

Making Good Progress

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 2 April
2007

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for

education and skills

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THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Education and Skills e-consultation website (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations>).

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Name Anne Pinney
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If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact Parag Vaghjani on:

Telephone: 020 7925 5380

e-mail: Parag.VAGHJIANI@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 311

e-mail: consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Please put an 'x' in the box that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Support Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> School Governor
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Education Official	X Other

Barnardo's work on education

As one of the UK's leading children's charities, Barnardo's work directly with over 110,000 vulnerable children, young people and their families. We run 383 projects, two-thirds of which include some form of educational provision. Diverse though they are, our projects have a common aim – to help those we work with to transform their lives and fulfil their potential. We use the knowledge gained from our provision to campaign for improvements in policy, evidence-based practice and to champion the rights of every child.

Barnardo's is a UK charity and we draw on the experience of our work in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Our education services include:

- support for inclusion – for looked after children, children with special needs and disabilities;
- alternative education - for those who have been excluded or cannot cope with the school environment, for example, children who have been severely bullied;
- day and residential schools - for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- support for transition - including pre-school to primary and primary to secondary;
- 'wrap-around' services – such as extended schools.

Key points in response to the consultation

Barnardo's broadly welcomes this consultation, in particular:

- the emphasis placed on measuring and valuing the progress made by low-attaining pupils;
- the scope this offers for presenting a more balanced picture of school performance than crude league tables;
- the proposals for improving information for parents and their involvement; and
- the proposals for targeted catch-up tuition.

However, we believe the proposals would be strengthened by:

- **no longer publishing league tables of absolute attainment**, given research evidence about the perverse incentives they create for schools to exclude 'problem' pupils or not to admit them in the first place.¹ Barnardo's works with many such children, trying to ensure that exclusion does not mark the end of their education - and a drift towards long-term social exclusion and under-achievement. We therefore urge you to explore alternative approaches to measuring school standards, for example, testing a representative sample of 3% of pupils every year, as was recently suggested by the QCA Chief Executive.²
- exploring **how to recognise schools' work with pupils who progress at a slower rate than others**, due to learning difficulties or the complexity of their lives outside school. The proposed progress measure is a step in the right direction, but will still not present a fair picture of schools' efforts in supporting these young people to achieve;
- exploring **targeted responses of a broader nature** than tuition in English and Maths, for children and young people who fall behind. While the proposed catch-up tuition is welcome, other responses – such as counselling, mentoring, workplace experience or activities to boost confidence and to improve motivation – may do more to address their underlying difficulties and thereby improve achievement. The Every Child Matters context – and in particular, Extended Schools – offers the scope for more holistic responses to overcome the barriers to learning and achievement faced by some young people.

Further information

We hope that these comments are of use. We would be delighted to provide further information on any of our projects or to collaborate in exploring the views of the young people we work with, for example, around the barriers to learning they have experienced and how these might be overcome.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss the issues raised here, please contact Anne Pinney – email anne.pinney@barnardos.org.uk or tel. 0208 498 7725.

¹ For example, Audit Commission, *SEN: A mainstream issue*, 2002.

² Reported at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/sats/story/0,,2039175,00.html>

Section 1 - Summary

1 "The question raised in this document is what more we can be doing through the system of educational assessment, challenge and support to focus more on progress" Do you think we could and should be doing more?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

We would welcome more of a focus on the progress made by individual pupils, especially those starting at lower levels of attainment. This would provide a more balanced picture – recognising schools' efforts with the many children who, for a wide variety of reasons, do not achieve national thresholds levels such as 5 a-c grades at GCSE.

2 "The document asks whether - without compromising the framework of tests, targets and performance tables which have helped drive up standards so sharply over the past decade - we can adapt the system to support a focus on **progress as well as absolute standards.**" Do you agree?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

There is mounting research evidence about the 'perverse incentives' league tables create. This can undermine schools' commitment to admitting and persevering in their work with important groups of children – including looked after children and children with special educational needs, particularly behavioural difficulties.

Progress measures will provide a fairer picture of school performance, but is likely that absolute attainment will continue to be the focus of media coverage and public perception, so these 'perverse incentives' are likely to persist. We must be ambitious for all children, value their progress and ensure that their education equips them with the knowledge and skills that they will need to thrive in the workplace and society.

We therefore urge you to give serious consideration to alternative approaches to assessing school standards, including the option of testing a representative sample of 3% of pupils every year. The QCA Chief Executive, Dr Ken Boston, has suggested that this would yield 'finer grain' results – potentially providing a more valid picture of school performance and lessening the administrative burden of testing all pupils.

We also urge you to learn from the experience of Scotland – which has replaced national tests with an annual Survey of Achievement; and Wales – which abolished national league tables in 2001, in favour of strengthened value-added measures and improved information for parents.

Section 2 - What the Data Tells Us

3 "Despite everyone's best efforts, there are still many children who fall behind their potential." Do you agree?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Yes. Barnardos works with many such children - including looked after children, children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, disabled children, children who have been bullied, teenage mothers, young carers, excluded children and those at risk of exclusion.

A key group of concern are Looked After Children, whose progress in school may be held back by a difficult home environment and then all too often, frequent moves in placement. Barnardos runs 22 projects across the UK supporting young people who have been in care. We published a short report last year, presenting their experiences of school and what they believe could have helped them to achieve more. This is available on-line at:

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/failed_by_the_system_report.pdf.

Section 3 - Assessment for learning, and testing for progress

4 "What is needed is a systematic approach which builds on effective assessment for learning practice and helps pupils and teachers to identify next steps in learning." Do you agree that this would be desirable?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

5 "We are interested to explore the impact of enabling teachers to enter a pupil for an externally-marked test as soon as they are confident (through their own systematic assessments) that the pupil has progressed to the next [National Curriculum] level." Do you agree?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

6 "We are considering the potential benefits of a series of "single-level" tests which, although taken more frequently, are in total no more burdensome than the current end-of-key stage "multi-level tests". The model could be a powerful driver for progression, raising expectations for all pupils, motivating them, bringing a sharp focus on 'next steps' and perhaps especially benefiting those who start the key stage with lower attainment than their peers, or are currently making too little progress. Ultimately, these tests might replace the end of key stage arrangements." Do you broadly agree or disagree with this proposal?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Section 4 - Personalised teaching and learning to support progression

7 If you wish please comment on the subsections entitled "The 2020 Vision Report" and "Teacher strategies: the "personalised classroom".

Comments:

8 If you wish please comment on the subsections entitled "Beyond the classroom - personalised support for all-round development" and "Next steps".

Comments:

Section 5 - Targets at school and national level

9 Do you agree with the statement that: "There is a strong case for establishing a measure of improvement in progression rates for pupils during the National Curriculum years"?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

We agree with these proposals, subject to lessons from the pilot. In particular, care must be taken to avoid the creation of new 'perverse incentives' with regard to children who are unlikely to meet this target.

Some children progress at a slower rate than others, due to learning difficulties and other special needs, or due to the complexity of their lives outside school. We urge you to use the pilots to explore how can progress measures can fairly reflect and incentivise schools' work with these children.

10 Do you agree with the proposal to formulate a new measure and target for pupil progress in the following terms: "The percentage of children achieving a basic level of progress expressed in terms of two National Curriculum levels (or equivalent)"?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments: As for question 9 -

We agree with these proposals, subject to lessons from the pilot. In particular, care must be taken to avoid the creation of new 'perverse incentives' with regard to children who are unlikely to meet this target.

Some children progress at a slower rate than others, due to learning difficulties and other special needs, or due to the complexity of their lives outside school. We urge you to use the pilots to explore how can progress measures can fairly reflect and incentivise schools' work with these children.

11 Do you agree with the proposed framing of measures and targets for English and mathematics at KS2, KS3 and KS4 as set out on page 19?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Yes, a focus on the basics is helpful, as these underpin other areas of learning and are essential if young people are to thrive in the workplace and beyond.

Section 6 - Piloting the new approaches

12 Do you agree in principle with the proposal to pilot these ideas with a limited number of Key Stages 2 and 3 schools in selected Local Authorities?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

13 If you wish, please comment on anything arising from the first two subsections namely 'How would the pilot work?' and 'Support costs and the progression premium'

Please note that both primary and secondary schools will be invited to participate in the pilot. The paragraph on page 21 headed 'Role of the local authority' should read "Each selected LA will invite a number of its primary **and secondary** schools to participate in the pilot."

Comments:

14 If you wish, please comment on anything arising from the subsection 'Individual tutoring'.

Comments:

While we welcome idea of 'catch-up' sessions for pupils falling behind their peers, this proposal is too narrowly framed. More holistic responses should be considered, in addition to tutoring in the 3Rs. For example, emotional support, mentoring or workplace experience might do more do address the underlying difficulties, increase motivation and thereby improve academic performance.

The analysis presented in the consultation paper is presented in the context of the wider Every Child Matters agenda, including extended schools. This is one aspect of the pilot which should explore the potential value of broader responses to children and young people's needs.

15 If you wish, please comment on anything arising from the last two subsections entitled 'Tests for progress' and 'Progress Targets and the Progression Premium'.

Comments:

16 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (E.g. the number and type of questions, was it easy to find, understand and complete? etc.)

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply X

Here at the Department for Education and Skills we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

XYes No

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 2 April 2007

Send by post to:
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Area 1A

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Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 6GJ

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