

**Glasgow City Council**

**Response from Glasgow City Council to letter of 21 December from  
Education and Skills Committee**

**SNSAs**

I am attaching a copy of our most recent Committee report on SNSAs which was discussed today 31 January 2019. This provides our position on the use of SNSAs and the numbers of pupils at each stage that used the SNSAs in 2017/18.

In response to your specific questions:

1. As set out in the paper, we do not use standardised assessments for all pupils. Schools will use a range of assessments with groups of pupils to inform their teaching and learning.
2. As set out in the paper, we do not set out a time period.
3. We do not have a set policy on the sharing of the outcomes of the SNSAs. We view SNSAs as one source of information which teachers will use to inform their planning and contribute to their professional judgement of a child's progress. Teachers/headteachers would share the information if they felt that it helped the child and/or parent improve learning.
4. We received a wealth of data on the assessments. However, it is too early with just one year's data to be able to assess as to whether this information is useful and how effectively it would contribute to improvement.
5. The attached report provides a summary of SNSAs.

Maureen McKenna  
31 January 2019



**Glasgow City Council**  
**Policy Development Committee**

**Item**

31 January 2019

**Report by Executive Director of Education**

**Contact: Donald MacLeod, Head of Service Ext: 74551**

**UPDATE ON SCOTTISH NATIONAL STANDARDISED ASSESSMENTS**

**Purpose of Report:**

To update and inform Committee on the administration guidance and progress of Scottish National Standardised Assessments.

**Recommendations:**

The Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes  No  consulted: Yes  No

## **Background**

- 1.1 Almost all local authorities in Scotland have been making use of standardised assessments for a number of years. The Scottish National Standardised Assessment (SNSA) now provides for a consistent approach being taken across local authorities. SNSA is provided by ACER International UK Ltd and is an adaptive, standardised assessment, based on aspects of the Curriculum for Excellence in Literacy and Numeracy. The assessment offers a series of adaptive questions set at an appropriately difficult level in response to learner's individual answers. Information generated provides diagnostic information to support teachers in planning next steps in children's learning and to inform their professional judgment on pupil progress. It is within the context of the National Improvement Framework but in itself cannot provide full evidence of achievement of a level within Curriculum for Excellence, that is, the assessment supports the teacher's professional judgement.
- 1.2 SNSA assessments were successfully piloted across 44 schools in Glasgow during session 2016/17 and have been available to all schools since August 2017 for learners in P1, P4, P7 and S3. In line with Glasgow's guidance for use of all assessments, the purpose of SNSA is to support and inform future learning by providing information on the strengths and development needs of individuals and groups of learners. An extensive training programme from SCHOLAR on analysis of SNSA data is being delivered across the city to support the effective diagnostic use of these assessments in raising attainment.
- 1.3 Education Services does not specify particular standardised assessments to be completed by all. Our position has always been that assessment is for learning and, where appropriate, headteachers and teachers should use assessment information to support their professional judgement. SNSA together with other standardised assessments being used across the city (MALT: Maths Assessment for Learning and Teaching, PIRA: Progress in Reading Assessment, NGRT: New Group Reading Test, SWST: Single Word Spelling Test) complement formative assessment approaches by adding reliability and rigour. They provide robust information that contributes towards a range of evidence to support the professional judgement of teachers. Helping to identify learners' progress in demonstrating the required breadth, challenge and application of knowledge, understanding and skills to achieve the expected level of attainment.

## **2. Progress**

- 2.1 As a local authority Glasgow does not specify any particular time of year when SNSA should be administered. This decision is taken at school level in discussion with class teachers, who are best placed to decide when it is most appropriate for individual children to undertake assessments that will support planning for the next stage of their learning. Year 1 data (2017/18) indicates that SNSA were administered across the city between March and June 2018. Further data will be required to establish any patterns or change in patterns of administration.

2.2 Local authority guidance on the administration of SNSA states that they should take place within the everyday learning environment of children and young people, set within the context of familiar learning experiences. Class teachers use their knowledge of a child’s progress to identify the most appropriate assessment level for an individual to undertake. The SNSA system is designed to be compatible with a wide range of assistive technologies to support a variety of additional support needs or English as an additional language needs. As a result the local authority has issued clear guidance to ensure that any barriers to accessing SNSA for children and young people are removed. Practitioners who work with children and young people with additional support needs use their knowledge and understanding of the child and their needs, strengths and challenges to reach a decision on whether or not the use of standardised assessments is appropriate. Year 1 data (2017/18) on the percentage of children and young people completing SNSA below reflects this practice.

2.3 Percentage of children and young people completing SNSA at each stage 2017/18.

	Local Authority roll by stage at 2017 census	% of roll completed assessment (June 2018)
P1 Literacy	6047	64.0%
P1 Numeracy	6047	69.7%
P4 Reading	5970	83.9%
P4 Writing	5970	80.7%
P4 Numeracy	5970	86.2%
P7 Reading	5435	84.7%
P7 Writing	5435	84.6%
P7 Numeracy	5435	86.2%
S3 Reading	4527	66.4%
S3 Writing	4527	65.9%
S3 Numeracy	4527	65.8%

2.4 In December 2018 a launch of the Gaelic Medium Standardised Assessments took place. The assessments were co-created and quality assured with the close involvement of the Gaelic Medium Education sector. Further releases of assessment content are planned for March and July 2019 and will provide an opportunity to make further improvements.

### 3. Findings

3.1 The use of SNSA in Glasgow is at an early stage with limited data available at present to identify trends in its use.

3.2 The initial pilot phase (2016/17) and Year 1 roll out (2017/18) have both proved successful with class teachers being confident in their own professional knowledge and understanding of a learner’s progress to make informed decisions about the timing and level of assessment to be undertaken

as well as whether it is appropriate for learners with additional support needs to be presented for assessment.

- 3.3 Training in the analysis of SNSA data and diagnostic use of the assessments has been well received across the city and will continue to support practitioners to identify and address gaps in learning for children and young people.

#### 4. Policy and Resource Implications

##### Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	Within existing resources for training and support.
<i>Legal:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Personnel:</i>	Within existing resources
<i>Procurement:</i>	Not applicable

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##### Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22</i>	Outcome 7: Literacy & Numeracy – improved attainment.
<i>What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?</i>	Diagnostic nature of SNSA will continue to identify individual gaps in learning for females /males which can be addressed to close any attainment difference between genders.
<i>Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage.</i>	Diagnostic nature of SNSA will continue to identify individual gaps in learning for children which can be addressed to narrow the poverty related attainment gap.

##### Sustainability Impacts:

<i>Environmental:</i>	Not applicable
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*Social, including  
Article 19  
opportunities:*

Not applicable

*Economic:*

Not applicable

**Privacy and Data  
Protection impacts:**

Agreements are in place with Scottish government to protect identity of children when data is collated.

## **5. Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report.

