

Survey Report on Members' Experiences of Delivering Scottish National Standardised Assessments Session 2018-19

Background

The 2017 AGM passed the following Resolution, which was assigned jointly to the Education (lead) and Executive Committees:

"This AGM resolve that, if the Scottish Government implements national standardised testing which the EIS determines as detrimental to learning and teaching in schools, all members in primary and secondary schools will be balloted on a boycott of the administration and reporting of the test results."

In addressing the terms of the Resolution, the Education Committee has sought to monitor the process of implementation and the extent of local authority and school management compliance with the Scottish Government guidance on SNSAs, which the EIS had been successful in influencing positively.

Monitoring last session included FOI to local authorities; seeking the views of Local Association Secretaries on local implementation of SNSAs; and surveying School Reps on establishment-based experiences.

At the end of Session 2018-19 all members who had been involved in Year 1 delivery with P1, P4, P7 and S3 were invited to share their experiences through a SurveyMonkey questionnaire. The survey covered the timing of assessments, practical delivery, alignment to CfE, user-friendliness and usefulness of the data, as well as asking respondents to indicate their Local Association. The survey was open for two weeks in early June and received 460 responses.

Summary of findings

TIMING OF ASSESSMENTS

Members were asked to provide comment on the extent to which they were able to use professional judgement to determine the timing of the assessments in the interests of supporting the learning of individuals and groups of children.

Respondent comments were extracted from the SurveyMonkey platform and collated within Word documents under the headings of 'Concerns' and 'Positive Feedback'. Concerns expressed by respondents amounted to 30 pages; positive feedback spanned only 3.

Feedback provided by members in 25 local authorities suggests that 'assessment windows' were set, or effectively set by the imposition of early deadlines and/ or the late scheduling of training for teachers in SNSAs. These local authorities were:

Aberdeen	Clackmannanshire	East Lothian
Aberdeenshire	Dumfries and Galloway	East Renfrewshire
Angus	East Ayrshire	Edinburgh
Argyll and Bute	East Dunbartonshire	Falkirk
Fife	Moray	Scottish Borders
Highland	North Ayrshire	Shetland
Inverclyde	Perth and Kinross	South Lanarkshire
Midlothian	Renfrewshire	Stirling
West Lothian		

Featuring very heavily in respondent comments was indication that the local authority had determined when in the school session that SNSAs were to be conducted either with individual year groups or with all year groups at once. In a few cases, responses highlighted that teachers had been advised by the SMT that the Authority had set a deadline for completion of assessments. It is not clear otherwise how teachers were made aware of local authority directives.

Regardless of how this was conveyed to and came to be understood by teachers, the effect has been to marginalise the role of teacher professional judgement in determining the timing of what should be diagnostic assessments to support learning and teaching. Survey evidence would suggest that the scope for exercising professional judgement in terms of timing has been grossly limited and frequently non-existent.

'I was told I had to complete the SNSA by the end of March.' (Aberdeen)

'Aberdeenshire Council provided dates which the assessments had to be completed within. These dates were in term 4 for P1.' (Aberdeenshire)

'We were told by the authority when to complete the assessments.' (Angus)

'None. I was told to do them by SMT. I had no warning, just came in on the first Monday after the Easter holidays and told to do them.' (Argyll and Bute)

'We were told by the authority when to do them (May 2018). They were to be completed with all children at the same time with a deadline of mid May.' (Argyll and Bute)

'The decision was out of my control and the authority decided when they were to be completed by.' (Clackmannanshire)

'I wasn't. I was told I had to blanket test the whole class regardless of whether I thought they were ready for the test or not. I said this was against Scottish government and E.I.S. advice and was told that authority said we had to blanket test the whole class by end of May.' (Dumfries and Galloway)

'Authority determined when assessments were completed - full cohort of S3 completed assessments over a period of 2 weeks plus a week of "mopping up".' (East Ayrshire)

Only 7 comments referenced the ability to exercise professional judgement, either directed by the Headteacher or in terms of discussion with SMT about the timing of whole cohort assessment. All 7 comments, however, came from respondents in local authorities in which, according to the bulk of the evidence, teachers' judgement was constrained by the setting of assessment windows and deadlines for completion. It would seem, then, that some teachers were unable to determine which children would sit which assessments within the parameters set by the local authority and/ or the school.

Respondent comments suggested that the question of timing of assessments had been understood by some to mean duration. In the majority of cases, comment stated or implied that the duration of the assessments was too great for Primary 1 pupils and/ or that the cumulative demand on teaching time was excessive.

'70 minutes per pupil to complete each test 56 P1 pupils in our school requiring 1-1 support to complete tests on an iPad. Cover required for teachers to support individual children through each test.' (Aberdeenshire)

'Literacy assessments ranged from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours per child. Numeracy assessments were 30-45 minutes.' (Aberdeenshire)

'While sitting with children doing assessment I felt sad that the children's concentration level is a fraction of the time it took to do the assessment. A child's concentration for doing anything like this is approximately 20 minutes approximately. It saddened me to think you think this appropriate.' (Argyll and Bute)

'These assessments were extremely time consuming taking up to 45-50 minutes per child. Far too long for any 5 year old to sit at a computer and asked to read far too challenging texts! These tests do not reflect the early level benchmarks at all!' (Dundee)

'Extremely long. 45 minutes per session is completely unrealistic.' (Falkirk)

'We were told by local authority that they all had to be completed by the 8th of June. I have had 2 weeks to try to get through 32 children using 4 iPads at 30-40 minutes each! With the less able children I sat with them in pairs so we could click things together.' (Falkirk)

'I was told by management that these tests must be started as soon as possible as we were already aware of how long it would take to get through them with three sets of Primary one children. I have a class of 22 and it took 8 full school

days of constant testing (classroom assistant and I). During this time, no formal teaching took place. Each child took roughly 20 minutes to complete Numeracy and 40-45 minutes for Literacy. This was time spent after having a formal whole school Assessment Week.' (Inverclyde)

PRACTICAL DELIVERY

Members were asked to provide comment on the extent to which SNSAs impacted on classroom management, the deployment of additional support staff/ teachers and availability of ICT. Post-collation of the survey data, concerns expressed by respondents about practical delivery amounted to 42 pages; positive feedback amounted to 11.

From comments about practical delivery which were positive, it was evident that adequate staffing, smaller classes and ICT resources are key to the smoother delivery of SNSAs. Teachers in schools which had up-to-date hardware that is fully compatible with the assessments (namely iPads) identified fewer problems with practical delivery. Some comments suggested that older children who were more adept with technology were able to work their way through the assessments independently. In smaller schools or where teachers had small numbers of children to assess, the process, the comments would suggest, has been more manageable. The deployment of additional staff to support the class teacher in the delivery of SNSAs was referenced as a positive by several respondents – classroom assistants, Headteachers and Depute Headteachers, supply teachers and ITE students, were stated to have been critical to the completion of the SNSAs.

The concerns most commonly highlighted were the challenges of fitting into the pupil day the SNSAs without disruption or diminution to learning. Many comments suggested that this was an impossibility, with normal teaching disrupted for days, sometimes weeks at a time, while the assessments were underway.

Additional workload for teachers was also repeatedly reported as a concern. Comments suggested that some teachers were under pressure to use their designated time for preparation and correction (NCC/ McCrone/CCC time) to do the SNSAs with individual children or small groups. It is clear that SNSAs, in spite of assurances from Scottish Government that they would not, have created added to the workload of class teachers and SMTs.

Teachers also reported that SNSA activity impinged on the progress of interventions that were already in place to address the poverty-related achievement and attainment gap and/ or to meet the needs of children requiring additional support. For example, staff were being redirected from PEF-funded projects and nurture groups to help administer SNSAs. In many cases, comments suggest, support assistants were re-deployed from working with individual children to supporting the delivery of SNSAs.

Comments also highlight that the delivery of SNSAs has been expensive for some schools who bought in additional supply cover, using their own budgets, to enable SNSA delivery. Several teachers commented that administering the assessments

would have been impossible had it not been for additional staffing being provided (in some cases by student teachers).

ICT was cited as a difficulty by many, down to the suitability and availability of existing equipment. Some comments stressed the logistical difficulties presented by hardware that is unreliable and/ or out of date. Others pointed to lack of PCs and tablets while many others expressed frustration that suites of computers or the laptop/ tablet trolley – a whole school resource – was inaccessible to the other children in the school for the duration of the assessment period.

'Due to the length of the tests, our school got one of our regular supply teachers in for extra days cover-7 of these were needed, also one of our teachers had a student on continuous, so she was able to assess. These tests had to be done individually, not in a group or in a relaxed classroom setting as suggested by Mr Swinney. Should be budgeted for as this has taken a lot of time -and money - to complete this. There is no way you could deliver these tests whilst in class with 24 other pupils.' (Aberdeenshire)

'The delivery of these tests became so unmanageable that I had to give up my McCrone time for 3 continuous weeks in order to support the learners. I must stress that school management did not ask this of me, but I was left with no other option. All management are currently in class covering absences and my classroom assistant has to be on hand to support 2 high tariff children in the class, at all times. This meant teaching a lesson at the same time as having children do the test became impossible. With aging ICT equipment these tests were particularly time consuming. I took out groups of 4 at a time and sat with them as they did the test.' (Glasgow)

'No additional support- were first asked to do P1 in group of 10 then went to groups of 3.' (North Lanarkshire)

'For Primary 1 especially, the impact on teaching and learning was substantial. There was no other support staff to support the implementation of the SNSAs and so it came down to staff giving up ccc time to work through assessments with individual children. There is no ICT suite available and we have a few chrome books, so it was difficult to get the Primary 1s logged on in any significant volume and check they were able to drag the necessary answers to the right places as the system did not allow for very good touch screen control, so the children had to be competent using a mouse or touch pad which they have little experience of. Most of the children guessed the answers as a result.' (South Lanarkshire)

'DHT actually did the tests, but with P7 helpers for P1s! Very disruptive for whole class and kids in and out in dribs and drabs over days. Very few computers available!' (Striling)

'My role this year has been to deliver STEM and raising attainment in Literacy across the school. Since Easter I have been released from my timetable to administer SNSA to all relevant classes. There has been no issue with accessing the assessments using chrome books. I took small groups of children from p4 and p7 to complete the assessments and only sat 1 to 1 with specific children, e.g.

dyslexic pupils. This was reasonably manageable. The primary 1 tests however have required administering on a 1 to 1 basis due to the amount of reading required and ensuring they do not click past the questions. This has been horrendously time consuming and I have still not completed them. It would be very difficult to administer them in small groups. It has been very demanding of my timetable and I am still to finish p1. The numeracy assessment can take a minimum of 20 minutes per child and the literacy one around 40 minutes minimum per child for primary 1.' (West Dunbartonshire)

'I am a P1 teacher and have had to be taken out of class for the equivalent of several days to administer the literacy tests. This mainly involved our Nurture Unit being cancelled for blocks of time/full mornings- which lead to behavioural issues with some children and visibly upset others who attend the nurture group. The nurture group is a PEF funded project. ASN teacher has covered for a couple of hours too. SLT have administered most of the Numeracy Assessments. I have used my own time to train a colleague on how to implement the assessments. I have also spent some time (mostly my own in NCCT) on the phone to the service desk after a 'glitch' caused several tests to skip/jump 10 questions after giving pupils a break.' (West Dunbartonshire)

'PSWs were taken off timetable for a fortnight to take groups of pupils to complete (P1s were taken individually). The laptop trolley was not able to be used by classes during this fortnight and there was constant disruption to lessons for pupils going for assessments and coming back and trying to catch up.' (West Lothian)

ALIGNMENT TO CFE

Members were asked to provide comment on the extent to which assessment tasks reflect CfE Experiences and Outcomes and the Four Capacities, as appropriate to each age and stage. Post-collation of the survey data, concerns expressed by respondents about practical delivery amounted to 42 pages; positive feedback covered only 6.

The positive comments gathered far from amount to an endorsement of the alignment of SNSAs to CfE, being generally very brief and superficial in nature, often lacklustre in tone and containing some qualification.

'I am a Primary 1 teacher. The numeracy was alright and did reflect some of the benchmarks.' (Aberdeen)

'I thought most of the content was age appropriate except the passages in the literacy.' (East Ayrshire)

'It is okay, but numeracy seemed heavily focussed on measure, data handling and time - calendar focus. Literacy had a good mix, but the reading passages were very long.' (East Lothian)

'There was certainly relevance in the tasks, but maybe not the breadth of coverage which pupils cover and certainly some contexts appeared outwith pupil experiences.' (Falkirk)

'I found the writing assessment to be appropriate in the most part for First Level; however, some questions e.g. use ch consonant blend with ao vowel digraph to be very specific and a skill that not all children would have developed in their spelling skills. The numeracy assessment was almost perfectly aligned with the benchmarks I believe.' (South Ayrshire)

'Somewhat.' (South Lanarkshire)

The vast majority of comments reflected the view that the SNSAs, particularly for Primary 1, are not well aligned to CfE either in terms of rationale or level of expectation.

A large number of comments focused on the dissonance between what is supposed to be a play-based focus to Early Level learning and the design and children's experience of SNSAs.

Many comments highlighted the problematic nature of the Literacy assessments for P1, which were said to contain questions set at an unreasonably high level of difficulty and which contained references that were unfamiliar to the Scottish context and to the experiences of the average five year old.

Though fewer in number, there were negative comments, also, about the Numeracy assessments – too much text to read, making the questions inaccessible to children with less developed literacy skills, and the inclusion of content that is not covered in the Early Level curriculum.

P4 assessments were cited by some respondents as not being reflective of the First Level benchmarks.

A relatively common comment was that the SNSAs, while perhaps reflecting aspects of the Benchmarks, did not reflect the Four Capacities of CfE.

A number of comments also called into question the strength of the adaptive element of the assessments, suggesting that it was not responsive enough when children were struggling with the answers to certain questions.

Another criticism levelled at SNSAs in the comments was that children found them boring, often clicking on random answers to get the test over with. (This sometimes led to skewed results according to some of the comments.)

Respondent comments reflected a degree of dissatisfaction with the very limited Writing assessments, these focusing only on spelling, punctuation and grammar, referred to as 'the tools of writing' by the test designers and Scottish Government.

Overall, survey respondents were unconvinced that SNSAs are a mode of assessment well aligned to the principles and practice of CfE, particularly with regards to First Level.

'The Literacy was ludicrous. I have been teaching for 15 years and never seen such cruel nonsense in all of my life!!! The amount of text to read and size of print was far too demanding, end of Primary 2/start of Primary 3 - NOT P1! Absolutely way beyond benchmarks. So, demoralising for teachers and pupils. My struggling learners with EAL performed much better than my able readers by guessing and so the actual results ended up being a shambles and not a true reflection.' (Aberdeen)

'The P1 Literacy SNSA does not support the Es and Os as the complexity of the texts they are being asked to read stops them from being able to show the literacy skills they have gained over the year - they could not show they have been Successful Learners I do not feel the P1 Literacy SNSA was appropriate at all - I had children feeling completely demoralised by the level of what they were being asked to do - not exactly supporting them becoming Confident Individuals.' (Dumfries and Galloway)

'There is no way these assessments have been matched up to the early level benchmarks! It's as if the person who devised these has not even read the early level benchmarks!! These assessments are awful, in my opinion, they are verging on being cruel and harmful to our young learners. With such long passages to read it was dreadful hearing my children saying, "I can't read that". At such a young age they were experiencing failure when in fact they should be feeling "successful & confident" in their learning & skills!!!' (Dundee)

'Some questions appeared to be beyond the benchmarks for early level. Children in P1 have been experiencing a play-based learning approach as recommended by SAC..... the test did not marry with this.' (East Ayrshire)

'Noticeably in the numeracy p1 assessment it did not line up with the benchmarks. Early level states pupils should be able to understand numbers to 30 but this has numbers to 100 in it. For literacy, the reading passages were immensely difficult, only a handful of pupils in my class could read it. It demoralised those that couldn't read or understand it - particularly the Hummingbird section. In the end, the pupil who could not read moved on to the questions which they guessed.' (East Ayrshire)

'In relation to the new benchmarks the questions were not presented in a way the children would be used to or confident in negotiating. For example: a map to navigate position and movement in a 2d format requires a level of abstract thinking beyond the capabilities of most 5-year olds. And a passage on hummingbirds? I'm confident not one of my children have any prior knowledge or personal experience around this subject. You must involve p1 teachers and consider in what way the children are learning in schools around Scotland. These tests do not reflect the ethos of playful pedagogy or indeed the content of the benchmarks.' (East Renfrewshire)

'P4 & 7 writing test assesses tools for writing; punctuation, grammar and spelling, not writing.' (Edinburgh)

USER-FRIENDLINESS

The penultimate survey question asked members about the appropriateness of the level of digital and keyboard skills required, and the accessibility of language, font, layout, as well as of the assessment tasks themselves. This question generated 32 pages of negative comments, 9 of positive feedback.

Positive feedback suggested that while text density and screen size were an issue, P7 had few problems with accessibility, other than where children had additional support needs. P4 children seemed to cope reasonably well with the digital format of the assessments though a few comments did indicate that there were challenges for some children in this age group. Many of the comments that were otherwise 'positive' highlighted the difficulties of accessibility for P1 pupils. Again, the availability of iPads seemed to be a factor where teachers were judging the SNSAs to be user-friendly for the children sitting them.

Issues with layout requiring excessive scrolling were cited in the body of negative comments provided by respondents. Often the section of text relevant for a question did not fit on the screen, requiring children to scroll back and forwards to access the relevant parts. This was said to be frustrating for all children and particularly challenging for Primary 1 pupils many of whom didn't have the requisite digital and keyboard skills to manage.

Other barriers cited were the number of instructions, which often, children found difficult to retain. The inability to go back to an answer once a user has clicked away from a page, even in error, was referenced numerously. Teachers complained that the language used in the P1 assessments was not age and stage appropriate at times while many others highlighted the difficulties presented, particularly to Primary 1 pupils, by too small font.

'P1 assessments required to be sat with one to one support to deal with the level of digital and keyboard skill required too much scrolling down required. Assessments at all levels take too long to complete, disheartened/switched off many of the children. Not particularly engaging activities.' (Edinburgh)

'If school is lucky enough to have headphones or a quiet space for assessments, then perhaps audio would have been helpful. iPads worked better than PC. The level of digital skills required was acceptable for a P1 child, although they required help to make the font bigger for reading at times. The layouts of the comprehension tasks in the Literacy SNSA made the question too long and the majority of children lost focus. The content of the assessment tasks was, in general, extremely difficult. This made the children lose interest, become anxious and refuse to answer any more questions. No child had an assessment shorter than 32 questions. One child sat for 37 questions. There was also a practice assessment which lasted 10-12 questions. The length of the assessment was completely inappropriate for such young learners.' (Glasgow)

'The children (Primary 1) used iPads which made them much more accessible, the only problem was that some of them kept pressing the 'next' button twice which skipped questions. I felt that the literacy was very difficult for P1 and I have some excellent readers! It took them a long time to complete the task, although it was

good that they could go back to it and not have to complete it in one sitting. The maths was set at a much more appropriate level.' (Perth and Kinross)

USEFULNESS OF SNSA DATA

Finally, respondents were asked to comment on the extent to which data provided in SNSA learner reports has been useful to you in providing reliable information on progress, in identifying next steps in learning and informing professional judgement on the achievement of CfE levels. Comments highlighting concerns amounted to 33 pages while pages of positive feedback totalled 7.

Of the very few positive comments about the helpfulness of SNSA data in providing useful information about children's progress, one expressed appreciation of the ability to compare the progress of children in the school with national standards. A few respondents said that they found the data useful in identifying gaps in children's learning and determining next steps.

Some of the positive comments stated the value of the SNSAs in teacher shaping teacher professional judgement of pupil progress. It was clear from several of such comments that some teachers are viewing the SNSA results as a means of 'testing' or 'checking' their own professional judgement. Clearly there has been some failure on the part of Scottish Government to convey the clear message that SNSA results are intended to 'inform', not 'confirm' teacher professional judgement of children's progress.

Again, the heaviest majority of comments in response to this question were critical of the value of SNSA data. The reasons cited were largely the unreliability of the assessment data when compared with the bigger picture of assessment, and that the results provided little to nothing new for teachers in terms of their understanding of children's progress and next steps in learning. Other issues were that there was too much information for teachers to absorb or that teachers were unable to make sense of the granular detail of the results having had no access to the assessments themselves or simply lacking the understanding of the language used.

'Absolutely useless. My lower ability children outperformed my able pupils by guessing!' (Aberdeen)

'The results we obtained in P4 did not match the in-house assessments we had completed throughout the year. Some were seriously flawed...children who couldn't read were assessed as being high achieving and those whose reading age was above average came out as low. Similar issues with children who needed scribe for writing, came out higher than those again working at second level. If the results were more consistent with what we had in-house, the post assessment statements would be useful for planning and assessment.' (Aberdeen)

'I understand they want evidence; however the SNSA tests are extensive and do not assess our curriculum. Why stress the children? My professional judgement is more reliable and helpful. This is just a paper exercise and pointless. Children are

not robots and perform differently on a daily basis. It's an unfamiliar situation and this results in the children being distracted. Not helpful at all!' (Angus)

'I have been bombarded with data to such an extent this last year. It did highlight some pupils requiring support but I was already aware of these from my own assessments. I feel this data is not really for teachers.' (Clackmannanshire)

'I have been given a spreadsheet telling me which pupils were graded High or Medium, and which questions were answered correctly or incorrectly by each pupil. However, not knowing what the questions were means this information is of no real use. This morning I spent 2 hours opening cells on the spreadsheet to see word descriptions of each question, but some of these descriptions are so ambiguous that the exact nature/level of the question is impossible to determine. Still need to try to analyse these as best I can.' (Dumfries and Galloway)

'Interesting and useful as handover information and in informing next steps of learning. Has proved to be a good confirmation of teacher judgement.' (East Lothian)

'I feel it was a pointless task. Teachers could have placed pupils easily without the need for this style of inappropriate testing. I sat watching pupils who couldn't read the text, guess and answer correctly. Therefore, the computer records it as right, rendering the whole process as pointless. Give teachers the professionalism they deserve and allow them to assess pupils or help to create an appropriate test.' (East Dunbartonshire)

'Promoted staff have not released the data to class teachers so a) can't use data to support reports b) pupils got no feedback therefore exercise pointless. I did not find the P1 data useful in providing summative or formative information. It was not rigorous enough for the former nor diagnostic enough for the latter.' (Fife)

'So much time has been set aside for the administration of the assessments that we have been unable to take the time to scrutinise the data.' (Glasgow)

Continuance of other standardised assessment

Although this survey did not directly ask members about the continuation of other forms of standardised assessment, responses suggest that in 8 local authorities, it continues, contrary to Scottish Government advice. Comments referenced the continuation of other standardised assessments – PIPs, INCAs, NGRTs, GL, CEM and MALT – in 8 local authorities (Aberdeenshire, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Glasgow, Inverclyde, Moray, North Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire) though it is unclear in most cases as to whether the practice is authority-wide or establishment-based.

Conclusions

On all five questions posed, the majority of respondents provided comments that were critical of SNSAs. Of the 460 respondents, most raised issues around the timing and practical delivery of SNSAs, their alignment to CfE and user-friendliness, and with the usefulness of SNSA data.

In more than two thirds of local authorities, it would appear from the survey evidence that teachers were not permitted to exercise professional judgement in determining the timing of the assessments, this having been instructed by the local authority in most cases, and possibly by SMTs in a few cases. This raises questions about assessment policy and the extent to which teachers as professionals can make decisions about which assessments to use, with which children and when, in the interests of learning and teaching.

Teachers for the most part, judged the duration of the assessments to be onerous and inappropriate for P1 learners in particular, which has implications at the very least in terms of any adjustments that will be made to the assessment design.

Many teachers were critical, also, of the cumulative drain on time that administering the SNSAs created, detracting time and focus from quality learning and teaching activities, which is of particular concern in light of an already heavily cluttered BGE curriculum.

In terms of practical delivery, the balance of opinion rests on the view that the first year of SNSA delivery has been expensive in terms of human resource and time, with some schools having purchased additional cover to enable smoother delivery but most having relied on support assistants, management time and teachers' non-class contact time. This is a contrary picture to that painted by the DFM of SNSAs being carried out with ease in classroom settings as part of normal learning activities by a class teacher with no spike in workload.

Also in relation to practical delivery, teachers expressed concern at the withdrawal of support from students who require additional support or who are involved in PEF interventions, while the assessments were underway. It is bitterly ironic that the interventions which could have a positive impact on the outcomes of poorer children are halted and their impact weakened for the duration of the period in which assessments, the kind of which are evidenced to disadvantage poorer children, are administered to them.

The variable availability of appropriate ICT equipment results in very different experiences of SNSA delivery from one school to another. To cope with the demands of the process well, schools need to be well endowed with iPads. Most are not.

Survey respondents were largely sceptical at best of the alignment of the SNSA assessment tool with CfE principles and practice. Misalignment of CfE rationale and SNSAs was judged to be a particular problem for Early Level P1 assessments where a clash of educational cultures was said to be evident – a play-based approach to learning versus formal digital screen-based assessment. Survey responses on the question of alignment also point to the need for refinement of the SNSA questions to reflect the CfE Benchmarks more accurately.

Refinement is needed, also, the survey data would suggest, in terms of the general user-friendliness of the assessments in the interests of accessibility and pupil engagement with them, with task type, language, layout, font size, etc., all requiring some attention.

Finally, the majority of teachers who responded to the survey did not find the data useful, it either being difficult to make sense of, of too great volume or of little to no additional worth in terms of providing information about children's learning.

In addition to generating useful information relevant to the main questions asked, the survey produced some useful data on dual testing within some local authority areas, indicating that Scottish Government guidelines have not been followed in some areas and in some establishments. In these cases, children continue to be over-exposed to testing, valuable teaching time is reduced and teacher workload increased.