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**Report to Council**

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**Date of Meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

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**Subject: Assessment of Children's Progress – Teacher Professional Judgement Data Collection 2016**

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**Report by: Chief Education Officer**

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**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the Data Collection of Teacher Professional Judgement for 2016 which was submitted to Scottish Government in September.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Council note and comment on the contents of this report.

**3.0 Background**

- 3.1. Achievement of children's progress in Curriculum for Excellence, specifically through the Broad General Education (P1-S3), was not previously collected at local or national level. This evidence is now required by Scottish Government as part of the National Improvement Framework. It will become publicly available in December 2016.
- 3.2. The National Improvement Framework recognised that one of the key drivers for improvement in education was to improve the quality of assessment evidence about children's attainment and progress. The Framework set out plans for a new data collection to gather evidence from all schools in Scotland on assessment of children's progress in achieving Curriculum for Excellence levels in Literacy and Numeracy, at P1, P4, P7 and S3.
- 3.3. This data collection is based on the assessment that teachers make about a child's attainment supported by a range of evidence, including, new national standardised assessments. It is recognised that consistency and quality of the data both nationally and across Clackmannanshire schools needs to improve. The Education Service is currently supporting establishments in ensuring that there is a shared understanding of Curriculum for Excellence levels, standards and progress.
- 3.4. This data collection provides new evidence of assessment of children's progress across Clackmannanshire. A summary of the overall results is

attached at **Appendix 1**. As advised by Scottish Government, the full statistical breakdown remains restricted under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics until publication on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

- 3.5. Education Scotland issued further detailed documents to support schools, teachers and parents on assessment on 25 November 2016. This information is intended to support teachers in their engagement with parents about how a child is assessed. It includes information on the planned new national standardised assessments which will be introduced in school year 2017/2018 for all children in P1, P4, P7 and S3. These guidance documents are attached at **Appendix 2**.

#### **4.0 Considerations**

- 4.1. The results for each individual school cannot be directly compared, as each school has its own particular context and breakdown of pupils and families. For example, schools where there is a relatively high proportion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 and 2, with English as an Additional Language, looked after children, or from families in crisis. In addition, there may be particular staffing or other issues which are affecting progress.
- 4.2. Nevertheless, the data, taken alongside other data, demonstrates that children in our disadvantaged communities are not doing as well as those from better off communities. This is in line with the overall pattern of the gap for children living in deprivation in Scotland. Many of our children are not achieving the nationally expected levels in Literacy and Numeracy. This is particularly evident as children progress through the Broad General Education, with particular dips in performance in writing and numeracy in P4 and in P7. The focus of Clackmannanshire's activity within Scotland's Attainment Challenge is to address these gaps and trends in performance.
- 4.3. The Scottish Government intends to publish the data online at national, local authority and school level, on 13 December 2016 as part of its reporting on the National Improvement Framework. Scottish Government have said they will use a combination of bandings and combined results to display the data at school level so that no children/classes can be identified but at a local authority level a more detailed breakdown will be available. They will also include some contextual data e.g. school roll and SIMD profile.
- 4.4. Parents will be able to access their own school's results through an online data base. Headteachers have already been prompted to engage with parents on their own results so that they understand their own context. The new guidance information from Education Scotland (para 3.5 above) is aimed at helping teachers explain assessment to parents, both in relation to their own child's progress, but also their overall school's results in this new data rich environment. The Education Service will support schools in helping parents to understand this information locally.
- 4.5. Scottish Government has recognised that due to the inconsistency of some of the data this year, the statistics should be seen as Experimental Statistics. The ongoing work to support quality assurance, moderation and sharing of

standards aims to improve the reliability and robustness of the data across Scotland.

## 5.0 Sustainability Implications

5.1. None.

## 6.0 Resource Implications

6.1. *Financial Details*

6.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes

6.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

6.4. *Staffing*

## 7.0 Exempt Reports

7.1. Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

## 8.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box )

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Our communities are safer  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Vulnerable people and families are supported                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Substance misuse and its effects are reduced                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| The environment is protected and enhanced for all                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

None

## 9.0 Equalities Impact

9.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?  
Yes  No

## 10.0 Legality

10.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers.

Yes  No

## 11.0 Appendices

11.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

1 - *TPJ Summary by Primary, Secondary, Special*

2 - *Education Scotland Information for parents and teachers on Assessment*

## 12.0 Background Papers

12.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes  (please list the documents below) No

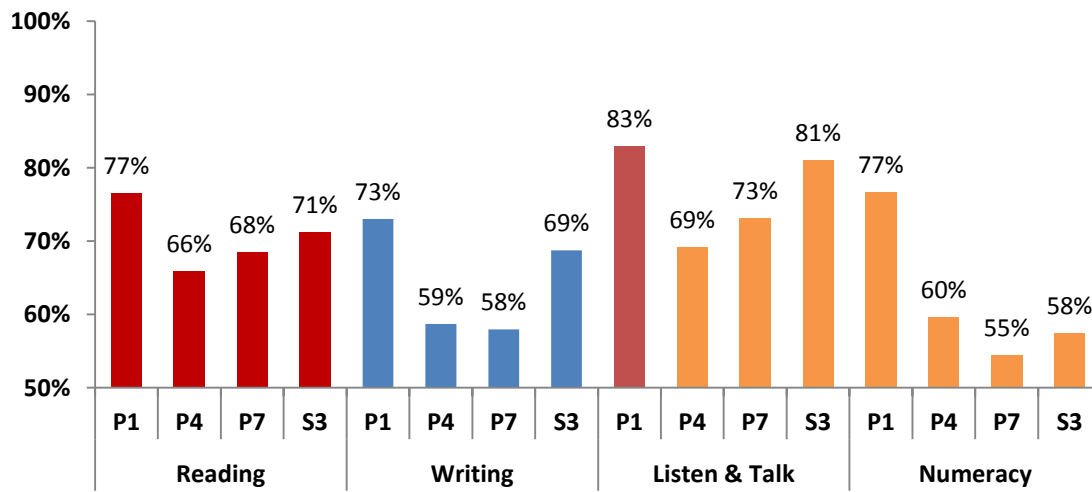
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### Approved by

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**CLACKMANNANSHIRE LA TOTAL - % at level or above**





# ASSESSING CHILDREN'S PROGRESS:

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



Education  
Scotland  
Foghlam Alba



Smarter  
Scotland  
Scottish  
Government

## **WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK?**



The National Improvement Framework has been introduced to provide better information about how children and young people are progressing and how well schools, councils and the Scottish Government are supporting their learning. That information will help teachers and others who work to support children and young people to understand where improvement is needed. It will also help schools, councils and national government to see which learning, teaching and assessment approaches are working well, and where changes need to be made.

As part of the National Improvement Framework, the Scottish Government will collect assessment information about children and young people: their health and wellbeing; their progress through the early years and with their learning; the national awards and qualifications they obtain; and their success on leaving school.

## **HOW IS CHILDREN'S LEARNING ASSESSED IN SCOTLAND?**



Assessment is a central part of everyday learning and teaching for children and young people. Teachers gather evidence on an ongoing and informal basis through asking questions, observing children working together and making comments on their work. Children may assess their own work or that of their classmates. Some assessment is more formal, such as projects, investigations, case studies and tests.

The assessment of children's progress throughout primary school and in secondary S1-S3 is based on teachers' views: their "professional judgement". In making these judgements, teachers draw on their professional knowledge and understanding of the child; on the recently published benchmarks for literacy and numeracy, which provide clear information about what children and young people should be able to do and demonstrate by the end of a Curriculum for Excellence level; and on a wide range of assessment information.

Many teachers and schools across Scotland use standardised assessments, bought in from various different providers, as one of the ways of assessing children's progress.

## **WHAT'S NEW?**

From June 2016, teachers of P1, P4, P7 and S3 classes are being asked at the end of every school year whether children have achieved the relevant Curriculum for Excellence level for their stage in reading, writing, talking and listening (literacy), and their ability to understand and work with numbers (numeracy). Most children are expected to have achieved the early level by the end of P1, first level by the end of P4, second level by the end of P7 and third and fourth level by the end of S3.

The Scottish Government will publish the information received from teachers, to show the percentage of children who have achieved Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy in individual schools, across councils and at a national level. No individual child will be identifiable from published information.

From August 2017, new, national standardised assessments will be introduced in all schools in Scotland. These assessments will provide an additional source of nationally consistent evidence for teachers to use when assessing children's progress.



## **WHAT WILL BE THE SAME?**

Ongoing and informal assessment is, and will continue to be, a central part of everyday learning and teaching.

Teachers will continue to draw on all of the assessment information available to them, when considering children's progress and planning the next steps in their learning.

Teachers remain best placed to know how the children in their class are progressing. Their professional judgement will continue to be the most important way of assessing your child's progress at school.

## **WHAT WILL THE NEW NATIONAL STANDARDISED ASSESSMENTS INVOLVE?**



- Every child in P1, P4, P7 and S3 will undertake national standardised assessments covering some aspects of reading, writing and working with numbers.
- Assessments will be completed online and will be automatically marked by the online system, giving teachers immediate feedback to help children progress.
- The assessments will be used to help teachers understand how well your child is progressing with his or her learning and to plan next steps. There will be no pass or fail.
- The system will be designed so that if a child is struggling with the questions they will get easier, and if a child is doing well the questions will become more challenging.
- The standardised assessments will be as short as possible and will be age and stage appropriate. A time limit of 50 minutes for each assessment has been set. This is an absolute maximum, to ensure that no child feels an unnecessary time pressure when undertaking the assessments. We do not expect the majority of children to require the full 50 minutes.
- Your child will not be expected to take assessments covering reading, writing and working with numbers in one sitting.
- There will be no set day or period of time during which the national standardised assessments must be taken. Individual teachers and schools will decide the most appropriate time during the school year for your child to take the national standardised assessments.
- The assessments will, as far as possible, accommodate the needs of children who require additional support.

## **WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN FOR MY CHILD?**



Teachers will judge whether children have achieved Curriculum for Excellence levels at the end of P1, P4, P7 and S3. This will help to ensure the next year's teacher knows how well children are progressing in their learning and can plan next steps and provide further support accordingly. Providing the right support at the right time will help to ensure your child can reach his or her potential.

As many teachers and schools across Scotland are already using a variety of standardised assessments, many children will already be familiar with taking this form of assessment. The Scottish Government is simply replacing the variety of existing standardised assessments that local authorities and schools currently buy in with a single, nationally consistent set of standardised assessments.

Your child will not have to revise or prepare for national standardised assessments. There will be no additional workload for your child and the assessments will offer no distraction from daily learning.

Teachers will discuss with children how they got on in their national standardised assessment, and will plan next steps with the individual child based on that information. Standardised assessment results will be considered alongside other evidence of your child's progress, from ongoing assessment and classroom activity.

The Scottish Government will ensure that the impact of the new standardised assessments on children is closely monitored.

## **WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR ME AS A PARENT?**

The online assessment system will produce feedback information about where your child did well and where further support is required. Teachers will use this information, alongside a wide range of other assessment information, to discuss with you how your child is progressing with their learning.

Education Scotland – the national body supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education – will be working with teachers and parents to develop guidance on the best ways to report your child's progress.

## **WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY CHILD?**

You have a key role to play in helping your child to learn. Your child's teacher will keep you informed about how your child is progressing. Talk to your child's school if you have any concerns about their learning or assessment. Ask for information on how you can support your child's learning at home.

The standardised assessments should be seen by your child as just another aspect of daily learning. There is no need to prepare your child for assessment or to practice any specific tasks or activities.

### **WHO CAN I TALK TO IF I'M CONCERNED?**

In the first instance, you should always expect to be able to speak with your child's class teacher or with their headteacher.

If you have any more general comments, questions or concerns about the way in which children's progress is being assessed as part of the National Improvement Framework, please email [nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot](mailto:nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot)

### **WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?**

Your child's class teacher or headteacher should always be on hand to discuss any questions that you may have about your child's progress and the role assessment plays in this.

Your Parent Council may be able to point you towards further advice or support.

Further information can also be found on the Scottish Government's website: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/NationalImprovementFramework/NatonalImprovementFramework>

For further information about how to support your child's learning, their education and school life, visit: [www.parentzonescotland.com](http://www.parentzonescotland.com)



## **Assessing Children's Progress: Questions and Answers**

### **How are children assessed in Scotland?**

The assessment of children's progress throughout primary school and in secondary school S1-3 is based on the professional judgement of teachers. In making these judgements, teachers draw on their professional knowledge and understanding of the child; on the recently published benchmarks for literacy and numeracy, which provide clear information about what children and young people should be able to do and demonstrate by the end of a Curriculum for Excellence level; and on a wide range of assessment information.

Assessment is a central part of everyday learning and teaching for every child and young person. Teachers gather evidence on an ongoing and informal basis through asking questions, observing children working together and making comments on their work. Children may assess their own work or that of their classmates. Other assessments can be more formal, such as projects, investigations, case studies and question papers/tests.

### **Why is this important?**

Children, parents, carers, teachers and headteachers need to know how individual children are getting on: where they are doing well and where they need further support. Assessment information can be used by teachers to make decisions about next steps in learning and to help parents understand better how they can support their child at home. It can be used by headteachers to understand how to make learning better for all children in the school.

### **Why are you introducing National Standardised Assessments?**

To give every child a better chance of reaching his or her potential, parents, carers and teachers need objective, consistent and comparable information about how well children are progressing. This information will be used to identify strengths and to understand and act upon areas where children need further support.

At school, local authority and national level, we need information to show us which learning and teaching approaches are working best and where changes need to be made. That way, we can learn from the best, and ensure time and efforts are focussed on the approaches which have the greatest impact on learning.

### **Does this mean national testing?**

No. We are not introducing a national testing regime. The national standardised assessments are not "high stakes tests". The results will not determine any key future outcomes for students (such as which school they go to, or whether they can progress to the next level). There will be no pass or fail. Children will not be expected to revise or prepare for assessments. They will simply continue to undertake routine classroom learning activities.

### **Does this mean that ongoing, classroom assessment will no longer be used?**

No. Ongoing assessment is, and will continue to be, a central part of everyday learning and teaching. The new national standardised assessments will provide an excellent source of evidence for teachers to use when assessing children's progress. Teachers will continue to draw on the full range of assessment activity when considering children's progress and planning the next steps in their learning.

### **What will the national standardised assessments involve?**

The new national standardised assessments will cover some aspects of reading, writing and numeracy. This type of national standardised assessment is not suitable for assessing listening and talking or extended writing.

Children will take the national standardised assessments online.

### **How long will the national standardised assessments take?**

The standardised assessments will be as short as possible and will be age and stage appropriate. A time limit of 50 minutes for each assessment has been set. This is an absolute maximum, to ensure that no child feels an unnecessary time pressure when undertaking the assessments. We do not expect the majority of children to require the full 50 minutes.

### **When will the national standardised assessments take place?**

There will be no set day or period of time during which the national standardised assessments must be taken. Individual teachers and schools will decide the most appropriate time during the school year for children to take the national standardised assessments.

### **Will all children take the national standardised assessments?**

In order to provide national consistency, the new national standardised assessments will be taken by all children in P1, P4, P7 and S3, whatever their background and ability, except in exceptional circumstances, such as where individual complex additional support needs make it inappropriate for them to do so.

### **What about children with additional support needs?**

We will ensure that the national standardised assessments are as inclusive as possible and accommodate the needs of the vast majority of children who require additional support. The system will be accessible to those who already use technology to help them learn, or other methods of communication such as speech to text and Braille. Practitioners who work with children and young people with complex additional support needs will use their knowledge and understanding of the child and their needs, strengths and challenges to reach a decision, with parents, on whether or not the use of standardised assessment is appropriate.

### **Will the national standardised assessments be marked by class teachers?**

No. The national standardised assessments will be delivered online, using technology that provides results automatically. The system will quickly and automatically generate information for teachers on where a child has done well and where further support may be required.

### **What will you do with the results?**

At a classroom level, the information provided from individual children's national standardised assessments will help teachers to understand how children are progressing, based on a nationally consistent picture of those aspects of reading, writing and numeracy that the assessments cover. Training and guidance will be provided to help teachers interpret and use the national standardised assessment results.

Information at a school and local authority level will help to inform local improvement planning.

National level information will help to inform national improvement plans and policy.

### **Will children get to see the results?**

Teachers will discuss with children how they got on in their national standardised assessment, and will plan next steps with the individual child based on that information. Teachers will ensure that standardised assessment results are considered alongside other evidence of the child's progress, from ongoing assessment and classroom activity.

### **Will parents get to see the results?**

Feedback information produced by the online assessment system will be used for discussion with parents about their child's learning, along with other assessment evidence that teachers use to assess a child's progress.

Education Scotland will be working with teachers and parents and carers, to agree how best to share the results from the standardised assessments, so that parents understand their child's progress and how best to support their learning at home.

### **Will you publish the results?**

Data on the percentage of children who have achieved the Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy relevant to their stage will be published at school, local authority and national levels. Teachers will use their professional judgement to decide if children have achieved those levels, based on a wide range of assessment information from across the full school year.

## **How will the national standardised assessments affect children?**

Standardised assessments are just one element of a wider range of evidence used by teachers who know children and work with them daily, to understand how they are progressing.

The new standardised assessments will be designed so that if a child is struggling with the questions they will get easier, and if a child is doing well, questions will become more challenging. In this way, the assessments will establish children's ability, without them having to face lots of questions that are too easy for them or too hard to answer.

Children will not have to prepare for assessments. There will be no additional workload for children or teachers. The assessments should not distract from core learning.

The Scottish Government will ensure that the impact on children of the new assessments is monitored closely.

## **Isn't P1 too young to assess children?**

There is widespread recognition that children's early development and their progress during the first year of school are crucial for their later success.

Many local authorities already use standardised assessment at Primary 1. Schools find this information useful to ensure the right support is in place to secure good outcomes for children and plan for future learning.

## **Can parents opt out of the assessments/decline to take part?**

The intention of all assessment is to assess progress and put in place support where a need is identified. As these assessments are designed to help teachers understand whether children need additional help or support, there is no benefit to opting out for parents or for children.

Parents who are concerned about any aspect of their child's learning and assessment should discuss this with their child's teacher.

## **How can parents help their child?**

Parents and carers have a key role to play in helping their child's learning to progress. Teachers should keep parents informed about how their child is progressing. Parents and carers should talk to the school if they have any concerns about their child's learning or progress. Teachers should talk to parents about how they can support their child's learning at home.

The standardised assessments should be seen by children as just another aspect of daily learning. There is no need for parents to prepare children for assessment or practice any specific tasks or activities.



## **Who will develop and deliver the new national standardised assessments?**

The National Standardised Assessments will be developed and delivered by ACER International UK Ltd. ACER International UK Ltd is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), a not-for-profit organisation with 85 years of experience in educational research. ACER has extensive experience of delivering large-scale online assessments similar to those they will deliver in Scotland. ACER currently provides online assessments in more than 80 countries around the world.

## **When will the new national standardised assessments be introduced?**

August 2017.

## **How will you ensure that the online system works, in advance of children taking the assessments?**

Implementation testing of the standardised assessment materials will begin by the end of 2016 and continue through to May 2017. Implementation testing will take place in local authorities in urban and rural areas and will include local authorities who do not currently use standardised assessments as well as those local authorities who do.

## **What will happen if schools do not have the necessary technology or internet connection to enable children to sit the tests online?**

If a school has significant difficulties with providing online assessments that cannot be overcome, we will make sure that the national standardised assessments can be taken in another way.

## **Where can I find out more?**

Further information about the assessment model used in Scotland can be found here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/NationalImprovementFramework>

Further information about the National Improvement Framework can be found here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/NationalImprovementFramework>

If you have any other questions, comments or concerns to raise about the way in which children's progress is being assessed as part of the National Improvement Framework, please email [nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot](mailto:nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot)





## Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: the National Improvement Framework

The Scottish Government wants to make sure that all children and young people:

- have the skills they need to do well – particularly in literacy and numeracy
- can do their best, no matter where they live or who their parents are
- feel healthy and secure
- go on to succeed once they have left school.

Evidence shows that six things make the biggest difference to the quality of children's learning:

- strong leadership
- high quality, professionally trained teachers and practitioners
- parents and carers who understand and are actively engaged in their children's learning and their school
- information that tells us how children are progressing
- good schools, which involve children, parents, carers, teachers and the community in planning to become even better
- an understanding of how information about what's happening in schools now can be used to improve things for the future.

As part of the National Improvement Framework, the Scottish Government will gather a range of data and evidence, to show us how well we are doing in each of these areas at school, local authority and national levels, and where we need to make further improvements.

This information leaflet is focused on the information we will gather to tell us how children are progressing with their learning.

### Assessing children's progress

The Scottish Government wants children to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

To find out whether we are achieving these aims, we need to gather information across the full span of children's learning, from the early years, through to the point where they leave school. This information will tell us how children are progressing individually, as well as at school, local and national levels.

Teachers will use the information to make decisions about next steps in learning, both for individual children, and in terms of the particular approaches and interventions they use in the classroom.



In assessing how children are progressing, we will collect information on a wide range of areas, including:

- **Health and wellbeing** – Children must feel healthy and secure if they are to do well in other aspects of their learning and life. Children must feel ready to learn. Existing surveys give us a lot of national level information about children’s health, attitudes, behaviours and wellbeing, which helps us to understand how children are getting on, to identify differences in health behaviours and wellbeing between different groups of children and to take action to improve the life chances of every child and young person. The Scottish Government is developing a new survey which will give us information at a local level and so can be used by schools and local authorities, to identify the aspects of children’s health and wellbeing that are of greatest interest to them and to plan how best to support the children and young people in their area.
- **Early years** – The sooner we can identify and act on any issues affecting children, the greater chance they will have of succeeding in later life. Health Visitors will continue to carry out child health reviews of all children at 27-30 months, to highlight whether there are any concerns about a child’s development at a young age, and to provide additional support as necessary.
- **Literacy and numeracy skills** – Reading, writing, talking and listening skills, and the ability to understand and work with numbers, are the building blocks for success in all other aspects of children’s learning. The majority of this leaflet focuses on explaining how children’s progress in literacy and numeracy will be measured.
- **National qualifications and awards** – While national qualifications are an important measure of young people’s learning, recognising broader achievements too, provides a richer understanding of how children are progressing. All young people benefit from gaining recognition for their achievements and the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that are developed through them. The National Improvement Framework will gather information on the number of national qualifications and the wider range of awards and achievements young people obtain.
- **The success of young people on leaving school** – Education is not an end in itself, but a way of preparing children and young people for their future lives. The National Improvement Framework will gather information about the quality of support young people are being given to help inform their choices about the future and about the number of young people who go on to and then sustain further education, employment or training.





## Measuring literacy and numeracy skills

The assessment of children's progress throughout primary school and in secondary S1 - S3 is based on teachers' views: their professional judgement.

We recognise that teachers are best placed to know how the children in their classes are progressing. That is why, at the end of every school year, the Scottish Government is asking all teachers of P1, P4, P7 and S3 classes whether children have achieved the relevant Curriculum for Excellence level in literacy and numeracy for their stage (i.e. the early level by the end of P1, first level by the end of P4, second level by the end of P7 and third and fourth level by the end of S3).

Teachers will make those judgements based on their own professional knowledge and understanding; on the recently published benchmarks for literacy and numeracy, which provide clear information about what children and young people should be able to do and demonstrate by the end of a Curriculum for Excellence level; and informed by how each individual child has been progressing over the full year. Teachers will work together within their school, local area and with national teams to make sure that their judgements are consistent. Education Scotland is leading a new programme to make sure that the judgements teachers make meet the national standards for the curriculum levels.

The Scottish Government will publish annual teacher professional judgement data on the percentage of children who have achieved the Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy relevant to their stage. That information will be published at school, local authority and national level.

## Using information appropriately

All schools are unique, so to understand how well a school is doing it is important to look at a range of different data sources, together with information about the individual school and the characteristics of the children and young people in that school. It is not appropriate to rank schools, based on teacher professional judgement of Curriculum for Excellence levels data. Creating league tables which imply that schools at the top of the table are the best in Scotland and those at the bottom are the worst would be entirely misleading. Schools operate in very different circumstances and cannot be compared in this way. The context of a school must be taken into account in understanding how well a school is doing.

## Assessing achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels

Assessment is a central part of everyday learning and teaching. The vast majority of evidence teachers consider when making their judgements is gathered frequently and informally, from day-to-day classroom activities.

This ongoing assessment can take the form of children assessing their own work, or the work of their classmates, teachers asking questions and teachers observing children working together. It will also include teachers commenting on children's work.

More formal assessment can include projects, investigations, case studies, design folios and question papers/more formal tests. This kind of assessment may take place at set points in the school calendar, for example, after a short course, at the end of a school term or year or at points of transition.

Teachers use assessment information on a day to day basis to help children plan next steps. **They will draw on all assessment activity when deciding whether the children in their class have achieved the Curriculum for Excellence level relevant to their stage.**

In addition, the Scottish Government is developing new national standardised assessments in aspects of reading, writing and numeracy, for all children in P1, P4, P7 and S3. These will replace the various standardised assessments currently in use in schools across Scotland. 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.

## Using assessment appropriately, proportionately and inclusively

The new national standardised assessments will cover aspects of reading, writing and numeracy. This type of assessment is not suitable for assessing listening and talking or extended writing. As the national standardised assessments will only cover some aspects of literacy and numeracy, they cannot and should not replace teachers' professional judgement of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels.

Children will take the standardised assessments online. The system will be designed so that if a child is struggling with the questions they will get easier, and if a child is doing well, questions will become more challenging. In this way, the assessments will establish children's ability, without them having to face lots of questions that are too easy for them or too hard to answer.

The standardised assessments will be as short as possible and will be age and stage appropriate. A time limit of 50 minutes for each assessment has been set.



This is an absolute maximum, to ensure that no child feels an unnecessary time pressure when undertaking the assessments. We do not expect the majority of children to require the full 50 minutes.

Children will not be expected to take standardised assessments covering the three areas of reading, writing and numeracy in one sitting. No child should sit a succession of assessments which would, in combination, last as long as an hour.

Teachers and schools will decide the most appropriate time during the school year for children to take standardised assessments.

Some teachers may decide to carry out the assessments at the start of the session or midway through, to help them to understand how individual children are progressing in aspects of literacy and numeracy, and to plan next steps in learning. Other teachers may carry out the assessments at the end of the school year, to confirm the stage children have reached in aspects of literacy and numeracy, as part of their broader judgements of whether children have achieved the Curriculum for Excellence level relevant to their stage. In this case, the results of each child's assessment would be shared with their next year's teacher, so that future learning can be planned.

We will ensure that the assessments are as inclusive as possible, and accommodate the needs of the vast majority of children who require additional support. The system will be accessible to those who already use assistive technology, and other methods of communication such as speech to text and braille. Those who work with children and young people with complex additional support needs will use their knowledge and understanding of the individual child and their needs, strengths and challenges, to reach a decision, with parents, on whether or not the use of standardised assessment is appropriate.

### Using assessment information to drive improvement

The Scottish Government wants to improve educational outcomes for every child and young person. We know that reading, writing and numeracy are the core skills children and young people need to succeed in all other areas of learning, both at school and beyond. We know that children living in deprived communities are doing less well at school, purely on the basis of where they were born. We know that identifying and addressing individual children's skills gaps early in their education pays dividends in their future successes as learners. Waiting until children sit national qualifications is too late to find out whether they are progressing as they should be.

Through the use of national standardised assessments and teacher professional judgement of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels, the National Improvement Framework will provide better information about how children and young people in Scotland are progressing with their learning.



This information will help teachers and practitioners to understand where children and young people are doing well and where they need further support; and to plan next steps accordingly.

It will help parents to understand any particular learning challenges their child is experiencing as early as possible, and to know how best to support their child's learning at home.

It will also help schools, local authorities and national government to see which learning and teaching approaches are working well within schools and classrooms and where changes need to be made.

## **Reflecting Curriculum for Excellence**

We know that teachers across Scotland already use a variety of standardised assessments. These assessments, however, have not been developed to meet the specific needs of Scottish education, and may not be measuring the aspects of children's learning in which we're most interested. As children in different schools are taking different assessments, there is no consistency in what is being measured.

The Scottish Government is replacing the variety of existing standardised assessments that local authorities and schools currently buy in with a single, nationally consistent set of standardised assessments, designed to reflect the way we deliver education in Scotland, through Curriculum for Excellence. They will therefore provide a much better tool to help teachers help children.

Alongside a range of other evidence, the national standardised assessments will inform teacher professional judgements of Curriculum for Excellence levels. The assessment should not be used in isolation and should not be viewed as a replacement for the ongoing assessment of children's progress which is central to Curriculum for Excellence.

Bringing standardised assessments into line with Curriculum for Excellence, also ensures that daily classroom learning is in itself all the preparation a child will need to take the assessments. Children will not have to revise or prepare for assessments. There will be no additional workload for teachers or children, and the assessments will offer no distraction from children's core learning.

## **Providing comparable, objective assessment**

Different assessments serve different purposes. Ongoing classroom assessments provide immediate information to teachers about how the children in their classes are progressing in their learning. This information supports teachers' professional knowledge and understanding, enabling them to consider individual children's needs and adapt their learning and teaching strategies on an ongoing basis in response to individual children's progress. As these assessments are developed, delivered, assessed and marked by individual teachers, however, they cannot provide a comparable measure of children's performance.



The new national standardised assessments will be developed by independent, objective experts in assessment and reporting tools. They will be quality assured by specialists and tested extensively in schools.

Assessments will be delivered online and will be marked automatically through the online system. The standardised assessments will therefore provide a fully objective and comparable measure of children's progress in some aspects of reading, writing and numeracy.

The national standardised assessments will sit alongside a wide range of other evidence, including ongoing classroom assessment of all aspects of literacy and numeracy. Taken together, ongoing assessment information and national standardised assessment results will provide a more complete and balanced picture of how children are getting on, giving teachers the information they need to support every child to succeed.

### Using assessment results appropriately

The Scottish Government is clear that the purpose and value of all assessment, including national standardised assessment, is in its ability to help teachers understand how children are progressing, and to tailor aspects of future learning accordingly. Assessment data should be used to improve educational outcomes for every child and young person.

It is important not to place a distorted value on an individual child's national standardised assessment results. National standardised assessments results cannot be considered in isolation. **Teacher professional judgement is the key measure of children's progress.** It is these judgements that take account of all aspects of a child's literacy and numeracy skills over the course of the full school year.

### Providing better information for parents

The online assessment system will produce individual feedback reports for each child, outlining where that child did well, and where further support is required. Teachers will use these reports, alongside a wide range of other assessment information, to discuss with parents how their child is progressing with their learning.

The information will also be used to plan next steps in learning and to help parents to see how they can support their child's learning at home.

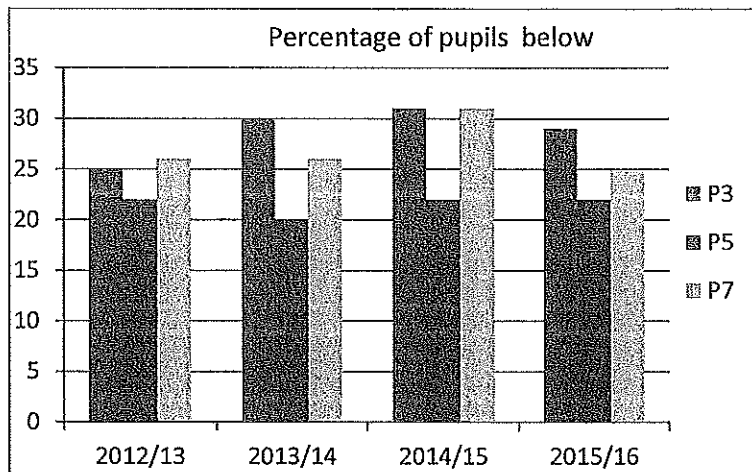
Education Scotland will be working with teachers and parents to develop guidance for schools on how best to report children's progress and achievements to parents.

For any further queries please contact [nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot](mailto:nationalimprovementframework@gov.scot)

### Reading results over time

The graph below illustrates the percentage of children whose attainment was below that expected for their age in reading.

In sessions 2012/13 to 2014/15 an increasing trend in the number of children below average can be identified. In session 2015/16 the percentage of pupils reading below average has decreased in P3 by 2% and P7 by 6%.



### Excellence

In 2014/15, 69% of pupils in Clackmannanshire were achieving average or above average results in reading for their age.

In 2015/16 these results increased to 71% of children achieving average or above average results in reading.

This is an overall increase of 2% points.

### Equity

In 2014/15, the poverty related attainment gap was defined as the gap in attainment between pupils living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 to 3 (most disadvantaged) compared to those living in SIMD deciles 8 to 10 (least disadvantaged).

This gap was measured as 41% points. Prior to session 2014/15, poverty related attainment data was not available. In session 2015/16 the attainment gap as defined above was measured at 17% points.

The gap has been closed by 24% points

