

Independent Review of the Scottish National
Standardised Assessments at Primary 1

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DRAFT

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Introduction: Scottish National Standardised Assessments and the remit of P1 SNSA Review

The Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) were introduced in 2017 – 18 as part of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education. These assessments are designed to provide a standard set of information of some aspects of literacy and numeracy attainment of children in P1, P4, P7 and S3.

The rationale for the introduction of SNSA has been outlined by the Scottish government in its response to The Education and Skills Committee Inquiry concerning Scottish National Standardised Assessments (see https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf)

As part of the development of the NIF, the Scottish Government decided to discontinue the previous national survey, the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN), and replace it with a census-based approach predicated on teachers' professional judgement. The Achievement of CfE Levels Return (not the Scottish National Standardised Assessment) is the replacement for the SSLN. Data is collected from schools each June detailing the proportion of children in P1, P4, P7 and S3 who have achieved the relevant Curriculum for Excellence level. This ACEL data is published each December. The achievement of a level judgements provide data from every child and every classroom, rather than the sample approach used by SSLN.

The Scottish Government argued that this new approach has a number of significant advantages over the SSLN which again are outlined in the submission to the Education and Skills Committee:

- It empowers teachers, placing primacy on their professional judgement as the key indicator of children's progress prior to national qualifications.
- It looks across the full CfE level not just elements of each level and determines whether a child or young person has achieved that level.
- It embeds the primary method of assessing the standard of Scottish education within the curriculum. A teacher's professional judgement on whether a child or young person has achieved a level is based on a range of evidence from a number of sources and potentially over a number of years.
- It aligns to systems that schools and local authorities already have in place to monitor and track each individual child or young person's progress within and between CfE levels.
- It provides annual data at school and local authority level and data which is broken down by pupil characteristics, allowing school and local authority staff

to analyse their own data for improvement purposes. National level data also contributes to national improvement planning.

- It provides annual data on both literacy and numeracy rather than every two years and it includes an additional stage, Primary 1, that was not covered by the SSLN.
- The results can be published and used for improvement purposes more quickly, within 6 months of the data being collected. SSLN results were generally published 11 months after the survey took place.
- It reflects the OECD's endorsement that "an assessment system that encompasses a variety of assessment evidence, that includes rich tasks and a clear indication of expected benchmarks referenced to the breadth and depth of the curriculum, can enhance teachers' assessment skills and learners' progress.

(Education and Skills Committee, Scottish National Standardised Assessments Inquiry to assess the evidence base and the alternative approaches. Submission from the Scottish Government, 2018:2-3)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf Accessed April 2019

As part of the process for supporting teachers' professional judgement and ensuring consistency across schools and local authorities in Scotland, the Scottish Government has taken a number of steps. These include:

- the publication of literacy and numeracy National Benchmarks to support practitioners when making decisions of children's progress between levels and achievement of a level;
- the Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) programme and the development of a National Moderation Hub available to practitioners via GLOW.
- the introduction of the Scottish National Standardised Assessment (SNSA) to bring an element of national consistency to teachers' judgements, but also to provide a local and classroom perspective.

The Scottish Government argued that these elements are an essential part of the process of developing a consistent national system in line with the OECD report (2011) which points out that curriculum, instruction and assessment are interdependent, so is important for a government to clearly define education standards aligned with the curriculum.

The National Benchmarks are designed to ensure that the SNSA can be tightly focused on clear standards and objectives and thus inform teachers' professional judgements about whether those standards have been achieved in the areas that are assessed through the standardised assessments. The Scottish Government noted that

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Commented [DL2]: The National Benchmarks have a purpose well beyond the SNSA. (see original statements on benchmarks). The SNSA are aligned to the Benchmarks in order to provide valuable information to teachers on children's progress towards the achievement of a CfE level.

a range of standardised assessments, amongst a variety of other assessment tools, were already in use by schools in almost all local authorities. However, none of these tools was specific to Curriculum for Excellence. In short SNSA, including in P1, should be seen in the broader context of the development and implementation of the National Improvement Framework.

Independent Review of SNSA in P1

The Australian Council for Educational Research International United Kingdom (ACER UK), a wholly owned subsidiary of ACER group, which is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1930, was contracted by the Scottish Government in October 2016 to implement and deliver the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) across all publicly funded schools in Scotland.

The Scottish National Standardised Assessments were introduced nationally in August 2017 for the academic year 2017-18. Towards the end of the academic year, concerns about the implementation of SNSA, particularly in P1, began to be reported, including by the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS). As a result, a debate took place in the Scottish Parliament which questioned the continuation of the use of SNSA in P1. In order to address these concerns, the Scottish Government commissioned an Independent Review.

Remit of the Review:

The Review will consider and provide recommendations on the following issues:

- the compatibility of the assessments with the play-based approach to early level of CfE;
- the alignment of the assessments to the Benchmarks for early level;
- the effect of taking an on-line assessment on P1 children;
- the usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers and how it supports their professional judgement;
- the implications of the Review for the ongoing development of the national Gaelic Medium Education standardised assessments; and
- the future of the assessments considering in particular whether they continue in line with the current continuous improvement model, whether they be substantially modified, or whether they should be stopped.

Scope of the Independent Review

From January to March 2019, the Independent Review visited schools to observe the SNSA being undertaken, interviewed headteachers, deputies and P1 teachers, stakeholders, Local Authority staff and HMI, and looked at relevant documentation. In addition, the Review sought evidence through anonymous surveys completed by Local authorities, headteachers and P1 teachers. It also took account of the conclusions of the P1 Practitioner Forum and the ACER User Reviews. During the course of the Review, other issues arose which were not specified in the remit from Scottish Government: the purpose of the P1 SNSA; the use of the P1 SNSA data for school improvement purposes, and the challenges associated with implementation of the assessment. These are included in the Review [report](#).

Evidence was gathered for each of the following areas:

- The purpose and administration of the P1 SNSA.
- The compatibility of the assessments with the play-based approach to early level of CfE, including the effect of taking an on-line assessment on P1 children.
- The usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers to support professional judgements and specifically to inform National Benchmark judgements.
- The use of the P1 SNSA data for school improvement purposes.
- The challenges of using the P1 SNSA.
- The implementation of national Gaelic Medium Education standardised assessments.
- The future of the P1 SNSA.

Coverage

Local authorities, headteachers and P1 teachers were interviewed and invited to complete an anonymous survey¹. The Review visited schools to observe the P1 SNSA being undertaken and interviewed staff involved. Stakeholders, particularly those who had sent submissions to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry, were interviewed to explore their opinions and concerns. A dedicated email address was established for general responses and the Review attended two sessions of the P1 Practitioner Forum held at Strathclyde University. In addition, the Review attended familiarisation sessions with the P1 SNSA and a training session, and interviewed staff from ACER, the assessment developers.

These sources of evidence, scrutiny of relevant documentation and reviews of recent research into key themes, were used to gather evidence for the Independent Review. The conclusions are summarised in the remainder of this report under the headings above. Each section includes an overarching narrative, key conclusions and recommendations based on evidence from observations, interviews, surveys and documentation.

¹ Throughout this Review references to headteachers, teachers and others relate to those who participated in the interviews and surveys.

Commented [u3]: Would it be worth saying why it was decided to do that, eg "because they are relevant to and informed the recommendations of the Review".

Commented [u4]: We would normally refer to these as "achievement of CfE levels judgements"

Participants in the Independent Review

Number (approx.)	Participants
142	P1 teachers
131	Headteachers and deputies
21	Local authorities
10	HMI and Education Scotland staff
20	Stakeholders and responders to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry
324	Total

The Independent Review was carried out by David Reedy, formerly Co-Director of the Cambridge Primary Review Trust, Past President of the United Kingdom Literacy Association and Principal Advisor for Primary Schools, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, assisted by Dr Eve Bearne, formerly of The University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

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Executive summary

This summarises the Conclusions reached in the areas covered by the Review.

The Independent Review identifies the primary purpose of the P1 SNSA as informing teachers' professional judgements about learning and teaching. P1 SNSA is a formative assessment which can inform summative judgements such as ACEL. However, it is not, and cannot be, in itself summative, as it only assesses part of the early level CfE and only forms part of the toolkit a teacher draws on to make professional judgements. P1 SNSA information does not have the capacity to perform a summative function on its own. As part of teachers' professional judgements the P1 SNSA offers a useful standard element within the overall evidence to inform judgements about learning and teaching. Results are calibrated against aspects of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, standardised on a Scottish population of children of the appropriate age, and can guard against unconscious positive or negative bias in relation to specific assessment criteria.

In administration of the P1 SNSA in schools, the level of support given to children varies widely and the assessment is carried out at different times of the school year, so that it is currently difficult to draw conclusions from aggregated data beyond the class or school. Despite concerns expressed about P1 SNSA data being used for high stakes purposes, the Review has not found any evidence that Benchmarks or P1 SNSA data are currently being used to set targets, make comparisons between schools, including league tables, or for teacher appraisal, nor that there are any plans to do so. The fact that there is flexibility in the timing of administering the P1 SNSA guards against information being aggregated to compare school performance.

There have been criticisms of the P1 SNSA on the grounds that it does not fit with a play-based pedagogy. Some argue that there should be no formal education before the age of 7; whilst these are genuine and committed views, they do not align with the current educational arrangements in Scotland. A small number of headteachers and teachers have also commented that the P1 SNSA does not fit with a play-based pedagogy but it seems that there are confusions between a 'moment of assessment' and a pedagogical approach. There are strong examples of schools where headteachers and teachers operate a play-based approach and find no incompatibility between that and the P1 SNSA.

There is scant evidence of children becoming upset when taking the P1 SNSA. However, there is evidence that the context for the assessments, including headteachers' and teachers' attitudes, makes a difference to children's assurance when undertaking the P1 SNSA.

Although survey and interview evidence shows that a majority of teachers and headteachers see the value of the P1 SNSA to support professional judgements about learning, teaching and assessment, a small number of others preferred more familiar

assessment processes. Of those opposed to the P1 SNSA and those who expressed more ambivalent views, almost all had not received training. In contrast, those who responded positively had all received training. There are, however, concerns about the administration of the assessments and the length of the P1 literacy SNSA specifically. The length of the P1 literacy SNSA gives rise to concerns about whether the results obtained for some children are reliable. In addition, it is not clear to some stakeholders how well the P1 literacy SNSA aligns with the Benchmarks for early level.

The Review has also revealed concerns about the time and staffing needed to administer the P1 SNSA and technological difficulties in carrying it out. However, some headteachers and teachers have found ways to overcome the challenges of technology involved in administering the P1 SNSA through careful planning, focused teaching and managed sharing of technology, although this is not always easy or straightforward, especially in bigger schools. Supporting children at P1 with ASN or EAL to undertake the SNSA can be challenging, needing sensible professional decisions about individual children's capability to undergo the assessment. However, the guidance offered about accessibility and administration of the P1 SNSA is comprehensive and clear about supporting children with ASN and EAL. In terms of reporting P1 SNSA data to parents/carers, the Review has found that headteachers often make it part of more holistic discussions of progress, as it is only one element of the assessment information gathered in schools.

Almost all the local authorities that responded to the Independent Review surveys have provided some training to implement the P1 SNSA. The Review did not specifically seek information about moderation but this has emerged as an important element of embedding and sustaining professional learning in relation to P1 SNSA and its place in informing professional judgements.

Teachers, schools and local authorities have identified ways in which P1 SNSA data can usefully inform elements of school improvement although they understand that P1 SNSA data only covers certain aspects of literacy and numeracy learning. P1 SNSA information, therefore, has the potential to be part of useful evidence for broader school improvement purposes. A minority of headteachers and teachers take a negative view of the value of the P1 SNSA to provide useful data to support school improvement in comparison to previous standardised assessments used in many local authorities. However, there is a relationship between understanding how P1 SNSA information can be used for school improvement purposes and attendance at training sessions focused on data analysis beyond the individual pupil.

It is the opinion of the Review that the national Gaelic Medium Education Standardised Assessment (MCNG) will avoid some of the difficulties encountered by the SNSA in its first iteration. Care has been taken to communicate with parents/carers, schools, local authorities and the Gaelic sector throughout the development of the assessments. The P1 MCNG has been robustly trialled and will

not be as lengthy as the literacy P1 SNSA and there is no reason for it not to be implemented.

The Review finds that P1 SNSA has potential to play a significant role in informing and enhancing teachers' professional judgements and should be continued with modification and safeguards against a drift towards high stakes. However, some important issues remain to be addressed including the view from some teachers and headteachers that introduction of the P1 SNSA undervalues professionalism. The P1 Practitioner Forum has played an important role in allowing professional debate about the usefulness and administration of the P1 SNSA.

Questions also remain about the purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national and local authority level and how the P1 SNSA will contribute to narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. The advantages of SNSA over other previously used standardised assessments should be made clear. At the moment, there can be little comparability of aggregated P1 SNSA data beyond the class or school and, therefore, this needs to be clarified and emphasised through the development of a Code of Practice clearly stating what SNSA data in P1 should productively be used for and what it should not. This should then be used as the basis for agreement in every school about the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA data. Leadership at school and local authority level is crucial to the success of the effective implementation of P1 SNSA and this will best be achieved through a clear and irrefutable statement of the purpose and uses of P1 SNSA data.

The Review would like to record gratitude to all children, teachers, headteachers, local authority officers and other stakeholders who have given their time in interviews and completing surveys.

Recommendations

1. The purpose and administration of the P1 SNSA.

That Scottish Government

- 1.1 Provide a detailed rationale for P1 SNSA setting out the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA at individual, class, school, local authority and national levels. This should include a statement that the intention of P1 SNSA data is solely focused on informing learning and teaching and will not be used for accountability purposes now or in the future.
- 1.2 Bring together stakeholders to develop a practical framework/Code of Practice which sets out what SNSA data in P1 should productively be used for and what it should not, including a statement about purpose. This framework should then be used as the basis for agreement in every school about the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA data. This should be publicised nationally and a copy sent to all schools and P1 teachers.
- 1.3 Provide clear guidance, along the lines of the guidance offered about administering the P1 SNSA with ASN and EAL children, on the level of support which can be given to P1 children as they undertake the assessments.
- 1.4 Continue with the flexible arrangements about the timing of the P1 SNSA.
- 1.5 Refrain from drawing any general conclusions from aggregated P1 SNSA data until there is evidence of consistent administration. P1 SNSA data should not be used to make comparisons between schools or local authorities.
- 1.6 In consultation with Headteachers, agree how P1 SNSA data will inform Quality Assurance conversations within the context of all the other data pertaining to the performance of schools. This should be based on the practical framework/Code of Practice recommended in 1.2.

That local authorities

- 1.7 In consultation with Headteachers, agree how P1 SNSA data will inform Quality Assurance conversations within the context of all the other data pertaining to the performance of schools. This should be based on the practical framework/Code of Practice as recommended above to Scottish Government. P1 SNSA data should not be used to make comparisons between schools or local authorities.
- 1.8 Refrain from drawing any general conclusions from aggregated P1 SNSA data until there is evidence of consistent administration.

2. The compatibility of the assessments with the play-based approach to early level of CfE and the effect of taking an online assessment on P1 children.

That Scottish Government

2.1 Continue to develop guidance and examples of the ways in which a play-based approach to learning and teaching can accommodate administration of the P1 SNSA.

2.2 Develop specific guidelines about how to use data from P1 SNSA alongside observational and other evidence from play-based activities to support judgements of progress and planning of next steps for learning within a play-based approach.

2.3 Ensure that training in administering the SNSA and relevant documentation emphasises the option of stopping the assessment if a child becomes tired, bored or upset.

3. The usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers to support professional judgements and specifically to inform **National Benchmark** judgements

Commented [DL5]: As above, we wonder whether this reference should be to ACEL judgements?

That Scottish Government

3.1 Request that, as part of its development process, ACER review the P1 literacy SNSA to ensure that the items align with the relevant parts of the early level CfE. Attention should be given to the language used in the item descriptors and in the data generated from the assessments so that they are comparable with the language used in the expectations and outcomes and associated Benchmarks for the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. In addition, ACER should involve experienced P1 practitioners in the question development process in order to give feedback on the appropriate level of difficulty, particularly in the P1 Literacy SNSA.

3.2 Recommend that one of the additional days of the two additional closure days agreed for 2019-2020 should be used so that all schools, including P1 teachers, can engage in professional learning related to how P1 SNSA information can be used effectively to inform professional judgements and/or moderation activities.

Commented [u6]: The term in use in Scotland is "in-service day" and we would recommend using that here.

3.3 Review the current materials available to ensure that there is easily accessible professional learning support available for schools to use on the dedicated closure day and publicise these materials to schools.

Commented [u7]: As above.

3.4 Expand the QAMSO programme to support local authorities and school clusters in developing cross school moderation events.

4 The use of the P1 SNSA for school improvement purposes

That Scottish Government

4.1 Produce guidance outlining how P1 SNSA can positively contribute to school improvement including further detailed case studies showing how a range of both urban and rural schools have used P1 SNSA for improvement purposes. This guidance should be accessible online.

4.2 Expand the frequency of professional learning opportunities/training in all local authorities, including face-to-face discussions, which focuses on both the positive use, as well as the limitations, of using P1 SNSA information. This should particularly target senior leaders in schools.

That local authorities

4.3 Expand the frequency of professional learning opportunities already planned, including cluster meetings. Develop bespoke training for P1 teachers and monitor attendance.

5 The challenges of using the P1 SNSA

That Scottish Government

5.1 Continue and extend support to schools for administering the P1 SNSA in terms of time and staffing.

5.2 Develop more guidance for primary schools, particularly larger schools, in managing the technological demands of the P1 SNSA.

5.3 Recommend that, as part of its ongoing review process, ACER reduce the number of items in the P1 literacy SNSA.

5.4 Extend the work of QAMSOs and moderation processes specifically to include special schools and those teachers with responsibility for children with additional support needs and English as an additional language.

5.5 Continue to develop the productive partnership between home and school and include parents/carers in professional conversations about children's progress.

That local authorities

5.6 Extend support and consultation with schools experiencing difficulties in managing the technology and timing of administering the P1 SNSA.

6 The implementation of national Gaelic Medium Education standardised assessments

That Scottish Government

6.1 Proceed with the implementation of the national Gaelic Medium Education Standardised Assessment.

7. The future of the P1 SNSA

That Scottish Government

7.1 Retain the P1 SNSA to inform professional judgements about learning and teaching but address the recommendations which address the key issues identified in this Review, particularly in respect of the P1 literacy SNSA.

7.2 Ensure that the purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national and local authority level is made clear in Government documentation and clarify how the P1 SNSA will contribute to narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. (See also [Recommendation 1.10](#))

7.3 Retain the P1 Practitioner Forum to offer advice and support to teachers, schools, local authorities, Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

Commented [u8]: Is this the right reference?

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Section One Purpose of P1 SNSA and its role within a broader assessment framework

1.1 What does research say about assessment?

The term 'assessment' is used in educational contexts to refer to judgements made by educationalists concerning individual pupil performance and the attainment of defined learning goals. It covers both classroom-based assessment as well as large scale external tests, examinations and standardised tests. As Harlen (2014) points out:

There is an important distinction between assessment and testing even though these terms are sometimes used interchangeably. Testing may be regarded as a method of collecting data for the process of assessment; thus, assessment is a broader term, covering other methods of gathering and interpreting data besides testing.

All assessment of pupils' achievements involves the generation, interpretation, communication and use of data for some purpose. Any assessment activity will involve: pupils being engaged in some activity; the collection of data from that activity by some agent; the judgement of the data by comparing them with some standard; and some means of describing and communicating that judgement. (Harlen, 2014: 2)

The point about use of the words 'test' and 'assessment' interchangeably is important in the context of P1 SNSA. It is noticeable that teachers, headteachers and commentators more broadly who responded to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry and to this Review frequently used the term 'test', suggesting an incomplete understanding of the broader uses of the P1 SNSA. There is an implication in using 'test' that it is matter of pass and fail and therefore high stakes for the individual undertaking the assessment. This Review defines SNSA as an assessment tool, not a test.

1.2 Purposes of assessment

There are four main purposes for assessment:

- to help children while they are learning
- to find out what pupils have learnt at a particular point in time
- to identify any significant problems that individual children might be experiencing or address any causes for concern
- to reflect on the effectiveness of the taught curriculum with groups of pupils against defined goals.

These can be termed *formative or continuous assessment, summative* and *diagnostic*. Diagnostic assessment can refer to the identification of specific learning needs for individuals but can also identify areas of the curriculum which need

attention. This dual use of the term can give rise to confusion, particularly where parents/carers are concerned.

1.2.1 Formative assessment

Formative/continuous assessment is commonly called assessment *for* learning. These assessments are designed to monitor children's learning at any stage in the teaching sequence. They give teachers the chance to address gaps in understanding. They also offer opportunities to identify children's strengths and weaknesses and provide feedback that can move learning forward. Formative assessment can also be diagnostic, helping to identify groups of children with common strengths or weaknesses so that more challenging learning and teaching or extra support can be planned for. Formative assessment is a cyclical process in which information is gathered in relation to pupils' progress towards agreed goals. This information is then used to identify the appropriate next steps to maximise learning, and the action needed to take these steps. This includes clear feedback to pupils.

There is a considerable research literature that demonstrates that formative assessment is an essential component of effective learning and teaching (CAN, 2006; Black and Wiliam, 2006; Marshall, 2012; Torrance, 2012; Hargreaves *et al.*, 2018). International commentators to the Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry into SNSA confirm this:

We feel that there is strong evidence of the benefit of using accurate and valid formative assessment information to inform teacher practice, as well as for school planning and evaluative purposes. Dr Craig Jones- New Zealand
https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190125IEAN_New_Zealand.pdf

1.2.2 Summative assessment

Summative assessment can be defined as assessment *of* learning. These assessments are often carried out at the end of a period of teaching: yearly, termly, half termly or more frequently, often informed by tests. Although some summative assessments can be used formatively, they are generally used to monitor and sum up the progress of individuals and groups of children and to identify attainment at specific ages or stages. This information can then be used for reporting purposes. It can help stakeholders keep track of pupils' learning, both individually and as part of certain groups. It can, alongside contextual factors, be used as part of school evaluation and improvement. Some formative assessment information can inform summative judgements.

1.2.3 Diagnostic assessment

Apart from its more technical use in identifying particular children's difficulties with learning, diagnostic assessment usually refers to analysing evidence of the impact of the taught curriculum (and sometimes pedagogical approach) on groups of children against learning goals. It enables the teacher to find out if there are gaps in learning or general misconceptions which then need to be planned for.

Any assessment must comprise collating evidence and weighing it up in the light of specific criteria. Evidence can be observational, collection of examples of work or more formal assessment processes including standardised assessments and tests. The specific criteria might be the teaching objectives for a particular activity, Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Objectives, or National Benchmarks, for example.

Commented [u9]: experiences and outcomes

In addition, summative assessment data can be used to hold individuals and institutions to account. In her submission evidence to the Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry of SNSA in all relevant year groups, Professor Louise Hayward stated:

Traditionally, assessment systems serve three main purposes: to inform learning, to sum up learning over time and to hold people to account. Assessment information gathered about the past is only helpful if it informs future action that leads to improvement. Children are not data – they are not numbers. They are people with lives and futures that depend on successful learning relationships. Learning must be our principal concern.

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Meeting%20Papers/20190123ES_Meeting_papers.pdf

Key points here are that individuals and institutions should be held to account because children's futures matter and that assessment is about ensuring children make the best progress possible. As one headteacher interviewed for the Independent Review pointed out:

I am accountable. I should be accountable. (Headteacher, [redacted], interview)

1.3 Validity and reliability of P1 SNSA data

Any standardised assessment needs to be valid and reliable if it is to be dependable and give rise to usable data. *Validity* of an assessment is defined in terms of how well what is assessed corresponds to the learning outcomes that it is intended to assess (Gardner, 2012; Stobart, 2012). One form of validity is *consequential validity*; the validity of an assessment tool is reduced if inferences drawn on the basis of the results are not justified (Gielen *et al.*, 2003). For example, an assessment of word decoding skills may be perfectly valid as an assessment of decoding but not valid if it used to make a judgement about reading ability more generally. The *reliability* of an assessment refers to the extent to which the results can be said to be of acceptable consistency for a particular use (Hall and Burke, 2003; Black and Wiliam, 2012, Verhavert *et al.*, 2019). Reliability can be reduced if, for instance, the outcomes are dependent on who conducts the assessment or if the assessment is administered where some groups of children are offered more support than others. Reliability is measured by the extent to which the same result would occur if it were repeated.

There have been significant criticisms of the reliability and validity of P1 SNSA. The EIS have stated: 'The question of assessment validity is highly pertinent to the continuing debate around P1 SNSAs.' (EIS, 2018: 3)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181214EIS_Submission_Final.pdf

The evidence provided to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry and to this Review by Professor Lindsay Paterson focused particularly on validity of the SNSA, mentioning P1 SNSA specifically. Professor Paterson surveyed key documents provided by Education Scotland and ACER. He concluded that the validity of the assessments was secure with reliability at least satisfactory. He shows that the SNSAs were developed paying close attention to specific details of the curriculum. Validity of assigning specific assessment tasks to the curricular headings in the Curriculum for Excellence was judged as secure by experts in literacy and numeracy from Education Scotland and beyond. He comments:

Thus the relevance of the tests to the curriculum was judged by the same kinds of professional committees as constructed the curriculum in the first place. If the tests are suspect because of how they were developed, then so is the curriculum. (Paterson, 2018)

<https://reformscotland.com/2018/11/scottish-national-standardised-assessments-professor-lindsay-paterson/>

In his evidence to the Education Committee inquiry, Professor Paterson also points out that the SNSA is:

... already giving reasonably reliable information, even for Primary 1 pupils. Contrary to the fears of their critics, this psychometric evidence suggests that it is possible to assess pupils in ways that are relevant to the curriculum and that produce results that can be broadly trusted.

Commenting on the link between the SNSA, the curriculum and the Scottish context, he continues:

A significant advantage of SNSAs over the standardised assessments commonly in use by many local authorities before the advent of the SNSA suffered from two disadvantages:

(a) They were not based as closely on the Scottish curriculum as the SNSA, whose development has been monitored by the same types of committees of teachers and other educational professionals as produced the curriculum in the first place. The basis in the curriculum strengthens the validity of the SNSA.

(b) The results of these previous systems of assessment were not statistically standardised on any representative group of Scottish pupils. (Paterson, 2018: 1-2)

Commented [u10]: This part of the sentence is identical to that used by Prof Paterson at para 1.7 of his written evidence, but the first half is different and doesn't appear to make sense as drafted?

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181206Professor_Lindsay_Paterson.pdf

1.3.1 Unconscious bias

When considering the importance of a national assessment system and its reliability and validity, it is important to remember that the use of standardised assessments can mitigate teachers' unconscious bias.

Hall and Sheehy (2018) point out that:

Assessing learning is not a neutral or value free activity. It is always bound up with attitudes, values, beliefs and sometimes prejudices, on the part of those carrying out the assessments and on the part of those being assessed. (Hall and Sheehy, 2018: 288)

Similarly, Professor Paterson raises the significant point that:

Teacher judgements are – with the best will in the world – not so reliable as standardised assessments. The reason is that teachers (at all levels, from pre-school to university) inevitably are biased towards optimism and towards the level of attainment that is officially expected of the students in their class. Evidence about the extent of this understandable bias was found by the Scottish Survey of Achievement (the predecessor to the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy). Standardised assessments provide a useful reality check, allowing teachers to calibrate their own judgements against independent criteria. (Paterson, 2018: 1-2)

This is confirmed by the Educational Endowment Foundation in its summary of effective assessment processes:

When we assess a piece of work from a child that we know well, our bias emerges. Perhaps we know they can perform better than the piece in front of us, subconsciously prompting us to raise the mark. Even if the work is assessed anonymously, the existing evidence shows that bias is exhibited against pupils with SEN, those whose behaviour is challenging, those for whom English is an additional language, and those on Free School Meals. Assessment judgments can often be overly-lenient, overly-harsh or, indeed, can reinforce stereotypes, such as boys being perceived as better than girls at mathematics.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/assessing-and-monitoring-pupil-progress/improving-teacher-assessment/>

Standardised assessments can reduce bias:

... by removing much of the variation inherent in assessments administered by humans. Those which are delivered by computers (and don't use human

marking) can reduce bias considerably, and increase the reliability and objectivity of the assessment process. (*ibid.*)

1.4 Issues with standardisation, validity and reliability in respect of the P1 SNSA

The use of the term ‘standardised’ has led to some confusion amongst stakeholders and educationalists. A minority of headteachers’ and teachers’ responses to the surveys and interviews questioned the ‘standardised’ nature of the SNSA, particularly how the assessments have been administered in different schools:

We are not sure that these are as standardised as indicated as they are not administered in the same way in schools and schools take them at different times in the year. (Headteacher, Dundee, interview)

It isn't a standardised assessment – it can't be if children do it at different times of the year – how can you make comparisons between schools and use it nationally as a snapshot? (Headteacher, Renfrewshire, interview)

Having talked to friends in other local authorities after completing the assessments, I know that we all carried out and supported the children in different ways. Therefore, I struggle to see how it can be seen as a standardised assessment. (P1 teacher, survey)

In its submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Connect, an organisation that represents parents’ views on education in Scotland, expressed concern about the timing and adaptability of SNSA:

... the scheme as it has been introduced into Scotland is not standardised in any way. Indeed, Government has declared that tests should be administered when the teacher feels the time is right, though we know that in many local authority areas the approach has been ‘standardised’ so that all the cohort are tested in a specific time window. The assessment also adapts to the aptitude of the learner, which on one hand means the child is not left to struggle against a task beyond their ability, however it also means the assessment cannot be described as standardised. (Connect, December, 2018: point 4)

However, these comments indicate an incomplete understanding of what standardisation entails. To understand the results of a standardised assessment for a particular child it is necessary to have a range of results across all pupils for comparison. Put simply, that is what ‘standardisation’ means. As Professor Lindsay Paterson comments, the purpose of the P1 SNSA ‘... is to try to make sure that pupils are being judged by standards that might reasonably be expected of children of that age who are following this curriculum (Paterson, blog, 2018)

<https://reformscotland.com/2018/11/scottish-national-standardised-assessments-professor-lindsay-paterson/>

Thus, the process of standardisation ensures that ‘the expectations of what pupils might achieve is realistic for pupils going through Scottish schools today’ (*ibid.*).

(See also ACER User Report, 2018 p.3 paras 1, 4 and 16, for example).

<file:///C:/Users/Windows%2010/Documents/Attached2/Scotland/Use%20these/Use%20this%20User%20report%202018.pdf>

Norming studies are part of the process of standardisation to ensure coverage of the range and type of conceptual understanding demonstrated typically across a ‘band’ of standardised scores by pupils in Scotland in P1. (*ibid.* p.16 para 81)

Commented [DL11]: coverage

Therefore, the criticisms cited above are not actually about standardisation but about reliability. The comments indicate a concern regarding reliability, pointing to the issue that teachers administering SNSA in P1 are offering different levels of support to children as they take the assessments, particularly in literacy. This was confirmed during the Independent Review’s direct observations of the assessments being implemented across different schools where there were differences in the levels of support given. Teachers administering the assessments within schools were consistent in the way they helped children complete them, but administration seems inconsistent across schools. If there were any intention to make comparisons between schools using the SNSA data, then lack of consistency in offering support to pupils becomes problematic. Unless consistency of implementation is achieved, aggregation of data beyond individual schools would not meet criteria for reliability.

Another aspect of the implementation of P1 assessments which acts against the reliable comparability of data sets is that the assessments can be taken at any point in the school year, not during set assessment ‘windows’. As Education Scotland in its submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry states:

It is for schools, in consultation with their local authority, to decide when children and young people should undertake the assessments. (Education Scotland, 2018:6)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf

Although evidence gathered for this Review indicates that the majority of P1 SNSA assessments are being taken at specific times agreed between schools and local authorities, this is not the case across all schools nor is there any guarantee that it will continue in this way in the future. Such perceptions can undermine the confidence of professionals in using the data for its intended purposes. Schools have some flexibility in deciding when to administer P1 SNSA with individuals or with groups of children. This flexibility supports the principle of teachers making the key judgement about appropriate timing of P1 SNSA where it will be most effective in informing learning and teaching decisions. Although there are in some cases agreements between local authorities and schools about timing of the assessments, these ‘windows’ have some scope for openness. The Review regards such flexibility as a valuable part of a teacher’s assessment toolkit.

Although there are guidelines to support administration of SNSA for children with additional support needs or English as an additional language, headteacher and teacher survey responses suggested a need for more explicit guidance about the level of support which might be offered in mainstream situations:

These [SNSAs] are not standardised in the sense that schools can use them whenever they like, support varies from school to school in the conditions of the assessments. (Headteacher, survey)

Some guidelines as to the level of support is needed as some colleagues at other schools administered the test in various ways and with different levels of guidance and support. (P1 teacher, survey)

I would like clearer guidance about how they should be conducted. I don't know if this was the fault in the local authority delivery or nationally, but there seems to a lot of discrepancies between local authorities in terms of how they were presented to the children, how they were carried out and then how this was shared with parents. (P1 teacher, survey)

1.5 Concerns about high stakes testing

Section 1.2 sets out the key purposes for using assessment data. However, assessment data can have a negative impact when what is assessed only focuses upon what can be assessed easily, exacerbated by attaching rewards and punishments to the results within an overall accountability system. In this approach, targets for improvement in test scores are set externally and teachers and schools monitored systematically in their progress toward those targets. This creates a 'high stakes' assessment process, putting considerable pressure on teachers to increase results, which is then transferred to pupils. This can have a negative impact on learning and teaching as Harlen points out:

Research shows that when this happens, teachers focus teaching on the test content, train pupils in how to pass tests and feel impelled to adopt teaching styles which do not match what is needed to develop real understanding. Initially this effort increases test scores but soon level off as the effect degrades. Then the results become meaningless in terms of intended learning.
(Harlen, 2014:9)

In a high stakes context, not only are the results meaningless for pedagogy but also meaningless for accountability purposes when judging the effectiveness of the system as a whole, schools and individual teachers.

Some respondents to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry regarding SNSA were concerned that, although the Scottish Government have given assurances to the contrary, there would be a drift towards 'high stakes' uses. The organisation Children in Scotland commented:

The new standardised assessments appear to present a pathway to 'high stakes' testing that move away from the broad educational ambitions of *Curriculum for Excellence* and the *Getting it Right for Every Child* approach. (CiS, 2018: 2)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181219Children_in_Scotland.pdf

In their submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Upstart Scotland, a charitable organisation dedicated, amongst other aims, to establish a statutory play-based 'kindergarten stage' for Scottish children, expressed concerns that:

[T]he linking of assessments to performance targets also raises the stakes significantly for schools and teachers. In Scotland, aspirational 'benchmarks' for children's educational performance were published to accompany the SNSAs. These are, not surprisingly, interpreted as targets. Along with advice to teachers that 'there is no need to provide curriculum level judgements in all curriculum areas – stick to literacy and numeracy', the benchmarks will exacerbate the 'salience effect' and 'teaching to the test'. (Upstart Scotland, 2018:1)

However, Scottish Government points out that SNSA was not designed for accountability purposes:

no school or local authority level data is published. Some national level SNSA [analysis] is published to provide the overall picture of achievement in the assessments and to inform national improvement activity. The Scottish Government does not publish school league tables. (Scottish Government, 2018:5)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf

In addition, the Scottish Government's submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry quotes the Scottish Government's International Council of Education Providers (ICEA) in its 2018 formal report in June 2018:

The ICEA initially expressed reservations about the introduction of these assessments and shared their views with the Scottish Government. The ICEA notes however, that the assessments are not 'high stakes tests' and the results do not determine any key future outcomes for young people, such as which school they go to, or whether they can progress to the next level. There is no pass or fail, and the ICEA notes that this approach to assessment and its central interpretation can be of formative use.

At the subsequent meeting of the ICEA in September 2018, Dr Allison Skerrett (from the University of Texas, Austin) speaking on behalf of the Council said that Scotland had carefully designed the assessments, their modes of delivery

Commented [DL12]: Advisors

and their purpose. She said that Scotland has a real opportunity to be a model for other systems that have employed standardised assessments. (ICEA, 2018: 7-8)

Nevertheless, in interview for this Review, one headteacher explained that she was concerned about the use of data and about league tables:

What terrifies me is that where the Scottish Government is doing is opposite to what CfE is meant to be. There's been a storm on Twitter about SNSA being seen as high stakes. (Headteacher, Clackmannanshire, interview)

Another commented:

If SNSAs were published I would be dismayed. If they publish my ACEL I am happy for that. (Headteacher, [redacted], interview)

In a similar vein, a QAMSO explained:

I think there is still a worry amongst some teachers that Scottish Government is collecting the data – even though it can't be used like that. Twitter and Facebook chatter just makes it worse. It's important to get the message to everybody. (QAMSO, Argyll and Bute)

No local authority responding to the surveys or interviews indicated that there was any use of P1 SNSA data to make judgements about individual school effectiveness.

Comprehensive national assessments on their own do not in themselves improve learning and teaching. In her submission to the Education Committee, Professor Claire Wyatt-Smith cited evidence from Australia showing that since the introduction of a national writing assessment in Australia, standards of writing had actually fallen (Wyatt-Smith and Jackson, 2016). There is also a connection between the fall in standards and a lack of teacher knowledge about how to link teaching, learning and assessment (Wyatt-Smith *et al.*, 2017). Any national assessments, therefore, are only part of a system which can inform quality learning and effective teaching. A standardised assessment in itself will not improve performance; while assessment information can be useful, it will not raise standards unless teachers understand how to use it.

The OECD report (Morris, 2011) also pointed out the dangers of only using the data from standardised assessments to inform decision making because they do not provide a full picture of what children can do or the effectiveness of classroom teaching:

“Only multiple measures of achievement can provide an accurate picture of student learning and school success,” writes Guilfoyle (2006: 1). Employing multiple evaluation measures – including incorporating non-test information into decision-making – reduces the risk of making incorrect decisions as a

result of the limitations of standardised test scores, improves the validity of the system, and reduces the likelihood of excessive narrowing of curriculum (Hamilton and Stecher, 2002). (Morris 2011: 44)

It should be noted that some academics have praised the careful construction of a framework for national assessment which is not high stakes. Hall and Sheehy (2018) comment that the assessments available to Scottish schools:

crucially ... are not, because there is not an emphasis on ranking and comparing. Performance tables are not compiled and published. (Hall and Sheehy, 2018: 296)

Moss (2017) argues that:

[T]he architecture of high stakes testing needs to be dismantled. Other methods should be used to explain to parents how schools are extending pupils' capacities and capabilities through their teaching. There are precedents we can learn from. Scotland in particular has invested much more in trying to make such a model work. (Moss, 2017: 63)

In summary, any assessment and its process must be clear about what it is going to assess, what purpose the assessment serves and the uses to which the assessment data will be put. If assessment information is used for 'high stakes' accountability it has a negative effect on learning and teaching and should therefore not be used in this way but be part of overall information to inform future action for system improvement.

1.6 Intended purposes and use of P1 SNSA data

In its submission to the Education Committees inquiry into SNSA the Scottish Government stated that the SNSA is:

... a unique assessment system that has been specifically designed for the Scottish context. The SNSA is a diagnostic, supportive assessment that is designed to improve children's learning, giving teachers helpful feedback on children's next steps in aspects of reading, writing and numeracy. This is fundamentally different to other models of standardised assessment which are about 'proving' learning, with results being published. Information from SNSA supports teachers' professional judgement of the progress that children and young people are making towards the relevant Curriculum for Excellence level. That judgement is reached based on all the evidence available to teachers – the SNSA is just one, nationally consistent, element of that evidence.

The SNSA involves:

- Formative assessments, the key purpose of which is to provide diagnostic information to teachers on aspects of literacy and numeracy. This helps the teacher to shape teaching and learning and to support their judgements about children and young people's progress.

- On line, a adaptive assessments meaning that the difficulty of the questions that children and young people get will vary depending on the answers they give to ensure an appropriate level of challenge.
- Not designed to provide a definitive assessment to confirm whether a child has or has not achieved the appropriate level. Instead, they are indicative and just one source of evidence that a teacher may call on in exercising their professional judgment as to whether a child has achieved a level. (Scottish Government. 2018: 5-6)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf

Gayle Gorman, HM Chief Inspector of Education, on behalf of Education Scotland, outlined the purposes of SNSA in Education Scotland's submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry. These were identified at individual child, group, school and local authority level. SNSA data can:

- Be used as part of a range of evidence to support teachers' professional judgement on the progress of each child.
- Support the identification of key strengths in a child's progress and identify next steps. They are designed to be used formatively.
- Practitioners can look at the data, identify any general patterns in the areas in which groups of children are doing well or need support and can adjust their teaching.
- SNSA information should not be the only source of information for decisions about individual or groups of learners. The SNSA contributes towards a range of assessment information which teachers draw on to develop next steps in learning and determine progress within a level and achievement of a level. No decision about a learner would be made on the basis of their SNSA assessment alone.
- A school can use the data as part of the information to identify the areas which are being taught well and the areas in which children are not doing so well and can organise whole school professional development in these areas.
- Local Authorities can use SNSA information to help identify effective practice to disseminate as well as possible areas for LA wide professional learning (See Sections Three and Four).
- At a national level SNSA information could be used to inform the development and maintenance of support and professional learning.

(Gorman, 2018 paras. 19 – 22)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190104Education_Scotland.pdf

The above statements set out a comprehensive set of purposes for SNSA assessments, including at P1, with their tight focus on informing decisions about

learning and teaching, and with formative/diagnostic assessment purposes clearly indicated. In addition, there is acknowledgement that SNSA data can only form part of the evidence drawn on for making professional judgements. However, evidence collected by both this Review and the Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry demonstrates that there is a perception within the system that the purpose of SNSA has not been clear and has changed over time. For example, in their submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, EIS commented:

When first announced by the Government, it was clear that the intention was that they would be a summative measure of children's attainment, applied across the country during the same window of time each year. The influence of the EIS and others persuaded the Government of the value of some forms of standardised assessment for diagnostic purposes, and of the fact that if assessment is to genuinely support the learning of individual children, then whole cohorts and classes of young people should not be undertaking the assessments at the same time. SNSAs were then designed to enable their use at any point in the year, the Government advising that the timing be determined by schools and teachers in consultation with the local authority.

(EIS, 2018: 4)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181214EIS_Submission_Final.pdf

The Royal Society of Edinburgh argued that:

The Scottish Government does not have access to the data generated by the SNSAs as this resides with schools and local authorities. Scottish Government has access only to the national level data generated by the assessments.

However, clarity about the range of SNSA data that Scottish Government would access came relatively late during the introduction of the assessments, indicating that Scottish Government was for some time unclear on how it intended to access and use the data. This may have contributed to the lack of consensus on the purpose of the SNSAs.

(RSA, 2019: 2)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221RSE.pdf

Notwithstanding the concerns expressed by submissions to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry and a few responses from surveys and interviews for this Review, teachers, headteachers and local authorities have commented on the usefulness of the P1 SNSA data:

I look for any surprises, children who have performed better than expected or have found the test more challenging than expected and compare results to my own assessment information. (P1 teacher, survey)

The maths one did show me topics which I hadn't covered very much in the year, but that was more an assessment of my teaching rather than the children's learning! I told their next teacher that they needed to do more work in those areas. (P1 teacher, survey)

We also use it alongside teacher judgement and other assessments to help us assess an individual's performance. It is used to pinpoint if there are trends across the school in terms of strengths and aspects for development and we then plan at stages and as a whole school accordingly. This information then helps us plan next steps in terms of support and challenge needed to raise attainment and achievement. I think the P1 SNSA is extremely useful in terms of the feedback it offers. (Headteacher, survey)

We find the class and cohort data very informative for identifying improvements required within schools' curriculum content, or approaches to delivering certain aspects of the curriculum. The diagnostic information is being used effectively at Cluster level also for schools to support and challenge each other on improving aspects of their curriculum. (Local authority, survey)

In summary, interview evidence and survey responses from teachers, headteachers and local authorities indicate an understanding of the use of data derived from the P1 SNSA. They can:

- provide information about where a child is in some aspects of numeracy and literacy at a particular moment in time in relation to some of the literacy and numeracy benchmarks
- be part of the evidence considered when teachers are making a judgement about CfE early level
- offer a standardised form of assessment linked to the CfE benchmarks so that consistency is promoted within and between schools across Scotland
- provide an indication, through the analysis of the data generated, that can inform planning for learning and teaching of an individual child
- inform teaching and learning discussions amongst school staff in relation to progress in terms of the CfE
- provide information on the profile of groups of pupils in a class which, when considered alongside other assessment information and the Experiences and Outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence, may lead to changes in the planned experiences and teaching provided in order to meet identified gaps in learning
- provide headteachers and other senior leaders with information about how well teaching and the curriculum is meeting the needs of children and groups in the areas assessed by SNSA in P1, leading to modifications if necessary
- provide local authorities with information which can be part of the evidence considered when having conversations about performance and school improvement.

There are, however, some concerns about how clearly the P1 SNSA links with the Experiences and Outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence and the associated Benchmarks. (See Section 3.3)

The P1 Practitioner Forum Report suggests:

All educators (teachers, schools, local authorities, Scottish Government advisors and Education Scotland/HMIE) have a professional responsibility to ensure that their systems do not overplay the reliability or predictive capacity of SNSA, or any other data. A negotiated and voluntary 'Code of Practice' with clear processes to ensure that educators at all levels understand the power and the limitations of data and enact good data-use practices would underline this. Such understanding could help to prevent SNSA data becoming high-stakes. (P1PF, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/7/>

In agreement with P1PF, it is the view of this Review that in order to ensure that there is no drift towards using P1 SNSA data or Benchmarks to set targets and move towards a high stakes context, and to ensure clarity of purpose, a Code of Practice which includes a practical framework should be developed and agreed in partnership with stakeholders.

Conclusions

The Review identifies the primary purpose of the P1 SNSA as informing teachers' professional judgements about learning and teaching. P1 SNSA is a formative assessment which can inform more comprehensive summative judgements such as ACEL. However, it is not, and should not be, in itself, summative, as it only assesses part of the early level CfE and also only forms part of the toolkit a teacher draws on to make professional judgements. Being doubly partial, therefore, P1 SNSA information does not have the capacity to perform a summative function about literacy and numeracy on its own.

As part of teachers' professional judgements the P1 SNSA offers a useful standard element within the overall evidence to inform judgements about learning and teaching. Results are calibrated against aspects of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, standardised on a Scottish population of children of the appropriate age, and can guard against unconscious positive or negative bias in relation to specific assessment criteria.

The level of support given to children during the administration of P1 SNSA varies widely. In addition, different schools administer P1 SNSA at different times, both for individual children and across schools. This means that it is currently difficult to draw conclusions from aggregated data beyond the class or school.

Teachers and headteachers have expressed concerns that P1 SNSA data might in the future be used for high stakes purposes. The Review has not found any evidence that Benchmarks or P1 SNSA data are being used to set targets, make comparisons between schools or for teacher appraisal or that there are any plans to do so.

Recommendations

That Scottish Government

Provide a detailed rationale for P1 SNSA setting out the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA at individual, class, school, local authority and national levels. This should include a statement that the intention of SNSA data is solely focused on informing learning and teaching and will not be used for accountability purposes now or in the future.

Bring together stakeholders to develop a practical framework/Code of Practice which sets out what SNSA data in P1 should productively be used for and what it should not, including a statement about purpose. This framework should then be used as the basis for agreement in every school about the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA data. This should be publicised nationally and a copy sent to all schools and P1 teachers.

Provide clear guidance, along the lines of the guidance offered about administering the P1 SNSA with ASN and EAL children, on the level of support which can be given to P1 children as they undertake the assessments.

Continue with the flexible arrangements about the timing of the P1 SNSA.

Refrain from drawing any general conclusions from aggregated P1 SNSA data until there is evidence of consistent administration. P1 SNSA data should not be used to make comparisons between schools or local authorities.

In consultation with Headteachers, agree how P1 SNSA data will inform Quality Assurance conversations within the context of all the other data pertaining to the performance of schools.

That local authorities:

In consultation with Headteachers, agree how P1 SNSA data will inform Quality Assurance conversations within the context of all the other data pertaining to the performance of schools. This should be based on the practical framework/Code of Practice recommended to Scottish Government. P1 SNSA data should not be used to make comparisons between schools or local authorities.

Refrain from drawing any general conclusions from aggregated P1 SNSA data until there is evidence of consistent administration.

Section Two The compatibility of the assessments with the play-based approach to early level of CfE

2.1 What is a play-based curriculum?

There is little disagreement in educational debate that play is essential to children's social, cognitive and identity development (Pentti Hakkarainen, 2006; Evans and Pinnock, 2007; Meire, 2007; Bruce, 2011; Carr, 2014). However, there is considerable variation in views of what a 'play-based' curriculum means and implies. Approaches vary across the world, including:

The Reggio Emilia approach, developed in northern Italy, which encourages imaginative play, fostering children's intellectual development through focusing systematically on symbolic representation. Young children are encouraged to 'explore the environment and express themselves through multiple paths including expressive, communicative, symbolic, cognitive, metaphoric, logical, imaginative and relational.' (Gandini, 2011: 80) Adults focus on enquiry and expressive language.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice, largely seen in the UK and USA, but having influence across the world, sees play as 'a primary (but not exclusive) medium for learning' (Stephen, 2006). The role of the adult is to 'demonstrate, question, model, suggest alternatives and prompt reflection' (*ibid.*)

<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20180129182408/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2006/01/26094635/0> (Accessed 7th April, 2019)

The High/Scope Curriculum, practised primarily in the USA, defines itself as play-based and child-centred, with children guided to 'explore, interact and exercise their creative imagination through purposeful play'. (<https://highscope.org/our-practice/curriculum/> accessed 7th April, 2019). Adults create a structured environment for children to exercise decision-making, cooperation, creativity and problem solving and prompt children to reflect on their learning.

Te Whariki, developed in New Zealand, pays particular attention to the social contexts in which children live and includes spontaneous play and play that supports meaningful learning in its curricular goals. Adults 'look closely at what children are seeing, saying, doing and knowing in order to understand, celebrate and elaborate learning.' (Luff, 2012:143) Such assessment then leads to new levels of challenge for the children.²

In England, the Ofsted report *Teaching and Play in the Early Years*, reports that: 'There is no one way to achieve the very best for young children' (Ofsted, 2015: 5). Most of the schools and settings visited saw approaches to teaching and play as a

² These are not intended as an exhaustive list, but represent some of the key approaches to play-based curricula.

continuum, with adults ‘weighing up the extent of their involvement and fine-tuning how formal or informal, structured or unstructured, dependent or independent each learning experience should be to meet the needs of each child most effectively.’ (*ibid.*)

In Wales, *The Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework* sees experiential activities as central to learning in order for children to practise and consolidate their learning through the ‘serious business of play’, experimenting, taking risks and making decisions both individually and as part of a group. The role of the adult is to create a balance between structured learning through child-initiated activities and those directed by practitioners. (Learning Wales, 2015: 4-5)

In Northern Ireland, the document *Learning Through Play in the Early Years* describes the role of adults to ensure ‘progression in the provision of activities to meet the developmental needs of children’ (p.8). It states that:

Children come to pre-school already as skilled learners. Through our observations, assessment and professional judgement we gain valuable insights into how each one learns best. This information informs our planning to meet the needs of each individual child’ (*ibid.*)

http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/foundation_stage/learning_through_play_early_years.pdf (Accessed 18th April, 2019)

In Scotland, *Building the Curriculum 2* includes play as an essential part of active learning ‘which engages and challenges children’s thinking using real-life and imaginary situations’ including opportunities for spontaneous play and planned, purposeful play (CfE 2007:5). It is important to build primary school experience on nursery experience, combining active, independent play with skilled and appropriate intervention or teaching. However, developing a more active approach to education means paying attention to progression in children’s development and learning (*ibid.* p.9). Establishing continuity and progression will include attention to: ‘using staffing resources to provide extended periods of learning through play for some children’ and ‘planning the careful development of literacy and numeracy skills supported by a strong and continuing emphasis on oral language and development’ (*ibid.* p.11) as well as considering how to use assessment information to plan next steps in learning (*ibid.* p.14).

2.2 Criticisms of P1 SNSA as not compatible with play-based learning

Submissions to the Scottish Government Education and Skills Committee Inquiry into the P1 SNSA (SGI, 2018-19) outlined a range of concerns, some calling for ‘assessment practice that is appropriate for a genuinely play-based P1 curriculum.’ (EIS, 2018). In her presentation to the P1 Practitioner Forum (P1PF) Jean Carwood-Edwards, Chief Executive of Early Years Scotland (EYS), pointed out that EYS does not believe that the SNSA has to be entirely play-based, although she stressed that learning through play is one of the critical, and most impactful, ways that children

learn. Jean acknowledged that children also learn in other ways, for example, through observation, conversation, exploration, sustained shared thinking, and so forth.

In interview, she and Jane Brumpton outlined a particular concern that the use of technology for carrying out assessments can disadvantage some children who do not have experience in technology from their homes or communities or who might not yet be able to handle the demands of the electronic devices. They also pointed out that the terminology of the SNSA, specifically the idea of a 'national standardised assessment' has implications that can undermine a view of teachers' professional judgements as the most valuable element of an assessment. Instead, they suggest that the SNSA should be seen simply as part of the teacher's toolkit in making assessments to move learning forward. Not only that, but 'standardised' carries suggestions of children sitting in serried rows which makes the SNSA seem to be in opposition to a more active play-based learning environment.

EYS recommends a wider national debate about how assessment at P1 might be described, explained, and carried out effectively, including meaningful engagement with early years practitioners, teachers and parents/carers to look at possible positive ways forward in the interest of the children.

Liz Smith (Conservative) in her response to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, (September 2018), cited the kindergarten model, developed by Friedrich Froebel in the 19th century 'using structured play and learning through discovery and gifts', arguing that 'Froebel did not ask infant teachers to make use of standardised tests or assessments. Instead, he asked them to be skilled in their professional judgements and well informed, through daily observation of each child, which would then be discussed with each family. Everything about that observation was done to inform and improve teaching' (Smith, 2018).

These views express concern with the form of assessment. However, other criticisms, for example from Upstart Scotland, are founded on the belief that children should not undergo formal schooling until they are six or seven. In respect of SNSA, their concern is that Scotland may fall into the 'test and targets trap'. Their *Play not Tests* campaign argues that 'every country that has so far introduced national testing in primary schools has seen a narrowing of the curriculum, a steady increase in teachers 'teaching to the test' and a push-down of academic content to ever younger age groups. These developments are related to the inevitable linking of national assessments to targets for attainment at specific ages.'

<https://www.upstart.scot/play-not-tests-in-p1-campaign/> (accessed 7th April, 2019). (See Section 1.5 for a discussion of targets)

In addition, Upstart Scotland argues that the P1 literacy Benchmarks do not align with *Curriculum for Excellence's* early level for the three to six age group, which stresses the centrality of exploration and play. Furthermore, that a 'relationship-centred, play-based kindergarten environment' means that all children would have

Commented [u13]: This isn't in italics elsewhere

access to ‘the type of experiences through which young human beings naturally develop problem-solving, vocabulary and language skills, including motivating play activities, explorations and investigations, involving real-life problem-solving and discovery of number and maths’ (*ibid.*) They continue ‘In countries where formal education doesn’t begin till seven, many children are already able to read, write and reckon by the time they start school and the overwhelming majority are ready to learn quickly and successfully.’ (*ibid.*)

Children in Scotland supports the *Play not Tests* campaign and firmly believes that play-based learning rather than a focus on assessment in the earliest stages of school, is the most appropriate form of education for children at this stage. The organisation recognises that assessment is central to teaching and learning but opposes the SNSA at P1 and P4. (Submission to Education and Skills Committee’s call for evidence on Scottish National Standardised Assessments, 2018). Drawing on evidence papers provided by Carolyn Hutchison, Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow, the main objections to the introduction of new standardised assessments are because of questions about their validity and reliability (particularly for those in P1 and P4), and whether the investment in time and resource will provide data that is likely to help improve educational attainment for pupils. (See Section 1.4 for a discussion of validity and reliability.)

Although not opposed to assessment in schools, Connect opposes all standardised assessment in Scottish schools for P1-S3. In specific opposition to SNSA, Connect argues that the assessments are ‘not standardised in any way’ (Submission to Education and Skills Committee’s Inquiry into Scottish National Standardised Assessments, 2018). (See Section 1.4 for a discussion of standardisation). In respect of play-based learning, Connect comments that ‘the P1 tests are administered in a stage where learning through play is the declared focus of our education system: to introduce tests at this stage is to act completely counter to the purpose of this approach and will inevitably lead to schools focusing on the tests as an end in themselves, moving away from the principles of Curriculum for Excellence’ (*ibid.*). Drawing on evidence from other countries, Connect argues that ‘China and Singapore along with Finland are all high performing education systems and have smaller equity gaps than Scotland, yet these countries have committed to test-free, play-based, early years education and childcare’ (*ibid.*).

2.3 Other countries as models for assessment in the early years

Opponents of assessment in the early years of schooling often draw on Scandinavian models where children do not attend formal schooling until they are 7 years old. From that age, assessment is integral to learning and teaching, for example in Finland:

The 2004 National Curriculum provides guidance for evaluation for students in early grades and throughout basic education. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004 (Finnish National Board of Education,

2004) divides classroom assessment into two categories: assessment during the course and final assessment. Both are nationally mandated to align with national criteria, but they serve different purposes. (Hendrickson, 2012)

International Education News observes that:

Finnish teachers use an array of diagnostic and screening tests extensively in the early grades in Finland to make sure that no students are falling behind, particularly in reading. For example in one municipality, primary school special education teachers administer a screening test in reading comprehension to all students at the end of 2nd and 4th grade across all schools (and many administer it at the end of every year). That information, however, is not used at the school or municipal level to “check” on who is and isn’t performing well, rather, it’s used to identify those students who will need extra help moving forward.

<https://internationalednews.com/2014/06/09/assessment-in-finland-steering-seeing-and-selection/> (Accessed 7th April, 2019)

In Iceland, in response to PISA reports of 2012 of a drop in standards in literacy, mathematics and science, as well as a widening gender gap, the Department of Education is proposing standardised tests for 6 year olds in phonetic awareness, decoding and comprehension. (Sigþórsson, 2017). There are no plans for developing similar practices in mathematics (Sigþórsson, 2019, personal communication).

There may be problems, however, in invoking practices from other education systems, as Aart de Geus, General Secretary of OECD from 2007-2011, points out:

Learning from another country’s experience does not necessarily imply copying all aspects of that country’s system. There is always a danger that such comparisons can become politicised because of the different traditions of different nations. ...it is possible for one country to learn from another’s good practices while recognising their different contexts and ideologies.’ (de Geus, 2011: 54)

Whilst other countries can offer useful insights into educational principles and approaches, the cultural and political context for any educational system needs to be taken into account.

2. 4 Respondents’ views of P1 SNSA in relation to a play-based curriculum

A few respondents commented on the P1 SNSA not being compatible with a play-based curriculum. Some are committed to not starting formal education until age 7:

Those countries with the highest rankings in education understand the vital role that play has in the social, emotional, mental, physical and academic wellbeing of children up to the age of at least 7 and tend not to formally

assess their pupils or even start formal education until this age, opting for a kindergarten style education. (P1 teacher, survey)

Raise formal schooling to age 7. Compulsory kindergarten before that. (Headteacher, survey)

Others think that a play-based approach does not suit an assessment carried out sitting for a period of time using a computer, for example:

The format and length of the assessment is not in the least conducive with the move towards a more play-based curriculum at early level. (Headteacher, survey)

Based on my experiences with the P1 SNSA I believe these assessments are inappropriate for P1 children. They are taking children away from positive, play-based experiences. (P1 teacher, survey)

Others, however, report that the SNSA can be aligned with a play-based approach, commenting:

They enjoyed it as a game. (Headteacher, survey)

Rather than being unsuited to a play-based approach, in some schools the SNSA experience was *'very positive – it was treated as a fun activity.'* (Headteacher, survey) and *'The children enjoyed the experience.'* (P1 teacher, survey).

In interview, the headteacher of [redacted] explained:

Assessments are done as part and parcel of the school day. There isn't a problem – the teachers just do them. The assessments in P1 fit comfortably with what we do in our play-based approach. (Headteacher, [redacted] interview)

In another school visited by the Independent Review, the Headteacher, who had been a P1 teacher, was satisfied that the P1 SNSA could be accommodated within a play-based approach to learning:

The children didn't know they were taking the assessment. They just saw it as another group activity. The children are used to that kind of activity anyway; they use the iPads with earphones. We did it in groups of four, just like in their usual carousel of activities. I explained it like I would explain any other activity. This is the way we teach anyway. A few left it and came back after break to finish it. One child with additional support needs did it during Learning Support time. (Headteacher, [redacted], interview)

This echoes the P1 SNSA case study evidence from [redacted] primary school, West Lothian on the National Improvement Hub:

The primary 1 assessments were completed in May, allowing routines to be established for the children in a flexible, play-based curriculum. It was very much felt that the Scottish National Standardised Assessments formed part of the day-to-day learning experience and, as such, did not require any additional planning beyond that of a normal lesson. (P1 SNSA Case Studies on the National Improvement Hub, 2018)

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/snsa-p1-case-studies-west-lothian-council.pdf> (Accessed 17th April, 2019)

2.5 Assessment and play-based approaches

Members of the P1 Primary Forum recognised that ‘play itself is not a learning outcome and the SNSAs are not designed as play-based learning activities in and of themselves’ (P1 PF, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/5/>

Nevertheless, it seems that some submissions to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, and responses to the Independent Review, conflate assessment and pedagogy, seeing the ‘moment of a assessment’ as the same as a pedagogical approach. However, there need not be any disparity between a play-based approach and P1 SNSAs. Both Professor Lindsay Paterson and Keir Bloomer in interview (February, 2019) distinguished between a play-based pedagogy which is a means to an educational end and an assessment which captures a snapshot of part of learning. Professor Paterson points out that ‘assessment and approach are different in function and have different purposes. An assessment that takes 45 minutes a year is not likely to interfere with a play-based approach to learning and teaching’ (Paterson, interview, February, 2019). As the Education Scotland documentation *Building the curriculum 2* (ES, 2007) and *How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?* (ES 2017), for example, indicates, effective use of assessment is very much part of learning and teaching in the early years.

In deed, if learning is to be valued as important to children’s development, it needs to be systematically assessed (Carr, 2015). As a practitioner using the well-respected approach to play-based learning from Reggio Emilia, Gandini specifically makes the point that ‘There is a widespread and mistaken view that the Reggio approach is incompatible with assessment of children’s progress.’ (Gandini, 2011: 78). But formative assessment using a wide range of strategies to ensure a balanced view of each child’s learning is widely recognised as the most effective way to move learning forward (Siraj-Blatchford *et al.*, 2002; Drummond and Marshall, 2006, Hargeaves *et al.*, 2018). There is considerable consensus that assessment in the early years should be made through systematic observation and documentation from a range of sources, taking an holistic approach (NAEYC, 2009; Gandini, 2011; Tayler *et al.*, 2013; Drake, 2014; Walsh *et al.*, 2017). In deed, research into effective teaching shows that the

most effective teachers are 'highly diagnostic' in their assessments (Hall, 2012); the P1 SNSA offers support for teachers' diagnostic and formative judgements.

Members of the P1 Primary Forum comment:

*The SNSAs are not play but they are consistent with the learning I'm looking to get from play I used the practice assessments as a free choice activity in the playroom. (Teacher comment P1 PF, 2019: *ibid.*)*

*Play-based activities are planned with the Benchmarks in mind, so I don't have a problem with children demonstrating their learning through SNSA. (Teacher comment P1 PF, 2019: *ibid*)*

There is no necessary disjunction between assessment and a play-based pedagogy. However, some groups are fundamentally opposed in principle to children undergoing formal schooling before the age of 7 but discussion of this issue of principle is beyond the scope of this Review.

2.6 The effect of taking an online assessment on P1 children

Media reports and some members of the Scottish Parliament reported that the P1 SNSA was causing children distress. However, surveys and interview evidence show that the majority of headteachers and teachers did not see any distress or discomfort as children undertook the P1 SNSA, in fact, they reported that the children enjoyed it:

Most children have responded well. They are excited about the assessment being carried out using ICT and the practice assessment is useful for less confident children. (Headteacher, survey)

They enjoyed it. They thought it was a game. (P1 teacher, survey)

They completed it with their usual engagement and positive attitude. (Headteacher, survey)

The children enjoyed the P1 numeracy assessment and they liked the random nature of the questions. (Deputy headteacher, [redacted] primary school, interview)

In the surveys and interviews providing evidence to this Review, there were very few comments about children becoming upset and tearful and rather more that children became tired and bored whilst taking the P1 Literacy SNSA particularly, for example:

...it was felt that the standard of some questions asked was beyond early level. Unfortunately, this caused some learners, who already lacked confidence, to become upset. (P1 teacher, survey)

Some children became demoralised because they found the test too difficult. (P1 teacher, survey)

Most children got to the point where they found it boring and tedious.

(P1 teacher, survey)

There were comments about the teacher's approach having an effect on the children's response:

Most children have enjoyed the 'game' we play. When the class teacher is implementing it they know when a child is maybe not enjoying it and can stop them so as not to cause distress. (P1 teacher, survey)

They were oblivious. As far as they were concerned they were just playing a computer game. Children at that age experience absolutely no stress whatsoever at completing tasks like this if adults present it in the correct way. (P1 teacher, survey)

No children were upset because we don't make a big deal out of it.
(Headteacher, [redacted], interview)

Others pointed out that children varied in their response to the assessment:

Some have enjoyed the assessment procedure, showing pride in their ability to read. Others find it stressful and appear very nervous. (P1 teacher, survey)

[Response] varies from pupil to pupil. Some cope fine, some are 'click happy' and others become stressed and anxious. (Headteacher, survey)

The Review observed a total of 26 children in different settings as they undertook either the P1 numeracy or P1 literacy assessments. None of them showed any distress and indeed, in some cases, showed great perseverance. When asked about how they felt they were all quite happy, for example, C. commented that he liked matching the words to the pictures and although G. said she found it difficult she was quite unfazed ([redacted] primary school, observation and interview). A. not only enjoyed the assessment but carried out a running commentary on the questions: 'I've got a wildcat at home! She's very wild.' and 'That's a silly question because it shows you in the picture.' ([redacted] primary school, observation and interview). T. said 'Some of those were tricky' but seemed quite happy about doing it. ([redacted] primary school, observation and interview).

In summary, there was scant evidence of children being upset by taking the P1 SNSA. Where this occurred, it was mostly because children were taken away from their usual learning context and were working with unfamiliar staff. The context of the assessment can make a difference to how confident or worried the children might be and individual differences are also a factor, suggesting that teachers' knowledge of the children is important in the way different children respond to the assessment. Recent research (Rowe and Miller, 2016; Kucirkova *et al.*, 2016) indicates that children are keen users of digital technology for their own purposes. Investigating children's use of a range of digital technologies in the home, research by Cremin *et al.*, (2014) shows that teachers are often not aware of children's funds of knowledge about digital technology drawn from home. Nevertheless, children do not have equal access to digital technology in homes, so it is important that the use of technology for

assessment is accompanied by classroom teaching in the uses of screen-based reading and composing.

Conclusions

Some critics who argue that the P1 SNSA does not fit with a play-based pedagogy do not agree with any formal education before the age of 7. These are genuine and committed views but do not align with the current educational arrangements in Scotland.

A small number of headteachers and teachers commented that the P1 SNSA does not fit with a play-based pedagogy but it seems that there are confusions between a 'moment of assessment' and a pedagogical approach.

There are strong examples of schools where headteachers and teachers operate a play-based approach and find no incompatibility between that and the P1 SNSA.

There is scant evidence of children becoming upset when taking the P1 SNSA. However, there is evidence that the context for the assessments, including the teachers' attitudes, make a difference to children's assurance when undertaking the P1 SNSA.

Recommendations

That Scottish Government:

Continue to develop guidance and examples of the ways in which a play-based approach to learning and teaching can accommodate administration of the P1 SNSA.

Develop specific guidelines about how to use data from P1 SNSA alongside observational and other evidence from play-based activities to support judgements of progress and planning of next steps for learning within a play-based approach.

Ensure that training in administering the SNSA and relevant documentation re-emphasises the option of stopping the assessment if a child becomes tired, bored or upset.

Section Three The usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers to support professional judgements

3.1 SNSA and professional judgements

The purpose of P1 SNSA is to inform professional judgements about learning and teaching. P1 SNSA literacy and numeracy assessments produce a significant amount of assessment data in the aspects of numeracy and literacy they focus upon, although it is important to recognise that they do not – and cannot – cover all aspects of CfE early stage and associated Benchmarks. As stated above (Section 1.7) a range of potential ways have been identified so that this formative information can be used productively to support professional judgements. The time of the year that children undergo the assessment influences the way the information might be used depending on the decisions that are to be made. For example, if SNSA is undertaken by a child or group of children in January it is most likely to inform learning and teaching decisions about where children are at that point, and indicate the kinds of experiences they will need to make further progress. If it is in May, then in addition, it can provide information which can inform decisions about the attainment of the early level and possible areas for attention as the children move from P1 into P2. At both times, however, reference to a wide range of evidence will be needed to inform National Benchmarks judgements.

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In addition, the production of ‘long scales’ will also make available information that could be useful in mapping progress of individual pupils over time. In his evidence to the Scottish Government Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Professor Lindsay Paterson noted:

The plans for the development of the assessments take advantage of the opportunity for longitudinal data by proposing to construct ‘long scales’. These will enable each pupil to be placed on a scale that stretches from early P1 to the end of S3.

Teachers will thus gain reliable information about each pupil’s progress through the stages of the curriculum, and thus will be able to tailor their teaching to each pupil’s needs. Only standardised assessments can provide this kind of educationally useful evidence.’ (Paterson, 2018:1)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181206Professor_Lindsay_Paterson.pdf

The intention of P1 SNSA data is to provide supportive information for diagnostic purposes.

3.2 How is P1 SNSA information being used?

Evidence gathered for the Independent Review through direct observation, interviews and the surveys, reveals a mixed picture regarding headteachers’ and teachers’ views of the usefulness of the data to inform judgements at individual,

group, school and LA levels. A majority of teachers and headteachers see the value of the P1 SNSA to support professional judgements about learning, teaching and assessment. A minority take a negative view. Despite the positive view of the majority who see the P1 SNSA as a useful assessment tool, key themes emerged about reservations and concerns. Training is an issue; of those who expressed negative views of the P1 SNSA, the majority had not received any training:

We did not feel prepared for implementing and using the data. Members of the Management Team were trained on how to implement the SNSA, using the online training. Data was collated and made available to P1 staff. It was not as useful as hoped and did not match our teacher judgement. As P1 staff in our establishment work closely and teach all P1 pupils across the week, we believe that our teacher judgement gives us a more realistic picture.

(P1 teacher, survey)

I felt completely unprepared for implementing and using data from P1 assessment. No training was provided to colleagues or leaders within my establishment prior to assessments being completed. HT and DHT received some training after data had been received. This was not shared with all staff.

(P1 teacher, survey)

Respondents who saw the value of the assessments recognised that the information can inform precise teaching interventions:

By assessing the children soon in P1, this informed my teaching of groups and highlighted the extent of prior knowledge my pupils had. (P1 teacher, survey)

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I use it to see which areas of numeracy in particular have not been covered or need revisiting. Also, in literacy it highlighted the fact that all three of my children were needing working in recognising rhyming words, so I was straight away able to push rhyming stories and classic nursery rhymes into our daily literacy routines. (P1 teacher, survey)

The data is also seen as useful in passing on information at transition to P2 and to inform professional judgements of achievement of early level:

We used the data to support transition of information for P2 teachers, analysed with key steps in teaching and learning from strengths and development points highlighted in areas of our curriculum progression pathways for individual pupils. They were looked at to support teacher judgement of achievement of a level to help triangulate this data.

(Headteacher, survey)

Some respondents were explicit about the SNSA offering a nationwide comparison:

I found them really helpful as you are comparing across Scotland whereas local authority standardised assessments are comparing within authority. It gives a fairer comparison. (Headteacher, survey)

Others, however, compared SNSAs with other forms of assessment:

They generate a lot of data providing a snapshot in time but the output is not as user friendly as other online assessments and takes longer to administer.
(Headteacher, survey)

A few respondents felt that the information offered did not align with their expectations:

I do not use the data as it does not provide an accurate picture of each child in my class – many children who have English as an additional language guessed answers and scored highly when they do not yet speak English.
(P1 teacher, survey)

Only a very small number of survey responses expressed this view and as the comments were from the surveys and not interviews, it was not possible to discern by discussion whether the perception was that the P1 SNSA was not suitable for particular children with EAL or ASN or whether the assessment revealed capabilities that the teacher had not appreciated.

3.3 Evidence of diagnostic information being used to support professional judgements

Teachers' responses to the surveys and comments from the P1 Practitioner Forum indicated that where they had received training, they saw positive value in the P1 SNSA data to inform judgements about learning and teaching:

It was useful for us in identifying areas where there wasn't a depth of knowledge across the whole class or there were significant gaps in an individual's learning. (P1 teacher, P1 PF, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/7/>

I use SNSA in line with other assessment evidence to target gaps in learning. [I shall be also be using data to inform future planning] and engage with SNSA data to aid planning for all children in my class. Also, looking for trends/gaps which may show areas of learning which need to be revisited and analysing data to help plan learning and teaching next steps. (P1 teacher quoted in LA survey, East Dunbartonshire)

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Headteachers also recognised the benefits of the P1 SNSA data in supporting teachers' professional judgements:

It is used to pinpoint if there are trends across the school in terms of strengths and aspects for development and we then plan at stages and as a whole school accordingly. We also use it alongside teacher judgement and other assessments to help us assess an individual's performance. This information then helps us plan next steps in terms of support and challenge

needed to raise attainment and achievement. I think the P1 SNSA is extremely useful in terms of the feedback it offers. (Headteacher, survey)

Local authorities, too, commented on the potential for P1 SNSA to support Benchmark judgements:

There is some value in providing data that schools can use at all the milestones in Curriculum for Excellence. It will allow schools to track learner flightpaths over time and provide supporting evidence in quality assurance and Benchmarking of teacher professional judgement.

(Western Isles Council, survey)

Some schools are beginning to report that the diagnostic information gleaned from the assessments is useful as it helps support next steps in learning, professional dialogue between teaching staff and senior leadership teams. It is also beginning to support understanding of possible targeted support / interventions and next steps in learning. (East Dunbartonshire, survey)

Commented [u17]: Might it be better to refer here to “teacher professional judgement” or achievement of CfE levels?

3.4 The alignment of the assessments to the Benchmarks for early level

One recurrent theme in the responses from headteachers and teachers was about the difficulty of the literacy SNSA, although there were hardly any negative comments about the numeracy assessment. There was concern expressed that not only was the literacy SNSA too long (see Section 5.4), but that it did not fit the Benchmarks for early level. This included respondents who were positive about the P1 SNSA as well as those who were critical:

I think the P1 SNSA is extremely useful in terms of the feedback it offers. However, for this feedback to be valid, reliable and robust, I feel the actual assessments need to be more realistic in terms of our expectations of children at this age and stage.

(Headteacher, survey)

The literacy test is far too hard. Bearing in mind this is early level, children would not be reading paragraphs of information to answer questions. The wildcat/kite stories were much too difficult for the majority of children in my class although they have almost all hit the Benchmarks for early level. The numeracy test was fine, but all children who have completed the literacy test have found it very difficult. (P1 teacher, survey)

In addition to responses from teachers and headteachers in interviews and surveys, Jonathan Cunningham and Catriona Smith from the Headteacher and Deputies Association were particularly critical of the difficulty of the P1 literacy SNSA and called for a review of the difficulty against the Benchmarks for the early level. (Interview, February, 2019)

One issue raised in the survey responses was the lack of clear links in terminology between the early level Benchmarks and the descriptors provided in the data from the P1 SNSA:

Many questions in both the literacy and numeracy assessments were not linked to the Benchmarks set by the Scottish Government.

(P1 teacher, survey)

Another feature of the criticism of the level of the P1 literacy SNSA was linked to the approach taken by the school in teaching early reading. Many schools use commercial phonics schemes which may not themselves align with the CfE early level so that the literacy SNSA, which is linked to the early level, seemed to be mismatched with the approach taken to teaching phonics in the school:

Many of the questions did not seem to match up to the Benchmarks and concepts were very difficult in comparison to the average early level expectations. Some phonemes that would not be expected at P1 level were included in Literacy assessments along with some selections of common words. These were more appropriate to those in P2 and beginning First Level.

(P1 teacher, survey)

This doesn't match the Benchmarks because there is a lot of reading that isn't CVC. (P1 teacher, interview)

Assessments themselves seem far too advanced in reading. Our pupils have been taught using a phonics based scheme and therefore the texts that they are being asked to work with are far too complicated. (Headteacher, survey)

Many words they were expected to read had phonemes in them that are not taught using our P1 phonics programme and would not be taught until P2.

(P1 teacher, survey)

Many words contain phonemes that have not been taught – 'ea' 'ai' 'ou' and magic e, pupils are unable to read these words. (P1 teacher, survey)

The incompatibility between commercial phonics schemes and the Curriculum for Excellence is not within the scope of this Review, but is a matter which deserves attention.

In addition to comments about phonics, a recurrent theme in the headteacher and teacher responses was about the length of texts that children had to read independently. This was particularly true in the story that extended over four pages which children had to read independently. Respondents commented that the length of the P1 literacy SNSA made too great demands on the stamina needed to read the longer texts, and was beyond many P1 children (see Section 5.4).

In interviews, there was agreement that some items in the literacy assessment should go beyond early level as there would be children in P1 who were working towards first level, but that there were too many of these items. It was also suggested that current P1 teachers should be involved in feeding back to the assessment developers their views concerning the balance of difficulty in the assessment items. The representatives from the Headteacher and Deputies Association suggested that 'There needs to be more input from school based professionals to help design the early level questions so that they can be better calibrated' (interview, February, 2019). Whilst it is understandable that there is reticence to involve teachers in development of assessment items because of confidentiality, there is an argument for some kind of mechanism that can more closely involve P1 classroom teachers in question development.

ACER reviews and refines the P1 SNSA as part of their continuing developmental quality assurance processes (see [ACER National Report, 2017-18](#)). This includes feedback from practitioners. Suggestions about ease of undertaking the assessment and the alignment of the P1 SNSA to the CfE early level Benchmarks, can be fed back to the assessment developers.

Commented [DL18]: Suggest a link is inserted to this report

3.5 Professional learning

Professional learning is crucial for developing capacity, particularly when new initiatives are being introduced and change is occurring. Adult learners interpret experiences in their own way, based on perspectives grounded in their histories and in their cultural contexts. Mezirow (1997) suggests that although adult learners usually prefer to stay within their own meaning perspectives to avoid anxiety and loss of self-confidence, this inhibits taking on new perspectives and flexibility in learning. Effective professional development opportunities enable teachers and headteachers to see beyond their current meaning perspectives and to consider the advantages of new contexts where change is occurring. As Michael Fullan points out, successful change requires a dynamic relationship between pressure, support and continuous negotiation (Fullan, 2001:91). The pressure for change may come from government, local authority or school initiatives. The provision of systematic professional development training to answer the needs of such initiatives is part of support. It enables new developments to be placed in a wider context, providing not only the rationale for change but also indicating the practical application of change: in the case of P1 SNSA, this would include the assessment information produced. The element of negotiation is critical in the process of developing new initiatives since teachers and headteachers need to be convinced that change will enhance current practice and, further, understand and accept the practical usefulness of systematically informing decisions about learning and teaching.

As part of the implementation plan for SNSA, SCHOLAR have been tasked with planning and delivering a range of professional learning opportunities, both in terms of content and mode of delivery. These sessions have included introduction to the

rationale and practical administration of SNSA, an introduction to the analysis of SNSA data, the use of SNSA data in practice and how this can fit within the wider NIF assessment strategy, and using SNSA with ASN and EAL learners, including the provision of accessibility guidelines and practical advice. Modes of delivery have included face-to-face sessions, webinars, and online video. Training opportunities for face to face sessions and webinars have been organised and delivered in almost all Scottish Local Authorities since 2017. As P1 SNSA has been implemented nationally, attendance at professional learning sessions have had a significant effect upon whether teachers and schools see the SNSA data in P1 as very useful for informing decisions. The analysis of impact documented in *Impact of training on perceived diagnostic value of SNSA* (ACER, April 2019) finds that:

The number of practitioners indicating a positive perception of the diagnostic value of SNSA rose from just over half, before training, to almost 90% after training. Overall the mean response value to the question on diagnostic value rose by 1.47 as a result of the training provided.' (ACER, 2019:5)

Only 2% expressed negative perception after attendance.

The report goes on to note:

Practitioners involved in the delivery of Primary 1 assessments were slightly more positive about the value of SNSA than practitioners in general, both before and after training'. (*ibid.*)

In interview for this Review, a P1 teacher who was invited to be a member of the P1 Practitioner Forum and who had not attended any training sessions before going to the forum, explained that she changed her initial perceptions of the usefulness of the data and overall understanding of the context of SNSA information after attending:

I can see more of the positives and find it reassuring that SNSA links with the Benchmarks. But it is interesting what it can't assess –the full range of comprehension and the creative elements of reading and maths.

(P1 teacher, interview)

It is clear, however, that although a range of successful professional learning opportunities have been organised across Scotland, access to them has been problematic, particularly for P1 teachers. The P1 Practitioner Forum report points out:

Some forum members with class commitments had received little or no information about implementing the SNSA; children were simply extracted from their class, they had been given minimal information and were unaware of the kinds of Benchmarks and outcomes the SNSA assessed or the implementation choices that could be made. The current training strategy, with Webinars, video materials and 'tutor' training materials was poorly advertised and local authority meetings did not always reach P1 classroom teachers. There is no printed manual that describes what the SNSA offers or how it works. The digital training materials are available on the SNSA website, which can only be accessed from an approved IP address (i.e. at school or via a

VPN link to the school server). This does not offer sufficient 'reach' across the profession and teachers, who are committed full time in school, cannot easily access training that is only offered at specific times or via the school intranet (P1PF, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/6/>

A comment from a headteacher gives another reason why P1 teachers may not understand how SNSA information could be useful in informing professional judgements:

Briefing sessions were attended early on but these have not been followed up as DHT was given responsibility of organising ongoing assessments. Therefore P1 teachers do not have a working knowledge of the administration or use of data. Original session was face to face in a large hall, teacher had no access to PCs to try out system so it was of limited use.

(Headteacher, survey)

The survey responses from headteachers and teachers indicate that of those who responded negatively to the P1 SNSA, the majority of headteachers and most of P1 teachers had not attended any training. In contrast, schools where the training was effectively communicated through meetings and discussions, express a positive welcome to the opportunities offered by the P1 SNSA.

In a school of 157 pupils, all staff used the webinar training. The headteacher organised sessions where all the staff were gathered in the staff room and watched the videos together, discussing issues as they followed the videos. The P1 teacher commented: 'The online webinar is fine. They took us through each section and the LA has put on extra training.' ([redacted] primary school, Argyll and Bute)

Given the above evidence, it seems not only that opportunities for professional learning should be continued and expanded, but that bespoke training for P1 teachers in particular should be made a priority.

Just over half of the Scottish local authorities responded to the surveys from the Independent Review. Their responses indicated that most schools in those authorities had received training. Some of this was through the webinars and online materials but the majority of those who responded to the survey had also provided meetings to support P1 SNSA training:

The QI team has run specific professional learning opportunities for all staff to attend with colleagues teaching at the same stage, to explore and deepen individual understanding of the standards, expectations and judgements of progress. (West Lothian, survey)

In the same local authority, professional development session evaluation responses indicated the value of locally organised professional development opportunities in supporting the implementation of P1 SNSA:

Analysing data to help inform next steps for learners and to indicate areas to target through direct teaching, interventions and/or revision of pedagogy. Detailed analysis of SNSA results to identify areas for improvement in curriculum and learning and teaching. We will certainly analyse our own results and see if we have any curricular or individual gaps. I will look at how best to use SNSA data with SMT and staff - particularly in identifying gaps in learning: analysing the (long scale) bands to help make informed decisions about children's progress along with my own professional judgement and assessment strategies; creating reports from the website to help analyse assessment data; gathering data on my class and being able to pinpoint where the gaps are and which pupils. I am going to share what I learned with teaching staff in the school and SLT. I will work with the SLT to analyse our data when assessments are complete to identify weaker topic areas. This will then impact my planning and teaching.

(P1 teacher, quoted in East Dunbartonshire Council survey)

3.6 Moderation

Access to moderation is a powerful professional learning opportunity and an essential component to support consistency of assessment judgements against specific criteria. The Cambridge Primary Review (CPR, 2010) cites evidence that group moderation is particularly effective. Group moderation occurs when educators within and between schools meet and share their interpretations of assessment criteria regarding levels, and discuss their judgements drawing on specific sets of evidence including any standardised assessments. The CPR concluded:

Experience of group moderation suggests it has benefits beyond improving the quality of assessment. It has well established professional development function and indeed the practice of teachers meeting to discuss the conclusions that can be drawn from studying pupils work has been described as 'the most powerful means of developing professional competence in assessment'. (CPR, 2010: 323)

Discussion and comparison of examples helps professionals to dig deeper into the data under scrutiny as one QAMSO explained:

I think we're quite far ahead with assessment and moderation. I was an AMF (Assessment and Moderation Facilitator) then the LA wanted one person per school to be trained as a QAMSO (Quality and Assurance Moderation Support Officer). The LA training is very good so we were already au fait with the assessment and moderation cycle. We take a different focus each term and concentrate on the Benchmarks and do it together. We devise an assessment task and feed back our findings to the authority. I was a maths person so I decided to do the reading

Commented [DL19]: These are two different LAs – West Lothian and East Dunbartonshire

QAMSO training. Each LA has a QAMSO for each level and they go to national training events to train people in using the assessment cycle. I think the training helps to see assessment as a process. Every term we are called back to discuss examples. We take examples of our own but they give us examples of plans and assessments to moderate across the group. It's good to meet other people and to see the standard across the country. It's all about sharing the standard and what counts as evidence. My job now is to support schools within our cluster (11 schools in our area). (QAMSO, Argyll and Bute, interview)

Moderation activities within and between schools will develop practical understandings of how P1 SNSA data can inform professional judgements about the achievement of a level. The role of the QAMSO is crucial here.

Conclusions

Survey and interview evidence shows that majority of teachers and headteachers see the value of the P1 SNSA to support professional judgements about learning, teaching and assessment. Of those opposed to the P1 assessment and those who expressed more ambivalent views, almost all had not received training. In contrast, those who responded positively had all received training.

Interview and survey evidence revealed concerns about administration and the length of the P1 literacy SNSA. (See Section Five)

Of the minority of respondents opposed to the use of the P1 SNSA, some had principled objections to assessing P1 children; others preferred more familiar assessment processes.

An emergent theme from surveys, observations and interviews is that it is not clear to some stakeholders how well the P1 Literacy SNSA, specifically, aligns with the Benchmarks for early level.

Almost all the local authorities which responded to the Independent Review surveys have provided some training to implement the P1 SNSA.

The Independent Review did not specifically seek information about moderation but this has emerged as an important element of embedding and sustaining professional learning in relation to P1 SNSA and its place in informing professional judgements.

Recommendations

The Scottish Government

Request that, as part of its development process, ACER review the P1 literacy SNSA to ensure that the items align with the relevant parts of the early level CfE. Attention should be given to the language used in the item descriptors and in the data generated from the assessments so that they are comparable with the language used in the expectations and outcomes and associated Benchmarks for the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. In addition, ACER should involve experienced P1

practitioners in the question development process in order to give feedback on the appropriate level of difficulty, particularly in the P1 Literacy SNSA.

Recommend that one of the additional days of the two additional closure days agreed for 2019-2020 should be used so that all schools, including P1 teachers, can engage in professional learning related to how P1 SNSA information can be used effectively to inform professional judgements and/or moderation activities.

Commented [u20]: As above, we prefer the term "in-service" day

Review the current materials available to ensure that there is easily accessible professional learning support available for school to use on the dedicated closure day and publicise these materials to schools.

Commented [u21]: As above

Expand the QAMSO programme to support local authorities and school clusters in developing cross school moderation events.

Local authorities

Expand the frequency of professional learning opportunities already planned, including cluster meetings. Develop bespoke training for P1 teachers and monitor attendance.

DRAFT

Section Four: The use of the P1 SNSA data for school improvement purposes

4.1 The intended purpose of SNSA data for school improvement

As outlined in Section 1.2 an intended purpose of P1 SNSA was to inform school improvement. In its submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Scottish Government stated that the SNSA system:

... provides class, school and local authority level reports all of which are designed to be used for improvement purposes. The class and school level reports are comprehensive and enable detailed analysis. This allows teachers and school managers to identify patterns in learning across groups of children and identify areas of strength or development needs. (2018: 8)

and concluded:

Improving the data we have available and using that data for improvement purposes at all levels of the system is an important part of that commitment, alongside our education reform programme. By expanding that evidence base and by providing diagnostic information to teachers and schools to help them tailor future teaching and learning, the SNSA are a key part of that reform and improvement agenda. (*ibid.*p.9)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf

Education Scotland also outlined how SNSA data could be used for the purpose of individual school improvement:

Practitioners can look at the data from different cohorts of children to identify any patterns in the areas in which they are doing well or need support and can adjust their teaching. Across the school, the establishment can review its data to identify the areas which are being taught well and the areas in which children are not doing so well and can organise whole school professional development in these areas. (2018:4)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190104Education_Scotland.pdf

4.2 The components of the school improvement process

The National Improvement Framework outlines the importance of school improvement:

School improvement focuses on the quality of education, including learning, teaching and assessment, as well as the quality of the partnerships that are in place to support children and young people with their broader needs. (NIF, 2109:32)

<file:///C:/Users/Windows%2010/Documents/Attached2/Scotland/Reports%20used%20in%20responses/00543908.pdf>

England's National College of School Leadership describes School Improvement as:

... mainly concerned with the processes through which schools can raise standards: the changes they can make and the strategies they can use to improve pupil outcomes. (2013:6)

<https://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/transfer/open/dsbm-phase-4-module-1-understanding-school-improvement/dsbm-p4m1-s3/dsbm-p4m1-s3-t1.html>

Ofsted in England, in a report on how headteachers achieve school improvement, emphasise developing effective monitoring systems based on school level data as critically important for identifying issues, assessing need and evaluating the impact of changes in school policies and practices (Ofsted, 2012). The analysis of school level data is therefore central to the process of continuous school improvement with a clear focus on improving pupil outcomes.

4.3 Evidence of use of SNSA data for school improvement purposes

Feedback from both interviews and surveys included many examples of positive use of P1 SNSA information for improvement purposes. After attending training by SCHOLAR, one teacher identified the areas she felt P1 SNSA data would inform:

I will be very keen to use the different ways to analyse data, which will in turn help to maximise support for pupils, and staff, thus raising attainment throughout; analysing data to establish if any interventions are required to raise attainment. I am planning on sharing the information and skills I gained at this course with my P1 stage colleagues before and after administering the SNSA assessments within our age group.... Use of the individual and class reports to help plan next steps in teaching and learning to raise attainment in numeracy and literacy and ensure progression throughout school; being able to pinpoint aspects for whole school priorities; considering groups of learners rather than looking at whole cohort.

(P1 teacher quoted in LA survey, East Dunbartonshire Council)

Some schools and LAs are already using P1 SNSA productively for school improvement:

It is used to pinpoint if there are trends across the school in terms of strengths and aspects for development and we then plan at stages and as a whole school accordingly. We also use it alongside teacher judgement and other assessments to help us assess an individual's performance. This information then helps us plan next steps in terms of support and challenge needed to raise attainment and achievement. (Headteacher, survey)

Helps give further evidence for different cohorts of learners including pupils with additional support needs and able pupils. (Headteacher, survey)

In survey evidence from the local authorities, this headteacher identifies the value of using the data not only for school improvement but also in discussions within the school cluster:

We find the class and cohort data very informative for identifying improvements required within schools' curriculum content, or approaches to delivering certain aspects of the curriculum. The diagnostic information is being used effectively at Cluster level also for schools to support and challenge each other on improving aspects of their curriculum.

(West Lothian Council, survey)

Local authorities in particular see the value of the P1 SNSA for school improvement:

These can be effective in supporting teachers' judgements, providing they are placed in perspective, when considering a wide range of assessment evidence. They can be used to identify common areas requiring a focus in the planning of next steps in learning for individuals, groups, class.

(Edinburgh City Council, survey)

P1 SNSA data could be used very effectively to drive continuous school improvement. This is due to the fact that it provides diagnostic data at individual, group and school level. This means that senior leaders in schools can look across the results to see if there are particular gaps, strengths etc which will then inform next steps not only for individual pupils, but in terms of curriculum and assessment.

(East Dunbartonshire Council, survey)

However, both headteachers and local authorities emphasise that P1 SNSA information is only a part of the school level data that should be considered and that, after only one year of implementation, the productive use of the information is potential, needing time to embed in the system:

All reliable assessment data is useful for school improvement. Analysis of themes and strengths and next steps is a useful starter for professional discussion. When used alongside the BGE Benchmarking tool, it is useful to have national comparators to help gauge progress and attainment.

(Headteacher, survey)

It will take time to fully realise the value of the tests. In principle SNSA can provide information and feedback that can be used alongside other information to help teachers make decisions about next steps and progress in learning. Schools can use the information as part of the range of evidence gathered to reflect on impact of improvements and areas for further development. (South Ayrshire Council, survey)

4.4 Criticisms of the usefulness of P1 SNSA data for school improvement purposes

In survey responses, some headteachers and P1 teachers commented that they were not convinced of the usefulness of P1 SNSA data, comparing it unfavourably with previous standardised assessments:

Other data from other types of assessments were easier to read and understand. The SNSA were difficult to make sense of in relation to learning in the classroom. No guidance on how to read and use the data. This may have helped. (P1 teacher, survey)

Some felt that SNSA information did not add anything to the information gathered through ongoing teacher assessment or was not accurate enough:

There was already enough information. The SNSA is not an appropriate assessment for P1. Teacher observations and a broad range of evidence collected over time are more appropriate at this age. We use assessments that demonstrate breadth, depth and challenge to inform school improvement. Then SNSA does not provide this, and P1 is not meaningful. (Headteacher, survey)

Others felt that the data generated was inaccurate, unnecessary and therefore not any use for informing school improvement:

It is not at all useful for improvement purposes. I am wholly against the use of this assessment in P1 and think it is detrimental to teaching and learning due to the time it takes to administer and the unreliable information it has provided for some of our children. (P1 teacher, survey)

However, the majority of the responses expressing no confidence in the P1 SNSA as generating useful data for school improvement were from teachers or headteachers who had not received training or who felt unprepared to carry out the assessment and interpret the data.

Evidence from one local authority points to the value of training to support teachers and headteachers in using P1 SNSA data to support school improvement:

Evaluations in relation to the SCHOLAR training from participants was very positive with all participants stating that they found the sessions extremely useful and that the training made them more confident in their ability to administer the assessments, but importantly, to access and analyse the attainment data for improvement purposes. (East Renfrewshire, survey)

In addition, those who refer to other assessments as more useful, for example, PiPs, which were administered at the beginning and end of P1 to all children, may not be clear about the different purposes of the SNSA and the distinction between summative and formative assessments.

As the Independent Review took place after only one full year of implementation of the P1 SNSA, responses to the surveys indicated that their use for school improvement purposes was still at the early stage and their impact was seen as potential rather than identifiable:

It is too early to say that all schools are using the data effectively for school improvement, but there is potential for this as understanding grows at school and officer level. (Shetland Islands Council, survey)

One local authority warned that the limitations of using P1 SNSA information should be understood:

We already use a range of measures for school improvement purposes, the SNSA is used almost exclusively to identify any gaps in general learning or for individuals. We would not use the SNSA on its own for school improvement purposes. (East Ayrshire local authority, survey)

However, headteachers who recognise the value of the P1 SNSA are aware of the partial nature of the assessment but nevertheless see it as a useful element in their professional toolkit:

It's useful as a part of a range of assessments. We want to use it better this session. (Headteacher, survey)

Conclusions

Teachers, schools and local authorities have identified ways in which P1 SNSA data can usefully inform elements of school improvement although they understand that P1 SNSA data only covers certain aspects of literacy and numeracy learning. P1 SNSA information, therefore, has the potential to be part of useful evidence for broader school improvement purposes.

All local authorities who returned surveys were positive about the potential for using P1 SNSA data to inform school improvement.

Survey and interview evidence show that a minority of headteachers and teachers take a negative view of the value of the P1 SNSA to provide useful data to support school improvement in comparison to previous standardised assessments used in many local authorities.

There is evidence of a relationship between understanding how P1 SNSA information can be used for school improvement purposes and attendance at training sessions focused on data analysis beyond the individual pupil.

Recommendations

The Scottish Government

Produce guidance outlining how P1 SNSA can positively contribute to school improvement, including further detailed case studies showing how a range of both urban and rural schools have used P1 SNSA for successful school improvement purposes. This guidance should be accessible online.

Expand the frequency of professional learning opportunities/training in all local authorities, including face-to-face discussions, which focuses on both the positive use, as well as the limitations, of using P1 SNSA information. This should particularly target senior leaders in schools.

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Section Five Challenges of using the P1 SNSA

5.1. Value of the P1 SNSA

A majority of interview and survey respondents saw value in the P1 SNSA, particularly for supporting professional judgements. These views are supported by the findings of the P1 Primary Forum. However, concerns were expressed about administration and the length of the P1 literacy SNSA. Responses detailing challenges associated with the P1 SNSA from surveys and interviews, even those showing unequivocal commitment to the value of the P1 SNSA, clustered around:

- the time and staffing needed to administer the assessments
- difficulties with technology
- the length of the P1 literacy SNSA
- the difficulty of some of the items, specifically in the P1 literacy SNSA (see Section 3.3).

5.1 Time to administer the assessments

This is an issue which is more acute in larger schools. In one school visited by the Independent Review there were 122 P1 children to be assessed. The headteacher was positive about the potential value of the P1 SNSA but pointed out that administering the assessments meant allocating a large amount of time for each P1 teacher. The Review observed nine children undertaking the P1 literacy assessments in the computer suite, supported by four members of staff. The children who took the longest time spent 45-50 minutes completing the assessment. In other schools the Review observed children undertaking the P1 numeracy assessment which took 30 minutes at the most.

In survey responses, headteachers and teachers commented:

[The SNSA] can only be carried out in a quiet space which means there has to be an adult available to do this. At the moment the majority of schools do not have extra staff to carry out these tests. In many schools there are staff who do not get any McCrone cover. PSAs are needed for specific children and in many instances cannot spend full days carrying out these tests. Tests also take a long time to administer. (Headteacher, survey)

It is very difficult to support a large number of children – more than one to 3 is difficult to support children so they show what they can do.

(Headteacher, survey)

On the other hand, visits and observations by the Review, and survey responses, indicate that in some schools there is a developed system which is integrated into the teaching day so that the P1 assessments are administered over a longer period of time as part of normal learning and teaching time. Equally, some schools have embraced the opportunity to pause the assessments if children are becoming too tired or switching off:

It is not too long for P1 children – and you can give them a break if needed.

(P1 teacher, [redacted], interview)

I was amazed about what other people had been told. I didn't know we could stop midway, that there were practice activities they could do beforehand or that I could let children choose what [technology] to use. (P1 teacher from P1 PF report, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/6/>

However, this is not quite so easy to organise if there are three or four P1 classes.

5.3 Difficulties with technology

Survey and interview responses covered a range of problems including: children not being familiar with using the mouse or desktop computers generally; internet connection failures; technical problems with machinery, particularly involving the use of earphones; scrolling up and down; availability of digital technology in the school:

As I carried these out with the children, they found the dragging nearly impossible. Their mouse control is not advanced enough to do this.

(Headteacher, survey)

The pupils are not able to manage the test independently on a computer. The children do not have the fine motor skills for example, joining a line from one image to another. The test would be better completed on a tablet using the child's finger but we do not have this facility at our school. (Headteacher, survey)

Thankfully we were able to use iPads to complete the test. If it had been on a laptop or PC, the children would have struggled with the ICT skills.

(P1 teacher, survey)

On a Review observation visit, one teacher pointed out that when the P1 teachers discovered in the first iteration of the P1 SNSA that children were struggling with some aspects of using the technology, the team planned extra time to develop the skills needed so that this year there were no problems for the children in managing the technology.

Case studies on the Education Scotland National Improvement Hub give examples from 2018 of schools organising the use of technology to support the administration of the P1 SNSA. In [redacted] school, South Ayrshire there were two classes in P1:

As well as two computers in the classroom itself, all classes have access to computers in the open area outside their classroom. Primary 1 children regularly use these computers in a range of learning and teaching activities.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/primary-1-snsa-case-studies>

[redacted] of West Lothian Council commented:

There were a few issues with P1 in terms of technology and the management of groups of children doing it at the same time so in West Lothian we have looked into this and developed appropriate support as part of our implementation plan including extensive consultation with staff. (Interview)

In [redacted] primary school, West Lothian, an urban school with 56 P1 children:

The primary 1 SNSAs were one of a number of activities children were involved in at the same time. There was a work station of touchscreen computers that groups of children (around 4 or 5) used, while the rest of the class were working on other activities at different workstations.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/primary-1-snsa-case-studies>

Clearly, some technological challenges can be overcome by planning, focused teaching, managed sharing of technology and local authority support and consultation. However, difficulties remain, particularly in larger schools where access is more demanding and P4 and P7 SNSAs also need to be accommodated.

5.4 The length of the P1 numeracy and literacy SNSAs

In surveys, observations and interviews the only comments about the length of the P1 numeracy assessment was to compare it with the length of the literacy assessment:

The numeracy tests are well matched to what is expected of a P1 child, and matches the Benchmarks. The literacy tests are very difficult and require a huge amount of concentration to complete; some took 40-45 minutes to complete. (P1 teacher, survey)

The reading section was lengthy and children lost interest; they were much happier completing the numeracy assessment. (P1 teacher, survey)

Some feel that the maths assessment at P1 is more manageable and accessible for pupils than the literacy assessment. This is due in part to the amount of text that children are required to read (in the literacy assessment) before answering the questions.

(East Dunbartonshire Council, survey)

There were frequent comments about the length of the literacy SNSA:

The assessments themselves are very lengthy; the test is exceptionally long for P1. (Headteacher, survey)

It was hard for some children to complete the sections due to the time it took to complete. (P1 teacher, survey)

One local authority reported that there had been concerns within the authority about the length of the P1 literacy SNSA:

In terms of length and content of text, it appeared to be far too advanced and the amount of text being presented was quite daunting for some children.
(Aberdeenshire, survey)

Responses indicated that the length of the literacy assessment threatened the validity of the results:

The length of the tests resulted in the children becoming very bored and clicking any answer. (P1 teacher, survey)

I found the literacy SNSA in particular was too long and wordy. The children were faced with huge passages that they could not read and this caused them to get bored/guess answers. (P1 teacher, survey)

In a school visit, the Review observed a highly fluent P1 reader completing the assessment with ease and relish. Nevertheless, when he reached the third lengthy text in the assessment adapted for the higher level, he was visibly flagging. This, again, might threaten the reliability of the assessment for particularly fluent readers. Whilst, as noted above, it is possible for children to discontinue the assessment and resume when they have been rested, this is not always possible in everyday contexts and especially in schools with large P1 numbers. In addition, it might be argued that if the P1 teacher is administering the assessments, any errors made as a result of disengagement can be noted and taken into account. However, it is by no means standard practice for P1 teachers themselves to administer the assessment, making more salient the issue of possible skewing of results because of the length of the P1 literacy SNSA.

The Review takes into account the need for a spread of questions in order adequately to assess the range of pupils undertaking the P1 literacy SNSA. However, in interview ACER confirmed that there would be no loss of coverage or reliability if the P1 literacy assessment were shorter with fewer items.

5.5 Suitability of the P1 SNSA for children with additional support needs

The Review did not ask any specific questions about the suitability of the P1 SNSA for children with additional support needs (ASN) or children with English as an additional language (EAL) and there were few references in the survey responses. One headteacher noted that children diagnosed as autistic experienced difficulty with the earphones and another commented:

Some pupils with ASN or who were not computer literate found the programme difficult to navigate. (Headteacher, survey)

One local authority commented that some schools:

...reported that pupils with ASN/EAL can present with anxiety when engaging with the SNSAs and are seeking greater clarity about the support strategies which should be in place to eliminate this. (City of Edinburgh Council, survey)

However, in observations and interviews, the Review found that some schools use their usual support arrangements to enable children with ASN to have access to the assessments as a matter of equity. In deed, one headteacher's survey response pointed out that the SNSA:

Supports approaches to targeting funding for initiatives supported by Pupil Equity funding. (Headteacher, survey)

Using the guidance offered in *Accessibility Guidance Primary 1 School year 2018-19*, and the SNSA Help Page Guidance on ASN and EAL, headteachers and teachers can use their professional judgement and expertise to make decisions about pupils undertaking the P1 SNSA and about appropriate support arrangements:

Pupils with additional support needs were given some support in terms of understanding what they were being asked to do, however completion was very much down to pupils. (P1 teacher, survey)

There were only two responses to the Review survey from headteachers of special schools, neither of which uses the assessment as it is not suited to the very complex needs of the pupils in those schools. However, in interview, Steven McPherson, HMI, pointed out that some special schools are able to use the assessments and that additional support need not be a barrier (interview, April, 2019). The Review recognises that it may be more of a challenge at P1 to support children with ASN to undertake the SNSA. However, it is clear from the Accessibility Guidance that teachers can decide whether or not it is appropriate for children with ASN or EAL to undertake the P1 SNSA.

Every local authority has a different approach to meeting the needs of children with additional needs and in some areas funding for support may be an issue. Nevertheless, the P1 SNSA has potential to support teachers both in the mainstream and in the special sector in developing appropriate assessment processes, and to boost professional confidence in assessment and moderation judgements.

5.6 Children with English as an additional language

Again, the Review did not specifically seek out responses about the suitability of the P1 SNSA for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). Few teachers or headteachers commented on children with EAL in respect of the P1 SNSA. Two who did respond thought that the P1 literacy SNSA was too difficult and lengthy for their EAL children. However, one headteacher commented that the P1 SNSA:

Supports analysis of performance of children in relation to SIMD, male/female, FME, EAL information gathering supporting targeted approaches if appropriate. (Headteacher, survey)

One local authority specifically commented on the support materials:

Online information materials for practitioners was informative and supportive in administration of the assessments as well as the removal of barriers to accessing SNSA for EAL and ASN learners. (Glasgow City Council, Survey)

See:

file:///C:/Users/Windows%2010/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/YRM8LSYK/p1_accessibility_teacher_guidance_1819.pdf

file:///C:/Users/Windows%2010/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/YRM8LSYK/eal_and_asn_administration_guidance-min.pdf

In observation visits and interviews, although there were children with EAL in some schools, no issues were identified. It seems that overall the good professional sense of headteachers and teachers and the guidance offered, helps to identify the appropriate use of the P1 SNSA with pupils who have English as an additional language.

5.7 Notifying parents/carers of SNSA results

The Review survey for headteachers specifically asked if parents/carers were notified of the results of the P1 SNSA. Of those who responded, the majority either did not report the results at all or specified that they reported as part of holistic reporting of progress to parents/carers. In interviews, Eileen Prior, of Connect, and separately Joanna Murphy of the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS), both pointed out that if the P1 SNSA is retained the data should not be reported to parents in isolation as it is just part of the information that teachers use for ongoing assessment purposes (interviews, February, 2019). Eileen Prior commented that reporting the results gives them special status. In their evidence to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Connect argues that 'Assessment should inform quality conversations between teachers, children and families' yet 'parents tell us they often do not know about the tests, nor are they given any feedback on the outcomes' (Submission to Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry into Scottish National Standardised Assessments, 2018:2).

Both Connect and NPFS call for a better quality of communication between home and school about learning, as Eileen Prior explains, 'what parents/carers want is a proper dialogue between child, parents/carers and school about what is going well, what isn't and how home and school can work together to move forward.' (Interview, February, 2019)

The National Improvement Framework (2019) agrees, and points to the value of genuine home school partnerships:

We want to improve and increase the ways in which parents, carers and families can work with teachers and partners to support their children and young people. We also want to increase the voice of parents and carers in leading improvements within schools. Parental involvement ensures that parents can help to shape the ethos, activity and priorities for the school in partnership with school leaders. (NIF, 2019:26)

Since the data generated from the P1 SNSAs is intended to support teachers' professional judgements and only assesses part of the CfE early level, it is inappropriate to report the results separately from general and holistic reporting of progress to parents. Conversations about progress with parents/ carers should focus on the entire child and her/his educational well-being.

Conclusions

Observations, interviews and survey responses reveal concerns about: the time and staffing needed to administer the P1 SNSA; technological difficulties; and the length of the assessment, specifically the P1 literacy SNSA.

Some headteachers and teachers have found ways to overcome the challenges of technology involved in administering the P1 SNSA through careful planning, focused teaching and managed sharing of technology although this is not always easy or straightforward, especially in bigger schools.

The length of the P1 literacy SNSA gives rise to concerns about whether the results obtained for some children are reliable.

Supporting children at P1 with ASN or EAL to undertake the SNSA can be challenging, needing sensible professional decisions about individual children's capability to undergo the SNSA. However, the guidance offered about accessibility and administration of the P1 SNSA is comprehensive and clear about supporting children with ASN and EAL.

Headteachers are generally thoughtful about reporting SNSA data to parents/carers, often making it part of a more holistic reporting conversation.

Recommendations

The Scottish Government

Continue and extend support to schools for administering the P1 SNSA in terms of time and staffing.

Develop more guidance for primary schools, particularly larger schools, in managing the technological demands of the P1 SNSA.

Recommend that, as part of its ongoing review process, ACER reduce the number of items in the P1 literacy SNSA.

Extend the work of QAMSOs and moderation processes specifically to include special schools and those teachers with responsibility for children with additional support needs and English as an additional language.

Continue to develop the productive partnership between home and school and including parents/carers in professional conversations about children's progress.

Local authorities

Extend support and consultation with schools experiencing difficulties in managing the technology and timing of administering the P1 SNSA.

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Section Six The national Gaelic Medium Education Standardised Assessment (MCNG)

6.1 Development of the MCNG

Measaidhean Coitcheann Nàiseanta airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig (MCNG) is a version of the Scottish national standardised assessments (SNSA) for children and young people in Gaelic Medium Education (GME). These were launched in December 2018. Initially they were expected to be published in August 2018. They were delayed to enable improvements based on a review of the use of standardised assessments in English medium. The cohort for whom MCNG is designed is relatively small: there are about 6000 children and young people in Gaelic Medium Education (GME), of whom 582 are in P1. The MCNG is part of the National Improvement Framework. MCNGs were requested by stakeholders to assist with assessing children's progress, to provide diagnostic information and to support teachers' professional judgement bespoke to Gaelic Medium Education. MCNG was specifically developed to enable children to be assessed in literacy and numeracy in Gaelic as the language in which they were being immersed.

An advisory group, including national organisations, local authorities and teachers working across 14 local authorities oversaw the development to ensure that it aligns with the Benchmarks of the Curriculum for Excellence and the staging posts for literacy and numeracy. Although the advisory group would have liked to include talking and listening in the assessments, this was not possible as it would have created difficulties about standardised approaches.

The content was developed by the company Giglets who have experience in creating Gaelic medium reading and onscreen resources. Nine content creators were recruited, representing all levels of CfE with a range of teaching experience, specifically to ensure that the content aligned with CfE. Material was then subjected to a quality assurance process. Giglets assembled a group with experience in Gaelic Medium Education, an educational psychologist and an academic from Edinburgh University. This group checked consistency across the questions for quality, appropriateness, and level of difficulty based on National Benchmarks. There was then a final check with local authorities, Scottish Government and quality assurance before signing it off. Outreach events to engage with local authorities explained the MCNG background, what they are designed for and how they take into account different sizes of school, geography and accessibility. Feedback was sent to Giglets for improvements.

The MCNGs take account of children's additional support needs. For example, font and screen colour can be selected and the children can listen to rather than read the

Commented [u22]: MCNG

Commented [u23]: It might be more accurate to say that standardised assessments, bespoke to the Gaelic Medium Education curriculum, were requested by stakeholders (the end result being the MCNGs)

Commented [u24]: The advisory group agreed the general principles for developing the MCNG.

Commented [u25]: The possibility of including talking and listening was explored by the group, but no precedent could be identified internationally, and it was concluded that a standardised assessment approach did not lend itself to assessing these skills.

Commented [u26]: Working group – including (but not limited to) an educational psychologist . . .

Commented [u27]: All questions were then submitted to an Education Scotland/Scottish Government group, comprising local authority representatives and chaired by Education Scotland, for final sign off.

Commented [u28]: It was the user trialling conducted in three phases (between May and October) in a variety of schools across different local authorities, which took into account different sizes of school, geography and accessibility issues. The feedback from this user trialling was then shared with Giglets to inform further system improvements.

questions. There is also audio support in three different accents, which is particularly useful at P1. A style guide has been created to assist the content creators with developing questions. A terminology checklist has been created for teachers of Gaelic terminology used within the assessments. The checklist will be updated as new questions are created. However, the working group will still be available for comment and support. There has been ongoing communication with the Gaelic sector and the development group wrote to all professional associations and interested organisations to highlight the value of receiving feedback.

Commented [u29]: At launch there was just one accent available. From April there have been two accents available. From the beginning of year 2 (i.e. from August 2019) there will be three accents available.

Commented [u30]: The terminology checklist is an aid to teachers who will be delivering the assessments, rather than the content creators – so this sentence perhaps belongs elsewhere.

Commented [u31]: The working group is now consulted on particularly complex, or ambiguous issues, rather than routinely.

Commented [u32]: It was the Scottish Government who wrote to encourage the submission of feedback.

6.2 The purpose of the P1 MCNG

The advisory group were keen to clarify understanding of the purpose of the assessment. It is to discover ‘Where is the child at?’ and they have ensured that MCNG fits with the Early Level of CfE. Nursery education supports the development of Gaelic. There is no window suggested for the assessments although there was early general discussion about the P1 assessment not being used until later in the school year. Overall, however, the view is that progress within immersion should drive when the assessments are done.

It is expected that by P7 children will achieve equal fluency and literacy in both Gaelic and English. Children in Gaelic Medium Education take MCNG at P1, P4, P7 and S3. In addition they take SNSA at P7 and S3. Teachers will have access to the assessment data and will inform parents where appropriate and as part of general reporting on progress. The data will not go beyond the local authority. At national level reporting is anonymised so there will be no attributable data used to identify national trends. The same policy will be used for Gaelic as for English: that there will be no high stakes use of data.

For P1 MCNG, Education Scotland held moderation events in three locations to strengthen the understanding of holistic assessment. The first of these focused specifically on listening and talking. These events emphasised that the assessments were only part of teachers’ professional judgements teachers on progress with Curriculum for Excellence levels.

Commented [u33]: These events were not held specifically for P1 MCNG, but rather in wider support of teachers’ professional judgement of achievement of a level – highlighting the ongoing centrality of talking and listening within immersion learning, and explaining the importance of those curricular aspects was in no way diminished by their exclusion (on practical grounds) from the MCNG.

Commented [u34]: The events also sought to secure a shared understanding of national standards.

6.3 Teachers’ Gaelic subject knowledge

In interview, HMI commented that teachers’ subject knowledge in GME has been strengthened by publications such as HM Inspectors’ Advice on Gaelic Education. This Advice describes best practice in immersion, based on evidence from scrutiny. It has assisted with achieving more consistency in the use of highly-effective immersion as central to GME. Teachers’ subject knowledge has been supplemented by the National Benchmarks which were designed to provide clarity on national standards.

6.4 Involving parents

There is information available on the MCNG public website <https://measaidheancoitcheann.gov.scot/en/parents>

and the leaflet regarding the approach to assessment outlined in the National Improvement Framework has also been shared with parents and carers of children in GME schools, as it is equally pertinent to them.

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/gov.scot/publications/factsheet/2016/11/assessing-childrens-progress-guide-for-parents-and-carers/documents/3a7ac459-c886-4c29-a1d2-d52c084cc7f9/3a7ac459-c886-4c29-a1d2-d52c084cc7f9/gov.scot%3Adocument>

In addition, parents can access online Gaelic resources used in schools provided by the commercial company Stòrlann, so that children and parents can access the same books. Also, BookBugs online reading resources are available in Gaelic. Gaelic4Parents.com is a website to support parents and children learning in GME. It also provides live support with homework. Gaelic4Parents.com enables access to a range of resources to support parents with supporting learning at home. For example, reading books, games, stories and audio.

6.5 Evidence for the Independent Review

Since the P1 MCMG is not yet available to schools it has not been possible for the Independent Review to observe any children undertaking the assessments. Similarly, it was not part of the survey as the MCMG has not yet been launched. However, evidence has been taken from HMI and Education Scotland and considered against the conclusions for the P1 SNSA. Local authorities report in interview that there have been no concerns about the Gaelic assessment: 'It's all been very well organised. And we have been involved in the trialling' (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles), interview, April, 2019).

Conclusions

It is the opinion of the Review that the MCMG will avoid some of the difficulties encountered by the SNSA in its first iteration.

Care has been taken to communicate with schools, local authorities and the Gaelic sector throughout the development of the assessments. Attention has been given to involving parents/carers.

The assessment has been robustly trialled and the MCMG will not be as lengthy as the literacy SNSA.

Recommendation

The Scottish Government

Commented [u35]: While we have not provided the leaflet directly to GME parents, it is available on parentzone and the SG website, and we have highlighted it in our communications with the Gaelic parent organisation, [Comann nam Pàrant](#)

Commented [u36]: MCNG

Commented [u37]: The MCNG was launched in December 2018, and the first assessments began to be undertaken from January 2019. During the review's information gathering period, however, very few schools had yet gained experience in delivering the assessments, and it did not prove possible to identify schools which were able to demonstrate the assessments to the review. During an outreach event in March for all GME providing local authorities, however, SG did share the review mailbox address with practitioners and encourage any early feedback on the system to be submitted as appropriate.

Commented [u38]: MCNG

Commented [u39]: MCNG

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Commented [u41]: At this early stage in the assessments' roll out, we do not have definitive data on the average length of time taken for the P1 MCNG literacy assessment. The trialling activity we undertook indicated the assessment was not overly lengthy, and early and anecdotal feedback at this stage appears to back that up.

Proceed with the implementation of the national Gaelic Medium Education Standardised Assessment.

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Section Seven The future of the P1 SNSA

7.1 The role of SNSA at national level

Evidence gathered by this Independent Review shows that there is unevenness in understanding across the sector about the intention and purpose of SNSA at national level and this has become a particular issue in P1. There is a need for clarity about:

- The purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national level.
- How the implementation of P1 SNSA helps to close the poverty related attainment gap.
- Given that most local authorities have used standardised assessments already in P1, what the advantages of SNSA are over other standardised assessments that have been in general use in Scotland.

SNSA was developed carefully so that it aligns with the CfE through the Benchmarks; none of the previously used assessments did this. In distinction from previous assessments, the SNSA is standardised on a Scottish population which again was not a feature of those assessments. In addition, having a standardised assessment as part of a professional toolkit for making judgements about children's learning serves to counter unconscious bias. Further, the P1 SNSA has the potential to support teacher subject knowledge.

Evidence gathered for this Review from teachers, schools and local authorities indicates a will that SNSA should succeed in its role of informing consistent professional judgements about learning and teaching. In its submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, EIS argued that the SNSA cannot offer 'small data' (Pasi Sahlberg, ICEA): 'the information that is most useful to teachers, learners and parents as they work in partnership to progress individuals' learning' (EIS, 2018:3). There were fears that the P1 SNSA might be used by those 'driving narrow accountability agendas either at local or national level' (*ibid.*). This reflects wider concerns about high stakes uses of data (see Section 1.5). However, this Review has not found evidence of intent to use the P1 SNSA data in this way. Indeed, it is difficult to see how the aggregation of such data might be used for broader accountability purposes. Nevertheless, as recommended in Section One, there should be strong safeguards against any drift towards the use of the P1 SNSA data for high stakes or accountability purposes. The data should be a tightly focused part of a broader range of evidence informing teachers' decisions about learning and teaching. Indeed, the granular nature of the data generated by P1 SNSA, alongside teachers' direct observations, offers the kind of 'small data' which is valuable in informing teachers' professional judgements.

As the OECD report explains, that if standardised assessments are used in the context of school accountability they are only a single aspect of a much broader process so that there should be a wider view of accountability:

... it is especially important to obtain a complete view of student outcomes and teacher instruction, which standardised tests cannot provide. Earl and Katz (2006) recommend gathering data in a wide range of forms, including standardised tests and formative classroom assessments, in order to enhance accountability evaluations (cited in Campbell and Levin, 2008). By implementing a 'toolkit' for understanding student performance and feedback, the concept of accountability becomes a conversation on ideas and challenges and a means to monitor progress, rather than a static approach to data collection and analysis. Such an approach to accountability not only provides more genuine data, but also can increase teacher buy-in and therefore reduce system distortions. (Morris, 2011)

<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/5kg3rp9qbnr6-en.pdf?expires=1554734976&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=FB80C111D6391003ECFCB43E5DF1A693>

Professor Kathy Hall, an international expert on assessment, acknowledges that Scottish policy tries to guard against narrow high stakes use of assessment data:

In Scotland, unlike England, individual schools are not held to account through comparative achievement data, and there are no league tables of performance. In essence, the tests available to Scottish schools are not substantially different to those used in England, but, crucially, they are not 'high stakes' because there is not an emphasis on ranking and comparing. Performance tables are not compiled and published. (Hall, 2018: 296)

7.2 Teachers' perceptions of the value given to their professional judgements

This Review values the contributions made by teachers and headteachers in responding to the survey, particularly at a very busy time of the teaching year. Their responses show that some teachers feel that their professional judgements are being undervalued by the introduction of the P1 SNSA as a 'standardised' assessment. This needs addressing. While the terminology is accurate in describing how the assessments have been developed, it has been taken to suggest that teachers' professional judgements have less status. This was not the intention of the development of the assessments and should be further emphasised in documentation. However, it may be the case that teachers who felt most keenly that their professional judgements were being questioned were those who had not had training or who had not had personal experience of carrying out the assessments.

7.3 Potential of the P1 SNSA to enhance teachers' subject knowledge

In the observations carried by this Review of children undertaking the P1 SNSAs, it was clear that the assessment offered rich observational as well as content data about

children's learning behaviours in literacy and numeracy. In addition, survey responses from P1 teachers who had carried out the assessments indicated that they valued this 'quality time' (P1 teacher, survey) with individual children. On the other hand, where P1 teachers had not been personally involved in administering the SNSAs, they were less aware of its value. The P1 SNSA is potentially a very useful extra observational tool and one which, in its detailed descriptors, can support the development of teachers' assurance in making consistent judgements of children's capabilities. If the assessment is to realise its potential as a diagnostic tool, then P1 teachers need to have experience of administering it themselves. This may create challenges for larger schools and mean some creative administrative decisions, but in terms of developing a skilful staff, it has real value.

Used at its best, as this headteacher noted, the P1 SNSA can support professional judgements as it:

- *Becomes part of our overall tracking data.*
- *Supports transition information sharing.*
- *Supports looking for trends and gaps in learning.*
- *Supports triangulation of formative and summative assessment and teacher judgement.*
- *Supports planning consultation meetings about next steps in learning and teaching.*
- *Supports analysis of performance of children in relation to SIMD, male/female, FME, EAL information gathering, supporting targeted approaches if appropriate.*
- *Can be used to analyse improvements in performance of learning (in conjunction with other assessments).*
- *Supports the tracking of pupil performance and identifying value added trends following initiatives. (Headteacher, survey)*

The NIF report 2019 emphasises the 'strong link between teachers' professional skills and competences and the quality of children and young people's learning experiences' (NIF, 2019: 23). It continues:

Consistent, well-moderated teachers' professional judgement data on achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy will help us to focus accurately on the difference in attainment between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people, and take further action as a result. (*ibid.*)

7.4. School leadership

Observational and survey evidence gathered for this Review shows that the effective implementation and use of the P1 SNSA data depends on the senior leadership team in any school. As the NIF report (2019) points out:

Evidence indicates that in the most effective systems, decisions about learning and teaching are made as close to the child or young person as possible,

drawing on the expertise of the professionals who know them best and listening to the views of the child, young person and their family. School leaders play a critical role in creating a culture of empowerment and collaboration where curricular and learner pathways are designed and developed to meet the needs of children and young people. (NIF, 2019: 20)

School leadership is the fulcrum for effective use of data to support children's learning futures. Decisions about assessment, and particularly P1 SNSA, set the ethos for the school. The Review met headteachers whose thorough understanding of the consistent and considered use of data enhanced the experiences of both children and teaching staff. Headteachers who have a secure sense of how data can be used for school improvement, including P1 SNSA, set the tone for a positive view of how best to move the school and the children it serves forward. This headteacher's analysis of the advantages of using the P1 SNSA is an example of effective leadership:

- *Standardised data that supports regular tracking of pupils learning and performance at school.*
- *Ability to share themes and trends across cluster schools as all undertook the same assessments. Supports cluster planning and initiatives to improve and enhance learning.*
- *A good way to get where pupils are on a national perspective supporting school improvement planning.*
- *Ability to drill down individually for children to see themes, trends and improvements or fluctuations in their learning ability.*
- *Children can take as long as they need to complete the assessment (unlike other online/standardised assessments).*

(Headteacher, survey)

7.5 Local authority leadership

In a similar way to the critical role of senior leadership teams in schools, the leadership of the local authority is crucial in challenging and supporting schools and setting the context for the effective and ethical use of P1 SNSA information. In responses to this Review, local authorities described their attitudes and approaches:

We have created guidance regarding administration and use of SNSAs. Schools are aware that SNSAs are not designed to be used as a test for achievement of a level. The results from the standardised assessments will provide an additional source of nationally consistent information to inform teachers' professional judgement, both when planning next steps and when considering whether children have achieved Curriculum for Excellence levels. Guidance for schools - the information gathered through standardised assessments should be used as part of a suite of information to inform learning and teaching. Standardised assessments can provide a detailed breakdown of a child's ability in literacy and numeracy. Together with assessments from day to day learning and other assessment tasks or activities, standardised assessments can provide a detailed picture of children's progress.

(East Dunbartonshire, survey)

As an authority, we regularly gather and analyse pupil progress at all stages, based on teacher professional judgement. We are then able to analyse any correlations between teachers' professional judgements and the outcome of the SNSA. This then prompts professional discussion between the authority and school leaders, which in turn prompts professional dialogue between school leaders and classroom practitioners. As an authority, this gives an additional layer of data for professionals to analyse together to ensure a robust approach to assessment, moderation, tracking and monitoring. (West Lothian, survey)

The P1 SNSA data is embedded in a broader understanding of how evidence is used to inform teacher professional judgements about learning and teaching and to support school improvement.

7.6 In summary

As Gayle Gorman points out in her Foreword to the *National Thematic Inspection Report*, 2018:

... there is a careful balance to be struck between providing the right amount of governance and accountability while at the same time allowing leaders and practitioners flexibility and autonomy to meet their pupils' needs. (Gorman, 2018)

This Independent Review has considered how Scottish Government might best strike such a balance in respect of the P1 SNSA. Overall, the Review has been impressed with the commitment of teachers, headteachers and local authorities to the children and families they serve. The Review has outlined the current situation with respect to the use and implementation of P1 SNSA. As one local authority leader puts it:

We need to be able to say 'here's where we are'. We need to understand as a country where we are. We're all accountable. We can't allow our children not to experience the best learning and teaching. (Interview, [redacted], West Lothian)

It is clear to the Review that P1 SNSA has a place in informing consistent and effective assessment practice. It has potential, but has not yet completed its second year of implementation, and indeed much of the evidence drawn on for this Review has been from only one year. The SNSA assessment process is founded on self-review and making changes as a result. It has to be acknowledged that the assessment is still in the early stages of implementation and that there is still work to be done and discussions to be held. As one local authority put it:

Whilst we did receive more comments about P1 SNSA than for SNSA at any other stage during session 2017-18, we feel that highlighted issues that could be resolved and improved upon through dialogue and ongoing

improvement, rather than on issues of principle about the validity of conducting standardised testing at this stage. (Aberdeenshire, LA survey)

The P1 Practitioner Forum has already made a valuable contribution to the debate about the usefulness of P1 SNSA. It has also made sound recommendations for the future of the assessments and has given P1 practitioners an opportunity to voice their professional concerns. This Forum should be continued in order to advise the Scottish Government, ACER and practitioner communities on the continuing implementation, development and use of SNSA in P1 classrooms.

Conclusions

P1 SNSA has potential to play a significant role in informing and enhancing teachers' professional judgement. However, some important issues remain to be addressed including the view from some teachers and headteachers that introduction of the P1 SNSA undervalues professionalism.

Questions remain about the purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national and local authority level and how the P1 SNSA will contribute to narrowing the poverty related attainment gap.

Most local authorities have for some years used standardised assessments at P1. It should be made clear what the advantages of SNSA are over other standardised assessments that have previously been in general use.

At the moment, there can be little comparability of aggregated P1 SNSA data beyond the class or school.

Leadership at school and local authority level is crucial to the success of the effective implementation of P1 SNSA.

The P1 Practitioner Forum has played an important role in allowing professional debate about the usefulness and administration of the P1 SNSA.

Recommendations

Scottish Government

Retain the P1 SNSA to inform professional judgements about learning and teaching but address the recommendations which address the key issues identified by this Review.

Ensure that the purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national and local authority level is made clear in Government documentation and clarify how the P1 SNSA will contribute to narrowing the poverty related attainment gap.

Retain the P1 Practitioner Forum to offer advice and support to teachers, schools, local authorities, Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

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Acknowledgements

Schools visited

Cardross primary school, Argyll and Bute

Corpus Christi primary school, Glasgow

Dunbar primary school, East Lothian

Gourock primary School, Inverclyde

Millersneuk primary school, East Dunbartonshire

Muckhart primary school, Clackmannanshire

Raploch primary school, Stirling

Tarbolton primary School, South Ayrshire

St Anthony's primary school, Renfrewshire,

St Benedicts primary school, Glasgow

Victoria Park Primary School, Dundee

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Stakeholders

ACER - Juliette Mendelovits and Helen Claydon

Children in Scotland – Amy Woodhouse

Connect - Eileen Prior

Early Years Scotland - Jean Carwood-Edwards and Jane Brumpton

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GTC Scotland - Ken Muir

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Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All 100%

Almost all 91%-99%

Most 75%-90%

Majority 50%-74%

Minority/less than half 15%-49%

A few less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

Independent Review of the Scottish National Standardised Assessments at Primary 1

David Reedy

DRAFT

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Introduction: Scottish National Standardised Assessments and the remit of P1 SNSA Review

The Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) were introduced in 2017 – 18 as part of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education. These assessments are designed to provide a standard set of information of some aspects of literacy and numeracy attainment of children in P1, P4, P7 and S3.

The rationale for the introduction of SNSA has been outlined by the Scottish government in its response to The Education and Skills Committee Inquiry concerning Scottish National Standardised Assessments (see https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf)

As part of the development of the NIF, the Scottish Government decided to discontinue the previous national survey, the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN), and replace it with a census-based approach predicated on teachers' professional judgement. The Achievement of CfE Levels Return (not the Scottish National Standardised Assessment) is the replacement for the SSLN. Data is collected from schools each June detailing the proportion of children in P1, P4, P7 and S3 who have achieved the relevant Curriculum for Excellence level. This ACEL data is published each December. The achievement of a level judgements provide data from every child and every classroom, rather than the sample approach used by SSLN.

The Scottish Government argued that this new approach has a number of significant advantages over the SSLN which again are outlined in the submission to the Education and Skills Committee:

- It empowers teachers, placing primacy on their professional judgement as the key indicator of children's progress prior to national qualifications.
- It looks across the full CfE level not just elements of each level and determines whether a child or young person has achieved that level.
- It embeds the primary method of assessing the standard of Scottish education within the curriculum. A teacher's professional judgement on whether a child or young person has achieved a level is based on a range of evidence from a number of sources and potentially over a number of years.
- It aligns to systems that schools and local authorities already have in place to monitor and track each individual child or young person's progress within and between CfE levels.
- It provides annual data at school and local authority level and data which is broken down by pupil characteristics, allowing school and local authority staff

to analyse their own data for improvement purposes. National level data also contributes to national improvement planning.

- It provides annual data on both literacy and numeracy rather than every two years and it includes an additional stage, Primary 1, that was not covered by the SSLN.
- The results can be published and used for improvement purposes more quickly, within 6 months of the data being collected. SSLN results were generally published 11 months after the survey took place.
- It reflects the OECD's endorsement that "an assessment system that encompasses a variety of assessment evidence, that includes rich tasks and a clear indication of expected benchmarks referenced to the breadth and depth of the curriculum, can enhance teachers' assessment skills and learners' progress.

(Education and Skills Committee, Scottish National Standardised Assessments Inquiry to assess the evidence base and the alternative approaches. Submission from the Scottish Government, 2018:2-3)
https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf Accessed April 2019

As part of the process for supporting teachers' professional judgement and ensuring consistency across schools and local authorities in Scotland, the Scottish Government has taken a number of steps. These include:

- the publication of literacy and numeracy National Benchmarks to support practitioners when making decisions of children's progress between levels and achievement of a level;
- the Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) programme and the development of a National Moderation Hub available to practitioners via GLOW.
- the introduction of the Scottish National Standardised Assessment (SNSA) to bring an element of national consistency to teachers' judgements, but also to provide a local and classroom perspective.

The Scottish Government argued that these elements are an essential part of the process of developing a consistent national system in line with the OECD report (2011) which points out that curriculum, instruction and assessment are interdependent, so is important for a government to clearly define education standards aligned with the curriculum.

The National Benchmarks are designed to ensure that the SNSA can be tightly focused on clear standards and objectives and thus inform teachers' professional judgements about whether those standards have been achieved in the areas that are assessed through the standardised assessments. The Scottish Government noted that

a range of standardised assessments, amongst a variety of other assessment tools, were already in use by schools in almost all local authorities. However, none of these tools was specific to Curriculum for Excellence. In short SNSA, including in P1, should be seen in the broader context of the development and implementation of the National Improvement Framework.

Independent Review of SNSA in P1

The Australian Council for Educational Research International United Kingdom (ACER UK), a wholly owned subsidiary of ACER group, which is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1930, was contracted by the Scottish Government in October 2016 to implement and deliver the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) across all publicly funded schools in Scotland.

The Scottish National Standardised Assessments were introduced nationally in August 2017 for the academic year 2017-18. Towards the end of the academic year, concerns about the implementation of SNSA, particularly in P1, began to be reported, including by the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS). As a result, a debate took place in the Scottish Parliament which questioned the continuation of the use of SNSA in P1. In order to address these concerns, the Scottish Government commissioned an Independent Review.

Remit of the Review:

The Review will consider and provide recommendations on the following issues:

- the compatibility of the assessments with the play-based approach to early level of CfE;
- the alignment of the assessments to the Benchmarks for early level;
- the effect of taking an on-line assessment on P1 children;
- the usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers and how it supports their professional judgement;
- the implications of the Review for the ongoing development of the national Gaelic Medium Education standardised assessments; and
- the future of the assessments considering in particular whether they continue in line with the current continuous improvement model, whether they be substantially modified, or whether they should be stopped.

Scope of the Independent Review

From January to March 2019, the Independent Review visited schools to observe the SNSA being undertaken, interviewed headteachers, deputes and P1 teachers, stakeholders, Local Authority staff and HMI, and looked at relevant documentation. In addition, the Review sought evidence through anonymous surveys completed by Local authorities, headteachers and P1 teachers. It also took account of the conclusions of the P1 Practitioner Forum and the ACER User Reviews. During the course of the Review, other issues arose which were not specified in the remit from Scottish Government: the purpose of the P1 SNSA; the use of the P1 SNSA data for school improvement purposes, and the challenges associated with implementation of the assessment. These are included in the Review report.

Evidence was gathered for each of the following areas:

- The purpose and administration of the P1 SNSA.
- The compatibility of the assessments with the play-based approach to early level of CfE, including the effect of taking an on-line assessment on P1 children.
- The usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers to support professional judgements and specifically to inform National Benchmark judgements.
- The use of the P1 SNSA data for school improvement purposes.
- The challenges of using the P1 SNSA.
- The implementation of national Gaelic Medium Education standardised assessments.
- The future of the P1 SNSA.

Coverage

Local authorities, headteachers and P1 teachers were interviewed and invited to complete an anonymous survey¹. The Review visited schools to observe the P1 SNSA being undertaken and interviewed staff involved. Stakeholders, particularly those who had sent submissions to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry, were interviewed to explore their opinions and concerns. A dedicated email address was established for general responses and the Review attended two sessions of the P1 Practitioner Forum held at Strathclyde University. In addition, the Review attended familiarisation sessions with the P1 SNSA and a training session, and interviewed staff from ACER, the assessment developers.

These sources of evidence, scrutiny of relevant documentation and reviews of recent research into key themes, were used to gather evidence for the Independent Review. The conclusions are summarised in the remainder of this report under the headings above. Each section includes an overarching narrative, key conclusions and recommendations based on evidence from observations, interviews, surveys and documentation.

¹ Throughout this Review references to headteachers, teachers and others relate to those who participated in the interviews and surveys.

Participants in the Independent Review

Number (approx.)	Participants
142	P1 teachers
131	Headteachers and deposes
21	Local authorities
10	HMI and Education Scotland staff
20	Stakeholders and responders to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry
324	Total

The Independent Review was carried out by David Reedy, formerly Co-Director of the Cambridge Primary Review Trust, Past President of the United Kingdom Literacy Association and Principal Advisor for Primary Schools, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, assisted by Dr Eve Bearne, formerly of The University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

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Executive summary

This summarises the Conclusions reached in the areas covered by the Review.

The Independent Review identifies the primary purpose of the P1 SNSA as informing teachers' professional judgements about learning and teaching. P1 SNSA is a formative assessment which can inform summative judgements such as ACEL. However, it is not, and cannot be, in itself summative, as it only assesses part of the early level CfE and only forms part of the toolkit a teacher draws on to make professional judgements. P1 SNSA information does not have the capacity to perform a summative function on its own. As part of teachers' professional judgements the P1 SNSA offers a useful standard element within the overall evidence to inform judgements about learning and teaching. Results are calibrated against aspects of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, standardised on a Scottish population of children of the appropriate age, and can guard against unconscious positive or negative bias in relation to specific assessment criteria.

In administration of the P1 SNSA in schools, the level of support given to children varies widely and the assessment is carried out at different times of the school year, so that it is currently difficult to draw conclusions from aggregated data beyond the class or school. Despite concerns expressed about P1 SNSA data being used for high stakes purposes, the Review has not found any evidence that Benchmarks or P1 SNSA data are currently being used to set targets, make comparisons between schools, including league tables, or for teacher appraisal, nor that there are any plans to do so. The fact that there is flexibility in the timing of administering the P1 SNSA guards against information being aggregated to compare school performance.

There have been criticisms of the P1 SNSA on the grounds that it does not fit with a play-based pedagogy. Some argue that there should be no formal education before the age of 7; whilst these are genuine and committed views, they do not align with the current educational arrangements in Scotland. A small number of headteachers and teachers have also commented that the P1 SNSA does not fit with a play-based pedagogy but it seems that there are confusions between a 'moment of assessment' and a pedagogical approach. There are strong examples of schools where headteachers and teachers operate a play-based approach and find no incompatibility between that and the P1 SNSA.

There is scant evidence of children becoming upset when taking the P1 SNSA. However, there is evidence that the context for the assessments, including headteachers' and teachers' attitudes, makes a difference to children's assurance when undertaking the P1 SNSA.

Although survey and interview evidence shows that a majority of teachers and headteachers see the value of the P1 SNSA to support professional judgements about learning, teaching and assessment, a small number of others preferred more familiar

assessment processes. Of those opposed to the P1 SNSA and those who expressed more ambivalent views, almost all had not received training. In contrast, those who responded positively had all received training. There are, however, concerns about the administration of the assessments and the length of the P1 literacy SNSA specifically. The length of the P1 literacy SNSA gives rise to concerns about whether the results obtained for some children are reliable. In addition, it is not clear to some stakeholders how well the P1 literacy SNSA aligns with the Benchmarks for early level.

The Review has also revealed concerns about the time and staffing needed to administer the P1 SNSA and technological difficulties in carrying it out. However, some headteachers and teachers have found ways to overcome the challenges of technology involved in administering the P1 SNSA through careful planning, focused teaching and managed sharing of technology, although this is not always easy or straightforward, especially in bigger schools. Supporting children at P1 with ASN or EAL to undertake the SNSA can be challenging, needing sensible professional decisions about individual children's capability to undergo the assessment. However, the guidance offered about accessibility and administration of the P1 SNSA is comprehensive and clear about supporting children with ASN and EAL. In terms of reporting P1 SNSA data to parents/carers, the Review has found that headteachers often make it part of more holistic discussions of progress, as it is only one element of the assessment information gathered in schools.

Almost all the local authorities that responded to the Independent Review surveys have provided some training to implement the P1 SNSA. The Review did not specifically seek information about moderation but this has emerged as an important element of embedding and sustaining professional learning in relation to P1 SNSA and its place in informing professional judgements.

Teachers, schools and local authorities have identified ways in which P1 SNSA data can usefully inform elements of school improvement although they understand that P1 SNSA data only covers certain aspects of literacy and numeracy learning. P1 SNSA information, therefore, has the potential to be part of useful evidence for broader school improvement purposes. A minority of headteachers and teachers take a negative view of the value of the P1 SNSA to provide useful data to support school improvement in comparison to previous standardised assessments used in many local authorities. However, there is a relationship between understanding how P1 SNSA information can be used for school improvement purposes and attendance at training sessions focused on data analysis beyond the individual pupil.

It is the opinion of the Review that the national Gaelic Medium Education Standardised Assessment (MCMG) will avoid some of the difficulties encountered by the SNSA in its first iteration. Care has been taken to communicate with parents/carers, schools, local authorities and the Gaelic sector throughout the development of the assessments. The P1 MCMG has been robustly trialled and will

not be as lengthy as the literacy P1 SNSA and there is no reason for it not to be implemented.

The Review finds that P1 SNSA has potential to play a significant role in informing and enhancing teachers' professional judgements and should be continued with modification and safeguards against a drift towards high stakes. However, some important issues remain to be addressed including the view from some teachers and headteachers that introduction of the P1 SNSA undervalues professionalism. The P1 Practitioner Forum has played an important role in allowing professional debate about the usefulness and administration of the P1 SNSA.

Questions also remain about the purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national and local authority level and how the P1 SNSA will contribute to narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. The advantages of SNSA over other previously used standardised assessments should be made clear. At the moment, there can be little comparability of aggregated P1 SNSA data beyond the class or school and, therefore, this needs to be clarified and emphasised through the development of a Code of Practice clearly stating what SNSA data in P1 should productively be used for and what it should not. This should then be used as the basis for agreement in every school about the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA data. Leadership at school and local authority level is crucial to the success of the effective implementation of P1 SNSA and this will best be achieved through a clear and irrefutable statement of the purpose and uses of P1 SNSA data.

The Review would like to record gratitude to all children, teachers, headteachers, local authority officers and other stakeholders who have given their time in interviews and completing surveys.

Recommendations

1. The purpose and administration of the P1 SNSA.

That Scottish Government

- 1.1 Provide a detailed rationale for P1 SNSA setting out the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA at individual, class, school, local authority and national levels. This should include a statement that the intention of P1 SNSA data is solely focused on informing learning and teaching and will not be used for accountability purposes now or in the future.
- 1.2 Bring together stakeholders to develop a practical framework/Code of Practice which sets out what SNSA data in P1 should productively be used for and what it should not, including a statement about purpose. This framework should then be used as the basis for agreement in every school about the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA data. This should be publicised nationally and a copy sent to all schools and P1 teachers.
- 1.3 Provide clear guidance, along the lines of the guidance offered about administering the P1 SNSA with ASN and EAL children, on the level of support which can be given to P1 children as they undertake the assessments.
- 1.4 Continue with the flexible arrangements about the timing of the P1 SNSA.
- 1.5 Refrain from drawing any general conclusions from aggregated P1 SNSA data until there is evidence of consistent administration. P1 SNSA data should not be used to make comparisons between schools or local authorities.
- 1.6 In consultation with Headteachers, agree how P1 SNSA data will inform Quality Assurance conversations within the context of all the other data pertaining to the performance of schools. This should be based on the practical framework/Code of Practice recommended in 1.1.

That local authorities

- 1.6 In consultation with Headteachers, agree how P1 SNSA data will inform Quality Assurance conversations within the context of all the other data pertaining to the performance of schools. This should be based on the practical framework/Code of Practice as recommended above to Scottish Government. P1 SNSA data should not be used to make comparisons between schools or local authorities.
- 1.7 Refrain from drawing any general conclusions from aggregated P1 SNSA data until there is evidence of consistent administration.

2. The compatibility of the assessments with the play-based approach to early level of CfE and the effect of taking an online assessment on P1 children.

That Scottish Government

2.1 Continue to develop guidance and examples of the ways in which a play-based approach to learning and teaching can accommodate administration of the P1 SNSA.

2.2 Develop specific guidelines about how to use data from P1 SNSA alongside observational and other evidence from play-based activities to support judgements of progress and planning of next steps for learning within a play-based approach.

2.3 Ensure that training in administering the SNSA and relevant documentation re-emphasises the option of stopping the assessment if a child becomes tired, bored or upset.

3. The usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers to support professional judgements and specifically to inform National Benchmark judgements

That Scottish Government

- 3.1 Request that, as part of its development process, ACER review the P1 literacy SNSA to ensure that the items align with the relevant parts of the early level CfE. Attention should be given to the language used in the item descriptors and in the data generated from the assessments so that they are comparable with the language used in the expectations and outcomes and associated Benchmarks for the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. In addition, ACER should involve experienced P1 practitioners in the question development process in order to give feedback on the appropriate level of difficulty, particularly in the P1 Literacy SNSA.
- 3.2 Recommend that one of the additional days of the two additional closure days agreed for 2019-2020 should be used so that all schools, including P1 teachers, can engage in professional learning related to how P1 SNSA information can be used effectively to inform professional judgements and/or moderation activities.
- 3.3 Review the current materials available to ensure that there is easily accessible professional learning support available for school to use on the dedicated closure day and publicise these materials to schools.
- 3.4 Expand the QAMSO programme to support local authorities and school clusters in developing cross school moderation events.

4 The use of the P1 SNSA for school improvement purposes

That Scottish Government

4.4 Produce guidance outlining how P1 SNSA can positively contribute to school improvement including further detailed case studies showing how a range of both urban and rural schools have used P1 SNSA for improvement purposes. This guidance should be accessible online.

4.5 Expand the frequency of professional learning opportunities/training in all local authorities, including face-to-face discussions, which focuses on both the positive use, as well as the limitations, of using P1 SNSA information. This should particularly target senior leaders in schools.

That local authorities

4.6 Expand the frequency of professional learning opportunities already planned, including cluster meetings. Develop bespoke training for P1 teachers and monitor attendance.

5 The challenges of using the P1 SNSA

That Scottish Government

5.1 Continue and extend support to schools for administering the P1 SNSA in terms of time and staffing.

5.2 Develop more guidance for primary schools, particularly larger schools, in managing the technological demands of the P1 SNSA.

5.3 Recommend that, as part of its ongoing review process, ACER reduce the number of items in the P1 literacy SNSA.

5.4 Extend the work of QAMSOs and moderation processes specifically to include special schools and those teachers with responsibility for children with additional support needs and English as an additional language.

5.5 Continue to develop the productive partnership between home and school and include parents/carers in professional conversations about children's progress.

That local authorities

5.6 Extend support and consultation with schools experiencing difficulties in managing the technology and timing of administering the P1 SNSA.

6 The implementation of national Gaelic Medium Education standardised assessments

That Scottish Government

6.1 Proceed with the implementation of the national Gaelic Medium Education Standardised Assessment.

7. The future of the P1 SNSA

That Scottish Government

7.1 Retain the P1 SNSA to inform professional judgements about learning and teaching but address the recommendations which address the key issues identified in this Review, particularly in respect of the P1 literacy SNSA.

7.2 Ensure that the purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national and local authority level is made clear in Government documentation and clarify how the P1 SNSA will contribute to narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. (See also Recommendation 1.10)

7.3 Retain the P1 Practitioner Forum to offer advice and support to teachers, schools, local authorities, Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

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Section One Purpose of P1 SNSA and its role within a broader assessment framework

1.1 What does research say about assessment?

The term ‘assessment’ is used in educational contexts to refer to judgements made by educationalists concerning individual pupil performance and the attainment of defined learning goals. It covers both classroom-based assessment as well as large scale external tests, examinations and standardised tests. As Harlen (2014) points out:

There is an important distinction between assessment and testing even though these terms are sometimes used interchangeably. Testing may be regarded as a method of collecting data for the process of assessment; thus, assessment is a broader term, covering other methods of gathering and interpreting data besides testing.

All assessment of pupils’ achievements involves the generation, interpretation, communication and use of data for some purpose. Any assessment activity will involve: pupils being engaged in some activity; the collection of data from that activity by some agent; the judgement of the data by comparing them with some standard; and some means of describing and communicating that judgement. (Harlen, 2014: 2)

The point about use of the words ‘test’ and ‘assessment’ interchangeably is important in the context of P1 SNSA. It is noticeable that teachers, headteachers and commentators more broadly who responded to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry and to this Review frequently used the term ‘test’, suggesting an incomplete understanding of the broader uses of the P1 SNSA. There is an implication in using ‘test’ that it is matter of pass and fail and therefore high stakes for the individual undertaking the assessment. This Review defines SNSA as an assessment tool, not a test.

1.2 Purposes of assessment

There are four main purposes for assessment:

- to help children while they are learning
- to find out what pupils have learnt at a particular point in time
- to identify any significant problems that individual children might be experiencing or address any causes for concern
- to reflect on the effectiveness of the taught curriculum with groups of pupils against defined goals.

These can be termed *formative or continuous assessment*, *summative* and *diagnostic*. Diagnostic assessment can refer to the identification of specific learning needs for individuals but can also identify areas of the curriculum which need

attention. This dual use of the term can give rise to confusion, particularly where parents/carers are concerned.

1.2.1 Formative assessment

Formative/continuous assessment is commonly called assessment *for* learning. These assessments are designed to monitor children's learning at any stage in the teaching sequence. They give teachers the chance to address gaps in understanding. They also offer opportunities to identify children's strengths and weaknesses and provide feedback that can move learning forward. Formative assessment can also be diagnostic, helping to identify groups of children with common strengths or weaknesses so that more challenging learning and teaching or extra support can be planned for. Formative assessment is a cyclical process in which information is gathered in relation to pupils' progress towards agreed goals. This information is then used to identify the appropriate next steps to maximise learning, and the action needed to take these steps. This includes clear feedback to pupils.

There is a considerable research literature that demonstrates that formative assessment is an essential component of effective learning and teaching (CAN, 2006; Black and Wiliam, 2006; Marshall, 2012; Torrance, 2012; Hargreaves *et al.*, 2018). International commentators to the Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry into SNSA confirm this:

We feel that there is strong evidence of the benefit of using accurate and valid formative assessment information to inform teacher practice, as well as for school planning and evaluative purposes. Dr Craig Jones- New Zealand
https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190125LEAN_New_Zealand.pdf

1.2.2 Summative assessment

Summative assessments can be defined as assessment *of* learning. These assessments are often carried out at the end of a period of teaching: yearly, termly, half termly or more frequently, often informed by tests. Although some summative assessments can be used formatively, they are generally used to monitor and sum up the progress of individuals and groups of children and to identify attainment at specific ages or stages. This information can then be used for reporting purposes. It can help stakeholders keep track of pupils' learning, both individually and as part of certain groups. It can, alongside contextual factors, be used as part of school evaluation and improvement. Some formative assessment information can inform summative judgements.

1.2.3 Diagnostic assessment

Apart from its more technical use in identifying particular children's difficulties with learning, diagnostic assessment usually refers to analysing evidence of the impact of the taught curriculum (and sometimes pedagogical approach) on groups of children against learning goals. It enables the teacher to find out if there are gaps in learning or general misconceptions which then need to be planned for.

Any assessment must comprise collating evidence and weighing it up in the light of specific criteria. Evidence can be observational, collection of examples of work or more formal assessment processes including standardised assessments and tests. The specific criteria might be the teaching objectives for a particular activity, Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Objectives, or National Benchmarks, for example.

In addition, summative assessment data can be used to hold individuals and institutions to account. In her submission evidence to the Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry of SNSA in all relevant year groups, Professor Louise Hayward stated:

Traditionally, assessment systems serve three main purposes: to inform learning, to sum up learning over time and to hold people to account. Assessment information gathered about the past is only helpful if it informs future action that leads to improvement. Children are not data – they are not numbers. They are people with lives and futures that depend on successful learning relationships. Learning must be our principal concern.

(https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Meeting%20Papers/20190123ES_Meeting_papers.pdf)

Key points here are that individuals and institutions should be held to account because children's futures matter and that assessment is about ensuring children make the best progress possible. As one headteacher interviewed for the Independent Review pointed out:

I am accountable. I should be accountable. (Headteacher, [redacted], interview)

1.3 Validity and reliability of P1 SNSA data

Any standardised assessment needs to be valid and reliable if it is to be dependable and give rise to usable data. *Validity* of an assessment is defined in terms of how well what is assessed corresponds to the learning outcomes that it is intended to assess (Gardner, 2012; Stobart, 2012). One form of validity is *consequential validity*; the validity of an assessment tool is reduced if inferences drawn on the basis of the results are not justified (Gielen *et al.*, 2003). For example, an assessment of word decoding skills may be perfectly valid as an assessment of decoding but not valid if it used to make a judgement about reading ability more generally. The *reliability* of an assessment refers to the extent to which the results can be said to be of acceptable consistency for a particular use (Hall and Burke, 2003; Black and Wiliam, 2012, Verhavert *et al.*, 2019). Reliability can be reduced if, for instance, the outcomes are dependent on who conducts the assessment or if the assessment is administered where some groups of children are offered more support than others. Reliability is measured by the extent to which the same result would occur if it were repeated.

There have been significant criticisms of the reliability and validity of P1 SNSA. The EIS have stated: ‘The question of assessment validity is highly pertinent to the continuing debate around P1 SNSAs.’ (EIS, 2018: 3)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181214EIS_Submission_Final.pdf

The evidence provided to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry and to this Review by Professor Lindsay Paterson focused particularly on validity of the SNSA, mentioning P1 SNSA specifically. Professor Paterson surveyed key documents provided by Education Scotland and ACER. He concluded that the validity of the assessments was secure with reliability at least satisfactory. He shows that the SNSA were developed paying close attention to specific details of the curriculum. Validity of assigning specific assessment tasks to the curricular headings in the Curriculum for Excellence was judged as secure by experts in literacy and numeracy from Education Scotland and beyond. He comments:

Thus the relevance of the tests to the curriculum was judged by the same kinds of professional committees as constructed the curriculum in the first place. If the tests are suspect because of how they were developed, then so is the curriculum. (Paterson, 2018)

<https://reformscotland.com/2018/11/scottish-national-standardised-assessments-professor-lindsay-paterson/>

In his evidence to the Education Committee inquiry, Professor Paterson also points out that the SNSA is:

... already giving reasonably reliable information, even for Primary 1 pupils. Contrary to the fears of their critics, this psychometric evidence suggests that it is possible to assess pupils in ways that are relevant to the curriculum and that produce results that can be broadly trusted.

Commenting on the link between the SNSA, the curriculum and the Scottish context, he continues:

A significant advantage of SNSAs over the standardised assessments commonly in use by many local authorities before the advent of the SNSA suffered from two disadvantages:

(a) They were not based as closely on the Scottish curriculum as the SNSA, whose development has been monitored by the same types of committees of teachers and other educational professionals as produced the curriculum in the first place. The basis in the curriculum strengthens the validity of the SNSA.

(b) The results of these previous systems of assessment were not statistically standardised on any representative group of Scottish pupils. (Paterson, 2018: 1-2)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181206Professor_Lindsay_Paterson.pdf

1.3.1 Unconscious bias

When considering the importance of a national assessment system and its reliability and validity, it is important to remember that the use of standardised assessments can mitigate teachers' unconscious bias.

Hall and Sheehy (2018) point out that:

Assessing learning is not a neutral or value free activity. It is always bound up with attitudes, values, beliefs and sometimes prejudices, on the part of those carrying out the assessments and on the part of those being assessed. (Hall and Sheehy, 2018: 288)

Similarly, Professor Paterson raises the significant point that:

Teacher judgements are – with the best will in the world – not so reliable as standardised assessments. The reason is that teachers (at all levels, from pre-school to university) inevitably are biased towards optimism and towards the level of attainment that is officially expected of the students in their class. Evidence about the extent of this understandable bias was found by the Scottish Survey of Achievement (the predecessor to the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy). Standardised assessments provide a useful reality check, allowing teachers to calibrate their own judgements against independent criteria. (Paterson, 2018: 1-2)

This is confirmed by the Educational Endowment Foundation in its summary of effective assessment processes:

When we assess a piece of work from a child that we know well, our bias emerges. Perhaps we know they can perform better than the piece in front of us, subconsciously prompting us to raise the mark. Even if the work is assessed anonymously, the existing evidence shows that bias is exhibited against pupils with SEN, those whose behaviour is challenging, those for whom English is an additional language, and those on Free School Meals. Assessment judgments can often be overly-lenient, overly-harsh or, indeed, can reinforce stereotypes, such as boys being perceived as better than girls at mathematics.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/assessing-and-monitoring-pupil-progress/improving-teacher-assessment/>

Standardised assessments can reduce bias:

... by removing much of the variation inherent in assessments administered by humans. Those which are delivered by computers (and don't use human

marking) can reduce bias considerably, and increase the reliability and objectivity of the assessment process. (*ibid.*)

1.4 Issues with standardisation, validity and reliability in respect of the P1 SNSA

The use of the term ‘standardised’ has led to some confusion amongst stakeholders and educationalists. A minority of headteachers’ and teachers’ responses to the surveys and interviews questioned the ‘standardised’ nature of the SNSA, particularly how the assessments have been administered in different schools:

We are not sure that these are as standardised as indicated as they are not administered in the same way in schools and schools take them at different times in the year. (Headteacher, Dundee, interview)

It isn't a standardised assessment – it can't be if children do it at different times of the year – how can you make comparisons between schools and use it nationally as a snapshot? (Headteacher, Renfrewshire, interview)

Having talked to friends in other local authorities after completing the assessments, I know that we all carried out and supported the children in different ways. Therefore, I struggle to see how it can be seen as a standardised assessment. (P1 teacher, survey)

In its submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Connect, an organisation that represents parents’ views on education in Scotland, expressed concern about the timing and adaptability of SNSA:

... the scheme as it has been introduced into Scotland is not standardised in any way. Indeed, Government has declared that tests should be administered when the teacher feels the time is right, though we know that in many local authority areas the approach has been ‘standardised’ so that all the cohort are tested in a specific time window. The assessment also adapts to the aptitude of the learner, which on one hand means the child is not left to struggle against a task beyond their ability, however it also means the assessment cannot be described as standardised. (Connect, December, 2018: point 4)

However, these comments indicate an incomplete understanding of what standardisation entails. To understand the results of a standardised assessment for a particular child it is necessary to have a range of results across all pupils for comparison. Put simply, that is what ‘standardisation’ means. As Professor Lindsay Paterson comments, the purpose of the P1 SNSA ‘... is to try to make sure that pupils are being judged by standards that might reasonably be expected of children of that age who are following this curriculum (Paterson, blog, 2018)

<https://reformscotland.com/2018/11/scottish-national-standardised-assessments-professor-lindsay-paterson/>

Thus, the process of standardisation ensures that ‘the expectations of what pupils might achieve is realistic for pupils going through Scottish schools today’ (*ibid.*).

(See also ACER User Report, 2018 p.3 paras 1, 4 and 16, for example).

<file:///C:/Users/Windows%2010/Documents/Attached2/Scotland/Use%20these/Use%20this%20User%20report%202018.pdf>

Norming studies are part of the process of standardisation to ensure coverage of the range and type of conceptual understanding demonstrated typically across a ‘band’ of standardised scores by pupils in Scotland in P1. (*ibid.* p.16 para 81)

Therefore, the criticisms cited above are not actually about standardisation but about reliability. The comments indicate a concern regarding reliability, pointing to the issue that teachers administering SNSA in P1 are offering different levels of support to children as they take the assessments, particularly in literacy. This was confirmed during the Independent Review’s direct observations of the assessments being implemented across different schools where there were differences in the levels of support given. Teachers administering the assessments within schools were consistent in the way they helped children complete them, but administration seems inconsistent across schools. If there were any intention to make comparisons between schools using the SNSA data, then lack of consistency in offering support to pupils becomes problematic. Unless consistency of implementation is achieved, aggregation of data beyond individual schools would not meet criteria for reliability.

Another aspect of the implementation of P1 assessments which acts against the reliable comparability of data sets is that the assessments can be taken at any point in the school year, not during set assessment ‘windows’. As Education Scotland in its submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry states:

It is for schools, in consultation with their local authority, to decide when children and young people should undertake the assessments. (Education Scotland, 2018:6)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf

Although evidence gathered for this Review indicates that the majority of P1 SNSA assessments are being taken at specific times agreed between schools and local authorities, this is not the case across all schools nor is there any guarantee that it will continue in this way in the future. Such perceptions can undermine the confidence of professionals in using the data for its intended purposes. Schools have some flexibility in deciding when to administer P1 SNSA with individuals or with groups of children. This flexibility supports the principle of teachers making the key judgement about appropriate timing of P1 SNSA where it will be most effective in informing learning and teaching decisions. Although there are in some cases agreements between local authorities and schools about timing of the assessments, these ‘windows’ have some scope for openness. The Review regards such flexibility as a valuable part of a teacher’s assessment toolkit.

Although there are guidelines to support administration of SNSA for children with additional support needs or English as an additional language, headteacher and teacher survey responses suggested a need for more explicit guidance about the level of support which might be offered in mainstream situations:

These [SNSAs] are not standardised in the sense that schools can use them whenever they like, support varies from school to school in the conditions of the assessments. (Headteacher, survey)

Some guidelines as to the level of support is needed as some colleagues at other schools administered the test in various ways and with different levels of guidance and support. (P1 teacher, survey)

I would like clearer guidance about how they should be conducted. I don't know if this was the fault in the local authority delivery or nationally, but there seems to be a lot of discrepancies between local authorities in terms of how they were presented to the children, how they were carried out and then how this was shared with parents. (P1 teacher, survey)

1.5 Concerns about high stakes testing

Section 1.2 sets out the key purposes for using assessment data. However, assessment data can have a negative impact when what is assessed only focuses upon what can be assessed easily, exacerbated by attaching rewards and punishments to the results within an overall accountability system. In this approach, targets for improvement in test scores are set externally and teachers and schools monitored systematically in their progress toward those targets. This creates a 'high stakes' assessment process, putting considerable pressure on teachers to increase results, which is then transferred to pupils. This can have a negative impact on learning and teaching as Harlen points out:

Research shows that when this happens, teachers focus teaching on the test content, train pupils in how to pass tests and feel impelled to adopt teaching styles which do not match what is needed to develop real understanding. Initially this effort increases test scores but soon level off as the effect degrades. Then the results become meaningless in terms of intended learning. (Harlen, 2014:9)

In a high stakes context, not only are the results meaningless for pedagogy but also meaningless for accountability purposes when judging the effectiveness of the system as a whole, schools and individual teachers.

Some respondents to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry regarding SNSA were concerned that, although the Scottish Government have given assurances to the contrary, there would be a drift towards 'high stakes' uses. The organisation Children in Scotland commented:

The new standardised assessments appear to present a pathway to ‘high stakes’ testing that move away from the broad educational ambitions of *Curriculum for Excellence* and the *Getting it Right for Every Child* approach. (CiS, 2018: 2)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181219Children_in_Scotland.pdf

In their submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Upstart Scotland, a charitable organisation dedicated, amongst other aims, to establish a statutory play-based ‘kindergarten stage’ for Scottish children, expressed concerns that:

[T]he linking of assessments to performance targets also raises the stakes significantly for schools and teachers. In Scotland, aspirational ‘benchmarks’ for children’s educational performance were published to accompany the SNSAs. These are, not surprisingly, interpreted as targets. Along with advice to teachers that ‘there is no need to provide curriculum level judgements in all curriculum areas – stick to literacy and numeracy’, the benchmarks will exacerbate the ‘salience effect’ and ‘teaching to the test’. (Upstart Scotland, 2018:1)

However, Scottish Government points out that SNSA was not designed for accountability purposes:

no school or local authority level data is published. Some national level SNSA is published to provide the overall picture of achievement in the assessments and to inform national improvement activity. The Scottish Government does not publish school league tables. (Scottish Government, 2018: 5)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf

In addition, the Scottish Government’s submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry quotes the Scottish Government’s International Council of Education Providers (ICEA) in its 2018 formal report in June 2018:

The ICEA initially expressed reservations about the introduction of these assessments and shared their views with the Scottish Government. The ICEA notes however, that the assessments are not ‘high stakes tests’ and the results do not determine any key future outcomes for young people, such as which school they go to, or whether they can progress to the next level. There is no pass or fail, and the ICEA notes that this approach to assessment and its central interpretation can be of formative use.

At the subsequent meeting of the ICEA in September 2018, Dr Allison Skerrett (from the University of Texas, Austin) speaking on behalf of the Council said that Scotland had carefully designed the assessments, their modes of delivery and their purpose. She said that Scotland has a real opportunity to be a model

for other systems that have employed standardised assessments. (ICEA, 2018: 7-8)

Nevertheless, in interview for this Review, one headteacher explained that she was concerned about the use of data and about league tables:

What terrifies me is that where the Scottish Government is doing is opposite to what CfE is meant to be. There's been a storm on Twitter about SNSA being seen as high stakes. (Headteacher, Clackmannanshire, interview)

Another commented:

If SNSAs were published I would be dismayed. If they publish my ACEL I am happy for that. (Headteacher, [redacted], interview)

In a similar vein, a QAMSO explained:

I think there is still a worry amongst some teachers that Scottish Government is collecting the data – even though it can't be used like that. Twitter and Facebook chatter just makes it worse. It's important to get the message to everybody. (QAMSO, Argyll and Bute)

No local authority responding to the surveys or interviews indicated that there was any use of P1 SNSA data to make judgements about individual school effectiveness.

Comprehensive national assessments on their own do not in themselves improve learning and teaching. In her submission to the Education Committee, Professor Claire Wyatt-Smith cited evidence from Australia showing that since the introduction of a national writing assessment in Australia, standards of writing had actually fallen (Wyatt-Smith and Jackson, 2016). There is also a connection between the fall in standards and a lack of teacher knowledge about how to link teaching, learning and assessment (Wyatt-Smith *et al.*, 2017). Any national assessments, therefore, are only part of a system which can inform quality learning and effective teaching. A standardised assessment in itself will not improve performance; while assessment information can be useful, it will not raise standards unless teachers understand how to use it.

The OECD report (Morris, 2011) also pointed out the dangers of only using the data from standardised assessments to inform decision making because they do not provide a full picture of what children can do or the effectiveness of classroom teaching:

“Only multiple measures of achievement can provide an accurate picture of student learning and school success,” writes Guilfoyle (2006: 1). Employing multiple evaluation measures – including incorporating non-test information into decision-making – reduces the risk of making incorrect decisions as a result of the limitations of standardised test scores, improves the validity of

the system, and reduces the likelihood of excessive narrowing of curriculum (Hamilton and Stecher, 2002). (Morris 2011: 44)

It should be noted that some academics have praised the careful construction of a framework for national assessment which is not high stakes. Hall and Sheehy (2018) comment that the assessments available to Scottish schools:

crucially ... are not, because there is not an emphasis on ranking and comparing. Performance tables are not compiled and published. (Hall and Sheehy, 2018: 296)

Moss (2017) argues that:

[T]he architecture of high stakes testing needs to be dismantled. Other methods should be used to explain to parents how schools are extending pupils' capacities and capabilities through their teaching. There are precedents we can learn from. Scotland in particular has invested much more in trying to make such a model work. (Moss, 2017: 63)

In summary, any assessment and its process must be clear about what it is going to assess, what purpose the assessment serves and the uses to which the assessment data will be put. If assessment information is used for 'high stakes' accountability it has a negative effect on learning and teaching and should therefore not be used in this way but be part of overall information to inform future action for system improvement.

1.6 Intended purposes and use of P1 SNSA data

In its submission to the Education Committees inquiry into SNSA the Scottish Government stated that the SNSA is:

... a unique assessment system that has been specifically designed for the Scottish context. The SNSA is a diagnostic, supportive assessment that is designed to improve children's learning, giving teachers helpful feedback on children's next steps in aspects of reading, writing and numeracy. This is fundamentally different to other models of standardised assessment which are about 'proving' learning, with results being published. Information from SNSA supports teachers' professional judgement of the progress that children and young people are making towards the relevant Curriculum for Excellence level. That judgement is reached based on all the evidence available to teachers – the SNSA is just one, nationally consistent, element of that evidence.

The SNSA involves:

- Formative assessments, the key purpose of which is to provide diagnostic information to teachers on aspects of literacy and numeracy. This helps the teacher to shape teaching and learning and to support their judgements about children and young people's progress.

- Online, adaptive assessments meaning that the difficulty of the questions that children and young people get will vary depending on the answers they give to ensure an appropriate level of challenge.
- Not designed to provide a definitive assessment to confirm whether a child has or has not achieved the appropriate level. Instead, they are indicative and just one source of evidence that a teacher may call on in exercising their professional judgment as to whether a child has achieved a level. (Scottish Government. 2018: 5-6)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf

Gayle Gorman, HM Chief Inspector of Education, on behalf of Education Scotland, outlined the purposes of SNSA in Education Scotland's submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry. These were identified at individual child, group, school and local authority level. SNSA data can:

- Be used as part of a range of evidence to support teachers' professional judgement on the progress of each child.
- Support the identification of key strengths in a child's progress and identify next steps. They are designed to be used formatively.
- Practitioners can look at the data, identify any general patterns in the areas in which groups of children are doing well or need support and can adjust their teaching.
- SNSA information should not be the only source of information for decisions about individual or groups of learners. The SNSA contributes towards a range of assessment information which teachers draw on to develop next steps in learning and determine progress within a level and achievement of a level. No decision about a learner would be made on the basis of their SNSA assessment alone.
- A school can use the data as part of the information to identify the areas which are being taught well and the areas in which children are not doing so well and can organise whole school professional development in these areas.
- Local Authorities can use SNSA information to help identify effective practice to disseminate as well as possible areas for LA wide professional learning (See Sections Three and Four).
- At a national level SNSA information could be used to inform the development and maintenance of support and professional learning.

(Gorman, 2018 paras. 19 – 22)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190104Education_Scotland.pdf

The above statements set out a comprehensive set of purposes for SNSA assessments, including at P1, with their tight focus on informing decisions about

learning and teaching, and with formative/diagnostic assessment purposes clearly indicated. In addition, there is acknowledgement that SNSA data can only form part of the evidence drawn on for making professional judgements. However, evidence collected by both this Review and the Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry demonstrates that there is a perception within the system that the purpose of SNSA has not been clear and has changed over time. For example, in their submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, EIS commented:

When first announced by the Government, it was clear that the intention was that they would be a summative measure of children's attainment, applied across the country during the same window of time each year. The influence of the EIS and others persuaded the Government of the value of some forms of standardised assessment for diagnostic purposes, and of the fact that if assessment is to genuinely support the learning of individual children, then whole cohorts and classes of young people should not be undertaking the assessments at the same time. SNSAs were then designed to enable their use at any point in the year, the Government advising that the timing be determined by schools and teachers in consultation with the local authority. (EIS, 2018: 4)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181214EIS_Submission_Final.pdf

The Royal Society of Edinburgh argued that:

The Scottish Government does not have access to the data generated by the SNSAs as this resides with schools and local authorities. Scottish Government has access only to the national level data generated by the assessments. However, clarity about the range of SNSA data that Scottish Government would access came relatively late during the introduction of the assessments, indicating that Scottish Government was for some time unclear on how it intended to access and use the data. This may have contributed to the lack of consensus on the purpose of the SNSAs. (RSA, 2019: 2)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221RSE.pdf

Notwithstanding the concerns expressed by submissions to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry and a few responses from surveys and interviews for this Review, teachers, headteachers and local authorities have commented on the usefulness of the P1 SNSA data:

I look for any surprises, children who have performed better than expected or have found the test more challenging than expected and compare results to my own assessment information. (P1 teacher, survey)

The maths one did show me topics which I hadn't covered very much in the year, but that was more an assessment of my teaching rather than the children's learning! I told their next teacher that they needed to do more work in those areas. (P1 teacher, survey)

We also use it alongside teacher judgement and other assessments to help us assess an individual's performance. It is used to pinpoint if there are trends across the school in terms of strengths and aspects for development and we then plan at stages and as a whole school accordingly. This information then helps us plan next steps in terms of support and challenge needed to raise attainment and achievement. I think the P 1 SNSA is extremely useful in terms of the feedback it offers. (Headteacher, survey)

We find the class and cohort data very informative for identifying improvements required within schools' curriculum content, or approaches to delivering certain aspects of the curriculum. The diagnostic information is being used effectively at Cluster level also for schools to support and challenge each other on improving aspects of their curriculum. (Local authority, survey)

In summary, interview evidence and survey responses from teachers, headteachers and local authorities indicate an understanding of the use of data derived from the P1 SNSA. They can:

- provide information about where a child is in some aspects of numeracy and literacy at a particular moment in time in relation to some of the literacy and numeracy benchmarks
- be part of the evidence considered when teachers are making a judgement about CfE early level
- offer a standardised form of assessment linked to the CfE benchmarks so that consistency is promoted within and between schools across Scotland
- provide an indication, through the analysis of the data generated, that can inform planning for learning and teaching of an individual child
- inform teaching and learning discussions amongst school staff in relation to progress in terms of the CfE
- provide information on the profile of groups of pupils in a class which, when considered alongside other assessment information and the Experiences and Outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence, may lead to changes in the planned experiences and teaching provided in order to meet identified gaps in learning
- provide headteachers and other senior leaders with information about how well teaching and the curriculum is meeting the needs of children and groups in the areas assessed by SNSA in P1, leading to modifications if necessary
- provide local authorities with information which can be part of the evidence considered when having conversations about performance and school improvement.

There are, however, some concerns about how clearly the P1 SNSA links with the Experiences and Outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence and the associated Benchmarks. (See Section 3.3)

The P1 Practitioner Forum Report suggests:

All educators (teachers, schools, local authorities, Scottish Government advisors and Education Scotland/HMIE) have a professional responsibility to ensure that their systems do not overplay the reliability or predictive capacity of SNSA, or any other data. A negotiated and voluntary 'Code of Practice' with clear processes to ensure that educators at all levels understand the power and the limitations of data and enact good data-use practices would underline this. Such understanding could help to prevent SNSA data becoming high-stakes. (P1PF, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/7/>

In agreement with P1PF, it is the view of this Review that in order to ensure that there is no drift towards using P1 SNSA data or Benchmarks to set targets and move towards a high stakes context, and to ensure clarity of purpose, a Code of Practice which includes a practical framework should be developed and agreed in partnership with stakeholders.

Conclusions

The Review identifies the primary purpose of the P1 SNSA as informing teachers' professional judgements about learning and teaching. P1 SNSA is a formative assessment which can inform more comprehensive summative judgements such as ACEL. However, it is not, and should not be, in itself, summative, as it only assesses part of the early level CfE and also only forms part of the toolkit a teacher draws on to make professional judgements. Being doubly partial, therefore, P1 SNSA information does not have the capacity to perform a summative function about literacy and numeracy on its own.

As part of teachers' professional judgements the P1 SNSA offers a useful standard element within the overall evidence to inform judgements about learning and teaching. Results are calibrated against aspects of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, standardised on a Scottish population of children of the appropriate age, and can guard against unconscious positive or negative bias in relation to specific assessment criteria.

The level of support given to children during the administration of P1 SNSA varies widely. In addition, different schools administer P1 SNSA at different times, both for individual children and across schools. This means that it is currently difficult to draw conclusions from aggregated data beyond the class or school.

Teachers and headteachers have expressed concerns that P1 SNSA data might in the future be used for high stakes purposes. The Review has not found any evidence that Benchmarks or P1 SNSA data are being used to set targets, make comparisons between schools or for teacher appraisal or that there are any plans to do so.

Recommendations That Scottish Government

Provide a detailed rationale for P1 SNSA setting out the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA at individual, class, school, local authority and national levels. This should include a statement that the intention of SNSA data is solely focused on informing learning and teaching and will not be used for accountability purposes now or in the future.

Bring together stakeholders to develop a practical framework/Code of Practice which sets out what SNSA data in P1 should productively be used for and what it should not, including a statement about purpose. This framework should then be used as the basis for agreement in every school about the purposes and uses of P1 SNSA data. This should be publicised nationally and a copy sent to all schools and P1 teachers.

Provide clear guidance, along the lines of the guidance offered about administering the P1 SNSA with ASN and EAL children, on the level of support which can be given to P1 children as they undertake the assessments.

Continue with the flexible arrangements about the timing of the P1 SNSA.

Refrain from drawing any general conclusions from aggregated P1 SNSA data until there is evidence of consistent administration. P1 SNSA data should not be used to make comparisons between schools or local authorities.

In consultation with Headteachers, agree how P1 SNSA data will inform Quality Assurance conversations within the context of all the other data pertaining to the performance of schools.

That local authorities:

In consultation with Headteachers, agree how P1 SNSA data will inform Quality Assurance conversations within the context of all the other data pertaining to the performance of schools. This should be based on the practical framework/Code of Practice recommended to Scottish Government. P1 SNSA data should not be used to make comparisons between schools or local authorities.

Refrain from drawing any general conclusions from aggregated P1 SNSA data until there is evidence of consistent administration.

Section Two The compatibility of the assessments with the play-based approach to early level of CfE

2.1 What is a play-based curriculum?

There is little disagreement in educational debate that play is essential to children's social, cognitive and identity development (Pentti Hakkarainen, 2006; Evans and Pinnock, 2007; Meire, 2007; Bruce, 2011; Carr, 2014). However, there is considerable variation in views of what a 'play-based' curriculum means and implies. Approaches vary across the world, including:

The Reggio Emilia approach, developed in northern Italy, which encourages imaginative play, fostering children's intellectual development through focusing systematically on symbolic representation. Young children are encouraged to 'explore the environment and express themselves through multiple paths including expressive, communicative, symbolic, cognitive, metaphoric, logical, imaginative and relational.' (Gandini, 2011: 80) Adults focus on enquiry and expressive language.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice, largely seen in the UK and USA, but having influence across the world, sees play as 'a primary (but not exclusive) medium for learning' (Stephen, 2006). The role of the adult is to 'demonstrate, question, model, suggest alternatives and prompt reflection' (*ibid.*)

<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20180129182408/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2006/01/26094635/0> (Accessed 7th April, 2019)

The High/Scope Curriculum, practised primarily in the USA, defines itself as play-based and child-centred, with children guided to 'explore, interact and exercise their creative imagination through purposeful play'. (<https://highscope.org/our-practice/curriculum/> accessed 7th April, 2019). Adults create a structured environment for children to exercise decision-making, cooperation, creativity and problem solving and prompt children to reflect on their learning.

Te Whariki, developed in New Zealand, pays particular attention to the social contexts in which children live and includes spontaneous play and play that supports meaningful learning in its curricular goals. Adults 'look closely at what children are seeing, saying, doing and knowing in order to understand, celebrate and elaborate learning.' (Luff, 2012:143) Such assessment then leads to new levels of challenge for the children. ²

In England, the Ofsted report *Teaching and Play in the Early Years*, reports that: 'There is no one way to achieve the very best for young children' (Ofsted, 2015: 5). Most of the schools and settings visited saw approaches to teaching and play as a

² These are not intended as an exhaustive list, but represent some of the key approaches to play-based curricula.

continuum, with adults ‘weighing up the extent of their involvement and fine-tuning how formal or informal, structured or unstructured, dependent or independent each learning experience should be to meet the needs of each child most effectively.’ (*ibid.*)

In Wales, *The Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework* sees experiential activities as central to learning in order for children to practise and consolidate their learning through the ‘serious business of play’, experimenting, taking risks and making decisions both individually and as part of a group. The role of the adult is to create a balance between structured learning through child-initiated activities and those directed by practitioners. (Learning Wales, 2015: 4-5)

In Northern Ireland, the document *Learning Through Play in the Early Years* describes the role of adults to ensure ‘progression in the provision of activities to meet the developmental needs of children’ (p.8). It states that:

Children come to pre-school already as skilled learners. Through our observations, assessment and professional judgement we gain valuable insights into how each one learns best. This information informs our planning to meet the needs of each individual child’ (*ibid.*)

http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/foundation_stage/learning_through_play_e_y.pdf (Accessed 18th April, 2019)

In Scotland, *Building the Curriculum 2* includes play as an essential part of active learning ‘which engages and challenges children’s thinking using real-life and imaginary situations’ including opportunities for spontaneous play and planned, purposeful play (CfE 2007:5). It is important to build primary school experience on nursery experience, combining active, independent play with skilled and appropriate intervention or teaching. However, developing a more active approach to education means paying attention to progression in children’s development and learning (*ibid.* p.9). Establishing continuity and progression will include attention to: ‘using staffing resources to provide extended periods of learning through play for some children’ and ‘planning the careful development of literacy and numeracy skills supported by a strong and continuing emphasis on oral language and development’ (*ibid.* p.11) as well as considering how to use assessment information to plan next steps in learning (*ibid.* p.14).

2.2 Criticisms of P1 SNSA as not compatible with play-based learning

Submissions to the Scottish Government Education and Skills Committee Inquiry into the P1 SNSA (SGI, 2018 -19) outlined a range of concerns, some calling for ‘assessment practice that is appropriate for a genuinely play-based P1 curriculum.’ (EIS, 2018). In her presentation to the P1 Practitioner Forum (P1PF) Jean Carwood-Edwards, Chief Executive of Early Years Scotland (EYS), pointed out that EYS does not believe that the SNSA has to be entirely play-based, although she stressed that learning through play is one of the critical, and most impactful, ways that children

learn. Jean acknowledged that children also learn in other ways, for example, through observation, conversation, exploration, sustained shared thinking, and so forth.

In interview, she and Jane Brumpton outlined a particular concern that the use of technology for carrying out assessments can disadvantage some children who do not have experience in technology from their homes or communities or who might not yet be able to handle the demands of the electronic devices. They also pointed out that the terminology of the SNSA, specifically the idea of a 'national standardised assessment' has implications that can undermine a view of teachers' professional judgements as the most valuable element of assessment. Instead, they suggest that the SNSA should be seen simply as part of the teacher's toolkit in making assessments to move learning forward. Not only that, but 'standardised' carries suggestions of children sitting in serried rows which makes the SNSA seem to be in opposition to a more active play-based learning environment.

EYS recommends a wider national debate about how assessment at P1 might be described, explained, and carried out effectively, including meaningful engagement with early years practitioners, teachers and parents/carers to look at possible positive ways forward in the interest of the children.

Liz Smith (Conservative) in her response to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, (September 2018), cited the kindergarten model, developed by Friedrich Froebel in the 19th century 'using structured play and learning through discovery and gifts', arguing that 'Froebel did not ask infant teachers to make use of standardised tests or assessments. Instead, he asked them to be skilled in their professional judgments and well informed, through daily observation of each child, which would then be discussed with each family. Everything about that observation was done to inform and improve teaching' (Smith, 2018).

These views express concern with the form of assessment. However, other criticisms, for example from Upstart Scotland, are founded on the belief that children should not undergo formal schooling until they are six or seven. In respect of SNSA, their concern is that Scotland may fall into the 'test and targets trap'. Their *Play not Tests* campaign argues that 'every country that has so far introduced national testing in primary schools has seen a narrowing of the curriculum, a steady increase in teachers 'teaching to the test' and a push-down of academic content to ever younger age groups. These developments are related to the inevitable linking of national assessments to targets for attainment at specific ages.'

<https://www.upstart.scot/play-not-tests-in-p1-campaign/> (accessed 7th April, 2019). (See Section 1.5 for a discussion of targets)

In addition, Upstart Scotland argues that the P1 literacy Benchmarks do not align with *Curriculum for Excellence's* early level for the three to six age group, which stresses the centrality of exploration and play. Furthermore, that a 'relationship-centred, play-based kindergarten environment' means that all children would have

access to ‘the type of experiences through which young human beings naturally develop problem-solving, vocabulary and language skills, including motivating play activities, explorations and investigations, involving real-life problem-solving and discovery of number and maths’ (*ibid.*) They continue ‘In countries where formal education doesn’t begin till seven, many children are already able to read, write and reckon by the time they start school and the overwhelming majority are ready to learn quickly and successfully.’ (*ibid.*)

Children in Scotland supports the *Play not Tests* campaign and firmly believes that play-based learning rather than a focus on assessment in the earliest stages of school, is the most appropriate form of education for children at this stage. The organisation recognises that assessment is central to teaching and learning but opposes the SNSA at P1 and P4. (Submission to Education and Skills Committee’s call for evidence on Scottish National Standardised Assessments, 2018). Drawing on evidence papers provided by Carolyn Hutchison, Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow, the main objections to the introduction of new standardised assessments are because of questions about their validity and reliability (particularly for those in P1 and P4), and whether the investment in time and resource will provide data that is likely to help improve educational attainment for pupils. (See Section 1.4 for a discussion of validity and reliability.)

Although not opposed to assessment in schools, Connect opposes all standardised assessment in Scottish schools for P1-S3. In specific opposition to SNSA, Connect argues that the assessments are ‘not standardised in any way’ (Submission to Education and Skills Committee’s Inquiry into Scottish National Standardised Assessments, 2018). (See Section 1.4 for a discussion of standardisation). In respect of play-based learning, Connect comments that ‘the P1 tests are administered in a stage where learning through play is the declared focus of our education system: to introduce tests at this stage is to act completely counter to the purpose of this approach and will inevitably lead to schools focusing on the tests as an end in themselves, moving away from the principles of Curriculum for Excellence’ (*ibid.*). Drawing on evidence from other countries, Connect argues that ‘China and Singapore along with Finland are all high performing education systems and have smaller equity gaps than Scotland, yet these countries have committed to test-free, play-based, early years education and childcare’ (*ibid.*) .

2.3 Other countries as models for assessment in the early years

Opponents of assessment in the early years of schooling often draw on Scandinavian models where children do not attend formal schooling until they are 7 years old. From that age, assessment is integral to learning and teaching, for example in Finland:

The 2004 National Curriculum provides guidance for evaluation for students in early grades and throughout basic education. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004 (Finnish National Board of Education,

2004) divides classroom assessment into two categories: assessment during the course and final assessment. Both are nationally mandated to align with national criteria, but they serve different purposes. (Hendrickson, 2012)

International Education News observes that:

Finnish teachers use an array of diagnostic and screening tests extensively in the early grades in Finland to make sure that no students are falling behind, particularly in reading. For example in one municipality, primary school special education teachers administer a screening test in reading comprehension to all students at the end of 2nd and 4th grade across all schools (and many administer it at the end of every year). That information, however, is not used at the school or municipal level to “check” on who is and isn’t performing well, rather, it’s used to identify those students who will need extra help moving forward.

<https://internationalednews.com/2014/06/09/assessment-in-finland-steering-seeing-and-selection/> (Accessed 7th April, 2019)

In Iceland, in response to PISA reports of 2012 of a drop in standards in literacy, mathematics and science, as well as a widening gender gap, the Department of Education is proposing standardised tests for 6 year olds in phonetic awareness, decoding and comprehension. (Sigpórsson, 2017). There are no plans for developing similar practices in mathematics (Sigpórsson, 2019, personal communication).

There may be problems, however, in invoking practices from other education systems, as Aart de Geus, General Secretary of OECD from 2007-2011, points out:

Learning from another country’s experience does not necessarily imply copying all aspects of that country’s system. There is always a danger that such comparisons can become politicised because of the different traditions of different nations. ...it is possible for one country to learn from another’s good practices while recognising their different contexts and ideologies.’ (de Geus, 2011: 54)

Whilst other countries can offer useful insights into educational principles and approaches, the cultural and political context for any educational system needs to be taken into account.

2. 4 Respondents’ views of P1 SNSA in relation to a play-based curriculum

A few respondents commented on the P1 SNSA not being compatible with a play-based curriculum. Some are committed to not starting formal education until age 7:

Those countries with the highest rankings in education understand the vital role that play has in the social, emotional, mental, physical and academic wellbeing of children up to the age of at least 7 and tend not to formally

assess their pupils or even start formal education until this age, opting for a kindergarten style education. (P1 teacher, survey)

Raise formal schooling to age 7. Compulsory kindergarten before that. (Headteacher, survey)

Others think that a play-based approach does not suit an assessment carried out sitting for a period of time using a computer, for example:

The format and length of the assessment is not in the least conducive with the move towards a more play-based curriculum at early level. (Headteacher, survey)

Based on my experiences with the P1 SNSA I believe these assessments are inappropriate for P1 children. They are taking children away from positive, play-based experiences. (P1 teacher, survey)

Others, however, report that the SNSA can be aligned with a play-based approach, commenting:

They enjoyed it as a game. (Headteacher, survey)

Rather than being unsuited to a play-based approach, in some schools the SNSA experience was *'very positive – it was treated as a fun activity.'* (Headteacher, survey) and *'The children enjoyed the experience.'* (P1 teacher, survey).

In interview, the headteacher of [redacted] primary school explained:

Assessments are done as part and parcel of the school day. There isn't a problem –the teachers just do them. The assessments in P1 fit comfortably with what we do in our play-based approach. (Headteacher, [redacted] primary school, interview)

In another school visited by the Independent Review, the Headteacher, who had been a P1 teacher, was satisfied that the P1 SNSA could be accommodated within a play-based approach to learning:

The children didn't know they were taking the assessment. They just saw it as another group activity. The children are used to that kind of activity anyway; they use the iPads with earphones. We did it in groups of four, just like in their usual carousel of activities. I explained it like I would explain any other activity. This is the way we teach anyway. A few left it and came back after break to finish it. One child with additional support needs did it during Learning Support time. (Headteacher, [redacted], interview)

This echoes the P1 SNSA case study evidence from [redacted] primary school, West Lothian on the National Improvement Hub:

The primary 1 assessments were completed in May, allowing routines to be established for the children in a flexible, play-based curriculum. It was very much felt that the Scottish National Standardised Assessments formed part of the day-to-day learning experience and, as such, did not require any additional planning beyond that of a normal lesson. (P1 SNSA Case Studies on the National Improvement Hub, 2018)

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/snsa-p1-case-studies-west-lothian-council.pdf> (Accessed 17th April, 2019)

2.5 Assessment and play-based approaches

Members of the P1 Primary Forum recognised that ‘play itself is not a learning outcome and the SNSAs are not designed as play-based learning activities in and of themselves’ (P1PF, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/5/>

Nevertheless, it seems that some submissions to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, and responses to the Independent Review, conflate assessment and pedagogy, seeing the ‘moment of assessment’ as the same as a pedagogical approach. However, there need not be any disparity between a play-based approach and P1 SNSAs. Both Professor Lindsay Paterson and Keir Bloomer in interview (February, 2019) distinguished between a play-based pedagogy which is a means to an educational end and an assessment which captures a snapshot of part of learning. Professor Paterson points out that ‘assessment and approach are different in function and have different purposes. An assessment that takes 45 minutes a year is not likely to interfere with a play-based approach to learning and teaching’ (Paterson, interview, February, 2019). As the Education Scotland documentation *Building the curriculum 2* (ES, 2007) and *How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?* (ES 2017), for example, indicates, effective use of assessment is very much part of learning and teaching in the early years.

Indeed, if learning is to be valued as important to children’s development, it needs to be systematically assessed (Carr, 2015). As a practitioner using the well-respected approach to play-based learning from Reggio Emilia, Gandini specifically makes the point that ‘There is a widespread and mistaken view that the Reggio approach is incompatible with assessment of children’s progress.’ (Gandini, 2011: 78). But formative assessment using a wide range of strategies to ensure a balanced view of each child’s learning is widely recognised as the most effective way to move learning forward (Siraj-Blatchford *et al.*, 2002; Drummond and Marshall, 2006, Hargeaves *et al.*, 2018). There is considerable consensus that assessment in the early years should be made through systematic observation and documentation from a range of sources, taking an holistic approach (NAEYC, 2009; Gandini, 2011; Tayler *et al.*, 2013; Drake, 2014; Walsh *et al.*, 2017). Indeed, research into effective teaching shows that the

most effective teachers are 'highly diagnostic' in their assessments (Hall, 2012); the P1 SNSA offers support for teachers' diagnostic and formative judgements.

Members of the P1 Primary Forum comment:

*The SNSAs are not play but they are consistent with the learning I'm looking to get from play I used the practice assessments as a free choice activity in the playroom. (Teacher comment P1 PF, 2019: *ibid.*)*

*Play-based activities are planned with the Benchmarks in mind, so I don't have a problem with children demonstrating their learning through SNSA. (Teacher comment P1 PF, 2019: *ibid.*)*

There is no necessary disjunction between assessment and a play-based pedagogy. However, some groups are fundamentally opposed in principle to children undergoing formal schooling before the age of 7 but discussion of this issue of principle is beyond the scope of this Review.

2.6 The effect of taking an online assessment on P1 children

Media reports and some members of the Scottish Parliament reported that the P1 SNSA was causing children distress. However, surveys and interview evidence show that the majority of headteachers and teachers did not see any distress or discomfort as children undertook the P1 SNSA, in fact, they reported that the children enjoyed it:

Most children have responded well. They are excited about the assessment being carried out using ICT and the practice assessment is useful for less confident children. (Headteacher, survey)

They enjoyed it. They thought it was a game. (P1 teacher, survey)

They completed it with their usual engagement and positive attitude. (Headteacher, survey)

The children enjoyed the P1 numeracy assessment and they liked the random nature of the questions. (Deputy headteacher, [redacted] primary school, interview)

In the surveys and interviews providing evidence to this Review, there were very few comments about children becoming upset and tearful and rather more that children became tired and bored whilst taking the P1 Literacy SNSA particularly, for example:

...it was felt that the standard of some questions asked was beyond early level. Unfortunately, this caused some learners, who already lacked confidence, to become upset. (P1 teacher, survey)

Some children became demoralised because they found the test too difficult. (P1 teacher, survey)

Most children got to the point where they found it boring and tedious.

(P1 teacher, survey)

There were comments about the teacher's approach having an effect on the children's response:

Most children have enjoyed the 'game' we play. When the class teacher is implementing it they know when a child is maybe not enjoying it and can stop them so as not to cause distress. (P1 teacher, survey)

They were oblivious. As far as they were concerned they were just playing a computer game. Children at that age experience absolutely no stress whatsoever at completing tasks like this if adults present it in the correct way. (P1 teacher, survey)

No children were upset because we don't make a big deal out of it. (Headteacher, [redacted], interview)

Others pointed out that children varied in their response to the assessment:

Some have enjoyed the assessment procedure, showing pride in their ability to read. Others find it stressful and appear very nervous. (P1 teacher, survey)

[Response] varies from pupil to pupil. Some cope fine, some are 'click happy' and others become stressed and anxious. (Headteacher, survey)

The Review observed a total of 26 children in different settings as they undertook either the P1 numeracy or P1 literacy assessments. None of them showed any distress and indeed, in some cases, showed great perseverance. When asked about how they felt they were all quite happy, for example, C. commented that he liked matching the words to the pictures and although G. said she found it difficult she was quite unfazed ([redacted] primary school, observation and interview). A. not only enjoyed the assessment but carried out a running commentary on the questions: 'I've got a wildcat at home! She's very wild.' and 'That's a silly question because it shows you in the picture.' ([redacted] primary school, observation and interview). T. said 'Some of those were tricky' but seemed quite happy about doing it. ([redacted] primary school, observation and interview).

In summary, there was scant evidence of children being upset by taking the P1 SNSA. Where this occurred, it was mostly because children were taken away from their usual learning context and were working with unfamiliar staff. The context of the assessment can make a difference to how confident or worried the children might be and individual differences are also a factor, suggesting that teachers' knowledge of the children is important in the way different children respond to the assessment. Recent research (Rowe and Miller, 2016; Kucirkova *et al.*, 2016) indicates that children are keen users of digital technology for their own purposes. Investigating children's use of a range of digital technologies in the home, research by Cremin *et al.*, (2014) shows that teachers are often not aware of children's funds of knowledge about digital technology drawn from home. Nevertheless, children do not have equal access to digital technology in homes, so it is important that the use of technology for

assessment is accompanied by classroom teaching in the uses of screen-based reading and composing.

Conclusions

Some critics who argue that the P1 SNSA does not fit with a play-based pedagogy do not agree with any formal education before the age of 7. These are genuine and committed views but do not align with the current educational arrangements in Scotland.

A small number of headteachers and teachers commented that the P1 SNSA does not fit with a play-based pedagogy but it seems that there are confusions between a 'moment of assessment' and a pedagogical approach.

There are strong examples of schools where headteachers and teachers operate a play-based approach and find no incompatibility between that and the P1 SNSA.

There is scant evidence of children becoming upset when taking the P1 SNSA. However, there is evidence that the context for the assessments, including the teachers' attitudes, make a difference to children's assurance when undertaking the P1 SNSA.

Recommendations

That Scottish Government:

Continue to develop guidance and examples of the ways in which a play-based approach to learning and teaching can accommodate administration of the P1 SNSA.

Develop specific guidelines about how to use data from P1 SNSA alongside observational and other evidence from play-based activities to support judgements of progress and planning of next steps for learning within a play-based approach.

Ensure that training in administering the SNSA and relevant documentation re-emphasises the option of stopping the assessment if a child becomes tired, bored or upset.

Section Three The usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers to support professional judgements

3.1 SNSA and professional judgements

The purpose of P1 SNSA is to inform professional judgements about learning and teaching. P1 SNSA literacy and numeracy assessments produce a significant amount of assessment data in the aspects of numeracy and literacy they focus upon, although it is important to recognise that they do not – and cannot – cover all aspects of CfE early stage and associated Benchmarks. As stated above (Section 1.7) a range of potential ways have been identified so that this formative information can be used productively to support professional judgements. The time of the year that children undergo the assessment influences the way the information might be used depending on the decisions that are to be made. For example, if SNSA is undertaken by a child or group of children in January it is most likely to inform learning and teaching decisions about where children are at that point, and indicate the kinds of experiences they will need to make further progress. If it is in May, then in addition, it can provide information which can inform decisions about the attainment of the early level and possible areas for attention as the children move from P1 into P2. At both times, however, reference to a wide range of evidence will be needed to inform National Benchmarks judgements.

In addition, the production of ‘long scales’ will also make available information that could be useful in mapping progress of individual pupils over time. In his evidence to the Scottish Government Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Professor Lindsay Paterson noted:

The plans for the development of the assessments take advantage of the opportunity for longitudinal data by proposing to construct ‘long scales’. These will enable each pupil to be placed on a scale that stretches from early P1 to the end of S3.

Teachers will thus gain reliable information about each pupil’s progress through the stages of the curriculum, and thus will be able to tailor their teaching to each pupil’s needs. Only standardised assessments can provide this kind of educationally useful evidence.’ (Paterson, 2018:1)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181206Professor_Lindsay_Paterson.pdf

The intention of P1 SNSA data is to provide supportive information for diagnostic purposes.

3.2 How is P1 SNSA information being used?

Evidence gathered for the Independent Review through direct observation, interviews and the surveys, reveals a mixed picture regarding headteachers’ and teachers’ views of the usefulness of the data to inform judgements at individual,

group, school and LA levels. A majority of teachers and headteachers see the value of the P1 SNSA to support professional judgements about learning, teaching and assessment. A minority take a negative view. Despite the positive view of the majority who see the P1 SNSA as a useful assessment tool, key themes emerged about reservations and concerns. Training is an issue; of those who expressed negative views of the P1 SNSA, the majority had not received any training:

We did not feel prepared for implementing and using the data. Members of the Management Team were trained on how to implement the SNSA, using the online training. Data was collated and made available to P1 staff. It was not as useful as hoped and did not match our teacher judgement. As P1 staff in our establishment work closely and teach all P1 pupils across the week, we believe that our teacher judgement gives us a more realistic picture.

(P1 teacher, survey)

I felt completely unprepared for implementing and using data from P1 assessment. No training was provided to colleagues or leaders within my establishment prior to assessments being completed. HT and DHT received some training after data had been received. This was not shared with all staff.

(P1 teacher, survey)

Respondents who saw the value of the assessments recognised that the information can inform precise teaching interventions:

By assessing the children soon in P1, this informed my teaching if groups and highlighted the extent of prior knowledge my pupils had. (P1 teacher, survey)

I use it to see which areas of numeracy in particular have not been covered or need revisiting. Also, in literacy it highlighted the fact that all three of my children were needing working in recognising rhyming words, so I was straight away able to push rhyming stories and classic nursery rhymes into our daily literacy routines. (P1 teacher, survey)

The data is also seen as useful in passing on information at transition to P2 and to inform professional judgements of achievement of early level:

We used the data to support transition of information for P2 teachers, analysed with key steps in teaching and learning from strengths and development points highlighted in areas of our curriculum progression pathways for individual pupils. They were looked at to support teacher judgement of achievement of a level to help triangulate this data.

(Headteacher, survey)

Some respondents were explicit about the SNSA offering a nationwide comparison:

I found them really helpful as you are comparing across Scotland whereas local authority standardised assessments are comparing within authority. It gives a fairer comparison. (Headteacher, survey)

Others, however, compared SNSAs with other forms of assessment:

They generate a lot of data providing a snapshot in time but the output is not as user friendly as other online assessments and takes longer to administer.
(Headteacher, survey)

A few respondents felt that the information offered did not align with their expectations:

I do not use the data as it does not provide an accurate picture of each child in my class – many children who have English as an additional language guessed answers and scored highly when they do not yet speak English.
(P1 teacher, survey)

Only a very small number of survey responses expressed this view and as the comments were from the surveys and not interviews, it was not possible to discern by discussion whether the perception was that the P1 SNSA was not suitable for particular children with EAL or ASN or whether the assessment revealed capabilities that the teacher had not appreciated.

3.3 Evidence of diagnostic information being used to support professional judgements

Teachers' responses to the surveys and comments from the P1 Practitioner Forum indicated that where they had received training, they saw positive value in the P1 SNSA data to inform judgements about learning and teaching:

It was useful for us in identifying areas where there wasn't a depth of knowledge across the whole class or there were significant gaps in an individual's learning. (P1 teacher, P1PF, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/7/>

I use SNSA in line with other assessment evidence to target gaps in learning. I shall be also be using data to inform future planning and engage with SNSA data to aid planning for all children in my class. Also, looking for trends/gaps which may show areas of learning which need to be revisited and analysing data to help plan learning and teaching next steps. (P1 teacher quoted in LA survey, East Dunbartonshire)

Headteachers also recognised the benefits of the P1SNSA data in supporting teachers' professional judgements:

It is used to pinpoint if there are trends across the school in terms of strengths and aspects for development and we then plan at stages and as a whole school accordingly. We also use it alongside teacher judgement and other assessments to help as assess an individual's performance. This information then helps us plan next steps in terms of support and challenge

needed to raise attainment and achievement. I think the P 1 SNSA is extremely useful in terms of the feedback it offers. (Headteacher, survey)

Local authorities, too, commented on the potential for P1 SNSA to support Benchmark judgements:

There is some value in providing data that schools can use at all the milestones in Curriculum for Excellence. It will allow schools to track learner flightpaths over time and provide supporting evidence in quality assurance and Benchmarking of teacher professional judgement.

(Western Isles Council, survey)

Some schools are beginning to report that the diagnostic information gleaned from the assessments is useful as it helps support next steps in learning, professional dialogue between teaching staff and senior leadership teams. It is also beginning to support understanding of possible targeted support / interventions and next steps in learning. (East Dunbartonshire, survey)

3.4 The alignment of the assessments to the Benchmarks for early level

One recurrent theme in the responses from headteachers and teachers was about the difficulty of the literacy SNSA, although there were hardly any negative comments about the numeracy assessment. There was concern expressed that not only was the literacy SNSA too long (see Section 5.4), but that it did not fit the Benchmarks for early level. This included respondents who were positive about the P1 SNSA as well as those who were critical:

I think the P 1 SNSA is extremely useful in terms of the feedback it offers. However, for this feedback to be valid, reliable and robust, I feel the actual assessments need to be more realistic in terms of our expectations of children at this age and stage.

(Headteacher, survey)

The literacy test is far too hard. Bearing in mind this is early level, children would not be reading paragraphs of information to answer questions. The wildcat/kite stories were much too difficult for the majority of children in my class although they have almost all hit the Benchmarks for early level. The numeracy test was fine, but all children who have completed the literacy test have found it very difficult. (P1 teacher, survey)

In addition to responses from teachers and headteachers in interviews and surveys, Jonathan Cunningham and Catriona Smith from the Headteacher and Deputies Association were particularly critical of the difficulty of the P1 literacy SNSA and called for a review of the difficulty against the Benchmarks for the early level. (Interview, February, 2019)

One issue raised in the survey responses was the lack of clear links in terminology between the early level Benchmarks and the descriptors provided in the data from the P1 SNSA:

Many questions in both the literacy and numeracy assessments were not linked to the Benchmarks set by the Scottish Government.

(P1 teacher, survey)

Another feature of the criticism of the level of the P1 literacy SNSA was linked to the approach taken by the school in teaching early reading. Many schools use commercial phonics schemes which may not themselves align with the CfE early level so that the literacy SNSA, which is linked to the early level, seemed to be mismatched with the approach taken to teaching phonics in the school:

Many of the questions did not seem to match up to the Benchmarks and concepts were very difficult in comparison to the average early level expectations. Some phonemes that would not be expected at P1 level were included in Literacy assessments along with some selections of common words. These were more appropriate to those in P2 and beginning First Level.

(P1 teacher, survey)

This doesn't match the Benchmarks because there is a lot of reading that isn't CVC. (P1 teacher, interview)

Assessments themselves seem far too advanced in reading. Our pupils have been taught using a phonics based scheme and therefore the texts that they are being asked to work with are far too complicated. (Headteacher, survey)

Many words they were expected to read had phonemes in them that are not taught using our P1 phonics programme and would not be taught until P2.

(P1 teacher, survey)

Many words contain phonemes that have not been taught – 'ea' 'ai' 'ou' and magic e, pupils are unable to read these words. (P1 teacher, survey)

The incompatibility between commercial phonics schemes and the Curriculum for Excellence is not within the scope of this Review, but is a matter which deserves attention.

In addition to comments about phonics, a recurrent theme in the headteacher and teacher responses was about the length of texts that children had to read independently. This was particularly true in the story that extended over four pages which children had to read independently. Respondents commented that the length of the P1 literacy SNSA made too great demands on the stamina needed to read the longer texts, and was beyond many P1 children (see Section 5.4).

In interviews, there was agreement that some items in the literacy assessment should go beyond early level as there would be children in P1 who were working towards first level, but that there were too many of these items. It was also suggested that current P1 teachers should be involved in feeding back to the assessment developers their views concerning the balance of difficulty in the assessment items. The representatives from the Headteacher and Deputes Association suggested that ‘There needs to be more input from school based professionals to help design the early level questions so that they can be better calibrated’ (interview, February, 2019). Whilst it is understandable that there is reticence to involve teachers in development of assessment items because of confidentiality, there is an argument for some kind of mechanism that can more closely involve P1 classroom teachers in question development.

ACER reviews and refines the P1 SNSA as part of their continuing developmental quality assurance processes (see ACER National Report, 2017-18). This includes feedback from practitioners. Suggestions about ease of undertaking the assessment and the alignment of the P1 SNSA to the CfE early level Benchmarks, can be fed back to the assessment developers.

3.5 Professional learning

Professional learning is crucial for developing capacity, particularly when new initiatives are being introduced and change is occurring. Adult learners interpret experiences in their own way, based on perspectives grounded in their histories and in their cultural contexts. Mezirow (1997) suggests that although adult learners usually prefer to stay within their own meaning perspectives to avoid anxiety and loss of self-confidence, this inhibits taking on new perspectives and flexibility in learning. Effective professional development opportunities enable teachers and headteachers to see beyond their current meaning perspectives and to consider the advantages of new contexts where change is occurring. As Michael Fullan points out, successful change requires a dynamic relationship between pressure, support and continuous negotiation (Fullan, 2001:91). The pressure for change may come from government, local authority or school initiatives. The provision of systematic professional development training to answer the needs of such initiatives is part of support. It enables new developments to be placed in a wider context, providing not only the rationale for change but also indicating the practical application of change: in the case of P1 SNSA, this would include the assessment information produced. The element of negotiation is critical in the process of developing new initiatives since teachers and headteachers need to be convinced that change will enhance current practice and, further, understand and accept the practical usefulness of systematically informing decisions about learning and teaching.

As part of the implementation plan for SNSA, SCHOLAR have been tasked with planning and delivering a range of professional learning opportunities, both in terms of content and mode of delivery. These sessions have included introduction to the

rationale and practical administration of SNSA, an introduction to the analysis of SNSA data, the use of SNSA data in practice and how this can fit within the wider NIF assessment strategy, and using SNSA with ASN and EAL learners, including the provision of accessibility guidelines and practical advice. Modes of delivery have included face-to-face sessions, webinars, and online video. Training opportunities for face to face sessions and webinars have been organised and delivered in almost all Scottish Local Authorities since 2017. As P1 SNSA has been implemented nationally, attendance at professional learning sessions have had a significant effect upon whether teachers and schools see the SNSA data in P1 as very useful for informing decisions. The analysis of impact documented in *Impact of training on perceived diagnostic value of SNSA* (ACER, April 2019) finds that:

The number of practitioners indicating a positive perception of the diagnostic value of SNSA rose from just over half, before training, to almost 90% after training. Overall the mean response value to the question on diagnostic value rose by 1.47 as a result of the training provided.’ (ACER, 2019:5)

Only 2% expressed negative perception after attendance.

The report goes on to note:

Practitioners involved in the delivery of Primary 1 assessments were slightly more positive about the value of SNSA than practitioners in general, both before and after training’. (*ibid.*)

In interview for this Review, a P1 teacher who was invited to be a member of the P1 Practitioner Forum and who had not attended any training sessions before going to the forum, explained that she changed her initial perceptions of the usefulness of the data and overall understanding of the context of SNSA information after attending:

I can see more of the positives and find it reassuring that SNSA links with the Benchmarks. But it is interesting what it can't assess –the full range of comprehension and the creative elements of reading and maths.

(P1 teacher, interview)

It is clear, however, that although a range of successful professional learning opportunities have been organised across Scotland, access to them has been problematic, particularly for P1 teachers. The P1 Practitioner Forum report points out:

Some forum members with class commitments had received little or no information about implementing the SNSA; children were simply extracted from their class, they had been given minimal information and were unaware of the kinds of Benchmarks and outcomes the SNSA assessed or the implementation choices that could be made. The current training strategy, with Webinars, video materials and ‘tutor’ training materials was poorly advertised and local authority meetings did not always reach P1 classroom teachers. There is no printed manual that describes what the SNSA offers or how it works. The digital training materials are available on the SNSA website, which can only be accessed from an approved IP address (i.e. at school or via a

VPN link to the school server). This does not offer sufficient 'reach' across the profession and teachers, who are committed full time in school, cannot easily access training that is only offered at specific times or via the school intranet (P1PF, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/6/>

A comment from a headteacher gives another reason why P1 teachers may not understand how SNSA information could be useful in informing professional judgements:

Briefing sessions were attended early on but these have not been followed up as DHT was given responsibility of organising ongoing assessments. Therefore P1 teachers do not have a working knowledge of the administration or use of data. Original session was face to face in a large hall, teacher had no access to PCs to try out system so it was of limited use.

(Headteacher, survey)

The survey responses from headteachers and teachers indicate that of those who responded negatively to the P1SNSA, the majority of headteachers and most of P1 teachers had not attended any training. In contrast, schools where the training was effectively communicated through meetings and discussions, express a positive welcome to the opportunities offered by the P1 SNSA.

In a school of 157 pupils, all staff used the webinar training. The headteacher organised sessions where all the staff were gathered in the staff room and watched the videos together, discussing issues as they followed the videos. The P1 teacher commented: 'The online webinar is fine. They took us through each section and the LA has put on extra training.' ([redacted] primary school, Argyll and Bute)

Given the above evidence, it seems not only that opportunities for professional learning should be continued and expanded, but that bespoke training for P1 teachers in particular should be made a priority.

Just over half of the Scottish local authorities responded to the surveys from the Independent Review. Their responses indicated that most schools in those authorities had received training. Some of this was through the webinars and online materials but the majority of those who responded to the survey had also provided meetings to support P1 SNSA training:

The QI team has run specific professional learning opportunities for all staff to attend with colleagues teaching at the same stage, to explore and deepen individual understanding of the standards, expectations and judgements of progress. (West Lothian, survey)

In the same local authority, professional development session evaluation responses indicated the value of locally organised professional development opportunities in supporting the implementation of P1 SNSA:

Analysing data to help inform next steps for learners and to indicate areas to target through direct teaching, interventions and/or revision of pedagogy. Detailed analysis of SNSA results to identify areas for improvement in curriculum and learning and teaching. We will certainly analyse our own results and see if we have any curricular or individual gaps. I will look at how best to use SNSA data with SMT and staff - particularly in identifying gaps in learning: analysing the (long scale) bands to help make informed decisions about children's progress along with my own professional judgement and assessment strategies; creating reports from the website to help analyse assessment data; gathering data on my class and being able to pinpoint where the gaps are and which pupils. I am going to share what I learned with teaching staff in the school and SLT. I will work with the SLT to analyse our data when assessments are complete to identify weaker topic areas. This will then impact my planning and teaching.

(P1 teacher, quoted in East Dunbartonshire Council survey)

3.6 Moderation

Access to moderation is a powerful professional learning opportunity and an essential component to support consistency of assessment judgements against specific criteria. The Cambridge Primary Review (CPR, 2010) cites evidence that group moderation is particularly effective. Group moderation occurs when educators within and between schools meet and share their interpretations of assessment criteria regarding levels, and discuss their judgements drawing on specific sets of evidence including any standardised assessments. The CPR concluded:

Experience of group moderation suggests it has benefits beyond improving the quality of assessment. It has well established professional development function and indeed the practice of teachers meeting to discuss the conclusions that can be drawn from studying pupils work has been described as 'the most powerful means of developing professional competence in assessment'. (CPR, 2010: 323)

Discussion and comparison of examples helps professionals to dig deeper into the data under scrutiny as one QAMSO explained:

I think we're quite far ahead with assessment and moderation. I was an AMF (Assessment and Moderation Facilitator) then the LA wanted one person per school to be trained as a QAMSO (Quality and Assurance Moderation Support Officer). The LA training is very good so we were already au fait with the assessment and moderation cycle. We take a different focus each term and concentrate on the Benchmarks and do it together. We devise an assessment task and feed back our findings to the authority. I was a maths person so I decided to do the reading

QAMSO training. Each LA has a QAMSO for each level and they go to national training events to train people in using the assessment cycle. I think the training helps to see assessment as a process. Every term we are called back to discuss examples. We take examples of our own but they give us examples of plans and assessments to moderate across the group. It's good to meet other people and to see the standard across the country. It's all about sharing the standard and what counts as evidence. My job now is to support schools within our cluster (11 schools in our area). (QAMSO, Argyll and Bute, interview)

Moderation activities within and between schools will develop practical understandings of how P1 SNSA data can inform professional judgements about the achievement of a level. The role of the QAMSO is crucial here.

Conclusions

Survey and interview evidence shows that majority of teachers and headteachers see the value of the P1 SNSA to support professional judgements about learning, teaching and assessment. Of those opposed to the P1 assessment and those who expressed more ambivalent views, almost all had not received training. In contrast, those who responded positively had all received training.

Interview and survey evidence revealed concerns about administration and the length of the P1 literacy SNSA. (See Section Five)

Of the minority of respondents opposed to the use of the P1 SNSA, some had principled objections to assessing P1 children; others preferred more familiar assessment processes.

An emergent theme from surveys, observations and interviews is that it is not clear to some stakeholders how well the P1 Literacy SNSA, specifically, aligns with the Benchmarks for early level.

Almost all the local authorities which responded to the Independent Review surveys have provided some training to implement the P1 SNSA.

The Independent Review did not specifically seek information about moderation but this has emerged as an important element of embedding and sustaining professional learning in relation to P1 SNSA and its place in informing professional judgements.

Recommendations

The Scottish Government

Request that, as part of its development process, ACER review the P1 literacy SNSA to ensure that the items align with the relevant parts of the early level CfE. Attention should be given to the language used in the item descriptors and in the data generated from the assessments so that they are comparable with the language used in the expectations and outcomes and associated Benchmarks for the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. In addition, ACER should involve experienced P1

practitioners in the question development process in order to give feedback on the appropriate level of difficulty, particularly in the P1 Literacy SNSA.

Recommend that one of the additional days of the two additional closure days agreed for 2019-2020 should be used so that all schools, including P1 teachers, can engage in professional learning related to how P1 SNSA information can be used effectively to inform professional judgements and/or moderation activities.

Review the current materials available to ensure that there is easily accessible professional learning support available for school to use on the dedicated closure day and publicise these materials to schools.

Expand the QAMSO programme to support local authorities and school clusters in developing cross school moderation events.

Local authorities

Expand the frequency of professional learning opportunities already planned , including cluster meetings. Develop bespoke training for P1 teachers and monitor attendance.

DRAFT

Section Four: The use of the P1 SNSA data for school improvement purposes

4.1 The intended purpose of SNSA data for school improvement

As outlined in Section 1.2 an intended purpose of P1 SNSA was to inform school improvement. In its submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Scottish Government stated that the SNSA system:

... provides class, school and local authority level reports all of which are designed to be used for improvement purposes. The class and school level reports are comprehensive and enable detailed analysis. This allows teachers and school managers to identify patterns in learning across groups of children and identify areas of strength or development needs. (2018: 8)

and concluded:

Improving the data we have available and using that data for improvement purposes at all levels of the system is an important part of that commitment, alongside our education reform programme. By expanding that evidence base and by providing diagnostic information to teachers and schools to help them tailor future teaching and learning, the SNSA are a key part of that reform and improvement agenda. (*ibid.*,p.9)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf

Education Scotland also outlined how SNSA data could be used for the purpose of individual school improvement:

Practitioners can look at the data from different cohorts of children to identify any patterns in the areas in which they are doing well or need support and can adjust their teaching. Across the school, the establishment can review its data to identify the areas which are being taught well and the areas in which children are not doing so well and can organise whole school professional development in these areas. (2018:4)

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190104Education_Scotland.pdf

4.2 The components of the school improvement process

The National Improvement Framework outlines the importance of school improvement:

School improvement focuses on the quality of education, including learning, teaching and assessment, as well as the quality of the partnerships that are in place to support children and young people with their broader needs. (NIF, 2109:32)

<file:///C:/Users/Windows%2010/Documents/Attached2/Scotland/Reports%20used%20in%20responses/00543908.pdf>

England's National College of School Leadership describes School Improvement as:

... mainly concerned with the processes through which schools can raise standards: the changes they can make and the strategies they can use to improve pupil outcomes. (2013:6)

<https://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/transfer/open/dsbm-phase-4-module-1-understanding-school-improvement/dsbm-p4m1-s3/dsbm-p4m1-s3-t1.html>

Ofsted in England, in a report on how headteachers achieve school improvement, emphasise developing effective monitoring systems based on school level data as critically important for identifying issues, assessing need and evaluating the impact of changes in school policies and practices (Ofsted, 2012). The analysis of school level data is therefore central to the process of continuous school improvement with a clear focus on improving pupil outcomes.

4.3 Evidence of use of SNSA data for school improvement purposes

Feedback from both interviews and surveys included many examples of positive use of P1 SNSA information for improvement purposes. After attending training by SCHOLAR, one teacher identified the areas she felt P1SNSA data would inform:

I will be very keen to use the different ways to analyse data, which will in turn help to maximise support for pupils, and staff, thus raising attainment throughout; analysing data to establish if any interventions are required to raise attainment. I am planning on sharing the information and skills I gained at this course with my P1 stage colleagues before and after administering the SNSA assessments within our age group.... Use of the individual and class reports to help plan next steps in teaching and learning to raise attainment in numeracy and literacy and ensure progression throughout school; being able to pinpoint aspects for whole school priorities; considering groups of learners rather than looking at whole cohort.

(P1 teacher quoted in LA survey, East Dunbartonshire Council)

Some schools and LAs are already using P1 SNSA productively for school improvement:

It is used to pinpoint if there are trends across the school in terms of strengths and aspects for development and we then plan at stages and as a whole school accordingly. We also use it alongside teacher judgement and other assessments to help us assess an individual's performance. This information then helps us plan next steps in terms of support and challenge needed to raise attainment and achievement. (Headteacher, survey)

Helps give further evidence for different cohorts of learners including pupils with additional support needs and able pupils. (Headteacher, survey)

In survey evidence from the local authorities, this headteacher identifies the value of using the data not only for school improvement but also in discussions within the school cluster:

We find the class and cohort data very informative for identifying improvements required within schools' curriculum content, or approaches to delivering certain aspects of the curriculum. The diagnostic information is being used effectively at Cluster level also for schools to support and challenge each other on improving aspects of their curriculum.

(West Lothian Council, survey)

Local authorities in particular see the value of the P1 SNSA for school improvement:

These can be effective in supporting teachers' judgements, providing they are placed in perspective, when considering a wide range of assessment evidence. They can be used to identify common areas requiring a focus in the planning of next steps in learning for individuals, groups, class.

(Edinburgh City Council, survey)

P1 SNSA data could be used very effectively to drive continuous school improvement. This is due to the fact that it provides diagnostic data at individual, group and school level. This means that senior leaders in schools can look across the results to see if there are particular gaps, strengths etc which will then inform next steps not only for individual pupils, but in terms of curriculum and assessment.

(East Dunbartonshire Council, survey)

However, both headteachers and local authorities emphasise that P1 SNSA information is only a part of the school level data that should be considered and that, after only one year of implementation, the productive use of the information is potential, needing time to embed in the system:

All reliable assessment data is useful for school improvement. Analysis of themes and strengths and next steps is a useful starter for professional discussion. When used alongside the BGE Benchmarking tool, it is useful to have national comparators to help gauge progress and attainment.

(Headteacher, survey)

It will take time to fully realise the value of the tests. In principle SNSA can provide information and feedback that can be used alongside other information to help teachers make decisions about next steps and progress in learning. Schools can use the information as part of the range of evidence gathered to reflect on impact of improvements and areas for further development. (South Ayrshire Council, survey)

4.4 Criticisms of the usefulness of P1 SNSA data for school improvement purposes

In survey responses, some headteachers and P1 teachers commented that they were not convinced of the usefulness of P1 SNSA data, comparing it unfavourably with previous standardised assessments:

Other data from other types of assessments were easier to read and understand. The SNSA were difficult to make sense of in relation to learning in the classroom. No guidance on how to read and use the data. This may have helped. (P1 teacher, survey)

Some felt that SNSA information did not add anything to the information gathered through ongoing teacher assessment or was not accurate enough:

There was already enough information. The SNSA is not an appropriate assessment for P1. Teacher observations and a broad range of evidence collected over time are more appropriate at this age. We use assessments that demonstrate breadth, depth and challenge to inform school improvement. Then SNSA does not provide this, and P1 is not meaningful. (Headteacher, survey)

Others felt that the data generated was inaccurate, unnecessary and therefore not any use for informing school improvement:

It is not at all useful for improvement purposes. I am wholly against the use of this assessment in P1 and think it is detrimental to teaching and learning due to the time it takes to administer and the unreliable information it has provided for some of our children. (P1 teacher, survey)

However, the majority of the responses expressing no confidence in the P1 SNSA as generating useful data for school improvement were from teachers or headteachers who had not received training or who felt unprepared to carry out the assessment and interpret the data.

Evidence from one local authority points to the value of training to support teachers and headteachers in using P1 SNSA data to support school improvement:

Evaluations in relation to the SCHOLAR training from participants was very positive with all participants stating that they found the sessions extremely useful and that the training made them more confident in their ability to administer the assessments, but importantly, to access and analyse the attainment data for improvement purposes. (East Renfrewshire, survey)

In addition, those who refer to other assessments as more useful, for example, PiPs, which were administered at the beginning and end of P1 to all children, may not be clear about the different purposes of the SNSA and the distinction between summative and formative assessments.

As the Independent Review took place after only one full year of implementation of the P1 SNSA, responses to the surveys indicated that their use for school improvement purposes was still at the early stage and their impact was seen as potential rather than identifiable:

It is too early to say that all schools are using the data effectively for school improvement, but there is potential for this as understanding grows at school and officer level. (Shetland Islands Council, survey)

One local authority warned that the limitations of using P1 SNSA information should be understood:

We already use a range of measures for school improvement purposes, the SNSA is used almost exclusively to identify any gaps in general learning or for individuals. We would not use the SNSA on its own for school improvement purposes. (East Ayrshire local authority, survey)

However, headteachers who recognise the value of the P1 SNSA are aware of the partial nature of the assessment but nevertheless see it as a useful element in their professional toolkit:

It's useful as a part of a range of assessments. We want to use it better this session. (Headteacher, survey)

Conclusions

Teachers, schools and local authorities have identified ways in which P1 SNSA data can usefully inform elements of school improvement although they understand that P1 SNSA data only covers certain aspects of literacy and numeracy learning. P1 SNSA information, therefore, has the potential to be part of useful evidence for broader school improvement purposes.

All local authorities who returned surveys were positive about the potential for using P1 SNSA data to inform school improvement.

Survey and interview evidence show that a minority of headteachers and teachers take a negative view of the value of the P1 SNSA to provide useful data to support school improvement in comparison to previous standardised assessments used in many local authorities.

There is evidence of a relationship between understanding how P1 SNSA information can be used for school improvement purposes and attendance at training sessions focused on data analysis beyond the individual pupil.

Recommendations

The Scottish Government

Produce guidance outlining how P1 SNSA can positively contribute to school improvement, including further detailed case studies showing how a range of both urban and rural schools have used P1 SNSA for successful school improvement purposes. This guidance should be accessible online.

Expand the frequency of professional learning opportunities/training in all local authorities, including face-to-face discussions, which focuses on both the positive use, as well as the limitations, of using P1 SNSA information. This should particularly target senior leaders in schools.

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Section Five Challenges of using the P1 SNSA

5.1. Value of the P1 SNSA

A majority of interview and survey respondents saw value in the P1 SNSA, particularly for supporting professional judgements. These views are supported by the findings of the P1 Primary Forum. However, concerns were expressed about administration and the length of the P1 literacy SNSA. Responses detailing challenges associated with the P1 SNSA from surveys and interviews, even those showing unequivocal commitment to the value of the P1 SNSA, clustered around:

- the time and staffing needed to administer the assessments
- difficulties with technology
- the length of the P1 literacy SNSA
- the difficulty of some of the items, specifically in the P1 literacy SNSA (see Section 3.3).

5.1 Time to administer the assessments

This is an issue which is more acute in larger schools. In one school visited by the Independent Review there were 122 P1 children to be assessed. The headteacher was positive about the potential value of the P1 SNSA but pointed out that administering the assessments meant allocating a large amount of time for each P1 teacher. The Review observed nine children undertaking the P1 literacy assessments in the computer suite, supported by four members of staff. The children who took the longest time spent 45-50 minutes completing the assessment. In other schools the Review observed children undertaking the P1 numeracy assessment which took 30 minutes at the most.

In survey responses, headteachers and teachers commented:

[The SNSA] can only be carried out in a quiet space which means there has to be an adult available to do this. At the moment the majority of schools do not have extra staff to carry out these tests. In many schools there are staff who do not get any McCrone cover. PSAs are needed for specific children and in many instances cannot spend full days carrying out these tests. Tests also take a long time to administer. (Headteacher, survey)

It is very difficult to support a large number of children – more than one to 3 is difficult to support children so they show what they can do.

(Headteacher, survey)

On the other hand, visits and observations by the Review, and survey responses, indicate that in some schools there is a developed system which is integrated into the teaching day so that the P1 assessments are administered over a longer period of time as part of normal learning and teaching time. Equally, some schools have embraced the opportunity to pause the assessments if children are becoming too tired or switching off:

It is not too long for P1 children – and you can give them a break if needed.

(P1 teacher, [redacted], interview)

I was amazed about what other people had been told. I didn't know we could stop midway, that there were practice activities they could do beforehand or that I could let children choose what [technology] to use. (P1 teacher from P1 PF report, 2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/p1-practitioner-forum-recommendations-scottish-national-standardised-assessments/pages/6/>

However, this is not quite so easy to organise if there are three or four P1 classes.

5.3 Difficulties with technology

Survey and interview responses covered a range of problems including: children not being familiar with using the mouse or desktop computers generally; internet connection failures; technical problems with machinery, particularly involving the use of earphones; scrolling up and down; availability of digital technology in the school:

As I carried these out with the children, they found the dragging nearly impossible. Their mouse control is not advanced enough to do this.

(Headteacher, survey)

The pupils are not able to manage the test independently on a computer. The children do not have the fine motor skills for example, joining a line from one image to another. The test would be better completed on a tablet using the child's finger but we do not have this facility at our school. (Headteacher, survey)

Thankfully we were able to use iPads to complete the test. If it had been on a laptop or PC, the children would have struggled with the ICT skills.

(P1 teacher, survey)

On a Review observation visit, one teacher pointed out that when the P1 teachers discovered in the first iteration of the P1 SNSA that children were struggling with some aspects of using the technology, the team planned extra time to develop the skills needed so that this year there were no problems for the children in managing the technology.

Case studies on the Education Scotland National Improvement Hub give examples from 2018 of schools organising the use of technology to support the administration of the P1 SNSA. In [redacted] school, South Ayrshire there were two classes in P1:

As well as two computers in the classroom itself, all classes have access to computers in the open area outside their classroom. Primary 1 children regularly use these computers in a range of learning and teaching activities.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/primary-1-snsa-case-studies>

[redacted] of West Lothian Council commented:

There were a few issues with P1 in terms of technology and the management of groups of children doing it at the same time so in West Lothian we have looked into this and developed appropriate support as part of our implementation plan including extensive consultation with staff. (Interview)

In [redacted] primary school, West Lothian, an urban school with 56 P1 children:

The primary 1 SNSAs were one of a number of activities children were involved in at the same time. There was a work station of touchscreen computers that groups of children (around 4 or 5) used, while the rest of the class were working on other activities at different workstations.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/primary-1-snsa-case-studies>

Clearly, some technological challenges can be overcome by planning, focused teaching, managed sharing of technology and local authority support and consultation. However, difficulties remain, particularly in larger schools where access is more demanding and P4 and P7 SNSAs also need to be accommodated.

5.4 The length of the P1 numeracy and literacy SNSAs

In surveys, observations and interviews the only comments about the length of the P1 numeracy assessment was to compare it with the length of the literacy assessment:

The numeracy tests are well matched to what is expected of a P1 child, and matches the Benchmarks. The literacy tests are very difficult and require a huge amount of concentration to complete; some took 40-45 minutes to complete. (P1 teacher, survey)

The reading section was lengthy and children lost interest; they were much happier completing the numeracy assessment. (P1 teacher, survey)

Some feel that the maths assessment at P1 is more manageable and accessible for pupils than the literacy assessment. This is due in part to the amount of text that children are required to read (in the literacy assessment) before answering the questions.

(East Dunbartonshire Council, survey)

There were frequent comments about the length of the literacy SNSA:

The assessments themselves are very lengthy; the test is exceptionally long for P1. (Headteacher, survey)

It was hard for some children to complete the sections due to the time it took to complete. (P1 teacher, survey)

One local authority reported that there had been concerns within the authority about the length of the P1 literacy SNSA:

In terms of length and content of text, it appeared to be far too advanced and the amount of text being presented was quite daunting for some children. (Aberdeenshire, survey)

Responses indicated that the length of the literacy assessment threatened the validity of the results:

The length of the tests resulted in the children becoming very bored and clicking any answer. (P1 teacher, survey)

I found the literacy SNSA in particular was too long and wordy. The children were faced with huge passages that they could not read and this caused them to get bored/guess answers. (P1 teacher, survey)

In a school visit, the Review observed a highly fluent P1 reader completing the assessment with ease and relish. Nevertheless, when he reached the third lengthy text in the assessment adapted for the higher level, he was visibly flagging. This, again, might threaten the reliability of the assessment for particularly fluent readers. Whilst, as noted above, it is possible for children to discontinue the assessment and resume when they have been rested, this is not always possible in everyday contexts and especially in schools with large P1 numbers. In addition, it might be argued that if the P1 teacher is administering the assessments, any errors made as a result of disengagement can be noted and taken into account. However, it is by no means standard practice for P1 teachers themselves to administer the assessment, making more salient the issue of possible skewing of results because of the length of the P1 literacy SNSA.

The Review takes into account the need for a spread of questions in order adequately to assess the range of pupils undertaking the P1 literacy SNSA. However, in interview ACER confirmed that there would be no loss of coverage or reliability if the P1 literacy assessment were shorter with fewer items.

5.5 Suitability of the P1 SNSA for children with additional support needs

The Review did not ask any specific questions about the suitability of the P1 SNSA for children with additional support needs (ASN) or children with English as an additional language (EAL) and there were few references in the survey responses. One headteacher noted that children diagnosed as autistic experienced difficulty with the earphones and another commented:

Some pupils with ASN or who were not computer literate found the programme difficult to navigate. (Headteacher, survey)

One local authority commented that some schools:

...reported that pupils with ASN/EAL can present with anxiety when engaging with the SNSAs and are seeking greater clarity about the support strategies which should be in place to eliminate this. (City of Edinburgh Council, survey)

However, in observations and interviews, the Review found that some schools use their usual support arrangements to enable children with ASN to have access to the assessments as a matter of equity. Indeed, one headteacher's survey response pointed out that the SNSA:

Supports approaches to targeting funding for initiatives supported by Pupil Equity funding. (Headteacher, survey)

Using the guidance offered in *Accessibility Guidance Primary 1 School year 2018-19*, and the SNSA Help Page Guidance on ASN and EAL, headteachers and teachers can use their professional judgement and expertise to make decisions about pupils undertaking the P1 SNSA and about appropriate support arrangements:

Pupils with additional support needs were given some support in terms of understanding what they were being asked to do, however completion was very much down to pupils. (P1 teacher, survey)

There were only two responses to the Review survey from headteachers of special schools, neither of which uses the assessment as it is not suited to the very complex needs of the pupils in those schools. However, in interview, Steven McPherson, HMI, pointed out that some special schools are able to use the assessments and that additional support need not be a barrier (interview, April, 2019). The Review recognises that it may be more of a challenge at P1 to support children with ASN to undertake the SNSA. However, it is clear from the Accessibility Guidance that teachers can decide whether or not it is appropriate for children with ASN or EAL to undertake the P1 SNSA.

Every local authority has a different approach to meeting the needs of children with additional needs and in some areas funding for support may be an issue. Nevertheless, the P1 SNSA has potential to support teachers both in the mainstream and in the special sector in developing appropriate assessment processes, and to boost professional confidence in assessment and moderation judgements.

5.6 Children with English as an additional language

Again, the Review did not specifically seek out responses about the suitability of the P1 SNSA for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). Few teachers or headteachers commented on children with EAL in respect of the P1 SNSA. Two who did respond thought that the P1 literacy SNSA was too difficult and lengthy for their EAL children. However, one headteacher commented that the P1 SNSA:

Supports analysis of performance of children in relation to SIMD, male/female, FME, EAL information gathering supporting targeted approaches if appropriate. (Headteacher, survey)

One local authority specifically commented on the support materials:

Online information materials for practitioners was informative and supportive in administration of the assessments as well as the removal of barriers to accessing SNSA for EAL and ASN learners. (Glasgow City Council, Survey)

See:

file:///C:/Users/Windows%2010/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/YRM8LSYK/p1_accessibility_teacher_guidance_1819.pdf

file:///C:/Users/Windows%2010/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/YRM8LSYK/eal_and_asn_administration_guidance-min.pdf

In observation visits and interviews, although there were children with EAL in some schools, no issues were identified. It seems that overall the good professional sense of headteachers and teachers and the guidance offered, helps to identify the appropriate use of the P1 SNSA with pupils who have English as an additional language.

5.7 Notifying parents/carers of SNSA results

The Review survey for headteachers specifically asked if parents/carers were notified of the results of the P1 SNSA. Of those who responded, the majority either did not report the results at all or specified that they reported as part of holistic reporting of progress to parents/ carers. In interviews, Eileen Prior, of Connect, and separately Joanna Murphy of the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFs), both pointed out that if the P1 SNSA is retained the data should not be reported to parents in isolation as it is just part of the information that teachers use for ongoing assessment purposes (interviews, February, 2019). Eileen Prior commented that reporting the results gives them special status. In their evidence to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, Connect argues that ‘Assessment should inform quality conversations between teachers, children and families’ yet ‘parents tell us they often do not know about the tests, nor are they given any feedback on the outcomes’ (Submission to Education and Skills Committee’s Inquiry into Scottish National Standardised Assessments, 2018:2).

Both Connect and NPFs call for a better quality of communication between home and school about learning, as Eileen Prior explains, ‘what parents/carers want is a proper dialogue between child, parents/carers and school about what is going well, what isn’t and how home and school can work together to move forward.’ (Interview, February, 2019)

The National Improvement Framework (2019) agrees, and points to the value of genuine home school partnerships:

We want to improve and increase the ways in which parents, carers and families can work with teachers and partners to support their children and young people. We also want to increase the voice of parents and carers in leading improvements within schools. Parental involvement ensures that parents can help to shape the ethos, activity and priorities for the school in partnership with school leaders. (NIF, 2019:26)

Since the data generated from the P1 SNSAs is intended to support teachers' professional judgements and only assesses part of the CfE early level, it is inappropriate to report the results separately from general and holistic reporting of progress to parents. Conversations about progress with parents/ carers should focus on the entire child and her/his educational well-being.

Conclusions

Observations, interviews and survey responses reveal concerns about: the time and staffing needed to administer the P1 SNSA; technological difficulties; and the length of the assessment, specifically the P1 literacy SNSA.

Some headteachers and teachers have found ways to overcome the challenges of technology involved in administering the P1 SNSA through careful planning, focused teaching and managed sharing of technology although this is not always easy or straightforward, especially in bigger schools.

The length of the P1 literacy SNSA gives rise to concerns about whether the results obtained for some children are reliable.

Supporting children at P1 with ASN or EAL to undertake the SNSA can be challenging, needing sensible professional decisions about individual children's capability to undergo the SNSA. However, the guidance offered about accessibility and administration of the P1 SNSA is comprehensive and clear about supporting children with ASN and EAL.

Headteachers are generally thoughtful about reporting SNSA data to parents/carers, often making it part of a more holistic reporting conversation.

Recommendations

The Scottish Government

Continue and extend support to schools for administering the P1 SNSA in terms of time and staffing.

Develop more guidance for primary schools, particularly larger schools, in managing the technological demands of the P1 SNSA.

Recommend that, as part of its ongoing review process, ACER reduce the number of items in the P1 literacy SNSA.

Extend the work of QAMSOs and moderation processes specifically to include special schools and those teachers with responsibility for children with additional support needs and English as an additional language.

Continue to develop the productive partnership between home and school and including parents/carers in professional conversations about children's progress.

Local authorities

Extend support and consultation with schools experiencing difficulties in managing the technology and timing of administering the P1 SNSA.

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Section Six The national Gaelic Medium Education Standardised Assessment (MCMG)

6.1 Development of the MCNG

Measaidhean Coitcheann Nàiseanta airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig (MCNG) is a version of the Scottish national standardised assessments (SNSA) for children and young people in Gaelic Medium Education (GME). These were launched in December 2018. Initially they were expected to be published in August 2018. They were delayed to enable improvements based on a review of the use of standardised assessments in English medium. The cohort for whom MCNG is designed is relatively small: there are about 6000 children and young people in Gaelic Medium Education (GME), of whom 582 are in P1. The MCNG is part of the National Improvement Framework. MCNGs were requested by stakeholders to assist with assessing children's progress, to provide diagnostic information and to support teachers' professional judgement bespoke to Gaelic Medium Education. MCNG was specifically developed to enable children to be assessed in literacy and numeracy in Gaelic as the language in which they were being immersed.

An advisory group, including national organisations, local authorities and teachers working across 14 local authorities oversaw the development to ensure that it aligns with the Benchmarks of the Curriculum for Excellence and the staging posts for literacy and numeracy. Although the advisory group would have liked to include talking and listening in the assessments, this was not possible as it would have created difficulties about standardised approaches.

The content was developed by the company Giglets who have experience in creating Gaelic medium reading and onscreen resources. Nine content creators were recruited, representing all levels of CfE with a range of teaching experience, specifically to ensure that the content aligned with CfE. Material was then subjected to a quality assurance process. Giglets assembled a group with experience in Gaelic Medium Education, an educational psychologist and an academic from Edinburgh University. This group checked consistency across the questions for quality, appropriateness, and level of difficulty based on National Benchmarks. There was then a final check with local authorities, Scottish Government and quality assurance before signing it off. Outreach events to engage with local authorities explained the MCNG background, what they are designed for and how they take into account different sizes of school, geography and accessibility. Feedback was sent to Giglets for improvements.

The MCNGs take account of children's additional support needs. For example, font and screen colour can be selected and the children can listen to rather than read the

questions. There is also audio support in three different accents, which is particularly useful at P1. A style guide has been created to assist the content creators with developing questions. A terminology checklist has been created for teachers of Gaelic terminology used within the assessments. The checklist will be updated as new questions are created. However, the working group will still be available for comment and support. There has been ongoing communication with the Gaelic sector and the development group wrote to all professional associations and interested organisations to highlight the value of receiving feedback.

6.2 The purpose of the P1 MCNG

The advisory group were keen to clarify understanding of the purpose of the assessment. It is to discover ‘Where is the child at?’ and they have ensured that MCNG fits with the Early Level of CfE. Nursery education supports the development of Gaelic. There is no window suggested for the assessments although there was early general discussion about the P1 assessment not being used until later in the school year. Overall, however, the view is that progress within immersion should drive when the assessments are done.

It is expected that by P7 children will achieve equal fluency and literacy in both Gaelic and English. Children in Gaelic Medium Education take MCNG at P1, P4, P7 and S3. In addition they take SNSA at P7 and S3. Teachers will have access to the assessment data and will inform parents where appropriate and as part of general reporting on progress. The data will not go beyond the local authority. At national level reporting is anonymised so there will be no attributable data used to identify national trends. The same policy will be used for Gaelic as for English: that there will be no high stakes use of data.

For P1 MCNG, Education Scotland held moderation events in three locations to strengthen the understanding of holistic assessment. The first of these focused specifically on listening and talking. These events emphasised that the assessments were only part of teachers’ professional judgements teachers on progress with Curriculum for Excellence levels.

6.3 Teachers’ Gaelic subject knowledge

In interview, HMI commented that teachers’ subject knowledge in GME has been strengthened by publications such as HM Inspectors’ Advice on Gaelic Education. This Advice describes best practice in immersion, based on evidence from scrutiny. It has assisted with achieving more consistency in the use of highly-effective immersion as central to GME. Teachers’ subject knowledge has been supplemented by the National Benchmarks which were designed to provide clarity on national standards.

6.4 Involving parents

There is information available on the MCNG public website

<https://measaidheancoitcheann.gov.scot/en/parents>

and the leaflet regarding the approach to assessment outlined in the National Improvement Framework has also been shared with parents and carers of children in GME schools, as it is equally pertinent to them.

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/gov.scot/publications/factsheet/2016/11/assessing-childrens-progress-guide-for-parents-and-carers/documents/3a7ac459-c886-4c29-a1d2-d52c084cc7f9/3a7ac459-c886-4c29-a1d2-d52c084cc7f9/gov.scot%3Adocument>

In addition, parents can access online Gaelic resources used in schools provided by the commercial company Stòrlann, so that children and parents can access the same books. Also, BookBugs online reading resources are available in Gaelic.

Gaelic4Parents.com is a website to support parents and children learning in GME. It also provides live support with homework. Gaelic4Parents.com enables access to a range of resources to support parents with supporting learning at home. For example, reading books, games, stories and audio.

6.5 Evidence for the Independent Review

Since the P1 MCMG is not yet available to schools it has not been possible for the Independent Review to observe any children undertaking the assessments. Similarly, it was not part of the survey as the MCMG has not yet been launched. However, evidence has been taken from HMI and Education Scotland and considered against the conclusions for the P1 SNSA. Local authorities report in interview that there have been no concerns about the Gaelic assessment: 'It's all been very well organised. And we have been involved in the trialling' (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles), interview, April, 2019).

Conclusions

It is the opinion of the Review that the MCMG will avoid some of the difficulties encountered by the SNSA in its first iteration.

Care has been taken to communicate with schools, local authorities and the Gaelic sector throughout the development of the assessments. Attention has been given to involving parents/carers.

The assessment has been robustly trialled and the MCMG will not be as lengthy as the literacy SNSA.

Recommendation

The Scottish Government

Proceed with the implementation of the national Gaelic Medium Education Standardised Assessment.

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Section Seven The future of the P1 SNSA

7.1 The role of SNSA at national level

Evidence gathered by this Independent Review shows that there is unevenness in understanding across the sector about the intention and purpose of SNSA at national level and this has become a particular issue in P1. There is a need for clarity about:

- The purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national level.
- How the implementation of P1 SNSA helps to close the poverty related attainment gap.
- Given that most local authorities have used standardised assessments already in P1, what the advantages of SNSA are over other standardised assessments that have been in general use in Scotland.

SNSA was developed carefully so that it aligns with the CfE through the Benchmarks; none of the previously used assessments did this. In distinction from previous assessments, the SNSA is standardised on a Scottish population which again was not a feature of those assessments. In addition, having a standardised assessment as part of a professional toolkit for making judgements about children's learning serves to counter unconscious bias. Further, the P1 SNSA has the potential to support teacher subject knowledge.

Evidence gathered for this Review from teachers, schools and local authorities indicates a will that SNSA should succeed in its role of informing consistent professional judgements about learning and teaching. In its submission to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry, EIS argued that the SNSA cannot offer 'small data' (Pasi Sahlberg, ICEA): 'the information that is most useful to teachers, learners and parents as they work in partnership to progress individuals' learning' (EIS, 2018:3). There were fears that the P1 SNSA might be used by those 'driving narrow accountability agendas either at local or national level' (*ibid.*). This reflects wider concerns about high stakes uses of data (see Section 1.5). However, this Review has not found evidence of intent to use the P1 SNSA data in this way. Indeed, it is difficult to see how the aggregation of such data might be used for broader accountability purposes. Nevertheless, as recommended in Section One, there should be strong safeguards against any drift towards the use of the P1 SNSA data for high stakes or accountability purposes. The data should be a tightly focused part of a broader range of evidence informing teachers' decisions about learning and teaching. Indeed, the granular nature of the data generated by P1 SNSA, alongside teachers' direct observations, offers the kind of 'small data' which is valuable in informing teachers' professional judgements.

As the OECD report explains, that if standardised assessments are used in the context of school accountability they are only a single aspect of a much broader process so that there should be a wider view of accountability:

... it is especially important to obtain a complete view of student outcomes and teacher instruction, which standardised tests cannot provide. Earl and Katz (2006) recommend gathering data in a wide range of forms, including standardised tests and formative classroom assessments, in order to enhance accountability evaluations (cited in Campbell and Levin, 2008). By implementing a 'toolkit' for understanding student performance and feedback, the concept of accountability becomes a conversation on ideas and challenges and a means to monitor progress, rather than a static approach to data collection and analysis. Such an approach to accountability not only provides more genuine data, but also can increase teacher buy-in and therefore reduce system distortions. (Morris, 2011)

<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/5kg3rp9qbnr6-en.pdf?expires=1554734976&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=FB80C111D6391003ECFCB43E5DF1A693>

Professor Kathy Hall, an international expert on assessment, acknowledges that Scottish policy tries to guard against narrow high stakes use of assessment data:

In Scotland, unlike England, individual schools are not held to account through comparative achievement data, and there are no league tables of performance. In essence, the tests available to Scottish schools are not substantially different to those used in England, but, crucially, they are not 'high stakes' because there is not an emphasis on ranking and comparing. Performance tables are not compiled and published. (Hall, 2018: 296)

7.2 Teachers' perceptions of the value given to their professional judgements

This Review values the contributions made by teachers and headteachers in responding to the survey, particularly at a very busy time of the teaching year. Their responses show that some teachers feel that their professional judgements are being undervalued by the introduction of the P1 SNSA as a 'standardised' assessment. This needs addressing. While the terminology is accurate in describing how the assessments have been developed, it has been taken to suggest that teachers' professional judgements have less status. This was not the intention of the development of the assessments and should be further emphasised in documentation. However, it may be the case that teachers who felt most keenly that their professional judgements were being questioned were those who had not had training or who had not had personal experience of carrying out the assessments.

7.3 Potential of the P1 SNSA to enhance teachers' subject knowledge

In the observations carried by this Review of children undertaking the P1 SNSAs, it was clear that the assessment offered rich observational as well as content data about

children's learning behaviours in literacy and numeracy. In addition, survey responses from P1 teachers who had carried out the assessments indicated that they valued this 'quality time' (P1 teacher, survey) with individual children. On the other hand, where P1 teachers had not been personally involved in administering the SNSAs, they were less aware of its value. The P1 SNSA is potentially a very useful extra observational tool and one which, in its detailed descriptors, can support the development of teachers' assurance in making consistent judgements of children's capabilities. If the assessment is to realise its potential as a diagnostic tool, then P1 teachers need to have experience of administering it themselves. This may create challenges for larger schools and mean some creative administrative decisions, but in terms of developing a skilful staff, it has real value.

Used at its best, as this headteacher noted, the P1 SNSA can support professional judgements as it:

- *Becomes part of our overall tracking data.*
- *Supports transition information sharing.*
- *Supports looking for trends and gaps in learning.*
- *Supports triangulation of formative and summative assessment and teacher judgement.*
- *Supports planning consultation meetings about next steps in learning and teaching.*
- *Supports analysis of performance of children in relation to SIMD, male/female, FME, EAL information gathering, supporting targeted approaches if appropriate.*
- *Can be used to analyse improvements in performance of learning (in conjunction with other assessments).*
- *Supports the tracking of pupil performance and identifying value added trends following initiatives. (Headteacher, survey)*

The NIF report 2019 emphasises the 'strong link between teachers' professional skills and competences and the quality of children and young people's learning experiences' (NIF, 2019: 23). It continues:

Consistent, well-moderated teachers' professional judgement data on achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy will help us to focus accurately on the difference in attainment between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people, and take further action as a result. (*ibid.*)

7.4. School leadership

Observational and survey evidence gathered for this Review shows that the effective implementation and use of the P1 SNSA data depends on the senior leadership team in any school. As the NIF report (2019) points out:

Evidence indicates that in the most effective systems, decisions about learning and teaching are made as close to the child or young person as possible,

drawing on the expertise of the professionals who know them best and listening to the views of the child, young person and their family. School leaders play a critical role in creating a culture of empowerment and collaboration where curricular and learner pathways are designed and developed to meet the needs of children and young people. (NIF, 2019: 20)

School leadership is the fulcrum for effective use of data to support children's learning futures. Decisions about assessment, and particularly P1 SNSA, set the ethos for the school. The Review met headteachers whose thorough understanding of the consistent and considered use of data enhanced the experiences of both children and teaching staff. Headteachers who have a secure sense of how data can be used for school improvement, including P1 SNSA, set the tone for a positive view of how best to move the school and the children it serves forward. This headteacher's analysis of the advantages of using the P1 SNSA is an example of effective leadership:

- *Standardised data that supports regular tracking of pupils learning and performance at school.*
- *Ability to share themes and trends across cluster schools as all undertook the same assessments. Supports cluster planning and initiatives to improve and enhance learning.*
- *A good way to get where pupils are on a national perspective supporting school improvement planning.*
- *Ability to drill down individually for children to see themes, trends and improvements or fluctuations in their learning ability.*
- *Children can take as long as they need to complete the assessment (unlike other online/standardised assessments).*

(Headteacher, survey)

7.5 Local authority leadership

In a similar way to the critical role of senior leadership teams in schools, the leadership of the local authority is crucial in challenging and supporting schools and setting the context for the effective and ethical use of P1 SNSA information. In responses to this Review, local authorities described their attitudes and approaches:

We have created guidance regarding administration and use of SNSAs. Schools are aware that SNSAs are not designed to be used as a test for achievement of a level. The results from the standardised assessments will provide an additional source of nationally consistent information to inform teachers' professional judgement, both when planning next steps and when considering whether children have achieved Curriculum for Excellence levels. Guidance for schools - the information gathered through standardised assessments should be used as part of a suite of information to inform learning and teaching. Standardised assessments can provide a detailed breakdown of a child's ability in literacy and numeracy. Together with assessments from day to day learning and other assessment tasks or activities, standardised assessments can provide a detailed picture of children's progress.

(East Dunbartonshire, survey)

As an authority, we regularly gather and analyse pupil progress at all stages, based on teacher professional judgement. We are then able to analyse any correlations between teachers' professional judgements and the outcome of the SNSA. This then prompts professional discussion between the authority and school leaders, which in turn prompts professional dialogue between school leaders and classroom practitioners. As an authority, this gives an additional layer of data for professionals to analyse together to ensure a robust approach to assessment, moderation, tracking and monitoring. (West Lothian, survey)

The P1 SNSA data is embedded in a broader understanding of how evidence is used to inform teacher professional judgements about learning and teaching and to support school improvement.

7.6 In summary

As Gayle Gorman points out in her Foreword to the *National Thematic Inspection Report*, 2018:

... there is a careful balance to be struck between providing the right amount of governance and accountability while at the same time allowing leaders and practitioners flexibility and autonomy to meet their pupils' needs. (Gorman, 2018)

This Independent Review has considered how Scottish Government might best strike such a balance in respect of the P1 SNSA. Overall, the Review has been impressed with the commitment of teachers, headteachers and local authorities to the children and families they serve. The Review has outlined the current situation with respect to the use and implementation of P1 SNSA. As one local authority leader puts it:

We need to be able to say 'here's where we are'. We need to understand as a country where we are. We're all accountable. We can't allow our children not to experience the best learning and teaching. (Interview, [redacted] West Lothian)

It is clear to the Review that P1 SNSA has a place in informing consistent and effective assessment practice. It has potential, but has not yet completed its second year of implementation, and indeed much of the evidence drawn on for this Review has been from only one year. The SNSA assessment process is founded on self-review and making changes as a result. It has to be acknowledged that the assessment is still in the early stages of implementation and that there is still work to be done and discussions to be held. As one local authority put it:

Whilst we did receive more comments about P1 SNSA than for SNSA at any other stage during session 2017-18, we feel that highlighted issues that could be resolved and improved upon through dialogue and ongoing

improvement, rather than on issues of principle about the validity of conducting standardised testing at this stage. (Aberdeenshire, LA survey)

The P1 Practitioner Forum has already made a valuable contribution to the debate about the usefulness of P1 SNSA. It has also made sound recommendations for the future of the assessments and has given P1 practitioners an opportunity to voice their professional concerns. This Forum should be continued in order to advise the Scottish Government, ACER and practitioner communities on the continuing implementation, development and use of SNSA in P1 classrooms.

Conclusions

P1 SNSA has potential to play a significant role in informing and enhancing teachers' professional judgement. However, some important issues remain to be addressed including the view from some teachers and headteachers that introduction of the P1 SNSA undervalues professionalism.

Questions remain about the purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national and local authority level and how the P1 SNSA will contribute to narrowing the poverty related attainment gap.

Most local authorities have for some years used standardised assessments at P1. It should be made clear what the advantages of SNSA are over other standardised assessments that have previously been in general use.

At the moment, there can be little comparability of aggregated P1 SNSA data beyond the class or school.

Leadership at school and local authority level is crucial to the success of the effective implementation of P1 SNSA.

The P1 Practitioner Forum has played an important role in allowing professional debate about the usefulness and administration of the P1 SNSA.

Recommendations

Scottish Government

Retain the P1 SNSA to inform professional judgements about learning and teaching but address the recommendations which address the key issues identified by this Review.

Ensure that the purpose for collecting P1 SNSA data at national and local authority level is made clear in Government documentation and clarify how the P1 SNSA will contribute to narrowing the poverty related attainment gap.

Retain the P1 Practitioner Forum to offer advice and support to teachers, schools, local authorities, Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

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Acknowledgements

Schools visited

Cardross primary school, Argyll and Bute

Corpus Christi primary school, Glasgow

Dunbar primary school, East Lothian

Gourock primary School, Inverclyde

Millersneuk primary school, East Dunbartonshire

Muckhart primary school ,Clackmannanshire

Raploch primary school, Stirling

Tarbolton primary School , South Ayrshire

St Anthony's primary school, Renfrewshire,

St Benedicts primary school, Glasgow

Victoria Park Primary School, Dundee

Westerton primary school, East Dunbartonshire

Stakeholders

ACER - Juliette Mendelovits and Helen Claydon

Children in Scotland – Amy Woodhouse

Connect - Eileen Prior

Early Years Scotland - Jean Carwood-Edwards and Jane Brumpton

EIS – Susan Quinn and Andrea Bradley

GTC Scotland - Ken Muir

Heads and Deputes Association – Jonathan Cunningham and Catriona Smith

National Parent Forum of Scotland - Joanna Murphy

Royal Society of Edinburgh - Keir Bloomer

Upstart Scotland - Sue Palmer

???? -Terry Wrigley

Professor Sue Ellis, Strathclyde University

Professor Louise Hayward, University of Glasgow

Professor Lindsay Paterson, University of Edinburgh

Sadie Cushley - HMI

Joan Esson – HMI

Louise Phillips - HMI

Steven McPherson - HMI

Helen Budge, Shetland Islands Council

Bernard Chisholm, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles)

Laurence Findlay, Aberdeenshire Council

Carrie Lindsay, Fife Council

Donna McMaster, West Lothian Council

Katie Beattie – Team Leader Assessment Policy

Chris Graham- Education Reform/ Learning Directorate

David Leng - Professional Adviser Improvement

Paul Morgan - ES Content adviser

Maeve MacKinnon – Senior Education officer, Gaelic

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All 100%

Almost all 91%-99%

Most 75%-90%

Majority 50%-74%

Minority/less than half 15%-49%

A few less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19
Aberdeen City Council					Course 1 14/01, 15/01 Webinar x1, F2F x1		Course 2 18/03 F2F x1		Course 2 01/05 F2F x1				
					Course 2 31/01 F2F x1				Course 4 13/05 F2F x1				
Aberdeenshire Council			Course 2 01/11 F2F x1		Course 5 30/01 Webinar x1		Course 2 20/03 21/03 F2F x4		Course 2 09/05 F2F x2				
			Course 4 01/11 F2F x1				Course 4 20/03 21/03 F2F x4		Course 4 09/05 F2F x2				
Angus Council			Course 2 08/11 F2F x2			Course 4 13/02 F2F x2							
						Course 5 28/02 Webinar x1							
Argyll and Bute Council					Course 2 16/01 F2F x1		Course 2 27/03 F2F x1		Course 4 29/05 F2F x1	Course 5 03/06 Webinar x1			
Clackmannanshire Council					Course 4 31/01 F2F x1								
	Course 2 20/09 27/9 F2F x2				Course 5 10/01 F2F x1	Course 4 07/02 F2F x1							
Dumfries and Galloway Council			Course 1 06/11 Webinar x1		Course 2 21/01 22/01 F2F x3	Course 5 04/02 Webinar x1	Course 4 12/03 F2F x2						
Dundee City Council					Course 2 23/01 F2F x2								
					Course 4 24/01 25/01 F2F x4								
East Ayrshire Council			Course 2 15/11 F2F x1		Course 4 17/01 F2F x1	Course 5 06/02 Webinar x1	Course 4 13/03 F2F x1						
East Dunbartonshire Council	Course 1 10/09 13/09 F2F x2				Course 5 29/01 F2F x1	Course 2 04/02, 13/02, 18/02 F2F x4	Course 2 12/03 F2F x1		Course 4 13/05 F2F x1				
East Lothian Council	Course 1 19/09 Webinar x 1		Course 4 28/11 F2F x2		Course 5 23/01 Webinar x1		Course 2 25/03 26/03 F2F x2						
East Renfrewshire Council							Course 1 06/03 Webinar x1		Course 2 14/05 F2F x2				
						Course 1 25/02 Webinar x1	Course 5 25/03 Webinar x1		Course 4 15/05 16/05 F2F x4				

Edinburgh City Council						Course 1 27/02 Webinar x1							
						Course 2 20/02 F2F x1	Course 2 04,05,06,07/03 F2F x4						
						Course 4 25/02, 26/02 F2F x2							
	Course 1 24/09 Webinar x1		Course 2 23/11 F2F x1			Course 5 19/02 Webinar x1				Course 4 13/05 F2F x1			
Falkirk Council													
Fife Council						Course 5 18/01 F2F x3		Course 2 14/03 & 21/03 F2F x2					
Glasgow City Council						Course 2 19, 20, 21, 27/02 F2F x4	Course 2 04, 05, 13/03 F2F x3						
	Course 1 04/09 Webinar x1	Course 1 08/10 Webinar x1	Course 2 06, 07, 08, 20, 26, 27/11 F2F x7			Course 5 05/02 Webinar x1	Course 5 20/03 Webinar x1	Course 4 23/04, 25/04 F2F x2	Course 4 08/05, 09/05 F2F x2				
								Course 4 26/03 F2F x1					
Highland Council							Course 2 04/03, 05/03 F2F x5						
		Course 1 31/10 Webinar x1	Course 1 05/11 15/11 Webinar x2			Course 2 07/02 F2F x2	Course 4 05/03 F2F x2						
Inverclyde Council													
						Course 5 30/01 Webinar x1	Course 2 27/03 F2F x3			Course 4 23/05 F2F x2			
Midlothian Council										Course 2 07,08,14,15/05 F2F x4			
	Course 1 25/09 Webinar x1									Course 4 07,08/05 F2F x2			
Moray Council						Course 2 17/01 F2F x2							
	Course 1 20/09 F2F x1					Course 5 22/01 Webinar x1							
North Ayrshire Council													
		Course 2 09/10 10/10 F2F x4											
	Course 1 17/09 Webinar x1	Course 4 31/10 F2F x2				Course 5 21/01 Webinar x1							
North Lanarkshire Council													
		Course 1 01/10 Webinar x1				Course 2 06/02 F2F x2							

	Course 1 18/09, 19/09 F2F x2	Course 2 04/10 F2F x2	Course 2 13/11 F2F x2			Course 5 28/02 Webinar x1	Course 4 19/03 F2F x2	Course 4 24/04 F2F x2				
Orkney Islands Council			Course 1 with Shetland/WIC 12/11 Webinar x1		Course 5 with Shetland/WIC 21/01 Webinar x1	Course 2 with Shetland/WIC 11/02 Webinar x1		Course 2 with Shetland/WIC 25/04 Webinar x1				
			Course 2 with Shetland/WIC 22/11 29/11 Webinar x2			Course 4 with Shetland/WIC 11/02 Webinar x1		Course 4 with Shetland/WIC 29/04 Webinar x1				
Perth & Kinross Council			Course 2 01/11 02/11 F2F x3	Course 4 05/12 F2F x2		Course 4 28/02 F2F x2	Course 4 01/03 F2F x2	Course 4 16/04 F2F x2				
Renfrewshire Council		Course 1 24/10 F2F x1	Course 2 20/11 F2F x2		Course 4 09/01 F2F x1			Course 1 30/04 F2F x1	Course 2 21/05 F2F x3			
								Course 4 17/04 F2F x1	Course 5 09/05 Webinar x1			
Scottish Borders Council		Course 1 01/10 Webinar x1	Course 1 02/11 23/11 F2F x2		Course 5 14/01 Webinar x1			Course 4 29/04 30/04 F2F x5				
Shetland Islands Council			Course 1 with Orkney/WIC 12/11 Webinar x1		Course 5 with Orkney/WIC 21/01 Webinar x1	Course 2 with Orkney/WIC 11/02 Webinar x1		Course 2 with Orkney/WIC 25/04 Webinar x1				
			Course 2 with Orkney/WIC 22/11 29/11 Webinar x2			Course 4 with Orkney/WIC 11/02 Webinar x1		Course 4 with Orkney/WIC 29/04 Webinar x1				
South Ayrshire Council		Course 2 03/10 F2F x2	Course 2 07/10 F2F x1			Course 2 25/02 F2F x1						
	Course 1 18/09 26/09 Webinar x1 F2F x1	Course 4 25/10 F2F x2			Course 5 16/01 Webinar x1							
South Lanarkshire Council						Course 2 05/02 F2F x2						
		Course 1 02/10 Webinar x1	Course 2 14/11 F2F x2		Course 1 15/01 Webinar x1	Course 4 18, 19, 21, 26, 27/02 F2F x10	Course 5 11/03, 18/03 Webinar x2					
Stirling Council						Course 2 06/02 F2F x1						
		Course 2 30/10 F2F x1				Course 5 20/02 Webinar x1	Course 4 11/03, 13/03 F2F x2	Course 4 24/04, 25/04 F2F x2				
West Dunbartonshire Council						Course 4 26/02 F2F x1						
		Course 1 02/10 23/10 F2F x2	Course 2 13/11 F2F x1		Course 2 17/01 F2F x1	Course 5 15/02 Webinar x1	Course 4 14/03 F2F x1					
West Lothian Council			Course 2 12/11 20/11 F2F x2		Course 4 28/01 29/01 F2F x5	Course 1 04/02, 13/02 F2F x2	Course 2 14/03 F2F x1	Course 5 09/04 Webinar x1				
						Course 2 06/02 F2F x2						

Glasgow City Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Tue 04 Sep 2018
East Dunbartonshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Mon 10 Sep 2018
East Dunbartonshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Thu 13 Sep 2018
North Ayrshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Mon 17 Sep 2018
North Lanarkshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face (NQT)	Tue 18 Sep 2018
East Lothian Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Wed 19 Sep 2018
North Lanarkshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face (NQT)	Wed 19 Sep 2018
Clackmannanshire Council	2	Analysing data	Face to Face	Thu 20 Sep 2018
Moray Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Thu 20 Sep 2018
Edinburgh City Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Mon 24 Sep 2018
Midlothian Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Tue 25 Sep 2018
South Ayrshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Wed 26 Sep 2018
Clackmannanshire Council	2	Analysing data	Face to Face	Thu 27 Sep 2018
North Lanarkshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Thu 27 Sep 2018
North Lanarkshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar (all staff)	Mon 01 Oct 2018
Scottish Borders Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Mon 01 Oct 2018
South Lanarkshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Tue 02 Oct 2018
West Dunbartonshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Tue 02 Oct 2018
Argyll and Bute Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Wed 03 Oct 2018
South Ayrshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 03 Oct 2018
South Ayrshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 03 Oct 2018
North Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 04 Oct 2018
North Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 04 Oct 2018
Glasgow City Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Mon 08 Oct 2018
North Ayrshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 09 Oct 2018
North Ayrshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 09 Oct 2018
North Ayrshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 10 Oct 2018
North Ayrshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 10 Oct 2018
West Dunbartonshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Tue 23 Oct 2018
Renfrewshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Wed 24 Oct 2018
South Ayrshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 25 Oct 2018
South Ayrshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 25 Oct 2018
Stirling Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 30 Oct 2018

Highland Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Wed 31 Oct 2018
North Ayrshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 31 Oct 2018
North Ayrshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 31 Oct 2018
Aberdeenshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 01 Nov 2018
Aberdeenshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 01 Nov 2018
Perth & Kinross Council	2	Analysing Data	F2F	Thu 01 Nov 2018
Perth & Kinross Council	2	Analysing Data	F2F	Thu 01 Nov 2018
Perth & Kinross Council	2	Analysing Data	F2F	Fri 02 Nov 2018
Scottish Borders Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Fri 02 Nov 2018
Highland Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Mon 05 Nov 2018
Dumfries and Galloway Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Tue 06 Nov 2018
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 06 Nov 2018
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 07 Nov 2018
South Ayrshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 07 Nov 2018
Angus Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 08 Nov 2018
Angus Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 08 Nov 2018
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 08 Nov 2018
Orkney Islands Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Mon 12 Nov 2018
West Lothian Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 12 Nov 2018
North Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 13 Nov 2018
North Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 13 Nov 2018
West Dunbartonshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 13 Nov 2018
South Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 14 Nov 2018
South Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 14 Nov 2018
East Ayrshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 15 Nov 2018
Highland Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Thu 15 Nov 2018
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 20 Nov 2018
Renfrewshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 20 Nov 2018
Renfrewshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 20 Nov 2018
West Lothian Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 20 Nov 2018
Orkney Islands Council	2	Analysing Data	Webinar	Thu 22 Nov 2018
Edinburgh City Council	2	Analysing Data	Webinar	Fri 23 Nov 2018
Scottish Borders Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Fri 23 Nov 2018

Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 26 Nov 2018
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 27 Nov 2018
East Lothian Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to Face	Wed 28 Nov 2018
East Lothian Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to Face	Wed 28 Nov 2018
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 28 Nov 2018
Orkney Islands Council	2	Analysing Data	Webinar	Thu 29 Nov 2018
Perth & Kinross Council	4	Support Improvement	F2F	Wed 05 Dec 2018
Perth & Kinross Council	4	Support Improvement	F2F	Wed 05 Dec 2018
Renfrewshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 09 Jan 2019
Clackmannanshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Thu 10 Jan 2019
Aberdeen City Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Mon 14 Jan 2019
Scottish Borders Council	5	Intro to EAL/ASN SNSA	Webinar	Mon 14 Jan 2019
Aberdeen City Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Tue 15 Jan 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Tue 15 Jan 2019
Argyll and Bute Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 16 Jan 2019
South Ayrshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Wed 16 Jan 2019
East Ayrshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 17 Jan 2019
Moray Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 17 Jan 2019
Moray Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 17 Jan 2019
West Dunbartonshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 17 Jan 2019
Dumfries and Galloway Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 21 Jan 2019
North Ayrshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Mon 21 Jan 2019
Orkney Islands Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Mon 21 Jan 2019
Dumfries and Galloway Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 22 Jan 2019
Dumfries and Galloway Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 22 Jan 2019
Moray Council	5	ASN and EAL	Webinar	Tue 22 Jan 2019
Dundee City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 23 Jan 2019
Dundee City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 23 Jan 2019
East Lothian Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Wed 23 Jan 2019
Dundee City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 24 Jan 2019
Dundee City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 24 Jan 2019
Dundee City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Fri 25 Jan 2019
Dundee City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Fri 25 Jan 2019

West Lothian Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Mon 28 Jan 2019
West Lothian Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Mon 28 Jan 2019
East Dunbartonshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Tue 29 Jan 2019
West Lothian Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 29 Jan 2019
West Lothian Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 29 Jan 2019
West Lothian Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 29 Jan 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Wed 30 Jan 2019
Inverclyde Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Wed 30 Jan 2019
Aberdeen City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 31 Jan 2019
Clackmannanshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to Face	Thu 31 Jan 2019
Dumfries and Galloway Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Mon 04 Feb 2019
East Dunbartonshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 04 Feb 2019
West Lothian Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Mon 04 Feb 2019
Glasgow City Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Tue 05 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 05 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 05 Feb 2019
East Ayrshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Wed 06 Feb 2019
North Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 06 Feb 2019
North Lanarkshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 06 Feb 2019
Stirling Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 06 Feb 2019
West Lothian Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 06 Feb 2019
West Lothian Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 06 Feb 2019
Clackmannanshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to Face	Thu 07 Feb 2019
Highland Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 07 Feb 2019
Highland Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 07 Feb 2019
Orkney Islands Council	2	Analysing Data	Webinar	Mon 11 Feb 2019
Orkney Islands Council	4	Support Improvement	Webinar	Mon 11 Feb 2019
Angus Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 13 Feb 2019
Angus Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 13 Feb 2019
East Dunbartonshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 13 Feb 2019
East Dunbartonshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 13 Feb 2019
West Lothian Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Wed 13 Feb 2019
West Dunbartonshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Fri 15 Feb 2019

East Dunbartonshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 18 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Primary)	Mon 18 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Primary)	Mon 18 Feb 2019
Edinburgh City Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Tue 19 Feb 2019
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 19 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Primary)	Tue 19 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Primary)	Tue 19 Feb 2019
Edinburgh City Council	2	Analysing Data	Webinar	Wed 20 Feb 2019
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 20 Feb 2019
Stirling Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Wed 20 Feb 2019
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 21 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Secondary)	Thu 21 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Secondary)	Thu 21 Feb 2019
East Renfrewshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Mon 25 Feb 2019
Edinburgh City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Mon 25 Feb 2019
South Ayrshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 25 Feb 2019
Edinburgh City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 26 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Primary)	Tue 26 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Primary)	Tue 26 Feb 2019
West Dunbartonshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 26 Feb 2019
Edinburgh City Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Wed 27 Feb 2019
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 27 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Primary)	Wed 27 Feb 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face (Primary)	Wed 27 Feb 2019
Angus Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Thu 28 Feb 2019
North Lanarkshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Thu 28 Feb 2019
Perth & Kinross Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 28 Feb 2019
Perth & Kinross Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 28 Feb 2019
Perth & Kinross Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Fri 01 Mar 2019
Perth & Kinross Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Fri 01 Mar 2019
Edinburgh City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 04 Mar 2019
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 04 Mar 2019
Highland Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 04 Mar 2019

Edinburgh City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 05 Mar 2019
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 05 Mar 2019
Highland Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 05 Mar 2019
Highland Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 05 Mar 2019
East Renfrewshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Webinar	Wed 06 Mar 2019
Edinburgh City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 06 Mar 2019
Highland Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 06 Mar 2019
Highland Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 06 Mar 2019
Edinburgh City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 07 Mar 2019
Highland Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 07 Mar 2019
Highland Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 07 Mar 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Mon 11 Mar 2019
Stirling Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Mon 11 Mar 2019
Dumfries and Galloway Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 12 Mar 2019
Dumfries and Galloway Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 12 Mar 2019
East Dunbartonshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 12 Mar 2019
East Ayrshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 13 Mar 2019
Glasgow City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 13 Mar 2019
Stirling Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 13 Mar 2019
Fife Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 14 Mar 2019
West Dunbartonshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 14 Mar 2019
West Lothian Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 14 Mar 2019
Aberdeen City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Mon 18 Mar 2019
South Lanarkshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Mon 18 Mar 2019
North Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 19 Mar 2019
North Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 19 Mar 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 20 Mar 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 20 Mar 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 20 Mar 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 20 Mar 2019
Glasgow City Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Wed 20 Mar 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 21 Mar 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 21 Mar 2019

Aberdeenshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 21 Mar 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 21 Mar 2019
Fife Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 21 Mar 2019
East Lothian Council	2	Analysing data	Face to Face	Mon 25 Mar 2019
East Renfrewshire Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Mon 25 Mar 2019
East Lothian Council	2	Analysing data	Face to Face	Tue 26 Mar 2019
Glasgow City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 26 Mar 2019
Argyll and Bute Council	2	Analysing Data	Webinar	Wed 27 Mar 2019
Inverclyde Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 27 Mar 2019
Inverclyde Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 27 Mar 2019
Inverclyde Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 27 Mar 2019
West Lothian Council	5	ASN & EAL	webinar	Tue 09 Apr 2019
Perth & Kinross Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 16 Apr 2019
Perth & Kinross Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 16 Apr 2019
Renfrewshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 17 Apr 2019
Glasgow City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 23 Apr 2019
North Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 24 Apr 2019
North Lanarkshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 24 Apr 2019
Stirling Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 24 Apr 2019
Glasgow City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 25 Apr 2019
Orkney Islands Council	2	Analysing Data	Webinar	Thu 25 Apr 2019
Stirling Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 25 Apr 2019
Orkney Islands Council	4	Support Improvement	Webinar	Mon 29 Apr 2019
Scottish Borders Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Mon 29 Apr 2019
Scottish Borders Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Mon 29 Apr 2019
Scottish Borders Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Mon 29 Apr 2019
Renfrewshire Council	1	Intro to SNSA	Face to face	Tue 30 Apr 2019
Scottish Borders Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 30 Apr 2019
Scottish Borders Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 30 Apr 2019
Aberdeen City Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 01 May 2019
Midlothian Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 07 May 2019
Midlothian Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Tue 07 May 2019
Glasgow City Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 08 May 2019

Midlothian Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Wed 08 May 2019
Midlothian Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 08 May 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 09 May 2019
Aberdeenshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Thu 09 May 2019
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Renfrewshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 21 May 2019
Renfrewshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 21 May 2019
Renfrewshire Council	2	Analysing Data	Face to face	Tue 21 May 2019
Inverclyde Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Thu 23 May 2019
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Argyll and Bute Council	4	Support Improvement	Face to face	Wed 29 May 2019
Argyll and Bute Council	5	ASN & EAL	Webinar	Mon 03 Jun 2019

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF P1 ASSESSMENT

<p>Monday 4 February – Glasgow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ P1 Practitioners Forum, Strathclyde University ○ Juliette Mendelovits, ACER ○ Sue Ellis, Strathclyde University <p>Tuesday 5 February – Glasgow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Louise Hayward, University of Glasgow 	Visit 1
<p>Thursday 14 February – Edinburgh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keir Bloomer/Royal Society of Edinburgh ○ Lindsay Paterson ○ Sue Palmer, Upstart <p>Friday 15 February – Edinburgh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Andrea Bradley (?), EIS ○ Ken Muir GTCS 	Visit 2
<p>Tuesday 19 February – Glasgow/Hamilton?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jonathan Cunningham, AHDS (Knightswood Primary) (am) ○ Observation of training session – South Lanarkshire (pm) <p>Wednesday 20 February – Glasgow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gaelic [REDACTED] & [REDACTED] Education Scotland [REDACTED] Improvement, Attainment and Wellbeing) <p>Thursday 21 February - Glasgow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Authority visit (East Dunbartonshire?) 	Visit 3
<p>Tuesday 26 February – Edinburgh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents – Connect (formerly SPTC) and NPFS (et al?) <p>Wednesday 27 February – Edinburgh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children in Scotland – CEO (& Strategic Forum?) 	Visit 4
<p>Thursday 7 March – tbc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regional Improvement Collaborative Leads <p>Friday 8 March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ADES – Performance and Improvement Network? 	Visit 5
<p>Monday 18 March</p> <p>Tuesday 19 March</p> <p>Wednesday 20 March</p>	Visit 6

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF P1 ASSESSMENTS

Background

1. The Scottish Ministers have commissioned an independent review of the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) at P1 level within the overall context of the National Improvement Framework (NIF). The review will consider the approach to P1 assessments looking specifically at whether the assessments meet their stated aims; require modification; or whether there is no value in continuing with national assessments at this level.

2. The SNSA in P1, P4, P7 and S3 were introduced in August 2017. The on-line assessments were designed to align to Curriculum for Excellence, to be adaptive, inclusive and accessible, providing data at a diagnostic level. The data from the assessments are just one part of the evidence that will help inform teacher judgement on how a child is progressing on aspects of numeracy and literacy within a CfE level. P1 assessments have historically been widely used in local authorities and the SNSA seeks to build on that practice by bringing national consistency and ensuring alignment with CfE, whilst providing helpful diagnostic information for teachers to plan learning and teaching.

Who will carry out the review?

3. The review will be carried out by David Reedy. Mr Reedy was Co-Director of the Cambridge Primary Review Trust from 2013-17 and has served as both General Secretary and President of the UK Literacy Association. He has also previously held the post of Principal Adviser Primary Schools in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. Mr Reedy has a wealth of relevant experience and has not been involved in the recent debate on P1 assessments in Scotland allowing him to bring a fresh and impartial perspective to the review.

4. Mr Reedy will be supported in carrying out the review by Dr Eve Bearne, a retired educational researcher, writer and university lecturer. She was Senior Research Associate at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. Dr Bearne taught on the Masters in Education for many years as well as on post-graduate programmes, has carried out wide-ranging research and published a number of education texts, books and articles.

5. Mr Reedy and Dr Bearne will be supported by a small review team who are familiar with the Scottish context. Following discussions with Mr Reedy and Dr Bearne, this team will comprise two members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education with relevant expertise in the early years and primary education. Mr Reedy and Dr Bearne will engage directly with practitioners, including from the early years during the course of the review.

6. Secretariat for the review will be provided by Scottish Government staff not involved in SNSA work.

Who will be invited to contribute?

7. A key focus of the Review will be engagement with practitioners who have direct experience of the P1 assessments. Mr Reedy is particularly keen to speak to

staff who have carried out the assessments during the 2018/19 academic session, given the changes that have been made to the assessments for this year. The review will have access to the views of teachers via the user feedback survey which is now available to practitioners when they carry out the assessments. Mr Reedy intends to explore with schools and local authorities the possibility of observing the assessments in practice and of speaking to the children undertaking them.

8. The review will also seek the views of those with an interest in the assessments, including local authorities, professional associations, parent groups, early years experts, voluntary sector organisations, academics and the Gaelic education community in respect of the Gaelic standardised assessments.

9. If you would like to contribute to the review, please email p1review@gov.scot by Friday 1 March 2019. Contributions based on experience of the assessments in session 2018/19 would be particularly welcome.

10. In considering your contribution, please bear in mind the time constraints for the review. You will also wish to note that in preparing for the review Mr Reedy and Dr Bearne have read the EIS survey, the SNSA User Review and other materials on the operation of the assessments in session 2017/18. They have also read the submissions provided to the Scottish Parliament Education and Culture Committee's current Scottish National Standardised Assessment inquiry.

Terms of Reference

11. The review will consider and provide recommendations on the following issues:

- the compatibility of the P1 assessments with the play based approach to early level of CfE;
- the alignment of the P1 assessments to the benchmarks for early level;
- the effect of taking an on-line assessment on P1 children;
- the usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers and how it supports their professional judgement;
- the implications of the review for the ongoing development of the national Gaelic Medium Education standardised assessments (MCNG)
- the future of the P1 assessments considering in particular whether they continue in line with the current continuous improvement model; be substantially modified; or should they be stopped.

12. In considering the terms of reference, Mr Reedy was clear that, given the time available and the broader inquiry being carried out by the Education and Culture Committee, the review should focus specifically on P1 assessments. It was also decided to focus on the SNSA themselves and not to include wider issues, such as the use of standardised assessments in other jurisdictions.

Timing of the review?

8. The review team has already begun its work by studying the assessments and other relevant documentation, and a programme of engagement with practitioners and other stakeholders is being developed. Mr Reedy has undertaken to submit his report to the Deputy First Minister by the end of May 2019. The

recommendations of the review will subsequently be brought back to Parliament for consideration.

**Independent review of P1 assessments
January 2019**

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**Independent review of P1 assessments
January 2019**

Annual Report 2017-18 - Assessments AY2017-18

DOCUMENT CONTROL

PRODUCT TITLE	Project Tools and Reporting
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DOCUMENT No.	MG02-19e

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Date	Version	Comments	Author	Approved by	Date Approved
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5 Assessments AY2017-18

5.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the assessment instruments that were delivered in the first year of implementation, AY2017-18.

- 5 On awarding of the contract in October 2016, ACER began liaising immediately with Scottish Government (SG) to develop and refine the design of the assessment described in its bid, to meet SG's specifications of an online adaptive assessment for Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 3 in numeracy, reading and writing.

10 In this chapter, *Section 5.2 Background* describes this process and other activities that led up to the delivery of the assessment instruments and practice questions in August 2017. *Section 5.3 Activities and deliverables*, outlines what was delivered and the processes that sustained delivery during the year. It summarises the content of the assessments and practice materials.

Activities related to the work undertaken in AY2017-18 of replenishing the assessments for AY2018-19 is covered in Chapter 11.

- 15 Throughout this chapter, those components of the live AY2017-18 Scottish National Standardised Assessments that contributed to the assessment of a child's or young person's capacity, and hence to reporting, are referred to as 'diagnostic' or 'scored'. Items that were administered in support of future assessment replenishment are referred to as 'in-test trial items'.

5.2 Background

20 5.2.1 Design of the SNSA instruments

Several meetings and workshops were held between SG, Education Scotland (ES) and ACER during the last months of 2016 to discuss the design of the assessment as outlined in ACER's bid, and to agree on refinement of the structures to be used in delivering the assessment instruments for P1, P4, P7 and S3. Among these meetings was a workshop held in Edinburgh on 15 November 2016 to agree the approach, targeting, construct, and number of clusters to be used in the adaptive design.

25 Two significant developments regarding assessment content and test design were discussed in this early series of meetings.

30 First, while the original specification for SNSA had stipulated that there would be three assessments for each year group – numeracy, reading and writing – ACER had proposed in its bid that for Primary 1 reading and writing be combined in a single assessment. The main reason for this proposal was based on the idea that in the early stages of literacy development, reading and writing skills are very strongly integrated, and the Scottish assessment (as in ACER's other early literacy assessments) would be designed to represent combined reading and writing skills. A second important reason for this change was to reduce the amount of testing time for Primary 1 children. This modification to the specifications was accepted by SG.

35 Secondly, ES challenged one aspect of ACER's proposed adaptive design: using a single 'starter' cluster (Cluster A) in the first phase of the assessment, a medium-difficulty set of items that would be presented to all children in the Stage. ES was concerned that this set of items would too easily become familiar and a practice effect would compromise the outcomes. ACER responded by offering to include, for each of the assessments, an additional cluster in the initial phase position – a full set of 10 to 12 items – and also to have two versions of item order in both of the initial clusters, to minimise familiarity. It was proposed that the four versions of Cluster A would be randomly assigned

to learners. This modification was accepted. As a result, the total number of assessment items that ACER committed to providing exceeded ACER's contractual delivery by almost 100 (810 compared with 714).

An SNSA Assessment Content Design workshop was held in Glasgow on 13 December 2016. Following this discussion, a table of weightings comprising organisers and subcategories drawn from the provisional benchmarks for Literacy and English, and for Numeracy and Mathematics, was forwarded to ACER by ES on 16 December 2016. During the course of reviewing items with ES and SG literacy and numeracy nominees, and other SG-sponsored discussions with Scottish literacy and numeracy experts, several suggestions about adjustments to the construct received on 16 December emerged, and adjustments to the construct were progressively agreed. A history of the discussion and modification is documented in *AC01-04-Proposed Adjustments to Literacy and Numeracy Constructs_v1.0*.

An agreed set of organisers, with target ranges for each, was developed, and agreed by SROs in the week beginning 3 April 2017.

5.2.2 Review and customisation of items

As offered in the bid for the SNSA contract, items were selected from ACER's existing item pool for the first year of the diagnostic assessments, and adapted where necessary to reflect Scottish contexts.

On the basis of a review of the Curriculum for Excellence and an audit of items in the ACER pool, ACER initially selected items for review by literacy and numeracy panels assembled by ES and SG. Two intensive face-to-face workshops were held at ES's Glasgow offices to undertake the review of prospective items for the AY17-18 scored assessments. The first workshop was held from 9th to 13th January 2017 and the second from 27th to 30th March 2017.

ACER had also undertaken in its contract to replenish the scored assessments, replacing one third of the material in each academic year. The replenishment items were to be added to the live assessment in small clusters at the end of the scored part of the assessment, as 'in-test trial items'. It was agreed that one in-test trial cluster would be included in each of the 11 assessments at launch, with additional in-test trial clusters introduced later in AY2017-18, in a rotated design. Accordingly, on a slightly later but overlapping timeframe to that used for the review of items to be used in the first diagnostic assessments, ACER began the process of developing new items during the first year of the contract. The proposed replenishment items were also submitted to the ES/SG review panels, using a combination of face-to-face and online review sessions.

One challenge in working with the SG/ES panel groups was that there was less than ideal stability in membership of the groups, especially amongst the ES members. This meant that the groups' understanding and experience, and therefore their ability to contribute effectively and efficiently to shaping the SNSA in its first year, was diminished. Nevertheless, the review groups offered vital input to the process of item selection and refinement; and they also formed an important conduit for communicating information about the SNSA to colleagues in the education community.

Table 1 shows the main activities undertaken in the development, review and customisation of items for the first live assessments, and development and review of replenishment items for in-test trialling in AY2017-18, in the period up to the end of June 2017.

Table 1 Development and review of SNSA item pool, October 2016 to June 2017

Date	Activity
October 2016 – January 2017	Assessment construct review and development

January – March 2017	SG/ES item review for 2017-2018 instruments, and subsequent revision and customisation by ACER
March 2017	Commencement of item development for 2017-2018 in-test trial items by ACER
April 2017	Blueprint with target ranges for CfE organisers agreed with SG
April – May 2017	Selection of items / construction of clusters / branching rules for AY2017-2018 adaptive instruments by ACER
April – June 2017	Remote review of replenishment items (Batches 1, 2 and 3) by SG/ES panels, and subsequent revision and customisation by ACER

85

5.2.3 Small-scale trialling – Local authority trialling phase

A 'Local Authority Trialling Phase', comprising trial testing of assessments in reading, numeracy, spelling, and grammar and punctuation, was conducted in five local authorities from the 13th February to the 3rd March 2017.

90 The purposes of this trialling were:

- to check the appropriateness of prospective assessment material for Scottish learners, particularly in terms of targeting difficulty levels;
- to field trial the technical characteristics of the online system and its use in schools; and
- to collect local authority and teacher feedback on different aspects of the assessments.

95 To initiate the activity, the SG project team held engagement meetings with five local authorities: Fife, Glasgow, South Lanarkshire, Stirling and Western Isles. All five agreed to participate in the trialling phase, and were instrumental in recruiting schools to participate. An individual ('School Contact') was identified at each participating school to act as liaison with ACER.

100 Via the School Contact, ACER provided instruction documents addressed to the School Contact and to teachers who had agreed that their classes be involved. Once informed of the number and types of assessments required by a school, ACER sent individual logins and passwords for the School Contact, teachers and all participating pupils. It was not necessary for schools to provide any information about the learners other than the number of learners in each participating class so that the target number of participants could be monitored and sufficient logins could be provided.

105 The School Contact was asked to conduct a technical readiness test to ensure that the school's IT network was sufficient to deliver the online assessments prior to any assessments being administered. To provide support on technical and administrative aspects of the activity, ACER ran a phone and email helpdesk from London for the duration of the trialling. Support was available from 8am – 5pm on school days and technical support was generally provided within 24 hours of contact.

110 Two hundred responses were sought for each of 28 different assessment forms in the trialling phase, from children and young people in the target year groups: P1, P4, P7 and S3. After an initially slow uptake, there was an excellent response from the participating local authorities, and a high completion rate. The target of 200 responses per item was met for 23 of the 28 assessments. For the remaining five (all at S3), the minimum number of responses was 140, sufficient for indicative interpretation. This response rate was far more positive than anticipated, judging from ACER's experience of similar activities in other locations. By the end of the trialling window, approximately 3900 pupils at a total of 66 schools in five local authorities had participated. In total, 9800 forms – including learner assessment and practice forms, staff forms, and technical readiness assessments – were completed. Over 6500 completed assessments were available for psychometric analysis.

120 During the trialling, staff from the ACER Partner Group (APG) accompanied SG staff on school visits
in Glasgow, Fife and South Lanarkshire to observe pupils completing the assessments and to talk
with school personnel.

Learner results from the trialling were sent to schools in the second half of March in PDF and excel
format. The results consisted of a scale score (based on ACER's existing international calibration) for
125 each of the assessments completed, using a pupil login as identifier for each participating child or
young person in the school.

School Contacts and teachers were invited to complete a feedback form either in Word format or
through an online survey (delivered via SurveyMonkey). Over 90 forms were received in various
formats. Feedback was generally supportive and positive about the assessments and the delivery
130 system. Responses to the teacher surveys as well as notes from the APG school visits was used to
inform further development of the SNSA.

Analyses of the trial data from the pupils in the LA Trialling Phase showed a wide distribution of
achievement within the assessments. The analyses indicate that the items used in the trial covered
the range of capacity for learners within each domain and at each corresponding year level. The
135 information obtained from the analyses of trial items was used in conjunction with the content
reviews that were taking place concurrently to inform decisions on item selection for each year
group and subject area.

In general, the technical functionality of the system worked well in all five local authorities.
Experience from the LA Trialling Phase brought home the importance of technical preparation of
140 local authorities, head teachers and other school leaders, as well as classroom teachers, for the
assessments.

For further detail see *AC01-08_SNSA LA Trialling Phase Report_v1.0*.

5.2.4 Accessibility for learners with ASN

The SG's strong emphasis on ensuring that the SNSA was accessible to all learners, including those
145 with additional support needs (ASN), was taken as a priority in preparing the assessment
instruments for 2017-18. After scoping discussions late in 2016, in the first months of 2017 a series
of meetings, school visits and consultations was held with stakeholders such as CALL Scotland to
ascertain their priorities, and the kinds of technical and non-technical supports typically available to
children and young people in Scottish schools. An initial workshop on accessibility was held on 2
150 February 2017, attended by representatives from SG, ES, local authorities, CALL Scotland, the
National Deaf Children's Society, Windsor Park School and APG staff, to outline the APG approach to
ensuring maximum accessibility to children and young people with diverse needs, and to collect
stakeholder feedback. (See *AS05A-01_Accessibility Requirements Workshop Report_v0.3*.) A second
155 workshop was held on 5th June 2017 with a similar group, to present and discuss the refined
approach. SG commissioned a review of the SNSA 2017-18 instrument by Digital Transformation
Services, which was delivered in June 2017. ACER provided responses to all review comments, for
immediate or subsequent action.

For a discussion of the accessibility work undertaken during the first year of implementation, please
see ...

160 [Note: Accessibility features will partly be added to this chapter in the next draft, and partly to
Chapter 11, Preparation for AY2018-19]

5.2.5 Cognitive laboratories

Along with the invitation to attend a showcase in June 2017 (see Chapter 10, Section 10.1.4), local
authorities were asked whether they were willing to approach schools asking whether some pupils
165 might participate in 'cognitive laboratories' (sometimes known as usability testing). The purpose of

the cognitive laboratories was to gather information on learners' interaction with the assessments and assessment platform, including information at individual item level.

By the end of June, usability testing had been held in nine local authorities. The sessions were conducted by APG staff. During and after the session, the APG member filled in a pro forma.

170 For further detail of this activity see *AS01A-06_June 2017 LA Showcase and Usability Testing report_v0.3*.

5.2.6 Cluster assembly

175 Once it had been ascertained from the local authority trialling phase that the calibration of items for Scottish children was similar to that for children in international contexts, items that had been reviewed and approved by the ES/SG review panels – some with customisation for the Scottish context – were selected for inclusion in the seven clusters for each of the 11 assessments. The difficulty range and mean difficulty of items in each cluster was calculated based on their interim scale scores (derived from international data collections). As well as taking account of difficulty, ACER selected items that met as closely as possible the target proportions per organiser within each subject area and stage, as agreed with SG.

5.2.7 Branching rules

185 Branching rules were devised with a view to sending learners along the optimal pathway to match their capacity, as determined by how they had performed on the assessment after a certain number of items. The rules were tested with an array of quality assurance mechanisms and dummy data by ACER's psychometric and test development teams, in both Australian and UK offices.

5.2.8 Development of in-test trial material (review, refinement)

190 Selection/development of in-test trial material for inclusion in the 2017-18 live assessments was commenced in April 2017. One in-test trial cluster of five items was prepared for inclusion in the assessments at the beginning of AY2017-18; additional material was drafted and reviewed for later inclusion during AY2017-18.

5.3 Main activities and deliverables

This section describes activities and deliverables associated with the AY2017-18 assessments, from July 2017 to June 2018.

5.3.1 UAT pre-launch

195 SG was given initial access to the online assessments in early July 2017, for User Acceptance Testing (UAT). SG's initial review encountered a variety of issues, which were resolved and remediated over the following month.

Updates were made throughout the AY17-18 academic year to incorporate further updates and enhancements, including:

- 200
- Masking the practice assessments to better accommodate out-of-stage assessments (September 2017)
 - Enforcing the rule whereby a learner can only sit one assessment per learning area in a given academic year (October 2017)
 - Accessibility updates: hotspot contrast; focus order; non-text content (December 2017)
 - Accessibility update: addition of accessibility teacher guidance notes to online Help (early 205 April 2018)

- Accessibility update: drag'n'drop focus order improvement; multiple choice alt-text improvement - numeracy (late April 2018)

5.3.2 Launch

210 The 2017-18 instruments were launched for schools on 24th August 2017 and made available to local authorities progressively from this date. The launch included practice assessments and adaptive assessments.

Practice assessments

Five practice assessments were available at launch:

- 215
- P1 literacy
 - P1 numeracy
 - P4 numeracy, reading and writing
 - P7 numeracy, reading and writing
 - S3 numeracy, reading and writing

220 The practice assessments were presented as independent modules that the teacher was invited to assign to his or her learners, to be administered under teacher guidance before children and young people presented for the assessment itself. For P1, there were separate practice assessments for literacy and numeracy. For each of P4, P7 and S3, a combined practice assessment for the three subject areas was available. The practice assessments introduced learners to the layout of the assessments and special features (for example, highlighted text in stimulus of the reading assessments), and offered learners the opportunity to practice each of the item types (e.g. multiple choice or hot spot) that appeared in the individual assessments. The items in the practice assessments were designed to be easier than the diagnostic items in the assessments, so that learners could concentrate on becoming familiar with the form and structure of the instruments.

230 Learners were able to repeat the practice questions as many times as needed.

During the course of AY2017-18, some teachers expressed concern that an element of the P1 literacy assessment was not sufficiently prepared for by the practice assessment: namely, that children were expected to read independently for some items, but that no practice questions rehearsed this skill.

235 The practice assessments for P4, P7 and S3 were quite similar, with only slight variations. Some teachers offered feedback that it would be preferred to have different practice assessments for each year group.

240 Anecdotal evidence (collected by the Service Desk and at training sessions) suggested that there was widely varying use of the practice assessments. Some teachers reported that they were useful; others thought they were too easy, so did not give sufficient indication of the difficulty of the assessments; some teachers did not use them, because 'Everyone knows how to do a multiple choice item'. Further anecdotal evidence about the relative difficulty of administering the assessments to P1 children suggests that more attention could be brought to the administration instructions available to teachers from within the online SNSA system.

245 *Live adaptive assessments: scored component*

Eleven adaptive assessment instruments were available at launch:

- 250
- P1 literacy
 - P1 numeracy
 - P4 numeracy
 - P4 reading

- P4 writing
- P7 numeracy
- P7 reading
- P7 writing
- 255 • S3 numeracy
- S3 reading
- S3 writing

Each of the 11 online adaptive assessment instruments had the same basic design, as shown in Figure 1. The letters A to F represent clusters of items (generally 10 to 12 per cluster). The position of each cluster represents relative mean difficulty of its items, with the higher clusters in the diagram representing more challenging items, and the lower representing easier items. The arrows represent pathways a learner follows through the assessment.

Adaptive assessment design

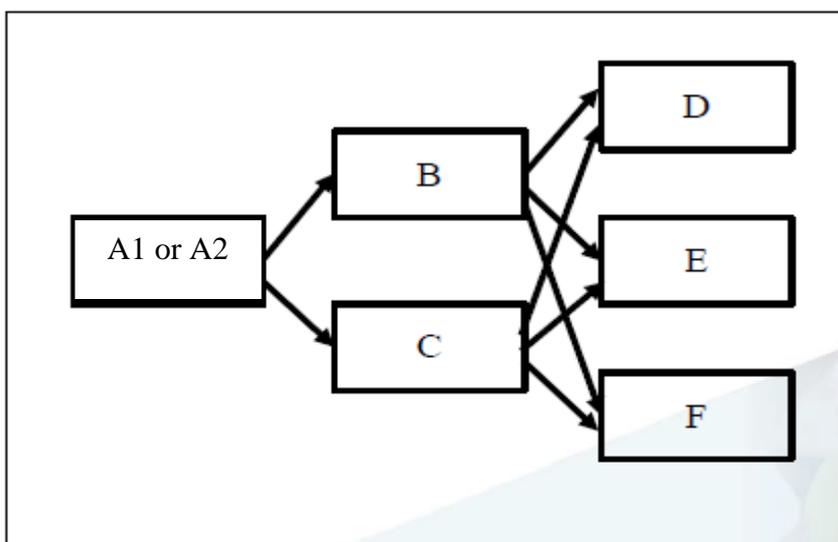


Figure 1 Implemented online adaptive assessment design for AY2017-18

[REDACTED]

265 [REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

270 While no systematic collection of feedback from teachers and learners on the content of the assessments was undertaken in AY2017-18, some feedback was received from teachers via the Service Desk and training sessions. The content of the P1 assessments attracted some adverse criticism. In particular, one literacy unit, Hummingbirds, was considered by many to be too challenging for most Primary 1 learners, for two reasons: its requirement of independent reading; and its subject, which was thought to be unsuitable because hummingbirds are unfamiliar to most Scottish four- and five-year-olds. There was also some concern that the first few items presented to

275 P1 children were not easy enough in either form or content.

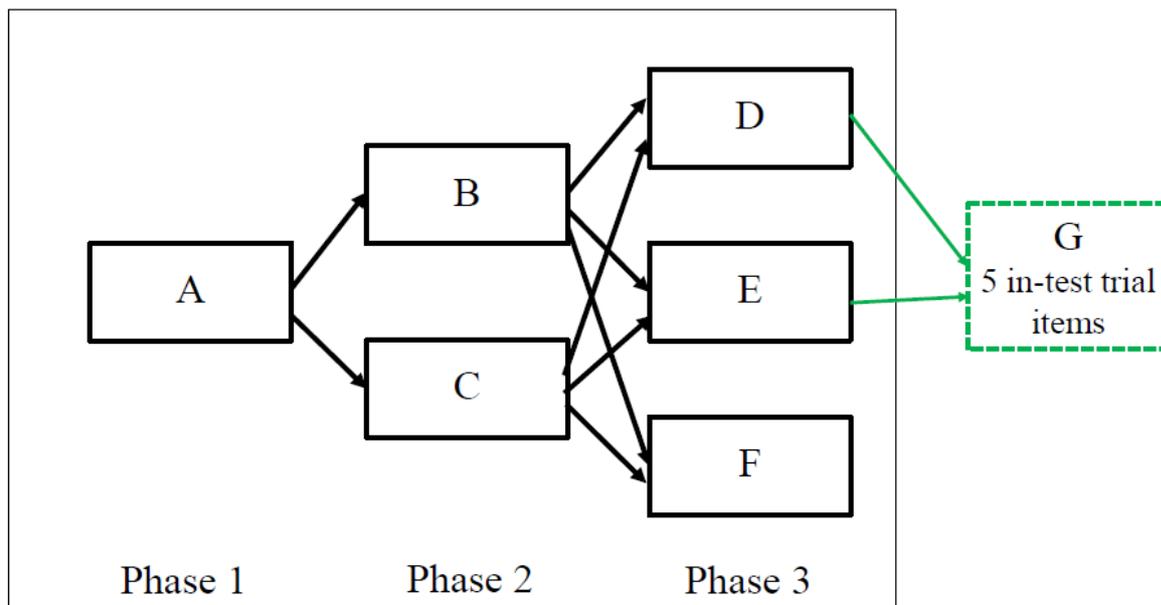
In general it appears that reception of the content of the P4, P7 and S3 assessments was positive.

280 It should be noted that psychometric analyses of the assessments do not suggest that the assessments at any stage were unduly challenging. For more details, please see Chapter 11 of this report as well as e.g. *AR03-13_SNSA November norming study analysis report_v0.6*; *AC04-07_Analysis of Performance on P1 assessment items_v0.2*; and discussions in *AC04-06_Recommended changes to AY 18-19 assessment instrument_v0.1*.

Live adaptive assessments: in-test trialling

285 SNSA’s design includes refreshment and replenishment of one third of the items in the scored assessments each year. Prospective replenishment items are submitted to trial testing, the purpose of which is to explore whether they have the psychometric characteristics that would validate their inclusion in a scored assessment. Successful trial testing relies on the sample of trial test-takers being similar to the target population. ‘In-test trialling’ – in which a few trial items are included in the administration of live assessments – is an efficient way of meeting this criterion. The in-test trial items are not scored and are not included in the reports issued to schools and local authorities.

290 It was agreed that an in-test trial cluster would be administered to all learners except those who had demonstrated the lowest capacity to that point, indicated by landing on Cluster F in Phase 3, in order to avoid adding more tasks for those learners who were likely to be struggling. Figure 2 shows this design.



295 *Figure 2 Implemented online adaptive assessment with in-test trial cluster G*

The assessment instruments launched at the beginning of AY2017-18 included a single G cluster of five items at the end of each assessment. Additional four- or five-item G clusters were added to the live assessments on 4 December 2017, after intensive Quality Assurance by ACER and User Acceptance Testing by SG. At this stage the G clusters were administered on a random rotation among the learners who subsequently took the assessment. In general, a minimum of 200 responses is required to reliably ascertain the psychometric characteristics of trial items. The number of responses for all of the in-test trial items far exceeded this minimum.

The preparation of replenishment items is described in more detail in Sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.8.

5.3.3 [REDACT]

305 [REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

310 [REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

315

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

320 [REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

325 [REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

330 [REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

335 [REDACT]

[REDACT]

[REDACT]

In-test trial cluster deliverables

340 Table 2 sets out the number of clusters and number of individual items that were administered in in-test trialling (G clusters) in AY2017-18.

Table 2 In-test trial items administered in AY2017-18

Assessment	Number of in-test trial clusters	Number of items trial tested
P1 literacy	12	52
P1 numeracy	11	51
P4 numeracy	11	51
P4 reading	14	60
P4 writing	11	53
P7 numeracy	13	64
P7 reading	11	51
P7 writing	10	50
S3 numeracy,	11	55
S3 reading	13	57
S3 writing	11	54
Total	128	598

345 In some cases (especially in reading, where several items needed to be linked to a stimulus text), an individual item was administered in two G clusters.

5.4 Summary, lessons learned and forward look

5.4.1 Summary

350 ACER and its partners provided online adaptive assessment instruments to meet contractual obligations for delivery at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. This can be considered a significant achievement given the short lead time allowed in the contract of less than a full calendar year.

Practice assessments were provided for each year group. These could be administered repeatedly, to familiarise learners with the SNSA's structure and features.

355 The number of assessment items included in the scored assessment instruments exceeded that offered in the contract, due to the addition of one cluster of items for each of the 11 assessments to meet ES's concern about possible practice effect of a single initial cluster. ACER's bid offered 714 items. The actual total included in SNSA for AY2017-18 was 810 items.

360 In-test trial clusters were included at the end of the live assessments to trial test prospective replenishment items for inclusion in subsequent years of the SNSA. A total of 598 trial test items, in batches of four or five per assessment, was presented to all learners except those who were mostly likely to demonstrate the lowest capacity.

All items included in the AY2017-18 scored assessments had been trial tested in international contexts, and were subsequently submitted for review and approval by panels of Scottish literacy and numeracy experts from SG and ES. On advice of these panels, some items were slightly

365 customised (in ways that were not anticipated to affect their psychometric characteristics) to better fit Scottish language, culture or curriculum. All items included in the in-test trial clusters were also submitted for review and approval by these panels.

370 SG, ES and ACER agreed a construct for each subject area based on organisers from the provisional Curriculum for Excellence Benchmark documents. Target proportions for each organiser within a subject group and year level were set. The numeracy and writing assessments, in most cases, achieved numbers and percentages of items within or close to the target ranges. The targeting for reading was not as well achieved.

5.4.2 Lessons learned

375 Maintain active participation and continuity of review group membership throughout test development process

Strengthen Quality Assurance processes in lead up to major deployments

Ensure item development focuses on curriculum areas (organisers) where target percentages have not been attained

Ensure that the first few items seen by learners (especially P1) are not intimidating

380 Highlight the availability of 'administration instructions' within the SNSA system to provide help and guidance to teachers, especially of P1, in administering the assessments to groups of learners

Continue to submit content, especially for P1, to careful scrutiny by review panels, to ensure its appropriateness for Scottish children and young people

5.4.3 Forward look

385 More (ongoing) new development of items

Review of practice items for P4, P7 and S3

Implementation of learner & teacher feedback mechanisms

Continuous improvement of accessibility features

Invoice

Name: David Reedy

Address:

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Date: 06/02/19

Invoice Number / Reference: 247

Learning Directorate

Scottish Government

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Description	Quantity	Amount
Independent Review of P1 SNSA for Scottish Government: Initial two day planning meeting on 15 and 16 January 2019.	2 days @ £[redacted]	£[redacted]
Train fare for D. Reedy and E. Bearne from Leicester to Edinburgh on 14 January.	2 single fares	£[redacted]
Evening meal for D.Reedy and E. Bearne on 14 January	2 main courses	£[redacted]
Evening meal for D.Reedy and E. Bearne on 15 January	2 main courses	£[redacted]
Taxi for D.Reedy and E. Bearne from Edinburgh Waverley to Holiday Inn on 14 January	1	£[redacted]
Taxi for D.Reedy and E. Bearne from Victoria Quay to Edinburgh Waverley Station on 16 January	1	£[redacted]
Bus fare from Edinburgh Waverley to Edinburgh Airport for D.Reedy	1	£[redacted]
Air fare from Edinburgh Airport to London City Airport on 16 January	Total	£[redacted]
		£[redacted]

Payment Details

BACS:

A/C Number: [redacted]

Sort Code: [redacted]

Bank Name: redacted]

Cheque:

Payee Name: D G REEDY

SCHEDULE 2

GRANT CLAIM FORM

Organisation: D G Reedy

Bank details: A/C Number: [REDACTED]
Sort Code: [REDACTED]
Bank Name: [REDACTED]
Payee Name: [REDACTED]

Project: Independent review of P1 assessments

Total agreed grant for 2018-19 [REDACTED]

Latest forecast of expenditure of grant for: <<£??>>

Grant claimed to date: <<£??>>

Unexpended grant <<£??>>

Claim for grant for the period <<4/06/2019>> to <<5/06/2019>>

We hereby claim [REDACTED] in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of grant dated 8 February 2019 and the Schedules attached thereto.

Completed by:
David Reedy

Position:
Lead for P1 SNSA Review

Contact details:
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date:28/02/2019

Items of Expenditure

Please list in the table below all discrete items of expenditure relevant to the above period and the type of documentary evidence that has been submitted/will be made available on request to substantiate each amount.

A	B	C	D
Item	Amount (£)	Paid Invoice Y/N	Other (please specify, e.g certificate of payment in kind)
Independent Review of P1 SNSA : attending meetings at Scottish Government and Parliament on 4 June	[REDACTED]		
Air fare from Stanstead to Edinburgh (return)	[REDACTED]	Yes	
Parking fee at Stanstead Airport	[REDACTED]	Yes	
Bus journey (return) from airport to centre	[REDACTED]	Yes	
Evening meal on 7/03/2019	[REDACTED]	Yes	
TOTAL*	[REDACTED]		

* Note the total should add up to the total expenditure claimed for the period.

Invoice

Name: David Reedy

Address:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Date: 09/06/19

Invoice Number / Reference: 257

Learning Directorate

Scottish Government

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Description	Quantity	Amount
Independent Review of P1 SNSA for Scottish Government: one day of meetings on 4 and 5 June 2019.	1 day @ [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Air fare from London Stanstead to Edinburgh	return	[REDACTED]
Parking at Stanstead Airport 4/5 June	1	[REDACTED]
Bus fare (return) to Edinburgh City Centre	Return	[REDACTED]
Evening meal on 25 February		[REDACTED]
	Total	[REDACTED]

Payment Details

BACS:

A/C Number: [REDACTED]

Sort Code: [REDACTED]

Bank Name: [REDACTED]

Cheque:

Payee Name: D G Reedy

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Tel: [REDACTED]

Ref: Grant for Independent Review of P1 Assessments

Eve Bearne Research Associate to David Reedy

Bank Details: A/C number: [REDACTED]
Sort code: [REDACTED]
Bank name: [REDACTED]
Payee name: [REDACTED]

Claim period: March 18th, 19th and 20th (3 days)

I hereby claim in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of grant dated 8 February 2019 and the Schedules attached thereto.

5 days @ [REDACTED] per day	£[REDACTED]
Train fare: March 20 th Cardross to Glasgow	£ [REDACTED]
Train fare March 20 th Glasgow to London	£ [REDACTED]
Total:	£ [REDACTED]

Completed by: Eve Bearne

Position: Research Associate

Contact details: as above

Date: 22nd March, 2019

Signed:

[REDACTED]

Invoice

Name: David Reedy

Address:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

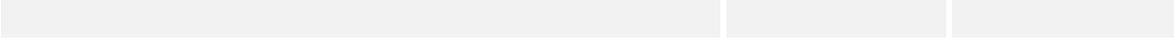
[REDACTED]

Date: 28/02/19

Invoice Number / Reference: 251

Learning Directorate
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Description	Quantity	Amount
Independent Review of P1 SNSA for Scottish Government: two days of meetings with stakeholders and school visits on 26 and 27 February 2019.	2 days @ £[REDACTED]	£[REDACTED]
Air fare from London City to Edinburgh	return	£[REDACTED]
Tram fare (return) to Edinburgh City Centre	1	£[REDACTED]
Bus fare from hotel to GTCS, Clerwood House, Edinburgh (return)	1	£[REDACTED]
Train fare to Dundee from Edinburgh (return)	1	£[REDACTED]
Bus fare from Dundee Station to Victoria Park Primary School (return)	1	£[REDACTED]
Evening meal on 25 February		£[REDACTED]
Lunch on 27 February		£[REDACTED]
Evening meal on 26 February		£[REDACTED]
	Total	£[REDACTED]



Payment Details

BACS:

A/C Number: [REDACTED]

Sort Code: [REDACTED]

Bank Name: [REDACTED]

Cheque:

Payee Name: D G Reedy

SCHEDULE 2

GRANT CLAIM FORM

Organisation: D G Reedy

Bank details: A/C Number: [REDACTED]
Sort Code: [REDACTED]
Bank Name: [REDACTED]
Payee Name: [REDACTED]

Project: Independent review of P1 assessments

Total agreed grant for 2018-19 £[REDACTED]

Latest forecast of expenditure of grant for: <<£??>>

Grant claimed to date: <<£??>>

Unexpended grant <<£??>>

Claim for grant for the period <<25/02/2019>> to <<27/02/2019>>

We hereby claim £[REDACTED] in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of grant dated 8 February 2019 and the Schedules attached thereto.

Completed by:
David Reedy

Position:
Lead for P1 SNSA Review

Contact details:
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date:28/02/2019

Items of Expenditure

Please list in the table below all discrete items of expenditure relevant to the above period and the type of documentary evidence that has been submitted/will be made available on request to substantiate each amount.

A	B	C	D
Item	Amount (£)	Paid Invoice Y/N	Other (please specify, e.g certificate of payment in kind)
Independent Review of P1 SNSA : two days of meeting with stakeholders on 26 and 27 February 2019.	£[REDACTED]		
Air fare from London City to Edinburgh	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Tram fare (return) to Edinburgh City Centre	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Bus fare from hotel to GTCS, Clerwood House, Edinburgh (return)	[REDACTED]	Yes	
Train fare to Dundee from Edinburgh (return)	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Bus fare from Dundee Station to Victoria Park Primary School (return)	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Evening meal on 26/02/2019	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Lunch on 28/02/2019	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Evening meal on 27/02/2019	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
TOTAL*	£[REDACTED]		

* Note the total should add up to the total expenditure claimed for the period.

Invoice

Name: David Reedy

Address:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Date: 22/02/19

Invoice Number / Reference: 250

Learning Directorate
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Description	Quantity	Amount
Independent Review of P1 SNSA for Scottish Government: two days of meetings with stakeholders and school visits on 19, 20 and 21 February 2019.	3 days @ [REDACTED]	£[REDACTED]
Air fare from London City to Edinburgh	return	£[REDACTED]
Underground fare (return) to Kelvinbridge	1	[REDACTED]
Evening meal on 19 February	1	£[REDACTED]
Lunch on 20 February	1	£[REDACTED]
Evening meal on 20 February	1	£[REDACTED]
	Total	£[REDACTED]

Payment Details

BACS:

A/C Number: [REDACTED]

Sort Code: [REDACTED]

Bank Name: [REDACTED]

Cheque:

Payee Name: D G Reedy

SCHEDULE 2

GRANT CLAIM FORM

Organisation: D G Reedy

Bank details: A/C Number: [REDACTED]
Sort Code: [REDACTED]
Bank Name: [REDACTED]
Payee Name: [REDACTED]

Project: Independent review of P1 assessments

Total agreed grant for 2018-19 £[REDACTED]

Latest forecast of expenditure of grant for: <<£??>>

Grant claimed to date: <<£??>>

Unexpended grant <<£??>>

Claim for grant for the period <<18/02/2019>> to <<21/02/2019>>

We hereby claim £[REDACTED] in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of grant dated 8 February 2019 and the Schedules attached thereto.

Completed by:
David Reedy

Position:
Lead for P1 SNSA Review

Contact details:
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date:17/02/2019

Items of Expenditure

Please list in the table below all discrete items of expenditure relevant to the above period and the type of documentary evidence that has been submitted/will be made available on request to substantiate each amount.

A	B	C	D
Item	Amount (£)	Paid Invoice Y/N	Other (please specify, e.g certificate of payment in kind)
Independent Review of P1 SNSA : two days of meeting with stakeholders on 19,20 and 21 February 2019.	£[REDACTED]		
Air fare from London City to Edinburgh	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Underground fare (return) to Kelvinbridge	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Evening meal on 19/02/2019	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Lunch on 14/02/2019	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
Evening meal on 20/02/2019	£[REDACTED]	Yes	
TOTAL*	£[REDACTED]		

* Note the total should add up to the total expenditure claimed for the period.

Invoice

Name: David Reedy

Address:
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Date: 28/02/19

Invoice Number / Reference: 252

Learning Directorate
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Description	Quantity	Amount
Independent Review of P1 SNSA for Scottish Government: two days of meetings with stakeholders and school visits on 7 and 8 March 2019.	2 days @ £[redacted]	£[redacted]
Air fare from Stanstead to Edinburgh	return	£[redacted]
Parking at Stanstead Airport on 7 and 8 March	1	£[redacted]
Car hire for 7 and 8 March	1	£[redacted]
Petrol cost to refill hire car	1	£[redacted]
Evening meal on 7 March	1	£[redacted]
Lunch on 7 March		£[redacted]
	Total	£[redacted]

Payment Details

BACS:
A/C Number: [redacted]
Sort Code: [redacted]
Bank Name: [redacted]

Cheque:
Payee Name: D G Reedy

SCHEDULE 2

GRANT CLAIM FORM

Organisation: D G Reedy

Bank details: A/C Number: [redacted]
Sort Code: [redacted]
Bank Name: [redacted]
Payee Name: [redacted]

Project: Independent review of P1 assessments

Total agreed grant for 2018-19 £[redacted]

Latest forecast of expenditure of grant for: <<£??>>

Grant claimed to date: <<£??>>

Unexpended grant <<£??>>

Claim for grant for the period <<7/03/2019>> to <<8/03/2019>>

We hereby claim £[redacted] in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of grant dated 8 February 2019 and the Schedules attached thereto.

Completed by:
David Reedy

Position:
Lead for P1 SNSA Review

Contact details:
d.reedy@[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Date:28/02/2019

Items of Expenditure

Please list in the table below all discrete items of expenditure relevant to the above period and the type of documentary evidence that has been submitted/will be made available on request to substantiate each amount.

A	B	C	D
Item	Amount (£)	Paid Invoice Y/N	Other (please specify, e.g certificate of payment in kind)
Independent Review of P1 SNSA : two days of meeting with stakeholders on 7 and 8 March 2019.	£[redacted]		
Air fare from Stanstead to Edinburgh	£[redacted]	Yes	
Parking fee at Stanstead Airport	£[redacted]	Yes	
Car hire costs for 7 and 8 March	£[redacted]	Yes	
Petrol Costs for refilling hire car	£[redacted]	Yes	
Evening meal on 7/03/2019	£[redacted]	Yes	
Lunch on 7/03/2019	£[redacted]	Yes	
TOTAL*	[redacted]		

* Note the total should add up to the total expenditure claimed for the period.

Company/Mr/Mrs

REEDY
DAVID

[REDACTED]

Date: 14.03.2019

Reservation Confirmation

Your reservation number: [REDACTED]

Security code: [REDACTED]

Pick-up:	20.03.2019 08:00 hrs.	Drop-off:	20.03.2019 15:00 hrs.
Pick-up station:	Glasgow 101 Waterloo Street G2 7DN Glasgow	Drop-off station:	Glasgow Airport Car Rental Centre PA3 2SW Paisley
Drivers name:	REEDY	First name:	DAVID
Flight/train no.:		Rate:	[REDACTED]
Car group:	ECMR	Method of payment:	[REDACTED]
Sample model:	Vauxhall Corsa 3 door, Citroën DS3		
Rental days:	1		

Charge	Quantity	Single Amount	Net	Local tax	Total Amount
Rental days	1 x	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	20,00%	[REDACTED] GBP
One-way fee	1 x	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	20,00%	[REDACTED] GBP
Expected rental price (net)					[REDACTED] GBP
Local tax					[REDACTED] GBP
Expected rental price (gross)					[REDACTED] GBP
Prepaid - amount already paid:					[REDACTED] GBP

incl. Rate includes 200 mls
 Loss Damage Waiver
 Third party insurance
 Registration fee / Road tax
 Loss Damage Waiver with an excess of [REDACTED] GBP
 Theft Protection with an excess of [REDACTED] GBP
 All designated discounts have been included in the stated final price.

Note: A reservation is for a vehicle group and not a specific model. Extras are subject to availability. The requested pick up time is binding (max grace period of 60 minutes within opening hours).

By making this reservation, you acknowledge that this is a pre-paid rate and will accept the associated charges in the event of a change, cancellation or non-collection of the vehicle.

Changing booking

A booking can be changed before the start of the rental (on availability) in return for an alteration charge of

● GBP

Any payment already made towards the rental will not be refunded; nor shall any differential amount be refunded if this alteration leads to a lesser rental cost.

Cancellation

A cancellation is possible prior to the commencement of the rental. In the case of cancellation, the already paid rental pre-payment will be charged, along with a cancellation fee. The cancellation fee is 100% of the rental price (including booked extras and fees) for reservations with a rental period of up to 3 days. For reservations with a rental period of more than 3 days, the level of the cancellation fee depends on the rental price booked (including booked extras and fees) and amounts to 3 rental days pro rata. Cancellations can be made on-line or by writing to:

reservations@sixt.com
Sixt rent a car Limited
Sixt House
5 Langley Quay, Waterside Drive
Langley, Slough
SL3 6EY
Fax: +44 (0)8701 569569

No-show

The rent already paid will be fully retained if the booked vehicle is not collected/ not collected at the agreed time.

Early Return

There will be no refund of the rental pre-payment already made if the vehicle is returned early.

Conditions of Payment

When booking a pre-paid rate, the credit card will be charged immediately with the total rental price. The means of payment must be presented when picking up the vehicle to debit or reserving the deposit (possibly in combination with entering your PIN code).

In the event of a charge back your reservation is automatically cancelled and SIXT is no longer under any legal obligation to provide the reserved rental car.

The general Terms and Conditions apply of the respective rental country.

Did you know: After your rental you can download your invoice copy under:

<https://www.sixt.com/invoicecopy>.

Hotline: +44 (0)8444 99 33 99 Calls cost 0,07 GBP per minute plus your phone company's access charge.
E-mail: reservations@sixt.com

Remarks:

Bank details:

Barclays Bank

Account No. [REDACTED]

Sort code [REDACTED]

IBAN No. [REDACTED]

SWIFT Code [REDACTED]

All station information at once:

Pick-up station: Glasgow
Q-Park
101 Waterloo Street
G2 7DN Glasgow
Monday - Friday: 08:00 - 18:00
Saturday: 08:00 - 16:00
Sunday: 09:00 - 14:00
Holiday: 09:00 - 14:00

Directions:*** Your way to us:**

You will receive your rental car at the Sixt branch which is located on the Waterloo Street on the left side at the Q-Park car park.

*** By Car from M8 Westbound:**

1. From the M8 Westbound take Junction 19 signed A814 Clydebank / SECC and keep left on the slip road.
2. Turn left at the traffic lights and carry along the A814 on to Argyle Street heading for the Glasgow Station Bridge.
3. Just before the bridge turn left at the traffic lights on to Hope Street then left again at the next lights on to Waterloo Street.
4. The Sixt branch is located just a short drive down Waterloo Street on your left hand side at the Q-Park car park.

*** By Car from M8 eastbound:**

1. From the M8 Eastbound as you cross the Kingston Bridge keep left and take Junction 18 for the City Centre
2. Continue straight following the road on to Bothwell Street and then right on to Blythwood Street.
3. At the lights on Blythwood Street take a right and the Sixt branch is directly on your left hand side.

*** From Glasgow Central Station:**

1. We are just a short walk from Glasgow Central Station, directions from this station:
2. From Glasgow Central exit via the left hand exit sign posted for Hope Street.
3. This exit is located to the left of the main exit beside the Grand Central Hotel.
4. When exiting the station cross Hope Street and continue straight across and along Waterloo Street passing Scottish Hydro and the Indigo Hotel.
5. The Sixt branch is located about 500 meters on your left hand side at the Q-Park car park.
6. There are extensive bus services in the city leading to Glasgow central stations where the above directions can be followed to find the Sixt branch.

*** From Glasgow Queen Street Station:**

It is a 10 minutes from Glasgow Queen Street Station to our location, the directions are:

1. From Glasgow Queen Street Station take the right hand exit sign posted for Dundas Street
2. Turn left then at the end of the road turn right on to West George Street and continue to follow.

3. Turn left at the fourth junction which will take you on to Hope Street
4. Continue down Hope Street and take the third main road on your right at Cafe Nero which is on to Waterloo Street.
5. The Sixt branch is located a short walk on the left hand side of this road.
6. There are extensive bus services in the city leading to Glasgow central stations where the above directions can be followed to find the Sixt branch.

Drop-off station:

Glasgow Airport
Car Rental Centre
PA3 2SW Paisley
Monday - Sunday: 07:00 - 24:00
Holiday: 07:00 - 24:00
24 hour return

Directions:*** Your way to Sixt:**

From domestic arrivals: Follow the signs for "Car rental", exit the terminal building from any exit and turn left and walk along the front of the terminal. The car rental centre, where the Sixt branch is located, is at the end of the walk-way, just 50 m from the terminal. From international arrivals: Exit the terminal and walk alongside the front of the building past the bus stops, then follow the covered walk-way. "Car rental" is well sign posted from all areas of the terminal. The car rental centre, where the Sixt branch is located, is just 50 m from the terminal.

*** Vehicle return:**

Exit motoway M8 at junction 28 (if you are coming from the east) or 29 (if you are coming from the west). If you have a SATNAV system, our postcode is PA3 2SG. Follow the signs for "Car rental", this will take you to our return area off Campsie Drive.

SCHEDULE 2

GRANT CLAIM FORM

Organisation: D G Reedy

Bank details: A/C Number: [redacted]
Sort Code: [redacted]
Bank Name: [redacted]
Payee Name: [redacted]

Project: Independent review of P1 assessments

Total agreed grant for 2018-19 £[redacted]

Latest forecast of expenditure of grant for: <<£??>>

Grant claimed to date: <<£??>>

Unexpended grant <<£??>>

Claim for grant for the period <<18/03/2019>> to <<20/02/2019>>

We hereby claim £[redacted] in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of grant dated 8 February 2019 and the Schedules attached thereto.

Completed by:
David Reedy

Position:
Lead for P1 SNSA Review

Contact details:
d.reedy@[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Date:17/02/2019

Items of Expenditure

Please list in the table below all discrete items of expenditure relevant to the above period and the type of documentary evidence that has been submitted/will be made available on request to substantiate each amount.

A	B	C	D
Item	Amount (£)	Paid Invoice Y/N	Other (please specify, e.g certificate of payment in kind)
Independent Review of P1 SNSA : two days of meeting with stakeholders on 18,19 ,20 March 2019.	£[redacted]		
Train fare from London King's Cross to Edinburgh for Eve Bearne and David Reedy	£[redacted]	Yes	
Train fare from Edinburgh to Dunbar for Eve Bearne and David Reedy	£[redacted]	Yes	
Tram fare from Edinburgh George St. to Haymarket for Eve Bearne and David Reedy	£[redacted]	Yes	
Train fare from Haymarket to Glasgow Charing X for Eve Bearne and David Reedy	£[redacted]	Yes	
Car hire for 19 March (Glasgow to Cardross, Johnston and Airport	£[redacted]	Yes	
Air fare Glasgow to Stanstead Airport on 20 March	£[redacted]	Yes	
Train fare from Stanstead Airport to London	£[redacted]	Yes	
Evening meal on 17 March for DR and EB	£[redacted]	Yes	
Evening meal on 18 March for DR and EB	£[redacted]	Yes	
Evening meal on 19 March for DR and EB	£[redacted]	Yes	
TOTAL*	£[redacted]		

* Note the total should add up to the total expenditure claimed for the period.

Invoice

Name: David Reedy

Address:

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Date: 21/03/19

Invoice Number / Reference: 254

Learning Directorate

Scottish Government

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Description	Quantity	Amount
Independent Review of P1 SNSA for Scottish Government: two days of meetings with stakeholders and school visits on 18, 19 and 20 March 2019.	3 days @ £[redacted]	£[redacted]
Train fare from London King's Cross to Edinburgh for Eve Bearne and David Reedy	2	£[redacted]
Train fare from Edinburgh to Dunbar for Eve Bearne and David Reedy	2	£[redacted]
Tram fare from Edinburgh George St. to Haymarket for Eve Bearne and David Reedy	2	£[redacted]
Train fare from Haymarket to Glasgow Charing X for Eve Bearne and David Reedy	2	£[redacted]
Car hire for 19 March (Glasgow to Cardross, Johnston and Airport)	1	£[redacted]
Air fare Glasgow to Stanstead Airport on 20 March	1	£[redacted]
Train fare from Stanstead Airport to London	1	£[redacted]
Evening meal on 17 March for DR and EB		£[redacted]

Evening meal on 18 March for DR and EB	£[redacted]
Evening meal on 19 March for DR and EB	£[redacted]
Total	£[redacted]

Payment Details

BACS:

A/C Number: [redacted]

Sort Code: [redacted]

Bank Name: [redacted]

Cheque:

Payee Name: D G Reedy

SEAS 'Worthy Cause/Retained Vendor' Form c

FIELDS MARKED WITH A "*" MUST BE COMPLETED IN ALL CASES

*Name	Eve Bearne
*Payref No.	
*Countersigning Officer	[redacted]
*Department/Entity	[redacted]
*Business Area	Learning Directorate
*Contact No.	[redacted]
*Date	08-Feb-19

Notes for Countersigning Officer:

YOU are responsible for ensuring that the correct procedures are in place for the use of this form.

These should include checking that:

the payee requested for set-up does NOT already exist on the SEAS system [if so and if a change is required, an appropriate submission should be made]

If a Worthy Cause, the payee cannot be a Supplier of goods and services. For Retained Vendors the payment will be sent through the internal mail system.

only valid bank details are submitted and are supported by documentary evidence i.e. confirmation of these on headed paper, copy of a claim application or award acceptance letter or a written statement, supplied by the payee and signed by one of its senior officials, such as a **Director, Company Secretary, Financial Controller, Credit Controller, Chief Executive, Partner, Proprietor or Individual Claimant. This supporting documents must be sent along with this form.**

*Request Type	New Worthy Cause
*BACS/OPG or Cheque	BACS
*Payee/Organisation Name	Eve Bearne
*Address 1	[redacted]
Address 2	
Address 3	
*Town/City	[redacted]
*Postcode	[redacted]
*Phone	[redacted]
Fax	
e-mail	
*Contact	
*Payment Terms	Immediate
*Bank Name	[redacted]
*Bank Branch Name	[redacted]
*Bank Address 1	[redacted]
Bank Address 2	
*Town/City	[redacted]
*PostCode	[redacted]
*SortCode	[redacted]
*Bank Account Name	[redacted]
*Bank Account No	[redacted]
Build. Soc. Roll No.	

*Brief Description of what payment is for [please also state why a cheque is required internally]
 Grant for Research Associate Independent Review of P1 Assessments

Please sign below to show the following conditions have been met:

* I have read the notes on the right and confirm that this request meets the criteria outlined therein.

* For amendments, the authenticity of the details in the attachment have been verified by seeking confirmation using established contact details in SEAS, not by contacting the source of the change request.

Signature _____

Print Name _____ **Grade** _____ **Date** _____

Must be B3 equivalent or above

FOR COMPLETION BY SEAS TEAM	
Supplier Number -	Site Name -
Description -	

Actioned By -	
Checked By -	

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
Tel: [redacted]

Ref: Grant for Independent Review of P1 Assessments

Eve Bearne Research Associate to David Reedy

Bank Details: A/C number: [redacted]
Sort code: [redacted]
Bank name; [redacted]
Payee name: Eve Bearne

Claim period: January 15 -16 2019 (2 days)
March 8th and March 11-12 (3 days)

I hereby claim in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of grant dated 8 February 2019 and the Schedules attached thereto.

5 days @ £[redacted]per day	£[redacted]
Train fare: January 16 th	£[redacted]
Taxi fare: January 16 th	£[redacted]
Total:	£[redacted]

Completed by: Eve Bearne

Position: Research Associate

Contact details: as above

Date: 13th March, 2019

Signed:

Invoice

Name: David Reedy

Address:

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Date: 17/02/19

Invoice Number / Reference: 249

Learning Directorate

Scottish Government

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Description	Quantity	Amount
Independent Review of P1 SNSA for Scottish Government: two days of meeting with stakeholders on 14 and 15 February 2019.	2 days @ £[redacted]	£[redacted]
Air fare from London City to Edinburgh	return	£[redacted]
Tram fare (return) to Edinburgh City Centre	1	£[redacted]
Evening meal on 13 February	1	£[redacted]
Lunch on 14 February	1	£[redacted]
Evening meal on 14 February	1	£[redacted]
	Total	£[redacted]

Payment Details

BACS:

A/C Number: [redacted]

Sort Code: [redacted]

Bank Name: [redacted]

Cheque:

Payee Name: D G Reedy

SCHEDULE 2

GRANT CLAIM FORM

Organisation: D G Reedy

Bank details: A/C Number: [redacted]
Sort Code: [redacted]
Bank Name: [redacted]
Payee Name: D G Reedy

Project: Independent review of P1 assessments

Total agreed grant for 2018-19 £[redacted]

Latest forecast of expenditure of grant for: <<£??>>

Grant claimed to date: <<£??>>

Unexpended grant <<£??>>

Claim for grant for the period <<13/02/2019>> to <<15/02/2019>>

We hereby claim £[redacted] in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of grant dated 8 February 2019 and the Schedules attached thereto.

Completed by:
David Reedy

Position:
Lead for P1 SNSA Review

Contact details:
d.reedy@[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Date:17/02/2019

Items of Expenditure

Please list in the table below all discrete items of expenditure relevant to the above period and the type of documentary evidence that has been submitted/will be made available on request to substantiate each amount.

A	B	C	D
Item	Amount (£)	Paid Invoice Y/N	Other (please specify, e.g certificate of payment in kind)
Independent Review of P1 SNSA : two days of meeting with stakeholders on 14 and 15 February 2019.	£[redacted]		
Air fare from London City to Edinburgh	£[redacted]	Yes	
Tram fare (return) to Edinburgh City Centre	£[redacted]	Yes	
Evening meal on 13/02/2019	[redacted]	Yes	
Lunch on 14/02/2019	£[redacted]	Yes	
Evening meal on 14/02/2019	£[redacted]	Yes	
TOTAL*	£[redacted]		

* Note the total should add up to the total expenditure claimed for the period.

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SEAS 'Worthy Cause/Retained Vendor' Form	
FIELDS MARKED WITH A "*" MUST BE COMPLETED IN ALL CASES	
*Name	David Reedy
*Payref No.	
*Countersigning Officer	[REDACTED]
*Department/Entity	[REDACTED]
*Business Area	Learning Directorate
*Contact No.	[REDACTED]
*Date	08-Feb-19

Select from DROP DOWN arrows to the right of selected fields
Do NOT type

*Request Type	New Worthy Cause
*BACS/OPG or Cheque	[REDACTED]
*Payee/Organisation Name	David Reedy
*Address 1	[REDACTED]
Address 2	
Address 3	
*Town/City	[REDACTED]
*Postcode	[REDACTED]
*Phone	[REDACTED]
Fax	
e-mail	
*Contact	
*Payment Terms	[REDACTED]
*Bank Name	[REDACTED]
*Bank Branch Name	[REDACTED]
*Bank Address 1	[REDACTED]
Bank Address 2	[REDACTED]
*Town/City	[REDACTED]
*PostCode	[REDACTED]
*SortCode	[REDACTED]
*Bank Account Name	[REDACTED]
*Bank Account No	[REDACTED]
Build. Soc. Roll No.	

Notes for Countersigning Officer:
YOU are responsible for ensuring that the correct procedures are in place for the use of this form.

These should include checking that:

- the payee requested for set-up does NOT already exist on the SEAS system [if so and if a change is required, an appropriate submission should be made]
- If a Worthy Cause, the payee cannot be a Supplier of goods and services. For Retained Vendors the payment will be sent through the internal mail system.

only valid bank details are submitted and are supported by documentary evidence i.e. confirmation of these on headed paper, copy of a claim application or award acceptance letter or a written statement, supplied by the payee and signed by one of its senior officials, such as a Director, Company Secretary, Financial Controller, Credit Controller, Chief Executive, Partner, Proprietor or Individual Claimant. This supporting documents must be sent along with this form.

*Brief Description of what payment is for [please also state why a cheque is required internally]	Grant for Chair of Independent Review of P1 Assessments
---	---

Please sign below to show the following conditions have been met:

I have read the notes on the right and confirm that this request meets the criteria outlined therein.

For amendments, the authenticity of the details in the attachment have been verified by seeking confirmation using established contact details in SEAS, not by contacting the source of the change request.



F/T: 0131-244 -0983
E: Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot

David Reedy

By email : [d.reedy@\[redacted\]](mailto:d.reedy@[redacted])

8 February 2019

Dear David

OFFER OF GRANT FOR INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF P1 ASSESSMENTS

The Scottish Ministers in exercise of their powers under Educational Development Research and Services (Scotland) Grant Regulations 1999, section 2(c) and the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, section 42 (1) hereby offer to give to David Reedy ("the Grantee") a grant of [redacted] payable over the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20 in connection with an independent review of P1 assessments, which is more particularly described in Part 1 of Schedule 1 ("the Project") and subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Definitions and Interpretation

- 1.1 In these Conditions, the words and expressions set out in **SCHEDULE 4** shall have the meanings ascribed to them in that Schedule.
- 1.2 In these Conditions unless the context otherwise requires, words denoting the singular shall include the plural and vice versa and words denoting any gender shall include all genders.
- 1.3 The headings in these Conditions are for convenience only and shall not be read as forming part of the Conditions or taken into account in their interpretation.
- 1.4 Except as otherwise provided in these Conditions, any reference to a clause, paragraph, subparagraph or schedule shall be a reference to a clause, paragraph, subparagraph or schedule of these Conditions. The schedules are intended to be contractual in nature. They form part of the Agreement and should be construed accordingly.
- 1.5 This Agreement shall not be varied except by an instrument signed in writing by both parties.

2. Purpose of the Grant

- 2.1 The Grant is made to enable the Grantee to carry out the independent review of P1 assessments.
- 2.2 The Grant shall only be used for the purposes of carrying out the independent review of P1 assessments and for no other purpose whatsoever.
- 2.3 No part of the Grant shall be used to fund any activity or material which is party political in intention, use of presentation or appears to be designed to affect support for a political party.
- 2.4 The main objectives/expected outcomes of the Grant are consideration and provision of recommendations on the following issues:
- the comparability of the assessments with the play-based curriculum model in the early level of Curriculum for Excellence;
 - the alignment of the assessments to the benchmarks for the early level;
 - the effect on P1 children of taking an on-line assessment;
 - the usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers and how it supports their professional judgement;
 - the implications of the review for the ongoing implementation of the national Gaelic medium education standardised assessments; and
 - the future of the assessments, considering in particular whether they continue in line with the current continuous improvement model; be substantially modified; or whether they should be stopped.
- 2.5 The targets/milestones against which progress in achieving objectives/expected outcomes shall be monitored are:
- a draft report by 3 May 2019
 - a final report by 31 May 2019
- 2.6 The eligible costs for which the Grant can be claimed are:
- reasonable travelling expenses
 - daily rate of payment for work carried out [redacted]
 - the cost of any additional support the grantee engages to help with the review
- 2.7 The eligible costs exclude:
- Any Value Added Tax (VAT) reclaimable by the Grantee

3. Payment of Grant

- 3.1 The Grant shall be paid by the Scottish Ministers to the grantee in accordance with the terms of **SCHEDULE 1** attached.
- 3.2 The Grantee shall within four weeks of receiving the final instalment of the Grant submit to Scottish Ministers a statement of compliance with the Conditions of the Grant using the form of words provided in **SCHEDULE 3**. The statement shall be signed by the Grantee.

3.3 In the event that the amount of the Grant paid by Scottish Ministers to the Grantee at any point in time is found to exceed the amount of the expenses reasonably and properly incurred by the Grantee in connection with the independent review of P1 assessments, the Grantee shall repay to Scottish Ministers the amount of such excess within 14 days of receiving a written demand for it from or on behalf of the Scottish Ministers. In the event that the grantee fails to pay such amount within the 14 day period, the Scottish Ministers shall be entitled to interest on the sum at the rate of 2 per cent per annum above the Bank of England base lending rate prevailing at the time of the written demand from the date of the written demand until payment in full of both the sum and the interest.

3.4 The Scottish Ministers shall not be bound to pay to the Grantee, and the Grantee shall have no claim against the Scottish Ministers in respect of, any instalment of the Grant which has not been claimed by the Grantee by 31 March of the applicable financial year as set out in **SCHEDULE 1**, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Scottish Ministers.

4. Inspection and Information

4.1 The Grantee shall keep the Scottish Ministers fully informed of the progress of the independent review of P1 assessments in the form of regular updates to the Review secretariat. Details shall include actual expenditure to date compared with profiled expenditure and any change to estimated expenditure for the financial year and/or the Project as a whole, the reasons for any such changes and progress in achieving objectives/outcomes.

4.2 Revisions to targets/milestones against which progress in achieving objectives/outcomes are monitored shall be subject to written agreement of the Scottish Ministers.

4.3 The Grantee shall, on completion of the Project, submit a report to the Scottish Ministers summarising the outcomes and performance of the Project. Such a report shall include such statistical and other information relating to the impact of the Project as shall be required by the Scottish Ministers.

4.4. The Grantee shall also provide any other information that the Scottish Ministers may reasonably require to satisfy themselves that the Project is consistent with the Agreement. The Grantee shall provide the Scottish Ministers with prompt access to any information they reasonably require to ensure compliance with these Conditions.

4.5 The Grantee shall keep and maintain for a period of seven years after the expenditure occurs, adequate and proper records and books of account recording all receipts and expenditure of monies paid to it by the Scottish Ministers by way of the Grant. The Grantee shall afford the Scottish Ministers, their representatives, the Auditor General for Scotland, his/her representatives and such other persons as the Scottish Ministers may reasonably specify from time to time, such access to those records and books of account as may be required by them at any reasonable time in response to a written request for such access from the person seeking it. The Grantee shall provide such reasonable assistance and explanation as the person carrying out the inspection may from time to time require.

4.6 In the event of the Grantee becoming aware of or suspecting any irregular or fraudulent activity that may have any impact on the Project or on the use of the Grant,

or any part of it, the Grantee shall immediately notify the Scottish Ministers of such activity and provide such other information as the Scottish Ministers may reasonably require in relation to the impact on the Project and the use of the Grant.

- 4.7 The Grantee shall immediately inform the Scottish Ministers of any change in its constitution for example, but not limited to, a change in status from one type of body corporate to another.

5. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 5.1 The Grantee will respect the confidentiality of any commercially sensitive information that they have access to as a result of the Project.
- 5.2 Notwithstanding the above, the Grantee may disclose any information as required by law or judicial order. All information submitted to the Scottish Ministers may need to be disclosed and/or published by the Scottish Ministers. Without prejudice to the foregoing generality, the Scottish Ministers may disclose information in compliance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, any other law, or, as a consequence of judicial order, or order by any court or tribunal with the authority to order disclosure. Further, the Scottish Ministers may also disclose all information submitted to them to the Scottish or United Kingdom Parliament or any other department, office or agency of Her Majesty's Government in Scotland, in right of the Scottish Administration or the United Kingdom, and their servants or agents. When disclosing such information to either the Scottish Parliament or the United Kingdom Parliament it is recognised and agreed by both parties that the Scottish Ministers shall if they see fit disclose such information but are unable to impose any restriction upon the information that it provides to Members of the Scottish Parliament, or Members of the United Kingdom Parliament; such disclosure shall not be treated as a breach of this agreement.
- 5.3 The Grantee shall ensure that all requirements of the Data Protection Laws are fulfilled in relation to the Project.
- 5.4 To comply with section 31(3) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, the Scottish Ministers publish an annual statement of all payments over £25,000. In addition, in line with openness and transparency, the Scottish Government publishes a monthly report of all payments over £25,000. The Grantee should note that where a payment is made in excess of £25,000 there will be disclosure (in the form of the name of the payee, the date of the payment, the subject matter and the amount of grant) in the both the monthly report and the annual Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 statement.

6. Disposal of Assets

- 6.1 The Grantee shall not, without prior written consent of the Scottish Ministers, dispose of any asset funded, in part or in whole, with Grant funds during the lifetime of the asset. During that period the Scottish Ministers shall be entitled to the proceeds of the disposal – or the relevant proportion of the proceeds based on the percentage of grant funding used in connection with the acquisition or improvement of the asset against the whole proceeds.

7. Publicity

- 7.1 The Grantee shall where reasonably practicable acknowledge in all publicity material relating to the Project the contribution of the Scottish Ministers to its costs. The Scottish Ministers may require to approve the form of such acknowledgement prior to its first publication.

8. Intellectual Property Rights

- 8.1 All Intellectual Property Rights are hereby assigned to and shall vest in the Crown or its assignees.
- 8.2 The Grantee shall ensure that nothing contained in any materials produced or submitted to the Scottish Ministers by the Grantee or anyone acting on its behalf nor the reproduction of such materials, shall constitute an infringement of any third party copyright or intellectual property right and shall indemnify the Scottish Ministers against all actions, proceedings, claims and demands made by reason of any such infringement.

9. Default and Recovery etc. of Grant

- 9.1 The Scottish Ministers may re-assess, vary, make a deduction from, withhold, or require immediate repayment of the Grant or any part of it in the event that:
- 9.1.1 The Grantee commits a Default;
 - 9.1.2 The Scottish Ministers consider that any change or departure from the purposes for which the Grant was awarded warrants an alteration in the amount of the Grant;
 - 9.1.3 The Grantee fails to carry out the Project;
 - 9.1.4 In the Scottish Ministers' opinion, the progress on the Project is not satisfactory; or
 - 9.1.5 In the Scottish Ministers' opinion, the future of the Project is in jeopardy.
- 9.2 If, in the Scottish Ministers' opinion, the Grant or any part of it is state aid and they consider that they are required to recover such sum in order to ensure compliance with their obligations under EU law Scottish Ministers may require immediate repayment of the Grant or any part of it together with interest at such rate and on such basis as may be determined from time to time by the Commission of the European Union.
- 9.3 The Scottish Ministers may withhold the payment of the Grant if at any time within the duration of the Agreement:
- 9.3.1 The Grantee passes a resolution that it be wound up, or a court makes an order that the Grantee be wound up, in either case otherwise than for the purposes of reconstruction or amalgamation, or circumstances arise which would enable a court to make such an order or the Grantee is unable to pay its debts within the meaning of section 123 of the Insolvency Act 1986;
 - 9.3.2 Where the Grantee is an individual, if a petition is presented for the Grantee's bankruptcy or the sequestration of his estate or a criminal bankruptcy order is made

against the Grantee; or the Grantee makes any composition or arrangement with or for the benefit of creditors, or makes any conveyance or assignation for the benefit of creditors, or if an administrator or trustee is appointed to manage his affairs; or

9.3.3 A receiver, manager, administrator or administrative receiver is appointed to the Grantee, or over all or any part of the Grantee's property, or circumstances arise which would entitle a court or a creditor to appoint such a receiver, manager, administrator or administrative receiver.

9.4 In the event that the Grantee becomes bound to pay any sum to the Scottish Ministers in terms of clause 9.1, the Grantee shall pay the Scottish Ministers the appropriate sum within 14 days of a written demand for it being given by or on behalf of the Scottish Ministers to the Grantee. In the event that the Grantee fails to pay the sum within the 14 day period, the Scottish Ministers shall be entitled to interest on the sum at the rate of 2 per cent per annum above the Bank of England base lending rate prevailing at the time of the written demand, from the date of the written demand until payment in full of both the sum and interest.

9.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of this clause 9, in the event that the Grantee is in breach of any of the Conditions, the Scottish Ministers may, provided that the breach is capable of a remedy, postpone the exercise of their rights to recover any sum from the Grantee in terms of clause 9 for such period as they see fit, and may give written notice to the Grantee requiring it to remedy the breach within such period as may be specified in the notice. In the event of the Grantee failing to remedy the breach within the period specified, the Grantee shall be bound to pay the sum to the Scottish Ministers in accordance with the foregoing provisions.

9.6 Any failure, omission or delay by the Scottish Ministers in exercising any right or remedy to which they are entitled by virtue of clauses 9.1 to 9.3 shall not be construed as a waiver of such right or remedy.

10. Assignation

10.1 The Grantee shall not be entitled to assign, sub-contract or otherwise transfer its rights or obligations under the Agreement without the prior written consent of the Scottish Ministers.

11. Termination

11.1 The Agreement may be terminated by the Scottish Ministers giving not less than 3 months' notice in writing from the date of the notice being sent.

12. Corrupt Gifts and Payments of Commission

12.1 The Grantee shall ensure that its employees shall not breach the terms of the Bribery Act 2010 in relation to this or any other grant. The Grantee shall ensure that adequate controls are in place to prevent bribery.

13. Continuation of Conditions

13.1 These Conditions, except for Condition 6, shall continue to apply for a period of 5 years after the end of the financial year in which the final instalment of the Grant was paid.

14. Compliance with the Law

14.1 The Grantee shall ensure that in relation to the Project, they and anyone acting on their behalf shall comply with the relevant law, for the time being in force in Scotland.

15. Governing Law

15.1 This contract is governed by the Law of Scotland and the parties hereby prorogate to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Scottish Courts

If you wish to accept the offer of this Grant on the whole terms and conditions as set out in the letter and annexed Schedules, you should sign and date both copies of the Grant Acceptance below and return one copy of the offer of Grant and Schedules to me at Scottish Government, Learning Directorate, 2C North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ. You should retain the second copy of the offer of Grant and Schedules for your own records.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Bruce". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ANDREW BRUCE
Deputy Director
Improvement, Attainment and Wellbeing

GRANT ACCEPTANCE

I accept the foregoing offer of Grant by the Scottish Ministers dated 08/02/2019 on the whole terms and conditions as set out in the letter and annexed Schedules. I confirm that I am solvent.

Signed:

Grantee

Print Name:

Occupation/position:

Date:

Place of Signing:

Signed:

Witness Name:

Address:

Date:

Place of Signing:

This is the schedule referred to in the forgoing offer of Grant dated: 08/02/2019

SCHEDULE 1

PART 1: THE PROJECT

David Reedy will lead an independent review of P1 standardised assessments in Scotland and will be supported by Dr Even Bearne, a retired educational researcher, writer and university lecturer; and a small review team who are familiar with the Scottish context. This team will comprise two members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education with relevant expertise in the early years and primary education. Mr Reedy and Dr Bearne will engage directly with practitioners, including from the early years during the course of the review.

The review will consider and provide recommendations on the following issues:

- the compatibility of the assessments with the play-based curriculum model in the early level of Curriculum for Excellence;
- the alignment of the assessments to the benchmarks for the early level;
- the effect on P1 children of taking an on-line assessment;
- the usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers and how it supports their professional judgement;
- the implications of the review for the ongoing implementation of the national Gaelic medium education standardised assessments; and
- the future of the assessments, considering in particular whether they continue in line with the current continuous improvement model; be substantially modified; or whether they should be stopped.

The review will commence in January 2019 and report to Scottish Ministers by the end of May 2019.

PART 2: PAYMENT OF GRANT

1. The total Grant of [redacted] shall be payable by the Scottish Ministers to the Grantee monthly on receipt of a completed claim for Grant in the form set out in SCHEDULE 2 together with the associated monitoring information set out in paragraph 4.1 of the Offer of Grant.
2. The total Grant shall be payable over the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20. The Scottish Ministers shall not be bound to pay any instalment of the Grant which has not been claimed by the Grantee by 31 March of the applicable financial year, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Scottish Ministers.
3. The Grantee shall provide a monthly profile of expenditure of the Grant before the start of the Project in the first instance and before the start of the next financial year. Any change to the profile or to the overall costs of the Project shall be notified to the Scottish Ministers at the earliest opportunity via the claims for Grant and monitoring reports.
4. Each claim shall be for an amount equal to the actual reasonable and proper costs and expenses incurred by the Grantee in connection with the Project or the estimated amount of the Grant required to meet the reasonable and proper costs and expenses of the Grantee in connection with the Project until the next claim is due to be submitted.

5. Each claim shall be submitted together with such explanatory or supplementary material as the Scottish Ministers may from time to time require whether before or after submission of the claim.

6. On receipt of each claim (and any required documentation and information), the Scottish Ministers shall determine the amount of expenditure which they consider the Grantee has reasonably and properly incurred or shall reasonably and properly incur in connection with the Project having regard to that claim. The determination shall be based on the information provided by the Grantee in accordance with this Schedule. The Scottish Ministers shall use their best endeavours (but shall be under no obligation or duty) to pay the amount determined to the Grantee within one week of receiving a claim and any required documentation and information relevant to the claim.

7. In order to facilitate the accrual of expenditure of the Grant for the financial year the Grantee shall, where appropriate, advise the Scottish Ministers in writing by mid April the amount of the Grant actually expended up to and including 31 March.

SCHEDULE 2

GRANT CLAIM FORM

Organisation: D G Reedy

Bank details: A/C Number: [redacted]
Sort Code: [redacted]
Bank Name: [redacted]
Payee Name: [redacted]

Project: Independent review of P1 assessments

Total agreed grant for 2018-19 <<£???.>>

Latest forecast of expenditure of grant for: <<£???.>>

Grant claimed to date: <<£???.>>

Unexpended grant <<£???.>>

Claim for grant for the period <<DD/MM/YYYY>> to <<DD/MM/YYYY>>

We hereby claim <<£???.>> in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of grant dated 8 February 2019 and the Schedules attached thereto.

Completed by:

Position:

Contact details:

Date:

Items of Expenditure

Please list in the table below all discrete items of expenditure relevant to the above period and the type of documentary evidence that has been submitted/will be made available on request to substantiate each amount.

A	B	C	D
Item	Amount (£)	Paid Invoice Y/N	Other (please specify, e.g certificate of payment in kind
TOTAL*			

* Note the total should add up to the total expenditure claimed for the period.

This is the schedule referred to in the forgoing Offer of Grant dated 8 February 2019

SCHEDULE 3

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF GRANT

Independent review of P1 assessments

This is to confirm that the grant claimed by David Reedy in relation to the above Project during the financial year ended 31 March 2019 was properly due and was used for its intended purpose(s) in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Grant. This statement is supported by the records of David Reedy.

Signed:

Name in block capitals:

Position:

Date:

This is the schedule referred to in the forgoing Offer of Grant dated 8 February 2019

SCHEDULE 4

DEFINITIONS

“Agreement” means the agreement constituted by the Scottish Ministers’ invitation to apply for a grant, the Grantee’s Application, these Conditions and the Grantee’s acceptance of these Conditions;

“Conditions” means these grant conditions;

“Data Protection Laws” means any law, statute, subordinate legislation, regulation, order, mandatory guidance or code of practice, judgment of a relevant court of law, or directives or requirements of any regulatory body including the Data Protection Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 2018 and any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof and the GDPR.

“Default” means:

- a) Any breach of the obligations of either party under this Agreement (including, but not limited to, any breach of any undertaking or warranty given under or in terms of this Agreement);
- b) Any failure to perform or the negligent performance of any obligation under this Agreement;
- c) Any breach of any legislation; or
- d) Any negligence or negligent or fraudulent mis-statement or misappropriation of Grant, or any other default,

In all cases by either party, its employees, agents or representatives;

“Financial Year” means a period from 1 April in one year until 31 March in the next;

“Grant” means the grant offered by the Scottish Ministers to the Grantee as specified in the Award Letter, as varied from time to time in accordance with these Conditions;

“Grantee” means the person, organisation or body to which the Grant will be payable as specified in these Conditions. Where two or more persons, organisations or bodies are the Grantee, references to the “Grantee” are to those persons, organisations or bodies collectively and their obligations under the Agreement are undertaken jointly and severally;

“Intellectual Property Rights” means all copyright, patent, trademark, design right, database right and any other right in the nature of intellectual property whether or not registered, in any materials or works in whatever form (including but not limited to any materials stored in or made available by means of an information technology system and the computer software relating thereto) which are created, produced or generated as part of the Project by or on behalf of the Grantee.

“Project” means the purpose for which the Grant has been awarded as described in the Offer of Grant;

“Payment” means each of the payments specified in Schedule 1 hereto.

PROGRAMME FOR DAVID REEDY & EVE BEARNE

Monday 14th January – Wednesday 16th January

Monday 14 th January	
14:00 > check in	Accommodation: [redacted] [redacted]

Tuesday 15 th January	
10:00 – 11:00	Meeting with Fiona Robertson, Director of the Learning Directorate Room – 2B Hot Office
11:30-13:30	Meeting with Scottish Government Officials; Andrew Bruce, [redacted] & David Leng Room - 2-B43 (Bridge)
13:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 14:30	Travel to Parliament
14:30 – 15:00	Meeting with Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Mr John Swinney MSP Room – T4.23

Wednesday 16 th January	
09:00-11:00	Meeting with Gayle Gorman, Chief Inspector of Education for Scotland Room - 2-B54 (Bridge)
11:30-12:30	Meeting with Scottish Government Officials, Andrew Bruce, [redacted] & David Leng Room – 2D- 77 (South)

David Reedy Visit

Wednesday 5th June 2019

AGENDA

- 13:00 Meet at Scottish Government offices, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ
- 13:00-14:30 Networking lunch with National Improvement Framework Unit policy team members:
[redacted] – Head of National Improvement Framework Team
David Leng – National Standardised Assessments Product Owner
[redacted] – Team Leader, Assessment
[redacted] – Team Leader, International and Research
Chris Chapman – International Council of Education Advisers Representative
- 14:30 Travel from Victoria Quay to St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG.
- 15:00-15:30 Coffee and meet with senior leadership team at Costa Coffee area:
Fiona Robertson – Director of Learning
Gayle Gorman – Chief Inspector of Education for Scotland
Graeme Logan – Deputy Director, Improvement Attainment and Wellbeing
- 15:30-17:00 Meeting with senior leadership team – meeting room GR.09.
- 17:00 Travel from St Andrews House to Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP
- 17:15-17:45 Meeting with Deputy First Minister and and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills alongside Scottish Government officials.

Review of Primary 1 Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA)

The documents and links below provide an overview of

- the development of the SNSA,
- the first year of implementation of the SNSA
- the political debate around the SNSA that has led to this independent review.

Much more detail can be provided on request and a demonstration of the P1 assessments will also be provided. The Scottish Government evidence paper submitted to the Scottish Parliament Education Committee (December 2018) and the SNSA National Report (December 2018) are a useful starting point in setting out the Government's position.

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20181221Scottish_Government.pdf

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-national-standardised-assessments-national-report-academic-year-2017-2018/>

Development of SNSA

Set of requirements which were issued to prospective suppliers, resulting in ACER becoming the chosen provider of the service.



SNSA - Invitation to Tender.docx

- attached as 39b

SNSA public website (launched in August 2017) high level information for all relevant audiences (pupils, teachers, LAs, parents)

<https://standardisedassessment.gov.scot/>

ACER have collated a number of key documents on the design and development process under the following headings:

- Design of the P1 assessments including the practice assessments
- The continuous improvement /annual refreshment process
- Report Design
- Training
- Support desk
- The process of standardisation
- Feedback strategies - planned or in place.

Implementation of SNSA

SNSA User Review (produced by Scottish Government to inform forward planning and continuous improvement) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-national-standardised-assessments-user-review-year-1-session-2017/>

National Improvement Hub (P1 case studies)

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/primary-1-snsa-case-studies>

Parliamentary debates/statements on SNSA:

Statement on 5 September 2018

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11641&mode=pdf>
(section 18)

Conservative Party Business on 19 September 2018

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11673&mode=pdf>
(section 18)

Statement on 25 October 2018 <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/statement-primary-1-assessments>

Education and Skills Committee Inquiry on SNSAs – responses to call for evidence and papers for first meeting on 9 January 2019

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/110246.aspx>

Evidence or comments from other parties

EIS survey – published under FOI-18-01829 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-18-01829/>

Upstart – <https://www.upstart.scot/play-not-tests-leaflet/> (Play Not Tests leaflet)

Connect press release - <https://connect.scot/news/connects-parent-survey-findings-national-testing-primary-1-children>

Children in Scotland press release - <https://childreninScotland.org.uk/why-young-children-need-play-not-tests/>

Recent PQs in relation to SNSA

1. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what results and outcomes of primary 1 assessments it received from Fife Council in 2018, and what its response was.

A: The Scottish Government does not receive any SNSA data from local authorities.

2. Q: To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its response to the vote in the Parliament on 19 September 2018 opposing National Standardised Assessments for P1 pupils.

A: On 25 October 2018, I made a parliamentary statement announcing an independent review of P1 assessments. The review will consider all the evidence gathered and provide recommendations by May 2019.

3. Q: To ask the Scottish Government whether the independent review of P1 assessments will take into consideration the effect and usefulness of the use of assessments for those with both identified and undiagnosed learning difficulties and neurodevelopmental disorders.

A: The expectation is that the independent review of P1 assessments will consider both the effect of the assessments on children and young people and the usefulness of the diagnostic information provided to teachers. The detailed remit of the review will be finalised shortly, including whether this consideration will focus on specific groups of children and young people, such as those with additional support needs.

4. Q: To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-18727 by John Swinney on 19 September 2018, and its reference to “A small number of teachers”, how many teachers this constitutes.

A: It is not possible from either the EIS survey or the user review focus groups and classroom observations to quantify the specific number of teachers who made these comments.

Around 460 teachers responded to the EIS survey, but it is not clear from the responses how many individuals expressed opinions on particular issues. As per the answer to PQ S5W-18736, more than 50 teachers and other professionals were involved in the focus groups and classroom observations.

5. Q: To ask the Scottish Government how much it cost (a) it and (b) each of its relevant agencies to operate the P1 assessment tests in the 2017-18 academic year, and what the projected cost is for 2018-19.

A: The cost of the P1 assessments for the 2017/18 academic year was around £447,000. This represents the amount paid by the Scottish Government to the SNSA supplier. No other agency contributes to these costs. For 2018/19, the projected cost is expected to be similar.

6. Q: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the comment by the chief inspector at paragraph 44 of the report, Scottish National Standardised Assessments User Review Year 1 – Session 2017/18, that “P1 teachers use the information the assessments provide to tailor support and to personalise approaches to ensure children get the very best start in their education”, what its response is to the observation at paragraph 52 that “The digital skills of children had an impact on their experience of the assessments... Teachers commented that this was a developmental issue that might inhibit children doing the assessments early in P1”, and what the impact on the veracity of the assessments was of pupils not having these skills.

A: The SNSA are diagnostic assessments designed to identify next steps in learning for children and young people. Identifying strengths or concerns about a child’s digital skills are very much part of everyday learning and teaching, as are the SNSA. The User Review highlights the concern about

digital skills and in some instances questions have been re-designed or replaced. To minimise the range of digital skills required by young children, there has also been a reduction in the number of drag and drop type questions. This does not impact on the diagnostic value of the questions but will have a positive impact by making the assessment more user friendly.

7. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what its response to the statement by the EIS that the Scottish National Standardised Assessments process has resulted in some pupils experiencing “extreme anxiety”.

A: The Scottish Government fully recognises these concerns and is taking steps through the system enhancements announced in the User Review published on 28 August to help ensure that the experience for all children and young people is positive. Under no circumstance should a child feel distressed or upset. If administered correctly, a child will take part in the assessment as part of their normal classwork and the assessment will not feel any different to any other task the child is asked to do.

8. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the statement by EIS that “the Scottish Government was provided with the feedback [regarding the Scottish National Standardised Assessments] from EIS members; it does not seem to have been reflected in its review process.”

A: The Scottish Government reflected on the comments from EIS members and others as part of our User Review of the SNSA. As the User Review makes clear, a number of enhancements are being made to the SNSA system as a result of the comments received.

9. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the statement by the EIS that “to create a narrow focus on SNSA [Scottish National Standardised Assessments] data is to create a ‘high stakes’ environment around what were meant to be diagnostic classroom tools, supporting but not supplanting teacher professional judgement.”

A: The Scottish Government has not created a narrow focus on Scottish National Standardised Assessments data. We have been consistently clear that the key measure of children and young people’s progress is teacher professional judgement. The SNSA are not “high stakes” tests; they are diagnostic assessments to support learning and bring a consistent, national element to help inform teachers’ professional judgement.

10. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the statement by the EIS that “in relation to P1, the EIS has a view that the SNSAs [Scottish National Standardised Assessments] should be scrapped.”

A: The Scottish Government remains committed to the P1 assessments, and the SNSA in general.

11. Q: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the comment at paragraph 10 of the report, Scottish National Standardised Assessments User Review Year

1 – Session 2017/18, that “teachers and schools are empowered to use the SNSA at a time in the year which suits children in their care and when the assessments will be most useful”, what its response is to the statement by the EIS that “children were largely presented en masse through SNSA ‘assessment windows’”.

A: The Scottish Government has made clear that individual teachers and schools, in conjunction with their local authorities, should decide the most appropriate time during the school year for children to take the Scottish National Standardised Assessments. We will discuss with local authorities the importance of schools having the flexibility to make the decision on timing.

12. Q: To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish its evidence to support the claim at paragraph 63 of the report, Scottish National Standardised Assessments User Review Year 1 – Session 2017/18, that “on the whole, the children found the assessments accessible and stimulating”, and what its response is to the statement by the EIS that “none of our members reported the assessments to be ‘stimulating’, as was claimed in the report.”

A: As set out in the User Review, Scottish Government and Education Scotland officials held a number of focus groups with teachers and observed a number of children and young people carrying out the assessments and discussed their experience with their teachers. It was clear from these sessions that, overall, the children involved enjoyed the assessments.

13. Q: To ask the Scottish Government how many teachers there were in 2017-18, and how many taught (a) P1s and (b) pupils who sat the Scottish National Standardised Assessments.

A: There were 51,513 FTE teachers in 2017/18. Of those, 3558 FTE teachers were teaching P1 in September 2017. This includes those teaching composite classes of pupils from two or more years. We do not have a breakdown of the number of teachers who taught the children and young people who sat SNSAs in 2017/18.

14. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what its position is regarding whether the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) add to teacher knowledge, in light of feedback that stated “As a practitioner who loves nothing more than analysing data and identifying next steps in learning, the SNSA is the most useless pieces of assessment data I have ever come across”.

A: The Scottish Government recognises that there are differing views on the reports generated by the SNSA system. One teacher commented that “Data is incredibly detailed and personalised. Feedback will be very useful in looking for next steps.” We will continue to look to enhance SNSA reports to ensure they are well matched to Curriculum for Excellence and provide high quality information for teachers.

15. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to survey P1s following the Scottish National Standardised Assessments.

A: As stated in the User Review published on 28 August, the assessment platform will be enhanced with a more systematic user feedback process. At the end of each assessment, a short age-appropriate survey will be available for children and young people that will encourage them to feedback on their experience.

16. Q: To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it decided to conduct the Scottish National Standardised Assessments digitally, and what consideration it gave to the impact that unequal resources might have had on these.

A: The Scottish National Standardised Assessments are adaptive assessments and can only be provided online. It was a key requirement in the development of the SNSA that the online system is compatible with a wide variety of technical platforms, devices and internet bandwidth connectivity available within Scottish local authorities and schools. No concerns were raised by local authority representatives or professional organisations about IT capability, in large part because most schools already have the necessary capability and capacity given that they have undertaken existing standardised assessments on digital platforms for some time.

17. Q: To ask the Scottish Government how many of the changes set out from paragraph 64 to paragraph 77 of the report, Scottish National Standardised Assessments User Review Year 1 – Session 2017/18, were under consideration prior to the receipt of teacher feedback.

A: The SNSA were developed in discussion with teachers and the Scottish Government has sought feedback from users as an integral part of the continuous improvement process. A number of system improvements, for example replenishment of a third of the questions, were already in train prior to more recent feedback such as the EIS member survey.

18. Q: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of reported concerns that the assessment were administered using varying equipment and with different levels of classroom support, whether it plans to use the data gathered by the Scottish National Standardised Assessments to compare schools.

A: The Scottish Government has made clear that it will not gather or publish any data from the Scottish National Standardised Assessments in order to compare schools. School level Achievement of CfE Level results, based on teachers' professional judgement, are published along with other school level data.

19. Q: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the comment at paragraph 31 of the report, Scottish National Standardised Assessments User Review Year 1 – Session 2017/18, that "almost all [teachers] said they had been very pleased with the reports generated and with the diagnostic information

provided”, whether it will confirm how many teachers (a) reported this and (b) gave a contrary position.

A: Paragraph 31 of the User Review refers to the face to face feedback provided about the assessments at all stages (P1, P4, P7 and S3) as part of focus groups with schools and local authorities and classroom observations. These 9 focus groups and 6 classroom observations involved more than 50 teachers and other professionals, the vast majority of whom indicated their satisfaction with the reports.

20. Q: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the comment at paragraph 29 of the report, Scottish National Standardised Assessments User Review Year 1 – Session 2017/18, that “Some teachers reported that children found the assessments upsetting. In contrast, other teachers commented that the children found them an engaging and positive experience”, whether it will confirm how many teachers reported either position.

A: A small number of teachers made these comments, through the EIS survey and first-hand discussions and observations with those carrying out the assessments. For 2018/19, we are introducing a more systematic user feedback process to hear directly from children and young people themselves. At the end of each assessment, a short age-appropriate survey will be available to encourage them to feedback on their experience.

21. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reports that one-to-one assistance was required by many P1s who were assessed under the Scottish National Standardised Assessments.

A: We have offered schools maximum flexibility on carrying out the assessments and there were a number of successful approaches, including through the use of one-to-one support. Working in small groups and on a one-to-one basis is part of everyday teaching and learning in Primary 1.

22. Q: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the comments at paragraph 47 of the report, Scottish National Standardised Assessments User Review Year 1 – Session 2017/18, that "A number of teachers commented positively on the ease of access to the platform" and "Other user feedback suggested that the IT infrastructure, the type of devices available and the children's IT skills had a negative impact on the experience of the assessments", whether it will confirm how many teachers gave the (a) positive and (b) negative feedback.

A: We do not have specific figures on this feedback which came from the focus groups with teachers. As part of the User Review, there will be more systematic means of gathering teacher feedback from 2018/19 onwards. Teachers will have the opportunity to offer feedback at any time from within the system, thus providing a simple and direct means to report their views and experience. In addition, an annual survey of users will be introduced to collect feedback from a randomly sampled group of staff to provide an overview of the SNSA experience.

23. Q: To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish its evidence to support the claim at paragraph 36 of the report, Scottish National Standardised Assessments User Review Year 1 – Session 2017/18, that “feedback is clear that the SNSA are an improvement on the existing standardised assessments for children with additional support needs and the accessibility features are really valued by the teachers and children”.

A: This is feedback from the Accessibility Advisory Group, as well as from training events with ASN staff and discussions with local authorities. The Accessibility Advisory Group contains practitioners, local authorities and organisations involved in ASN such as Call Scotland.

24. Q: To ask the Scottish Government whether it has (a) requested and (b) received legal advice on whether parents are permitted to withdraw their children from Scottish National Standardised Assessments and, if so, whether it will place a copy in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe).

A: The Scottish Ministerial Code states that Ministers must not ordinarily divulge either the source or content of legal advice. I am able to confirm on this occasion that the Scottish Government has taken appropriate legal advice on this matter.

25. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the compatibility of the statement in its letter to local authority education directors, dated August 2018, that "parents don't have the option to opt out of the assessments" except in "exceptional circumstances", and the key step established in "Learning together": Scotland's national action plan on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home, published on 21 August 2018, that parents should be supported to be active participants in the assessment and reporting process.

A: The Scottish Government is supportive of parents participation in their child's learning, teaching and assessment. The SNSAs, in common with virtually all aspects of the Scottish curriculum and its delivery, are not provided for in legislation. This means that they cannot be seen as compulsory, but also that there cannot be a legal right for parents to withdraw their children from the assessments, or indeed any other part of the school curriculum (with the exception of some parts of religious observance and instruction). In practice however, if parents or carers have any particular concerns about their child's participation in the SNSAs, they should discuss this with their school with a view to reaching agreement on whether the child will undertake the assessments, as they would for any other aspect of learning, teaching or assessment.

26. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the accuracy of the information that it gave to a parent on 3 April 2018, as shown in its response to freedom of information request FOI/18/01458, in which it was stated "I can confirm that the assessments (not testing) are not mandated by the Scottish Government.", and whether it has now contacted this parent to retract the information.

A: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-18399 on [xx] September 2018. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>

27. Q: To ask the Scottish Government whether parents of P1 pupils are entitled, in law, to withdraw their children from standardised national tests.

A: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-18399 on [xx] September 2018. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>

28. Q: To ask the Scottish Government how it informs (a) local authorities and (b) schools about parents' and young people's rights regarding standardised assessments in primary schools.

A: The Scottish Government has made clear that the Scottish National Standardised Assessments are part of everyday learning and teaching. The assessments provide teachers with diagnostic information to help them plan next steps in children's learning. Similar to other methods of assessment in schools, there is no legal basis for a parent to withdraw their child from the SNSA. If parents have specific queries or questions about their child undertaking the assessments then they should discuss this matter with their child's school who will take the decision on whether to grant the request as they would for any other aspect of learning and teaching.

29. Q: To ask the Scottish Government how the reporting of P1 assessments will take into account the proportion of children with additional support needs within a (a) class and (b) school.

A: The Scottish National Standardised Assessments are designed to be accessible to all children and young people. Additional support mechanisms available for any other aspect of learning can be used when undertaking an assessment. The reporting functionality within the system can be filtered at class and school level to look specifically at children and young people with additional support needs.

30. Q: To ask the Scottish Government how many parents have asked for their children to be withdrawn from the P1 standardised assessments.

A: The Scottish National Standardised Assessments are part of everyday learning and teaching. They provide teachers with diagnostic information on children's progress in aspects of literacy and numeracy. The Scottish Government has received fewer than 10 requests from parents asking to withdraw their child from the assessments. As with any other area of learning, teaching and assessment parents should discuss their concerns with their child's teacher.

31. Q: To ask the Scottish Government how much the Scottish National Standardised Assessments IT system has cost to introduce in schools, broken down by (a) initial and (b) annual running cost.

A: The Scottish National Standardised Assessments IT system was delivered on time and remains within budget. Costs have been broken down by (a) initial and (b) annual running costs below:

		SNSA main contract	Notes Applicable
SNSA initial costs	Main suppliers development and initial implementation fee	£1,115,000	
SNSA running costs (AY 17/18)	Main suppliers management fee and assessment fee	£3,390,509	1
SNSA running costs (AY 18/19)	Main suppliers management fee and assessment fee	£3,445,915	1
SNSA running costs (AY 19/20)	Main suppliers management fee and assessment fee	£862,329	1,2
Estimated Contract Completion cost		£8,813,753	3

Notes

1. The cost of the assessments is assuming a 100% uptake of assessments for the full school role for P1, P4, P7 and S3 in academic year 17/18. Actual uptake is expected to be less due to absences, children with complex additional support needs etc.
2. Year 19/20 is a part year as the 3 year contract term currently ends in October 2019. Three months (one quarter) of the full years management and assessment fee is estimated.
3. Costs are not VAT applicable.

32. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what evidence was used to reach its decision to introduce testing for P1 pupils.

A: The Scottish National Standardised Assessments were introduced as part of the National Improvement Framework, which was first launched in 2015. The development of the National Improvement Framework was based on the best practice which exists internationally on the use of data and intelligence to improve education at national, local, school and individual child level. This includes the OECD publications Synergies for Better Learning and Education Policy Outlook.

Assessment is a central part of everyday learning and teaching for children and young people. The Scottish National Standardised Assessment are designed to be experienced by children as part of ongoing learning and teaching activities in the classroom. The assessments provide teachers with an additional piece of evidence to assess a child's progress and identify whether further support is required. The assessments are uniquely aligned to Curriculum for Excellence and are designed around the early level compatible with play-based learning approaches in P1. We are not introducing national testing at P1 or any other stage of schooling.

33. Q: To ask the Scottish Government what processes or information are in place to inform parents that their children can opt out of P1 testing.

A: The Scottish National Standardised Assessments were introduced as part of the National Improvement Framework, which was first launched in 2015. The development of the National Improvement Framework was based on the best practice which exists internationally on the use of data and intelligence to improve education at national, local, school and individual child level. This includes the OECD publications Synergies for Better Learning and Education Policy Outlook.

Assessment is a central part of everyday learning and teaching for children and young people. The Scottish National Standardised Assessment are designed to be experienced by children as part of ongoing learning and teaching activities in the classroom. The assessments provide teachers with an additional piece of evidence to assess a child's progress and identify whether further support is required. The assessments are uniquely aligned to Curriculum for Excellence and are designed around the early level compatible with play-based learning approaches in P1. We are not introducing national testing at P1 or any other stage of schooling.

Fol releases in relation to SNSA

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/?term=scottish+national+standardised+assessments&topics=Education&page=1>

SCHEDULE 1

ASSESSMENTS TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK: STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

Descriptive Specification

1. Introduction

1.1 The Scottish Government requires a Service provider to provide a national system of online standardised assessments of children's progress in literacy and numeracy in Scotland (hereafter the "Assessments"). This document describes the Scottish Government's requirements and should be read in conjunction with the list of Functional and Technical requirements at Appendix 1, and the Glossary of terms at Appendix 3.

1.2 The Assessments will comprise part of a wider project to introduce a "National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education". The Service Provider's role within the project will be to design and deliver a set of Assessments which will:

- report progress in skills for reading, writing and numeracy
- assess pupils in primaries 1, 4, 7 and secondary 3
- provide individual, diagnostic reports on each pupil's progress which will supply information to identify strengths and individual learning needs
- be online (but with provision for alternative formats if necessary)
- be adaptive (become easier or more difficult dependent of the answer of the pupil)
- provide standardised scores
- be suitable for the Scottish school education system and aligned with Curriculum for Excellence
- be inclusive (will be equitable and allow all pupils to be fairly assessed, no matter their background, experience, additional support needs or level of ability).

1.3 The key elements of this requirement are:

Service Implementation and Implementation Testing Phase

- design and implementation of the Assessments content and delivery system
- implementation testing of the Assessments to take place during the 2016/17 school year

Full Service Delivery

- delivery of the Assessments - beginning in the 2017/18 school year and continuing with a further round of the annual assessment process in 2018/19. There will be the opportunity for two one-year extensions to include the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years.
- diagnostic and statistical reporting

- service support and management
- training where appropriate
- annual updating and the capacity for further development of the Assessments.

1.4 The Service Provider will be required to work closely with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland throughout the development of the Assessments, in particular to ensure their alignment with Curriculum for Excellence.

1.5 A number of related developments are expected to take place during the life of the contract to support the aims of the National Improvement Framework. In particular, the Scottish Government may develop a platform for all digital elements of the wider system to sit within. While such a platform is out of scope of this specification, it is essential that the Assessments system has the interoperability to work seamlessly with future developments.

2. Background

2.1 In January 2016 the Scottish Government published "[The National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education](#)" (hereafter the "Framework"). The Framework sets out the Scottish Government's vision and priorities for Scotland's children. The Framework has been developed to support high-quality learning and teaching, the core principle of Curriculum for Excellence. Over time, the Framework will provide a level of robust, consistent and transparent data across Scotland to extend the understanding of what works and drive improvements across all parts of the system. The Framework builds on the best practice within the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and has been informed by the OECD research "Synergies for Better Learning".

2.2 Data gathered on children's progress are essential to achieving excellence and equity. Improved data on children's progress at key stages, including differences between those from the least and most deprived areas, will allow for planning further interventions to ensure that all children achieve as well as they can. Part of this data will be provided from the Assessments.

3. Aims of the Contract

3.1 The primary aim of the Assessments is to provide one piece of evidence as part of a whole range of evidence to support teachers' professional judgement of children's progress in learning. The information provided will also be used to inform, alongside other assessment evidence, teachers' professional judgement on achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels.

4. Scope of the Requirement

4.1 The Assessments will be available for use in publicly funded schools in Scotland from school year 2017/18 onwards. There is an expectation that the Assessments will be used once a school year at any point by all pupils in P1, P4, P7 and S3.

4.2 Pupil census data for 2015 are shown in the table below. This is for publicly funded primary and secondary schools and gives an indication of how many pupils may take the assessments per year. This does not include special school pupils as they are not

categorised by stage. However we expect, where appropriate, special school pupils will take part in the Assessments.

<i>Stage</i>	<i>No of pupils, September 2015</i>
P1	57,135
P4	57,063
P7	52,668
S3	50,296

4.3 In September 2015 in Scotland there were:

- 2,038 publicly funded primary schools
- 361 publicly funded secondary schools
- 144 publicly funded special schools with 6,920 pupils.

4.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the following are **outside** of the scope of this requirement:

- local authorities undertaking the Assessments more frequently and in stages other than Primaries 1, 4, 7 and Secondary 3
- hardware and other infrastructure required by schools.

5. Service Provider Responsibilities

5.1 The Service Provider will be responsible for the following high-level objectives of the Contract. A detailed list of functional and technical requirements for the Assessments are provided in Appendix 1. At all times the Service Provider must work in conjunction with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and other parties as directed by the Scottish Government.

Service Implementation and Implementation Testing Phase

Design of the Assessments

5.2 The Assessments content and materials will be designed to assess skills in numeracy, reading and writing. They will be aligned with Curriculum for Excellence to assess early level to 4th level and currently expected to be delivered to pupils in Primaries 1, 4, 7 and Secondary 3. The Assessments will be adaptive starting at an appropriate level to ensure engagement of pupils. There will be a separate assessment for reading, an assessment for writing and an assessment for numeracy per pupil.

5.3 In developing the Assessments content (and any supporting materials), the Service Provider will engage with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and others as directed by the Scottish Government or Education Scotland. This process will be arranged in conjunction with Education Scotland.

5.4 A joint quality assurance group established by Education Scotland will meet quarterly throughout the duration of the contract. Members of the group will include the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and the Service Provider.

Assessment Delivery Method

5.5 There will be a pupil-friendly and age-appropriate tool for the delivery of the Assessment content and materials to pupils.

5.6 The primary methodology for accessing the Assessments will be via a secure internet site. If a school is unable to support an on-line assessment for whatever reason, alternative output formats will be made available.

Implementation Testing

5.7 Implementation testing of both the content and design of the Assessments and of the intended delivery method will be undertaken prior to the first year of full implementation of the Assessments (in 2017/18). Implementation testing will take place during 2016/17.

5.8 The Service Provider will produce a report of the implementation testing phase as directed by the Scottish Government. The report must be approved by the steering group (see 7.2) before the project can proceed to the next phase.

Standardisation and a Scottish Sample

5.9 The Assessments will be standardised against a Scottish sample of assessment performance. The Scottish Government acknowledges it may not be possible for a large enough Scottish sample of data to be collected to allow Scottish-based adjustment for age by 2017/18 and existing standardisation methods may need to be used which may not be Scottish specific.

5.10 The Contactor will work with the Scottish Government to agree the process and timetable required to introduce a solely Scottish based sample to determine standardisation.

5.11 The Scottish Government may wish to explore with the Service Provider the possibilities of introducing a process which allows standardisation by months in stage in addition to age.

Data matching

5.12 The results of the assessments will be matched to pupil characteristics at the individual pupil level to allow analysis by group (such as gender or deprivation status).

5.13 There are a number of options for matching pupil characteristic data to individual pupils. The Service Provider will work with the Scottish Government to agree and implement an appropriate method of data matching for the Assessments.

Assessment Scoring and Reporting

5.15 The primary output of the Assessments will take the form of an individual “diagnostic” report to be automatically generated and available to the teacher in real time after an Assessment is marked. In addition, reports which combine the results of groups of Assessments will be available for group, class, stage, school, cluster and local authority levels and the facility will be provided for authorised users to generate ad-hoc reports.

5.16 National level data and full pupil level datasets, matched to pupil characteristic data and, where applicable, including longitudinal analysis of pupil progress, will be made available by the Service Provider to the Scottish Government and Education Scotland on request in the formats specified in requirement 3.7 of Appendix 1.

Full Service Implementation

5.17 The Assessments will be made available to all publicly funded schools in Scotland in 2017/18 (and thereafter). Full implementation will include:

- provision of guidance and training materials prior to delivery
- provision of support for teachers, administrators and schools on an on-demand basis
- all administration associated with delivery and completion of the Assessments.

5.18 The Assessments will be available for use for all pupils in Scotland from the start of the school year in August 2017 onwards. The Assessments will be available for use at any point during the school year. The Scottish school year runs from August to June inclusive.

Annual Updating and Review

5.19 Between each annual round of the Assessments, the content, design and other relevant aspects will be reviewed. As part of that process, feedback will be sought from users of the service and the Service Provider will make adjustments to support and materials in response to that feedback.

5.20 Prior to each school year’s round of Assessments, the Service Provider, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland will together review the content of the Assessments. Where it is decided to remove individual questions or groups of questions (e.g. because they do not align with Curriculum for Excellence), the Service Provider will ensure that the overall design of the Assessments (including its adaptive and standardised nature) are not adversely affected.

Training

5.21 The Service Provider will undertake an analysis of training needs of users and produce a recommended training plan. The Service Provider will provide all necessary training materials for assessments and reporting.

Support

5.22 There are various elements of support required. These are detailed in Appendix 1, section 6.

6. Applicable Legislation

6.1 The Service Provider will ensure that their working methods do not contravene the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. (See <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data-protection-act>).

6.2 The Service Provider must comply with legislation defined for accessible websites under the UK's Equality Act 2010.

6.3 The Service Provider will ensure that they comply with the principles outlined in the Scottish Information Governance Framework Toolkit, which is available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/07/01082955>. The Service Provider shall comply with data protection and confidentiality rules and must, as a minimum, employ the following types of security measures:

- physical security
- access control
- security and privacy enhancing technologies
- awareness, training and security checks in relation to personnel
- incident/response management/business continuity
- audit controls/due diligence
- information security management systems
- safeguarding.

7. Contract Management and Project Governance

7.1 The Scottish Government will appoint a contract manager who will be responsible for day-to-day liaison with the Service Provider. The Service Provider will be required to attend weekly meetings with the project team during the development and implementation phase (these meetings can be by audio or video conference if appropriate).

7.2 The contract will be overseen by a steering group consisting of the Scottish Government and Education Scotland. The Service Provider will be required to meet with the steering group on a monthly basis during the development phase of the contract. From autumn 2017 onwards meetings will be on a quarterly basis.

7.3 The Service Provider will participate in regular meetings with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and a range of stakeholders as directed by the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to discuss the Assessments. These meetings will take place at least four times a year during the first three years of the contract and at least twice a year thereafter. A reference group will be established by Education Scotland

for annual review and development of the Assessments to monitor and advise on changes.

7.4 The Service Provider will be required to provide monthly written progress reports until autumn 2017.

7.5 The Service Provider is required to provide information to the Scottish Government in line with the requirements detailed in Schedule 4 – Management Arrangements.

7.6 A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used to regularly assess Service Provider and system performance. These can be found in Appendix 2 of this document.

8. Contract Duration

8.1 It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded in August 2016. The Service Provider must be in a position to begin the project within 4 weeks. The Contract will end upon completion of the 2018-19 round of Assessments (three year contract). There will be the opportunity for contract to be extended up to 24 months (until the completion of the 2020-21 round of Assessments) at the sole discretion of the Scottish Ministers

8.2 Detailed implementation plans will be agreed with the Service Provider.

**Appendix 1 to the Statement of Requirements:
List of Functional Technical and Business Requirements**

1 Assessment Content

2 Functional Requirements

3 Reporting

4 Implementation

5 Training

6 Support

7 Technical Requirements

This section describes what technical characteristics are required of the Assessments. It covers:

7.1 Performance Efficiency

(System Performance, Time-behaviour, Resource Utilisation, Capacity)

7.2 Compatibility

(Co-existence, Interoperability)

7.3 Usability and Accessibility

(Appropriateness Recognisability, Learnability, Operability, User error protection, User interface aesthetics)

7.4 Reliability

(Maturity, Availability, Fault tolerance, Recoverability)

7.5 Security

(Confidentiality, Integrity, Non-repudiation, Accountability, Authenticity)

7.6 Maintainability

(Modifiability, Backward compatibility, Software replacement, Release management)

7.7 Portability

(Adaptability, Instalability, Replaceability)

7.8 Service Level Performance Management

(Adaptability, Instalability, Replaceability)

Requirements

The system must fulfil the following requirements by the target full service implementation date of August 2017, except where a requirement is described as a '**should**', which indicates a requirement is desirable, but not essential.

Ref.	1. Assessment Content
1.1	The Assessments will assess skills in numeracy, reading and writing.
1.2	The Assessments will be available for use by all pupils in P1, P4, P7 and S3 in Scotland from August 2017 onwards.
1.3	The content of the Assessments will reflect the knowledge, skills understanding, and standards embedded within the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes for reading, writing and numeracy across the CfE Levels.
1.4	The Assessments will be available to be used once a year at any point by all pupils in P1, P4 and P7 and S3.
1.5	The language and context used in questions and answers will be appropriate for the audience for the Assessments.
1.6	The Assessments will be adaptive starting in a middle range question for stage and adapting according to the answer given.
1.7	The Assessments will be inclusive and equitable and allow all pupils to be fairly assessed no matter their background, experience or level of ability.
1.8	The length and time taken for the Assessments will be age and stage appropriate.
1.9	The Assessments will present the pupil with sufficient questions to enable standardised scores and age-equivalent scores to be produced.
1.10	The Assessments will contain sufficient questions to accommodate the adaptive nature of the assessment.
1.11	The Assessments will deploy sufficient questions to prevent familiarisation of the content amongst pupils.
1.12	The Assessments should deploy sufficient questions to avoid teachers becoming familiar with the content of the Assessments (and so teaching to the test).
1.13	The subject questions should be randomised to avoid blocks of questions on the same topic.
1.14	The time taken by a pupil to take an Assessment in either literacy or numeracy will be minimised and no more than 50 minutes (a typical Assessment will not

	<p>be expected to last this long but there may be circumstances where, for whatever reason, children might require extra time to complete their assessment). Arrangements must be made and agreed with Education Scotland as to the appropriate timing out mechanism.</p>
1.15	<p>The Assessment should have an unseen timing element that the teacher can refer to as part of the results but this will not appear on the pupil's screen. This will also indicate whether the Assessment has been paused for any reason.</p>
1.16	<p>All content used in the Assessments will be quality assured to the highest standard of technical accuracy including spelling and grammar. The content of the texts and questions should be clear and unambiguous. They should also offer real and relevant contexts for the assessments.</p>
1.17	<p>The Assessments will assess the following reading skills at the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence level:</p> <p>P1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • phonological awareness • word recognition – common words • word decoding. <p>P4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • word recognition • word decoding • reading comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - answer questions about the main ideas in the text - answer questions about the main purpose of the text - find information within a text. <p>P7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • word recognition • word decoding • reading comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - answer a range of literal, inferential and evaluative questions - recognise persuasive language - find more complex information within a text - distinguish between fact and opinion. <p>S3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - answer a range of literal, inferential and evaluative questions - use evidence from the text to support answers - comment on the language used in texts - recognise persuasive techniques - evaluate the reliability and credibility of texts.

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1.18	The Assessment for reading skills will be able to produce an age-equivalent or reading-age score for all pupils who take the assessment.
1.19	The Assessment for writing skills will assess spelling at the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence level.
1.20	Contextualised grammar and punctuation should be considered as part of the writing skills Assessment.
1.21	The Assessment for writing skills should be able to produce an age-equivalent score for all pupils who take the assessment.
1.22	<p>The Assessment for numeracy skills will assess the following (at the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence level):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mental agility • estimating and rounding • addition and subtraction • multiplication and division • place value • negative numbers • fractions, decimal fractions and percentages • money • time • measurement • perimeter, area, volume • data and analysis • chance and uncertainty • ability to answer contextualised questions and word problems
1.23	The Assessments should ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to respond to questions within each of the elements outlined above as specified by the experiences and outcomes within Curriculum for Excellence.
1.24	The Assessment should present mental agility questions and context/word problem questions to every pupil.
1.25	The Assessment for numeracy skills will be able to produce an age-equivalent score for all pupils who take the assessment.
1.26	The Assessment for numeracy should allow all pupils to be assessed on the skill at the same level in a number of ways to ensure the pupil has had the opportunity to demonstrate full understanding of the element being assessed. For example a pupil may show their ability to answer a question as an algorithm relating number bonds and as a word problem.
1.27	As part of review processes led by Education Scotland and the Scottish Government it will be possible for the supplier to remove individual questions or groups of questions (e.g. in response to feedback) without the overall design of the Assessment being affected.

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1.28	The Assessments will be reviewed on an annual basis, in conjunction with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government. The Service Provider will obtain regular feedback from system users and make adjustments to support package and materials in response to that feedback.
1.29	The Service Provider will be responsible for the storage and maintenance of all Assessment content, including, master, backup and archived versions of all Assessment content.

Ref.	2. Functional Requirements
2.1	<p>Practice questions</p> <p>The Assessments will provide pupils with a few “practice” questions allowing pupils to practice any techniques that are required to answer questions. This may be of particular importance for younger pupils. The Assessments system will include an age appropriate introductory section to explain to the pupil the format and style of how the Assessments will be conducted.</p>
2.2	<p>Secure content access</p> <p>The pupil will not have access to the Assessment content until the teacher starts the Assessment.</p>
2.3	<p>Assessment version control</p> <p>The pupil will be provided with the correct version of the Assessment at the point where the Assessment is started.</p>
2.4	<p>Eligibility</p> <p>Pupils will only be presented with the Assessment which they are eligible to be taking, i.e. their identity has been authenticated, the Assessment type is correct and they are presented with age appropriate questions.</p>
2.5	<p>Login</p> <p>The pupil will login to the Assessment using a unique ID and will be presented with the correct version of the assessment.</p>
2.6	<p>Successful access</p> <p>It will be possible for schools and local authorities to monitor that each pupil has successfully accessed their Assessment and completed their Assessment.</p>
2.7	<p>Check ID</p> <p>The pupil's identity should be validated.</p>
2.8	<p>Display tutorial screens</p> <p>The Pupil will be provided with some pre-assessment tutorial screens. This will provide suitable instruction in how to navigate the screens. The tutorial will not form part of the allocated assessment time.</p>
2.9	<p>Display pre-screens</p> <p>The Scottish Government and Education Scotland should have the option to specify the configuration of assessment specific introductory screens for presentation to the pupils; this may include Assessment specific help and references.</p>
2.10	<p>Special accommodations</p>

	Assessments will be delivered in accordance with the requirements set out in the UK Equality Act 2010 and cater for pupils requiring special assessment arrangements (e.g. larger font). Where possible, this will be achieved without the need to specifically create separate adapted versions of assessments.
2.11	<p>Auto-mark assessment questions</p> <p>Assessment responses will be automatically marked but must not be displayed to the pupil.</p>
2.12	<p>Saving pupil responses</p> <p>The system should automatically save pupil responses at the point where the Assessment is paused or fails due to a technical error.</p>
2.13	<p>Record of attendance</p> <p>A record of those sitting an Assessment at each school will be available to schools/local authorities.</p>
2.14	<p>Real-time assessment responses</p> <p>The results of all Assessments which have been automatically marked will be available to teachers in real-time.</p>
2.15	<p>Remove response data</p> <p>No cached Assessment information/data will be captured or accessible on any device in the school after an Assessment has ended.</p>
2.16	<p>Functional completeness</p> <p>Systems will provide the complete end-to-end process to be performed by users without the requirement for workarounds or technical support.</p>
2.17	<p>Functional correctness</p> <p>Systems will allow the complete end-to-end process to be completed in a consistent manner, with a consistent look and feel using industry standard approaches and terminology where appropriate.</p>
2.18	<p>Data match</p> <p>The results of the Assessments will be matched to pupil characteristics at the individual pupil level to allow analysis by group. This will include at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • SIMD decile based on home postcode • Looked After status • Additional Support Needs status • Ethnicity • English as an additional language status • School • Local authority • Stage

2.19	<p>Scottish sample</p> <p>The Assessments will be standardised by age (year and month) by using a sample of pupils in Scotland.</p> <p>(This requirement does not have to be in place by August 2017 – please refer to paragraph 5.9 for further information)</p>
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Ref.	Assessments: Administrator Functionality
2.20	<p>Schools check</p> <p>Schools should be able to check that their technical infrastructure is satisfactory e.g. by running a diagnostic test.</p>
2.21	<p>Access to assessment content</p> <p>Release of the Assessment to the pupil will be controlled by the school teacher/administrator.</p>
2.22	<p>Unforeseen disruption</p> <p>Arrangements will be made and agreed with Education Scotland for the case of unforeseen disruption during the Assessment.</p>
2.23	<p>Adding pupils</p> <p>Arrangements should be made for the configuration of pupils in an automated fashion.</p>
2.24	<p>Exceptions – adding pupils</p> <p>As an exceptions process schools should be able to add pupils to Assessments and for this information to be available to the local authority.</p>
2.25	<p>View attendance</p> <p>If necessary local authorities should be able to view details of any Assessments which may have been scheduled, along with candidate information.</p>
2.26	<p>Assessment Pause</p> <p>Administrators should be able to pause pupil assessments if required to handle unexpected disruptions (e.g. fire alarm).</p>

Ref.	Assessment Access
2.27	<p>Assessment access</p> <p>The primary method for accessing the Assessments will be via a secure internet site. Assessments can be accessed via different formats as required, such as paper where this is necessary</p>

Ref.	3. Reporting
3.1	<p>Reports – high level</p> <p>The primary output of the Assessments will take the form of an individual “diagnostic” report to be automatically generated and available to the teacher immediately after an Assessment is completed. In addition, reports which combine the results of groups of Assessments will be available for group, class, school, cluster and local authority levels. Data must be fully cleaned and quality assured. A unique pupil identifier will be used and data will be linked to pupil level information to enable analysis by pupil characteristics.</p>
3.2	<p>On-demand reporting</p> <p>The Service Provider should provide standard reporting for all day-to-day operational areas of the service on a self-service, on-demand basis.</p>
3.3	<p>Ad-hoc reporting</p> <p>Schools and local authorities should be provided with the ability to generate ad-hoc reporting</p>
3.4	<p>Real time reporting</p> <p>The Scottish Government should have access to real time or near real time information on system performance provided by the Service Provider. This information will be sufficiently comprehensive to allow the Scottish Government to assess the impact of, for example volume and frequency of assessment sittings.</p>
3.5	<p>Access to reporting data source</p> <p>System management information data source(s) should be made available to the Scottish Government to run its own ad-hoc reports, these data sources will be available to suit Scottish Government core hours of Monday-Friday, 07.00 – 19.00 GMT.</p>
3.6	<p>Local copies</p> <p>Reports produced by the Service Provider should be downloadable by authorised users.</p>
3.7	<p>Export data</p> <p>The underlying data supporting all reports will be capable of export in a format that is compatible with other software packages, e.g. MS Excel, CSV, HTML, and PDF to allow further analysis.</p>
3.8	<p>Access control</p>

	Access to create, amend, run and view reports will be restricted to authorised users only.
3.9	<p>Access control – roles</p> <p>Various roles will be available in the system aligned to organisational requirements.</p>
3.10	<p>Standard reporting</p> <p>Where appropriate, authorised users will be able to access a list of all reports available to their role which are provided as standard.</p>
3.11	<p>Flexible reporting</p> <p>A flexible reporting solution is required which should allow appropriate authorised users to create reports in multiple formats, without the requirement for Service Provider involvement. These should incorporate a specified selection of information on any aspect of the assessment data which will be determined by users.</p>
3.12	<p>Output</p> <p>The Assessments will not have ‘pass’ or ‘fail’ elements.</p>
3.13	<p>Report content</p> <p>Individual pupil reports will provide the following at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age of pupil when the Assessment was taken • date the Assessment was taken • raw score • standardised score • age norm for reading, writing and numeracy • where appropriate individual score breakdown by the elements of skills in reading, writing and numeracy concepts assessed • summary of specific skills outlining areas of strength and areas for development.
3.14	<p>Report functionality</p> <p>Reports should have the functionality at a minimum to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be available in tabular form and graphical form to enable analysis in a range of ways • provide clear, easily understood data • provide name of learners and agreed pupil level information. • provide analysis and a clear commentary on the data to help practitioners understand the key strengths, next steps required for individual and groups or learners and possible interventions. • provide information that will help schools deliver feedback to parents in an informative, accessible and helpful format.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide trends in attainment over time (in year 2 onwards) • be available to analyse progress of specified groups (e.g. socio-economic groups, EAL, gender, to demonstrate performance gaps) • be available to provide analysis by question/concept to enable schools to identify changes required to their curriculum • include an indication of pupil progress over time (once a pupil has taken the assessments at more than one core stage) • Identify which assessments have been paused during completion.
3.15	<p>National level data</p> <p>Summary national level data will be made available to the Scottish Government and Education Scotland.</p>
3.16	<p>Pupil level dataset</p> <p>The Scottish Government will have the ability to receive a full dataset (in an acceptable and agreed format) of the results of the assessments at pupil level for each school year. The full scope and format of the data will be agreed between the Scottish Government and the Service Provider and is likely to include pupil level assessment results (age of pupil when assessment was taken, date assessment was taken, raw score, standardised score and age norm – all for each of reading, writing and numeracy), unique pupil identification numbers (such as Scottish Candidate Numbers) and pupil characteristics (as detailed in requirement 2.18).</p> <p>Once pupils have taken the assessments more than once, longitudinal analysis of pupil progress will be included in any data sets supplied to the Scottish Government.</p>

Ref	4. Implementation
4.1	<p>Implementation testing</p> <p>A process of implementation testing will take place during the 2016/17 school year in order to ensure that all aspects of the Assessments, including content, interfaces and delivery method are in full working order and fit for purpose before being deployed nationally in 2017/18.</p>
4.2	<p>Implementation testing</p> <p>The purpose of the Implementation Test will ensure that the Assessments interface and delivery are in full working order and fit for purpose before the Assessments are deployed nationally.</p>
4.3	<p>Implementation test plan</p> <p>The Service Provider will develop an Implementation Test Plan to be agreed with the Scottish Government which will cover as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fit for purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - testing the questions / items / assessments with pupils in P1, 4, 7 and S3 - testing the content is CfE linked and at the appropriate expected benchmark - testing there is an appropriate range of questions - testing that the questions demonstrate application of understanding and knowledge of content and skills - testing the success of adaptability and accessibility - testing that engages pupils and is pupil friendly - testing the content and system is inclusive of all pupils, including those with additional support needs - testing over a number of different devices and platforms - testing both urban and rural and island locations - testing in schools that currently use assessments - testing in schools that currently don't use assessments - testing that the data / diagnostic information within reports is of a quality that will allow teachers to plan learning more effectively - testing that reports can be produced on both an individual and a cohort basis • delivery • authentication • stop/start mechanism • interfaces • reports.
4.4	<p>Full Implementation</p> <p>The Service Provider will be responsible for ensuring the Assessments are available to all schools as required at any point during the school year.</p>

4.5	<p>Testing and implementation plan</p> <p>The Service Provider will work to a testing and implementation plan, to be agreed with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland and aimed at ensuring that the Assessments and all related materials, support and related infrastructure requirements are able to be deployed in August 2017.</p>
4.6	<p>Testing and implementation plan</p> <p>The testing and implementation plan will include pre-installation, testing and quality tasks and who is responsible for each. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• rollout approach and tasks• infrastructure checks/upgrade• system installation hardware & software• any integration/migration tasks (including existing configurations and reports)• assessment tool configuration• installation of key features/functionality• testing and quality control (including proposed method of system testing prior to handover)• training plan.

Ref	5. Training
5.1	<p>Training needs</p> <p>The Service Provider will undertake an analysis of the training needs of the users who will interact with the systems or processes. This analysis will identify the skill sets and skill levels required by each type of user and the training which is required to bridge the gap between the existing and recommended skill sets and skill levels of the users.</p>
5.2	<p>Training plan</p> <p>The Service Provider will produce a recommended training plan which will identify the resources required for delivery of the training.</p>
5.3	<p>Training environment</p> <p>The Service Provider should make available an area of the system that can be used for training that will not have any impact on the live system.</p>
5.4	<p>Training courses</p> <p>The Service Provider should supply the Scottish Government, with, as a minimum, the following information on each training course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a summary of course content • course duration and frequency • delivery method – hands-on, classroom, documentation-based, computer-based, web-based or some other indicated method.
5.5	<p>Training materials</p> <p>The Service Provider will provide all necessary training materials for the use of Assessments and reporting functionality.</p>
5.6	<p>Analysis of data training</p> <p>The Service Provider should provide guidance and training to Education Scotland, schools and local authority staff on the interpretation of results covering individual, group, class, school and local authority levels on an annual basis. The Service Provider should also provide a telephone enquiry line to support Education Scotland staff and practitioners.</p>

Ref.	6. Support
6.1	<p>Ease of use</p> <p>Schools will be able to run Assessments with no or minimal specialist support from the Service Provider.</p>
6.2	<p>Support provision</p> <p>Support will be made available to all participating schools on an on-demand basis during school year 2017/18 and each school year thereafter within the contract period. This will include all administration associated with delivery and completion of the Assessments.</p>
6.3	<p>Single point of contact</p> <p>System administrators, teachers and local authority users will receive a single point of contact for service management with email and telephony channels as a minimum.</p>
6.4	<p>On-line help</p> <p>On-line help will be available in order to facilitate ease of use of the system for pupils, teachers and administrators.</p>
6.5	<p>First time fix</p> <p>The Service Provider will provide first time fixes targeting a level of 70% of calls.</p>
6.6	<p>User guidance.</p> <p>The Service Provider will provide access to user documentation pertaining to the Assessments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • user guides • tutorials • FAQs. <p>Such documentation must be updated to reflect new versions of the software.</p>
6.7	<p>Ease of system administration</p> <p>The Assessments will allow differing levels of system administration to be undertaken at the most appropriate levels.</p> <p>System administration undertaken by the Service Provider (with Scottish Government approval) will include setting up (and deactivation) of user accounts.</p>
6.8	<p>Local system administration</p> <p>System administration functionality should be made available to the user organisations including user account management (including user profiles, privileges and revocation).</p>

6.9	<p>Version release</p> <p>The Service Provider will have a documented process for release management which will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how they will make software upgrades and new versions available to the Scottish Government • how they will proactively manage, any software upgrades or new releases • how they propose to work with the Scottish Government to plan/implement/test software upgrades or new releases • an outline of any likely impacts/disruption on service, operation, performance, to users and to the Scottish Government due to software upgrades or new releases.
6.10	<p>Upgrade planning</p> <p>The Service Provider will have a development “roadmap” of planned (Service Provider and Specially Written) software upgrades or new releases with the Scottish Government. The Service Provider must also keep the Scottish Government appraised of any impacts that future software upgrades (of all types) may have on the Assessments.</p>
6.11	<p>Reports</p> <p>The Service Provider will make the following reports available to the Scottish Government on a monthly basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performance monitoring report, comprising the monthly measures of agreed Key Performance Indicators at Appendix 2 • operations report, comprising a summary of system performance in the previous month (highlighting any escalated issues, or any area where service levels have not been met, and activities proposed to rectify the problem), a helpdesk service report and any relevant incident reports. <p>The monthly reports will be made available to the Scottish Government an agreed number of working days following the reporting period.</p>
6.12	<p>Additional support (time & materials service)</p> <p>The Service Provider will be prepared to provide technical support as a “time & materials” service to individual user organisations where such work would be deemed to fall outwith agreed contractual support arrangements.</p> <p>Requests for such additional support may be made by the Scottish Government only.</p>
6.13	<p>Support</p> <p>The Service Provider will provide teachers with guidance and support on how to carry out the Assessments with pupils. Different types of guidance and</p>

	support will be required for class teachers, head teachers and local authority staff.
6.14	<p>Support</p> <p>IT support will be provided. This will be a particular requirement in the first year but support will need to be on-going throughout the contract period. The variety in IT systems and capacity across each local authority must be taken into account. Contingency plans must be developed and agreed with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government.</p>
6.15	<p>Support arrangements and coverage</p> <p>Prior to any implementation period, the Service Provider will be explicit about what is covered in terms of support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of support of the proposed system • support and maintenance services • support package (support staff, on-line help, user forum, knowledge base) • support documentation available (digital/hard copy) • support times, responses and priorities • support provisions of any 3rd party items • details of schedule and costs of Updates or Upgrades including OS upgrades if applicable • breakdown of the costs required for supporting this project.
6.16	<p>Integrated technologies</p> <p>The Service Provider will document how any integrated technologies will be supported (escalation path, incident ownership and so on).</p> <p>The Service Provider will document end to end support including 3rd party hardware/software is provided.</p>
6.17	<p>Manufacturer support</p> <p>Where applicable, the Service Provider will have proof that the manufacturer will support their system into the future giving details of end-of-sale and end-of-life statements on all of the proposed equipment.</p>
6.18	<p>Training services</p> <p>As part of the training plan, the Service Provider should detail training services, costs and locations. This should include training for any skills and knowledge expected for the Scottish Government to configure and maintain the assessment system if appropriate.</p>
6.19	<p>Warranties</p> <p>The Service Provider will ensure all appropriate warranties are in place and documented.</p>

7. Technical Requirements: System Performance

Ref.	7.1 Performance Efficiency
7.1.1	<p>Concurrent users – assessment</p> <p>The Assessments system should be capable of supporting 250,000 assessments per academic year. This number may increase over the lifetime of the contract. No timetable for assessments will be centrally mandated therefore the Service Provider should size the solution appropriately for concurrent usage based on previous experience of operating this type of system.</p>
7.1.2	<p>Performance</p> <p>The Assessments system should have an acceptable response time when users are interacting with the system. For a full screen refresh, the page response time should be less than 3 seconds for 99.99% for assessments.</p>
7.1.3	<p>Performance efficiency – logon</p> <p>The Assessments system should be capable of meeting the following performance measurement: successful completion of a secure logon to the system within 5 seconds for 99.99% of all valid logon attempts.</p>
7.1.4	<p>Performance monitoring</p> <p>In order to meet the performance metrics within the requirements the Assessments system will have a capability to accurately monitor performance.</p> <p>The system performance monitoring will include hardware, software and network in order to diagnose the precise cause of any performance issues within the bounds of the Service Provider’s infrastructure.</p>
7.1.5	<p>Assessment schools</p> <p>The proposed system will be capable of operating within a nationally distributed school network. There will be a need to support 32 Local Authorities and over 2,000 schools (2,543 at September 2015).</p>
7.1.6	<p>Concurrent users</p> <p>The proposed system will be capable of supporting concurrent access by pupils within schools. The size of classes within schools will vary with an anticipated maximum size of 33 access points.</p>
7.1.7	<p>Integration scalability</p> <p>Any integration components provided by the Service Provider will have the ability to scale up for future growth.</p>
7.1.8	<p>Elasticity</p> <p>The Service Provider should provide the manual or automated ability to increase the supported number of concurrent Assessments.</p>

Ref.	7.2 Compatibility
7.2.1	<p>Co-existence</p> <p>Assessments will be available online. Service Providers will indicate what internet configuration will be set to allow seamless operation.</p>
7.2.2	<p>Integration and interoperability</p> <p>Where integration is required the proposed system will use open API standards.</p>

Ref.	7.3 Usability and Accessibility
7.3.1	<p>Accessibility</p> <p>The Assessments will be accessible to all pupils. There must be clear guidance on the administration of the Assessments to pupils with additional support needs and English as an additional language.</p>
7.3.2	<p>Accessibility – assessment delivery</p> <p>The Assessments will be designed to ensure that pupils with additional support needs can be accommodated including ensuring sufficient time for the Assessments. This will include the provision to interface with assistive technology both as alternative or ancillary input devices and alternative & enhanced output devices, for example, screen enlargers, headphones, packages which produce Braille, speech recognition software, touch screens etc. Service Provider will provide details of the provision that has been made for integration with any assistive technology both hardware and software. The Service Provider must comply with legislation defined for accessible websites under the UK's Equality Act 2010.</p>
7.3.3	<p>Accessibility – assessment production / assessment entry & scheduling</p> <p>The Assessments should conform to the guidelines laid out in the British Standards Institute (BSI) 8878: 2010 Web accessibility code of practice. Also, the solution will be expected to achieve, as a minimum, World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) level AA accessibility standards. However, the Service Provider should aim to achieve as many of WAI level AAA accessibility standards as possible.</p>
7.3.4	<p>Younger pupils</p> <p>There will be clear guidance on the administration of Assessments to pupils in P1.</p>
7.3.5	<p>Software</p>

	The Assessments system should not require any dedicated software to be loaded onto users' access devices. The Service Provider should list any exceptions to this.
7.3.6	<p>Operability of system</p> <p>New users of the Assessments should be able to operate the system without having to rely on help desk staff to provide support on the functionality of the system.</p>
7.3.7	<p>Web hosting of system</p> <p>The Service Provider will host the Assessments system, and make it available to users, via a secure website having a unique web address.</p>
7.3.8	<p>Client IP range</p> <p>The Service Provider should be able to limit the client IP ranges which can access the Assessments.</p>
7.3.9	<p>Initial software development</p> <p>The Service Provider may subject the standard software to such initial development as may be possible, but will not disrupt or pose risk to the software (or later upgrades of the software) in order to more closely meet the Scottish Government's requirements. Any such initial software development is to be included within the Detailed Implementation Plan.</p>
7.3.10	<p>Self-help access</p> <p>The Assessments will provide a help function which will provide users with a service they can access as their first source of help.</p>
7.3.11	<p>Ease of use</p> <p>All components of the system will be easy to use. This includes, but is not limited to; assessment administration and reporting, assessment login & registration and assessment delivery. A pre-assessment tutorial will be the only method required to instruct pupils how to use the system to complete an assessment.</p>
7.3.12	<p>Learnability</p> <p>All components of the system should be easy and intuitive to use, without constant recourse to online help, training notes or technical support beyond a reasonable familiarity period. Contextual help should be the first form of help offered.</p>
7.3.13	<p>User error protection</p> <p>The solution will be robust in its prevention of users carrying out actions that will jeopardise the integrity of the system and its underlying data.</p>
7.3.14	<p>Browser compatibility</p> <p>The Assessments will be usable on the major browsers identified in the W3C analysis of the most popular browsers.</p>

	The Service Provider will provide a list of compatible browsers.
7.3.15	<p>Device agnostic</p> <p>The Assessments system will be available on mobile devices.</p> <p>The Service Provider will provide a list of compatible mobile device operating systems.</p>
7.3.16	<p>Mobile optimisation</p> <p>Systems will be optimised on mobile devices. Service Providers will explain the minimum display size and input devices to complete Assessments.</p>
7.3.17	<p>Open standards</p> <p>The software should use open standards rather than Service Provider-specific protocols.</p>
7.3.18	<p>Settings</p> <p>The Assessments will use the English (UK) language and keyboard, use UK date formats, use the British pound sterling as currency, and employ Curriculum for Excellence terminology where applicable.</p>

Ref.	7.4 Reliability
7.4.1	<p>System access</p> <p>The Assessments system will be available during core Scottish Government working hours which are Monday – Friday (07.00 – 19.00 GMT) with the exception of agreed and planned downtime.</p>
7.4.2	<p>System access – downtime</p> <p>In the event of planned downtime this will be specified by the Service Provider in conjunction with Scottish Government in order to avoid downtime during critical Scottish Government business periods. The Scottish school year runs from August – June inclusive.</p>
7.4.3	<p>System access – automatic updates</p> <p>In the event that software automatic updates are used, then the resulting ‘downtime’ will be specified within a schedule / threshold specified by Scottish Government.</p> <p>Any client software updates will also be specified within a schedule.</p>
7.4.4	<p>System availability</p> <p>The system should have a minimum availability of 99.99%, with the exception of periods of agreed planned maintenance.</p>
7.4.5	<p>Availability monitoring</p> <p>In order to measure compliance of service levels specified by Scottish Government for availability, the Service Provider will provide a mechanism to monitor availability.</p>
7.4.6	<p>Component redundancy</p> <p>The component(s) of the end to end system provided by the Service Provider will be able to continue to function in the event of failure of a component. Services provided by the Service Provider must not be interrupted due to a lack of redundancy where such redundancy can be reasonably expected.</p>
7.4.7	<p>Integration availability</p> <p>Any integration components provided by the Service Provider should have a minimum availability of 99.99% with the exception of periods of agreed planned maintenance.</p>
7.4.8	<p>Integration error handling</p> <p>Any integration components provided by the Service Provider will have suitable error handling which will ensure there is full traceability of messages in the event of a fault with the Service Provider’s system.</p>
7.4.9	<p>Backup</p>

	The proposed system will be able to recover any data directly affected by an interruption or a failure, and re-establish the desired state of the system.
7.4.10	<p>System failure</p> <p>In the event of an unplanned interruption to an assessment as a result of, for example, temporary failure of the system or temporary power failure, then the proposed system should be able to recover the assessment responses up to the point of failure.</p>
7.4.11	<p>Recoverability</p> <p>In the event of an unplanned interruption (outside of a confirmed disaster scenario) to an assessment entry or capacity update, the Service Provider should be able to restore the user to the point of failure.</p>
7.4.12	<p>Major incident</p> <p>In the event of a major incident that results in complete failure of the system then the proposed system will be able to recover in less than 30 minutes. In addition, hours of data lost by the system averaged from a number of failure scenarios will not exceed 24 hours.</p>
7.4.13	<p>Single end user device failure</p> <p>In the event of operational problems with a single end user device, then it should be possible for a pupil to continue their Assessment on another end user device without any loss of service, i.e. they will be able to pick up their Assessment at the point where they could no longer operate on the first end user device.</p>
7.4.14	<p>Assessment interruption</p> <p>It will not be possible for a user to perform actions via standard components, i.e. keyboard and mouse that could unintentionally invalidate, pause or terminate the Assessment.</p>

Ref.	7.5 Security
7.5.1	<p>Authentication</p> <p>The proposed system will include a robust security model providing the ability to authenticate all users of the system.</p>
7.5.2	<p>Password management</p> <p>A valid mechanism will exist for the creation and issue of passwords including temporary passwords, password reset, and secure password storage.</p>
7.5.3	<p>Portal single sign on</p> <p>It should be possible for this password management facility to be seamlessly integrated with an external Scottish Government single sign on solution, using appropriate open standards.</p>

7.5.4	<p>Audit entries</p> <p>Audit logs will record at least the following audit entries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • user identification • type of event • date and time of creation • date and time of modification • success or failure indication • origination of event • identity or name of affected data • reasons for resitting / reassigning an Assessment.
7.5.5	<p>Report of audit information</p> <p>The proposed system will provide the ability to interrogate and report against the auditing information to make use of and support the auditing functionality.</p>
7.5.6	<p>Auditing of proxy access</p> <p>Where the Service Provider’s system allows a user to proxy for another user, an audit trail will be available to reflect this activity whenever it is invoked.</p>
7.5.7	<p>Automatic disconnect / screen timeout</p> <p>The system should automatically disconnect sessions after a period of inactivity as specified by Scottish Government. The Assessment should be saved to that point and be able to resume at the point it was ended.</p>
7.5.8	<p>Internal access</p> <p>The system as provided by the Service Provider will have security measures in place that prevents unauthorised dissemination of assessment material.</p>
7.5.9	<p>Least privilege access to information and functionality</p> <p>The access rights of users’ or systems’ user accounts will only allow access to the information and functionality required to perform the necessary tasks or functions on the basis of least privilege. For example, control a user’s level of access to data and functionality based on their role and limited to their school only.</p>
7.5.10	<p>Password standards</p> <p>The system will be capable of supporting password standards as defined by the Scottish Government.</p>
7.5.11	<p>Unique access</p> <p>All user and system user accounts (identities) will be unique. Compensating security controls must be in operation where this is not possible in order that the source of creation, change or deletion can be identified.</p>
7.5.12	<p>Default deny</p>

	All users will be authenticated to each and every non-anonymous service they request. In the absence of authentication, systems must default to denying all access.
7.5.13	<p>User account management</p> <p>The system will include tools which will allow administrators to provision, de-provision and manage user accounts. The system will provide robust identity verification processes. It is not expected that this functionality would be used as the main method of pupil account provision.</p>
7.5.14	<p>Security of data stored</p> <p>The Service Provider will ensure that the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data is maintained while stored and processed within the system. For example, protect passwords, assessment responses, personal data and other data by implementing appropriate security controls within system components.</p>
7.5.15	<p>Security of data during transmission</p> <p>The Service Provider will ensure that the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data is maintained during network transmission. Appropriately strong encryption and security protocols will be used to protect the transmission of passwords, assessment responses, personal data and other data over public networks, including the Internet and wireless networks.</p>
7.5.16	<p>Encryption</p> <p>All encryption solutions will be compliant with a recognised standard.</p>
7.5.17	<p>Removable media for backup / archive</p> <p>If the Service Provider's system requires the use of removable media such as tape drives for backup or archive purposes, then industry standard best practice and guidelines will be followed for the storage of such devices.</p>
7.5.18	<p>Data separation</p> <p>All data (including live data, backed up data and archived data) will be securely segregated from data owned by other customers of the Service Provider using appropriate physical and/or logical separation technologies.</p>
7.5.19	<p>Penetration testing</p> <p>The Service Provider will at a minimum ensure annual, or following significant change, penetration tests of the infrastructure and applications supporting the services it provides to the Scottish Government are conducted. The Service Provider will provide details of its penetration testing. The Scottish Government may wish to arrange for independent penetration testing. The Service Provider should be prepared to have their service subject to testing.</p>
7.5.20	<p>Security hardening</p>

	<p>The Service Provider will ensure that all infrastructure supporting the delivery of services to the Scottish Government will be hardened to the respective technology Service Providers' security hardening guidelines. For example, security hardening via the configuration of servers and server operating systems such that only the required services are running and secure configuration of software and applications to Service Providers' security practices. The Service Provider will provide details of its infrastructure hardening approach to hardening including server, storage and network components.</p>
7.5.21	<p>Patch management</p> <p>The Service Provider will ensure that security patches and anti-malware protection for infrastructure supporting the services it provides to the Scottish Government will be applied in line with Service Provider recommendations and that operating systems, software and firmware remain in Service Provider support. The Service Provider will provide details of its approach ensuring that operating systems, software and firmware remain in Service Provider support.</p>
7.5.22	<p>Compliance with data protection legislation</p> <p>The processing of personal data will comply with the UK Data Protection Act 1998.</p>
7.5.23	<p>Hosted solution</p> <p>The Service Provider will provide the ability to sanitise all computing resources of Scottish Government data once the Scottish Government has exited the environment provided by the Service Provider in line with HMG Policy (currently Information Assurance Standard IS5).</p>
7.5.24	<p>Security policy</p> <p>The Service Provider will operate and maintain a security policy and provide the Scottish Government with the latest version of the policy upon request.</p>
7.5.25	<p>Change management</p> <p>The Service Provider will operate a formal IT change control process in respect of amendments to applications and infrastructure supporting the services it provides to the Scottish Government.</p>
7.5.26	<p>Security</p> <p>The Service Provider will ensure that appropriate technical and organisational security measures are in place.</p> <p>The Assessments system will be appropriately protected from electronic attack, including against the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hacking • denial of service attacks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction of malicious software (including worms, Trojans and executable files) • privilege escalation (e.g. an authorised user attempting to use his credentials to access other users/organisations' data).
7.5.27	<p>Physical security</p> <p>The Service Provider will ensure assets supporting the delivery of services to the Scottish Government are located in a secure environment. The Service Provider will ensure that robust physical access controls operate across physical environments, supported by appropriate protective controls to address man-made and environmental threats.</p>
7.5.28	<p>Business continuity and cyber resilience</p> <p>The Service Provider (inclusive of Sub-Service Providers) will ensure continuity of service and protection against cyber-attacks. This will include (as a minimum):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • processes in place including those for assessing future risks • test strategies for Disaster Recovery policies and procedures, including the dates, duration and frequency • strategies for the back-up of delivering services will an incident occur including manpower and access to equipment • strategies in place to mitigate against cyber-attack and crime using online technologies including processes relating to Boundary Firewalls and Internet Gateways, Secure Configuration, Access Control, Malware Protection and Patch Management • where applicable, Service Provider will align to any standards in this area (e.g. ISO 27001, ISO 22301, ISO/IEC 20000, Cyber Essentials/Cyber Essentials Plus or their equivalents)
7.5.29	<p>Scottish Government Standards</p> <p>Where appropriate, the Service Provider should ensure that they comply with the principles outlined in the High Level Operating Framework, which is available at http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Economy/digital/digitalservices/HLOF and with the Digital First Service Standard, which is available at https://resources.mygov.scot/.</p>

Ref.	7.6 Maintainability
7.6.1	<p>Modifiability</p> <p>The Assessments system should be modifiable via standard configuration and not normally require customisation to achieve a requirement. In the event customisation is required, the Scottish Government must be informed.</p>
7.6.2	<p>Backward compatibility</p> <p>In the event that new versions, releases or system patches are required then these will be applied to the system without affecting any of the Scottish Government's existing systems or integration points. The patching & upgrades</p>

	must be part of a demonstrable testing and release process by the Service Provider in order to reduce the risk of disruption to the Scottish Government.
7.6.3	<p>Software replacement</p> <p>In the event of the Service Provider’s software being replaced by a new offering for the same service by the same Service Provider, for example as part of their roadmap, the Scottish Government will be made fully aware of the replacement and associated implementation timelines. All remedial action that must be taken in the Scottish Government systems in order to address incompatibilities and prevent service disruption must be made known to the Scottish Government.</p>
7.6.4	<p>Release management</p> <p>It will be possible for the Scottish Government to be able to accept software updates at a time that is suitable to the Scottish Government.</p>

Ref.	7.7 Portability
7.7.1	<p>Device compatibility</p> <p>The proposed system will be compatible with, and able to run on different device types; including desktop PCs, laptops and mobile devices.</p>
7.7.2	<p>Deployment methodology</p> <p>The Service Provider will provide a detailed overview of their deployment methodology.</p>
7.7.3	<p>Removal of all data (at end of contract)</p> <p>It will be possible to remove all data held on the Assessments system. It will be possible to remove the data and place it either into one archive or into individual user organisations’ specific archives.</p> <p>A number of options for long-term archiving will be available, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retention in a “read-only” version of the software • migration of data into another system • exporting to some other medium/format.

Ref.	7.8 Service Level Performance Management
7.8.1	<p>Dashboard view of performance</p> <p>The Scottish Government should be able to view a dashboard of incidents and performance against agreed KPIs.</p>
7.8.2	<p>Weekly and monthly performance reports</p> <p>The Scottish Government will receive formal reports on performance against agreed KPIs.</p>

Official Sensitive: Commercial

**Appendix 2 to the Statement of Requirements:
Key Performance Indicators**

Service KPI	Service Credit	KPI Ref
For each data file or report submitted late (i.e. after a Contractually specified or otherwise agreed date) to the Authority.	£500 per instance	KPI01
Full Implementation Stage Milestone Date Missed	£200 per working day	KPI02
Over the period of each month, the system will have a minimum availability of 98%, with the exception of periods of agreed planned maintenance.	£200 per hour	KPI03
Any integration components provided by the Service Provider will have a minimum availability of 98% with the exception of periods of agreed planned maintenance.	£50 per hour	KPI04
In the event of a major incident that results in complete failure of the system then the proposed system will be able to recover in less than 30 minutes.	£500 per instance	KPI05
The Service Provider will provide first time fixes targeting a level of 70% of calls.	£500 per month	KPI06
Service Provider to ensure Scottish Government Invoices are accurate and received on time – 97%.	£250	KPI07
Service Provider to ensure MI is delivered within pre-agreed timeframe – 97%.	£250	KPI08
Service Provider to ensure MI is accurate to the services provided – 97%.	£250	KPI09

Appendix 3 to the Statement of Requirements: Glossary of Education Terms

Adaptive requires starting at an appropriate level to ensure the engagement of children and young people and becoming easier or more difficult dependent on the response of the learners.

Additional support needs is defined in The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. A child or young person is said to have 'additional support needs' if they need more – or different support – to what is normally provided in schools or pre-schools to children of the same age.

Cluster is the term given to the partnership between a secondary school and its partner primary schools and early learning and childcare centres

Contextualised assessment of grammar and punctuation requires that it is not presented in isolation but takes account of the context and the words being used in a piece of meaningful writing.

Curriculum for Excellence is the curriculum model in place across Scottish schools and provides a coherent, flexible and enriched approach to learning: 3 - 18.

Curriculum for Excellence levels reflect the progress envisaged for most children and young people. The expectations about progression through curriculum levels are as follows: Early (pre-school years and P1), first (to the end of P4), second (to the end of P7), third and fourth (S1 to S3 with Fourth level broadly aligning to SCQF level 4). More information is available in "Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 5."

Diagnostic reports will supply information which will identify the strengths and individual learning needs of children and young people.

EAL is the abbreviation for English as an additional language and relates to those children and young people for whom English is not their first language.

Education Scotland is the national body which supports quality and improvement in **Scottish education**.

Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os) for Curriculum for Excellence describe national expectations for learning and achievement for children and young people from the early years to the end of S3 (ages 3-15).

Inclusive refers to ensuring that the activity is relevant and accessible to all children and young people.

SCQF is the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework which is a way of detailing Scottish qualifications. It does this by giving each qualification a level and credit points.

SIMD is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. It is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places in Scotland suffering from deprivation.

Bibliography of ACER research papers and instruments focusing on early childhood education

Publication date from 1999 onwards

[redacted], ACER Cunningham Library

Aboriginal Early Childhood Education: Why Attendance and True Engagement are Equally Important

Publication date: 2016

Delivery mode: Research article

Location of children: Australia – Indigenous children

Year range: Early childhood education and first year of school

References:

***Krakouer, J. (2016). *Aboriginal Early Childhood Education: Why attendance and true engagement are equally important*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=indigenous_education**

The Australian government has increasingly recognised the importance of quality early childhood education (ECE) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, as noted in a variety of policy documents, such as the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 'Closing the Gap' targets of the Rudd government in 2008, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015. However, the focus in Aboriginal ECE is still on improving access to, and attendance at, ECE centres in Australia, rather than highlighting the reasons for reduced Indigenous engagement in ECE. This paper goes beyond the rhetoric of framing Aboriginal ECE from a 'deficit' perspective to focusing on why the mainstream school system needs to adapt to and accommodate Aboriginal learners. It is argued that a shift in policy thought is necessary in order to improve Aboriginal ECE in Australia, from one that attempts to 'prepare' Aboriginal children for school to one that prepares schools and educators for Aboriginal children. Only in acknowledging the cultural mismatch between home and school environments for Aboriginal children will successful ECE outcomes be achieved. [Introduction]

ACER Learning Progressions Explorer

Website: <https://www.acer.org/au/gem/learning-progression-explorer>

Status: To be released in 2019

Client: ACER in collaboration with UNESCO

Content area: Literacy and numeracy

Delivery mode: Online

Year range: Early years to latter end of secondary school

References:

***Waters, C. (2018). *Learning progressions in ACER's work*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/monitoring_learning/34/**

This document has been developed to provide background to ACER's learning progressions, to explain the terminology that is being used in this work, and to describe how learning progressions are being incorporated into various aspects of ACER's work.

The Annual Status of Education Report survey

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) survey is a household-based survey of school-aged children in all rural districts in India. It is the only annual survey that yields data on children's basic learning levels in India. It evolved out of the work of a non-governmental organisation called Pratham.

Implementation date: Survey conducted every year since 2005. In 2008, the [ASER Centre](#) was established.

Client: [Pratham](#)

Delivery mode: Annual Survey – 'citizen led', reaching households in every rural district in India. This description applies not only because the data collection activities are completed by volunteers in each district, but also because the data are collected in each village in a way that engages the locals, and thereby raises awareness of local issues of schooling and learning levels, and triggers discussion about possible solutions to these issues.

Location of children: India

Age range or year range: School-aged children

References:

Australian Council for Educational Research. (2014). *The Annual Status of Education Report survey: Monitoring learning levels of children in rural India*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: http://www.acer.edu.au/files/AssessGEMs_ASER.pdf

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) survey is a household-based survey of school-aged children in all rural districts in India. It is the only annual survey that yields data on children's basic learning levels in India. The ASER survey aims to obtain reliable, district-level estimates of the status of rural children's school enrolment and skills in reading and arithmetic and to measure the change in these estimates over time. [Author abstract].

Banerji, R. (2015). *Assessment to action: New thinking from India*. In R. Leech (Ed.), *Research conference 2015: Learning assessments: Designing the further*. 16–18 August 2015, Southbank, Melbourne. Retrieved from https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1259&context=research_conference

In countries such as India, impressive progress has been made in schooling. More than 95 per cent of children are now enrolled in school. But when we look at children's learning, the situation is far from satisfactory. Available evidence suggests that in Grade 5, only about half of all enrolled children can read or do arithmetic expected at Grade 2 level. Faced with this crisis, how can assessment lead to effective instruction? ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) uses simple tools to assess the current level of children's ability to read and to do arithmetic. Using this assessment, children are grouped for instruction by level rather than by grade. Appropriate methods and materials are used for each group to help children begin from where they are today and move to where they need to be. The 'teaching-at-the-right-level' approach has been found to be effective in many settings in India for building basic skills quickly. This 'new thinking' from India can provide large-scale solutions for the learning crisis faced in many parts of the developing world. [Author abstract]

Assessment of Children's Confidence and Involvement as Learners in Early Childhood Education and Care: Literature review

ACER are to review and evaluate instruments/tools to assess the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) Learning and Development Outcome, 'Children are confident and involved learners'.

Status: In progress

Client: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

Delivery mode: Literature review

Literature: Australian and international literature

Age range: Birth to 8 years of age

Autism Detection in Early Childhood (ADEC)

This assessment was designed by Dr Robyn Young, for the purpose of screening for autistic tendencies in young children. It is considered an effective, validated screening tool for identifying autism and autistic tendencies in children as young as 12 months.

Publication year: 2007

Age range: 12 months to 3 years of age

Assessment time: 10–25 minutes

Assessment tool:

***Young, R. (2007). *Autism detection in early childhood (ADEC)*. Camberwell, Australia: ACER Press.**

References:

The following reference is a study that evaluates ACER's ADEC screening tool. However, this was not an ACER study and none of the authors was associated with ACER for the study and publication:

Nah, Y. H., Young, R., & Brewer, N. (2014). Using the Autism Detection in Early Childhood (ADEC) and Childhood Autism Rating Scales (CARS) to predict long term outcomes in children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44(9): 2301–2310.

This study evaluated the predictive validity of the Autism Detection in Early Childhood (ADEC – Young, R., Autism detection in early childhood: ADEC. Australian Council of Educational Research, Camberwell, Victoria) and a well-established screening tool, the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS – Schopler et al., The childhood autism rating scale (CARS). Western Psychological Services, Los Angeles), for long term outcomes of children with ASD engaged in an early intervention program. Participants were 55 children (44 male, 11 female) aged 19–42 months ($M = 33.5$, $SD = 5.6$) at initial assessment who were followed up two and six years after their initial assessment. The ADEC and the CARS performed similarly when predicting long term outcomes such as clinical diagnostic outcome and overall adaptive functioning level. However, only the ADEC score was significantly correlated with ASD symptom severity at the 6-year follow up. Although these findings need to be replicated with additional and larger samples, this study extends our understanding of the psychometric properties of both the ADEC and the CARS.
[Author abstract, ed]

Beekunko

ACER, through the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Centre, provided support to OMAES (Oeuvre Malienne d'Aide à l'Enfance du Sahel), a non-governmental organisation in Mali, for the development of an internal monitoring and evaluation system for the Beekunko assessment in Mali.

Implementation date: ACER engaged by OMAES 2015–2016

Client: OMAES (Oeuvre Malienne d'Aide à l'Enfance du Sahel)

Delivery mode: Beekunko is a household-based assessment of children's learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy for children in Mali, whether currently attending school or not.

Location of children: Mali

Age range: 6–14 years of age

References:

***Tobin, M., & *Lietz, P. (2016). *Measuring the impact of citizen-led assessments for improving the quality of education*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) website: <https://research.acer.edu.au/assessgems/11/>**

Effective communication and advocacy activities are essential components in initiating change in education practices and policies. ACER, through the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Centre, provided support to OMAES (Oeuvre Malienne d'Aide à l'Enfance du Sahel), a non-governmental organisation in Mali, for the development of an internal monitoring and evaluation system for the Beekunko assessment in Mali. Beekunko is a household-based assessment of children's learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy for children in Mali, whether currently attending school or not, and who are six to 14 years of age. OMAES' primary aim through Beekunko is to motivate stakeholders at various levels to take action in schools and communities, and become engaged in education policy reform with the ultimate goal of improving student learning. Its main strategy is to improve awareness among stakeholders about the actual learning outcomes of children in Mali. [ACEReSearch]

Best Start Initiative

Client: NSW Department of Education and Training

Delivery mode: Data analysis report

Location of children: New South Wales, Australia

Year range: Commencement of kindergarten

References:

Meiers, M., & *Khoo, S-T. (2008). *Best start 2008: Kindergarten literacy assessment, Department of Education and Training, NSW: Data analysis report, June 2008. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research.

In 2007, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned to supply advice to the NSW Department of Education and Training on literacy assessment instruments suitable for students at the commencement of Year K, for use in the Best Start initiative. This report outlines: the modifications made to the literacy assessments developed for the ACER Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS) to make it suitable, the testing of the literacy assessment in a sample of kindergartens in New South Wales, analysis of student results, and recommendations.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

Note: This is a review of the CLASS instrument. The instrument was not developed by ACER.

References:

***Cloney, D., et al. (2017). Psychometric properties of the classroom assessment scoring system (Pre-K): Implications for measuring interaction quality in diverse early childhood settings. *Journal of Applied Measurement, 18*(3): 299–318.**

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observational instrument assessing the nature of everyday interactions in educational settings. The instrument has strong theoretical groundings; however, prior empirical validation of the CLASS has exposed some psychometric weaknesses. Further, the instrument has not been the subject of psychometric analysis at the indicator level. Using a large dataset including observations of 993 Australian classrooms, confirmatory factor analysis is used to replicate findings from the few existing validation studies. Item response modelling is used to examine individual indicator behaviour. Latent growth models are used to produce new findings about estimating factor scores. Findings show that the CLASS exhibits stable psychometric properties within classrooms over repeated observations. Model fit is improved and factor scores are more reliable when the repeated observations made in administering the CLASS are accounted for statistically. It is recommended that researchers enforce a fixed number of repeated observations to minimise bias.

[Author abstract]

Closing the Gap Between Research and Practice: Foundations for the Acquisition of Literacy

***De Lemos, M. (2002). *Closing the gap between research and practice: Foundations for the acquisition of literacy*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/literacy_numeracy_reviews/1/**

Over the years, two main approaches have emerged in the teaching and learning of reading and writing. One is the 'whole language' approach; the other concentrates more on instruction in phonics. This paper focuses on the theoretical assumptions underlying these two approaches to the teaching of literacy, and the studies which have been undertaken, in the international arena, to find out how children progress, from their earliest educational years, in attaining both initial reading skills and lifelong literacy. [Author abstract, ed]

The Conditions of Reading Acquisition in Contexts of Low Literacy

***Anderson, P. & Fearnely-Sander, M. (2015). The conditions of reading acquisition in contexts of low literacy. Paper presented at the Shaping Reading Pedagogy and Assessment for Sustainable Learning conference. In J. Spink (Chair), *Shaping Reading Pedagogy and Assessment for Sustainable Learning* (Paper 1, pp.3–19). Symposium conducted at the 13th International Conference on Education and Development of UKFIET, University of Oxford, UK. Retrieved from: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1023&context=monitoring_learning**

A child's cultural, linguistic and cognitive distance from school language can make comprehension the critical issue in reading acquisition. Assessments of reading development tend to encounter ceiling effects in phonological skills within the first few years of schooling; but the gap in comprehension subsequently widens between advantaged and disadvantaged students in relation to school literacy. The purpose of this paper is to show what kind of pedagogy, from early grades onwards, can result in 'beating the odds' for children in disadvantaged contexts. It draws on socio-linguistic theory, comprehension research and research into literacy development in a second language to show why the discontinuities between literate and social languages can affect the development of the cognitions necessary for word and text-level comprehension in the early grades; and the registers and content of academic genres from upper primary. The development of comprehension bears on poverty reduction and access to sustainable futures because comprehension is associated with school success. The evidence is strong that particular home environments promote the kind of literacy that results in school success. However, research also shows that the success practices of such homes are replicable in schools in high poverty, low literacy contexts – not only in advanced economies but also in poor countries of Africa, Asia and the Pacific. [Author abstract]

Counting On It: Early Numeracy Development and the Preschool Child

*Reid, K. (2016). *Counting on it: Early numeracy development and the preschool child* (Issue #2 July 2016). In *Changing Minds: Discussions in neuroscience, psychology and education*. Retrieved from: https://research.acer.edu.au/learning_processes/19/

Children think mathematically long before they start school. Before children start learning mathematics at school, they show informal understanding of many numeracy concepts. This is informal numeracy knowledge; that is, skills that children develop before starting school that do not depend on written mathematical notation. For example, children's numeracy knowledge is evident in their developing counting skills. It is also evident in their capacity to compare, share, order, estimate and calculate different quantities. Fundamental skills in recognising and responding to numerical cues are apparent in infancy, and, at a very basic level, may be innate. Early numeracy skills influence achievement in school mathematics. Understanding the importance and development of preschoolers' numeracy skills is fundamental for those involved in early years education so they can support and encourage children to develop their skills in early learning contexts, and provide appropriate school-entry teaching and learning. This review synthesises current research from neuroscience, psychology and education to highlight some key findings in the development of preschool children's early numeracy skills. The review focuses on three areas: origins of preschoolers' numeracy skills, important numeracy skills in preschoolers' development, and connections between preschoolers' numeracy skills and their later school achievement. The purpose of the review is to highlight a selection of relevant research findings. It is not intended to be an exhaustive review of the literature. The aim is to emphasise the significance of preschool children's early numeracy development and to argue for the importance of fostering early numeracy in early childhood contexts. [Abstract, ed]

Critical and Creative Thinking

Implementation date: 2012

Client: Department of Education and Training Victoria

Content area(s): Critical and creative thinking assessments

Delivery mode: Downloadable assessments and scoring guides

Location of children: Victoria, Australia

Year range: Year 1–10

Development of Measurement Tools for National Childcare Accreditation Council

Since February 2000, this project entails the design of quality assurance measurement instruments, and psychometric analyses of data derived from them, for the Quality Improvement Assurance System (QIAS) operated by the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC). These data arise from ratings on NCAC's QIAS that apply to all Long Day Care centres, Family Day Care centres and After School Hours Care centres throughout Australia. During the 2004–05 financial year, ACER will continue its support of NCAC, involving: the calculation of ratings from centre staff, participating families and validators' reports; the calculation of Quality Area Ratings using the ratings of Principles; the calculation of Composite Quality Profile Indices; and preparation of the Quality Practices Guide.

Client: National Childcare Accreditation Council

Delivery mode: Data analyses and report production

Diagnostic Assessment Tools in English

Implementation date: 2011

Client: Department of Education and Training Victoria

Content area(s): English (reading, writing, speaking and listening) – design to support English Online assessment

Delivery mode: Downloadable assessments and teacher support materials

Location of children: Victoria, Australia

Age range or year range: Foundation to year 2

Early Childhood Education: Pathways to Quality and Equity for All Children

***Elliott, A. (2006). *Early childhood education: Pathways to quality and equity for all children* (Australian Education Review No. 50). Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=aer>**

The author describes the current provision of early childhood services in Australia and examines relevant policy. The review also provides an overview of early childhood education research, in Australia and internationally, and uses this body of work to identify and illuminate the central issues. Section 1 outlines the history of early childhood service provision in Australia, providing a context and a level of explanation for the fragmented and unsatisfactory nature of the provision. It argues that these issues of supply, accessibility, affordability, funding, staffing and quality have remained unresolved for over two decades. Section 2 defines service policies and maps the current lack of integration, indicating the dilemmas and costs faced both by users of those services and by those who miss out on using the services. The next section examines the research literature, providing evidence of the impact and effectiveness of quality early childhood education and care. Section 4 shows that what stands in the way of achieving quality early childhood outcomes in Australia are a lack of appropriate staff, a lack of balanced investment in the sector, and poor collaboration between those responsible for the care and education elements in the field. The final section offers a consideration of how to proceed to achieve a new generation of research-based policy vision and equitable implementation of quality early childhood care and education for Australian children. [Back page, ed]

Early Learning STEM Australia (ELSA) Evaluation study

Note: Development of assessment framework and interview content to evaluate the ELSA pilot program.

Project website: <https://elsa.edu.au>

Status: Ongoing

Implementation date: 2018

Client: University of Canberra

Location of children: Australia

Age range: 4 to 5.5 year olds

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)

Note: ACER reviewed the Early Grade Reading Assessment. The assessment instrument was not developed by ACER.

Australian Council for Educational Research. (2014). *The Early Grade Reading Assessment: Assessing children's acquisition of basic literacy skills in developing countries*. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), administered individually in about 15 minutes, measures the most basic foundation skills for literacy acquisition in the early grades. The assessment was developed by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) through funding provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank, in addition to resources provided by RTI. The EGRA was developed to provide a battery of assessments of basic reading skills for developing countries to monitor the status of early reading in primary schools. The assessment tool was first implemented in The Gambia and Senegal in 2007. Since then, the reading assessment methodology has been adapted for use in more than 60 countries, in 100 languages, as of March 2014. [Author abstract, ed]

Early Intervention in the Home for Children at Risk of Reading Failure

Location of children: Australia

Year range: Year prior to school

References:

Fielding-Barnsley, R., & *Purdie, N. (2003). Early intervention in the home for children at risk of reading failure. *Support for Learning, 18*(2), 77–82.

In this study, the authors evaluate the effects of an eight-week dialogic reading intervention with an experimental group of 26 at-risk children in the year prior to formal schooling. The results on measures of literacy taken during the first year of formal schooling, compared with results of a control group of 23 children, will encourage all those working to involve families in early intervention. [Author abstract]

Early Start School Entry Interview

Status: Ongoing

Implementation date: 2014

Client: Department of Education and Training, Queensland

Content area: Literacy, numeracy

Delivery mode: Oral and paper-based (one on one teacher interview)

Location of children: Queensland, Australia

Age range or year range: Preparatory/Reception (4.5 to 5.5 years of age)

Early Years Transitions: Supporting Children and Families at Risk of Experiencing Vulnerability

This rapid literature review on support for children and families at risk of experiencing vulnerability in early years transitions sought to understand how Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services, professionals and teachers could better support children at risk of vulnerability, and their families, during transitions. The transitions included are from home, out-of-home care (OOHC) and other programs/services to ECEC services and to school. In particular, this review focuses on the support needs of children who have experienced trauma, children living in out-of-home care, refugee children, and children who experience intergenerational poverty. The literature search and writing of this review was undertaken by Jacyntha Krakouer, Pru Mitchell and Jenny Trevitt (Australian Council for Educational Research), and Dr Anita Kochanoff (Brotherhood of St Laurence).

Publication Date: 2017

Client: Department of Education and Training Victoria

Delivery Mode: Rapid literature review

Location of published literature: Australian and international literature

Age Range: 4–6 years

References:

***Krakouer, J., et al. (2017). *Early years transitions: Supporting children and families at risk of experiencing vulnerability: Rapid literature review*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) website:**
https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=early_childhood_misc

This rapid literature review on support for children and families at risk of experiencing vulnerability in early years transitions was commissioned by the Department of Education and Training Victoria. It sought to understand how Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services, professionals and teachers could better support children at risk of vulnerability, and their families, during transitions. The transitions included are from home, out-of-home care (OOHC) and other programs/services to ECEC services and to school. In particular, this review focuses on the support needs of children who have experienced trauma, children living in out-of-home care, refugee children, and children who experience intergenerational poverty. A selection of programs and strategies were identified in the literature. These are described through the review to highlight the patterns and trends in evidence of what works to support children and families at risk of experiencing vulnerability in early years transitions. These programs are also collated against major themes and findings from the review. [Abstract]

Education Pathways to Peace in Mindanao – Palladium

Status: Ongoing

Implementation date: 2018

Client: Australian Department Foreign Affairs & Trade and the Philippines government

Content area(s): Literacy, Mathematics, Social and Emotional Development and Executive Function using LearnARMM instruments developed by University of Melbourne & ACTRC, owned by DFAT

Delivery mode: Oral Interview

Location of children: Mindanao, Philippines

Year range: Kindergarten to Grade 3

Effective Strategies for the Teaching of Reading: What Works, and Why

De Lemos, M. (2005). Effective strategies for the teaching of reading: What works, and why. *Australian Journal of Learning Disabilities, 10(3), 11–17.

Teaching children how to read and write has always been the primary objective of schooling. However, in recent years there has been a questioning of the effectiveness of different approaches to the teaching of reading, as well as concerns that many students fail to achieve effective literacy skills by the end of the compulsory years of schooling. This has led to a renewed focus on the teaching of reading in the early years of schooling, and the introduction in Australia of new policies and practices which are aimed at improving literacy outcomes. At the same time there have been significant advances over the past two decades in the research on reading and on the processes underlying the acquisition of reading. This research has led to the questioning of some of the assumptions on which current teaching practices have been based, and has identified some of the critical factors associated with the acquisition of reading skills. [Author abstract]

Essential Learning Metrics (ELMs) Early Years Assessments

Status: Ongoing

Implementation date: 2016

Client: Schools (ACER delivered service)

Content area: Literacy, Numeracy

Delivery mode: Online – available on a range of devices

Location of children: England

Age range: 4.5 to 6.5 years of age

Factors Responsible for the Superior Performance of Male Students in Years 3 and 5 Standardised Testing at One Australian Primary School

***Dinham, S., Buckland, C., Callingham, R., & Mays, H. (2008). Factors responsible for the superior performance of male students in years 3 and 5 standardised testing at one Australian primary school. *Learning and Teaching: An international journal in classroom pedagogy*, 1(1), 51–70.**

The project reported here investigated a New South Wales primary school where boys outperform girls in standardised tests in literacy and numeracy, contradicting general findings on male and female academic performance. The project aim was to isolate school-based factors from community-based factors responsible for this phenomenon, and to explore the possibility that rather than boys being advantaged, girls were being disadvantaged by practices at the school. The approach adopted employed case-study methods and ethnographic approaches, including interviews, document analysis, analysis of student performance data, and structured and unstructured observation of a range of school activities. Factors responsible for the superior performance of boys in standardised testing at the school and possible implications are explored. [Author abstract, ed]

Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML)

The Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML) is an initiative to support national strategies for measuring learning and enable international reporting. GAML is led by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and their technical partner is the ACER Centre for Global Education Monitoring (ACER-GEM). UIS and ACER-GEM have initiated a program to develop and validate common reporting scales (UIS-RS) in mathematics and reading, and then facilitate and support their use, in partnership with interested countries. The reporting scales do not involve the development of a new test or assessment program. Rather, they support the use of existing assessments of various kinds, and a pool of calibrated items that could be used to facilitate measurement and reporting of learning outcomes against common scales. Phase I of the development of UIS-RS leverages work commenced under the former Learning Metrics Partnership.

Implementation date: 2018–current

Client: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Delivery mode: Monitoring against one UN Sustainable Development Goal Target indicator: Indicator 4.1.1 – Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex.

Location of children: Interested countries

Year range: Grades 2/3, end of primary education and end of lower secondary education

References:

***Adams, R., *Jackson, J., & *Turner, R. (2018). *Learning progressions as an inclusive solution to global education monitoring*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=monitoring_learning**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mark a welcome shift in global discussion of education, because now we are talking not only about getting children into school, but also about making sure that they are learning. At the same time, the SDGs introduce a new layer of complexity, because we need to define what quality education means in a way that is meaningful across international contexts. This short paper describes how the development of global learning progressions provides an innovative solution, to balance the need for flexibility and consistency in global monitoring of learning. [Abstract]

Australian Council for Educational Research. (2017). *Monitoring learning against the sustainable development goals*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1036&context=monitoring_learning

The Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML) is an international collaboration to improve learning around the world, led by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). The Australian Council for Educational Research Centre for Global Education Monitoring (ACER-GEM) has a major role in supporting GAML, as the UIS's technical partner. This publication outlines ACER's role in the work plan of the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning. [Abstract]

Australian Council for Educational Research. (2018). *The UNESCO Institute for Statistics Reporting Scales: Concept note*. Retrieved from https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=monitoring_learning

Measurement of learning achievement is essential to monitor how well education systems are delivering on the promise of universal quality education. This promise is reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 4 (Target 4.1): By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. Goal 4 can only be meaningful if there is a shared global understanding of quality education, and relevant and effective learning. The various indicators associated with SDG Target 4.1 attempt to translate its key constructs into measurable outcomes against which education systems can demonstrate progress. These indicators also require a shared international understanding of their meaning, if they are to inform global efforts to improve the quality of education for all children. The work described in this paper supports monitoring against one such indicator: Indicator 4.1.1 – Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex. [Abstract]

***Turner, R., *Adams, R., *Schwantner, U., *Cloney, D., *Scoular, C., *Anderson, P., ... *Rogers, P. (2018). *Development of reporting scales for reading and mathematics: A report describing the process for building the UIS reporting scales*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=monitoring_learning**

As a technical partner of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, ACER-GEM has created reporting scales for reading and maths, with the intention of enabling countries to examine and report the outcomes of their assessment activities using a common framework. This report gives the theoretical and contextual background to the scales, and describes the steps in the drafting process. [Abstract]

I Can Do Maths (ICDM)

'I can do maths (ICDM)' was developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research. The purpose of the instrument is to inform teachers and parents about a student's numeracy development in the early years of schooling. It assesses the early numeracy skills of children in the first two-to-three years of schooling. The questions in ICDM are designed to assess key learning objectives for the early years of schooling, with questions covering the three main areas of early numeracy: number, measurement and space.

Publication date: 2000

Publisher: ACER Press

Delivery mode: Children respond to orally administered questions. The set includes masters for individual profiles, diagnostic maps and descriptive reports.

Year range: First three years of school

Assessment Time: Untimed, approximately 20 minutes – group or individual

Assessment tool:

***Doig, B., & *De Lemos, M. (2000). [I Can Do Maths](#). Melbourne, Australia: ACER Press.**

References:

***Doig, B., & *De Lemos, M. (2000). *Hops, steps and jumps: How numeracy learning progresses in the early years*.**

While curriculum frameworks are major influences on learning, teachers know that children progress at different rates. Sometimes this is evident within a particular topic, and at other times more obvious across different topics. In this paper, the authors present the hops, steps, and jumps of numeracy learning of some 3000 Australian children. All were assessed using I Can Do Maths, and their achievements mapped to provide a detailed picture of how children progress on their numeracy journey. This mapping provides teachers with information about key hurdles to numeracy learning for Australian children.

***Doig, B., & *De Lemos, M. (2003). Hops, steps and jumps: Mathematical progress in the early years. In L. Bragg, C. Campbell, G. Herbert, & J. Mousley (Eds.), *Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia: Innovation, Networking, Opportunity. Proceedings of the 26th annual conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia, Deakin University, 6–10 July 2003*. Retrieved from http://web.archive.org/web/1000/http://www.merga.net.au/documents/RR_doig.pdf**

Integrating the Findings from the National Assessment of Student Achievement into the Policy Process: An Experience from Nepal

This publication is the second in the series of topical case studies initiated jointly by the Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia–Pacific (NEQMAP) at UNESCO Bangkok and the Australian Council for Educational Research, Centre for Global Education Monitoring (ACER-GEM).

Poudel, L. N., Bhattarai, G. P., & Gopal, P. (2018). *Integrating the findings from the national assessment of student achievement into the policy process: An experience from Nepal.*

Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website:

https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1026&context=ar_misc

This paper presents the experiences from Nepal on how the findings from the National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) have been integrated into policy processes. The purpose of this brief paper is twofold: to give an overview of the process of the National Assessment of Student Achievement, and to describe how the results were disseminated to different stakeholders to incorporate the findings into the design of policy processes. In doing so, the case study highlights how the assessment findings have been used to design and implement policies and programs in education. [Abstract]

International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study (IELS)

The purpose of the study is to improve early childhood services by providing policymakers, researchers and educators with valid and comparable information on children's learning. The OECD appointed the Australian Council for Educational Research and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) to design, develop and pilot the study.

Project Website: <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/international-early-learning-and-child-well-being-study.htm>

Implementation date: 2016 (the year that OECD appointed ACER for the study)

Client: OECD

Delivery Mode: Online

Content areas: Literacy, numeracy, empathy, self-regulation

Location of children: England, USA, Estonia

Year range: 5-year-olds

Diaz-Diaz, C., Semenc, P., & Moss, P. (2019). Editorial: Opening for debate and contestation: OECD's International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study and the testing of children's learning outcomes. *Policy Futures in Education*, 17(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210318823464>

This special issue aims to bring critical perspectives to bear on a growing phenomenon in education: comparative assessment of educational performance using standardised measures of outcomes or 'international large-scale assessments'. We focus on one of its latest examples: the International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study. Proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, n.d.a) in 2012, this study is now being put into practice, targeting early childhood education and young children in particular. The articles in this edited collection offer varied critiques of this project as well as critiques of the influential role that the OECD is playing in how member countries design, implement and assess their early childhood education.

Key Stage 1 SATs

Implementation date: 2013

Client: Standards and Testing Agency (STA)

Content area(s): Reading, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling

Delivery mode: Paper-based

Location of children: England

Year range: Year 2

Notes: Consists of a series of short-term contracts for item development for different content areas, since 2013.

Latin-American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE)

Note: ACER reviewed the LLECE. The assessment tool was not developed by ACER.

Australian Council for Educational Research. (2014). *The Latin-American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education: Measuring and comparing educational quality in Latin America.*

Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website:

<https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=assessgems>

The Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación (Latin-American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education or LLECE) is the network of national systems for the assessment of education quality in Latin America, created in 1994, and coordinated by UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC). LLECE's purpose is to produce data and knowledge that inform educational policy in the region, contribute to capacity building, and serve as a forum for reflection, exchange and generation of new ideas and good practices in education evaluation. The LLECE assessments aim to provide information about the quality of education in the region and guide decision-making in public education policies. In line with this purpose, LLECE's studies not only compare results between participant countries but also investigate the factors associated with student achievement. The focus here is to identify those school factors that can be influenced by educational policies. [Author abstract]

Learning Metrics Partnership

The Learning Metrics Partnership (LMP) is a joint initiative of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the ACER Centre for Global Education Monitoring (ACER-GEM) to develop a set of nationally and internationally comparable learning metrics in mathematics and reading, and then to facilitate and support their use for monitoring purposes, in partnership with interested countries.

Implementation date: Partnership established in 2016

Client: Joint initiative of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the ACER Centre for Global Education Monitoring (ACER-GEM)

Delivery mode: Learning metrics in mathematics and reading

Location of children: Interested countries

Year range: Early primary school to early secondary school

References:

***Mendelovits, J., *Turner, R., & *Adams, R. (2015). *Monitoring reading globally for the post 2015 development goals*. Paper presented at the Shaping reading pedagogy and assessment for sustainable learning. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1023&context=monitoring_learning**

The Global Education Monitoring Centre of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER-GEM) has initiated the development of a set of learning metrics, with the intention of developing a means of measuring and reporting on learning outcomes that will support the post-2015 development goals. Initial activity was through what was referred to as the Learning Metrics Partnership (LMP), which was explored as a joint initiative of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and ACER-GEM. The objective is to develop a set of nationally and internationally comparable learning metrics in mathematics and reading, and then facilitate and support their use for monitoring purposes, in partnership with interested countries. The empirically derived learning metrics will support national governments to effectively measure and monitor learning outcomes for policy purposes. This would not involve the development of a new test or testing program. Rather, it would support the use of existing assessments of various kinds (including citizen-led regional and national assessments) and a pool of calibrated items that could be used to facilitate measurement and reporting of local learning outcomes against common metrics. A key output of this work would be a common learning metric for reading, spanning reading development from early primary school to early secondary school. In the conceptualisation of the reading metric, comprehension is represented as the central developmental continuum, with other components of early reading mapped differentially in relation to comprehension according to the linguistic specificities of different languages. [Author abstract]

***Turner, R., *Mendelovits, J., *Anderson, P., & *Adams, R. J. (2015). Monitoring reading progress: Towards a global approach. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=assessgems>**

This paper explores some of the opportunities and challenges confronted by researchers and service agencies seeking to support the international community to monitor progress against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The paper's main focus is on measuring children's progress in learning to read. The paper discusses some of the characteristics of an effective approach to measuring outcomes in a globally consistent way, describes progress in beginning to implement an approach to achieve this, and mentions some of the ways current assessment and measurement activities might relate to this approach. [p.2]

UNESCO Institute of Statistics, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade and the Australian Council for Educational Research. (2014). *Learning metrics partnership: A capacity support and policy strengthening initiative to develop and use common learning metrics for mathematics and reading*. Retrieved from: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1018&context=monitoring_learning

The Learning Metrics Partnership (LMP) is a joint initiative of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the ACER Centre for Global Education Monitoring (ACER-GEM) to develop a set of nationally and internationally comparable learning metrics in mathematics and reading, and then to facilitate and support their use for monitoring purposes, in partnership with interested countries. This document outlines the LMP's three-phase program that aims to develop and validate common learning metrics for reading and mathematics, and to support countries to report results of their assessment activities against these learning metrics. The key features of the program are fourfold: it accommodates results from a range of different assessments of learning outcomes, it yields high-quality data that are nationally relevant and internationally comparable, it emphasises peer-to-peer capacity support and learning opportunities, and it has a strong focus on improving data use and policy interface. [Author abstract]

Learning Through Play at School

Status: In progress as at 4 February 2019

Client: The Lego Foundation's Centre for Creativity, Play and Learning

Delivery mode: Report – based on a scoping study method

Literature range: Australian and international literature

Age range: 6–12 years of age

In progress:

***Parker, R., & Thomsen, B. S. (2019). *Learning through play at school: A study of playful integrated pedagogies that foster children's holistic skills development in the primary school classroom*.**

Literacy Advance Research Project

The Literacy Advance Research Project is a collaborative venture of the Australian Council for Educational Research (principal researcher), the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and the University of Melbourne, Centre for Applied Educational Research. The Project, a component of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria's broader Literacy Advance reform strategy, was designed as an evaluation of the implementation of the strategy and the approaches to literacy that the strategy encompasses. It tracked student progress in literacy from Year 1 through to Year 3.

Implementation date: 1998–2000

Client: Catholic Education Commission of Victoria

Delivery mode: Reports – evaluation

Location of children: Victoria, Australia

Year range: Year 1 through to Year 3

References:

***Ainley, J., & Fleming, M. (2000). *Learning to read in the early primary years: A report from the Literacy advance research project to the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria*. East Melbourne, Australia: Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.**

***Ainley, J., McGregor, J., & Fleming, M. (2002). *Three years on: Literacy advance in the early and middle primary years*. East Melbourne, Australia: Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.**

The Literacy Advance Research Project, a component of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria's broader Literacy Advance reform strategy, was designed as an evaluation of the implementation of the strategy and the approaches to literacy that the strategy encompasses. It began as a two-year longitudinal study (Phase One) that tracked student progress in literacy from the beginning of Year 1 to the end of Year 2. It also investigated the implementation of key elements of the Literacy Advance strategy over the two years. Phase Two of the Research Project began in February 2000. This extension was based on the following three threads: studying the implementation of Literacy Advance in schools, following the progress of the original cohort of students to Year 3 when they participated in the state-wide assessment program called the Achievement Improvement Monitor, and following the progress of a new cohort of students through Year 1. Together these sources of data provide a picture of Literacy Advance, its implementation and its links to student learning. This report focuses on Phase Two of the Literacy Advance Research Project and refers to results from Phase One. [Executive summary, ed]

Literacy and Numeracy Interventions in the Early Years of Schooling: A Literature Review

The Australian Council for Educational Research was commissioned to conduct a literature review of the evidence regarding the efficacy and effectiveness of the range of interventions, in literacy and numeracy teaching and learning, focusing on the early years of schooling by documenting the most current research and knowledge from Australia and internationally about the short- and long-term impacts, of a range of literacy and numeracy interventions on student learning outcomes. Where possible the literature review was to refer to any cost-effectiveness analysis that had been undertaken with the view to identifying evidence-based models of effective practice in literacy and numeracy interventions. In turn, the review was to provide an overview of the general principles of effective intervention in literacy and numeracy learning.

Client: Commissioned by the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) on behalf of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Literacy and Numeracy (MAGLN)

Delivery mode: Report – literature review of the evidence

Year range: Kindergarten to Year 3

References:

***Meiers, M., *Reid, K., *McKenzie, P., & *Mellor, S. (2013). *Literacy and numeracy interventions in the early years of schooling: A literature review*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/policy_analysis_misc/20/**

This review has analysed the research evidence for the efficacy and effectiveness of a range of literacy and numeracy interventions in the early years of schooling; that is, Kindergarten to Year 3. The term literacy and numeracy interventions broadly referred to programs, strategies or initiatives currently implemented (or which could be implemented) by schools, education sectors and systems in order to improve student outcomes in literacy and numeracy. To supplement the analysis of evidence on specific interventions, the review has also examined the evidence for general principles in the design and delivery of effective literacy and numeracy interventions in the early years of schooling.

Literature Review Relating to the Current Context and Discourse Surrounding Indigenous Early Childhood Education, School Readiness and Transition Programs to Primary School

This literature review relating to Indigenous early childhood education, school readiness and transition programs has been undertaken as part of an evaluation of the School Readiness Initiative (SRI) Television (TV) series, which is supported by the Dusseldorp Forum. An important function of this literature review is to inform the manner in which fieldwork is conducted as part of the evaluation of the SRI TV series; for example, by providing a framework for discussions with stakeholders in schools and communities during the fieldwork process.

Publication date: 2016

Client: Dusseldorp Forum

Delivery mode: Literature Review

Location of children: Australia – Indigenous children

Year range: Transition to school

References:

***Krakouer, J. (2016). *Literature review relating to the current context and discourse surrounding Indigenous early childhood education, school readiness and transition programs to primary school*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website:**
https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=indigenous_education

Since the educational experiences of Aboriginal Australians are often framed from a 'deficit' perspective, whereby the failures of Indigenous people to engage with the mainstream educational system are seen as the 'problem', an alternative approach to Indigenous early childhood education discourse is preferable. This alternative approach highlights the strengths that many Aboriginal children possess when commencing school, strengths that may result from Indigenous child-rearing practices. Consequently, this literature review utilises a strengths-based perspective for Aboriginal early childhood education and school readiness, noting that Aboriginal children are frequently expected to adapt to a foreign educational system whereby school expectations differ from that of their home environment. The role that television can play in assisting Indigenous children to adapt to and understand Western school environments will be discussed in this review. However, it is important to acknowledge that transitioning to school is a holistic, relational process that occurs over a period of time before and after the very first school day, thus requiring not only children to be ready, but schools as well. The failures of some mainstream educational systems to adapt to the needs of Aboriginal children commencing school need to be acknowledged if Aboriginal children are to experience a successful transition to school. Ultimately, the main purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview about the factors that ensure an effective transition to school for Aboriginal children and the role that television can play in achieving it. [ACEReSearch]

Longitudinal Early Childhood Education Tracer Study

Implementation date: 2014–ongoing

Client: UNICEF – for the Philippines

Content area(s): Literacy and numeracy using LearnARMM instruments (developed by Melbourne University and ACTRC – Filipino University) (instruments belong to DFAT)

Delivery mode: Oral interview

Location of children: Philippines

Year range: Kindergarten to grade 3

Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS)

This national study, conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research, was designed to follow the literacy and numeracy development of a national sample of students throughout the years of primary schooling. The study commenced in 1999 with children at the beginning of their school lives and continued until 2005 when the students in the sample were in year 6. The Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS) developed new instruments for assessing children's literacy and numeracy understanding in the first three years of primary school and described growth in skills over the entire seven years of primary school. The study was funded by a core grant from ACER.

Implementation date: 1999–2005

Client: ACER self-funded

Delivery mode: Longitudinal study, analysis and report

Country of children: National sample of Australian Children

Year range: Primary School

References:

***Anderson, P., & *Meiers, M. (2001). *Better than beige: Designing assessment tasks to enhance learning and measure growth in the early years of school*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Annual Conference, Fremantle, 2001. Retrieved from: <http://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2001/and01114.pdf>**

This paper examines the five linked sets of assessment tasks that have been developed to progressively measure growth in literacy and numeracy in the first three years of school. The tasks were designed for the ACER Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Survey (LLANS). The tasks are based around familiar classroom activities, administered on a one-to-one basis by teachers and include many hands-on components. They address a wide range of aspects of literacy and numeracy development in the early years of school. Measuring growth in skill development is possible because the data from the five sets of tasks have been linked to create a common scale for literacy and a common scale for numeracy. LLANS data used to construct the scales has been collected from 1000 primary students across Australia since 1999. The scales describe the typical nature of student development in the skills addressed by the assessment tasks, thus providing a frame of reference for monitoring individual development and measuring achievement over time. This paper outlines the nature and scope of the LLANS assessment tasks and the use of scales to describe growth as a model for assessment tasks that are both diagnostic and a reliable measure of growth in literacy and numeracy skills in the first three years of school. [Author abstract, ed]

***Frigo, T., Corrigan, M., Adams, I., Hughes, P., Stephens, M., & Woods, D. (2004). *Supporting English literacy and numeracy learning for indigenous students in the early years* (ACER Research Monograph 57). Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=indigenous_education**

This report focuses on further, longitudinal research into educational outcomes for younger Indigenous students. It draws attention to the importance of a good start, attendance, engagement, supportive teaching strategies, strong links between schools and their communities, and school environments that recognise Indigenous cultures. It includes: research design, community profiles, geographical regions, the assessment tools, factors influencing achievement and growth, learning contexts, and a conclusion.

***Meiers, M., & *Forster, M. (1999). *The Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS)*. Paper presented at the ACER Research Conference 'Improving Literacy Learning – What does research tell us?', Adelaide, 18–19 October. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/monitoring_learning/9/**

***Meiers, M. (2000). *The journey continues: The longitudinal study*. In High Expectations, Outstanding Achievement: Early Years of Schooling P-4 conference, Sunday 12 to Monday 13 November 2000. Melbourne, Australia: Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training.**

This paper describes the ACER Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS), a study set within the conceptual framework of developmental assessment. The paper details how it collects achievement data, describes common assessment tasks, and gives some samples that illustrate aspects of emerging writing skills and show children at different stages of development.

***Meiers, M., *Khoo, S. T., *Rowe, K., *Stephanou, A., *Anderson, P., & *Nolan, K. (2006). *Growth in literacy and numeracy in the first three years of school* (ACER Research Monograph No. 61). Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/acer_monographs/1/**

This report describes the findings from the first three years of the ACER Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS). The longitudinal study was established in 1999 in a context in which there was significant national interest in improving achievement in literacy and numeracy for all Australian children, and a particular interest in the development of foundational skills in the early years of school. A nationwide sample of 100 schools was selected in proportion to the population of each state and territory and ten students were randomly selected from each of these schools. This provided a cohort for LLANS of 1000 children who commenced school in 1999. The longitudinal study continued beyond the first three years of school until 2005, when the students in the sample were in year 6.

***Meiers, M. (2006). *Assessing growth in literacy in the early years of school: A longitudinal study*. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 29(3), 252–267.**

The ACER Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS) was designed to follow the growth in literacy and numeracy of a single cohort of students across the years of primary school. A sample of 1000 students in 100 schools formed the cohort for the study, which commenced in 1999. A linked set of literacy assessment tasks focused on key aspects of literacy was developed for the LLANS. Assessment data collected across the years of primary school provided information needed to construct a long LLANS literacy scale covering the full range of proficiency. The scale was used to measure change and track students' achievement over time in the early years of school. This article begins by describing the conceptual framework for the study, and the methodology. The linked set of literacy assessment tasks developed for the first three years of the study, and the long literacy scale are discussed. Findings about the progress of the whole cohort in the first three years, and about individual growth trajectories are presented.

Meiers, M. (2014). Assessing growth in literacy in the early years of school: A longitudinal study. *Indian Journal of Educational Assessment, 4(2): 4–9.

This article reports on two longitudinal studies undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research on literacy in the early years. The Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study was undertaken between 1999 and 2006 with a nationally representative sample of 1000 Australian students from school entry to year 6, and was underpinned by the concept of development assessment. It measured students' performance in literacy and numeracy over time to construct a progress map to describe typical progression of development in that area of learning. A second longitudinal study was carried out which investigated the nature of growth in literacy and numeracy achievement from preschool to year 2. These two studies provide evidence of the knowledge of texts that children acquire from their experiences prior to school, and the continuing growth of this knowledge as the children make progress at school. There are implications for planning differentiated literacy teaching programs in the early years of school, and for recognising and using rich, authentic and engaging literacy texts to support literacy learning for all children. [Author extracts, ed]

***Purdie, N., *Reid, K., *Frigo, T., *Stone, A., & *Kleinhenz, E. (2011). *Literacy and numeracy learning: Lessons from the longitudinal literacy and numeracy study for indigenous students (ACER Research Monograph 65)*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: http://research.acer.edu.au/acer_monographs/7/**

The Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Surveys for Indigenous Students (ILLANS) commenced in 2000 to track the development of English literacy and numeracy skills in a group of Indigenous students – from school entry through the early years of schooling and beyond. This report presents findings from Phase 2 of the project, which examines literacy and numeracy development across grades 3 to 6 of primary school. It compares assessments of 297 Indigenous students and 685 non-Indigenous students from 25 schools. Chapters include: Foundations of literacy and numeracy achievement, promoting literacy and numeracy learning among Indigenous students, research design and methods, student characteristics, assessment data for 2003–2006, factors influencing achievement and growth, case studies and school profiles, and the ILLANS project in context.

***Stephanou, A., *Meiers, M., & *Forster, M. (2000). Constructing scales for reporting growth in numeracy: The ACER Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study. In *Improving Numeracy Learning: Research Conference 2000: Proceedings* (pp. 38–42). Retrieved from https://web.archive.org/web/20120711030843/http://acer.edu.au/documents/RC2000_Proceedings.pdf**

The ACER Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study is set within the conceptual framework of developmental assessment. This paper describes work done on the development of a numeracy scale, and demonstrates how the progressive achievement of the LLANS cohort of students can be reported on that scale and subscales.

Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study: Transitions from Preschool to School (LLANS: TPS)

In 2012, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) began the Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study: Transitions from Preschool to School (LLANS: TPS). This study focuses on a critical period in children's development; the transition from the year prior to school (described in this report as preschool, but also known as kindergarten) into the first and second years of primary school. LLANS: TPS aimed to increase understanding of the relationship between preschool knowledge and experiences and the development of literacy.

Implementation date: 2012–2014

Delivery mode: Report

Location of children: 235 children from Australia

Year range: Transitions from Preschool to School

References:

***Reid, K., & *Andrews, N. (2016). *Fostering understanding of early numeracy development*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website:**
https://research.acer.edu.au/monitoring_learning/29

In 2012, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) began the Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study: Transitions from Preschool to School (LLANS: TPS). The study is part of a program of longitudinal literacy and numeracy research at ACER that started with a seven-year longitudinal study of children's developing literacy and numeracy throughout primary school, which began in 1999 with a cohort of 1000 children from 100 schools around Australia (Meiers et al., 2006). The original Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS) developed new instruments for assessing children's literacy and numeracy understanding in the first three years of primary school and described growth in skills over the entire seven years of primary school. The purpose of this report is to describe the numeracy skills of the preschool children (at the end of the year prior to starting school) who participated in the first year of LLANS: TPS. A better understanding of the numeracy knowledge and skills of preschool children has two important outcomes for early childhood educators and early years teachers: knowing what knowledge and skills can be fostered among young children, and understanding the early numeracy foundation on which formal instruction can build. We describe patterns of understanding of preschool children participating in LLANS: TPS in six significant areas of early numeracy: numbers and counting, sharing, number comparison and ordering, calculations, patterns, shapes and measurement.

Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS): Preschool Interview

Client: ACER

Content area(s): Literacy

Delivery mode: Oral interview

Location of children: Australia

Age range: Preschool (4.5 to 5.5 year olds)

Measuring the Social Outcomes of Schooling

Forster, M. (2004). Measuring the social outcomes of schooling: What does ACER's research tell us? In *Research Conference 2004. Supporting student wellbeing: What does the research tell us about the social and emotional development of young people?* (pp. 80–84). Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website:

https://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2004/2/

For the past eight years, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has been at the forefront of work in Australia to refine re-conceptualisations of the social outcomes of schooling, and to explore ways to measure the social and emotional development of young people. Contexts for ACER's work in this area include consultancies for individual schools, the development of questionnaire instruments as part of fee for services provisions for schools, assistance for state ministries of education, and development work for a variety of tertiary assessments. For example, in 1998, ACER worked with one school to formally assess and monitor the moral, ethical, social and emotional development of its students through secondary school. ACER began work with the Education Department of Western Australia (EDWA) to develop instruments to address the social outcomes of schooling within EDWA's system-wide monitoring program that collects evidence of student achievement at Years 3, 7 and 10. These instruments measure interpersonal skills (collaboration, conflict resolution and communication skills), intrapersonal skills (feelings in relation to self and self-management), and social, moral and ethical development, with the intention of reporting achievements of students from Year 3 to Year 10 on a single scale. ACER also worked with the South Australian Education Department to define student wellbeing across the compulsory years of schooling. This paper reflects on ACER's research into the conceptual and practical challenges of refining definitions of social and emotional growth in a way that allows the definitions to be operationalised as valid, reliable and useful measurement instruments. [Author abstract, ed]

Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth (MTEG)

Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth (MTEG) is an international assessment program especially appropriate to those countries where education systems are in rapid development. Key aims of the program are to provide policy-relevant information about learning and the factors related to it, focusing on the needs expressed by the country, and to track growth in learning over time.

References:

Australian Council for Educational Research. (2015). *Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth: A partnership service to monitor the educational growth of students in the early to middle years of schooling*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: <https://research.acer.edu.au/mteg/2/>

This publication describes and promotes a program run by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth (MTEG) offers a flexible, collaborative approach to developing and implementing an assessment of learning outcomes that yields high-quality, nationally relevant data. MTEG is a service that involves ACER staff working closely with each country to develop an assessment program that meets the country's monitoring needs while being based as closely as possible on a set of defined design principles and quality standards.

Afghanistan

Implementation date: Project was initiated in 2012, administered to class 3 students, Afghanistan, in 2015 using an offline app on computer tablets.

Client: ACER partnership with the Afghanistan Ministry of Education

Delivery mode: Learning assessment program & report

Country of children: Afghanistan

Year range: Administered to Class 3 & Class 6

References:

***Anzai, D., & *Walker, M. (2015, September). *Aligning reading assessment with national goals*. In J. Spink (Chair), *Shaping Reading Pedagogy and Assessment for Sustainable Learning (Paper 2, pp. 20–35)*. Symposium conducted at the 13th International Conference on Education and Development of UKFIET, University of Oxford, UK. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1023&context=monitoring_learning**

Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth (MTEG), initiated in 2012, is an international assessment program especially appropriate to those countries where education systems are in rapid development. Key aims of the program are to provide policy-relevant information about learning and the factors related to it, focusing on the needs expressed by the country, and to track growth in learning over time. Developed in partnership with the Afghanistan Ministry of Education, MTEG was administered at Class 6 in 2013, and administered at Grade 3 later in 2015. The assessment of reading at Class 3 draws on the five components of reading recommended in the 2000 US NRP Report, but with a strong emphasis on listening and reading comprehension. The MTEG approach in the assessment of reading is distinguished from that of other reading assessment programs that operate in low income countries: the focus of these programs is largely, sometimes exclusively, on decoding. MTEG reading supports the Afghan national curriculum emphases, not only on the development of literacy skills, but also more broadly on

promoting and strengthening children's ability to think and reason – abilities integral to reading comprehension. The aims articulated in the official curriculum are directed at bringing about social change, reducing poverty, and creating a more stable society. This paper outlines the MTEG reading assessment framework with particular reference to its application at Class 3, presents available results, and discusses issues arising from this approach to reading assessment in fragile situations. [Author abstract]

***Anzai, D., *Munro-Smith, P., *Robertson, S., *Walker, M., & *Daraganov, A. (2018). *Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth: Class 3 proficiency in Afghanistan 2015–16: Outcomes of a learning assessment of mathematical and reading literacy*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: <https://research.acer.edu.au/mteg/17/>**

This report presents the results of an assessment of mathematical and reading literacy of Class 3 students in 15 provinces in Afghanistan. The data were collected between late 2015 and mid-2016. The report also describes the growth in mathematical and reading literacy between Class 3 and Class 6. The Class 6 data were collected from the 2013 assessment in 13 provinces in Afghanistan. [Abstract]

Australian Council for Educational Research. (2016). *Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth: Assessment framework for Afghanistan*. Retrieved from <https://research.acer.edu.au/mteg/16/>

The Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth (MTEG) program aims to achieve the breadth and rigour of large-scale international surveys while also addressing the unique needs and context of Afghanistan. The MTEG program will provide an ongoing measure of students' educational progress at key stages of learning: middle primary school (Class 3), towards the end of primary school (Class 6), and towards the end of compulsory secondary schooling (Class 9). This MTEG assessment framework provides a statement and discussion about what the assessment intends to measure and lays out the principles upon which it has been built. It outlines an approach to assessing mathematical literacy, reading literacy and writing literacy. It also puts forward a conceptual framework for the context questionnaires. [ACEReSearch]

***Walker, M. (n.d). *The cure for early grades assessment difficulties? Take a tablet*. *International Developments*, 5(3), 6–9. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: <https://research.acer.edu.au/intdev/vol5/iss5/3/>**

Monitoring educational development in the early years of schooling is vital if practitioners, and policy makers, are to support students' learning, but the assessment of student achievement in developing countries can be a logistical headache. Maurice Walker reports on an innovative approach to assessment using tablets to address this issue.

Lesotho

Implementation date: 2014–2016

Client: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Lesotho and funded by World Bank

Content area: Literacy, numeracy

Delivery mode: Online

Location of children: Lesotho

Age range or year range: Grades 1 to 3 (5 to 7 years of age)

National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy

The Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, appointed an independent Committee to review current practices in the literacy acquisition of Australian school children. The Committee was chaired by Dr Ken Rowe, Research Director of the Learning Processes and Contexts research program at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

Report published: 2005

Client: Australian Government, Department of Education, Science and Training

Delivery mode: Report

Country of children: Australia

Year range: Primary Years

References:

***Rowe, K. (Chair). (2005). *Teaching reading: Literature review. A review of the evidence-based research literature on approaches to the teaching of literacy, particularly those that are effective in assisting students with reading difficulties: National Enquiry into the Teaching of Literacy*. Retrieved from <http://web.archive.org/web/20120508201949/http://www.dest.gov.au/nitl/documents/literature%5Freview.pdf>**

***Rowe, K. (Chair). (2005). *Teaching reading: Report and recommendations. National Inquiry in the Teaching of Literacy*. Retrieved from https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?filename=2&article=1004&context=tll_misc&type=additional**

Executive Summary: [executive_summary.pdf](#)

Guide to the Report and Recommendations for Parents and Carers: [guide_recommendations.pdf](#)

National Literacy and Numeracy Tests (NAPLAN)

Implementation date: 2008

Client: Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)

Delivery mode: Report

Location of children: Australia

Age range or year range: Years 3, 5, 7 and 9

References:

***Freeman, C. (2009). First national literacy and numeracy tests introduced. *Research Developments*, 12–15. Retrieved from <https://research.acer.edu.au/resdev/vol20/iss20/12/>**

More than one million students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 participated in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in May 2008. Chris Freeman describes ACER's contribution to NAPLAN through test development, data analysis and marking. ACER is contributing to test development, data analysis and the marking of NAPLAN tests in some jurisdictions.

National Quality Standard – Evaluation by ACER

The National Quality Standard outlined seven areas that research has shown indicated a quality environment for young children’s learning and development. The Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) then commissioned ACER to conduct an evaluation of the assessment and rating instrument and process that had been designed to support the National Quality Standard. ACER’s evaluation focused on the application of the assessment and ratings process during trials by assessors in over 200 children’s services across Australia. The findings of ACER’s evaluation were used to improve the instrument before it was introduced.

Publication date: 2012

Client: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Delivery mode: A report evaluating the assessment and rating process for the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (NQS)

Location of children: Australia

Service Range: Early childhood education and care as well as school-age care

References:

***Raban, B. (2011). A new era in early years learning. *Research Developments*, 26, 8–11. Retrieved from <https://research.acer.edu.au/resdev/vol26/iss26/3>**

Bridie Raban explains the impact of changes to Australian early childhood education legislation that come into effect in 2012, for which ACER has conducted an evaluation.

***Raban, B. (2012). *The national quality standard: towards continuous quality improvement*. Albert Park, Australia: Teaching Solutions.**

This practical guide for students and professionals assists early childhood educators to identify short-, medium- and long-term goals for the development of their services, towards meeting the National Quality Standard through the development of Quality Improvement Plans. It provides a background to the National Quality Framework, discusses the development of a QIP, and looks closely at the assessment and rating process, and how services can prepare for this and work towards developing the best possible services for their communities, families and children. [Back cover]

***Rothman, S., *Kelly, D., *Raban, B., *Tobin, M., *Cook, J., *O'Malley, K.,*Bramich, M. (2012). *Evaluation of the assessment and rating process under the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/early_childhood_misc/8/**

This evaluation of the assessment and rating process for early childhood education and care and school-age care services had as its focus the validity and reliability of the process. In particular, do the items reviewed with the assessment and rating instrument provide consistent and replicable measures? The evaluation was undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), which analysed assessment and rating data from both draft and final reports, managed the online surveys of services and authorised officers, conducted focus groups with services and authorised officers, and had discussions with regulatory authority staff. Focus group sessions were conducted in each capital city, with participants from outside the metropolitan area participating in person or by telephone. The evaluation was able to examine the overall validity and reliability of the assessment and rating process, including use of the instrument. [Executive summary, ed]

On-line Assessment Year 1 (OLAY1)

On-line Assessment Year 1 (OLAY1) – literacy and numeracy skills

Implementation date: 2013

Client: Northern Territory Department of Education and Training

Delivery mode: Computer-based monitoring and assessment tool

Age range: Year 1 (5 to 6.5 years of age)

References:

***Anzai, D. (2012). Digital assessments of early learning. *Research Developments*, 28, 10–11. Retrieved from: <https://research.acer.edu.au/resdev/vol28/iss28/4/>**

ACER developed a computer-based monitoring and assessment tool for the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (DET) that was used to assess Year 1 students' literacy and numeracy skills from 2013. The ACER assessment pioneered an approach where early years students independently interact with the program by navigating the site, tackling the questions and recording their own responses.

Overcoming Disadvantage in Early Childhood (ALNF ODEC)

Implementation date: 2018–2019

Client: Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF)

Content area(s): Literacy, Executive function

Delivery mode: Oral interview

Location of children: Australia

Age range: Preschool (4.5 to 5.5 year olds)

Pattern and Structure Assessment (PASA)

The Pattern and Structure Assessment (PASA) is a school assessment tool for early mathematics (Foundation to Year 2). It is designed to provide teachers with diagnostic information about how children think about mathematical ideas to inform teaching. The tool was the result of a collaboration between Macquarie University authors (Joanne Mulligan and Michael Mitchelmore) and ACER.

Publication date: 2015

Publisher: ACER Press

Delivery mode: One-on-one assessment with electronic score conversation and reporting of results.

Year range: Foundation to Year 2

Assessment time: 15–20 minutes (individual)

References:

Mulligan, J., Mitchelmore, M., & *Stephanou, A. (2015). *PASA: Pattern and Structure Assessment: Assessment materials kit*. Melbourne, Australia: ACER Press.

This assessment kit provides a means to investigate young children's understanding of mathematics. It helps ascertain how children think about mathematical ideas underlying tasks, rather than focusing on the mathematical tasks children can and cannot do. By knowing how children approach tasks, teachers can plan and scaffold individual learning experiences. Pattern and Structure Assessment (PASA) consists of three one-on-one assessments designed for children in the first three years of formal schooling (Foundation to Year 2). Each PASA assessment consists of approximately 15 tasks, covering a wide variety of ideas that underlie strands of the early years Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. [Back cover, ed]

***Stephanou, A., & *Lindsay, J. (2015). *Using PASA with PAT Maths: A teacher's guide to reporting PASA results on the PAT Maths scale*. Camberwell, Australia: ACER Press.**

Preschool Education in Australia

***Dowling, A., & *O'Malley, K. (2009). *Preschool education in Australia*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Education Research website:**

https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=policy_briefs

In 2008, all Australian governments made a commitment through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) that by 2013, all children in the year before formal schooling will have access to high-quality early childhood education programs delivered by degree-qualified early childhood teachers, for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks of the year, in public, private and community-based preschools and childcare. This policy brief summarises the then-current structure of preschool in Australia in contemplation of this major policy shift. This paper describes the context in which the COAG commitment was to be implemented, including: the current organisation of, and participation in, preschool education in Australia; the different regulations governing different types of preschool in Australia; the apparent under-supply of degree-qualified ECE teachers in Australia; the contentious debate over curriculum and assessment that is currently occurring amongst preschool practitioners; and the urgent need for better data about preschools in Australia. [p.1]

Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT)

[Progressive Achievement Tests](#) are a series of tests designed to provide objective, norm-referenced information to teachers about their students' skills and understandings in a range of key areas. ACER's Progressive Achievement approach is used in thousands of schools in Australia and around the world. The approach focuses on assessing and monitoring student growth over time and is underpinned by an understanding that students of the same age and in the same year of school can be at very different points in their learning and development. Also see [PAT Teaching Resource Centre](#).

Publisher: ACER Press

Delivery mode: All PAT tests are available online and in print, with the exception of PAT-R Spelling, which is only available in print.

References:

***Barrett, M., *Bovell, M., Bruniges, M., *Butler, M., Hattie, J., & *Masters, G. (2016). *PAT essentials: Tools, resources and materials to support teachers and educators*. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).**

ACER's Progressive Achievement Tests are an Australian, nationally normed series of tests designed to provide objective information to teachers about their students' skills and understandings in a range of key areas. Created and improved over many years by ACER's team of test developers and psychometricians, PAT tests help in understanding students' current strengths and weaknesses, informing teaching and learning, and monitoring progress over time. PAT Essentials is a collection of tools, resources and materials to support teachers and educators who use PAT tests in their schools. It contains a series of booklets in four categories: Foundations, Resources, Professional Learning and Principles. These categories address different levels of experience and different uses of assessment data. [Publisher website]

***Butler, M. (2016). *PAT Foundations: Understanding and analyzing Progressive Achievement Tests*. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).**

The PAT (Progressive Achievement Test) assessments are statistically rigorous tests that provide quantitative and qualitative data on student performance. But the rigour and technical expertise that goes into developing these tests can sometimes make their function and administration difficult for teachers and educators to fully understand. PAT Foundations draws from years of experience in test development, workshop delivery and teacher consultation. It seeks to explore the purpose and practice of assessment, and to assist teachers and educators in getting the most out of their PAT assessment program. [Publisher website]

Progressive Achievement Tests in Mathematics (PAT Maths)

[Progressive Achievement Tests in Mathematics](#) provide information about the level of achievement of students from Year 1 to Year 10.

Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading (PAT Reading)

[Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading](#) assess students' reading comprehension skills, vocabulary knowledge and spelling, and provide teachers with diagnostic information to inform teaching.

Year range: Comprehension covers Foundation to Year 10, Vocabulary covers Years 3 to 10, Spelling covers Years 2 to 10

Progressive Achievement Tests in Written Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (PAT SPG)

[Progressive Achievement Tests in Written Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar](#) assess students' understanding of the standard English language conventions of grammar and punctuation in two multiple-choice assessment components.

Year range: Written Spelling covers Year 2 to Year 10, Grammar and Punctuation covers Year 3 to Year 10

Progressive Achievement Tests in Science (PAT Science)

[Progressive Achievement Tests in Science](#) assess science knowledge, scientific literacy and understanding of scientific principles.

Year range: Science covers Year 3 to Year 10

Progressive Achievement Tests in Early Years (PAT Early Years)

[Progressive Achievement Tests in Early Years](#) are mathematics and reading tests for students in the first two years of their schooling.

Project Good Start

Project Good Start was a two-year study commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research. The aim of Project Good Start was to collect information from pre-schools, early childhood centres and day care centres and primary schools, and to visit a number of pre-school and first year of school sites to examine evidence about current practices in early years numeracy programs and compare this information with that obtained from the assessment data collected. Project Good Start was an Australia-wide longitudinal study of effective numeracy practices in the year before school and in the first year of school. It was funded under the Commonwealth Numeracy Research and Development Initiative.

Implementation date: The study was conducted about 2003 to 2004 and a related survey and literature review preceded this time.

Client: Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training

Delivery mode: Final report preceded by a publication based on the survey and the literature review. The study collected both qualitative data and quantitative data. The quantitative data was collected via two instruments called 'Who Am I?' and 'I Can Do Maths'.

Location of children: Australia

Year range: Year before school and first year of school

Literature review:

***Doig, B., *McCrae, B., & *Rowe, K. (2002). *A good start to numeracy: Effective numeracy strategies from research and practice in early childhood*. Retrieved from:**
<http://web.archive.org/web/http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/schools/Publications/2003/GoodStart.pdf>

A Good Start To Numeracy is a review of the international and Australian research literature on numeracy in early childhood designed to provide early childhood professionals and parents with a basis for identifying effective numeracy strategies. It is not an exhaustive listing.

Survey:

***Doig, B., *Underwood, C., & Fullarton, S. (2004). *A survey of current Australian strategies in numeracy*. Retrieved from:**
<http://web.archive.org/web/http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/schools/publications/2004/numeracy/ASurveyofCurrentProgramsA.pdf>

References:

Peck, R. and A. Grant (2004). *The numeracy skills of preschoolers. Every Child, 10(1): 16–17.

Project Good Start is a two-year study commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research as part of the Australian Government's Numeracy Research and Development Initiative. A number of state and national projects are being conducted which focus on improving students' outcomes in numeracy by identifying effective teaching and learning practices in the primary and pre-primary years. This article describes some of the findings of the study. The role of the Mathematical Association of Victoria (MAV) in the study is discussed.

***Thomson, S. (2004). Numeracy in the early years: Project Good Start. *Australian Primary Mathematics Classroom*, 9(4): 14–17.**

The author reports on a national project that focused on improving children's early numeracy outcomes. Numeracy in the Early Years: Project Good Start was a national project that commenced in 2001. The key objective of the project was to improve children's early numeracy outcomes by investigating the practices and learning experiences that support the numeracy development of a sample of children in the year before school and in their first year of formal schooling. The project included a quantitative study of children in the year before school and in their first year of formal schooling.

Final report:

***Thomson, S., *Rowe, K., *Underwood, C., & *Peck, R. (2005). *Numeracy in the early years: Project Good Start: Final report to the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/tll_misc/4/**

This project focused on improving students' outcomes in numeracy by identifying effective teaching and learning practices in the primary and pre-primary years. The study was conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research. The project aimed to provide answers to two questions: how to identify effective numeracy programs at both the year before school and in the first year of school, and what constitutes evidence of effectiveness.

Ready for School Program

Client: ACER sponsored and TELSTRA funded

Delivery mode: Professional development program

References:

***Elliott, A. (2005). Engaging with literacy: Supporting literacy learning through building social competence. *Every Child*, 11(4), 22–23.**

The Ready for School program has been developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research. Its main goals are to help teachers understand and deal with challenging behaviours, build social competence and boost children's engagement with learning.

***Elliott, A., & Slee, J. (2005). *Educators' perceptions of young children's challenging behaviours*. Paper presented at the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Biennial Conference, Brisbane, 28 September to 1 October.**

Early childhood educators are increasingly concerned about children with challenging behaviours and there is the perception that young children exhibit more difficult behaviours than in the past. There is evidence that difficult behaviours present problems in preschool and childcare settings and contribute to problems adjusting to school. In the longer term, children with a history of aggressive, disruptive and oppositional behaviours are prevented from taking advantage of learning opportunities. This can result in poor schooling outcomes. The combination of poor behaviour and poor academic performance is associated with school failure, early school leaving, norm-violating and often delinquent behaviours in adolescence and early adulthood, plus later employment difficulties. This paper reports some preliminary findings on educators' perceptions of changing behaviour patterns in early childhood contexts. It highlights increasing frequencies of difficult behaviours, the impact they have on educators in early childhood classrooms and the reasons early educators give for apparent increases in challenging behaviours. The paper concludes by highlighting key points from an ACER sponsored and TELSTRA funded professional development program to help early childhood educators better understand challenging behaviours and build young children's social competence. [Author abstract]

School Readiness Initiative: Little J & Big Cuz

In order to meet the challenges posed by the School Readiness Initiative (SRI), ACER and partners assembled a cast of expert players to develop the TV show *Little J & Big Cuz*. The primary objective of the initiative is to improve school readiness for Indigenous preschool-aged children by providing a window into the world of school. The TV show is a fun, animated series constructed as a narrative. The educational foundations are implicit rather than explicit – school is simply a part of life. Episodes depict school life and include activities that occur in this space, such as show-and-tell, lunchtime, school performances and so on. Being school ready includes the development of foundational literacy and numeracy skills, engagement in learning, and positive attitudes towards education and school. Of equal importance for students and their families is an understanding of how school works, what is expected of them and what they should expect from school.

Website: [Little J & Big Cuz](#)

Implementation date: Originally broadcast on NTIV in April 2017

Client: Initiative of the Australian Council for Educational Research's (ACER) Foundation

Delivery mode: Television program and accompanying free online educator resources and games

Location of children: Focused on Australian Indigenous children

Age range: 4 to 6 years of age

References:

Lonsdale, M. (2010). *Using television to improve learning opportunities for Indigenous children.

Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website:

https://research.acer.edu.au/indigenous_education/20/

Moyle, K. (2019). *Connecting Little J and Big Cuz with a kindergarten education program – Case study

1: Morphett Vale East Kindergarten. Retrieved from the Australian Council for Educational

Research website: <https://research.acer.edu.au/littlebigcuz/5/>

Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA)

Implementation date: 2017

Client: Scottish Government

Content area(s): Literacy, numeracy

Delivery mode: Online – available on a range of devices

Location of children: Scotland

Year range: Primary 1 (4.5 to 6 years of age)

Teacher Resource Centre: Early Years Teaching Resources

Implementation date: 2016

Client: ACER internally funded

Content area(s): Downloadable resources

Delivery mode: Data interpretation and teacher support materials for Progressive Achievement Tests including phonics support materials

Location of children: Australia

Year range: Foundation to year 2

The Selection of ECEC Programs by Australian Families: Quality, Availability, Usage and Family Demographics

Note: This was not an ACER project. However, it did include one ACER staff member.

Implementation date: 2010–2015

Client: Melbourne Graduate School of Education: E4Kids project at the University of Melbourne

Delivery mode: Five-year longitudinal study

Location of children: Early childhood education and care programs in Australia

Age range: 3.5 to 5.5 years of age

References:

Cloney, D., Collette, T., Hattie, J., Cleveland, G., & *Adams, R. (2016). The selection of ECEC programs by Australian families: Quality, availability, usage and family demographics. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 41(4): 16–27.

High-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs have the potential to ameliorate socioeconomic status (SES) gradients. In the Australian ECEC market, however, there is no guarantee that children from low SES backgrounds access high-quality ECEC programs. This study tested the influence of family SES on the selection of ECEC program quality. Participants were 2494 children enrolled in up to 1427 ECEC classrooms (mean age at entry = 43 months, SD = eight months). The study controlled for a range of child, family, home and community-level background factors. Both cross-sectional (linear regression) and longitudinal (growth models) methods are used. The study confirmed that children from lower SES families were more likely to attend lower quality programs. Longitudinal modelling showed the largest quality gap before kindergarten. To narrow SES-related achievement gaps there is a need to significantly improve aspects of program quality that influence children's development, and specifically to do so in programs for younger children. There is a particular need to target ECEC programs in lower SES areas to ameliorate the observed SES quality gradient. The findings further challenge current policy directions from the Productivity Commission inquiry into child care and early learning. [Author abstract]

Starting School: A Strengths-Based Approach Towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

This paper has been prepared by a joint project team, with Indigenous and non-Indigenous members, from ACER and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Implementation date: 2012

Client: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Delivery mode: Report including a review of the literature and a further analysis of LSIC data

Age range: An initial sample of 1671 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

References:

***Armstrong, S., *Buckley, S., *Lonsdale, M., *Milgate, G., Bennetts Kneebone, L., Cook, L., ... Skelton, F. (2012). *Starting school: A strengths-based approach towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1027&context=indigenous_education**

This paper provides an overview of the role of resilience in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strengths based early learning context. It does this by reviewing the literature and by conducting an analysis of data collected through the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC), a study that follows two age groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as they grow up. The analyses in this paper focused on results for the Kindergarten or K cohort of the LSIC sample. These children began their participation with the project in 2008 when they were mostly between the ages of 3.5 and 4.5 years. The data considered in this report were predominantly from the Wave 3 phase of data collection when the K cohort was between the ages of 5.5 and 6.5 years. However, some Wave 2 data (when children were aged between 4.5 and 5.5 years) were also investigated. The origins of this paper came from a desire to do something more with the rich LSIC* data available, and a frustration that the positive elements being captured in the LSIC data are not necessarily being reflected in the rhetoric, policies, programs and approaches that are aimed at supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's transition to formal learning. While the LSIC data appear to be pointing to strong and rich interactions between children and their parents and carers, and to the importance of cultural knowledge and identity as a key factor in the development of resilience, these protective factors are not currently being reflected in testing and checklists being used to measure children's wellbeing and school readiness. The analyses in this paper focused on results for the Kindergarten or K cohort of the LSIC sample.

*The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC) (also known as *Footprints in Time* study)

Toddler's and Parents

***Filipi, A. (2007). A toddler's treatment of mm and mm hm in talk with a parent. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30(3), 33.1–33.17. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2104/ara10733>**

This paper examined the work accomplished by mm and mm hm in the interactions of a parent and his daughter. Using the findings of Gardner (2001) for adults, the analysis shows that mm accomplished a range of functions based on its sequential placement and prosodic features, whereas mm hm was much more restricted to its use as a continuer. The principal concern of the study, however, was to investigate how the child treated these tokens in next turn position. It was found that she was able to display her acceptance or rejection of the response and that she had acquired a stock of conversational resources to do so. Included in the stock were the ability to initiate self and other repair, to correct, and to initiate a new topic to mark completion of a sequence. It is argued that through these actions the child was offering a display of her understanding of sequential connections and appropriateness of fit, and importantly what she deemed to be a sufficient response. The paper ends with a discussion of the child's emerging knowledge as it is revealed in the minutiae of interaction. [Author abstract]

***Filipi, A. (2009). *Toddler and parent interaction: The organisation of gaze, pointing and vocalisation*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company.**

This book provides a microanalysis of the interactions between four children and their parents starting when the children were aged 9 to 13 months and ending when they were 18 months old. It tracks development as an issue for and of interaction. In so doing, it uncovers the details of the organisation of the sequence structure of the interactions, and exposes the workings of language and social development as they unfold in everyday activities.

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) – Consultancy Service

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was contracted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to deliver a consultancy service for improving the quality of education and children’s learning outcomes and effective practices in the Eastern and Southern Africa region. ACER were to take stock of and compare existing student assessments in the region, focusing on students in primary education.

Client: UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)

Delivery mode: Consultancy Service, reviews, analysis and reports

Location of children: Eastern and Southern Africa

Year range: Primary education

References:

Australian Council for Educational Research. (2014). *Uwezo: Monitoring children’s competencies in East Africa*. Retrieved from

<https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=assessgems>

Uwezo, meaning ‘capability’ in Kiswahili, is an initiative in which the competencies of school-aged children in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda are measured to obtain information that encourages changes in educational policy and practice. Uwezo began as a four-year initiative (2009–2013) and it is envisaged that it will run for at least another five-year period. Uwezo’s goal is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of education. Annual household surveys are implemented to assess the basic literacy and numeracy competencies of school-age children across Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Uwezo believes that this information will raise public awareness about education levels, and will trigger actions aiming to improve them. [Author abstract]

Cassity, E. & UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO). (2016). *Improving quality education and children’s learning outcomes and effective practices in the Eastern and Southern Africa region: Zimbabwe: Country case study 2016*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website:

https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1027&context=monitoring_learning

This case study of Zimbabwe provides an understanding of the specific practices implemented to measure and improve the literacy and numeracy learning outcomes of Zimbabwean primary school children in the long term. It explores emerging trends from the 2014 Zimbabwe Early Learning Assessment (ZELA) in student learning outcomes and the provision of textbooks and teaching materials procured through the Education Development Fund (EDF). It also reviews the multiyear program of an intensive capacity-building partnership with the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The capacity-building program supports the long-term sustainability of ZELA through system strengthening in assessment, data management and analysis. [Abstract]

***Friedman, T., *Schwantner, U., *Spink, J., *Tabata N., & *Waters, C. (2016). *Improving quality education and children's learning outcomes and effective practices in the Eastern and Southern African region: Main report*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/monitoring_learning/25/**

In order to understand the major impediments to student learning in the region, UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) commissioned this study to map and compare existing assessments of literacy and numeracy in primary education in the region, to examine how the data can be used to characterise children who are experiencing only limited learning outcomes to inform education policy, and to document practices that could help improve learning outcomes of disadvantaged children. The report concludes with a macro theory of change combining assessment, analysis and action. The research was jointly supported by ACER's Centre for Global Education Monitoring.

***Schwantner, U. (2016). *Improving quality education and children's learning outcomes and effective practices in the Eastern and Southern Africa region: Rwanda: Country case study 2016*. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1026&context=monitoring_learning**

This case study of Rwanda provides an understanding of the specific practices implemented to measure and improve the literacy and numeracy learning outcomes of Rwandan primary school children in the long term. An important development regarding the quality standards and assurance program of education in Rwanda is the 2011 introduction of Learning Achievement in Rwandan Schools (LARS). This case study outlines the main purposes and components of LARS, the main findings regarding effective strategies and factors from the LARS baseline report and the capacity building component of LARS. [Abstract]

UNICEF Philippines Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Longitudinal Study

Implementation date: 2014–2020

Client: UNICEF

Delivery mode: Questionnaires (teachers & Principals), Cognitive instruments, Case studies

Location of children: Philippines (Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao)

Year range: Kindergarten to age four

Note: *Jacqueline Cheng, *Dan Cloney and *Rachel Parker are writing a research paper on 'The use of item response models to estimate the growth trajectories of students' literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional development from kindergarten to primary grade 3 in the Philippines'.

Using Measures of Quality to Improve the Learning Outcomes of All Children

***Cloney, D. (2018). *Using measures of quality to improve the learning outcomes of all children*. Paper presented at the Research conference 2018: Teaching practices that make a difference – Insights from research. Proceedings and program: 12–13 August 2018, Sydney. Retrieved from Australian Council for Educational Research website:**

https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1344&context=research_conference

There is compelling evidence that high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs can act to narrow achievement gaps attributed to social inequality. This evidence is typically observed in model programs, designed by experts and offered to vulnerable families outside the market. In everyday settings, where market forces may price families out of certain programs or poor local availability may preclude attendance, ECEC programs do not appear to deliver these significant gains or close these gaps. There is a need to continually improve quality in all ECEC settings to deliver on the potential of early education. It is unclear, however, how quality improvement can be achieved in way that will deliver the best start in life for all. This paper looks at what early childhood interaction quality looks like right now in Australian services and internationally. Specifically, what educator practices are related to children’s learning and development? This paper contributes to the knowledge about quality improvement in two ways. The first is related to how educators can leverage research into pedagogical quality to collect data and improve their own practice. The second relates to the organisation of the ECEC system and how it must be arranged to ensure all children get equal access to high-quality ECEC experiences. Together, these two contributions have the potential to increase the effect ECEC programs have on children’s learning and development outcomes and to deliver on the promise of narrowing achievement gaps and breaking the link. This paper explores the challenge of lifting the quality of Australian ECEC programs, so that the system can deliver on the promise of reducing achievement gaps related to disadvantage. Specifically, this paper brings together the latest research to ask how large-scale psychometric analysis can be used at the classroom level for educators, or communities of educators, to: (1) collect their own data about their practice, (2) visualise it on a continuum of pedagogical quality, and (3) use this information to demonstrate growth in quality. [Author abstract]

VDET English Online

Implementation date: 2009

Client: Department of Education and Training Victoria

Content area(s): Literacy – based on LLANS model

Delivery mode: Online – oral interview with online data entry by teacher

Location of children: Victoria, Australia

Age range or year range: Prep to year 2 (four assessments)

Note: This assessment has been revised in collaboration with ACER and is still in use.

Who Am I?

'Who am I?' was developed as a research tool for the ACER project on curriculum and organisation in the early years of school. The purpose of the tool is to determine readiness for specific learning experiences by assessing cognitive processes underlying early literacy and numeracy skills.

Instrument published: 2000

Client:

Delivery mode:

Location of children:

Age range or year range: Preschool and first two years of school

Assessment time: Approximately 20 minutes – group or individual

Instrument:

***De Lemos, M., & *Doig, B. (2000). *Who am I? A school entry assessment tool*. Melbourne, Australia: ACER Press.**

References:

***De Lemos, M. (2002). *Patterns of young children's development: An international comparison of development as assessed by Who am I?* Retrieved from the Government of Canada website: <http://www.publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/MP32-29-02-5E.pdf>**

This paper provides information on a measure that was developed to assess children's level of development at preschool and entry to school level, as well as their readiness for formal schooling. This measure, Who am I? is based on early copying and writing skills, and is designed to identify the broad stages of development that underlie children's readiness for more formal learning in a school situation. The results reported in this paper indicate variations in the patterns of development of young children according to both age and schooling. Development of early copying and writing skills is accelerated in cases where children enter preschool at an early age and are exposed to formal teaching of early reading and writing skills, as in Hong Kong. However, less formal preschool programs and later entry to school, as in Sweden, result in a delay in the acquisition of early writing skills. Delayed development is also noted in the case of children from relatively poor home backgrounds who do not attend preschool prior to entry to school, as in the case of children in a remote rural area of Northern India. However, there are close similarities in development between children of the same age in Canada and in Australia. The results of these studies indicate that Who am I? provides a valid measure of development across different language and cultural groups, and can therefore be used as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of early childhood provision, as well as children's readiness for more formal learning in a school situation. [Author abstract, ed]

***De Lemos, M. & *Doig, B. (1999). Who am I? A school entry assessment tool. In Department of Education, Employment & Training, *Targeting excellence: Continuing the journey – 1999 conference proceedings* (pp. 60–63), Early Years of Schooling P-4 Conference, 21 & 22 November 1999, Melbourne.**

'Who am I?' was developed as a research tool for the ACER project on curriculum and organisation in the early years of school. This project is investigating the relationship between age of entry to school, school curriculum, teacher expectations and student outcomes in a sample of over 4000 children from preschool to year 2.

***De Lemos, M., & *Doig, B. (2000). *Assessment in the early years: An Australian perspective*. Paper presented at the 6th European Conference on Educational Research, Edinburgh, 20–23 September 2000, Symposium on Assessment in the Early Years.**

This paper presents information relating to an Australian-developed school entry assessment tool. Based on simple copying and writing tasks, it can be used to assess children from different cultural and language backgrounds.

***De Lemos, M. (2008). Assessing development and readiness for school across different cultural and language groups. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 13(2), 73–98.**

This article provides information on a measure that was developed to assess children's level of development at preschool and entry to school level, as well as their readiness for formal schooling. This measure, 'Who Am I?', is based on early copying and writing skills and is designed to identify the broad stages of development that underlie children's readiness for more formal learning in a school situation. Although originally developed in Australia, it has now been used in studies in a number of different countries, including Canada, Hong Kong, India, and Sweden, and data from these studies provide some insight into the variations in development that are associated with different patterns of preschool provision and different ages of entry into an educational program. The results of these studies indicate that 'Who Am I?' provides a valid measure of development across different language and cultural groups and can therefore be used as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of early childhood provision, as well as children's readiness for more formal learning in a school situation. [Author abstract, ed]

Year One Phonics Screening Check

The test is very similar to the UK phonics screening check. It assesses knowledge of all letter sound combinations that represent the 44 phonemes in English. ACER wrote the analysis materials for the assessment and an accompanying document that talks about what to look for in a good phonics program as well as a document about teaching strategies in phonics.

Website: [Phonics Screening Test](#)

Implementation date: 2018

Client: Department for Education, South Australia

Content area: Phonics

Delivery mode: One-to-one interview

Location of children: South Australian government schools

Year range: Year 1

Assessment time: It takes only 5–7 minutes and is carried out by classroom teachers with each student individually.

The Young Learners Project

The Young Learners Project is a collaboration between The Melbourne Graduate School of Education and the Australian Scholarships Group. B. Raban was associated with ACER when the referenced items below were published.

References:

Brown, P. M., Brynes, L. J., *Raban, B., & Watson, L. (2012). Young learners: The home literacy environments of Australian four-year-olds. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 26(4), 450–460.

This study investigated the home literacy environments (HLEs) of 4-year-old children attending an early childhood program prior to school entry and the association between the HLE and children's interests in and attitudes to literacy. One hundred and thirty-eight parents and 140 children from a preschool for 4-year-olds in the Melbourne metropolitan area in Victoria, Australia participated in the study. Parents completed a questionnaire and children were interviewed. Results showed that, generally, these parents created 'somewhat rich' literacy environments, and that traditional literacy (as opposed to techno-literacy) materials predominated. Frequency of the parents' own reading was positively associated with the frequency with which parents read to their children. Richness of parents' reading habits was positively associated with the frequency with which parents read to their children, but not necessarily associated with the children's own interests in or orientation to literacy. [Author abstract, ed]

Brown, P. M., Brynes, L. J., Watson, L. M., & *Raban, B. (2013). Young learners: Aspects of home literacy environments supporting hypotheses about the structure of printed words. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 11(3), 262–273.

This study investigated the relationships between children's home literacy environments and their early hypotheses about printed words in the year prior to entering school. There were 147 children (70 girls and 77 boys: mean age 57 months) in the study. Results showed that the children had varying degrees of knowledge about printed words. Significant associations between age of the child and the application of hypotheses about printed words were found. In relation to the home literacy environments, parents with stronger literacy profiles and habits, whether to do with traditional forms of print or new techno-literacies, were more likely to read to their children on a daily basis, and these children were more likely to have developed hypotheses about the structure of printed words. The implications for understanding children's early literacy knowledge and relevance for educators of young children are discussed. [Author abstract, ed]

Brown, R., Scull, J., Nolan, A., *Raban, B., & Deans, J. (2012). Young learners: Mapping the beliefs and practices of preschool teachers in relation to early literacy development. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 39(3), 313–331.

This article introduces the Young Learners Project, which is a large scale longitudinal study that aims to identify a number of factors associated with positive outcomes in literacy in the first year of school: the role of the preschool teacher, home life and child characteristics. In particular, the article presents the design of one sub-study within the larger project that is focusing on the beliefs, theoretical constructs and literacy practices of 25 preschool teachers working in government-funded preschools located in diverse parts of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. The article deliberates the methodological choices of a group of researchers who set out to represent in diverse ways, and for diverse purposes, the layered meanings inherent in preschool teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to early literacy development. In particular, through reference to illustrative extracts of a single case analysis, the article explores the possibilities and complexities of adopting mixed methods and, in doing so, responds to a call for researchers to make explicit the purposes and challenges of case study methodologies. [Author abstract, ed]

***Indicates that author was an ACER staff at the time of publication or study**

Local Authority survey

This survey is part of an independent review commissioned by the Scottish Government into Primary 1 Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA). Responses will inform recommendations on the following areas:

- the suitability of SNSA for use in P1;
- the relationship of P1 SNSA to the National Benchmarks for early level;
- the effect of taking an on-line assessment on P1 children;
- the usefulness of the diagnostic information and how it supports teachers' professional judgements;
- the usefulness of P1 SNSA for school improvement purposes.

All responses are anonymous and will not be used for any purpose other than this review.

Name of Local Authority:

Number of schools with P1 classes:

How many schools have attended training to support the use of SNSA?

How many schools have used the online materials to support the use of SNSA?

What feedback did you get about the training?

What feedback did you get about the online materials?

What feedback have you had from teachers about the P1 SNSA?

How are teachers guided in using P1SNSA to support their professional judgements about children's progress?

Please give details of any professional development courses specifically aimed to support teachers in making those professional judgements.

How are schools guided in using the P1 SNSA to inform the National Benchmark / ACEL judgements?

What is your view of the usefulness of P1 SNSA for school improvement purposes?

Do you have any other comments about the P1 SNSA ?

Thank you for completing this survey.

Headteacher survey

This survey is part of an independent review commissioned by the Scottish Government into Primary 1 Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA). Responses will inform recommendations on the following areas:

- the suitability of SNSA for use in P1;
- the relationship of P1 SNSA to the benchmarks for early level;
- the effect of taking an on-line assessment on P1 children;
- the usefulness of the diagnostic information and how it supports teachers' professional judgements;
- the usefulness of P1 SNSA for school improvement purposes.

All responses are anonymous and will not be used for any purpose other than this review.

Do you use the P1 SNSA? Why/why not?

At what time of the year do you carry out the P1 SNSA?

Have your P1 teachers had training in using the P1 SNSA:

- on the purpose of the assessment?
- on the administration of the assessment?
- on the use of data from the assessment to inform further learning and teaching ?

Was this in a face to face session or online?

How do you use the data from the P1 SNSA?

What are the advantages of using the P1 SNSA?

What are the difficulties/challenges in using the P1 SNSA?

How have the children responded to the assessment procedures?

Do you report the results to parents/carers? If so, how is this done?

In your opinion, to what extent is the P1 SNSA useful for school improvement purposes?

Do you have any other comments about the P1 SNSA?

Thank you for completing this survey.

Teacher survey

This survey is part of an independent review commissioned by the Scottish Government into Primary 1 Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA). Responses will inform recommendations on the following areas:

- the suitability of SNSA for use in P1;
- the relationship of P1 SNSA to the benchmarks for early level;
- the effect of taking an on-line assessment on P1 children;
- the usefulness of the diagnostic information and how it supports teachers' professional judgements;
- the usefulness of P1 SNSA for school improvement purposes.

All responses are anonymous and will not be used for any purpose other than this review.

At what time of the year do you carry out the P1 SNSA?

How prepared do you feel for implementing and using the data from the P1 SNSA?

How do you use the data from the P1 SNSA?

What are the advantages of using the P1 SNSA?

What are the difficulties/challenges in using the P1 SNSA?

How do you use the results to support your professional judgement of children's progress?

How have the children responded to the assessment procedures?

Do you need any further support in carrying out, and using, the P1 SNSA? If so, please provide details.

Do you have any other comments about the P1 SNSA?

Thank you for completing this survey.

David Reedy