

Inverclyde Scottish National Standardised Assessments

The Committee issued a call for views on its upcoming inquiry on standardised assessments and did not receive any responses from local authorities. The Committee would very much appreciate your input to the inquiry.

Specifically, the Committee seeks the perspective of your local authority on the following questions:

1. If you conduct standardised assessments at local authority level as well as SNSAs in your schools, do you plan to retain the standardised assessments at local authority level as well as SNSAs in the long term? If so, please provide some detail on:

- a. the reasoning for this (what it provides that SNSA cannot),
- b. which assessment you use from which provider, and
- c. the annual cost of the local authority standardised assessments.

Inverclyde Council have no plans to retain other forms of standardised testing at authority level after the 2017/18 academic year.

2. Does your local authority seek to guide your schools as to when in the academic year SNSAs should be carried out? If so, please provide details and the rationale for your approach. If your local authority does not prescribe a particular timescale for SNSAs, are you aware of any practice within your schools where senior management teams prescribe the timings and, if so, what do you consider to be the benefits of this approach?

We have issued guidance agreed through our LNCT that states there should be no testing window, however it is recommended that testing takes place between January and March. The authority does not support the idea of “testing a pupil when they are ready” as the tests are not designed to be used in this way. We are also wary of individual teachers choosing to test pupils late in the academic year because this may give the best perceived results. Experience of administering tests tells us that there will always need to be some additional time given to finishing the tests because of absence etc. It is unfair on both pupils and teachers if tests are administered too late in the year.

“Because the assessments are formative, Inverclyde are suggesting that the assessments should ideally take place between January and March. However, it is accepted that some assessments may be administered earlier if there is a strong justification to do so. If it has not been possible to assess a child before March, then the assessment can be administered later. The assessments give valuable information on a pupil’s strengths and areas for further development that can help to support teacher judgements to inform next steps in learning”

3. Are you aware of the extent to which the results of SNSAs are shared with parents and, where age appropriate, children? Is there a local authority level policy on sharing this information? (for example, to aid development including learning at home with parental involvement)

Please see below our guidance to school

Should I let parent know that the assessments are being administered?

The link to the SNSA has a page for parents and it is advisable to make them aware of the link through your normal communication processes. This is simply one part of an ongoing assessment process and should not be given undue focus. The assessment is to support teachers' judgements and parents should be reminded that the results form only a part of the ongoing assessments to form a judgement. As with any information held on a pupil, whilst parents have a right to know about individual assessments if they so require, the totality of the judgements should be discussed rather than individual test results in isolation.

4. Given the results of SNSAs are being analysed and reported on at a national level (linked below), are you provided with a breakdown of performance at local authority level of the results? Are you provided with a breakdown at school level or smaller cohorts (class level for example or for SIMD areas)? How will this data be used to improve education in your area?

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-national-standardised-assessments-national-report-academic-year-2017-2018/>

As an authority we have undertaken no central analysis of SNSA results for the academic year 2017/18. We will continue to work with our schools to provide self-evaluation data packs to inform their Standards and Quality and Improvement Plans. If schools find it useful then head teachers may choose to share headline SNSA data across schools.

5. How are you collating evidence on how the SNSAs are bedding in at local authority level? For example, the benefits to the teachers and as a consequence the children and young people or any practical concerns with how the tests are operating (resource issues including technology and also staff time, unintended consequences etc.)

Inverclyde work alongside head teachers, LNCT and assessment co-ordinators to evaluate the use and implementation of tests. This has been long established practice when previously using other forms of standardised assessments.

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