

1st Chain of emails

From: [redacted] **Sent:** 18 May 2018 10:22
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted] [redacted] Leng D (David) <David.Leng@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SNSA feedback

Hi [redacted]

Sorry, I should clarify that teachers only have access to the practice assessments. While the practice assessments demonstrate the mechanics of the system, we would acknowledge that they would be more useful if they were more representative of the questions which pupils will encounter, and we will be seeking to address that.

Your feedback is detailed and constructive and taken entirely in that spirit, so please feel free to raise any further issues with us as they occur. Thank you for sharing the information on the learner experience with us – it's much appreciated and very welcome.

regards

[redacted]
From: [redacted]
Sent: 18 May 2018 09:37
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted] Leng D (David)
Subject: RE: SNSA feedback

Hi [redacted]

Many thanks for that information. It is certainly something I was not aware of. It may have been mentioned in the webinar but I can't remember it and it is not in the notes I took. As always with new things when there is lots of information it is quite difficult to pick it all up.

I have looked at the 'Preview' option but I can only preview the practice assessment not the assessments. The Practice only shows pupils how they manipulate the SNSA and work through screens. What I wanted to look at was the types of questions being set.

I know feedback can quite often focus on the negatives and seem like criticism. So on a positive note I would like to add that I am fully in favour of assessments (tests, check-ups, quizzes, standardised assessments) for pupils so that teachers and SMTs can have information on what pupils know and what needs to be taught or revisited. Assessments can also help inform the ways we teach and what we teach.

I would like you to also know that the pupils in my schools where I facilitated these SNSAs all enjoyed doing them. There was no stress involved as it was not built up into anything 'high stakes' beforehand. I have been in teaching for 17 years now (I started as a mature PGCE student) and have always been delighted with how all

pupils concentrate and focus when given these tasks. I love to see them so engaged and trying their best. I also find the information it gives me invaluable to my teaching and the pupils' learning.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance in the future.

Regards
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 18 May 2018 09:13
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted] David.Leng@gov.scot
Subject: RE: SNSA feedback

Hello [redacted]

The SNSA project team received your very helpful feedback on the assessments via [redacted], and we will follow up on these in due course, but I wanted to pick up quickly on one point around teachers' access to the practice assessments. Teachers can access these via the Assessments menu on the Learners screen by choosing the Preview option (see screenshot below).

I'm not sure how prominently (or whether) this features in the training so I'll check up on that.

I will have a look at the

Regards
[redacted]
[redacted] | Learning Directorate | Scottish Government

Tel: [redacted]
Address: Area 2C North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

Demonstration School

Home **Learners** Staff ▾ School account Help

Tags ▾ Assessments ▾ Manage ▾ Login details Generate Report

All enrolled all 346 learners

Name	Stage	Q	Clas	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anguill	View assessments status	01	Clas

From: [redacted]
Sent: 17 May 2018 14:33
To: Logan G (Graeme)
Cc: Leng D (David); Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland); [redacted]
Subject: FW: SNSA feedback

Hi [redacted]

Copy colleagues

To see the comments below from one our Scottish Executive Committee members who is a teacher in the Borders. I told her I would feed her helpful comments back to your team.

Thanks

Regards

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
T: [redacted]
W: [redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 17 May 2018 14:12
To: [redacted]

Subject: SNSA feedback

Hi [redacted]

[redacted] said I should send any feedback regarding to SNSAs to you as you are involved with the Development Group.

I am in favour of assessments to inform teachers about next steps etc. The SNSAs have been set up to assess against the benchmarks.

I am a Support for Learning Teacher in two schools and have been facilitating these SNSAs this week. Due to time pressures we have allocated one week to get them done for P1, P4 and P7.

The following are comments:

- Getting P4 & P7 logged on, finding the website (with a long name) and saving it in favourites takes time
- Getting P1 logged on, finding the website (with a long name) is laborious as an adult needs to do it
- P1 pupils need good competent keyboard/generic skills to complete the assessments (click and drag, do not double click, scroll etc.)
- Netbook screens do not show the 'Next' key so pupils have to scroll down to find it
- P1 pupils have a lot of pointer movements to make every time they go to next screen (go to top left to read out instructions then read out questions and possible answers, now find the 'Next' button etc. – quite complex)
- The Guidance says give pupils the same support they would get in class – this is quite subjective. Do you give them the support they DO get or what you would like them to get if there were more staff? As a teacher I am unsure what is being assessed in some areas. For example is the reading assessing comprehension or decoding?
- Teachers cannot do sample assessments
- No text to speech option for P4 and P7 pupils (for pupils who are still developing skills in decoding) - only parts of P1 have speech option
- Font is very small on P4 & P7 assessments – we are all having to peer at screen
- P1 reading requires them to read or hear about 4 sections of a story before they answer questions – lots of memory rather than find answer in text
- Lots of words and names used in P1 assessments that are not decodable using Alphabetic Codes taught in P1 e.g. Zoe, Mia, Alysha etc.
- P1 pupils need lots of support to get through the Practice and 2 assessments. We do not have time to do 1 to 1 support so independent working through them digitally may not give correct measure against benchmarks

Hope this is useful?

Regards

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

2nd Chain of emails

From: [redacted]
Sent: 14 May 2018 19:00
To: Leng D (David) <David.Leng@gov.scot>
Subject: Fwd: P1 Feedback

Hi David

I am forwarding this in case you would like to feed it into all of the intelligence you are gathering on P1. However, I suspect much is too specific to directly inform any future policy decisions regarding P1.

Kind regards

[redacted]

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [redacted]
Date: 14 May 2018 at 12:04:26 BST
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: P1 Feedback

Hi [redacted] ,

We've received some lengthy feedback about the P1 assessments from a Headteacher. I've copied the feedback portion below for review, they specifically requested it be passed on.

"Numeracy
scroll down is too hard for P1
Not progressive
Font 1 and 9 not what pupils would recognise these
No shape included in the assessment, why?
Calendar - far too difficult for early level
no doubles at all.
No number bonds
No + - = symbol used
lots of fraction questions BUT no pictures to show half/quarter
Money - match coin involved, reading ability, eg. coin - FIFTY PENCE instead of 50p
No digital time
only some children had weight question - why?
Information handling - shells- very confusing as no boxes for the children to count.
Egg counting - eggs too small
position and movement - behind cat confusing as box is beside the cat

Literacy

Not progressive, all children had to tackle humming birds and even this is far too difficult

Font - no joining tails not Sassoon infant

not all asked to find title - why?

Title - all capital letters - difficult to read similar size to author

names really hard - Aysha, Noah etc would be better if simple names like Tom, Sam etc

Looking For Sally - far too small, children use pictures for clues - too much writing on each page

Looking for Sally - too complicated to find numbers - make it like a proper e-book so children can turn pages

Rhyming - assessing knowledge of poetry not rhyming

word recognition not words which are easy to blend - need to be blendable."

A lot of is very nitpicky and it seems like they've taken issue with the SNSA assessments, the majority of it is the opposite to what we hear on the Service Desk.

Best Regards,

[redacted]

[redacted] | SNSA Service Desk Operator

T: [redacted] M: [redacted]

3rd Chain of emails

From: [redacted]

Sent: 09 May 2018 22:01

To: Leng D (David) <David.Leng@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted]

Subject: Fw: Report for May Policy Meeting/Feedback on P1 assessments

Dear David & [redacted]

Just in case this report on P1 hasn't reached you yet, It is relevant to your discussions around P1 assessments (and my comment at our meeting today).

This is a matter of some importance as you are well aware. Of course the statistics are complicated by the lack of data as to who attended the events and their expertise in P1 T&L.

Best wishes

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted] Tel: [redacted]
[redacted] Email: [redacted]
[redacted] Web: [redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: 07 May 2018 15:33

To: [redacted]

Cc: [redacted] , [redacted] ; [redacted] ; [redacted] , [redacted]

Subject: Report for May Policy Meeting/Feedback on P1 assessments

Good afternoon,

Please find (attached) the report for our policy meeting in May, as well as an overview of all of the (written) comments received in relation to the Primary 1 assessments. The feedback for the Primary 1 assessments is collated from the evaluations from all of our training sessions - not just the sessions in April.

Thanks and regards,

[redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]



Report for May
2018 Policy Meeting

“Report for May 2018 Policy Meeting” – provided as an separate attachement.



Feedback related to
Primary 1 assessmen

Report shown below:

Feedback related to Primary 1 assessments

This report is a summary of all comments received (from written evaluations only) related to Primary 1 assessments.

Comments overall

Phase	No. of evaluations	No. of comments	No. of comments related to Primary 1 assessments
A	2830	2290	17
B	2409	2005	55

Phase A

Comment	No. of evaluations	% of evaluations	Action
The children will be disadvantaged due to poor ICT skills.	10	<1	
The assessments will be too time – consuming for the children	6	<1	

Phase B

Comment	No. of evaluations	% of evaluations	Action
The assessments are too difficult – in particular the literacy assessment.	25	1	
The children require lots of support, which is	15	<1	

unmanageable.			
The assessments are too time – consuming for the children.	12	<1	
The children are disadvantaged due to poor ICT skills.	9	<1	
The size of text/font is inappropriate.	3	<1	

Examples of Comments

1. Primary 1 assessments - I am unaware of any school that thinks these are appropriate in content for Primary 1s, on many levels. Many questions in the Numeracy are beyond the expected stage for them with language they are still unfamiliar with. In Literacy, the texts that they are expected to read on their own are way beyond anything we would expect at that stage, when they are only developing whole word recognition and blending with phonics. The length of the text and language does not compare to the few sentences that pupils would be used to reading on a page, with detailed pictures; focusing all their concentration into decoding, the majority of them then forgot what they were reading as the text was so lengthy. The majority of the children just guessed at the answers not giving a true reflection of their ability. Comprehension questions with Primary 1s are normally completed orally and after several days of discussion and becoming familiar with a reading book. This does even compare to giving P.1s a lengthy text, when they are still emergent readers, developing these skills. Finally, giving P.1s 30 + questions would not be normal practise in any assessment, as their concentration span can be short; having to stop and re-start the assessment several times means it is very time consuming to administer them.
2. P1 literacy was very difficult for the children to access (even with ipads). Letter font used made some letters unrecognisable for children. Starting points expected children to read independently (sentences) & read questions to answer. Reading comprehension - long passages with a no. of pages to click

back & forth on. Find which page links to each ? or needs to listen & had a lot of information in their heads (lots of support to navigate).

3. The P1 assessment, in particular the literacy one, was at times pitched far too high for the learners. They were expected to read large amounts of text unaided with complex vocabulary such as 'hummingbird' and 'perching' being used. The 4 page stories were also very complex for the level of the learners. I am aware that we are assessing in March whereas others are assessing at the end of the year, but I wouldn't expect a P1 at the end of the year to be able to access these texts either.
4. Concerned when undertaking P1 SNSA that they can too easily end up on the difficult path. Then lots of expectation of self reading which can be too hard. Seems to push to fluent reader questions without really knowing if they can read. Concerned about consistency if people happened to be reading parts to SNSA that haven't been designed to be read. Inconsistent for standardisation.

4TH Chain of emails

From: [redacted]

Sent: 25 April 2018 09:38

To: Leng D (David) <David.Leng@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] ; [redacted]

Subject: Notes from [redacted] user focus group sessions

Hi [redacted]

I have attached my notes from the Glasgow sessions yesterday.
Fingers crossed that the other Las are similarly positive / constructive.

Kind regards

[redacted]
[redacted]
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[redacted]



SNSA Feedback -
focus group notes_(



SNSA Feedback -
focus group notes_(

1st SNSA Feedback focus group notes attachment shown below:

SNSA Feedback – User Focus Group

[redacted] Local Authority – primary session

[redacted]

11:15 – 12:45, 24 April 2018

In attendance:

[redacted]

Two primary HTs, 3 DHTs and 1 PT

David Leng (SG)

[redacted]

General context

Mix of schools who had completed all of the assessments and some who had not yet started. One HT came from a school where they had chosen to administer the LSES to all learners in the school – found it helpful with tracking.

Topic	Questions	P1 impact? (Y/N)	Responses
Technology	Were there any technical challenges in administering the assessments or generating reports?	Y	<p>P1 – challenge was using the technology. They are used to using computers (with adult support). Layout, eg scrolling, that caused problems. Standardised assessments – difficult to see validity of results, but do value them – concerns about how scrolling issues reflect pupil ability.</p> <p>P4 and P7 – scrolling was biggest challenge. Nature of reading assessment in terms of content – challenging since children used to reading one text in prose as opposed to tabulated information – more challenging in this format.</p> <p>P1 less good with a mouse because more used to tablets – only 2 tablets in school. Don't have mouse skills any more because don't have computers at home any more.</p> <p>Tried on ipads in some schools. [redacted] digital strategy with everyone having ipads mean assessments will be easier next year. Worked fine on ipad – didn't work on a kindle (couldn't get any sound).</p> <p>Any group technology a challenge in one school – only a couple of laptops</p>

		<p>and one desk top that needed to be gathered together so only 5 pupils could do the assessment at once.</p> <p>Too disruptive to do in classroom with classroom in a box – wifi unreliable, so couldn't use these.</p> <p>One school not able to see reading results for some learners until the practice assessment was completed.</p>
Classroom management	Were there any logistical challenges in administering the assessments?	<p>Did all assessments early, didn't want to leave until the last term – worried that children might not be ready but wanted honest baseline for the children. Some children better or worse than expected. Results have not reflected negatively on teachers. Most sceptical teacher has been most positive about results.</p> <p>Only able to do half a class at a time – because still have IT suite. 17 working computers. Needed to concentrate so could only have children working on IT suite in room – so needed staff cover to take out half a class at a time. So 6 sessions per class, which is a lot of interruptions of normal class work.</p> <p>Will have to do in groups of 5 – 60 children at each stage. Don't have rooms</p>

		<p>or staff – not sure how we will do this.</p> <p>Would take 14 days of timetabling to complete all assessments. Have IT suite – trying to minimise disruption for children. Too disruptive to do in classroom with classroom in a box – wifi unreliable, so couldn't use these.</p> <p>More complicated because online would be easier on paper, could do whole class at once.</p> <p>2 days in each classroom – children timetabled to do this over several weeks with headphones. Don't have IT suite. P4 was quickest to get done. Completed in classroom at quieter times of day.</p> <p>One teacher particularly concerned about fairness with children taking assessments at different times of year in different set ups.</p>
Support for learners	How much teacher support did individuals need? What about children with ASN?	<p>P4 needed less support from an adult – able to get through unassisted in one school.</p> <p>For out of stage assessments easiest to assign relevant stage assessment to whole class and then unassign and reassign lower level to relevant pupils.</p> <p>Useful to give children</p>

		<p>white boards to record working.</p> <p>Numeracy not EAL friendly – word problems a real issue.</p> <p>EAL couldn't access – so didn't do with them.</p> <p>Mixed message in [redacted] that out of stage assessments could not be assigned.</p> <p>Any thoughts to translate assessments for EAL learners? The group did acknowledge that with as many as 30 different languages in some [redacted] schools that this could be a challenge.</p>
<p>Support for teachers</p>	<p>Did you need support to figure out the system? If so, what did you use? (eg online help and guidance, service desk, training, public website) How useful was it?</p>	<p>Online videos – basically someone reading a training manual, very slow. Would have liked more demonstration of questions in the video.</p> <p>Training guide comprehensive (<i>I think they were referring to the tutor materials</i>) – helped to be able print off and have available during the assessments.</p> <p>Phase A training really good – but would have preferred it to be hands on. Would like for teachers to be able to log on in session and try for themselves. Preferred Phase B because hands on.</p> <p>Phase B like suggestions from support officers re</p>

		<p>how to make spreadsheet less unwieldy. Specific tricks given at training very helpful.</p> <p>Most had not used service desk, but one school found it very helpful. DHT and class teacher used several times. Very helpful re technical issues, took longer to get a response for content issues, eg resetting the assessment.</p>
Support for teachers	How is expertise in administering assessments shared within the school?	<p>One school P1 administered by HT and support teacher taking children out – most children found it quite enjoyable no one particularly distressed by it.</p> <p>Support for learning workers took out P1 children.</p> <p>Class teachers didn't use at all – just HT and support staff.</p> <p>Class teacher just given passwords and log ins.</p> <p>Session with teachers re how to use log ins and access reports.</p>
Practice material	Did you use the practice material with your class(es)? Was it helpful?	<p>Practice assessment was good to practice scrolling – made a big deal of this to help understand. Most did practice as a group on smartboard – teacher asked children to guide them what to do next.</p> <p>Can practice tests be</p>

			available to allow children to practice with swiping?
Content difficulty	<p>The aim of the SNSA is to provide teachers with diagnostic information. The assessments are constructed on an adaptive model with the intention of pitching their difficulty optimally for individuals. They are constructed such that we would ideally expect learners to succeed on about 50% of questions. Given these aims, do you think the level of difficulty of the assessments is appropriate?</p>		<p>P1 – one school chose not to do with P1s since children not ready for it and didn't have capacity to do it. One class still planning to do P1 reading.</p> <p>In terms of writing assessment – 20% of content curriculum is assessed. Does this assessment give the right sorts of information? It isn't giving a full picture of writing ability. Is this assessment necessary? Important information gained from it, but if trying to save classroom time this could be the one to lose.</p> <p>Group felt the title 'tools for writing' would be more helpful.</p> <p>Think children enjoyed it; using the computer. Quite focused – keen to do the best they could.</p> <p>More able children enjoyed the challenge.</p> <p>As a teacher not used to giving something children where you expect 50% to fail at. Spent quite a lot of time preparing children for this – wouldn't have known to do this if didn't have previous experience of doing adaptive assessments.</p>

		<p>Generally seemed okay with question content.</p> <p>P1 able children found okay. No specific concerns.</p> <p>As expected.</p> <p>Pitched right</p> <p>None had a sense that the children felt stressed about the assessments.</p> <p>Up to us to ensure children see as important but not the be all and end all.</p> <p>This will become part of the norm for children.</p>
<p>Length of assessments</p>	<p>How long did individual children/young people take to do the assessments?</p>	<p>P1 – would not normally ask child to concentrate for 50 mins – to do over multiple sessions adds to manageability issues. Shortening assessments would help.</p> <p>40 min on average for P1 over several sessions.</p> <p>P4 was quickest – about half an hour.</p> <p>Children were less careful towards end of assessments – shorter assessment for P1 would mean they were more accurate in answering.</p> <p>Not being able to go back to questions is problematic – several shared at this view.</p> <p>Any scope to flag</p>

			<p>questions to revisit at the end? – without changing the adaptive path.</p> <p>Could they have option to be prompted to review questions at the end of each cluster?</p>
Length of assessments	Did they need to take breaks?		Using breaks would increase manageability issues.
Length of assessments	Were there any other situations in which assessments took place over more than one sitting?		Nothing specific mentioned.
Question types	Were there any types of questions that learners found difficult to respond to / interact with?		See responses to earlier questions.
Reports	Do you feel that the reports are useful? In what ways? (eg planning lessons, supporting individuals, reinforcing/challenging teacher perceptions)		<p>Results useful and clear – helpful to identify areas that were missed to address in teaching.</p> <p>Incredibly detailed – huge amount of information. Not printed, saved in class folders. Highlighted gaps in aspects of learning in classes – eg aspects in P7 not developed well enough.</p> <p>Not shared results with children – mainly used by staff. Useful to compare to own tracking.</p> <p>Surprised by results for some children, realised some children not been challenged enough.</p> <p>Reports came thought really quickly. Clear how questions are marked.</p> <p>Schools do year on year tracking – so not sure</p>

		<p>how SNSA fits when learners only assessed every 3 years. Malt maths, Hodder for reading.</p> <p>GDR very useful – gives a bit more of what the assessments were like for children and roughly what questions were asked.</p> <p>GDR – would have liked to see reports condensed, so easier to read. Would have liked to see questions grouped in CfE headings.</p> <p>Don't like low, medium, high terms – not normally used with children. Reassured by change to long scale to remove the high, medium, low terms.</p> <p>Queries from the group regarding whether Government or LAs will be publishing data or comparing data across schools.</p> <p>Needing to rebuild teacher confidence in their own teacher assessment judgements now that national assessments are available.</p> <p>Agreement that data had been really helpful and backed up teacher judgements.</p>
Reports	What information have you shared or do you plan to share with parents?	<p>No one has shared any info with the pupils. No requests from parents</p>

			<p>but believe this is only a matter of time.</p> <p>You wouldn't be sharing any information you as a class teacher did not already know.</p> <p>As a parent of child in P7 next year – I will be asking the school for it.</p> <p>Provides a platform for discussion with parents, at parents' nights etc</p> <p>One parent has asked for their child to be opted out. This may become more common as parent become more aware of it. This could prevent teachers from having key information as more parents opt out. This parent was concerned about the stress the child was under.</p>
Reports	Have you used data from SNSA for any purposes in addition to informing teaching / monitoring individual learners? (eg HMI visits, working with other schools, LA)		Secondary school had suggested the primary school might like to share the data - they had said no.
Overview	Has your view of the SNSA changed since you've used it? In what ways?		Nothing to add to previous points
Overview	What is the one piece of advice that you would give another school that is about to administer the assessments for the first time?		Question not asked
Overview	What would you like us to do differently next year?		Nothing to add to previous points
Conclusion	Any final comments?		Personally I value standardised

		<p>assessments – about professional dialogue with the class teacher and informing next steps.</p> <p>Like that this is a general assessment that is not about child getting a level. Greater sense in children that there is no harm in getting something wrong – good for parents to see the professionalism with which this information is being gathered. Reports show what they are good at and what they need to work on.</p> <p>If this continues as honest and not teaching to the test then SNSA will work.</p> <p>Downfall is only doing it at 1, 4 and 7 – this is the biggest value in other standardised tests can measure over each year.</p> <p>Does ACER have plans to develop assessments for intervening years?</p>
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2nd SNSA Feedback focus group notes shown below:

SNSA Feedback – User Focus Group

[redacted] Local Authority – secondary school session

[redacted]

9:15 – 10:45 am, 24 April 2018

In attendance:

[redacted]

One secondary HT, 3 DHTs and two PTs

David Leng (SG)

[redacted]

General context

Those attending covered a mix of schools who had already administered all of their assessments and some who had not yet started. Several schools, from both of these groups, had participated in the norming study.

Topic	Questions	P1 impact? (Y/N)	Responses
Technology	Were there any technical challenges in administering the assessments or generating reports?		Fine – better for pupils to log in through Glow than use the passwords. One didn't use Glow – but will in future. One used the system generated passwords for norming study then switched to GLOW. Several changed given passwords to generic passwords. Administered in batches – internet went down for one group which was quite disruptive for pupils, but great the system had saved their progress. Didn't think internet issue would make any difference to learner's assessment performance but logistical problem. Three classes completed assessments at same time – one class had issues with assessments freezing partway through. Some

		<p>problems where system gave the message 'please select answer' – when learner had already selected answer (not clear if this was system or broadband that was causing this problem).</p> <p>User names difficult when a children has lots of middle names all included in log in name – any way to simplify</p>
Classroom management	Were there any logistical challenges in administering the assessments?	<p>Timetabled for classes and extra support. Some pupils completed in separate area – since not appropriate for them to complete as part of main group.</p> <p>Currently logistically sensible to approach in whole classes – due to availability of IT suites. No one tried with ipads. One had hoped to use ipads – but mobile router not working.</p> <p>IT suite holds 20 – classes of 30. Logistical challenge to manage when some working on assessment and others doing other work.</p> <p>When not timetabled sessions – coming from all over school, so not whole classes. Cover for sessions is a logistical challenge – need staff to cover change overs since takes longer than 50 min lesson slot to get settled, complete assessment and wrap up.</p> <p>Using support for learning team and senior teaching staff to help out. Would like learners to work through whole assessment rather than needing to leave partway through.</p> <p>One considering using SQA assessment model with</p>

			strict timings to make more manageable.
Support for learners	How much teacher support did individuals need? What about children with ASN?		<p>Once learners have started assessment they are fine – minimal support needed. High proportion of EAL (only norming study done at this stage) – anticipating need for a high level of support in reading and interpreting language. Practice assessments good in introducing how to engage with the assessments.</p> <p>One school decided not to put learners forward with high proportion of EAL – did not want to administer P7 assessments to S3 (since assessment name visible in tab at top of screen), since did not want them to know they were struggling with P7 assessment. Amount of reading in reading assessment is too much. Child with dyslexia – uses text reader (wanted to listen to questions several times). Took time to get system to connect (school not sure of the text reader used). Took 1 hour 20 min to complete.</p>
Support for teachers	Did you need support to figure out the system? If so, what did you use? (eg online help and guidance, service desk, training, public website) How useful was it?		<p>None of the schools had called the Service Desk when administering assessments and experiencing technical problems. Service desk very helpful for every call.</p>
Support for teachers	How is expertise in administering assessments shared within the school?		<p>No issues with teachers understanding the system. They are not doing anything other than invigilating – they were told to access all via GLOW. Many teachers straight into</p>

			<p>system without any training. One school – teachers were shown how to set GLOW tiles for all learners so they could do themselves. No one accessed online help – didn't need this. One school made up their own support pack for teachers – summary bullet points re no of questions, likely time duration etc</p>
Practice material	Did you use the practice material with your class(es)? Was it helpful?		<p>Would it have been better to have a separate practice test for each assessment? Better if a couple of questions for each subject. Practice is more about preparing how to respond rather than the actual assessment content. One didn't use the practice assessments – another logistical concern. Don't think it made a difference for most pupils. Did practice assessment as a whole class – since more about how you go through the assessment than doing it themselves. Pupils find this approach helpful – since they could ask questions. CAT assessments include a few questions at the start of the test as a walk through, system shows how to answer, pupils don't need to do anything.</p>
Content difficulty	The aim of the SNSA is to provide teachers with diagnostic information. The assessments are constructed on an adaptive model with the intention of pitching their difficulty optimally for individuals. They are constructed such that we		<p>Because used to doing tests in secondary – just see this as another test. Haven't deliberately sold this as a test – pupils familiar with CAT, so think it is something similar. Some viewed as very easy and some very hard. Pupils want to know</p>

	<p>would ideally expect learners to succeed on about 50% of questions. Given these aims, do you think the level of difficulty of the assessments is appropriate?</p>	<p>whether they have passed. Familiar with CAT and CEM tests. Don't find it difficult because if they can't answer it they can just click on an answer – so don't see as really easy or difficult, In norming study felt they were rushing it, just clicking through – would rather have had a sense of them taking it more seriously and reading more carefully. In CAT if they rush through first section they are then prevented from moving onto next section for set time period, to discourage rushing.</p> <p>Skim reading – like they do with facebook.</p> <p>Not used to online assessments except CAT – more familiar with pen and paper assessments.</p> <p>No learners found difficult to use.</p> <p>Some numeracy items that learners struggled with tended to be in context – the literacy needed to access the numeracy was too challenging. Amount of reading in reading assessment too challenging. Subject content in questions seem to be pitched correctly – it was the amount of reading.</p> <p>Not used to seeing multiple texts, would just read one in class.</p> <p>Contexts can confuse best mathematicians i.e. assessing ability to apply content rather than reading demand.</p> <p>Literacy assessments felt much easier than numeracy</p>
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		<p>(were literacy assessments too easy?)</p> <p>One queried validity of the writing assessment – whole first section is on spelling so disadvantages dyslexics. Assessment does not link to the benchmarks. Final section was more about reading skills, e.g. ‘identify where comma should go’. Section on ‘parsing’ – what is this?</p> <p>Descriptors too specific and not linked clearly to benchmarks.</p> <p>PT said unlikely to use any data from writing assessment – not useful.</p> <p>Assessment is more about skills for writing than writing itself. Would prefer for the assessment to be called ‘tools for writing’ – to better reflect the scope of the writing assessment.</p> <p>Don’t want an assessment where dyslexics perform poorly because of high proportion of spelling.</p> <p>Can use calculator at National 4, why not for SNSA? Did learners get questions wrong because of lack of confidence of calculator, rather than not knowing what to do?</p>
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Length of assessments	How long did individual children/young people take to do the assessments?	<p>Writing assessment is very quick – all done in 15 min. Maths takes a bit longer because need working. Reading takes longer – good readers about 30 min, but can take longer for weaker readers.</p> <p>A lot are scanning the text in reading assessment rather than reading</p>
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			carefully – so can complete quite quickly.
Length of assessments	Did they need to take breaks?		No
Length of assessments	Were there any other situations in which assessments took place over more than one sitting?		No
Question types	Were there any types of questions that learners found difficult to respond to / interact with?		Spelling - dyslexics
Reports	Do you feel that the reports are useful? In what ways? (eg planning lessons, supporting individuals, reinforcing/challenging teacher perceptions)		<p>Areas highlighted in review of numeracy reports – fractions (can use this as a planning tool). Less useful – class reports are by tutor class and not set class. Want to be able to compare across class – can't do this. Filters by regi class. Would like to be able to filter by class without having to add class tags and filter.</p> <p>Numeracy is not just maths department – have to prepare for mathematics not just numeracy, doesn't sit well in maths department, it is a whole school responsibility.</p> <p>Can order reports from low to high – came out pretty much as is, but some far higher or far lower than expected. Some were presented with 22 question some proceeded as far as 44, depending on answers given.</p> <p>Same questions came up a lot across the class. Would like some more clarity about how the assessments adapt.</p> <p>Some parts of report very specific – would like grouped by specific topics</p>

		<p>(not just organiser). Wouldn't like to hand out individual reports to learners – to show table that were they sit in relation to rest of class could be crushing. Others not even considering sharing it – instead providing more general feedback on areas whole class did well or poorly on. Report showing where they come in class doesn't work because tutor group not class group. One had heard from training that National data would be available for primary schools but not secondary schools.</p> <p>Could there be a report for all subjects on same report – for manageability?</p>
Reports	What information have you shared or do you plan to share with parents?	<p>No requests from parents. Most have sent a communication to parents – no response, except one had queries in relation to why their pupils selected for norming study. However, do anticipate that these requests will come.</p> <p>What about FOI requests from the press? <i>DL</i> – can't request data that would identify individuals. More general data can be provided within data protection requirements. Trying to avoid league tables.</p>
Reports	Have you used data from SNSA for any purposes in addition to informing teaching / monitoring individual learners? (eg HMI visits,	All still at testing stage – so not yet.

	working with other schools, LA)		
Overview	Has your view of the SNSA changed since you've used it? In what ways?		Best to come back to this after have discussed with pupils and teachers – don't know enough yet. Will be a fine tool as people become more familiar. Still query how valid the writing assessment is as a tool. Would like writing assessment better linked to benchmarks. This will be a tool that will help us once more familiar. Assessments reflect what we were expecting re comments.
Overview	What is the one piece of advice that you would give another school that is about to administer the assessments for the first time?		Not asked
Overview	What would you like us to do differently next year?		Nothing beyond that listed above.
Conclusion	Any final comments?		No

5TH Chain of emails

From: [redacted]
Sent: 25 April 2018 09:36
To: Leng D (David) <David.Leng@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Focus Group Feedback

Dear David

Lovely to meet with you on Friday - the HTs enjoyed having the opportunity to feed back to you.

As promised, I have attached the notes from the two HTs who couldn't make it along to the focus group.

PS we had Phase B training with some of our senior managers in Primary yesterday afternoon and it was very well received!

Best wishes

[redacted]

(See attached file: SNSA Feedback 1 - focus group questions.docx)(See attached file: SNSA Feedback 2- focus group questions.docx)

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SNSA Feedback 1 - focus group question



SNSA Feedback 2- focus group question

1st report shown below:

SNSA Feedback – User Focus Group Questions
P1

Stage(s)

The following questions will act as a guide for discussion and recording purposes and the answers will provide us with very useful feedback.

Topic	Questions	P1 impact? (Y/N)	Responses
Technology	Were there any technical challenges in	yes	We used ipads with the P1s. They were very

	administering the assessments or generating reports?		<p>sticky and therefore when you clicked on the next button, it sometimes didn't work. Children would then press it many times and then it would suddenly work and jump on several questions. You couldn't then go back. This resulted in a very high number of children looking like they had not attempted lots of questions. Our results are null and void as a result.</p> <p>P4s had no issues</p>
Classroom management	Were there any logistical challenges in administering the assessments?	yes	<p>Due to the complexity of the above we found that we had to use a member of staff with at the most 4 children to support the technical issues regarding the ipads. Because we have 85 P1's this meant we used over a full week of SMT time as well as buying in supply to release staff.</p> <p>P4's had no issues</p>
Support for learners	How much teacher support did individuals need? What about children with ASN?		<p>Support was the same for the ASN children in p1</p> <p>In P4 more time was given and for some children the assessments were broken up over a few days as some children tired really quickly.</p>
Support for teachers	Did you need support to figure out the system? If so, what did you use? (eg online help and guidance, service desk, training, public website) How useful was it?	yes	<p>Only time we needed support was when two children used the wrong ipad and therefore the names and assessments did not match.</p> <p>At first we were told there was nothing they could do about it. Eventually they were able to help.</p>
Support for	How is expertise in		Teachers managed to work

teachers	administering assessments shared within the school?		out the use easily and shared their experiences with each other. SMt all took part so that we all knew what the children were doing.
Practice material	Did you use the practice material with your class(es)? Was it helpful?	no	Due to the number of children this was not possible.
Content difficulty	The aim of the SNSA is to provide teachers with diagnostic information. The assessments are constructed on an adaptive model with the intention of pitching their difficulty optimally for individuals. They are constructed such that we would ideally expect learners to succeed on about 50% of questions. Given these aims, do you think the level of difficulty of the assessments is appropriate?		P4 was fine. P1 was not suitable for that time of year.

Length of assessments	How long did individual children/young people take to do the assessments?		25 -40 minutes a child in P1 Longer in P4- writing was quickest
Length of assessments	Did they need to take breaks?	yes	In P4 some did
Length of assessments	Were there any other situations in which assessments took place over more than one sitting?	yes	
Question types	Were there any types of questions that learners found difficult to respond to / interact with?	yes	In the P1 assessment the way they had to navigate the books was impossible for them. Most online books allow the children to swipe whereas this meant they had to choose page numbers. This was extremely difficult for the children.

Reports	Do you feel that the reports are useful? In what ways? (eg planning lessons, supporting individuals, reinforcing/challenging teacher perceptions)	yes	The reports were very useful and have assisted in planning for the children for this term. We have used the information when predicting levels for pupils for the end of year.
Reports	What information have you shared or do you plan to share with parents?		At present we haven't shared however staff have used some of the information within the text in their report cards and we will possibly use at parents night this term.
Reports	Have you used data from SNSA for any purposes in addition to informing teaching / monitoring individual learners? (eg HMI visits, working with other schools, LA)	yes	Not yet
Overview	Has your view of the SNSA changed since you've used it? In what ways?	Yes no	For P4 it has been a very useful and valuable exercise. For P1 it was a waste of valuable time which we can't even use the information.
Overview	What is the one piece of advice that you would give another school that is about to administer the assessments for the first time?		Let the P4's do it as a class. We started in small groups but actually it was fine as a class.
Overview	What would you like us to do differently next year?		Improve the P1s.
Conclusion	Any final comments?		

2nd report shown below:

SNSA Feedback – User Focus Group Questions

Stage(s)

The following questions will act as a guide for discussion and recording purposes and the answers will provide us with very useful feedback.

Topic	Questions	P1 impact? (Y/N)	Responses
Technology	Were there any technical challenges in administering the assessments or generating reports?	No, major issues	We used laptops to administer all the SNSA assessments. We were able to successfully login and access the assessments. The only issues were related to the internet outages issues.
Classroom management	Were there any logistical challenges in administering the assessments?	Yes	<p>The Senior Leadership Team administered the assessments individually to all Primary 1 pupils. To expect P1 pupils to be able to complete the assessments independently in a busy and active Primary 1 classroom was not realistic. Primary 1 teachers would have spent more time supporting pupils doing the assessments than teaching the rest of the class. All Primary 1 pupils had to be logged on and passwords entered by SLT. Some children required support navigating the assessments.</p> <p>P4 and P7 pupils were administered the assessments in groups of 8. This certainly sped up the process but there were more assessments. The children were taken to a separate room which was quiet to ensure the optimum environment to work in.</p> <p>There was a huge amount of SLT time take up administering the SNSA assessments and we only had 75 children undertaking the assessments in P1, P4 and P7. Next session we will have 130 children but still only with a HT</p>

			and DHT to undertake this.
Support for learners	How much teacher support did individuals need? What about children with ASN?		Primary 1 needed one to one support. EAL and ASN pupils needed one to one support
Support for teachers	Did you need support to figure out the system? If so, what did you use? (eg online help and guidance, service desk, training, public website) How useful was it?		No. The system is intuitive and I have been able to administer and access all assessments without training.
Support for teachers	How is expertise in administering assessments shared within the school?		The Senior Leadership Team (HT and DHT) administered the testing. Please see previous comments as to why this was the case.
Practice material	Did you use the practice material with your class(es)? Was it helpful?		No. This would have just added additional time to the process. Some children were overwhelmed by the length of the tests as it was so adding in a practice assessment too would have been unfair.
Content difficulty	The aim of the SNSA is to provide teachers with diagnostic information. The assessments are constructed on an adaptive model with the intention of pitching their difficulty optimally for individuals. They are constructed such that we would ideally expect learners to succeed on about 50% of questions. Given these aims, do you think the level of difficulty of the assessments is appropriate?		<p>The Primary 1 Literacy assessment was categorically not appropriate. The assessment did not reflect Early level CfE. The texts the pupils were expected to try and read were well beyond an appropriate level. The phonics sections did not assess enough initial sounds and digraphs. The children needed more opportunity to be assessed at an appropriate phonics level.</p> <p>Some of the content in the Primary 1 Numeracy assessment was inappropriate. For example the graph work where were being asked First level questions. The wording of questions was also complex.</p> <p>The Writing assessments multiple choice sections at P4 and P7 were far too complex to work out</p>

			<p>the right choice. The text size was small and trying to identify if a comma or set of speech marks were in the right or wrong place was difficult. The multiple-choice options for misspelled words was frustrating to watch children complete. We closely observed our Dyslexic children completing these tasks and almost all of them found them difficult due to the similarities between all the options.</p>
Length of assessments	How long did individual children/young people take to do the assessments?		<p>P1: 15 to 20 minutes per each assessment. Total of 30 to 40 minutes per child P4: 20 minutes per assessment. Total of approx. 60 minutes per child P7: 20 per assessment. Total of approx. 60 minutes per child</p> <p>These are average timings. As you would expect some children took less time and some far longer.</p>
Length of assessments	Did they need to take breaks?		<p>Yes. The children did not sit all three assessments at the one time. We spread the assessments over different days.</p>
Length of assessments	Were there any other situations in which assessments took place over more than one sitting?		<p>Some pupils in P4 became upset during the assessments despite reassurances. Therefore were given breaks to support. Some children became uninterested and just started to click random answers particularly in the Reading and Writing assessments.</p>
Question types	Were there any types of questions that learners found difficult to respond to / interact with?		<p>In the Primary 1 Numeracy assessment, expecting children to count objects on screens was unfair. Concrete materials would be far more appropriate at this stage to support one to one correspondence. The Primary 1 Literacy assessment became more of a listening and memory test for</p>

		<p>pupils. The texts the children had to listen to were too long and the children were moving between screens to be able answer questions. The number of multiple choice options meant they were listening to a great deal of information before being able to select an answer. If the texts had been at a more appropriate level then this could have been avoided and been a truer reflection of pupil ability.</p>
<p>Reports</p>	<p>Do you feel that the reports are useful? In what ways? (eg planning lessons, supporting individuals, reinforcing/challenging teacher perceptions)</p>	<p>Accessing the reports was intuitive. I was impressed with this. The aggregate reports provided a very quick way to see overall results for each year group. As you were able to download these as an excel spreadsheet this made it easy to transfer into our existing tracking spreadsheets.</p> <p>The individual reports are paper rich! We ended up printing them all so we could compare across individuals in each year group. We were reluctant to do this but opening and closing documents and having multiple documents open a onetime became far more frustrating.</p> <p>Most of the assessments reflected our own assessment data and professional judgement but there were clear anomalies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We were able to identify children who were “lucky” with their multiple choice answers in P4 to P7. As SLT had administered all the tests we were able to observe pupils as they undertook them. We noted children who it was apparent were ‘guessing’. One child did exceptionally well with his guesses! He receives extensive support. 2. We also noted children in

			<p>P4 to P7 who found manipulating the assessments difficult. This impacted on some pupils results.</p> <p>A useful addition would be adding strategies to provide ideas for supporting children have answered questions specifically. Bug Club reading assessments do this and staff find it very useful.</p>
Reports	What information have you shared or do you plan to share with parents?		<p>We have not shared any information with parents. As the tests are not standardised of yet, the results of low, medium and high do not seem the most appropriate for sharing with parents. We have minimised the administering of the assessments to both pupils and parents to avoid unnecessary stress.</p> <p>In future years, we will only share data with parents if it is requested. The SNSA assessments are part of a suite of assessments we use as well as professional judgement and we would not want parents focusing on one result.</p>
Reports	Have you used data from SNSA for any purposes in addition to informing teaching / monitoring individual learners? (eg HMI visits, working with other schools, LA)		<p>We have added the data from the SNSA to our existing tracking and monitoring. It was interesting to compare to our own assessments and staff professional development.</p> <p>The data is also used as part of attainment visits by EDC.</p> <p>We shared the SNSA data with staff at P1, P4 and P7 at tracking meetings.</p>
Overview	Has your view of the SNSA changed since you've used it? In what ways?		<p>I was hopeful that the SNSA assessments would more effectively reflect CfE. I was frustrated that this was not the case particularly with the Primary 1 assessment.</p>
Overview	What is the one piece of		Administering the assessments

	<p>advice that you would give another school that is about to administer the assessments for the first time?</p>		<p>will take far longer than you anticipate.</p>
<p>Overview</p>	<p>What would you like us to do differently next year?</p>		<p>Please change the Primary 1 assessments. Please consider reducing the number of questions the children are answering in all assessments at all stages. Please consider changing the multiple-choice element particularly in the writing assessment.</p>

6th Chain of emails

From: [redacted]
Sent: 20 April 2018 22:01
To: Leng D (David) <David.Leng@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] ; [redacted]
Subject: SNSA Feedback – User Focus Group

Hi David

Good day out today! Thanks.

Does the attached look a usable format for capturing professional feedback, using the Question sheet that you pre-sent as the framework?

Best wishes

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[redacted]
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9:30-10:30 am, 20 April 2018

In attendance:
[redacted]
Four primary school head teachers_P1, P4 and P7
Another two primary HTs sent written comments.

David Leng (SG)
[redacted]

General context

All assessments were done in November to February in these schools as recommended by [redacted] .

Topic	Questions	P1 impact? (Y/N)	Responses
Technology	Were there any technical challenges in administering the assessments or generating reports?		<p>Website (entry to system) ok. Password is too complicated for P1s. One HT had changed all passwords to simplify. Others did not know this could be done. One used tile on Glow. One HT did not use tablets – too tempting for children to just swipe randomly. One HT used laptops successfully. There was an Internet outage for a week - local issue.</p>
Classroom management	Were there any logistical challenges in administering the assessments?		<p>Organising time for the assessments Took weeks Needed extra teaching assistants in the room.</p> <p>Worked with P7s in groups of 7-8 worked ok. Didn't work so well with P4s</p> <p>Took a full week of smt time, (85 P1s in this school); Had to cancel other standardised tests because of time taken for SNSA. More time-consuming than paper-based tests.</p>
Support for learners	How much teacher support did individuals need? What about children with ASN?		<p>All P1s had to be administered one-o-one Issues with mouse control for P1s. Teacher took over mouse control - Children pointed to what they wanted. Too many places to click for small children.</p> <p>P7: writing – hard for</p>

			<p>dyslexic children Children in P4 and P7 should be able to listen to questions for numeracy and writing to reduce impact of reading on their measure of their capacity. Although allowed, difficult to read out to learners because it is an adaptive assessment.</p> <p>Length of P1 not an issue. No distress, but disengagement Memory test</p>
Support for teachers	<p>Did you need support to figure out the system? If so, what did you use? (eg online help and guidance, service desk, training, public website) How useful was it?</p>		<p>No mention of using online help and guidance or public website. Used service desk. “Support from help desk is brilliant” (universal agreement) Could we get online help – chat facility? Training in Phase A was not great; training in Phase B was “brilliant”.</p>
Support for teachers	<p>How is expertise in administering assessments shared within the school?</p>		<p>No comments</p>
Practice material	<p>Did you use the practice material with your class(es)? Was it helpful?</p>		<p>Complaint from one HT that there is nothing on the market to give children practice in this type of assessment. No technical issues in practice assessments for P4 and P7. One HT said no need for P7 to do practice: “it was patronising”. P1 practice was not useful. Did not make any difference to how well children could show their skills. Did not use it.</p>
Content	<p>The aim of the SNSA is</p>		<p>One HT said did not trust</p>

<p>difficulty</p>	<p>to provide teachers with diagnostic information. The assessments are constructed on an adaptive model with the intention of pitching their difficulty optimally for individuals. They are constructed such that we would ideally expect learners to succeed on about 50% of questions. Given these aims, do you think the level of difficulty of the assessments is appropriate?</p>	<p>results. Almost all children in P7 were rated “High”. Implausible. Another HT said mediocre children scored High and children with ASN scored Medium. Not consistent with results from other assessments or their own attainment judgements. Suspicion that guessing got a lot of children through. Complaints about Hummingbird: unfamiliar content, layout (not linear) unfamiliar and not what is taught at early stage. Lifeboats topic not appropriate for Scottish children – relied on cultural knowledge Strategies for supporting reading such as underlining, highlighting – not available. Could these tools be introduced? First question in P1 was difficult –first question should not be mcq as it’s too much to take in. P1 numeracy was better than literacy; Candles on cake were too small and thin – P1 numeracy Does not match early level benchmarks.</p>
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Length of assessments	How long did individual children/young people take to do the assessments?	No complaints about length, even when asked explicitly
Length of assessments	Did they need to take breaks?	No comment
Length of assessments	Were there any other situations in which assessments took place over more than one sitting?	No comment
Question types	Were there any types of questions that learners found difficult to respond to / interact with?	P1 – several audio files on one page was too hard to negotiate. “A memory test” to hold mcq options in their heads.
Reports	Do you feel that the reports are useful? In what ways? (eg planning lessons, supporting individuals, reinforcing/challenging teacher perceptions)	<p>Positive on reports from two written responses.</p> <p>Group diagnostic report useful, but only when several learners have done the same question (otherwise percentage correct is useless)</p> <p>Questions that are administered to only one or two children are not useful when reported – no generalizable messages.</p> <p>Complaint that filtering on group aggregate report cannot be printed. Greg: Can't save the group aggregate report filtering</p> <p>Reordering learners on Group diagnostic report (eg by capacity) is good, but when printed reverts to alphabetical order</p> <p>Group diagnostic excel download is hard to manipulate</p> <p>Other programmes they've used are more easily printable in PDF.</p> <p>Want age standardised scores.</p> <p>Desire for establishing the relationship between</p>

			<p>SNSA and other assessments for trend information.</p> <p>Individual reports are too long to print out – waste of paper especially since only first page is unique to learner.</p> <p>Most results reflected teacher judgment. / Didn't tell me anything I didn't already know.</p> <p>"P4s and P7s matches my judgement" (less affluent school)</p> <p>"Rubbish, everyone in my school got high in P7." (more affluent school)</p> <p>Spelling descriptors are random – seem unrelated to CfE, "not the way we teach spelling".</p>
Reports	What information have you shared or do you plan to share with parents?		No comment
Reports	Have you used data from SNSA for any purposes in addition to informing teaching / monitoring individual learners? (eg HMI visits, working with other schools, LA)		No comment
Overview	Has your view of the SNSA changed since you've used it? In what ways?		No comment
Overview	What is the one piece of advice that you would give another school that is about to administer the assessments for the first time?		No comment
Overview	What would you like us to do differently next year?		No comment
Conclusion	Any final comments?		.No comment

7th Chain of emails

From: [redacted]
Sent: 27 April 2018 08:46
To: Info <info@snsa.org.uk>
Subject: SNSA testing

Hello,

As a lecturer in education I am interested to know how the levels for children undertaking the SNSA tests are being allocated a level. Is this via norm-referencing against the current cohort or based on predetermined levels. If it is predetermined levels how were these reached - was this based on a sample of pupils (if so how many and where/when was this done) and if decided by someone else who and how was this done.

Many thanks in advance,

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] | [redacted]
Lecturer in Education
[redacted]
[redacted] | [redacted]

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[redacted]

Draft response:

Please note that the Scottish Government does not hold the email sent in reply to the email above because it was sent directly by the SNSA Service Desk. Below is a draft response provided by the Scottish Government to the Service Desk:

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your enquiry.

Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) are aligned to the benchmarks within Curriculum for Excellence, with all questions based on the conceptual understandings expected of children and young people as they progress through school.

Teachers use the additional, objective information provided by the SNSA, along with wider assessment evidence, to gauge progress and to inform immediate next steps in learning.

The SNSA are adaptive assessments, with the levels of question difficulty varying according to how well individuals answer questions. All questions within the SNSA are subject to approval by Education Scotland for curricular and cultural appropriateness and the levels of difficulty ascribed.

During the 2017-18 session, a representative sample of children and young people from all over Scotland participated in 'norming studies' at two points in the year – November and March. These provided national datasets to establish two long scales of outcomes, time-referenced to those points in the year. In addition, an 'equating study' provided information from children and young people in the intervening years of P2, P3, P5, P6, S1 and S2 to provide additional, corroborative data to establish each of the long scales.

Individuals presented for an SNSA are assessed according to the outcomes shown as they progress through the adaptive assessment. An individual's placement on the long scale is the result of how many questions were answered correctly and the difficulty of the questions attempted, norm referenced against the national samples at the most relevant time of the session.

Teachers will provide parents with information on their child's progress using wider assessment information gathered during the course of the session in addition to the diagnostic, formative information available within the SNSA.

We hope the above provides you with useful information.

8th Chain of emails

From: [redacted]

Sent: 04 May 2018 23:41

To: National Improvement Framework <nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot>

Subject: SNSA Support

Hello,

I have scoured the SNSA website, but seem unable to find answers that I am looking for.

I am quite concerned about the current SNSAs used within my primary 1 class - particularly the literacy questions.

I am under the impression that children can use support they would be given in class, e.g. concrete materials in numeracy. This raises some serious questions for me in relation to the literacy assessment - children in primary 1 are unable to read many of the words which use Read, Write, Inc, set 2 and set 3 sounds, nor long sections of writing and rather than excite them about reading, I have been faced with children feeling disheartened and switching off completely to the rest of the assessment.

I have seen a recent facebook group chat which mentioned some teachers have read aloud passages to the children whilst they have followed along and then they have answered the questions using comprehension skills - many of which getting the majority incorrect but still receiving a passage about hummingbirds.

These assessments do not seem to match with the early benchmarks.

If some teachers are reading passages to children and others are not, how will the results be truly realistic?

Though, if in class we would assist children in reading passages (granted, much shorter), then why should we not during the assessments? Surely this would be the relevant support materials used for the children?

It also seems as though we are setting the children up to fail if they are only able to read simple CVC and CVCC words at this time, but we are expecting them to read words such as Kenisha, hummingbird etc.

I can see an excellent value in assessments when used in an age, stage and ability appropriate way, but I am concerned about these assessments and their impact on the children themselves.

I look forward to an informative reply.

Many thanks,

[redacted]