

BtC5

BtC5 confirms Highland's approach to standardised testing. Such testing can provide useful information about individual learners. But there are potential drawbacks which schools and ASGs should consider carefully. You might find the following useful in your reflections:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforschoolstaff/ltt/issuepapers/summativeassessment.htm>

How can we make school even better?

Standardised Testing



What does this mean for me?

Highland believes that schools and ASGs should consider the following before adopting standardised testing 'across the board':

- single, 'one-off' tests have a higher unreliability factor than continuous assessment - they should not be used on **their own** to decide anything
- testing, though an aura of precision and objectivity, can undermine teachers' confidence in their own professional judgement
- testing can lead to teachers 'teaching to the test' - especially (and understandably) if they believe that they are being evaluated on the results
- testing can loom too large in the minds of pupils - causing stress and demotivation especially for low achievers
- testing can loom too large in the minds of parents - leading to unhelpful 'tutoring' to the test out of school hours and pressure on pupils.

However, research and experience show that standardised testing can be beneficial. It can:

- provide additional 'objective' evidence to help confirm teacher judgement of course-work

- identify 'hidden' potential - individuals who under-achieve in course-work
- help through dialogue to motivate by providing long term targets that are meaningful to the learner
- provide 'staging posts' along the learning journey - used at intervals of two or three years

Standardised testing can, then, be productive. But it requires:

- Sensitive use - to avoid becoming too important and therefore too stressful for all involved
- Purposeful use - a full understanding by all involved of the purpose of the test: to enhance the evidence base of learner progress so that we might help individuals to improve
- Sensible use - as one component in a variety of assessment approaches to build up over time a comprehensive profile of the learner.

Key Questions for Schools

- *Should our school / our ASG adopt standardised testing?*
- *If so, how will we solve the potential difficulties described earlier? How would we use the information?*

cont

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Highland CfE Implementation Group

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Testing**

