

## Shetland

### SNSA

Replies to the Committee's questions about SNSA are given below the 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.*

Shetland Islands Council does not conduct standardised assessments in its schools and does not plan to do so in the future. Some individual schools have conducted them in the past (e.g. PIPS), and a few are continuing to use them alongside SNSAs to gain data from all stages.

*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?*

In 2017-18, Head Teachers decided collectively, in discussion with local authority officers, to set a window between January and March for SNSA to be carried out in all schools. For 2018-19 Head Teachers and officers decided collectively that no window would be set at authority level.

In each school the Head Teacher is responsible for deciding the timing of SNSA each year. All do this collaboratively with their colleagues. A variety of patterns is emerging, which will be discussed at a Head Teachers' meeting at the end of the session. The collaborative approach ensures that all members of the school staff can explain the rationale for the decision the school has taken.

*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)*

Local authority guidance to Head Teachers suggests that they advise parents as follows: "No assessment outcome information will be sent home, but teachers may refer to them within the normal school reporting cycle or at Parents' evenings." Schools generally share the results with parents only if directly asked to do so, and this has hardly happened so far. However, schools are using their SNSA data to help inform the conversations at Parents' Evenings and to help set targets for the next stage of learning.

*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?*

The data for each school provided by Education Scotland in Local Authority reports in summer 2017 was discussed with the school by its link Quality Improvement Officer. In a large majority of cases, teachers found that the SNSA data confirmed their judgement of their pupils' capacity. In a few cases, officers noted clear discrepancies between SNSA data and the final teacher judgement of level data for the same pupils. Officers discussed these cases centrally and then with the Head Teachers concerned, recognising that the SNSA data is only one part of the evidence used in judging achievement of a level.

A deeper analysis will be conducted for the 2018-19 set of data, in keeping with the more refined data and analysis that is expected at national level. Officers plan to correlate the SNSA data and the Achievement of a Level data and again to investigate discrepancies, while taking account of the specific nature of SNSA and of the time of year at which SNSAs were completed by each pupil.

*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.)*

The authority monitors the way the SNSAs are bedding in by periodic discussions with all Head Teachers at Head Teachers' Development Days, and by discussions held in individual schools with their link Quality Improvement Officers. At this early stage the only consistent message is that teachers have generally found the SNSA data to confirm their judgements.

The main concerns expressed by teachers in 2017-18 related to P1 assessments. It is too early yet to judge whether the changes to P1 assessments will reduce those concerns.