

Education and Skills Committee
Survey Responses from Teachers

Anonymous Teacher 3

I am a teacher of Additional Support in a school of approx. 350 pupils in Aberdeenshire. Since SNSAs have been introduced, at the instruction of the Head Teacher, I have had to stop my timetable of additional support to carry out P1, P4 and P7 SNSAs according to the 'window' of time we are given by Aberdeenshire Council to complete them. My understanding is that we should not be testing whole cohorts of pupils in a week/ two week but that is what I am being asked to do. The disruption to pupils in need of additional support is unfair.

I do not feel that pupils find the SNSAs stressful, If anything I think they feel the content is too much and too lengthy, particularly in the Reading Assessments. The texts don't appear to adapt to the child's level very quickly, with some pupils presented with several lengthy chunks of texts that must demotivate, demoralise or just bore them. I'm sure when presented with such texts some pupils become 'click happy' just to move on and, as I have witnessed, if they then randomly choose the right answer the assessment results will not be accurate.

I agree with the comment received in evidence that questions remain about the assessment validity of SNSAs in terms of their content, mode of delivery, including in digital format, and ability to provide feedback that is meaningful to learners. I do not feel that the results give any new information to teachers although they make interesting reading. I feel it would be better, as we used to do with 5-14 testing, that pupils are only presented when their teacher feels they have completed the level being assessed.

I feel the SNSAs provide only a snapshot which should not be relied upon as a true picture of a child's ability; particularly when factors such as how the child is feeling that day and completing the test in digital format could influence the results. The class teacher is better placed to make judgements about the children they know and should be trusted to do so. A national standardised picture of results is of course important but the SNSAs do not provide this as teachers across Scotland have not received the same training in using the SNSAs therefore all will be implementing them and overseeing them in a different way.