



APPG for
Schools,
Learning and
Assessment

October 2023

Appendices

Towards a fairer, more useful and
fit-for-purpose way to assess children
and young people in the 21st century

Types of evidence considered

Interested parties were invited to submit written evidence over a period of four months ending in March 2023. Seventeen submissions of written evidence were made to the APPG. In addition, a series of five meetings, during which oral presentations were heard, was held between January and June 2023.

APPG meetings

Each of the five APPG meetings was addressed by a panel of speakers with expertise in educational assessment systems or first-hand experience of assessment at primary or secondary level. As well as national and internationally renowned academics, contributions were made by school heads, post-16 school and college students, an apprentice, representatives of both national and local parent-led campaign groups, a university admissions and outreach officer, and a successful businessman with experiencing of working with schools and young people on work experience.¹

Attendance at the meetings suggested a very high level of interest in the area of assessment reform. Each of the meetings addressed specific areas of interest relating to assessment reform including:

- i) the impact of assessment;
- ii) the types of knowledge, skills and competencies considered to be the most important for life and work in the 21st century;
- iii) international perspectives on assessment reform;
- iv) the role of statutory assessment in primary education and a final meeting which considered
- v) whether it is possible to maintain high standards without high stakes assessment in primary education.

Written submissions

There were 17 submissions of written evidence. These came from a wide range of interested parties which included education think tanks and consultancies, and awarding bodies, among others. Contributions reflected a wide range of expertise and interest, ranging from those with first-hand experience of the education system to those whose evidence on assessment reform was informed by extensive research. While most of the submissions offered a critique of current modes of formal assessment, some also provided proposals for alternative

¹ See Appendix 2 for a list of panel members for each of the five APPG meetings.

ways to assess the learning and wider achievements of children and young people.²

The outliers

The report is intended to be as inclusive as possible to reflect the very broad range of presentations made at meetings and written submissions to the APPG. Less attention has been paid to obvious outliers. For example, two of the 17 written submissions were strongly in favour of maintaining end-point exams at 16 and 18 years as the sole means of assessment. One written submission focused on the inaccuracy of exam grades and another exclusively on the importance of oracy in education and oral assessments. These contributions were out of step with a widespread desire to see formal tests and examinations included in multi-modal assessment, and for assessment to cover a range of academic, applied and soft skills (eg oral communication, team working, problem solving and presentation skills (Donnelly et al 2019)) at both primary and secondary level. Contributions supported by academic research and/or supported by statistical evidence from parent and other education stakeholder surveys

carried more weight with the APPG than anecdotal evidence, and the report reflects this. Exceptions have been made for the contributions made by post-16 students who spoke at two of the APPG meetings and whose experiences of academic and technical education were felt to represent an important type of evidence.

² See Appendix 3 for details of interested parties who submitted written evidence to the APPG.

The current context

Several contributions at the APPG meetings pointed out that the cancellation of formal examinations and the use of teacher assessed grades during the Covid pandemic years 2020 and 2021, showed that alternative ways of assessing at primary and secondary were possible. While an Ofqual survey of teachers and students' experiences of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) found concerns about the lack of consistency in approach used by different schools and colleges (Case et al 2022: 69 -70), follow-up interviews revealed that concerns were largely attributable to confusion over the employment of TAGs. For example, concerns were raised over the delays in the decision-making about how to implement TAGs with teachers feeling there was insufficient support and guidance from external agencies (Holmes et al 2022: 146).

Contributions made to the APPG point to a widespread desire that assessment reform should be the one good thing to emerge from the pandemic. The single issue on which all the written submissions and presentations were agreed was that change in how we assess children and young people is desperately needed. Even outliers who advocated the retention of exams as the sole means of assessment wanted change, proposing reforms to make the examination system fairer.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Officers of the APPG for Schools Learning and Assessment

Flick Drummond
Chair, Conservative

Emma Hardy
Co-chair, Labour

Kim Johnson
Vice-chair, Labour

Lord Hunt of King's Heath
Vice-chair, Labour Life Peer

Lord Watson of Invergowrie
Vice-chair, Labour Life Peer

Baroness Morris of Yardley
Vice-chair, Labour Life Peer

Lord Knight of Weymouth
Vice-chair, Labour Life Peer

Appendix 2

Meetings of the APPG for Schools Learning and Assessment

[The impact of the current assessment system \(January 2023\)](#)

Al McConville
Co-founder, Rethinking Assessment and deputy head of King's Alfred's School.

Siân Lewis
Head of parent participation, Parentkind.

UTC South Durham students
Alisha-Paige Leather and Hannah Fenwick.

[What knowledge, skills and competencies will be most important for life and work in the 21st century, and how best can they be assessed? \(February 2023\)](#)

Mike Nicholson
Head of the team responsible for supporting undergraduate and postgraduate student admissions and widening access and participation at Cambridge University.

Thomas Martin
Non-executive chairman of Arco Ltd, a 5th generation family company.

Post-16 students
Alison Chang and Rylie Sweeney.
Brandon Farley (by video presentation).

International perspectives on assessment (March 2023)

Tim Oates CBE

Cambridge University Press and Assessment in May 2006, and previously at the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency as head of research and statistics.

Siv Gamlem

Professor in the Department of Pedagogy at Volda University College in Norway. Her PhD in educational sciences (University of Stavanger, Norway) examined teachers and students perceptions of feedback, and feedback practice in lower secondary school.

Ng Pak Tee

Professor at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University, with expertise in the development of school and teacher leaders. Professor Ng Pak Tee previously served as NIE's associate dean leadership learning and head of the policy and leadership studies academic group. His main work is in educational change, policy and leadership.

Bill Lucas

Professor of Learning and director of the Centre for Real-World Learning, University of Winchester. He is a researcher, writer and educational thought-leader. Prof Lucas's model of creativity is now in use in more than 20 countries across the world. He co-chairs the new PISA 2022 test of creative thinking and is co-author of the recent Durham Commission Report on Creativity and Education.

Dennis Fitzgerald

Board member of the New South Wales Education Standards Authority and the former chair of the New South Wales Curriculum and Credentials Committee (the statutory body responsible for curriculum, assessment, examinations and credentials in New South Wales under the Education Act).

Does statutory assessment serve the needs of primary education? (May 2023)

Alice Bradbury

Professor of Sociology of Education at IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society, and co-director of the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Pedagogy (0-11 years). Co-chaired the Independent Commission on Assessment in Primary Education (ICAPE).

Helen Smith McGuire

Parent and founder of campaign group Let Kids Be Kids, a small group of primary school parents who advocate a broader curriculum in education.

Matt Morden

Co-head of Surrey Square Primary School and education blogger.

Dominic Wyse

Professor of the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Pedagogy (0 to 11 years), IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society. Prof Wyse provided his contribution – Evidence and recommendations for England's national curriculum – as a written statement to the meeting.

Can we maintain high standards without high stakes assessment? (June 2023)

Alison Ali

Director/owner of Can Can Campaigns, runs strategy and communications for More Than A Score, a campaign demanding an overhaul of the primary assessment and accountability system.

Steve Mastin

Education consultant and former chairman of the Conservative Education Society (2014-18). A former head of history at a state secondary school and curriculum leader for a large multi-academy trust.

Gemma Moss

Professor of Literacy at the UCL Institute of Education and director of the ESRC Education Research Programme.

John Hayes

Head of Gospel Oak Primary and Nursery School in Camden since 2012 and member of the NEU national leadership council.

Appendix 3

Organisations which submitted written evidence to the APPG for Schools Learning and Assessment

ASCL

The Association of School and College Leaders.

AQA

Awarding body in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Provides academic qualifications (GCSE, AS and A-level examinations and vocational qualifications) taught in schools and colleges.

Pearson

Awarding body offering academic and vocational qualifications including Pearson Edexcel, BTEC, LCCI and EDI.

Beadles

Independent boarding and day school.

Dixons Academies Trust

Academy trust with schools in Leeds, Bradford, Liverpool and Manchester.

Edge

An independent foundation working for an education system which includes “a broad and balanced curriculum, interactive and engaging real world learning, high quality technical and professional training and rich relationships between education and employers”.

EDSK

A think tank which designs “new and better ways for policymakers and educators to help every learner succeed – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds”.

GL Assessment

Provides formative assessments (eg 11-plus tests) to schools across the UK and Ireland.

Oliver Green

A-level student.

Helen Smith McGuire on behalf of Let Kids Be Kids

A campaign which represents 30,000 parents and led the 2016 Kids Strike during which over 8,000 parents kept their year 2 children off school in protest over year 2 SATs.

More than a Score

A national campaign formed by a coalition of 18 organisations which brings together parents, teachers and experts in early years, primary education and child mental health “to persuade decision makers to listen to those who know and care about the impact of high stakes testing on children and schools”.

The New School

A Croydon-based, independent, non-fee-paying school which operates on a “democratic decision-making model for pupils and staff”. The New School is funded by philanthropic company donations and pupils do not sit SATs.

Gemma Moss

Professor of Literacy at the UCL Institute of Education and director of the ESRC Education Research Programme. Chaired the British Educational Research Association (BERA) expert panel on assessment at primary level (2017-22).

The Royal Society

Recognises, promotes and supports excellence in science and encourages the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity.

Dennis Sherwood

Author of *Missing the Mark*, a book which gives a detailed explanation supported by statistical analysis and evidence explaining why many pupils receive inaccurate final grades in essay-based examinations.

Skills Builder Partnership

A not-for-profit social enterprise which supports individuals to build essential skills through education and throughout the rest of their lives.

Voice 21

An education charity which campaigns for oracy to have a higher status in the education system.

Appendix 4

The 14 Bedales Assessed Courses (BACs)

- ancient civilisations (literature, art and societies of ancient civilisations)
- art
- dance
- design (product and fashion)
- digital game design
- English literature
- geography
- global awareness (uses critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration and communication to understand and address global issues with an emphasis on politics, economics, law and anthropology)
- history
- music
- outdoor work (traditional and contemporary farming and livestock and plant management skills)
- philosophy, religion and ethics
- sports science
- theatre