

Campaign newsletter

NEU Derbyshire Branch



No evidence or support for Baseline Testing

We must stop government testing four

Despite overwhelming evidence, the Government intends to reintroduce Baseline testing of all four and five-year olds in September 2020.

Before then, it wants schools to volunteer for a pilot scheme, this coming September.

The NEU has serious concerns about this and is working with *More Than A Score*, a coalition of parents, early years experts and teachers to stop the tests being introduced.

Government minister, Nick Gibb, wants children to be tested at entry to Reception, and again at 11, when they take KS2 SATs. These tests will produce two scores, which will be compared with each other.

So, Baseline is a crude, and imposed, accountability measure, which has nothing to do with meeting the needs of young children in their first weeks in school, which are so important.

Early Years experts have criticised the plans saying that:

- *baseline assessment cannot provide a valid account of the learning of four-year-olds*
- *it cannot therefore provide a trustworthy basis on which to measure progress*
- *it will damage the early years curriculum and hold back the learning of many children*
- *It will adversely affect primary education as a whole*
- *its costs are not justified.*

Early Years Assessment

Teachers already assess children during the reception year, but in more appropriate ways.

Early years teachers already make assessment of children using a rounded approach based on observation of the child across many activities and experiences.

They consider a child's well-being, and gain insights from



WHAT SCHOOL LEADERS SAY

This week, a YouGov survey showed little support amongst school leaders for the new tests:

- **79%** believed that testing pupils in reception is an inefficient way to measure future progress.
- **75%** believed it is not possible to reliably test four-year-olds.
- **73%** thought baseline assessment is an unfair way to measure the future progress of schools.
- Only **12%** agreed that baseline assessment is an age-appropriate way to gauge school-wide progress
- One headteacher tweeted this week, "**I received an invite for my school to participate in baseline pilot. I said "No". It's a waste of time, money, unreliable & inappropriate!**"
- There are many more who will do the same

parents and nursery staff.

All this is well established throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), starting in nurseries and leading seamlessly to the EYFS Profile at the end of the reception.

Baseline will undermine all this and government advice, issued this week, acknowledged that the new tests will cause "*discomfort*" to some children who can't answer the questions – **remember we are talking about four year old children.**

The government tried to introduce Baseline tests in 2016 and had to withdraw in the face of huge

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Baseline is a voluntary pilot in 2019, which we want to stop – here is how you can help:

- download the Baseline pamphlet from www.morethanascore.org.uk
- call a meeting to discuss NEU model motion saying that you do not want your school to do the pilot www.neu.org.uk/campaigns/assessment
- talk to your headteacher and ask for their support