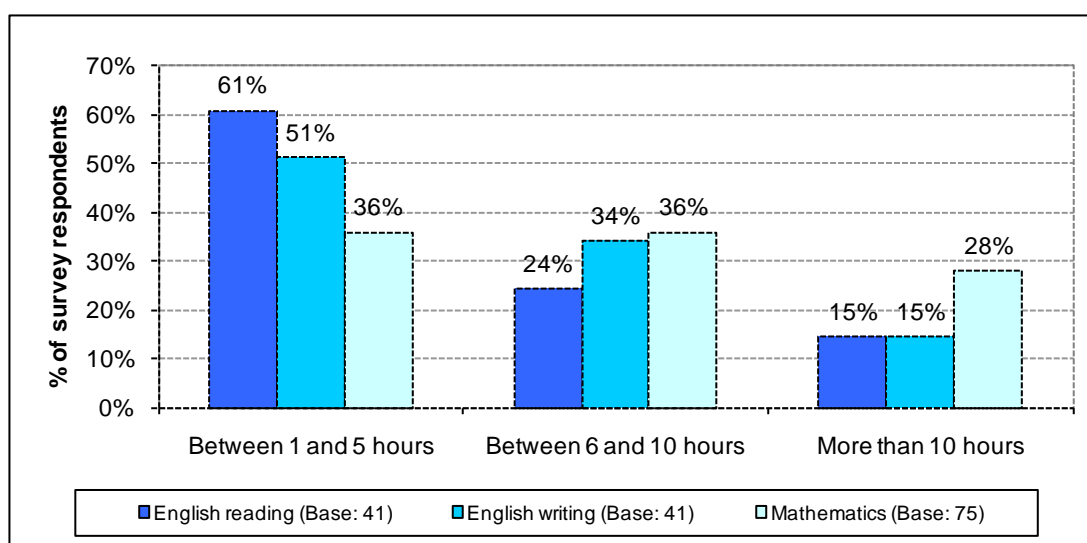
When asked to quantify the amount of time invested in helping pupils to revise for the June 2010 test round, answers ranged from 30 minutes to up to 100 hours.⁶ The majority of respondents said that they spent less than six hours revising for English reading and English writing (61% and 51% respectively). The amount of time spent revising for mathematics was more varied: 36% spent between one and five hours on revision; 36% spent between six and ten hours; and 28% spent more than ten hours. Almost double the proportion of

⁵ Note: Totals will not sum to 100 due to multiple response.

⁶ One respondent stated that they had invested approximately 30 minutes and two respondents stated that they had invested approximately 100 hours in total helping pupils revise for the June 2010 tests (both in mathematics). The latter were however, outliers in terms of the overall pattern of responses.

respondents reported spending more than ten hours revising for mathematics compared to either English reading or English writing SLTs. This finding is broadly supported by the findings from the Phase 1 school survey where approximately double the proportion of respondents reported investing time to 'A great extent' revising for mathematics compared to either English reading or English writing. However, there was considerable variation in the amount of time invested across the three subjects, as Figure 5.3 illustrates. Therefore, recently introduced accountability arrangements for mathematics SLTs may have affected the amount of revision undertaken.

Figure 5.3: Approximately how many hours in total were invested in helping pupils revise for the June 2010 tests?



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Most schools chose to involve those pupils not entered for SLTs in preparation and revision activities (58% and 55% respectively). The most common reason cited for doing so was that these activities were integrated into lesson plans for the benefit of all pupils. Other explanations included that it was important for those pupils who may sit the test in future to engage in these activities, whilst others said it was considered good practice to ensure that some pupils do not feel, in any way, excluded from these activities.

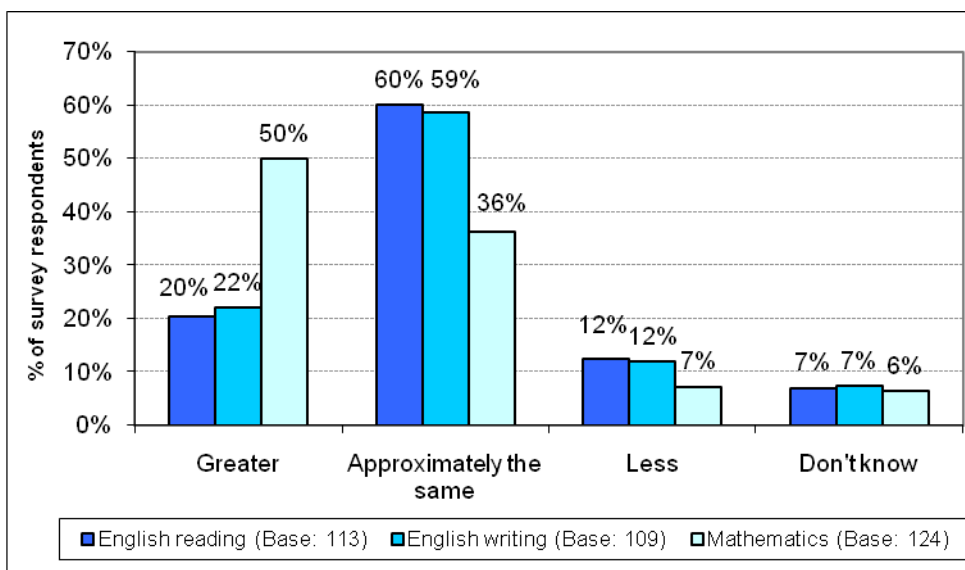
Changes to preparation and revision activity over time

On the whole, the majority of respondents said that they did not spend more time helping pupils to prepare (61%) or revise (67%) for SLTs now in comparison to the beginning of the SLT pilot.⁷ Respondents noted a variety of reasons for this. For example, almost one-third stated that they focused on teaching the curriculum rather than teaching to the test, whilst just over one-tenth noted that the purpose of the tests is to confirm TA therefore they saw no need to revise for the test. Where schools were investing more time in helping pupils to prepare or revise for the test, 22% of respondents said this was due to the new accountability arrangements for mathematics SLTs and 30% said it was to enable pupils to feel more confident about sitting the tests.

Notwithstanding the above, when asked to compare the amount of time invested in revising for the SLTs in June 2010 to the December 2009 test round, the majority of respondents said that they invested approximately the same amount of time in helping pupils to revise for both the English reading and English writing tests (60% and 59% respectively). However, one-half of respondents said they had invested a greater amount of time helping pupils to revise for the mathematics SLTs in June 2010 compared to English reading and writing (20% and 22% respectively). These findings are illustrated in Figure 5.4.

⁷ September 2007

Figure 5.4: Compared to the December 2009 round of SLTs, was the time spent helping pupils revise greater/the same/less for the June 2010 tests?



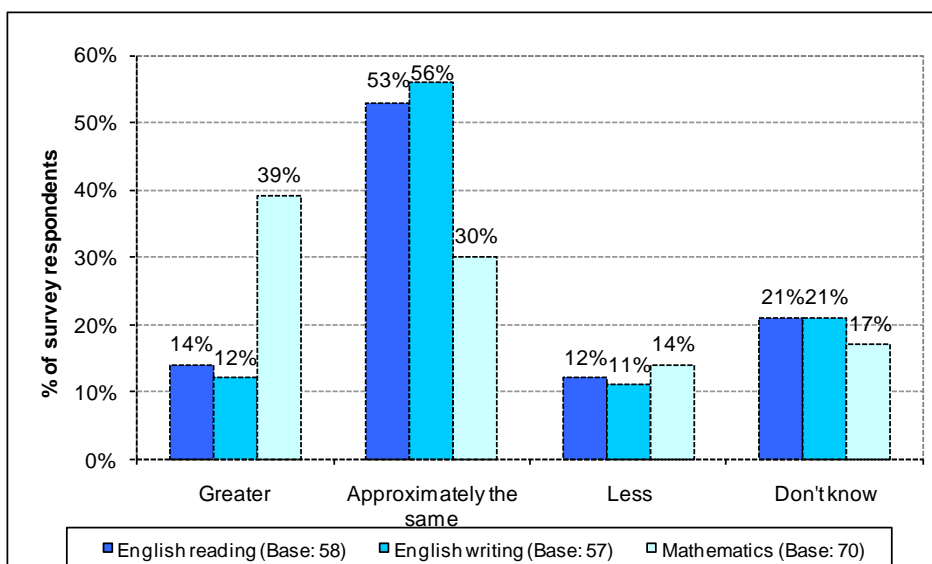
Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 5.5 is based on findings collected in Phase 1. When compared with findings from Phase 2 it suggests that the level of revision undertaken in June appears to be a seasonal variation rather than an increasing trend over time. This may be explained by the timing of the June test round and the fact that revision activities may be ongoing for end of year tests and other NCTs. This finding is supported by evidence from the teacher focus groups.

“Because they are doing both NCTs and SLTs [in English] the process has been more or less the same [as it was for just NCTs]. Using past papers...” (Teacher focus group participant)

Figure 5.5: Compared to the June 2009 round of SLTs, was the time spent helping pupils revise greater/the same/less for the December 2009 tests?



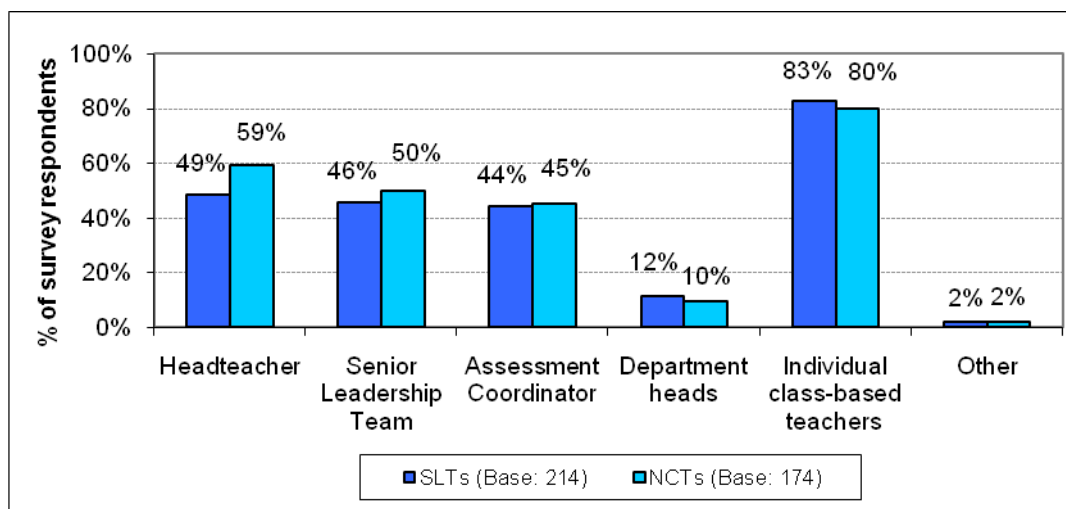
Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2009.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Comparing revision and preparation for SLTs and NCTs

While decisions about preparation and revision activities were largely the responsibility of individual class-based teachers, presumably because they have a greater understanding of their pupils' needs the survey found that responsibility was often shared across a number of staff within the school. This is broadly consistent with the decision making process for NCTs (see Figure 5.6). The 'other' category included, for example, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).

Figure 5.6: Who is responsible for making decisions about test preparation and revision for SLTs and for NCTs?



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.

Note: Totals will not sum to 100 due to multiple response.

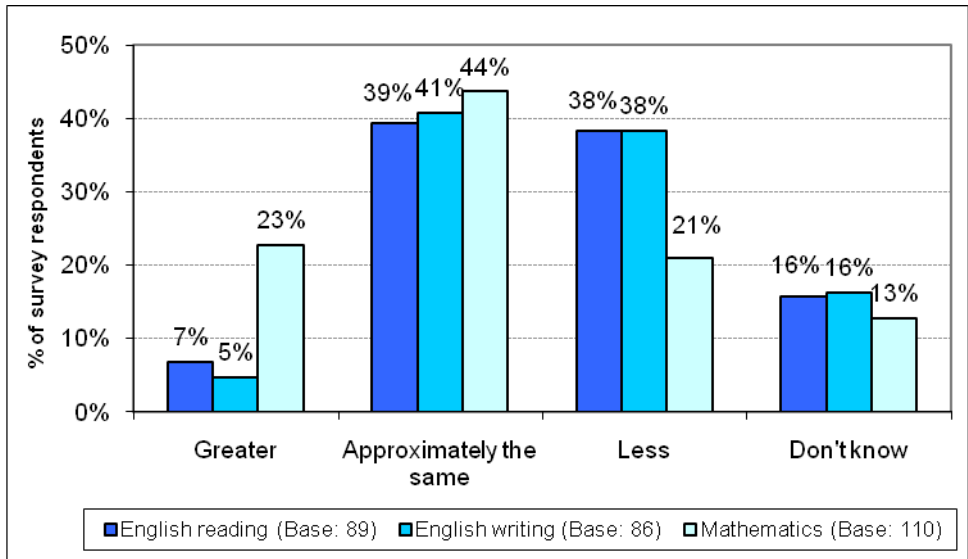
Figure 5.7 illustrates that, regardless of the subject area, the majority of respondents invested either the same or less time with Year 6 pupils in helping them to revise for SLTs when compared to the 2009 NCTs. This is supported by the Phase 1 survey findings and evidence gathered through the teacher focus groups.

"[The run up to the SLTs is] very different from NCTs when you would have had weeks of preparation and revision. I'm quite comfortable with doing a couple of [preparation] sessions the week before [the SLTs], saying this is what the papers look like, these are the questions. We have given the kids a look at the [SLT] papers that they had done previously to see if there were mistakes." (Teacher focus group participant)

This approach to revision was welcomed by parents/carers.

"The way it is done now is much more [about] confidence building." (Parent/carer focus group participant)

Figure 5.7: For Year 6 pupils, compared to the 2009 NCTs, was the time spent helping pupils revise greater/the same/less for the June 2010 tests?



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.
 Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

In Phase 2 of the research, a considerable proportion of respondents invested more time in helping Year 6 pupils to revise for the mathematics SLTs in June 2010 than they did for the 2009 NCTs. This contrasts with the findings from the teacher focus groups and may point to a general reluctance on the part of some participants to candidly discuss this more sensitive issue in front of their peers, given the nature of SLTs and the perceived move away from teaching to the tests. The relative newness of the tests and the opportunity for pupils to achieve a Level 6 could explain why some schools are spending more time on mathematics revision this year compared to last year.

Summary

Findings on the extent to which schools were preparing pupils for the tests were mixed, but the majority of those respondents who were preparing pupils for SLTs invested a little time in such activities. The majority of respondents said that they did not invest time in helping pupils to revise for the June 2010 SLTs. While respondents said that the amount of time invested in preparation and revision had not changed since the beginning of the SLT pilot, when explored further there does appear to have been more revision activity for the June 2010 test round compared to the December 2009 test. This is probably linked to the end of the academic year and the timing of NCTs and the change in the accountability context.

As with NCTs, class-based teachers were largely responsible for making decisions about test preparation and revision for SLTs, but the senior leadership team and assessment coordinator were often involved in this decision making process. Overall the amount of Year 6 time invested in revising for SLTs in June 2010 was no greater than the time invested in revising for NCTs in 2009.

The inclusion of the Year 6 mathematics results in the AATs does appear to have resulted in an increase in the amount of time schools invest in test preparation and revision activity for that subject.

Section 6: Impact on schools

Introduction

This section draws on findings from the school survey and teacher focus groups in order to assess the importance which schools place on SLTs as well as the impact that they have on: the curriculum; teaching and learning; and the tracking and monitoring of pupil progress and attainment. It also considers the potential future impact of including mathematics SLTs in the schools' AAT.

This section is structured under the following headings:

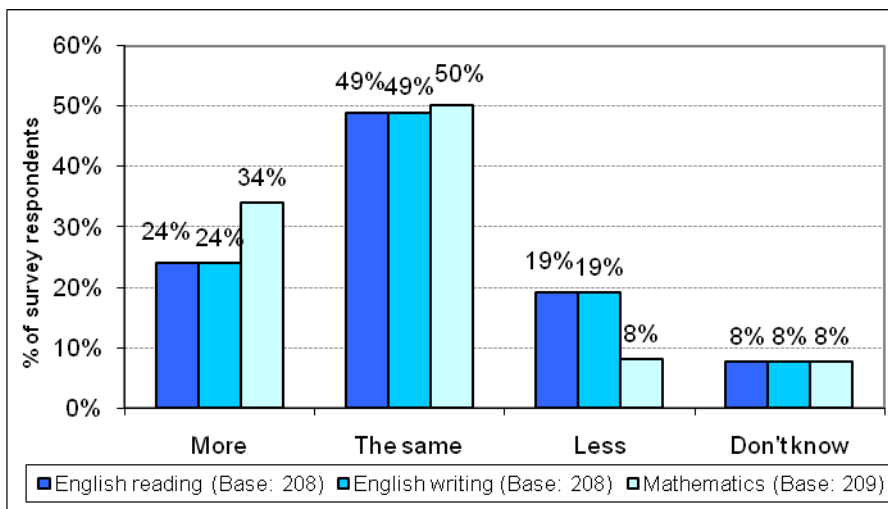
- Comparing the importance of SLTs and NCTs;
- Impact on the curriculum;
- Impact on teaching and learning;
- Impact on tracking and monitoring;
- Using mathematics test results in the AATs; and
- Summary.

Comparing the importance of SLTs and NCTs

Findings on the level of importance of SLTs in comparison to NCTs were mixed. However, on balance respondents believed that, compared to NCTs, SLTs had the same or greater importance in their school. As Figure 6.1 illustrates, that change in accountability arrangements had a marginal impact on how schools view the mathematics SLTs, which now impact Years 3-5 as schools increase the extent to which they bank test Levels.

Analysis of survey data by job role showed that across all three subjects, headteachers and assessment coordinators tended to place greater importance on SLTs in comparison to NCTs; other members of the senior leadership team and class-based teachers tended to place the same importance on SLTs as on NCTs, whilst 'other' staff, (for example the SENCO and Teaching Assistants) tended to place less importance on SLTs. This finding could reflect the level of buy-in from these individuals or the amount of time they may have spent on activities related to the Pilot.

Figure 6.1: Do SLTs have more/the same/less importance in your school than NCTs?



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The consensus from the teacher focus groups was that SLTs had greater significance for the school as a whole in comparison to NCTs, the latter being viewed as more important for Year 6 pupils almost exclusively.

“SLTs are more significant across the whole school because the whole school know about them now, whereas SATs [are] only [in] Year 6.” (Teacher focus group participant)

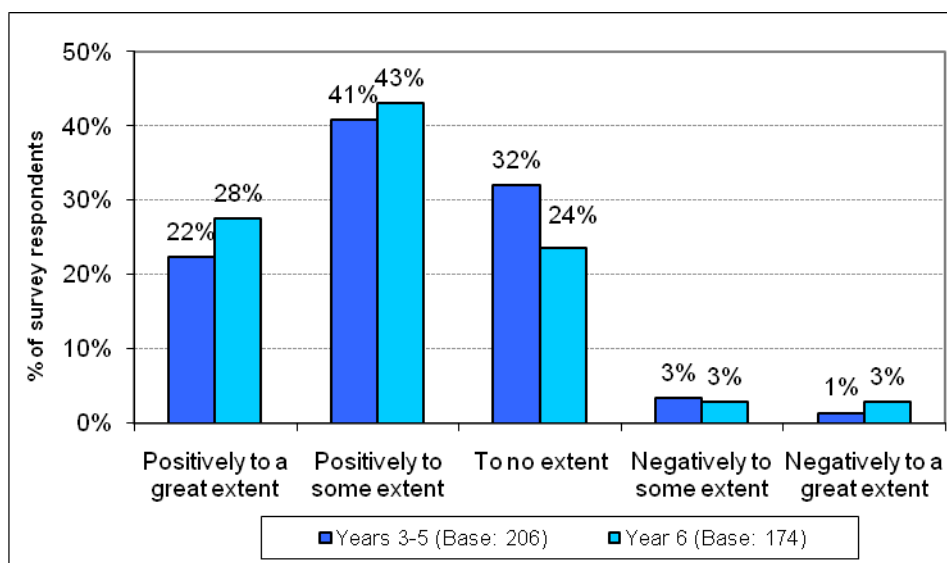
It is noteworthy that, where focus group participants said that SLTs had a lower significance than NCTs, this was because they felt the tests had become part of the whole school approach to assessment as pupils are assessed throughout the KS and their performance is not dependent on their end of KS tests.

“I think SLTs have a lower significance because they’ve become part of the assessment procedure, so it’s a whole school approach. There isn’t that build up [which you get with NCTs].” (Teacher focus group participant)

Impact on the curriculum

Figure 6.2 illustrates that the majority (63% for Year 3-5 and 71% for Year 6) of respondents reported that SLTs did contribute to a more balanced curriculum for all year groups. This is in contrast to the findings reported in Phase 1 where over one-half (54%) of respondents reported that SLTs did not contribute to a more balanced curriculum. The impact of SLTs on the curriculum for Year 6 pupils was more positive (in proportionate terms) than for the Year 3-5 pupils. Potential explanations for this are discussed later in this Section.

Figure 6.2: To what extent do SLTs contribute to a more balanced curriculum?



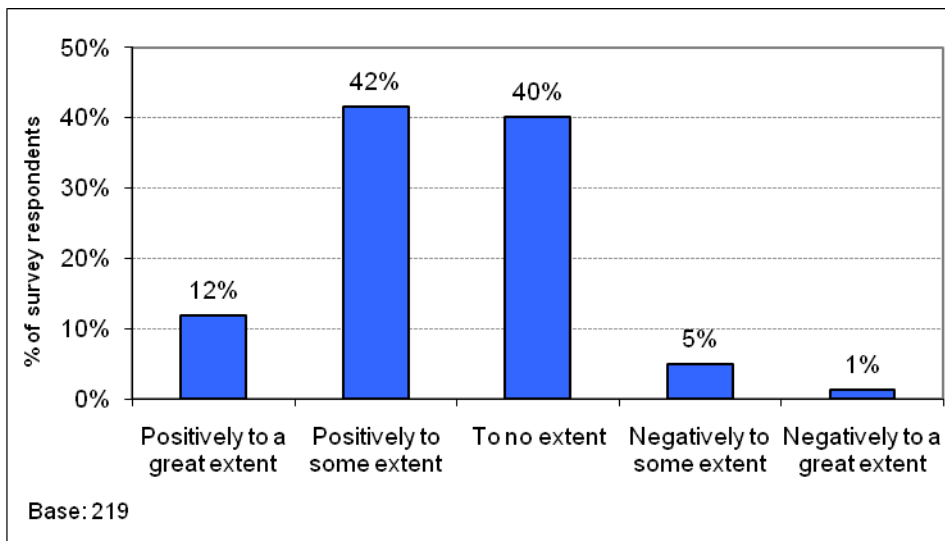
Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Where respondents felt that SLTs positively contributed to a more balanced curriculum, they noted that there was less emphasis on teaching to the test in comparison to NCTs, allowing them more time to teach the wider curriculum. Respondents also reported that SLTs give teachers more confidence in their TA, by allowing them to differentiate the curriculum and develop more personalised learning programmes for their pupils.

Over one-half of the survey respondents said that the SLTs had a positive impact on the breadth of curriculum covered; only a small minority (6%) said that there had been a negative impact on the breadth of curriculum covered. These findings are illustrated in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3: To what extent have SLTs had an impact on breadth of curriculum covered?



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Teacher focus group participants generally supported this positive view about the impact of SLTs on the curriculum. Teachers felt that there were a variety of ways in which SLTs had freed-up more class time to cover the curriculum, particularly in Year 6, including:

- Redistributing responsibility across the KS;

“Because it’s imposing that accountability across the KS there isn’t that pressure to cram in Year 6; so you don’t need to lose that curriculum time.” (Teacher focus group participant)

- Focusing less on revision compared to NCTs; and

“The time allocation has enhanced particular subjects, especially in Year 6. We’ve moved science units [back in], which we had to shift out of Year 6 because we didn’t have time to do them. [We have moved them back in] because we haven’t got the pressures of doing the revision from February onwards.” (Teacher focus group participant)

- Having the summer test round in June instead of May (as is the case for NCTs) which gives staff an additional month for teaching and learning.

“I haven’t felt the need to cram in all of the mathematics objectives before May. I have felt more relaxed about things because I know I have an extra month [of teaching] before they do their test.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Impact on teaching and learning

The vast majority of respondents claimed that SLTs, along with the APP materials, had a positive impact on how they teach pupils, either ‘to some extent’ or ‘to a great extent’ (92%). This supports the findings from Phase 1. Reasons cited for this positive response included better identification of individual pupil’s needs, which improves planning and target setting and enables greater personalisation of the curriculum. Participants from one teacher focus group also felt that the evidence-based approach of APP helps to facilitate a more balanced curriculum.

“The fact that you can use cross curricular evidence [for APP] is making staff think they can give the [pupils] [more varied] opportunities, so we’re being far more creative in our planning.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Furthermore, the majority of respondents also stated that SLTs had a positive impact on teaching and learning generally, either ‘to some extent’ or ‘to a great extent’ (69%).

Most participants in the teacher focus groups also welcomed the opportunity for the more able pupils to achieve a Level 6.

“By being able to access Level 6 we’ve been able to stretch our very bright Year 6 [pupils] further.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Some focus group participants noted that because pupils still sit the English NCTs, they have had limited opportunity to change their approach to teaching English in Year 6, and therefore found it challenging to measure the full impact of the English reading and English writing SLTs on teaching and learning at this point in time.

“We are still doing NCTs, so I don’t think there has been a significant difference with what I’m doing in my class this year than with previous years, but there is a difference with maths.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Impact on tracking and monitoring

As with Phase 1 of the research, the vast majority of respondents in Phase 2 agreed that SLTs contribute to improved tracking and monitoring of individual pupil’s progress, either ‘to some extent’ or ‘to a great extent’ (87%).

“You have to engage in termly assessment and think about how accurate that assessment is... Pupil progress meetings become more and more productive. That helps teachers to group and differentiate [pupils] and perhaps to think more about what they have got to plan for, given the ability spread in their class.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Respondents felt that SLTs have added to the existing tracking and monitoring systems in schools, making it easier to spot gaps in pupils’ learning. It was also suggested that SLTs help to confirm TA in addition to contributing to a greater focus on accountability. This was said to have had a positive impact on most KS 2 pupils (50%), particularly the more able/motivated groups (38%).

While the response was largely positive, some concerns were raised about a negative impact on lower ability pupils, particularly those with SEN (43%), as well as those who are not confident in a test environment (15%).⁸ This may be because these pupils are less likely to be entered for SLTs (see Section 7 of this report for further discussion on the impact of SLTs on these pupils).

Of those respondents who did not feel SLTs had impacted on tracking and monitoring (13%), the most commonly cited reason was that they felt it was APP, rather than SLTs, which had improved this process; a finding supported by teacher focus group evidence. Some of the teachers who attended the focus groups said that the time lag between sitting the tests and receiving test results made tracking and reporting attainment more difficult to manage; especially in terms of reporting pupil attainment in Year 6 to post-primary schools.

“The APP has made a difference because that is their personalised learning programme and that has made a big difference to our intervention programmes and tracking our data on a termly basis. We are much more acutely aware of progression and the need to intervene at different points. The SLTs just validate and moderate that.” (Teacher focus group participant)

“I don’t think you’d rely on your SLT results to track pupils because you’d be waiting a long time for some of them.” (Teacher focus group participant)

⁸ Please note that the base for this question is 54.

Using mathematics test results in the AATs

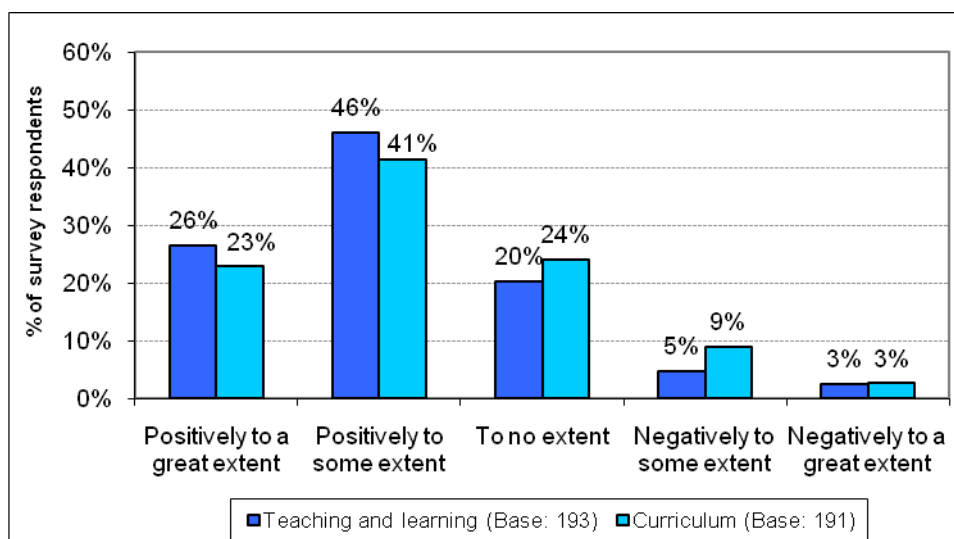
For many focus group participants the inclusion of mathematics SLT results in place of SATs for the school's AAT has increased the importance attached to the mathematics SLTs this school year.

"[SLTs] are probably gaining in significance. We played them down I think when they first came out... this year particularly, it comes to the top really with us not doing the maths SATs and SLTs taking over." (Teacher focus group participant)

Figure 6.4 shows the impact which respondents believed that using mathematics SLTs for the school's AAT will have on teaching and learning and on the curriculum in the future. As the Figure demonstrates, the potential impact was largely perceived to be a positive one. Some respondents said that testing pupils at the appropriate Level means they could spend less time on revision and more time on personalising the curriculum.

However, around one-fifth of respondents did not think that the use of mathematics SLTs for the school's AAT would have any impact on these areas in the future. A minority (8% for teaching and learning and 12% for curriculum) of survey respondents thought that the use of mathematics SLTs in the school's AAT would have a negative impact on these areas, and on the curriculum in particular, although this appears to be somewhat linked to a general reluctance to use AATs as a method for reporting test results. Compared to the Phase 1 survey, it appears that respondents have become more positive about the potential impact on the curriculum⁹. Similar comparisons are not available for teaching and learning.

Figure 6.4: To what extent do you think using mathematics SLTs for the school's Achievement and Attainment Tables (AAT) will impact on teaching and learning and on the curriculum?



Source: PwC SLT Pilot school survey, 2010.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

A number of teacher focus group participants were concerned that using SLTs in the school's AAT would result in a decrease in their attainment profile (particularly Level 5) as pupils would only be entered for a Level 5 test when they are ready.

"I think the MGP schools are going to see a dip in their higher Level attainment and I don't think there is any way we are getting around that. I think we are going to get few [Level] 5s because there were so many [pupils] who were getting it... and now we're not entering them unless they are a secure Level 5." (Teacher focus group participant)

⁹ In the Phase 1 school survey when asked 'To what extent do you think using mathematics SLTs for the school's AAT will impact on the curriculum in the future: 12% of respondents answered 'positively, to a great extent'; 35% said 'positively, to some extent'; 39% thought the impact would be 'neither positive nor negative'; 12% answered 'negatively, to some extent'; and 2% said 'negatively, to a great extent'.

Summary

The majority of respondents said that SLTs were given the same or greater importance in their school, compared to NCTs, with slightly more importance placed on the mathematics SLTs – this is likely to be a result of the new accountability arrangements for mathematics. Similarly, the majority of respondents felt that SLTs do contribute to a broader and more balanced curriculum across KS 2, and particularly in Year 6, by freeing up more class time to cover a wider curriculum, validating TA and helping to better personalise the curriculum to suit individual pupil's ability.

The combination of SLTs and APP materials had a positive impact on how the vast majority of respondents teach their pupils, because it provided a greater opportunity to better identify pupils' needs, improved target setting and enabled greater personalisation of the curriculum. All of these impacts are expected to be sustained over time.

Respondents also agreed that SLTs contribute to improved tracking and monitoring of individual pupil's progress. This was said to have had a positive impact on most KS 2 pupils, especially the more able and motivated pupils. However, it was noted that there was the potential to negatively impact pupils with SEN or those who may be less confident in a test environment.

Section 7: Impact on pupils, parents and carers

Introduction

This section examines the impact of SLTs on pupils and parents/carers. The findings presented in this section are based on the school survey; teacher, parent/carer and pupil focus groups.

This section is structured under the following headings:

- Pupils' attitudes towards testing;
- Pupil engagement and progression;
- Parent/carer engagement; and
- Summary.

Pupils' attitudes towards testing

The majority of pupils were generally positive about the SLT experience. Overall, the majority of pupils preferred English tests, both reading and writing, to mathematics because they were able to use their "imagination" and enjoyed the variety of topics studied. While around one-tenth of pupils felt they struggled with the time in English writing tests, the majority felt they had enough time for all tests. Approximately one-half of pupils mentioned that they would like to complete similar tests in other subjects; the most common subject mentioned was science.

"I like English because I think it can be exciting when you do certain subjects. At the moment we're doing rivers and it's really exciting and I like doing research about certain things." (Pupil focus group participant)

While a small proportion of pupils indicated that they felt worried about tests in general, for the most part pupils felt ready to sit the SLTs and understood that they would only be sitting the test once they were ready. The minority of pupils indicated that pressure came in the form of added insistence from their parents/carers to prepare and revise for the tests beforehand. However, for the most part, parents/carers (approx 85%) noticed no difference in their child's behaviour prior to the test. Findings from the parent/carer and pupil focus groups indicate that schools' approach to SLTs had helped to reduce pressure on those pupils who were sitting the test, for example by limiting emphasis on the test in the classroom. There appeared to be no difference in relation to each of the subjects. Furthermore, parent/carer focus group participants who had a child(ren) in Year 6 noted that there was less pressure attached to SLTs when compared to NCTs, a finding supported by pupil focus group participants.

"She was less stressed. You could see when she came home she wasn't stressed at all but when they're doing the NCTs your children do get worked up and they actually do talk about it as well. But with this one the teacher is actually really relaxed so they don't bring the stress home with them. And we're not so stressed out either." (Parent/carer focus group participant)

"I prefer them to NCTs because on NCTs you just have one day but SLTs it's two times you have to do them every year, so even if you don't get it, you can revise more and get it the next time, whereas NCTs you just have one chance and that could be your bad day." (Pupil focus group participant)

Having two test rounds combined with the opportunity to bank test results also appears to have reduced pressure on pupils as they are aware that their achievement for mathematics no longer depends on their performance on one particular day.

“The attitude of Year 6 mathematics [pupils] has changed. They’re really enjoying their mathematics because they know already they have [a particular] Level.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Pupil engagement and progression

Consistent with Phase 1 findings, pupils indicated that they liked the personalised approach of SLTs because tests are based on what they perceived as their attainment Level. This is supported by parent/carer focus group participants who felt their children were more relaxed when sitting a SLT.

“I prefer SLTs because then you get your actual Level so you know what you’re actually doing.” (Pupil focus group participant)

“My daughter loved doing them, she enjoyed them because it... catered [for] her Level and she felt confident. That actually made her achieve more I think.” (Parent/carer focus group participant)

In terms of pupil engagement, just under two-thirds of survey respondents felt it would have a positive impact to ‘some extent’ or a ‘great extent’. Furthermore, almost three-quarters (72%) of survey respondents indicated that SLTs have impacted specifically on pupil engagement with progression.

This is supported by findings from the teacher focus groups in which around one-half of participants mentioned that they had begun to notice an increase in engagement as pupils were more aware and keen to know what they needed to do to achieve the next Level.

“I like the tests because I like getting my results and I don’t mind if I don’t pass because... I just have to try harder and work up to standard.” (Pupil focus group participant)

Teacher focus group participants noted a particular impact on SEN and Additional Educational Needs (AEN) pupils, specifically those with English as an Additional Language (EAL). A small proportion of schools noted that while these pupils may be working securely within a Level, their experience of this group of pupils suggests that they would be unable to complete the test within the allocated time. However, other schools noted that SLTs had reduced the pressure on SEN pupils as many would not be working at a Level 3 and although their progress would be tracked through the APP they would not be required to sit the test. For those that were working within Level 3, one school felt this was a more appropriate test than NCTs.

“I actually think it’s a benefit to [pupils] who are SEN. We’ve got this idea about when they’re ready, if they’re not ready then you’re not going to put them through that system. So these [pupils] have made progress and we are measuring that progress but it doesn’t have to be through a test.” (Teacher focus group participant)

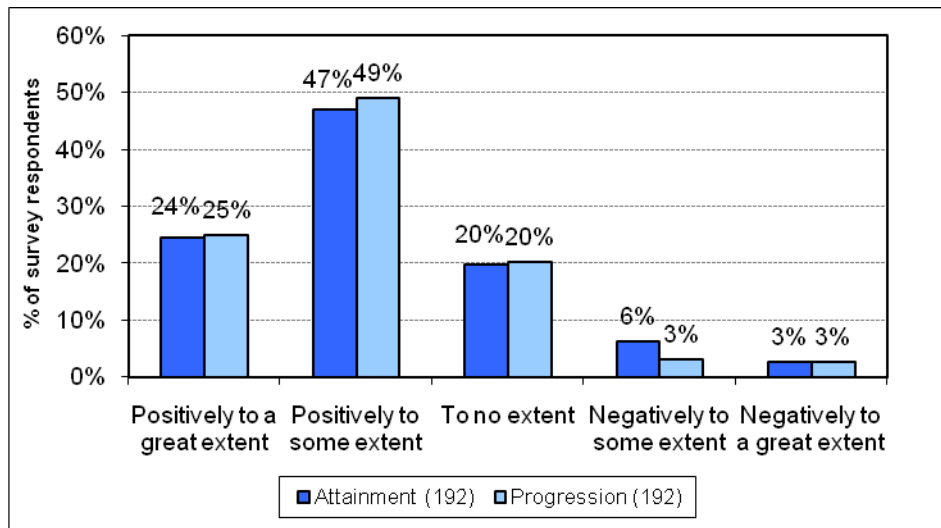
Findings from the focus groups suggest that the opportunity to enter pupils for a Level 6 test is viewed positively by all groups – teachers, parents/carers and pupils. Parents/carers felt positive that higher achieving pupils still had a challenge should they achieve a Level 5, whereas teachers noted a change in how they teach pupils and welcomed the opportunity to differentiate the curriculum for those pupils working towards or within a Level 6. The findings from the pupil focus groups indicated that pupils who have sat or are working towards a Level 6 within a particular subject felt a sense of achievement and welcomed the opportunity to undertake more challenging class-work.

“Because I’m cleverer than most [pupils] in my class I had to do what the other [pupils] were doing whereas this year I get to go off and do harder maths with the headteacher.” (Pupil focus group participant)

“It’s also motivating the most able pupils because they’re able to work on a Level that reflects their ability rather than one that caps them. If they’re a Level 6, they wouldn’t get [that Level] with NCTs.” (Teacher focus group participant)

In addition to the above, findings from the school survey also suggest that respondents are positive regarding the potential of SLTs to impact positively on pupil attainment and progression in the future. As Figure 7.1 shows, nearly three-quarters of respondents expect SLTs to continue to impact positively on pupil attainment and progression in the future.

Figure 7.1: Future impacts of SLTs on pupil attainment and progression



Source: PwC SLT Pilot School Survey, 2010.
 Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

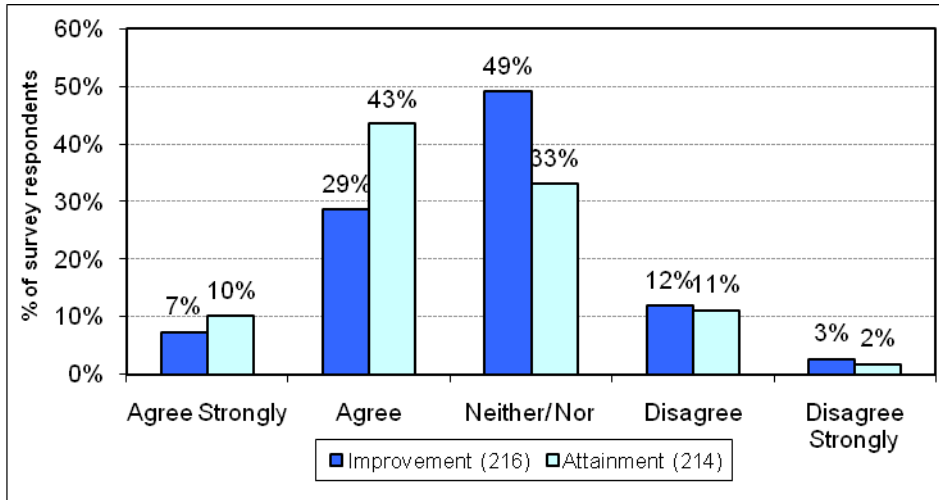
Parent/carer engagement

Around two-thirds of survey respondents agreed or agreed strongly that, as a result of being involved in the MGP and SLT pilot, they provide more information to parents/carers about their child(ren)'s attainment and progress (45% and 20% respectively). One-quarter of respondents were undecided and one-tenth disagreed or disagreed strongly on this point (9% and 1% respectively).

The majority of respondents agreed or agreed strongly (83%) that their school has informed parents/carers that the results of Year 6 mathematics SLTs have replaced NCTs in the school's AAT.

As highlighted in Section 3 of this report and the interim report, the knowledge which parents/carers have of SLTs is dependent on their level of engagement with their child's learning. This is supported by findings from the school survey, in which nearly one-half of respondents indicated that SLTs have had no impact on parents'/carers' engagement in terms of their child(ren)'s progress and what they need to do to improve. However, survey findings did indicate that just over one-half of respondents felt that parents/carers now have a better understanding of their child's attainment Level.

Figure 7.2: As a result of the SLTs parents/carers (a) show more interest in their child’s progress and what they need to do to improve and (b) have a better understanding of the Level of attainment of their child.



Source: PwC SLT Pilot School Survey, 2010.
 Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Approximately one-quarter of teacher focus group participants mentioned that they were sharing APP and SLT data (e.g. attainment Levels) with parents/carers, which suggest that the type of information shared with parents/carers has changed. The rationale for this was that the opportunity to provide information to parents/carers based on APP provides them with more detailed information on their child’s progress.

“Because of APP, all the grids and the information that we have from those that we continually give to parents/carers and let them know their child’s Level and targets, they have all that information so they don’t feel they need a test because we’re already telling them the Level.” (Teacher focus group participant)

Parents/carers raised a number of issues in relation to SLTs, the most common being SLTs versus multi-level testing, i.e. NCTs. A small proportion of parents/carers worried that their child did not have the opportunity to achieve a higher Level on the day of the tests because a particular test is at a single Level. This mirrors schools’ concerns about a potential dip in their attainment profile. A number of others expressed concerns about potential over-testing, a particular concern for parents/carers whose children had completed both the NCTs and the mathematics and English (reading and writing) SLTs.

In some instances, parents/carers were a little confused when their child had not achieved the Level for which they were entered for the test. Parents/carers understood NCTs and that their child would receive a Level once they had completed the test. However, in the case of SLTs and where their child did not achieve the Level for which they were entered for the test, parents/carers questioned whether this meant their child was operating at the Level below or whether the TA assessed Level remained valid.

“If their teacher assessed them at a Level 5b and then they do a Level 5 test and don’t get it, are they not a Level 5 even though they’ve been teacher assessed [at that Level]?” (Parent/carer focus group participant)

“I don’t see why you need these tests if they go on TA anyway.” (Parent/carer focus group participant)

The majority of parents/carers indicated that they are happy about the low-profile approach to SLTs however, and in contrast to Phase 1 findings, parents/carers appear to be undertaking more preparation and revision activities with their child(ren) at home, particularly those parents/carers with child(ren) in Year 6. As mentioned in Section 5, this may reflect the tradition of revision and preparation taking place in schools at this time of year or behaviours associated with NCTs.

Summary

In comparison to findings from Phase 1, pupils appear to be more aware of SLTs. In particular, older year groups appear to have a better understanding of SLTs and how they differ from NCTs. Notwithstanding this, research findings suggest that SLTs have had a limited impact on pupils' attitudes towards testing, with findings from all focus groups suggesting that pupils tend to be less stressed when sitting the SLTs. Furthermore, it appears that SLTs have contributed positively to levels of pupil engagement and progression.

Teacher focus group participants reported an increase in pupils' interest in what they needed to do to achieve the next Level. Teacher focus group participants reported limited cases of increased parent/carer awareness and it appears that this remains relatively unchanged over the course of this evaluation. However, schools have begun to share more information with parents/carers on pupil progress in particular APP profile.

Section 8: Conclusions

Introduction

This section sets out the conclusions for this evaluation of the SLT Pilot. These conclusions are based on the evidence presented in this report.

Conclusions

The current level of awareness of SLTs amongst all stakeholder groups was considered to be appropriate (i.e. test awareness was positively related to the individual's level of engagement with the tests and/or the pupils who sit them). Maintaining this level of awareness among school staff and pupils is both manageable and sustainable. However, the findings indicate that schools are deliberately limiting the amount of information which parents/carers receive about the tests, in order to minimise the potential for external pressure on pupils to revise or prepare for the tests. This approach may be difficult to sustain in the future, due, for example, to the inclusion of the mathematics results in the school's AAT and the tradition of parents/carers encouraging their children to revise for NCTs at the end of Year 6.

Test entry procedures are now well embedded in Pilot schools. Although the guidance regarding the entry of pupils at sub-level c is well understood, some schools continue to challenge the appropriateness of entering certain sub-level c pupils for a test – these schools felt that there was a distinction between a pupil working at a Level and being capable of achieving that Level in a test situation. Some schools therefore continue to apply the discretion, allowed by the system, regarding whether pupils are ready to sit the test, taking into consideration factors such as their home environment and emotional maturity.

The amount of revision and preparation undertaken in advance of SLTs has been impacted by the new accountability arrangements for mathematics, but is still no greater than that for NCTs. All stakeholder groups considered this to be a positive impact of the tests. However, as noted above, with the inclusion of SLT results in AATs, schools may face increased pressure from parents/carers to conduct the same amount of revision for SLTs as they previously did for NCTs. Moreover, in the future, there is the potential for this to impact upon younger year groups (particularly Year 5) who are now sitting SLTs, but would not have been involved in revision for NCTs.

Pilot schools felt that SLTs had had a positive impact on their school; contributing to improved tracking and monitoring and a broader and more balanced curriculum. What is more, along with the APP materials, SLTs were considered to have improved teaching and learning generally within schools. The inclusion of the mathematics results in the school's AAT was also expected to have a positive impact on both teaching and learning and on the curriculum in the future.

SLTs were perceived to have had a positive impact on pupils in terms of reducing the amount of stress experienced by pupils sitting the tests and improving pupil engagement and progression (including pupil's interest in what they needed to do to reach the next Level). The impact on parents'/carers' awareness or engagement with their child's learning has been limited to date. Notwithstanding this, schools have begun to share more information with parents/carers about their child's progress, particularly in relation to their APP and TA Levels.

The overarching conclusion from the evaluation, taking into consideration both the positive and negative impacts noted by all stakeholder groups, is that there is broad support amongst Pilot schools for SLTs and the principles which underpin the tests – specifically, testing pupils when they are ready and using the test to validate TA. Schools continue to support the reduced emphasis on tests, but were concerned about the sustainability of this. The spread of responsibility across the KS was also viewed as a positive change by Senior Leadership and teachers alike. In addition, the findings indicate that, from a school's perspective, the overall benefits of SLTs outweigh any additional workload associated with the administration of the tests, particularly of that relating to test entry. Given that Pilot schools have now entered pupils for up to six test rounds (under both SLT Pilot and MGP Pilot); it appears that schools have successfully integrated SLTs into their existing school processes and that these processes are now sufficiently embedded.

This Final Report has been prepared for and only for the DFE in accordance with the terms of our proposal and for no other party and/or purpose. We do not accept or assume any liability or duty of care for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this Report is shown or into whose hands it may come, save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing. Proposals, tenders, reports together with working papers and similar documents, whether interim or final and other deliverables submitted by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, contain methodologies, models, pricing information and other materials and work product, which are proprietary and confidential to PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, or which have been provided to PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP by third parties who may have made such information available on foot of confidentiality agreements, either written, implied, or under the law of confidence. PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP clearly identifies all such proposals, tenders, reports and other deliverables as protected under the copyright laws of the United Kingdom and other countries. Such documents, presentations and materials are submitted on the condition that they shall not be disclosed outside the recipient's organisation, or duplicated, used or disclosed in whole or in part by the recipient for any purpose other than that for which they were specifically procured, pursuant to our engagement letter. In the event that, pursuant to a request which the DFE has received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it is required to disclose any information contained in the proposal or any deliverable prepared by us, it will notify PwC promptly and consult with PwC prior to disclosing such information. The DFE agrees to pay due regard to any representations which PwC may make in connection with such disclosures and the DFE shall apply any relevant exemptions which may exist under the Act to such information.

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Appendix 1: Phase 1 teacher survey instrument

EVALUATION OF THE SINGLE LEVEL TEST PILOT

SCHOOL SURVEY DECEMBER 2009

BACKGROUND

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) has been commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to evaluate the Single Level Test (SLT) pilot.

As part of this research, we would like to collect, analyse and report on schools' perceptions of the SLTs. DCSF are particularly interested in understanding what – if any - changes in behaviours and planning have come about since the introduction of SLTs and what impact this may have on the curriculum; teaching and learning; progression and attainment.

In this short survey, we invite you to contribute your views and feelings on the SLT pilot. The information you provide will ensure that your school's voice is represented in our evaluation and will inform future decisions on how SLTs might be used, so please take the time to complete this.

INSTRUCTIONS

- It will help us if you could answer all questions but if there are any you would prefer not to answer, please just leave that line blank.
- Please return your completed questionnaire in the prepaid envelope provided by **16th December 2009**.
- If you require assistance in completing this survey, or have questions about the work we are doing, please do not hesitate to contact Annette Morgan on (028 90) 415365 or by email at annette.morgan@uk.pwc.com.

USE OF DATA

This survey is conducted under the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct. The responses you give, along with any comments, will be confidential to the research team within PwC. Where we use information/ data you provide as part of our report to the DCSF, this will be aggregated with that of others and/ or anonymised so that your answers cannot be attributed to you or your school.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Please check that this information is correct, and make any amendments where necessary.

School name:	«School_name»
LA name:	«LA_name»
PwC reference Number:	«PwC_ref_no»

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1. (a) What is your current role within the school? <i>[Tick all that apply.]</i>		
Headteacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Member of Senior Leadership Team (other than the Headteacher)	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Assessment Co-ordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Class-based teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Other <i>(please specify)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
(b) If applicable, which year group do you teach		
Please write in number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

SECTION 2: TEST ENTRY

COMPLETION NOTE: This section asks questions about the number of pupils entered at each round of the SLTs. This section should be completed by the member of staff in your school responsible for the administration of Single Level Tests including test entry.

2. Did any pupils in your school sit SLTs for English reading? *[Tick one box only]*

Yes		1	Go to Q3
No		2	Go to Q4

3. In English reading, how many pupils were entered for each level? *[Write in number]*

Level 3		1	Level 4		2
Level 5		3	Level 6		4

4. Did any pupils in your school sit SLTs for English writing? *[Tick one box only]*

Yes		1	Go to Q5
No		2	Go to Q6

5. In English writing, how many pupils were entered for each level? *[Write in number]*

Level 3		1	Level 4		2
Level 5		3	Level 6		4

6. Did any pupils in your school sit SLTs for Mathematics? *[Tick one box only]*

Yes		1	Go to Q7
No		2	Go to Q8

7. In Mathematics, how many pupils were entered for each level? *[Write in number]*

Level 3		1	Level 4		2
Level 5		3	Level 6		4

8. (a) Were the number of test entries in English *reading* and English *writing* for the December 2009 SLTs greater/ approximately the same/ fewer than the June 2009 SLT entries? [Tick one box for each column]

English reading		English writing	
Greater	1	Greater	1
Approximately the same	2	Approximately the same	2
Fewer	3	Fewer	3

(b) What were the reasons for this? [Please write in the space provided below]

English reading	English writing

9. (a) Were the number of test entries in Mathematics for the December 2009 SLTs greater/ approximately the same the same/ fewer than the June 2009 SLT entries? [Tick one box only]

Greater	1
Approximately the same	2
Fewer	3

(b) What were the reasons for this? [Please write in the space provided below]

SECTION 3: TEST POLICY

10. (a) Does your school have a test entry policy? *[Tick one box only]*

Yes		1	Go to Q11
No		2	Go to Q14
Don't know		3	Go to Q14

(b) If yes, can you explain this in more detail?

11. (a) Does the test entry policy differ between English reading, English writing and Mathematics? *[Tick one box only]*

Yes		1
No		2
Don't know		3

(b) If yes, can you explain this in more detail?

12. (a) For each of the following subjects, did the test entry policy differ between the June 2009 SLTs and December 2009 SLTs? *[Tick one box for each column]*

	English reading	English Writing	Mathematics
Yes		1	1
No		2	2
Don't know		3	3

(b) If yes, can you explain this in more detail?

--

13. (a) Does your school have a different test entry approach for end of Key Stage pupils (e.g. year 6 pupils)? *[Tick one box only]*

Yes		1
-----	--	---

No		2
----	--	---

Don't know		3
------------	--	---

(b) If yes, can you explain this in more detail?

--

14. Were all eligible pupils entered for the test? *[Tick one box for each column]*

**English
reading**

**English
writing**

Mathematics

Yes		1		1		1
-----	--	---	--	---	--	---

No		2		2		2
----	--	---	--	---	--	---

Don't know		3		3		3
------------	--	---	--	---	--	---

15. Who was involved in deciding pupil test entries? *[Tick all that apply]*

The headteacher		1
Assessment Coordinator		2
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)		3
Class-based teachers		4

Other *(Please specify below)*

16. Briefly summarise how decisions were made on test entries? *[Please write in the space provided below]*

17. (a) To what extent are the same pupils in your school being entered for each test round? *[Tick one box only]*

To a great extent		1
To some extent		2
To no extent		3

(b) If 'to a great extent' or 'to some extent', can you explain this in more detail?

18. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements in relation to Teacher Assessment (TA)? *[Tick one box in each row]*

**Agree Strongly Agree Neither/
Nor Disagree Disagree
Strongly**

TA is central to our decisions on test entries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TA is given the most weight in deciding test entries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
As a school, we are very confident in the quality of our TA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We believe our TA will reliably predict pupils' performance in the December 2009 SLTs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 4: TEST PREPARATION

19. Does your school invest time in preparing pupils for SLTs? *[Tick one box for each column]*

English reading English writing Mathematics

Yes		1		1		1
No		2		2		2

If you answered yes to any of the above, please go to question 20.

If you answered no, please go to question 27.

20. To what extent does your school invest time preparing pupils for SLTs? *[Tick one box for each column]*

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
To a great extent		1		1		1
To some extent		2		2		2
To no extent		3		3		3

21. Which of the following do you use to help prepare pupils for the SLTs? *[Tick all that apply]*

Past papers		1
Study clubs		2
Tutorials		3
Other <i>(please specify below)</i>		

22. Please approximately what proportion of teachers in your school use past papers to prepare their pupils for each of the following SLTs? *[Write in percentage]*

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
Percentage		1		1		1

23. Compared to SATs, do teachers invest more/ the same/ less time in preparing pupils for each of the following SLTs? [Tick one box for each column]

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
More		1		1		1
The same		2		2		2
Less		3		3		3
Don't know		4		4		4

24. Compared to SATs, do pupils do more/ the same/ less revision for each of the following SLTs? [Tick one box for each column]

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
More		1		1		1
The same		2		2		2
Less		3		3		3
Don't know		4		4		4

25. For each subject below, compared to the previous round of SLTs (June 2009), have teachers invested more/ the same/ less time in preparing pupils for each of the following SLTs? [Tick one box for each column]

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
More		1		1		1
The same		2		2		2
Less		3		3		3
Don't know		4		4		4

26. To what extent do you agree that having access to past papers is helpful in preparing pupils for the SLTs? *[Tick one box only]*

Agree strongly		1	
Agree		2	
Neither agree nor disagree		3	
Disagree		4	
Strongly disagree		5	

SECTION 5: TEST PROCESSES

27. In which areas of the school were the tests administered? *[Tick all that apply]*

	English reading	English writing	Mathematics
In a classroom	1	1	1
In the library	2	2	2
In the sports hall	3	3	3
In the school dining	4	4	4

Other *(please specify below)*

28. Which of the following individuals were responsible for supervising the tests in your school? *[Tick all that apply]*

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
Headteacher		1		1		1
Assessment Coordinator		2		2		2
SENCO		3		3		3
Teaching Assistant		4		4		4
Administration staff (e.g. Bursar)		5		5		5
Other <i>(please specify)</i>						

29. Have test processes changed since your school was part of the MGP pilot, e.g. test supervision? *[Tick one box in each column]*

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
Yes		1		1		1
No		2		2		2

If you answered yes to any of the options above, please go to question 30.

If you answered no, please go to question 31.

30. In what ways have processes changed? *[Please write in the space provided below]*

English reading

English writing
Mathematics

SECTION 6: IMPACT OF SLTs ON THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING, AND PUPIL

31. (a) To what extent do SLTs contribute to a more balanced curriculum? *[Tick one box only]*

To a large extent	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
To some extent	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
To no extent	<input type="checkbox"/>	3

(b) Why do you say this?

32. (a) To what extent do SLTs, along with the Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) materials, impact on *planning provision for pupils*? *[Tick one box only]*

Positively, to a great extent	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Positively, to some extent	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Neither positive nor negative	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Negatively, to some extent	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Negatively, to a great extent	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

(b) Why do you say this?

33. (a) To what extent do SLTs, along with the APP materials, impact on *how you teach pupils*? [Tick one box only]

Positively, to a great extent		1
Positively, to some extent		2
Neither positive nor negative		3
Negatively, to some extent		4
Negatively, to a great extent		5

(b) Why do you say this?

34. (a) To what extent do you think using Mathematics SLTs for the school's Achievement and Attainment Tables (AAT) will impact on the *curriculum* in the future? [Tick one box only]

Positively, to a great extent		1
Positively, to some extent		2
Neither positive nor negative		3
Negatively, to some extent		4
Negatively, to a great extent		5

(b) Why do you say this?

35. (a) To what extent do you think using Mathematics SLTs in the schools AAT will impact on pupils' attainment in the future? [Tick one box only]

Positively, to a great extent		1
Positive, to some extent		2
Neither positive nor negative		3
Negatively, to some extent		4
Negatively, to a great extent		5

(b) Why do you say this?

36. (a) To what extent do you think using Mathematics SLTs in the schools AAT will impact on pupils' progression in the future? [Tick one box only]

Positively, to a great extent		1
Positive, to some extent		2
Neither positive nor negative		3
Negatively, to some extent		4
Negatively, to a great extent		5

(b) Why do you say this?

37. To date, which of the following areas, if any, have been positively impacted as a direct result of SLTs *[Tick all that apply]*

Pupils' engagement with their own learning		1
Pupils wanting to know more about how they can progress		2
Breadth of curriculum covered		3
Teaching and learning generally		4

38. Which aspects of SLTs contribute to pupils becoming more engaged with their own learning and development? *[Please write in the space provided below]*

39. (a) To what extent do SLTs contribute to improved tracking and monitoring of individual pupils' progress? *[Tick one box only]*

To a great extent		1
To some extent		2
To no extent		3

(b) Why do you say this?

40. Referring to question 39 above, which particular groups of pupils, if any, does this most positively impact upon? *[Tick all that apply]*

Free School Meal eligible (FSM) pupils		1
English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils		2
Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)		3

SECTION 7: IMPACT OF SLTs ON PARENTS/ CARERS

41. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

[Tick one box in each row]

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither/ Nor	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
As a result of being involved in the MGP and SLT pilot, we provide more information to parents/ carers about their child(ren)s attainment and progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
As a result of the SLTs, parents/ carers show more of an interest in their child's progress and what they need to do to improve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents are generally supportive of their child sitting SLTs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our school has informed parents that the results of Mathematics SLTs have replaced SATs in the school's Achievement and Attainment Table	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 8: CONCLUSIONS

42. In the next round of SLTs, what are your plans for pupil entry? *[Tick all that apply]*

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
Enter all pupils in each year group		1		1		1
Enter all pupils in particular year groups only		2		2		2
Enter all eligible pupils in each year group		3		3		3
Enter all eligible pupils in particular year groups only		4		4		4
Enter those pupils who did not sit December 2009 SLTs		5		5		5
Other <i>(Please specify below)</i>						

43. Please use the space below to provide any additional comments regarding SLTs.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it in the prepaid envelope enclosed.

Appendix 2: Phase 1 teacher focus group topic guide

SLT Pilot - Teacher Focus Group Topic Guide

I: Background

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) LLP has been commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to evaluate the Single Level Test (SLT) pilot.

As part of this research, we would like to collect, analyse and report on schools' perceptions of the SLTs. DCSF are particularly interested in understanding what – if any - changes in behaviours and planning have come about since the introduction of SLTs and what impact this may have on the curriculum; teaching and learning; progression and attainment.

There are two parts to the evaluation, namely (a) a series of four focus groups with both teachers and pupils; and (b) a survey involving the headteacher, assessment co-ordinator (or equivalent) and Year 3-6 teachers.

II: Use of data

- Your views are private and confidential within this group. The views of this group and each of you individually will not be attributed in any written report or any other outputs generated by this project.
- We plan to record this interview. The purpose of this is to ensure that we accurately reflect the views expressed by those in the group. The recording will be used only for the purposes of writing up comprehensive notes.
- Can each of you introduce yourself to the group. Please provide your name; the school you are from; how long you have been a teacher in your school; and the level of your involvement with Single Level Tests please.

III: Participant names

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.

IV: Administration

Focus Group Moderator	
Location	
Date/ Time	
Interview recorded (Yes / No)	
Interview transcribed (Yes / No)	

Section 1: Introduction

1. **What is the awareness level of Single Level Tests?** [Prompts: amongst all teachers, support staff, governors, all pupils, all parents, local secondary schools]

Section 2: Preparation and entry of pupils for SLTs

Background: DCSF would like to know more about schools preparations for the SLTs and the decision making process for test entry. The following questions will explore these topics in detail.

2. **What process has your school followed in entering pupils for SLTs for December 2009?** [Probes: Who was responsible for test entries? How were you and other teachers involved in entry decisions? Does your school have a written or unwritten policy on test entries? What role did the APP and TA play in entry decisions for both English and Mathematics? Was the process different to, or better than that used for entering pupils for SATs or previous SLT rounds?]

--

3. [Where applicable] Was the process used for the December 2009 SLTs any different from the processes used in previous SLT rounds [Has your school prepared pupils for the test? If so, in what ways? What impact does access to test papers (with the exception of Level 6) have on how your school prepares your pupils for the test, if at all? Are there any differences by subject in how you prepare pupils for the test?]

--

4. Have you noticed any differences in test entries for this round of SLTs compared to previous rounds (where applicable)? [Probes: Are whole cohorts being entered this time in either English or Mathematics? How do test entries compare to what happened under the MGP pilot? Are the same pupils being entered for each test round? Are all eligible pupils entered? Are pupils being entered for the same level as their TA would suggest they are prepared for? If not, why not?]

5. What specific role did Teacher Assessment (TA) play in entry decisions? [Probes: Are all teachers confident in their Teacher Assessment in both English and Mathematics? How important were TAs in finalising test entries? What steps have been taken to ensure that Teacher Assessment is reliable and valid for the purposes of test entry?]

6. Generally speaking, how confident are you/ your schools that the correct pupils have been selected for test entry in both English and Mathematics?

7. How many pupils have been selected to sit the SLT? [Probes: Did you notice any difference in test entries between English and Maths? Were there any differences by year group?]

Section 3: Impact of SLTs on the curriculum, teaching and learning, and administration

Background: DCSF would like to understand how SLTs have/ will impact on the curriculum, and/or teaching and learning, now that SLT maths results will be reported in Attainment and Achievement tables.

8. What impact do you think SLTs have on the curriculum? [Probes: Do SLTs make it possible to achieve a broad and balanced curriculum? If not, which particular areas of the curriculum suffer? Is the status of particular subjects enhanced by SLTs?]

9. Has teaching pedagogy changed as a result of SLTs? [Prompts: Are there any differences between subjects (English reading, English writing and Mathematics?) If so, in what way? Can you give me any practical examples of this?]

10. Now that maths SLT results are to be used in place of SATs for the annual Achievement and Attainment tables (i.e. school performance tables), what impact does this have on your perceptions of the test? [Probes: How will this impact on the maths curriculum, and teaching and learning? How will it impact on English? What about the impact on other subjects in the curriculum? What about the impact on different year groups?]

Do the SLTs contribute to improved tracking of pupil performance? [Probes: In what ways has pupil performance tracking improved? Have the tests changed the way in which interventions are put in place for pupils? If so, in what ways?

Section 4: Impact of SLTs on pupils, and parents/ carers

Background: DCSF would like to understand how SLTs will impact on parental and pupil engagement.

11. Are there any aspects of SLTs that contribute to pupils' becoming more engaged with their learning?

12. In what ways, if any, do SLTs/ can SLTs contribute to improved motivation? What about rates of progression in either English or Mathematics? [Probes: Have you any observations on pupils' responses to the tests, either in the run up to, during or after the tests?]

13. How much, if any, information does your school provide to parents/ carers about their child's attainment and progression? [Probes: Do parents provide feedback to schools on the information they receive about their child's progression?]

14. In what ways, if any, has your school changed the way it engages with parents/ carers as a result of the SLTs?

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Section 5: Conclusion

15. Is there anything else, which we have not discussed, which you think is relevant and would like to add to our discussions?

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Appendix 3: Phase 1 pupil focus group topic guide

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	✗	?

Single Level Test Pilot – Pupil Focus Group

School name:	<input type="text"/>						
Your name:	<input type="text"/>						
<i>Tick one box for each row below</i>							
Year 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Girl	<input type="checkbox"/>				

1. What do you think about school?

- A Do you enjoy school?
- B Do you enjoy playing with your friends?
- C Do you like doing tests?
- D If you do well in tests, do you feel good?

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	X	?

2. What do you think about English?

A Do you like English?

B Do you like reading?

C Do you like writing?

D Do you like doing English tests?

E Do you like English more than Maths?

F Do you like English more this year than last year?

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	✗	?

3. What do you think about Maths?

A Do you like Maths?

B Do you like doing Maths tests?

C Do you like Maths more than English?

D Do you like Maths more this year than last year?

4. What do you know about Single Level Tests?

A Have you heard your teachers talk about Single Level tests?

B Did your teacher explain what they were about?

C Do you know when you will be doing the test?

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	✗	?

5. Tell us about how you practiced for the English test.

A Did you practice for the test?

B Do you think you do the same amount of practice for the English test as you do for other tests?

C Did you like practising for the test?

6. Tell us about how you practiced for the Maths test.

A Did you practice for the test?

B Do you think you do the same amount of practice for the Maths test as you do for other tests?

C Did you like practising for the test?

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	✗	?

7. What test did you do?

A Did you do a Maths or an English test?

Maths	English	Both
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Tell us what you think about the Tests

	English	Maths
A Did you like doing the test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Did you have enough time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Did you feel ready to take the test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D Was this test different to other tests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E Did you think the test was hard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	X	?

F Were you worried about doing the test?

G Would you like to do tests like these in other subjects?

H Do you think you did better in this test than others?

9. How the tests help you with your schoolwork

A Do they help you to know what you're good at?

B Do they help you to know what you need to do to be better at Maths or English?

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	X	?

10. If there is anything you want to tell me that we haven't talked about, you can write in the box below.

Thank you.

Appendix 4: Phase 1 parent/ carer focus group topic guide

SLT Pilot – Parent Focus Group Topic Guide

I: Background

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) has been commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to evaluate the Single Level Test (SLT) pilot.

As part of this research, we would like to collect, analyse and report on parents' perceptions of the SLTs. DCSF are particularly interested in understanding your views on how you engage with your child's learning and progression, and any views you might have on Single Level Tests. There are also a number of questions about how much information you receive about your child's progress and any suggestions you might have about how this could be improved, if at all.

There are four parts to the evaluation, namely (a) a series of four focus groups with both teachers and pupils (b) a survey involving the headteacher, assessment co-ordinator (or equivalent) and Year 3-6 teachers (c) a series of four focus groups with parents and (d) a series of focus groups with pupils.

II: Use of data

- Your views are private and confidential within this group. The views of this group and each of you individually will not be attributed in any written report or any other outputs generated by this project.
- We plan to record this interview. The purpose of this is to ensure that we accurately reflect the views expressed by those in the group. The recording will be used only for the purposes of writing up comprehensive notes.
- Can each of you introduce yourself to the group. Please provide your name and the name of your child, their year group and whether you are aware of the SLTs.

III: Participant names

11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.
17.	18.
19.	20.

IV: Administration

Focus Group Moderator	
Location	
Date/ Time	
Interview recorded (Yes / No)	
Interview transcribed (Yes / No)	

Section 1: Introduction

16. How aware are you of Single Level Tests (SLTs)? [Probes: How did you find out about SLTs, what information did you get from the school? How useful was the information? Would you like more information?]

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17. What is your understanding of how the SLTs operate? [Prompts: They are undertaken twice a year; they test pupils for a single level; pupils are entered when they are judged by their teacher to be ready; the tests are shorter and more focused than the SATs; pupils can only move upwards from one level to the next]

--

Section 2: Information you receive about your child

Background: The questions in this section are about the information that school gives you about your child's learning and progression, whether it is through school reports or at parent evenings

18. How do you receive information about how your child is doing at school? [Probes: Verbal or written feedback? How often do you receive information about how your child is doing at school? Is the information provided clear enough? Does the information provided enable you to assess your child's progress? Is the information provided in an appropriate way?]

19. Have you any suggestions about how communication from the school could be improved?

Section 3: Preparation and entry of pupils for SLTs

Background: DCSF would like to know more about the extent to which pupils are prepared for sitting the SLTs and the decision making process for test entry. The following questions will explore these topics in detail.

20. How did the school communicate with you about the test? [Probes: Did the school provide you with a letter indicating that your child would be entered for the test or did they contact you directly (either face-to-face or by phone)? Did the school give you an opportunity to opt your child out of the test? Did the school offer to speak with you about the reasons why they had entered your child for the test? Did the school inform you of what level your child would be entered for? Did they explain the reasons why your child was entered at that level?]

--

21. Would you like the school to involve you more in decisions about whether your child should to be entered for the test or not?

--

22. Are you aware whether the school is preparing your child for the December SLT? [Probes: To what extent is your child being prepared for the test? To what extent, if any, is your child revising for the test at home? Is the extent of preparation/ revision the same as it was for SATs? Do you notice any differences between English and maths?]

23. What importance do you attach to your child revising/preparing for SLTs? [Probes: do you think test preparation is important? Do you help your child prepare for the test at home? Would you like to see the school investing more time in test preparation?]

Section 4: Previous rounds of Single Level Tests

Background: Your child may have taken a test in a previous round of SLTs. We would like to know more about your views on these and how much information you received from the school about these.

24. Which test(s) was your child entered for? [English reading, writing, Maths or both?]

25. Did the test have any impact on your child's behaviour? [Probes: Did they feel pressure, or did they enjoy taking the test?]

26. Are there any comparisons between the current round of SLTs and these previous rounds of SLTs? [Prompts: The degree to which you were informed about your child being entered; test preparation; the importance the school places on the test(s); the level of pressure, if any, experienced by your child]

Section 4: Use of SLT results

Background: DCSF are planning a number of changes to how the results of the Single Level Tests will be used. For maths, they are planning to use the SLT results in the school's achievement and attainment tables (otherwise known as league tables). No decision has been made in respect of the English SLTs. We would like to ask you a number of questions about this.

27. To what extent did the school's exam results impact on your decision to send your child there? [Probes: Is a high attaining school very important to you? What about other things such as the proximity of the school to your home; reputation amongst the community etc?]

28. Do you think it is important for your child's school to publish SLT results? Why do you think this?

29. If SLT results were to be published, what impact would this have on how the school operates? [Probes: What impact would it have on the curriculum? Would it have an impact on the degree to which pupils are prepared for the test? Would you be supportive of your child's school publishing test results?]

Section 5: Conclusion

30. Is there anything else, which we have not discussed, which you think is relevant and would like to add to our discussions?

Appendix 5: Phase 2 teacher survey instrument

BACKGROUND

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) has been commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to evaluate the Single Level Test (SLT) pilot.

As part of this research, we would like to collect, analyse and report on schools' perceptions of the SLTs. DCSF are particularly interested in understanding what – if any – changes in behaviours and planning have come about since the introduction of SLTs and what impact this may have on the curriculum; teaching and learning; progression and attainment.

You may have received a similar questionnaire after the December 2009 round of SLTs. To allow us to monitor the impact of SLTs we are undertaking this subsequent staff survey to capture any changes or variations in practice from the December test round.

As with our December survey, we invite you to contribute your views and feelings on the SLT pilot. The information you provide will ensure that your school's voice is represented in our evaluation and will inform future decisions on how SLTs might be used, so please take the time to complete this.

INSTRUCTIONS

- It will help us if you could answer all questions but if there are any you would prefer not to answer, please just leave that line blank.
- Please return your completed questionnaire in the prepaid envelope provided by **Wednesday 30th June 2010**.
- If you require assistance in completing this survey, or have questions about the work we are doing, please do not hesitate to contact Annette Morgan on 028 90 415365 or by email at annette.morgan@uk.pwc.com.

USE OF DATA

This survey is conducted under the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct. The responses you give, along with any comments, will be confidential to the research team within PwC. Where we use information/ data you provide as part of our report to the DCSF, this will be aggregated with that of others and/ or anonymised so that your answers cannot be attributed to either you or your school.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Please check that this information is correct, and make any amendments where necessary.

School name:	«School_name»
LA name:	«LA_name»
PwC reference Number:	«PwC_ref_no»

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

44. (a) What is your current role within the school? *[Tick all that apply]*

Headteacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Member of Senior Leadership Team (other than the Headteacher)	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Assessment Co-ordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Class-based teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Other <i>(please specify)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

(b) If applicable, which year group do you teach?

Please write in number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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SECTION 2: TEST ENTRY

COMPLETION NOTE: This section asks questions relating to test entry in your school. This section should only be completed by the member of staff in your school responsible for the administration of test entries.

EVALUATION OF THE SINGLE LEVEL TEST PILOT – PHASE TWO – SCHOOL SURVEY – JUNE 2010

45. (a) Approximately, what proportion of those pupils entered for the June 2010 test round were also entered for the December 2009 test in the same subject?

[Please enter a number in each box]

	English reading	English Writing	Mathematics
	% 1	% 2	% 3

(b) Can you explain why your school has taken this approach? [Tick all that apply]

Pupil(s) passed a level in December and made one level of progress since then	1
December entry was appropriate according to TA but pupil(s) did not achieve this level	2
Pupil(s) entered at a lower level than TA in December to ensure that they achieved and had a reportable level	3
December entry was explorative and pupil(s) did not achieve the level for which they were entered	4
Pupil(s) passed in December and June entry is explorative	5
Other	6

If 'Other', please specify:

46. (a) Approximately, what proportion of Year 6 pupils entered for the June 2010 test round were also entered for the December 2009 test in the same subject?
[Please enter a number in each box]

	English reading		English Writing		Mathematics	
	%	1	%	2	%	3

(b) Can you explain why your school has taken this approach? *[Tick all that apply]*

Pupil(s) passed a level in December and made one level of progress since then		1
December entry was appropriate according to TA but pupil(s) did not achieve this level		2
Pupil(s) entered at a lower level than TA in December to ensure that they achieved and had a reportable level		3
December entry was explorative and pupil(s) did not achieve the level for which they were entered		4
Pupil(s) passed in December and June entry is explorative		5
Other		6

If 'Other', please specify:

47. (a) Focusing on June 2010 test round only, what proportion of all eligible pupils working at sub-level C were entered for this test round? *[Tick one box only]*

All		1
Some		2
None		3

(b) If 'None', can you explain the reason(s) for this?

SECTION 3: APPROACH TO TEST ENTRY

EVALUATION OF THE SINGLE LEVEL TEST PILOT – PHASE TWO – SCHOOL SURVEY – JUNE 2010

48. Who was involved in deciding pupil test entries? [Tick all that apply]

The headteacher		1
Assessment Coordinator		2
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)		3
Class-based teachers		4
Other (Please specify below)		

49. (a) In your school, do the criteria for test entry differ between English reading, English writing and Mathematics? [Tick one box only]

Yes		1
No		2
Don't know		3

(b) If yes, can you explain how the criteria differs and what the rationale is for this difference?

50. (a) For each of the following subjects, did the test entry criteria employed by your school differ between the December 2009 and June 2010 SLTs? [Tick one box for each column]

	English reading	English Writing	Mathematics
Yes		1	1
No		2	2
Don't know		3	3

(b) If yes, can you explain how the criteria differs and what the rationale was for this difference?

51. (a) Does your school take a different test entry approach for Year 6 pupils? [Tick one box only]

Yes		1
No		2
Don't know		3

(b) If yes, can you explain how the criteria differs and what the rationale is for this difference?

52. (a) Are your school procedures for test entry captured in a formal written policy? [Tick one box only]

Yes		1
No		2

(b) If yes, can you please explain your policy?

53. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements in relation to test entry. [Tick one box in each row]

Agree Strongly
Agree
Neither/
Nor
Disagree
Disagree Strongly

Having two test rounds per year is of benefit to our school

1
 2
 3
 4
 5

The administration involved in entering pupils for the SLTs is greater than that of National Curriculum Tests (NCTs)

1
 2
 3
 4
 5

Our approach to test entry is well known and understood in this school

1
 2
 3
 4
 5

Our approach to test entry is manageable in terms of workload

1 2 3 4 5

Our approach to test entry is sustainable over time

1 2 3 4 5

54. (a) Do you have any plans to change your processes for test entry? *[Tick one box only]*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
-----	--------------------------	---

No	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
----	--------------------------	---

(b) If yes, can you please explain why?

55. (a) In your opinion, do the benefits of SLTs outweigh the administration involved in test entry? *[Tick one box only]*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
-----	--------------------------	---

No	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
----	--------------------------	---

(b) If yes, can you please explain why?

SECTION 4: TEACHER ASSESSMENT

56. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements in relation to TA? [Tick one box in each row]

Agree Strongly Agree Neither/
Nor Disagree Disagree
Strongly

Teacher Assessment moderation

We use in-school moderation to check the consistency of TAs

1 2 3 4 5

Our school participates in cross-school moderation of our TAs

1 2 3 4 5

Our approach to moderating TAs is well known and understood in this school

1 2 3 4 5

Quality of TAs and their use in informing test entry

TA is given the most weight in deciding test entries

1 2 3 4 5

We believe our TA will reliably predict pupils' performance in the June 2010 SLTs

1 2 3 4 5

As a school, we are confident in the quality of our TA

1 2 3 4 5

EVALUATION OF THE SINGLE LEVEL TEST PILOT – PHASE TWO – SCHOOL SURVEY – JUNE 2010

57. Apart from Teacher Assessment (TA), what other information does your school use in deciding pupil test entries? Please highlight any differences between subjects or year groups. *[Please write in the space provided]*

SECTION 5: TEST PREPARATION AND REVISION

Note: We have defined test preparation and revision as follows: test preparation includes activities such as familiarising pupils with the structure and/ or layout of the test paper; providing pupils with test completion instructions and familiarising them with the location for the test. Revision, on the other hand, is any activity or set of activities that involve helping pupils to review material in advance of them sitting the test(s) this is in addition to time spent with pupils consolidating their learning as part of normal teaching and learning.

58. Based on the definitions provided above, did you invest time in *preparing* pupils for SLTs in June 2010? [Tick one box for each column]

	English reading	English writing	Mathematics
Yes	1	1	1
No	2	2	2

If yes, please go to question 16

If no, please go to question 17

59. How much time did you invest helping pupils to prepare for the June 2010 SLTs? [Tick one box for each column]

	English reading	English writing	Mathematics
A lot of time	1	1	1
A little time	2	2	2

60. Based on the definition provided of *revision*, did you invest time in helping pupils revise for the June 2010 SLTs? [Tick one box for each column]

	English reading	English writing	Mathematics
Yes	1	1	1
No	2	2	2

If yes, please go to question 18

If no, please go to question 22

61. Approximately, how many hours in total were invested in helping pupils revise for the June 2010 tests? *[Please enter the approximate total number of hours spent revising for each subject]*

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics
No. of hours		1		2	3

62. What revision activities did you undertake with pupils entered for SLTs? Please highlight any differences between subjects or year groups. *[Please write in the space provided below]*

63. Compared to the December 2009 round of SLTs, was the time spent helping pupils revise greater/ the same/ less for the June 2010 tests? *[Tick one box for each column]*

	English reading		English Writing		Mathematics
Greater		1		1	1
Approximately the same		2		2	2
Less		3		3	3
Don't know		4		4	4

64. For Year 6 pupils, compared to the 2009 NCTs, was the time spent helping pupils revise greater/ the same/ less for the June 2010 tests? [Tick one box for each column]

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
Greater		1		1		1
Approximately the same		2		2		2
Less		3		3		3
Don't know		4		4		4

65. Approximately what proportion of teachers in your school used *past papers* in advance of the June 2010 SLTs? [Write in percentage]

	English reading		English Writing		Mathematics	
Percentage		1		2		3

66. What does your school use past papers for? [Tick all that apply]

Helping pupils with test timing		1
Familiarising pupils with the test conditions (e.g. location and setting)		2
Revising content		3
Familiarising pupils with the language used		4
Familiarising pupils with test layout		5
Familiarising pupils with the test instructions		6
Other (Please specify): _____		7
None of the above		8

67. (a) In comparison to the beginning of the SLT pilot, would you say you that you now spend more time helping pupils prepare and revise for SLTs? *[Please tick one box in each column]*

	Preparation	Revision
Yes	1	1
No	2	2

(b) Can you explain why?

68. (a) Does your school involve those pupils not entered for SLTs in preparation and revision activities? *[Please tick one box in each column]*

	Preparation	Revision
Yes	1	1
No	2	2

(b) Can you explain why?

69. (a) Who is responsible for making decisions about test preparation and revision for SLTs and for NCTs? [Tick all that apply]

	For SLTs	For NCTs
Headteacher	1	1
Senior Leadership Team	2	2
Assessment Co-ordinator	3	3
Department heads	4	4
Individual class-based teachers	5	5
Other (<i>please specify</i>): _____	6	6

(b) If the individual responsible differs, can you explain the rationale for this difference?

SECTION 6: TEST PROCESSES

70. In which areas of the school were the tests administered? *[Tick all that apply]*

	English reading	English writing	Mathematics
In a classroom	1	1	1
In the library	2	2	2
In the school hall	3	3	3
In the school dining area <i>(If separate from the school hall)</i>	4	4	4

Other *(please specify below)*

71. Can you please indicate who was involved in test invigilation in your school? *[Tick all that apply in each column]*

	For SLTs	For NCTs
Headteacher	1	1
Assessment Coordinator	2	2
SENCO	3	3
Teaching Assistant	4	4
Administration staff (e.g. Bursar)	5	5
External test administrator	6	6
Other <i>(please specify)</i>	7	7

72. (a) In your experience, have teachers carried out more invigilation for SLTs compared with NCTs? *[Please tick one box only]*

Yes		1
-----	--	---

No		2
----	--	---

(b) If yes, can you explain why?

73. (a) Have the ways in which test processes are organised in your school (e.g. test supervision) changed since your school was part of the MGP pilot? *[Tick one box in each column]*

	English reading		English writing		Mathematics	
Yes		1		1		1
No		2		2		2

(b) If you answered yes, can you please explain in more detail?

74. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements in relation to test administration processes? [Tick one box in each row]

Agree Strongly **Agree** **Neither/ Nor** **Disagree** **Disagree Strongly**

Our test administration processes are well known and understood in this school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
--	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Our test administration processes are manageable in terms of workload	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
---	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Our test administration processes are sustainable over time	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
---	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

75. (a) In your opinion, do the benefits of SLTs outweigh the workload involved in organising test administrative processes? (e.g. organising rooms, invigilation, etc) [Tick one box only]

Yes		1
No		2

<p>(b) Can you please explain this?</p>
--

SECTION 7: IMPACT OF SLTs ON THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING, AND PUPIL OUTCOMES

76. Do SLTs have more/ the same/ less importance in your school in comparison to NCTs? *[Tick one box for each column]*

	English reading	English Writing	Mathematics
More	1	1	1
The same	2	2	2
Less	3	3	3
Don't know	4	4	4

77. (a) To what extent do SLTs contribute to a more balanced curriculum for each of the following year groups? Note: A balanced curriculum is one which is tailored to every pupil's needs so that they receive the support they require to secure a broad range of skills and balances the amount of time spent on learning new material, revision and test preparation. *[Tick one box for each row and column]*

	Year 3 - 5	Year 6
Positively to a great extent	1	1
Positively to some extent	2	2
To no extent	3	3
Negatively to some extent	4	4
Negatively to a great extent	5	5

(b) Why do you say this?

78. (a) To what extent do you think using Mathematics SLTs for the school's Achievement and Attainment Tables (AAT) will impact on the following areas in the future? [Tick one box for each column]

	Teaching and learning	Curriculum	Pupil attainment	Pupil progression
Positively to a great extent	1	1	1	1
Positively to some extent	2	2	2	2
To no extent	3	3	3	3
Negatively to some extent	4	4	4	4
Negatively to a great extent	5	5	5	5

(b) Can you explain how?

79. (a) To what extent do SLTs, along with the Assessing Pupils Progress (APP) materials, impact on how you teach pupils? [Tick one box only]

Positively to a great extent	1
Positively to some extent	2
To no extent	3
Negatively to some extent	4
Negatively to a great extent	5

(b) Why do you say this?

80. To what extent have SLTs had an impact on the following areas? *[Tick one box in each column only]*

	Pupils' engagement with their own learning	Pupils wanting to know more about how they can progress	Breath of curriculum covered	Teaching and learning generally
Positively to a great extent	1	1	1	1
Positively to some extent	2	2	2	2
To no extent	3	3	3	3
Negatively to some extent	4	4	4	4
Negatively to a great extent	5	5	5	5

81. (a) To what extent do SLTs contribute to improved tracking and monitoring of individual pupils' progress? *[Tick one box only]*

Positively to a great extent	1
Positively to some extent	2
To no extent	3
Negatively to some extent	4
Negatively to a great extent	5

(b) Why do you say this?

82. Referring to question 38 above, which particular groups of pupils, if any, are affected: *[Please write in the space provided below]*

(a) Positively by this?

1

(b) Negatively by this?

2

SECTION 8: IMPACT OF SLTs ON PARENTS/ CARERS

83. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
[Tick one box in each row]

Agree Strongly
Agree
Neither/ Nor
Disagree
Disagree Strongly

As a result of being involved in the MGP and SLT pilot, we provide more information to parents/ carers about their child(ren)s attainment and progress

1 2 3 4 5

As a result of the SLTs, parents/ carers show more of an interest in their child's progress and what they need to do to improve

1 2 3 4 5

As a result of SLTs, parents/carers have a better understanding of the level of attainment of their child

1 2 3 4 5

Our school has informed parents that the results of Mathematics SLTs have replaced NCTs in the school's AAT

1 2 3 4 5

SECTION 9: CONCLUSION

84. Please use the space below to provide any additional comments regarding SLTs.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it in the prepaid envelope enclosed.

Appendix 6: Phase 2 teacher focus group topic guide

SLT Pilot - Teacher Focus Group Topic Guide

I: Background

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) LLP has been commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to evaluate the Single Level Test (SLT) pilot.

As part of this research, we would like to collect, analyse and report on schools' perceptions of the SLTs. DCSF are particularly interested in understanding what – if any - changes in behaviours and planning have come about since the introduction of SLTs and what impact this may have on the curriculum; teaching and learning; progression and attainment.

There are three parts to the evaluation, namely (a) a series of six focus groups with teachers ; (b) four focus groups with pupils and parents; and (c) a survey involving the headteacher, assessment co-ordinator (or equivalent) and Year 3-6 teachers.

II: Use of data

- Your views are private and confidential within this group. The views of this group and each of you individually will not be attributed in any written report or any other outputs generated by this project.
- We plan to record this interview. The purpose of this is to ensure that we accurately reflect the views expressed by those in the group. The recording will be used only for the purposes of writing up comprehensive notes.
- Can each of you introduce yourself to the group. Please provide your name; the school you are from; how long you have been a teacher in your school; and the level of your involvement with Single Level Tests please.

III: Participant names

21.	22.
23.	24.
25.	26.
27.	28.
29.	30.

IV: Administration

Focus Group Moderator	
Location	
Date/ Time	
Interview recorded (Yes / No)	
Interview transcribed (Yes / No)	

Section 1: Introduction

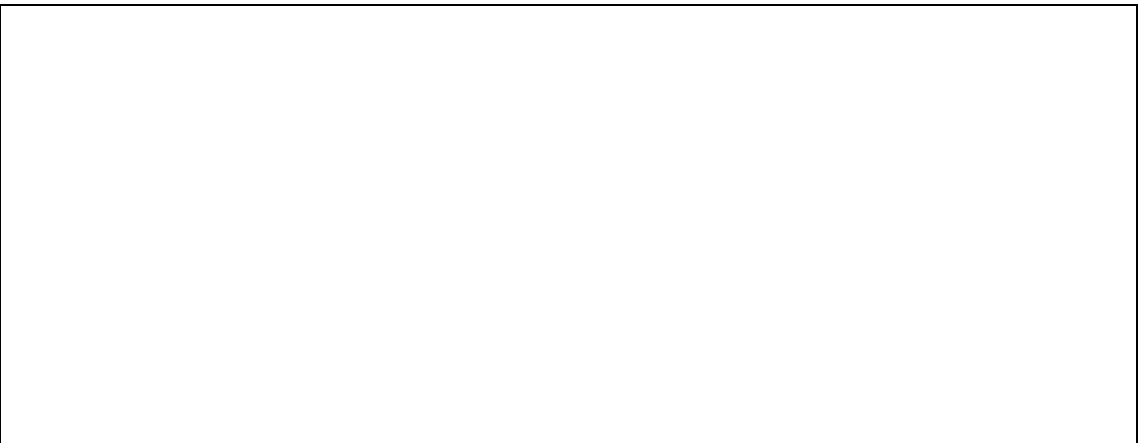
31. What is the awareness level of Single Level Tests in your school? [Prompts: amongst all teachers, support staff, governors, all pupils, all parents, local secondary schools. What do you think these groups understand about SLTS?]

Section 2: SLT test entry

Background: DCSF would like to know more about the decision making process for test entry and whether, and to what extent, you have noticed any particular patterns between subjects or over time.

FACILITATOR NOTE: Set the following question up as a general enquiry into the process, we will move on to talk about changes between previous SLT test rounds in the next question.

32. What process has your school followed in entering pupils for the June 2010 SLTs? [Probes: Who was responsible for test entry? How were you or other teachers involved in test entry decisions, if at all? Does your school have a policy on test entries? Was the process different to, or better than that used for entering pupils for NCTs or previous SLT rounds?]



33. Have you noticed any differences in the number of test entries for this round of SLTs compared to previous rounds (where applicable)? [Probes: Are whole cohorts being entered this time for either English or Mathematics? How do test entries compare to what happened under the MGP pilot? Are the same pupils being entered for each test round? If so, why? (Possible explanations could include: made one level of progress, pupil did not achieve the level they were entered for or test entry was exploratory). Are all eligible pupils entered? Are pupils being entered for the same level as their TA would suggest they are prepared for? If not, why not? Are there any differences between year groups, e.g. Year 6 pupils?]

34. What is your understanding of LA test entry guidance? [Probe: Do you enter pupils at sub level c for the test? If not, could you expand on this in more detail?]

35. What specific role did Teacher Assessment (TA) play in test entry decisions for the June 2010 SLT round? [Probes: Are all teachers confident in their Teacher Assessment in both English and Mathematics? How important were TAs in finalising test entries? Does anything else inform test entry decisions? What steps have been taken to ensure that Teacher Assessment is reliable and valid for the purposes of test entry?]

36. Generally speaking, how confident are you/ your schools that the correct pupils have been selected for test entry in both English and Mathematics?

37. Has administration of SLTs changed since the start of the pilot? [Prompts: Who is responsible for administration associated with test entry? How difficult is it to manage? Do you think the benefits of the SLTs outweigh the administration associated with SLTs?]

Section 3: Test preparation, revision and supervision

Background: DCSF would like to know more about how schools prepare pupils for the SLTs and the arrangements that your school has in place for test supervision. The following questions will explore these topics in detail. We have defined test preparation and revision as follows: test preparation includes activities such as familiarising pupils with the structure and/or layout of the test paper; providing pupils with test completion instructions and familiarising them with the location for the test. Revision, on the other hand, is any activity or set of activities that involve helping pupils to review material in advance of them sitting the test(s) this is in addition to time spent with pupils consolidating their learning as part of normal teaching and learning.

38. To what extent were the test preparation processes used for the June 2010 SLTs any different from the processes used in previous SLT rounds [Probes: Has your school prepared pupils for the test? If so, in what ways? Are there any differences by subject in how you prepare pupils for the test? Are there any differences by year group in terms of how you prepare pupils for the tests?]

39. How much revision (as opposed to preparation) did pupils do prior to sitting the tests? [Probes: What impact does access to past papers (with the exception of Level 6) have on how your school helps pupils revise for the test, if at all? How are past papers used? Could any of this revision be considered 'consolidation of learning'? Has the amount of revision increased/ stayed the same/ reduced in comparison to when pupils sat the NCTs in May 2009? Are there any differences in the amount of revision undertaken between year groups? Are there any differences between subjects]

40. Who is involved in supervising (invigilating) the tests in your school? [Probes: how much of the invigilation activity was each of them responsible for? Who, in your view, ought to be responsible for this activity? If applicable is there any particular reason why teachers are used to supervise the tests instead of support staff? How do supervision arrangements for the 2009 SLTs compare to those for the NCTs]

41. Does your school administer the test separately for each year group or each test level? Do you think it is important to do this?

Section 4: Impact of SLTs on the curriculum, teaching and learning.

Background: DCSF would like to understand how SLTs have/ will impact on the curriculum, and/or teaching and learning, now that SLT maths results will be reported in Attainment and Achievement tables.

42. In comparison to other tests (NCTs) do SLTs have a higher/ the same/ lower significance in your school? [Probes: Why do you say this? Has the significance of SLTs changed over time?]

43. What impact do you think SLTs have on the curriculum? [Probes: Do SLTs make it possible to achieve a broad and balanced curriculum? Note: A balanced curriculum is one which is tailored to every child's needs so that every pupil receives the support they need to secure a broad range of skills. If not, which particular areas of the curriculum suffer? Is the status of particular subjects enhanced by SLTs?]

44. Has teacher pedagogy changed as a result of SLTs? [Prompts: Are there any differences between subjects (English reading, English writing and Mathematics?) If so, what are the differences? Can you give me any practical examples of this?]

45. Now that maths SLT results are to be used in place of NCTs for the annual Achievement and Attainment tables (i.e. school performance tables), what impact does this have on your perceptions of the test? [Probes: How will this impact, if at all, on the maths curriculum, and teaching and learning? How will it impact on English? What about the impact on other subjects in the curriculum? What about the impact on different year groups?]

46. Do the SLTs contribute to improved tracking of pupil performance? [Probes: In what ways, if at all, has pupil performance tracking improved? Have the tests changed the way in which interventions are put in place for pupils? If so, in what ways? Do SLTs impact on any particular groups of pupils, e.g. FSM eligible, pupils with Special Educational Needs?]

Section 5: Impact of SLTs on pupils, and parents/ carers

Background: DCSF would like to understand how SLTs will impact on parental and pupil engagement.

47. Are there any aspects of SLTs that contribute to pupils becoming more engaged with their learning? [Prompts: SLTs combined with the use of APP. Do SLTs/ can SLTs contribute to improved motivation? What about rates of progression in either English or Mathematics? [Probes: Have you any observations on pupils responses to the tests, either in the run up to, during or after the tests?]

48. How much, if any, information does your school provide to parents/ carers about their child's attainment and progression? [Probes: Do parents provide feedback to schools on the information they receive about their child's progression?]

49. In what ways, if any, has your school changed the way it engages with parents/ carers as a result of the SLTs? [Prompts: How did the school communicate with parents about the tests? Did your school obtain parental consent prior to pupils sitting the test(s)? If so, what were the reasons for doing this? Do you think SLTs help give parents a better understanding of their child s attainment?]

Section 6: Conclusion

50. Reflecting on what we have talked about today, in your opinion are there benefits with SLTs which outweigh any additional workload associated with the tests?
[Prompts: including everything from making test entry decisions to administering the tests to communicating results to parents (if applicable)?

51. Is there anything else, which we have not discussed, which you think is relevant and would like to add to our discussions?

Appendix 7: Phase 2 pupil focus group topic guide

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	✗	?

Single Level Test Pilot

School name:	<input type="text"/>						
Your name:	<input type="text"/>						
<i>Tick one box for each row below</i>							
Year 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Girl	<input type="checkbox"/>				

11. What do you think about school?

- A Do you enjoy school?
- B Do you enjoy playing with your friends?
- C Do you like doing tests?
- D If you do well in tests, do you feel good?

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	X	?

12. What do you think about English?

A Do you like English?

B Do you like reading?

C Do you like writing?

D Do you like doing English tests?

E Do you like English more than Maths?

F Do you like English more this year than last year?

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	✗	?

13. What do you think about Maths?

A Do you like Maths?

B Do you like doing Maths tests?

C Do you like Maths more than English?

D Do you like Maths more this year than last year?

14. What do you know about Single Level Tests?

A Have you heard your teachers talk about Single Level tests?

B Did your teacher explain what they were about?

C Do you know when you will be doing the test?

15. What test did you do?

A Did you do a Maths or an English test?

Maths	English	Both
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	✗	?

16. Tell us about how you revised for the English test.

A Did you revise for the test?

B Do you think you do the same amount of revision for the English test as you do for other tests?

C Did you like revising for the test?

17. Tell us about how you revised for the Maths test.

A Did you revise for the test?

B Do you think you do the same amount of revision for the Maths test as you do for other tests?

C Did you like revising for the test?

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	✗	?

18. Tell us what you think about the Tests

	English	Maths
A Did you like doing the test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Did you have enough time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Did you feel ready to take the test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D Was this test different to any other tests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E Did you think the test was hard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F Were you worried about doing the test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G Would you like to do tests like these in other subjects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H Do you think you did better in this test than others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes	No	Don't know
✓	✗	?

19. How did the tests help you with your schoolwork

A Do they help you to know what you're good at?

B Do they help you to know what you need to do to be better at Maths or English?

20. If there is anything you want to tell me that we haven't talked about, you can write in the box below.

Thank you.

Appendix 8: Phase 2 parent/carer focus group topic guide

SLT Pilot – Parent Focus Group Topic Guide

I: Background

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) has been commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to evaluate the Single Level Test (SLT) pilot.

As part of this research, we would like to collect, analyse and report on parents' perceptions of the SLTs. DCSF are particularly interested in understanding your views on how you engage with your child's learning and progression, and any views you might have on Single Level Tests. There are also a number of questions about how much information you receive about your child's progress and any suggestions you might have about how this could be improved, if at all.

There are three parts to the evaluation, namely (a) a series of six focus groups with teachers; (b) four focus groups with pupils and parents; and (c) a survey involving the headteacher, assessment co-ordinator (or equivalent) and Year 3-6 teachers.

II: Use of data

- Your views are private and confidential within this group. The views of this group and each of you individually will not be attributed in any written report or any other outputs generated by this project.
- We plan to record this interview. The purpose of this is to ensure that we accurately reflect the views expressed by those in the group. The recording will be used only for the purposes of writing up comprehensive notes.
- Can each of you introduce yourself to the group. Please provide your name and the name of your child, their year group and whether you are aware of the SLTs.

III: Participant names

31.	32.
33.	34.
35.	36.
37.	38.
39.	40.

IV: Administration

Focus Group Moderator	
Location	
Date/ Time	
Interview recorded (Yes / No)	
Interview transcribed (Yes / No)	

Section 1: Introduction

52. How aware are you of Single Level Tests (SLTs)? [Probes: How did you find out about SLTs? What information did you get from the school? How useful was the information? Would you like more information?]

53. What is your understanding of how the SLTs operate? [Prompts: They are undertaken twice a year; they test pupils for a single level; pupils are entered when they are judged by their teacher to be ready; the tests are shorter and more focused than the SATs; pupils can only move upwards from one level to the next]

Section 2: Information you receive about your child

Background: The questions in this section are about the information that school gives you about your child's learning and progression, whether it is through school reports or at parent evenings

54. How do you receive information about how your child is doing at school? [Probes: Verbal or written feedback? How often do you receive information about how your child is doing at school? Does the information provided enable you to assess your child's progress? Is the information provided in an appropriate way?]

55. Have you any suggestions about how communication from the school could be improved?

Section 3: Preparation and entry of pupils for SLTs

Background: DCSF would like to know more about the extent to which pupils are prepared for sitting the SLTs and the decision making process for test entry. The following questions will explore these topics in detail.

Note: We have defined test preparation and revision as follows: test preparation includes activities such as familiarising pupils with the structure and/ or layout of the test paper; providing pupils with test completion instructions and familiarising them with the location for the test. Revision, on the other hand, is any activity or set of activities that involve helping pupils to review material in advance of them sitting the test(s) this is in addition to time spent with pupils consolidating their learning as part of normal teaching and learning.

56. How did the school communicate with you about the test? [Probes: Did the school provide you with a letter indicating that your child would be entered for the test or did they contact you directly (either face-to-face or by phone)? Was this each time your child took a test? Did the school give you an opportunity to opt your child out of the test? Did the school offer to speak with you about the reasons why they had entered your child for the test? Did the school inform you of the level your child would be entered for the test(s)? Did they explain the reasons why your child was entered at that level? Did you receive notification that your child had achieved the level for which they were entered?]

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57. Would you like the school to involve you more in decisions about whether your child should be entered for the test or not? [Probe: Any parents with a Year 6 child, whether they would want to be involved in the test entry decisions.]

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Facilitator note: Read out the definitions of revision and preparation to remind group of the difference.

58. Are you aware whether the school is preparing your child for the June 2010 SLT? [Probes: Are you aware whether the school is helping your child revise for the test ? Are you aware whether the school is helping your child prepare for the test? Is the extent of preparation/ revision the same as it was for SATs or NCTs? Do you notice any differences between English and Maths?]

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59. What importance do you attach to your child revising and/ or preparing for SLTs?
[Probes: do you think test preparation or revision is important? Do you help your child prepare for or revise for the test at home? Would you like to see the school investing more time in test preparation or revision?]

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Section 4: Previous rounds of Single Level Tests

Background: Your child may have taken a test in a previous round of SLTs. We would like to know more about your views on these and how much information you received from the school about these.

60. Which test(s) was your child entered for and at what level? [English reading, writing, Maths or both? Level 3, 4, 5 or 6?]

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61. Did the test have any impact on your child's behaviour? [Probes: Did they feel pressure, or did they enjoy taking the test?]

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62. Are there any comparisons between the current round of SLTs and these previous rounds of SLTs? [Prompts: The degree to which you were informed about your child being entered; test preparation or revision; the importance the school places on the test(s); the level of pressure, if any, experienced by your child]

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Section 4: Use of SLT results

Background: DCSF are planning a number of changes to how the results of the Single Level Tests will be used. For maths, they are planning to use the SLT results in the school's achievement and attainment tables (otherwise known as league tables). No decision has been made in respect of the English SLTs. We would like to ask you a number of questions about this.

63. To what extent did the school's test results impact on your decision to send your child there? [Probes: Is a high attaining school very important to you? What about other things such as the proximity of the school to your home; reputation amongst the community etc?]

64. Do you think it is important for your child's school to publish SLT results? Why do you think this? [Probes: Would it have an impact on the degree to which pupils are prepared for the test? Have you noticed any differences from previous rounds in terms of how the school approaches the test? Would you be supportive of your child's school publishing test results for both subjects (English and maths)?

Section 5: Conclusion

65. Is there anything else, which we have not discussed, which you think is relevant and would like to add to our discussions?

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