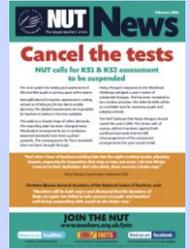




NUT Newsletter

SUFFOLK DIVISION



NUT calls for KS1 and KS2 SATs to be cancelled

Government testing system is in chaos

In recent weeks widespread and growing concerns have hit the headlines about the way children in primary schools are tested.

Such is the level of concern that the NUT has now called for KS1 and KS2 SATs to be cancelled this year and for schools not to “opt-in” to do Baseline Assessment in September. Here’s why:

KS1 and KS2

Concerns around KS1 and KS2 fall into two parts – teacher assessment and changed criteria for SATs tests.

For teacher assessment the government have issued “writing exemplifications” for teachers and have only now issued guidance on how they should be used.

The writing checklists given to Year 2 teachers mean that teachers have to provide six pieces of evidence for eighteen different statements, across a range of subjects, for thirty or more children in their class – **that is a whopping 3,240 pieces of evidence to collect and “validate”**.

This has huge workload implications and the confusion is compounded by the fact that the reporting date has changed twice.

Raising the bar

The other major concern is that the standard expected of children at KS1 and KS2 is being pushed upwards and there is widespread concern that this is out of reach of many children, who have not yet been taught what is in the new tests.

Children in Year 6 now have to make twice the rate of progress expected of children last year in order to meet the expected standard – placing more pressure on teachers to focus on the test and to run booster classes.

This has raised concerns about the age appropriateness of what young children are being expected to do – this is most obvious in the Spelling and Grammar (SPAG) tests.

Baseline Assessment

The government scheme for Baseline Assessment of four year olds has also come in for a lot of criticism and there are now reports that they plan to drop these tests.

In a joint survey of teachers by the NUT and ATL 74% of teachers said there was extra workload involved and only 7% said it was a reliable way to assess children.

Teachers also reported that the Baseline Assessment

took them away from the important tasks of settling the children in to their first weeks in school.

Baseline Assessment is not statutory and the NUT is campaigning for schools not to do the tests in 2016 – 2,000 schools chose not to do them in 2015 and we want to increase that number.

Separating assessment and accountability

The recent chaos and confusion gives teachers a good opportunity to discuss the problems with a system that combines assessment of children with the accountability of teachers - the two are very different and need to be separated.

The government want to test four year olds in order to hold schools accountable, not to establish what children can do – this is wrong as it reduces children to a piece of data and their development to a line on a graph.

A recent report commissioned by the NUT, called **Exam Factories**, highlighted many problems about the current assessment and accountability system and the impact this is having on schools and children.

The NUT is working with other organisations to develop a response to this growing crisis so please tell us your views and look out for further details.

Find out more about our campaign and **Exam Factories** on the new website www.teachers.org.uk

Fine words, but...

“And when I hear of teachers working late into the night marking books, planning lessons, preparing for inspections that may or may not come, I do two things: I marvel at their dedication, but I also think, there must be a better way.” (Nicky Morgan 2014)

***Please make every effort to attend your next local association meeting
Please ensure you have a rep in your school
Please check out the NUT website
www.teachers.org.uk
for information and advice on workload, appraisal, pay and many other issues***