

APPG for Schools Learning and Assessment – Meeting Note

Does statutory assessment serve the needs of primary education?

Date – 9 May 2023

Time – 2.15pm

Parliamentarians in attendance –

- Emma Hardy MP
- Flick Drummond MP
- Lord Watson of Invergowrie
- Baroness Blower

Agenda –

Time	Details
2.15 – 2.20	Welcome to meeting (co-chair Emma Hardy MP)
2.20 – 2.25	Opening remarks from Prof Alice Bradbury
2.25 – 2.30	Opening remarks from Helen Smith McGuire
2.30 – 2.35	Opening remarks from Matt Morden
2.35 – 3.45	Q&A
3.45	Close of meeting

Summary –

Alice Bradbury presented on the findings of ICAPE. She pointed to accountability being one of the main drivers of not helping children to learn. Alice made clear that learning for children in primary encompassed things far wider than what we currently assess. The ICAPE report advocated for separating out how we assess children for their learning to how we assess the standards of schools, whereas these are currently linked together. The report proposed that we should phase out SATs and replace these with a formative assessment for children.

Helen provided the views of parents on the current assessment system, saying that many parents were concerned with the impact that assessment and the stress associated with these have on entire families. Helen explained that parents raised concerns when changes were implemented in 2016, and they feel incredibly let down by the government as their campaigning led to the Education Select Committee recommending that SATs should be scrapped, yet there had been no change to these.

Matt Morden spoke about the immense pressures that assessments place on teachers, as well as on students. Matt claimed that children this young should not be experiencing this level of stress and that it does not stop once assessments are finished, but has lasting impacts much longer after the end of testing. He stated that tests currently serve no clear purpose for learning, as teachers already know what track their student is on without the need for SATs.

Following the opening presentations there were questions asked on parental campaigns around SATs, how we could demonstrate high standards without the need for assessment, international comparisons on primary assessment and the use of sampling.