

## June 2017: LA Showcase and Usability Testing report

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## 1 Introduction

This document reports on the LA Showcases and Usability Testing – Learners (cog labs) conducted in June 2017 in preparation for the implementation of the Scottish National Standardised Assessments.

There are two main sections to this document:

- 5
  - LA Showcases, and
  - Usability Testing – Learners.

It should be read in conjunction with AS01A-03\_SNSA\_Milestone 2-3 Test Plan Summary.

## 2 LA Showcases

10 From 5 June - 23 June 2017, in collaboration with the Scottish Government (SG), the ACER Partner Group (APG) held 23 showcase for 24 local authorities.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of these showcases was to demonstrate assessments to local authorities and school staff in order to increase confidence in the product, and to fulfil commitments made by the Scottish Government.

Each showcase was presented by one SG and one APG representative.

15 **SG presenters:** David Leng (DL) **[redacted]**

**APG presenters:**

**[redacted]** As part of the training process, less experienced presenters shadowed more experienced presenters before themselves delivering a showcase.

20 The presentations included an introduction and overview of the assessments lead by an SG representative, an overview of the assessment platform, an interactive demo of a P1 practice programme and a P4 Reading assessment (live where technology allowed this), a live (where possible) preview of the Group Diagnostic and Group Aggregate Reports and a mock-up of the Individual Report.

25 Showcases were offered to all 32 local authorities. David Leng sent an initial email to local authorities providing information about both the showcase and the opportunity to take part in usability testing, and inviting them to sign up for a session. The email and its attachment are included as Appendix I to this document.

30 Using the responses from the local authorities, ACER and SG liaised to schedule as many showcases as possible in the 3-week window, prioritising those local authorities who had responded by the submission date of 31 May 2017. It is envisioned that some further showcases will take place in August and September for those local authorities who could not participate before the end of the school year. A summary of the LA responses and scheduling is presented in a collaborative document on the Scottish Government's SNSA Project SharePoint: [MG03-04 SNSA staff schedule June 2017 v0.1](#).

35 After each showcase, one of the APG attendees was invited to complete a feedback form. This feedback was used to fine-tune the presentations during June, and will be used in the further development of training and help materials. Edited versions of these feedback forms are included below. The information included is gathered both from the forms originally submitted by local authorities, and from observations made by the presenter (or an APG member shadowing the session) – for example, the information after 'predicted number' is taken from the LA submissions, while the 'actual number' is the estimate of the note-taker on the day. The initials of the APG member who completed the form are given in the 'Notes' section.

40 A brief summary of benefits and themes emerging in feedback is included at the end of this document.

45

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<sup>1</sup> Two local authorities – Midlothian and East Lothian – had a joint showcase.

## 2.1 Aberdeen City

**Location:** Aberdeen City, Northfield Academy

**Date:** 22 June

**Time:** 3:45pm

50 **Presenters:** [redacted]

Notes: [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** n/a

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** 48

55 **Actual number:** head teachers and LA staff, 100+

*Key Questions:*

- Will these replace the existing assessments?
  - When can the assessments be conducted (LA window)?
  - What do High, Medium and Low represent? What scale is being used?
- 60 • Question about EAL considerations

*Notes:*

A very positive session, with great engagement and positive response to the various reports. The LA rep asked about LA access to data, and the session did run longer than planned so most staff cleared out rather quickly.

65

## 2.2 Aberdeenshire

**Location:** Aberdeenshire, Council Chambers, Woodhill House,

**Date:** 23 June

**Time:** 2pm

70 **Presenters:** [redacted]

Notes: [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** n/a

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** n/a

75 **Actual number:** head teachers and LA rep, 90+

*Key Questions:*

- Can we access the assessment content?
- Will the same descriptors be covered over High, Medium and Low for different pathways?
- Can off-stage assessment be conducted for learners with ASN?

80 *Notes:*

There was some minor technical difficulty so I used the offline presentation to showcase the assessment; however, I was able to use the live reports. There was a number of questions on whether the assessments would be suitable for off-stage assessment. The Local Authority rep was very keen to have access to the assessments prior to learners, but it has always been policy that there will be no access to assessments.

85

## 2.3 Angus Showcase

**Location:** Kirriemuir Town Hall, Angus

**Date:** 15/06/17

90 **Time:** 09:30 - 10:45

**Presenters:** [redacted]

**Notes:** [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** Yes

*Attendees:*

95 **Predicted number:** approx. 50 teachers

**Actual number:** Approximately 80 primary and secondary head teachers

*Key Questions:*

- Can a teacher read the questions to a child in P1 (i.e. as an alternative to using the audio function)?
- 100 • What is the basis for the region descriptors (High, Medium and Low)
- When will full standardisation be available?
- Will this compare learners with all other learners in Scotland?
- Will this data be published?
- What is the basis for a learner's numerical score mean (i.e. how is the scale constructed)?

105 *Notes:*

A positive session. Audience members listened closely to the presentation and were engaged. My impression was that the audience responded positively to the preview of the assessments (P4 Reading, P1 Practice). The audience took particular interest in the individual pupil report, seeking to understand the basis for the region descriptors (high, medium and low) and related text. They were also interested in understanding the links to the Curriculum for Excellence and benchmarks.

110

Several questions following the presentation were focused on standardisation and were prompted by [redacted]. The audience identified this is an area where they would like more detailed information.

115

In answer to the question of whether LA or national data would be published, [redacted] clearly stated SG's policy position on national data and mentioned LA reporting requirements were still to be determined. This led to a discussion about the benefits and risks of comparative data, and the policy complexities associated with this.

120

[redacted] presentation emphasised the importance of seeing assessment instruments as just one of many tools that can inform a teacher's professional judgement. This point was also stressed by [redacted] in [redacted] concluding remarks.



## 2.4 Clackmannanshire Showcase

**Location:** Clackmannanshire

**Date:** 21.06.17

**Time:** 3.45pm

125 **Presenters:** [redacted]

Notes: [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** CEM

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** 80

130 **Actual number:** 70

*Key Questions:*

- They asked whether more assessments for the in-between years will be available to purchase.
- The attendees wanted to know if assessments can be known by level rather than phase.

135 *Notes:*

We had a very good showcase with around 70 attendees at Clackmannanshire.

It was all very well received with no negative comments.

140 As usual there were some questions about levels and in particular some teachers were keen to call assessments by level rather than phase name – reasoning being that if they have a low achieving P7 child, they might want to use a P4 assessment for them, but the child might be upset if they see they are sitting a P4 assessment.

There was some concern that a lack of IT skills might bring up some problems with smaller children but happy overall to give it a go.

145 This LA will be asking all its schools to sit assessments during a specific testing window (probably May).

## 2.5 Dumfries Showcase

**Location:** Dumfries

**Date:** 14.06.17

**Time:** 15.30

150 **Presenters:** David Leng[redacted]

Notes: [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** CEM

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** 50

155 **Actual number:** mostly head teachers, 45

*Key Questions:*

- A lot of questions on the scale and where low/medium/high comes from. Teachers persisted and wanted to know how it compared to some other assessments they are currently doing (as in: is 'low' equal to 85%?). DL tried to keep it general but by the end they asked for equivalency tables (so they can compare assessments) and DL said they will have data to enable them to do that. Some head teachers said they will continue to use whatever they've used before in addition to our assessments.
- The other area of confusion were the organisers. They wanted to know why they are not exactly like benchmarks and DL again stepped in and tried to explain
- Finally, they had concerns about language, apparently they think it's 'strange'. One example was 'proceed anyway' - they insisted that P4 wouldn't understand this.

*Notes:*

DL did his presentation very confidently and easily but faced a bit of resistance from the start - a lot of questions like 'Why have these assessments?', 'When will teachers find time to train?', 'Who will keep and use the data from the assessments?' and similar. DL was very reassuring and empathetic and it went fine.

[redacted] did the demo - I believe she just joined us 6 days ago and it was her first showcase but she was an experienced and confident speaker so it all went well.

Time ran out whilst they were focusing on the scale, but once [redacted] showed them the second page of the individual report - they loved that bit! They thought it was very useful.

Overall it went well.

## 2.6 Dundee Showcase

**Location:** The Steeple, Nethergate, Dundee

180 **Date:** Friday 9th June 2017

**Time:** 11.30 – 1pm

**Presenters:** [redacted]

**Notes:** [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):**

185 *Attendees:*

**Predicted:** no information given

**Actual:** Local Authority Reps, Head teachers, Union Reps and likely around 60+

*Key Questions:*

- 190
- Will there be LA level access to data? (LA Rep)
  - What is the policy on EAL guidance?
  - Can the assessment be translated for EAL learners?

*Notes:*

195 This session went well, with a few questions relating to EAL, but after that they were all keen to get to lunch. They responded very well, with Local Authority Reps speaking to [redacted] and me after the showcase. They seemed very keen to transition over without the need to keep existing assessments (except for yea groups other than P1, P4, P7 & S3).

The connection to the computer wasn't great, and the display was slightly yellow but they still were able to get a good understanding of our system.

## 200 2.7 East Ayrshire Showcase

**Location:** Grange campus, Kilmarnock

**Date:** 21/6/2017

**Time:** 15 30 – 17 30

**Presenters:** David Leng, [redacted]

205 **Notes:** [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** GL

All schools use GL NRG T in P4.

Some schools GL in other year groups.

*Attendees:*

210 **Predicted number:** up to 50

**Actual number:** 60 – about 10 had previously attended head-teacher briefings.

*Key Questions:*

- Can parents insist on obtaining the data report under FOI?
- Can a learner sit an assessment more than once? I'm quite concerned that a child may sabotage their assessment and then be unable to sit it again.
- If a learner in your class is not working at the level of the test, are you able to postpone their assessment?
- How wide is the branching? How does it compare to other assessments such as GL assessments?
- I'm concerned about learners with ASN requirements. Will learners attending special schools be required to undertake these assessments?
- I have a P4 class with some learners in it that would find the text (from a P4 assessment) completely inaccessible. They will not be able to read it. Why should everyone have to sit the same assessment when their class work is differentiated to suit their ability? I don't think it fits in with the principles of CfE.
- If a learner has already completed an assessment in P1, but are not yet able to sit the P4 assessment, are they able to sit the P1 assessment again?
- The font is not user-friendly. It is inappropriate for learners with reading difficulties.

*Notes:*

230 This audience were probably a little more probing than some others and the feeling was they were more "sceptical" about their use.

The questions were a little more argumentative and probing.

However, the LA representative was happy with how it went and with the information presented.

235 Before the presentation, he had asked if we had any idea about when most people were considering using the assessments.

## 2.8 East Dunbartonshire Showcase

**Location:** Bishopbriggs Academy, Bishopbriggs

**Date:** 20/6/2017

**Time:** 15 00 – 17 30

240 **Presenters:** David Leng, [redacted]

**Notes:** [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** GL

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** Approx 100 Primary/Secondary Senior Leaders

245 **Actual number:** ~70

*Key Questions:*

- Do all the students get the same questions in the first branch?  
What they really are asking is, “Can we use the diagnostic table to find out which questions were asked in the first branch” in order to compare organisers and descriptors. They were hoping to be able to do a whole class comparison of a descriptor. DL said we would feed back the question.
- There was a question asked privately at the end about data protection. We were asked if we had to report the data asked for under “Freedom of Information”. DL addressed this.
- We were also asked if the font size in the text (before zoom in) was pt 12 or 14.

255 *Notes:*

This group seemed positive and engaged. There were the usual questions as well as the ones above.

There was an issue with the school’s sound system and so the P1 practice assessment was showcased using a traditional amplifier.

## 260 2.9 East Lothian &amp; Midlothian Showcase

**Location:** Tynewater Primary School

**Date:** 12/06/2017

**Time:** 3:30 -5:30

**Presenters:** [redacted]

265 Notes: [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):**

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** approx. 15 teachers

**Actual number:** 10 primary school teachers from 2 schools and 1 head teacher

270 *Key Questions:*

- Why can't teachers have access to test questions?
- Why doesn't it measure speed as the Durham assessments do?
- Why doesn't the SNSA data doesn't feed into SEEMiS the way the SEEMiS data feeds into SNSA?

275 *Notes:*

There were some minor problems with Internet connectivity and hardware.

## 2.10 East Renfrewshire Showcase

**Location:** Woodfarm High School, Robslee Road, Thornliebank East Renfrewshire G46 7HG

**Date:** 13 June 2017

**Time:** 3:00–4:30 pm

5 **Presenters:** David Leng, [redacted]

Notes: [redacted]

### Currently used standardised assessments (if known):

East Renfrewshire standardised assessment

Administered at baseline (P1) in August, P3, P5, P7 and S2 in February

10 Paper-based, non-adaptive. Assessment is generated in East Renfrewshire by LA. Marked and analysed centrally

### Attendees:

**Predicted number:** 70; Head Teachers/ DHTs/ English / Maths PTs/Faculty Heads/ Education Dept Staff

15 **Actual number:** about 40. Head teachers, deputies, English and maths curriculum leaders and the attainment and improvement officer from the local authority.

### Key Questions:

- How will standardisation be done in the first year of the assessment?
- Is there a sample assessment that pupils can practice on?
- 20 • How can you standardise when learners can sit the assessment at any time of year?
- Can a child do an assessment not at their year group? (e.g. could a struggling P7 do a P4 assessment?)
- What is in the writing skills assessment? (“I’m not going to give my children an assessment of something I haven’t taught.”)
- 25 • What timescale has been set for giving up current assessments and transferring to the SNSA?
- What is the relationship between the Levels and Low, Medium and High? For example, does Low (for P4) equal Early Level, Medium First Level and High Second Level?

### Notes:

30 Good and knowledgeable questions. The LA representative said, “We don’t want to give up our own assessment immediately. We will run the two concurrently next year. There’s only one common year (P7). We will probably schedule the SNSA after Easter in a six week window.”

Another comment: “End of S3 is too late for young people to make decisions about which pathway to take in senior years of school. We need the mid S2 assessment.”

35 I showed the most challenging pathway of P4 reading assessment. Afterwards, I asked some primary teachers how they thought their pupils would fare with this (E. Renfrewshire is one of the highest performing local authorities – some doubts had been expressed as to whether the SNSA would be hard enough for their pupils.) They said there was “a lot of reading” compared with their own assessment, but thought it would be suitable for the most-able P4 pupils.

## 40 2.11 Edinburgh Showcase

**Location:** Carrick Knowe Primary School

**Date:** 23 June 2017

**Time:** 1:30-4:00

**Presenters:** David Leng [redacted]

45 Notes: [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** CHEM

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** Primary HTs and CLs Maths/English invited (estimated 60-80)

**Actual number:** 100

50 *Key Questions:*

- Can IMO's have a copy of the ppt presentation (with the hyperlinks disabled, obviously) to distribute?
- Lots of detailed questions around benchmarks, validity - needed statistical data.
- Can Initial Teacher Educators have access to the system as a means of training student teachers?

55

*Notes:*

The Primary 4 Literacy assessment would not load.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This issue was due to the risk identified by ACER in the concurrent running of deployments, exports of assessment content, showcases and functionality testing. From GoLive, deployment schedules and testing will be out of hours, but prior to hand over there was a need to conduct and run testing which caused some minor issues during the showcases. A backup, offline presentation in the form of screenshots in a PowerPoint was provided so that all content could be showcased in spite of any technical difficulties.



## 2.12 Falkirk Showcase

60 **Location:** Seminar Room, Camelon Education Centre, Abercrombie Street, Falkirk

**Date:** 14.06.17

**Time:** 15.30

**Presenters:** [redacted]

**Notes:** [redacted]

65 **Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** n/a

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** 70

**Actual number:** teachers, 54

*Key Questions:*

- 70
- We were asked if a child who had not been assessed as confident at early level in P1 would be able to sit the assessment in P2 if the teacher judged them to be ready. [redacted] said that we were looking at a range of similar issues and guidance would be provided in due course.

*Notes:*

75 **[redacted]**

We had a very good showcase - about 54 teachers turned up, although no sign of our LA contact.

The demonstrations went well, everything worked up to the pupils' menu option, when I switched to offline (but I went through all the filtering and selecting options they will have and they were fine with it).

80 It was all well received, with a lot of positive body language and nodding. The only questions we got were of a 'how to' nature, which were easily answered.

An interesting point was that they will all do the assessments at a similar point of their LA's choosing.

85 **[redacted]** There were just over 50 participants at the Falkirk Showcase. They responded very positively to the presentation and most of the questions related to the administration of the assessments. There were very few questions because the technical presentation was so clear and provided comprehensive coverage of appropriate elements.

There were no representatives from the EA at the meeting.

## 90 2.13 Fife Showcase

**Location:** Viewforth High School

**Date:** 19/06/2017

**Time:** 2:00- 4:00

**Presenters:** [redacted]

## 95 Notes: [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** CEM/Durham (SOSCA)

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** 50

**Actual number:** approx. 40

100 *Key Questions:*

- If a small school has less than 10 pupils at P1/4 stage can they combine in clusters within the LA so that they can get a comparison with other children of that age and stage in the locality if not the school or class?
- On the training /help site could we set up a “sandbox” of dummy profiles that teachers could play with and practise on in advance without impacting on the data? SEEMiS have this sandbox function and it is very helpful.

105

*Notes:*

none

## 110 2.14 Highland Showcase

**Location:** Milburn Academy, Inverness

**Date:** 19 June, 2017

**Time:** 3:30–5:00 pm

**Presenters:** David Leng, [redacted]

115 **Notes:** [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** Durham CEM, at P1, P3, P4, P5, P7

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** less than 100

**Actual number:** 60

120 Combination of primary and secondary (many more primary) head teachers and deputies, including Millburn Academy head teacher; one person from the local authority. Glow webinar linked in another 6 attendees from six different Highland locations.

*Key Questions:*

- Will you be reporting predictions of SQA exam results (as CEM does)?
- Will the assessment be timed, or time out?
- Can you download the reports?
- Are there instructions about how to filter on reports?
- How can we access such tools as colour contrast, if our pupils don't have the tool on their computer (as many won't)?
- When will the equating with CEM be done?
- Will you be able to show trend information (as CEM does)?

*Notes*

135 The LA representative was doing a survey to find out when most schools wanted the testing window to be. It sounds as if it will be January/February. She told attendees that Highland would continue to administer CEM in 2017-18, but probably no longer than that, and only in the year groups not assessed in SNSA (P3, P5?), so as not to over-assess the children.

Technical difficulties: had to use the local hardware as no internet access at the site unless you had LA credentials. The screen resolution as projected was poor throughout but for the assessment platform (items, reports and dashboard) was extremely poor.

140 One participant asked that the "a" used in the P4 assessment be changed to an "ɑ" – but this was contradicted by another participant who said that P4s ought to be able to read "a".

## 2.15 Moray Showcase

**Location:** Elgin Town Hall (Supper Room), 1 Trinity Pl, Elgin IV30 1UL

145 **Date:** 19 June, 2017

**Time:** 11:00–12:30 pm

**Presenters:** David Leng, [redacted]

Notes: [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** Durham CEM

150 **Attendees:**

**Predicted number:** approx. 65 staff, HTs and representatives

**Actual number:** 40

Combination of primary and secondary (more primary); head teachers and deputies; three people from Local Authority.

155 **Key Questions:**

- Could there be a survey of P1s to see which devices they use, and whether there is any effect of using tablets rather than laptops or desktops?
- Are the S3 assessments aligned with third level or fourth level?

**Notes:**

160 Quite a lot of difficulty getting internet access and for the projector to work. Audience seemed engaged and interested.

P4 reading assessment was regarded as “quite tricky”.

## 2.16 North Lanarkshire Showcase

- 165 **Location:** NLC Kildonnán Street
- Date:** 21/06/2017
- Time:** 3pm
- Presenters:** [redacted]
- Notes: [redacted]
- 170 **Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** CEM Assessments at P1, P3, P5, P7 and S2
- Attendees:*
- Predicted number:** Approx. 60. (Secondary Heads, Primary Heads, Continuous Improvement Service, Educational Psychologists, Attainment Challenge Team).
- Actual number:** 40 (incl. [redacted], CIOs, SIOs, Head from each family Group (20), Educational Psychologists)
- 175 *Key Questions:*
- NLC have 2 years of CEM will there be a gap in attainment data?
  - How confident are we that the matching up of data will be robust enough to show the attainment gap is closing at the end of the financial year?
  - Can the tags be put in after an assessment takes place?
  - Will staff get access to an actual assessment to play around with before it takes place?
  - Could some dummy logins/staff accounts be made available for training staff
  - Is there a baseline assessment for Primary 1?
- 180
- Notes:*
- 185 Variety of Senior Personnel from authority some had already attended an initial briefing with DL and [redacted].
- [redacted] discussed the working group looking at long term data collection involving CEM, GL and East Renfrewshire Internal Assessments; member of team offered to be involved in this group.
- 190 [redacted] was not aware of any LA meeting with Scholar at this time but it may have gone through the Director of Education email
- NLC to have consultation with staff before deciding how to proceed

## 2.17 Perth and Kinross Showcase

**Location:** Glenearn Community Hall, Perth

**Date:** 22/06/17

195 **Time:** 15:30 - 17:00

**Presenters:** [redacted]

**Notes:** [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** No

### *Attendees:*

200 **Predicted number:** 50 (primary and secondary)

**Actual number:** Approximately 80 primary and secondary head teachers

### *Key Questions:*

- P1 Assessment – Do children use headphones?
- P4 Reading – Is there always only one correct answer in each multiple choice item?
- 205 • Why is it possible to use the Group Aggregate Report to compare one or more groups of less than ten learners, but it is not psychometrically valid to make a comparison with less than 10 learners on the last page of the Individual Report?
- What is the policy position on sharing the Individual Report with parents? Who decides this?
- What are the LA's plans for the timing of the assessment over the year?
- 210 • What are the guidelines on administering the assessments, e.g. do we take one class to the computer suite, then another, then another all within a week or two, etc.?
- What is the timing of the standardisation exercise?
- What opportunities will children have to familiarise themselves with the assessments before they start?
- 215 • How can we make sure children won't be nervous?

### *Notes:*

A positive session. Audience warmed up as showcase progressed. They were attentive and asked relatively few questions. Most questions flowed from the reports as above. Some interest in how the assessments related to existing assessment practice, and teaching and learning. A strong message from the LA Rep, [redacted] and [redacted] that assessments were low stakes and diagnostic.

220 Session ended with discussion about cog labs [redacted] from the school that had participated in the cognitive laboratory – [redacted] – were in the audience and talked about how two of their children had given feedback on specific items during the cog lab, and had enjoyed the assessment experience. Overall, well-received.

225

## 2.18 Renfrewshire Showcase

**Location:** Park Mains High School, Renfrew

**Date:** 15/6/2017

**Time:** 15:30 – 17:30

230 **Presenters:** David Leng, [redacted]

**Notes:** [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** GL (contract expires in June 2017)

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** no information provided

235 **Actual number:** 60

*Key Questions:*

- Can we consider introducing a red warning triangle to the system when a student tries to move on without answering? This may support those with weak reading skills.
- When will we get a numerical scale and how will it tie in to what we have?
- 240 • Can we have a horizontal scale on the individual student report rather than the vertical as it is now?
- Will we get a normal distribution graph?
- When do we get a numerical scale?
- How will this data tie to historical data?

245 *Notes:*

Staff were very engaged and seemed interested. More focussed on the nuance of the data.

The introduction from the LA representative was very clear: this is happening- we are not here to question the process but engage on how to best move forward.

250 There were some system issues on the day. We had to present from behind a curtain since the HDMI cable was to the side of their stage/ screen. This meant one presenter moving slides on. It was ok but there was a risk that this would impact on the flow.

There were issues with the zoom and highlight function. The audience were forgiving of these.

The functionality issues were reported after the session.

## 2.19 South Ayrshire Showcase

255 **Location:** Kyle Academy, Ayr

**Date:** 22/6/2017

**Time:** 15 30 – 17 30

**Presenters:** David Leng, [redacted]

**Notes:** [redacted]

260 **Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** CEM

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** 60-100

**Actual number:** 60

*Key Questions:*

- 265
- Do ACER have assessments available for intervening years?
  - Would it be better for the LA to report to parents on these assessments?
  - What are the meanings of high/medium/low with respect to the Scale and “result” cell of the diagnostic table showing learner responses?
  - Can assessments only be sat once?
- 270
- Can the diagnostic table be adapted so it can be used as a classroom tracking tool?

*Notes:*

Initially I tried using the IT equipment provided by the school because it was difficult to disconnect without IT being present. I could access everything I needed to and so there was no apparent blocking by the LA firewall.

275 This audience were generally amiable and seemed quite enthusiastic about what was being provided.



## 2.20 South Lanarkshire Showcase

**Location:** South Lanarkshire

280 **Date:** 20.06.17

**Time:** 3.45pm

**Presenters:** [redacted]

**Notes:** [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** CEM

285 **Attendees:**

**Predicted number:** no information provided

**Actual number:** 100

**Key Questions:**

- Attendees wanted more details on how each assessment relates to levels.
- They asked whether more assessments for the in-between years will be available to purchase.

**Notes:**

We had a very good showcase with over 100 attendees at South Lanarkshire.

295 It was all very well received and went on for an hour longer with everyone wanting to see more and talk.

There were some questions about levels (e.g. 'Is high achievement equivalent to level 4?' etc).

Again, they asked for assessments for in-between years and [redacted] told them that SG is only paying for these but ACER may very well do more for in-between phases.

300 When we had a question if P4 child can sit P1 assessment and similar, [redacted] said that whilst they don't encourage it, the latest government thinking is to allow it. Apparently more on this decision is to come.

The rest was all smooth sailing.

## 2.21 Stirling Showcase

305 **Location:** Bannockburn High School

**Date:** 13 June 2017

**Time:** 4:00- 5:00

**Presenters:** [redacted]

**Notes:** [redacted]

310 **Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** CEM

*Attendees:*

**Predicted number:** Invitation to all primary and secondary schools for interested staff.

**Actual number:** 50

*Key Questions:*

- 315
- How would info about the assessments be conveyed to parents?
  - What would the info consist of?
  - Wanted to be reassured that there would be a clear and consistent message from S.G. about the purpose of the assessments.

*Notes:*

320 none

## 2.22 West Dunbartonshire Showcase

**Location:** Education Resource Service, Edinbarnet Campus, 5 Craigpark Street, Faifley, Clydebank G81 5BS

**Date:** 12 June, 2017

325 **Time:** 3:30–5:00 pm

**Presenters:** David Leng, [redacted]

Notes: [redacted]

**Currently used standardised assessments (if known):** GL at P3, 4, 5, 6 7 and S2

### *Attendees:*

330 **Predicted number:** no information provided

**Actual number:** 14

Combination of primary and secondary (more primary); head teachers and deputies; one person from Local Authority: with attainment and assessment responsibility.

### *Key Questions:*

- 335
- Will the standardised results be reported on stanines? (as GL assessments are)
  - Will P1 pupils have plenty of practice material?
  - What will we do about standardised assessments for the intervening year groups?

### *Notes:*

Audience seemed rather tired, though good questions were asked.

340 Concern about managing P1 pupils – “They will need a lot of support.”

Overall approval of the assessments and especially of the reports – all three types.

Not much apparent interest in the dashboard for staff members – too much information at this stage? More focus on the assessment itself and especially on the reports.

## 2.23 West Lothian Showcase

345 **Location:** Deans Community High School, Eastwood Park, Livingston

**Date:** Thursday 8th June 2017

**Time:** 11.30 – 1pm

**Presenters:** David Leng, [redacted]

Notes: [redacted]

350 **Attendees:**

**Predicted:** no information provided

**Actual:** Local Authority Reps, Head teachers, and likely around 60+

**Key Questions:**

- How will the LA roll out the assessment?
- Will there be a workload issue?

**Notes:**

All the questions raised were related to LA control of the assessment, when they will be conducting it and how much of a workload balance it will be. The local authority rep fielded these questions briefly by saying there was a session later in the day to cover it.

### 360 3 Usability Testing – Learners

Along with the invitation to have a showcase in June, local authorities were asked whether they were willing to have some pupils in their LA participate in usability testing,<sup>3</sup> with the proviso that for timetabling and staffing reasons, these cog labs would need to be on or very close to the date of the showcase in that local authority. An example of the email and attachment sent to local authorities and of the initial emails sent to participating schools can be found in Appendix I.

365

The purpose of the usability testing – commonly referred to as ‘cognitive laboratories’ (cog labs) within ACER – was to gather information on learners’ interaction with the assessments and assessment platform, and to fulfil the SG commitment of offering user testing in all local authorities before the end of the academic year.

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Thirteen local authorities indicated that they were willing to take part in their initial response to DL, but not all of these sessions could be scheduled in the tight timeframe.<sup>4</sup> By the end of June, usability testing had been held in 9 local authorities. Of the remaining three local authorities who initially signed up, one (Fife) has been offered participation in any user testing in the autumn term and two (Orkney Islands and Scottish Borders) have showcases scheduled for the autumn term, making their participation in user testing in June out of scope. These two local authorities will also be contacted and offered the chance to participate in any user testing in autumn. One local authority (Falkirk) was contacted about taking up the offer, but did not respond within the timeframe.

375

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The cognitive laboratories themselves were conducted by APG staff. During and after the session, the APG member filled in a pro forma. Information at an item level was also collected by some observers. Edited versions of the feedback sheets submitted by the observers are included in the subsequent pages.

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<sup>3</sup> Please see Appendix I

<sup>4</sup> Note that in the spreadsheet MG03-04, a fourteenth local authority – South Lanarkshire – is marked as having shown willingness to participate in the user testing; no corroboration of this, however, can be found in the email exchanges or submissions from LAs available to ACER. This may be a typo in the spreadsheet.

### 3.1 Aberdeen City

Usability Testing session was held in Aberdeen City at **[redacted]**.

#### 3.1.1 P4 Practice, Reading, Numeracy and Writing Skills

385 Observer’s name: **[redacted]**

Location: **[redacted]** P4s

Date: 22.6.17

Technical set up: Laptop, chrome, Laptop, IE and iPad Safari, Wifi

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	1min	CEM and PIPs
Assessment Selection screen		Reading and Numeracy, then Writing Skills – 2 very able learners who went through extremely quickly
Instructions screen		
First Question		
Following questions		
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner		Both students completed the assessment at the same time then moved onto additional forms because they enjoyed it.  No issue with scrolling or navigation, very little instruction was required. Both learners preferred reading the question, previous assessments had audio but they liked this.  They had no timing issue, both very able  They were confused with the presentation of cloze items that weren’t displayed as a cloze item but different response areas and questions – this is due to the current assessments they use being cloze assessments
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher		The staff would like an audio component as this is what their current assessments use, especially for numeracy.  Scrolling on the laptop was difficult; the iPad was much better.  Logout instructions: one learner easily found it the other struggled. This was without ANY instruction though.

## 390 3.2 Aberdeenshire

Usability Testing was conducted with [redacted] in Aberdeenshire at [redacted].

## 3.2.1 P1 Practice, P1 Literacy, P1 Numeracy

Observer's name: [redacted]

Location: [redacted]P1

395 Date: 23.6

Technical set up: My own laptop and wifi (Network blocked site access)

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	1min	Incas
Assessment Selection screen		One learner on numeracy and one with literacy
Instructions screen		Both learners found the audio instruction easy to follow; they did have difficulty with mouse dexterity.  Navigation from question to audio to next was difficult for one learner but the other managed easily. This could be ability and question content being difficult for one learner
First Question		
Following questions		
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner		There was scrolling in the P1 assessments, which will not occur in the final version. As such, they had difficulty with the mouse – especially with some of the interactivity.  Confused the left and right mouse button at times, wasn't overly experienced with a computer/mouse  Possible to disable right click?  Learners love the audio and interactivity, one learner thought it was a game, the other struggled with some of the content and it wasn't until the third branch that content was more suitable.
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher		Was sports day so there was no staff supervision, or discussion

## 3.3 Angus

Two Usability Testing sessions were held in Angus at [redacted]

## 3.3.1 P4 Numeracy

400 Observer's name: [redacted]

Location: [redacted]

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017

Technical set up: PC

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	5 mins	The learner thought that they had sat online assessments previously The learner felt that it was easier to sit an online assessment if you were able to click on a picture The learner felt that the subjects that posed the most challenge were division and time
Assessment Selection screen	1 min	No issues
Instructions screen	2 mins	The learner commented that the instructions were "clear and good"
First Question	1 min	The learner commented that the question was "clear and I get it"
Following questions	30 mins	The learner commented that the majority of questions were "easy"
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner	5 mins	The learner felt that the easiest question was the one on measuring fingers as there was "only one difference" The learner felt that the most of the questions in the assessment were "a bit challenging" The learner did not think that any of the words used in the assessment were hard to understand
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher		See below
Other observations		The learner was very computer literate and found the PC easy to use The learner commented that the assessment was "fun" and felt that other learners would also enjoy it. The learner found scrolling easy and needed no prompting when it was required. The learner did not want to use paper to work answers out.

405



## 3.3.2 P4 Writing

Observer's name: **[redacted]**Location: **[redacted]**410 Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017

Technical set up: PC

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	5 mins	The learner knew that they had sat online assessments previously The learner felt that previous online assessments were not difficult The learner felt that all subjects were similar in terms of difficulty
Assessment Selection screen	1 min	No issues. The learner felt it was "clear and obvious what to do"
Instructions screen	3 mins	The learner took quite a while to read the screen
First Question	1 min	The learner was happy with clicking on the next button and found the assessment easy to navigate at this point
Following questions	40 mins	The learner commented that the majority of questions were "easy", "clear" or "good" The learner approached most questions on spelling phonetically but this strategy did not always work The learner often approached questions by eliminating the options that they felt were incorrect The learner read most questions aloud. The learner often re-read questions The learner could not touch type and was often quite slow with this The learner was not always confident about their answers and often commented "it is probably not right" The learner commented that it was often difficult to see where the punctuation marks were. She used the crrl + and ctrl – functions independently
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner	5 mins	The learner felt that the easiest questions were on spelling The learner felt that the most difficult questions were when s/he didn't understand a word and found this off-putting The learner commented that if they didn't understand a question then they guessed the answer. The learner felt the assessment was "fun and a bit challenging"
Post-interview discussion	15 mins	<b>[redacted]</b> stated that the school was used to using PIPs & InCAS

with teachers / head teacher		<p>and that the learners had used these assessments. [redacted] was dissatisfied with PIPs assessments as they contained the same material each year so, in theory, it would be possible to “teach to the test”. [redacted] felt that InCAS were a bit better as they are adaptive in design so included more variety</p> <p>[redacted] felt that learners found the “Attitudes &amp; Opinions” section of the current assessment the easiest and the numeracy and language parts of the current assessments the most challenging as the learners often didn’t fully understand the question</p> <p>Neither learner has ASN. Both learners were described as “more than able”</p> <p>[redacted] felt that some pupils with ASN require questions to be explained to them</p> <p>[redacted] felt that it was important to be able to use tablets for younger pupils as desktop computers were “alien” to them</p> <p>[redacted] felt that some ASN pupils have poor concentration levels and that this had proven to be a problem with the current standardised testing systems</p> <p>[redacted] was concerned about teachers/schools/LAs administering the assessments at different points in the year.</p> <p>[redacted] felt that everyone should sit the assessments at the same time to make them “fair” and to allow teachers to gain “quality data”</p> <p>[redacted] commented that it would have been helpful to have two assessment opportunities in one year to measure “added value”</p> <p>[redacted] felt that aligning the assessments to the benchmarks would support inexperienced members of staff</p> <p>[redacted] would have liked the assessments to have included an “Attitudes &amp; Opinions” section, similar to the assessments currently used as this allowed them to identify the learner’s own opinion on their learning</p> <p>[redacted] commented that the font used was small and had expected a larger font similar to the size used in the standardized assessments currently used</p> <p>[redacted] felt that a couple of the words in the reading assessment were difficult to understand, e.g. “uncharacteristic”. Although [redacted] felt that it would be possible to work out the meaning from the context</p> <p>[redacted] would have liked assessments to have been made available for each stage annually</p> <p>[redacted] felt that it should be an option for an older pupil to sit an assessment aimed at a previous stage if this was appropriate for an individual learner</p>
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Other observations		<p>The learner was very computer literate and found the PC easy to use</p> <p>The learner found scrolling easy and needed no prompting when it was required</p>
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## 415 3.4 Clackmannanshire

Two Usability Testing sessions were held in Clackmannanshire at [redacted].

## 3.4.1 P1 Practice, P1 Literacy

Observer's name: [redacted]

Location: [redacted]

420 Date: 21/06/17

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	10 min	The child has not used laptop or PC before. She had limited experience of tablet use. We practiced using the mouse for a few minutes.  She had never done any online assessments but has played games on her tablet before.
Assessment Selection screen	5 min	Because of her inexperience with the mouse, it took a while to get started.
Instructions screen	3min	She understood the instructions and didn't have any questions about it.
First Question	2min	ok
Following questions	10min	Ok – found it very hard to use a dotted line to join in two images
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner	10min	She said she liked the assessment very much, and liked the voice who was reading it. She didn't like it if the sentences were too long.  Her favorite subject is numeracy and she finds reading difficult.
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher		Teacher was not available as she was in a lesson.
Other observations		She seemed to be very at ease at having to trial the assessments. She sighed if the new item had a lot of text there and struggled with navigating the screen, but didn't find any items difficult to answer.

## 3.4.2 P4 Numeracy

Observer's name: [redacted]

425 Location: [redacted]

Date: 21/06/17

Technical set up: laptop

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	10 min	A very confident boy who uses computer a lot at both school and at home. He has done online assessment before (in school) but wasn't aware of details.
Assessment Selection screen	1 min	Fast and confident selection.
Instructions screen	1min	He scanned the instructions and moved on quickly.
First Question	2min	Fine
Following questions	10min	All good – he wasn't paying too much attention to the questions but seemed keen to finish them off as soon as possible. He chatted throughout, saying he 'hated' fractions, but found problem solving questions more interesting.
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner	10min	The boy completed the assessment in about 15 minutes, not always answering correctly but being very confident about his choices. He dealt with any snags (e.g. having to click something again to make a selection) without any issues. He said that he prefers reading to numeracy, and his favourite subject is PE.
Post-interview discussion with staff		Teacher was not available as she was in a lesson.
Other observations		When concentrating on a particular question, he would read the question to himself out loud (may be distracting to others?). He found the assessment having 30 questions 'just right' and didn't think it was too difficult. He liked that it is a multiple choice assessment. He thought his friends would like it too.

430

## 3.5 Dumfries and Galloway

Two Usability Testing sessions were held in Dumfries and Galloway [redacted].

## 3.5.1 P7 Numeracy

Observer's name: [redacted]

435 Location: [redacted]

Date: 13/6/2017

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Assessment Selection screen	2mins	The learner was very excited about being chosen for this and was very engaged. They chose the numeracy test very quickly because "I like maths"
Instructions screen	2-3 mins	The student seemed to read very slowly at first and was clearly trying not to read aloud. They were audible but only just. When asked if they were able to proceed they felt that they could. When asked if they were sure, they replied that the instructions had been clear and that they were happy to move on.
First Question	3 mins	The student felt that this question, which was a straight-forward subtraction, was difficult. They said "I don't quite get that." When I asked why, they said "I just don't understand what it wants me to do and I don't think many people would." I suggested that we could read the question together and as soon as they read the question aloud they identified that it was subtraction and instantly suggested "I think that subtraction need to be thicker because it look like a dash not a subtraction."  As a maths specialist: it is often typical for subtraction symbol to be written slightly thicker than a dash in texts, particularly if the questions are a mixed selection and this may have thrown the student off.
Following Questions	50 mins ( the student narrated their mathematical strategy for every question)	In general, the student found these quite straight forward. They were able to explain their maths strategy and felt that they were straight forward. The student commented on the questions that they was not familiar with. The student found the fractions question difficult because they had never seen it presented that way.  Although Venn diagrams were unfamiliar the student was able to reason. They did ask if they were correct about the overlapping sections of the diagram.  A question of if $5 \times 13 = 65$ , then $20 \times 13 = 4 \times 65$  The student was confused about why you would make that a multiple choice question. They insisted that it could just be calculated and missed the nuance of being able to use an

		<p>associated fact.</p> <p>In one question, there was quite a bit to remember from the question and the student asked for a pen and piece of paper.</p> <p>In a question regarding ordering of three digit numbers, the student felt that the correct answer was not listed but when they discussed their strategy, they were eventually able to find an answer. More by process of elimination than strategy. The student was not expecting to see an answer with the values to be listed in descending order. They spent a lot of time trying to work out the ascending order. They commented that it wasn't what they expected and even when the correct answer was found, the student was unsure. They felt that they should be told to "to go backwards"</p> <p>The student felt that diagrams related to each question were too far away from the actual question. They felt that diagrams could be made bigger or at the very least, moved closer to the question. By the end of the session, the student became quite frustrated by this.</p>
Post-interview		<p>The student felt that it might be worth having a small note to remind people that they could enlarge the screen if needed. As they had forgotten and had to be reminded. Though the student commented that making it bigger didn't solve the problem of the "too big" distance between the question and answer.</p> <p>The student enjoyed the experience but was a little disappointed that they would not get to know their score. They felt that the test had been ok but commented that they thought that people who didn't like maths would find it really hard (the student was obviously unaware of the branching nature of the assessment).</p> <p>The student was not recognised as having any ASN.</p>

## 3.5.2 P7 Reading

440 Observer's name: [redacted]

Location: [redacted]

Date: 14/6/2017

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Assessment Selection screen	2mins	<p>The student was anxious on arrival and took a lot of reassurance about the purpose of the assessment.</p> <p>When the screen opened, they were anxious when they spotted three assessments but were reassured when asked to choose just one.</p> <p>The student chose the Reading assessment.</p>
Instructions screen	4-5 mins	<p>The student started reading slowly and seemed to read the first few lines several times.</p> <p>They were questioned about their understanding of the highlighting function and they seemed to understand.</p>
First Question	3 mins	<p>Read the info before reading the questions. Then seemed to have to completely re-read the info again before selecting an answer.</p>
Following Questions	40 mins	<p>The student didn't seem to realise that the text was the same for the next couple of questions but by question 4 had recognised that they could read the question and then go back to the text. In the main, they read the question first, every time the question changed and sometimes, when the text changed. However, when they were anxious, they resorted to reading the text first, and fully on every question.</p> <p>On some questions, there was some pictures with some information to support the text. The student hadn't seemed to look at the test. They were asked what they thought the purpose of the pictures were. They did recognise that they had informational value but they did not appear to give equal weighting to the information in a picture and did not expect to find the answer to a question in the picture. The indication was that they felt it was "just for interest".</p> <p>The student fluctuated between being relaxed and then anxious, after being reassured that it was about checking the test, they would seem more settled but this was less effective every time. Eventually I asked if they would like to stop. They seemed relieved. We then "played a game", where we decided randomly which option we would choose before we read the question. Then the student was more happy to discuss their thoughts about the question- because they were less focused on getting the right answer. This allowed us to complete the test.</p> <p>One question had a response choice that used the word fondness and the student asked what this meant. I provided two examples of sentences which used this word and that helped and the student</p>



		<p>recognised it as one as he had heard but, post assessment, the teacher present said that this was a word not used often.</p> <p>The student seemed to branching upwards and so the test was, in the end very challenging – as they would be mid-level. When asked if they were ok- they did comment that they were worried about not getting the right answer. This is when the assessment was turned into a game in order to get feedback on the questions and the layout etc for the remaining questions.</p>
<p>Post-interview</p>	<p>10 mins</p>	<p>The student thought that there was lots of information in the questions and that the questions were ok. That people would understand them.</p> <p>A teacher was present for the assessment- the student was asked if it was ok for the teacher to stay. The teacher felt that the student had been keen to please and I would agree with this and feel there were things that bothered them that was not mentioned.</p> <p>The student seemed to move in and out towards the screen and although asked if they needed to make the text bigger, they said it was fine. Observation would suggest otherwise.</p> <p>The student didn't want to use the highlight function but did seem to struggle to find key words, often scanning the same question more than twice.</p> <p>In the question with pictorial information, the student felt it was in the right place but his use of the mouse and head movement as he moved it suggested that it had felt in the wrong place. The class teacher also commented on the fact that the student hadn't seemed to navigate this question well or give equal weighting to the pictorial question.</p> <p>The student was not recognised as having any ASN.</p>

445 3.6 East Dunbartonshire

Two Usability Testing sessions were held in East Dunbartonshire at [redacted].

3.6.1 Primary 1 Practice

Observer’s name: [redacted]

Location: [redacted]

450 Date: 20/06/2107

Technical set up: School’s ICT Suite - old desktop computers with headphones for sound

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	5 minutes	xxx was very quiet but very clear - she said she likes to use her computer at home for drawing pictures. She said that she doesn’t play games on her computer. She said that at school she comes in the ICT suite and learns how to log on and log of. She also spends time at school drawing picture on the computer. Her username was quite complex and it took a while for her to log in to the school system and then we had to wait a long time for the computer to boot up and load the LA network. She went back to her class because it was taking so long! I didn’t quite understand why the teacher had not logged onto the system herself ahead of time so that it was ready to go - not sure why she wanted the pupil to log on using her own logon credentials - maybe for security reasons.  xxx was clearly a very bright child.
Assessment Selection screen	1 minute	Straightforward. She clicked on Start.
Instructions screen	2 minutes	xxx listened to the voice and seemed to understand the instructions, but I had to prompt her to click on the mouth icon. She didn’t seem to absorb the instruction right away - she wanted to hear them again and I had to prompt her to click on the mouth icon to hear the voice again. She didn’t get how to choose the word. She listened several times and then went to the Next button.
First Question		She managed all the questions without any hesitation, however, with the first few questions, she needed to be prompted to click on the “mouth” button to hear the instructions. She did not attempt to read the instructions for any of the questions. After a few questions she got the hang of always going to the mouth icon to hear Alison speaking to her.
Following		As above. She hesitated on the very last screen and needed to be

questions		prompted to click on Finish.
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner		<p>xxx said that she was very comfortable with the Practice assessment, she was engaged and she found it quite easy. She understood the prompts and the instructions. She said she liked the pictures and she liked Alison. She was very calm and focussed.</p> <p>For a small child, it was not ideal that she had to use an adult-sized desktop computer and adult-sized chair.</p>
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher	10 minutes	<p>Discussed the difficulties of having to use an ICT suite with old computers with clunky keyboards with Depute Head. System was very slow to get onto the LA Education network but it was fine once that stage had completed. The Depute confirmed that xxx is the most able and most amenable pupil in Primary 1.</p> <p>Head teacher was not in school after the cog lab was completed.</p>
Other observations		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Assessment site was very quick to appear and no loading issues or any technical issues other than the fact that a 6-year-old child was sitting in a big office chair in front of an old desk-top computer, keyboard and mouse.</li> <li>2. The IT provision/set-up in the school was not very conducive to P1 children. The Depute Head told me they did not have any tablets that the children could use.</li> <li>3. The pupil taking this assessment was extremely able - I think perhaps the cog lab session revealed more about her than about the application.</li> </ol>

## 3.6.2 Primary 4 Reading

Observer's name: [redacted]

455 Location: [redacted]

Date: 20/06/2107

Technical set up: School's ICT Suite – old desktop computers

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	5 minutes	xxx was very composed and told me that he used an iPad at home for games, but never for reading. He had never done an online assessment.
Assessment Selection screen	1 minute	Straightforward. Clicked on Start.
Instructions screen	2 minutes	Absolutely fine – xxx was a very very able reader.
First Question		Question 1 - He read the text more quickly than I did! He read the questions and the responses, then went back to the passage. He had no hesitation in answering the question.
Following questions		<p>When we moved to Question 2 he asked me if it was the same text. It took him a few questions to be confident with the interface – when he clicked Next he hesitated as he expected the text to change as the page had changed. He then settled into a routine that that the passage was the same but the questions changed when the page changed. He said he thought it would be better if the questions changed when you clicked next but the page remained the same so you knew for sure that the text hadn't changed.</p> <p>When the text did change, he seemed to take a few seconds to grasp that it had. Then he was fine.</p> <p>xxx didn't notice the link in the question to get the highlighted text. He said it didn't look different enough from the rest of the text.</p> <p>When he understood how it worked, he said he liked that feature of the text in the body of the passage being highlighted in yellow.</p>

Post assessment interview / discussion with learner		<p>xxx said he felt a bit tired after the assessment mainly due to his neck being strained by the position of the chair and the desktop computer monitor. He was looking up all the time.</p> <p>He said he felt fine mentally, not stressed at all. He said he enjoyed the “more interesting” passages – the ones with animals. He was less engaged by the other passages, but he had no difficulty answering the questions</p> <p>On a scale of 1 to 10 he gave the experience a 6!</p>
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher	10 minutes	<p><b>[redacted]</b> confirmed that xxx was an excellent reader and an extremely intelligent, good-natured, balanced child - top of his class in everything.</p> <p><b>[redacted]</b> was not in school after the cog lab was completed.</p>
Other observations		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Assessment site was very quick to appear and no loading issues or any technical issues other than the fact that a 6-year -old child was sitting in a big office chair in front of an old desk-top computer, keyboard and mouse.</li> <li>2. The IT provision/set-up in the school was not very conducive to P1 children. The Depute Head told me they did not have any tablets that the children could use.</li> <li>3. The pupil taking this P4 assessment was extremely able - I was astonished by how well he could read and interpret the text. He was very confident with the interface except he didn't see the highlight links in the questions as mentioned above.</li> </ol>

## 460 3.7 Edinburgh

One Usability Testing session was held in Edinburgh at **[redacted]**.

## 3.7.1 Primary P1 Numeracy

Observer's name: **[redacted]**

Location: Carrick Knowe Primary School Edinburgh

465 Date: 23 June 2017

Technical set up: Laptop, dongle

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments		No prior online assessment experience but does use the Heineman online maths homework programme.
Assessment Selection screen	<1min	
Instructions screen		
First Question	1 min	
Following questions	29 Mins	
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner		This was a p2 pupil. Had not experienced graphs or calendar prior to this assessment. Found halving, biggest to smallest, lightest/heaviest and sequencing easy. Did not understand the chart about pet tasks at all. Has not done bar charts – also was unsure if mice and chickens were pets or only rabbits counted as pets. Settled on the latter.
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher		Support for Learning assistant was there- said they don't do bar charts until p4.  When the same text/image appeared a second time with a new question attached, pupil skipped it assuming that they had already done it. They were using a laptop and this caused accessibility problems. E.g. in left/ right question, the character was not present on screen at the same time as the question –they had to scroll down to find him, then back to the question and then back down and up again before having all the info needed to answer. Only one

		<p>of the two children bothered with this. Similar issues with the placing the balls under, beside etc item when the whole image could not be seen alongside the question.</p>
<p>Other observations</p>		

## 3.8 Moray

Two Usability Testing sessions were held in Moray at **[redacted]**.

## 470 3.8.1 S3 Writing Skills

Observer's name: **[redacted]**

Location: **[redacted]**

Date: 20/06/17

Technical set up: Student used school laptop, with good connectivity

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	5 minutes	Had done CEM assessments, MidYis, in S2 and a CEM assessment at primary school
Assessment Selection screen	30 seconds	No trouble: I logged in for the student and she selected writing skills as the assessment she wanted to do.
Instructions screen	1 minute	No problems
First Question	30 seconds	No problem with formats though some hesitation over passages initially. Not sure what caused this.
Following questions	20 minutes	
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner	5 minutes	No issues with screen interface.  Said there was nothing disconcerting in the assessment. I probed her about the grammatical terms ("noun", "verb"). She said they were taught in English and also in French lessons. Knew the meaning of most but not all of the spelling words. Said the constructed response spelling words were "easier".
Post-interview discussion with teachers		Observed by a <b>[redacted]</b> . She thought the screen interface was very easy to manage. Questions were challenging. Discussion about "noun" and other grammatical terms: children would learn this in



/ head teacher		<p>primary school.</p> <p>On request I showed her the individual learner report: pleased and impressed: “much easier to interpret than the CEM reports”.</p> <p>Asked about whether it was possible to pause the assessment (ie leave and come back later).</p>
Other observations		<p>Internet worked well.</p> <p>Good reception at school. Invited to come back next year to do some more research if needed.</p> <p>I met <b>[redacted]</b> and <b>[redacted]</b>.</p> <p>Misunderstanding about the year group needed: initially the school had prepared 3 girls who would be in S3 next year. In the end I cog labbed with 2 girls who were in S3 this year.</p> <p>The pupil was regarded as one of the most able in year group.</p>

475

3.8.2 S3 Numeracy

Observer’s name: **[redacted]**

Location: **[redacted]**

Date: 20/06/17

480 Technical set up: Student used school laptop, with good connectivity

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	5 minutes	Had done a CEM assessments “at primary school” (the LA does primary and secondary CEM, so she would have done MidYis too but doesn’t remember it). Remembered having accidentally skipped a question and not being able to go back.
Assessment Selection screen	30 seconds	No trouble: I logged in for the student and she selected numeracy as the assessment she wanted to do.
Instructions screen	1 minute	No issues. The instruction says that your teacher will give you some scrap paper. She asked for scrap paper at this point.
First Question	30 seconds	Clicked on box (part of stimulus) first before realising that she needed to click on a bubble.
Following questions	40 minutes	Used scrap paper a lot for workings. Has seen “none of these” before as an option. Thinks it’s a trick.
Post assessment interview /	5 minutes	Observed that the questions got harder as she went along (she did

discussion with learner		<p>go along the most difficult track).</p> <p>Observed that it was “more problem solving than maths – not like what you do in National 4 and 5”. When pressed, “More like Life Skills” (which seems consistent with the notion of numeracy).</p> <p>Some questions simple – “don’t overthink them”. But most of them made you think.</p> <p>No issues with screen interface.</p>
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher		None
Other observations		<p>Internet worked well.</p> <p>Good reception at school. Invited to come back next year to do some more research if needed.</p> <p>I met <b>[redacted]</b></p> <p>Misunderstanding about the year group needed: initially the school had prepared 3 girls who would be in S3 next year. In the end I cog labbed with 2 girls who were in S3 this year.</p> <p>The pupil was regarded as one of the most able in year group.</p>

## 3.9 Perth and Kinross

Two Usability Testing sessions were held in Perth & Kinross at [redacted].

## 485 3.9.1 P4 Numeracy

Observer's name: [redacted]

Location: [redacted]

Date: 22 June 2017

Technical set up: ACER Laptop, EE Dongle, Chrome

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	5 mins	Pupil was at ease and confident. Teacher informed me that she and the other child were excited to be doing the assessment. Said she enjoyed mathematics. Maths and art were her favourite subjects. No prior experience of online assessments. Only paper-based maths assessments in class. Teacher advised child was confident in maths. Pupil said she was in second from top maths group in her class.
Assessment Selection screen	20 secs	Pupil quickly chose numeracy assessment, clicking on the arrow symbol.
Instructions screen	30 secs	Pupil read instructions quickly, seemed eager to get started. She said the instruction screen was easy. I don't know whether she took in all details, but she had no problem navigating the assessment.
First Question	30 secs	Started quickly with first question. Said question was easy. Chose correct answer
Following questions	25 mins	Q2: Did not understand at first. Reasoned and chose incorrect answer. Continued to move through questions quickly. For most questions pupil took about 30 seconds to reason an answer. She chose incorrect answers to more than half of the questions. When I asked about her reasoning for choosing a particular answer, she talked me through it. However, her logic was often incorrect, and in some cases appeared to have an element of guesswork. Pupil said most questions were between easy and hard. Overall found questions with pictorial content easier. Found end screen confusing. 'You have finished 5 questions...' Needs to be removed.
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner	2 mins	Enjoyed assessment. Said she felt no need to hurry. Found questions with visual/pictorial content easier. These supported her reasoning. Tabular content harder. Questions with no images, charts or tables, hardest of all. Found instructions easy. Comfortable with vocabulary used in instructions.
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher	30 secs	No opportunity to discuss this session with the teacher afterwards, other than to acknowledge the pupil had enjoyed the session and worked through it quickly.
Other observations		No ASN stated.

## 490 3.9.2 P4 Writing

Observer's name: [redacted]

Location: [redacted]

Date: 22 June 2017

Technical set up: ACER Laptop, EE Dongle, Chrome

Activity	Time to complete	Observations
Initial discussion, including prior experience of online assessments	3 mins	[redacted] sat in on session. Understood from [redacted] (before session) that pupil was medium to high ability range. Pupil said she enjoyed reading and writing. Chose writing. No prior experience of online assessments. Pupil wore glasses, but was not identified as ASN.
Assessment Selection screen	20 secs	Quickly chose writing button.
Instructions screen	1 min	Spent a while on instruction screen. I had impression she found font small (screen set at 100%). Asked if she could read the text ok. She said she could.
First Question	30 secs	Found first question format clear. Correct answer.
Following questions	35 mins	<p>Pupil found first five questions (choosing an incorrect spelling) easy to understand, although not all the spellings were familiar, so she chose some incorrect answers.</p> <p>Qs6-10 (which featured numbered blanks in sentences) were harder to understand. Pupil spent some time trying to understand the question and was confused by the number in the sentence. She did not readily connect the instructions on the right hand side of the screen with the numbered blanks in the sentences. She said a visual prompt (arrow or highlight) to call attention to the instructions on the right hand side of the screen would have helped. She suggested some marker other than a number in the sentence blanks would have been less confusing.</p> <p>She was leaning into the screen and I asked again if making the font larger would be helpful. The pupil was not sure, but when I zoomed in the screen, she appeared to read the questions more easily.</p> <p>As she proceeded, she found the questions with numbered blanks easier. Teacher and pupil agreed a practice assessment or other activity to familiarise learners with the question format would be important and helpful. Questions in other formats she found 'easy'. Did well in most questions, but was not familiar with some of the spelling words and attempted to sound out or guess the answers.</p> <p>Q19: Where there were several sentences as part of a question and the pupil had to address successive sentences in successive questions, she suggested making the already-answered (i.e. not relevant) sentences fainter, or greyed-out, to call attention to the</p>

		<p>sentence that was the focus of the question.</p> <p>Q27: Pupil and teacher thought giving a prompt in the question was helpful e.g. 'verb (action word)' - prompt being 'action word'.</p> <p>Q28: Did not recognise word 'apostrophe'.</p>
Post assessment interview / discussion with learner	5 mins	Pupil enjoyed the assessment. Sentences with numbered blanks and spellings not encountered in class were the most challenging questions. Others easier.
Post-interview discussion with teachers / head teacher	5 mins (with pupil)	Teacher had positive impression of assessment overall. Commented that some of the spelling words were not at all familiar and was interested in the question of how teachers and children could prepare for unfamiliar words. I noted alignment with CfE / benchmarks.
Other observations	5 mins	In wrap-up discussion with <b>[redacted]</b> as I was leaving, <b>[redacted]</b> commented that she had reservations about the national assessments, concern about the logistics of children sitting the assessments given the school's limited IT suite facilities, and the time involved in scheduling these sessions, when she was confident the school already had a comprehensive and well-organised approach to assessment.

## 495 4 Conclusions

The Local Authority Showcases and Usability Testing sessions were successful in:

- Raising awareness and encouraging uptake of the Scottish National Standardised Assessments
- Contributing to greater levels of engagement with local authorities and school staff
- 500 • Informing LA and school staff about the assessments and giving a ‘taster’ of how they will work, look and feel
- Producing feedback to inform SG policy thinking
- For ACER, identifying improvements to the assessments and the assessment platform.

505 Topics that came up frequently in questions during the LA Showcases included access to assessment results, off-stage assessments, IT facilities and skills, local authority management of the assessments, assessments for intervening years, policy and guidance for EAL and ASN learners, and the meaning of the scale and difficulty levels.

510 Generally, children and young people who participated in the usability testing reported enjoying the experience and the assessments. Some areas that were frequently commented on by the observers include IT skills and facilities, and the difficulty of the questions.

515 As well as providing valuable opportunities for schools, LA staff and children and young people, to have a better understanding of the assessments, the events that feed into this report provided important professional development opportunities for ACER Partner Group staff. They resulted in feedback and data that will be used by the ACER Partner Group in its ongoing efforts to improve all aspects of the product, from the training and service desk to the assessment content and platform.

## 5 Appendix I: SG communication with local authorities

### 5.1 David Leng SNSA Showcase Letter to Directors

Buidheann-Stiùiridh an Ionnsachaidh  
Learning Directorate



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

F/T: 0131-244 0891  
E: [David.Leng@gov.scot](mailto:David.Leng@gov.scot)

Director of Education/Children's Services

23 May 2017

Dear Director of Education

#### Scottish National Standardised Assessment (SNSA) Local Authority Showcase and 'Walk-through'

During the recent engagement discussions, we indicated that we would be inviting all local authorities to participate in trialling of the SNSA in June. I am now writing to firm up this offer to you.

This will take the form of a showcase for staff rather than assessments for children and young people given the time in the school term. We have prepared a 'walk through' of the nearly finalised SNSA, to demonstrate almost all aspects of its functionality, supported by ACER International UK staff. This will give the staff of your choice the opportunity to view the assessments, ask any questions and make comments directly to ACER. You can determine the range and number of staff you wish to attend the showcase.

#### Specific details of the showcase

- Local authority showcases of the SNSA will be offered for the period 5 June to 23 June inclusive.
- One showcase will be offered per local authority.
- Time required: 1 to 1 ½ hours.
- Presenters will be Scottish Government personnel and ACER Partner Group (ACER, SCHOLAR, Twig) personnel
- It is envisaged that the showcases could be held in twilight sessions (3:30 pm to 5:00 pm) or at a time of your choice.
- Sessions will be held at a venue within a local authority – ideally at a school.
- Local authorities, or individuals unable to attend a live session, will be offered a Webinar on one of two dates (suggest Tuesday 20 and Thursday 22 June.)

Cidha Bhictòria, Dòm Èideann, EH6 6QQ  
Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)



## Outline of showcase programme

Item number	Description	Format	Approx. duration
1	Introduction	PowerPoint presentation	5–10 minutes
2	Accessing the SNSA platform	Video with presenter explanation	5–10 minutes
3	Demonstration of an assessment	Live interactive demo from online platform	20 minutes
4	View of group diagnostic report	Live generation of a report from online platform	10 minutes
5	View of individual and group aggregate report	Mock-ups of the reports	10 minutes
6	Discussion and questions	Discussion led by presenter	15–30 minutes

## SNSA trial

In addition ACER are keen to undertake a small scale learner based trial in each local authority area. This is called "Context Analysis" or "Think Aloud" and involves one or two children or young people undertaking an assessment alongside a member of ACER Partner Group staff. The staff member observes the children undertaking the assessment, and prompts him or her to "think aloud" as they do it. The purpose is to better understand children's experience of the assessment and gain important qualitative feedback on the usability of the assessments. The assessments will not be live and do not record the individual details of the children; however, they simulate the actual process and provide rich feedback and data.

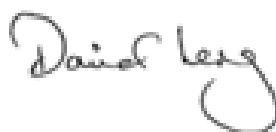
## Action required

If you would like to take up these opportunities, please complete the attached proforma and return as soon as possible to:

[nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot](mailto:nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot)

I am happy to discuss any of these proposals with you.

Yours Sincerely,



David Leng  
 Scottish National Standardised Assessment Product Owner  
 Scottish Government \ Learning Directorate \ 2-B South \ Victoria Quay \ EDINBURGH \ EH6 6QQ

Telephone: 0131 244 0891  
 Mobile: 07769 936222  
 E-mail: [David.leng@gov.scot](mailto:David.leng@gov.scot)

Cidha Bhictòria, Dùn Èideann, EH6 6QQ  
 Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)





5.2 Attachment – David Leng SNSA Showcase Letter to Directors

**SNSA Showcase and ‘walk-through’**

Name:

Local Authority:

Preferred date and time:

Location:

Number and range of staff:

I  
**SNSA Trial**

We are willing / not willing for some pupils to participate in the SNSA Trial.

Signed:

Date:

**Please return this by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 completed to:**

[nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot](mailto:nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot)

## 6 Appendix II: communication with LAs and schools for Usability Testing

### 6.1 Initial email to LA contact

Dear <LA contact>,

In your recent response to David Leng's invitation to an LA Showcase for the SNSA in June, you indicated that you would be willing for children and young people in your local authority to take part in a learner trial. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

We are seeking 1 school in your local Authority at which 1-2 learners in either <P1, P4, P7 or S3> (or one year group above) can participate in this exercise on the morning of the LA Showcase in <Local Authority> on <day of LA showcase>. This would take place at the child's school and ideally using the school's facilities, so that the context matches as closely as possible the real situation in which the learner would be completing the assessment.

This trialling, also known as "Cognitive Laboratory" or "Think Aloud", will help us better understand children's experience of the assessment and gain important qualitative feedback on the usability of the assessments. To do this trialling, a member of the ACER Partner Group will sit with a child or young person while they complete an assessment. They will observe how the learner interacts with the assessment and take notes, and may ask questions or encourage the learner to talk about what they are doing. More details can be found in the attached document.

We would appreciate it if you could pass on, as soon as possible, the contact details (email and phone number) for the head teacher of a schools that would be willing to participate. We will then contact them directly using the letter attached to arrange a time. When passing on the head teacher's details, please also let me know whether you have already contacted them about this activity.

Please do not hesitate to get in contact should you have any questions.

Kind regards,

xxx

## 6.2 Email attachment: letter to head teachers

Dear Head Teacher

### **Conducting small-scale trialling at your school**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a small scale learner-based trial in your school.

The trial would involve one or two children at your school working on an assessment alongside a researcher from the ACER Partner Group, the group that has been commissioned by the Scottish Government to develop the Scottish National Standardised Assessments for use in Scottish schools.

In the session, the researcher will sit beside the child or young person, while assessment questions are delivered on a computer. The child or young person will be invited to answer each question, and may be prompted to talk about what he or she is thinking while answering. The questions will mostly be in a multiple-choice format; a few may require typing in a single word. The questions will reflect the Curriculum for Excellence, at a level appropriate for the child or young person's year group.

The purpose of the cognitive laboratory is to obtain feedback from children on the assessments (rather than assess the learner), and the session will not be under "standardised conditions". Accordingly, no report on the child's performance on the assessment will be provided.

The session will take about 45 minutes to one hour. A small room or quiet corner of a larger room would be required. Ideally one of the school's own computers will be used; however, the researcher will bring a laptop along as backup.

The participation of the children and young people involved will assist the Scottish Government in ensuring that the assessments are easy to access, and appropriate for Scottish learners.

If you are intending to seek permission from parents to allow their child to take part, you might like to give them the attached pro-forma letter. Please feel free to modify and adapt the letter to suit your context.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions or comments, using the email address

[acerscotland@aceruk.org](mailto:acerscotland@aceruk.org)

One of our staff will contact you to confirm timing and other details in the next few days.

Kind regards,

**[redacted]**

ACER International UK

Dear parent

Your child is invited by the Scottish Government and ACER UK to participate in a small-scale research study called a “Cognitive Laboratory” (cog lab) or “Think Aloud”. It will involve your child working on an assessment alongside a researcher from the ACER Partner Group, the group that has been commissioned by the Scottish Government to develop the assessments for use in Scottish schools.

Your child would participate in a single, one-on-one session of about 45 minutes to one hour in length. The session will be conducted at xxxx [the child’s school] in a classroom setting.

The purpose of the cog lab is to better understand children’s experience of the assessment and gain important qualitative feedback on the usability of the assessments. The cog lab is not designed to assess your child’s capacity. In the session, the researcher will sit beside your child, while assessment questions are delivered on a computer. Your child will be invited to answer each question, and may be prompted to talk about what he or she is thinking about the question while answering. The questions will mostly be in a multiple-choice format; a few may require typing in a single word. The questions will reflect the Curriculum for Excellence, at a level appropriate for your child’s year group.

The participation of your child will assist the Scottish Government in ensuring that the assessments are easy to access, and appropriate for a Scottish context.

We hope that you will accept the invitation for your child to participate in this small research study. Please be assured of your child’s privacy: no record will be kept by the researchers of his or her name, or of any identifying characteristics.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact xxx [head teacher or delegate]

Regards

[head teacher]

Details:

Session time: Approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour

Where: [school name]

Contact: [head teacher or delegate]

-----

I give consent for my child to participate in the research.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6.3 Initial email to participating schools

Dear <Teacher Name>,

Thank you for agreeing to <children/young people> from your school participating in the learner trialling for the Scottish National Standardised Assessments on < <the morning of the> date of LA Showcase>.

We are seeking 1 or 2 learners in either <P1, P4, P7 or S3> (or one year group above) to participate in this trialling.

The trialling, also known as “Cognitive Laboratory” or “Think Aloud”, will help us better understand children’s experience of the assessment and gain important qualitative feedback on the usability of the assessments. To do this trialling, a member of the ACER Partner Group will sit with a child or young person while they complete an assessment. They will observe how the learner interacts with the assessment and take notes, and may ask questions or encourage the learner to talk about what they are doing. The learner’s individual details will not be recorded, and while their responses to the assessment will be saved to the system using a fictional login, these will not be used for any analysis and will be deleted. Please find attached a letter explaining the trialling in more detail.

As the staff member conducting the trialling will be giving a demonstration in <LA> on the same day, please let us know a time in the morning that would be suitable to visit <School name>.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate and please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email should you have any questions.

Kind regards,

xxx

## 6.4 Follow-up email to participating school including tech check

Dear <school contact>,

<thanks + intro of APG observer if known.>

As mentioned in my previous email, we would ideally use your school's facilities to conduct the learner trialling next week. To ensure this runs smoothly, we would appreciate if you could do the following test on <day>. Our staff will have their own laptop and internet connection with them in the event of any problems on the day.

Using a PC, laptop or tablet (including iPad), copy and paste the following link into your Internet browser:

<https://schools-snsa.aceruk.org/coglab>

Enter the following username:

xxx

I will send the password in a separate email.

Once you have logged in, click on 'P1 Literacy Practice Program June Showcase' and work through a few of the practice screens. Please let me know whether the pages load and the audio works.

<Please also remember to let us know whether you would like to have 1 or 2 children involved in the trialling, and which year group each of them is in. >

Do not hesitate to get in contact should you have any questions.

Kind regards,

xxx