

Appendix 1: National Testing in the Primary School and S1-2

In November 1987, the Scottish Education Department published a consultation paper entitled *Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: A Policy for the 90s*, which identified the need for:

"clear guidance on what pupils should be learning in primary schools and in the first two years of secondary schools; improved assessment of pupils' progress; better information for parents about the curriculum and about their children's performance."

Following this consultation, the Department established a Committee on Assessment 5-14, which was given the remit of identifying what sort of assessment was required for pupils aged 5-14 and suggesting how this could be carried out in the context of learning and teaching. In September 1990, that Committee issued its preliminary findings in another consultation paper.

The SED also set up Review and Development Groups (RDGs) under the auspices of the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum to prepare national guidelines for putting *Curriculum and Assessment for the 90s* into practice. These RDGs were composed entirely of people who were actively involved in the education of children in the age range 5-14. Though their work also embraced S1 and S2, the papers which they produced were perceived generally as guidelines for the primary school. In March 1990, the RDG on English Language issued Working Paper No.2 for consultation; and, in May 1990, the RDG on Mathematics issued Working Paper No.3, also for consultation.

At this stage, all the emphasis was on the development of school policies and programmes. There was no public mention of National Testing, although the idea was clearly in the minds of Ministers. Indeed, the RDGs were still preparing the Working Papers when, towards the end of 1989, the first test item writers were seconded to develop test material — a rather inauspicious start to such a major programme, for they were in fact being asked to produce tests to assess a curriculum which had not yet been defined, and the tests had to be re-written when the Guidelines were changed.

There was no organisation in Scotland equipped to produce national tests suitable for the primary school. The existing remit of the Scottish Examination Board limited its activities to the secondary school, but under the Self-Governing Schools etc (Scotland) Act 1989 the Board was given the new function of preparing, distributing and monitoring tests which would assess the work of pupils in primary schools.

The initial reaction of the Board was hostile to National Testing of this nature, and it would have liked to refuse to undertake the new remit. However, when it was pointed out that the SEB could not legally refuse an instruction from the Secretary of State, the Board insisted that not a single penny of normal Board money should be used for this purpose and, in addition, a management fee should be charged. The Scottish Office agreed, and around £¼ million was made available in 1990. The Board's representatives also made it clear that, at all stages in the developments, the Board's task was to produce good-quality tests and to make them as user-friendly as possible. It would be responsible only for the administration of the National Tests, not for the policy on

testing, which rested with the SOED Committee on Testing, chaired by the Chief Inspector responsible for developments within the 5-14 age range (**Note 37**).

Involvement of the education authorities also got off to a bad start. When Directors of Education were called to New St Andrew's House to have National Testing explained to them, they were at first told that the SED would bear all the costs. However, it became clear during question time that any costs incurred in the marking of the tests would have to be borne by the local authorities. It was assumed that primary teachers would carry out the marking as part of their job. This did not go down well, especially since teachers in secondary schools were already receiving payment for recording internal assessments for SCE examinations.

The Primary Assessment Unit (PAU) was officially established in February 1990, using rented accommodation in Newbattle Abbey College. Even before this, however, to speed up the process, 140 item writers (mainly classroom teachers) had been seconded for four weeks during the latter part of 1989 and the early part of 1990 to prepare test units in Language and Mathematics suitable for pupils in P4 and P7. The first task of the PAU was to vet and revise these units and to prepare them, along with illustrations, for piloting in 110 selected primary schools in May and June 1990.

There was considerable resistance to the introduction of these tests from education authorities; and Strathclyde, Central and Tayside Regions went so far as to instruct headteachers not to take part in the pilot. The tests were opposed also by parents' organisations and by the teaching profession, particularly the EIS which asked its members to boycott them. The tests were regarded as an unwanted intrusion in the teaching process, and some even feared that they might be the precursors of a return to "*the 11+*", as selection for secondary education had been popularly called in the past.

In the end, fewer than half of the 110 pilot schools took part but, despite this opposition, there were sufficient returns to permit valid item analysis. Criticisms from the pilot schools centred, by and large, on difficulties of administration rather than on the tests themselves which most pupils and teachers had found interesting. Criticisms included the amount of time the tests took up, setting different levels within the same class, avoiding boredom when pupils finished the tests at different speeds, the problem of keeping the rest of the pupils gainfully employed particularly in composite classes and in open-plan schools, and the fact that the results merely told the teacher what she already knew. Teachers would have preferred diagnostic tests to help them analyse the difficulties faced by individual pupils; and, even if it so happened that some such information was gleaned from the tests, it was rendered useless by the fact that the testing took place at the end of the school session when there was no time to take remedial action with the pupils.

In the meantime, the Committee on Assessment chaired by Professor Bart McGettrick had been preparing guidelines to cover the whole field of assessment in the primary school and the first two years of the secondary school. Their report *Working Paper No. 4: Assessment 5-14* was issued for consultation in September 1990.

In October 1990, the Committee on Testing chaired by HMCI Douglas Osler issued a report which set out the framework for the national trialling of tests which was to take place in 1991. The report made it clear that the National Tests were to be seen as part of the overall 5-14 assessment strategy. It had been decided that each pupil in P4 and P7 would take one test in language (involving reading and writing) and one in mathematics; and each test would consist of four units which were geared to work which had already been undertaken in the classroom.

Each language unit would take 20-25 minutes to complete, each mathematics unit 15-20 minutes. Each test would carry a threshold score, i.e. the lowest number of marks which a pupil could score in order to be judged to have attained a particular level. The teachers themselves would decide the test level most appropriate for each child, but it was expected that most pupils in P4 would achieve Level B, and most in P7 would be successful at Level D (**Note 38**). Where there was real doubt over which level of test was appropriate for an individual child, it would be permissible for him/her to sit tests at two levels, taking the lower level first.

Since the tests would be marked by the class teacher, they would become an integral part of the teacher's judgement of each child's progress, and the results could be used to diagnose areas of weakness in the pupil's learning. Information on how each individual child had performed in the tests would be confined to the Pupil Progress Report and would be divulged only to that child and his/her parents. The tests were not intended to cover all the targets and learning outcomes in language and mathematics; rather they would provide indicators of areas of the work which required more detailed investigation, particularly where the teacher's judgement differed from the results of the tests. Reporting to parents would not be restricted to these tests. Teachers would continue to use their professional judgement and the evidence available to them from their own continuous assessment over the whole session to report on pupils' learning and attainment across the whole curriculum, including the skills of Listening and Talking which were the two other language outcomes in the language curriculum.

Following the pilot, the units were revised in the light of comments received and, in mid-October 1990, a catalogue containing 128 units was issued to all primary schools, together with exemplar units to illustrate the tests at Level C. Each unit in the catalogue carried a description of its level, topic/context and content to help schools choose for individual pupils those tests which best suited their attainment and the work they had already covered in class. Schools were expected to make their own selection of units and to submit their orders for test papers by mid-December 1990. The tests would be delivered to the schools in February 1991, and the first round of testing would be held in a six-week period in March/April 1991, instead of over the previously proposed two-week period in May, which had been heavily criticised by the pilot schools. Although the 1991 tests were to be a "*practice*" round and the results were not to be published, a summary of each school's results was to be given to its School Board.

At the beginning of November 1990, the Government issued The Testing in Primary Schools (Scotland) Regulations 1990 under Section 69 of the 1989 Self-Governing Schools etc (Scotland) Act. These required education authorities, though not independent schools, to participate in the 1991 National Testing Programme.

In mid-December 1990, the Assessment of Achievement Programme published its report on the English performance of pupils who were in P4, P7 and S2 in 1989. It stated that performance at all three levels was satisfactory in most areas and, where comparisons could be made with the previous survey in 1984, standards had been maintained and sometimes improved. Although the 1984 survey was not a perfect yardstick against which to measure the 1989 survey, the comparison did provide evidence that Scottish teachers still continued the tradition of emphasising the 3Rs, contrary to the claims of some politicians that these were being neglected and standards were falling. The survey revealed one area of concern, however, namely, the inability of many pupils to express themselves in writing — a conclusion which tied in with the early findings of the National Tests. At the same time, HMI reports on individual schools were indicating a wide variation in the amount of time that pupils spent on written expression and on re-drafting their work to correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. The Department was quick to point out that the AAP report was a *national* snapshot, whereas the aim of the tests was to inform parents and teachers about the performance of *individual* children.

Around 1,700 teachers refused to administer the trial tests in 1991, mostly members of the EIS, which challenged the principle of National Testing and objected to the considerable loss of teaching time which the procedures would involve. Parents generally supported the teachers, sometimes by keeping their children off school on the test days. As a result of the boycott, only some 37,000 children took the tests out of the 120,000 children who should have taken them. Some authorities took action against the teachers by deducting part of their salaries; others issued warnings to them and to their headteachers. PAU staff were heavily involved in numerous public meetings which the Scottish Office arranged to win public support by explaining the nature of the tests and what they were designed to achieve.

One of the controversial issues concerned the right of parents to withdraw their children from testing. On 25 January 1991, the Scottish Education Minister, Michael Forsyth, stated that he would take no action against parents who withdrew their children. It was up to education authorities and the courts to decide how the law should be interpreted. Authorities received conflicting advice from legal experts. When Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council consulted a Queen's Counsel, he gave it as his opinion that parents did not have the right to withdraw their children from testing since it was now part of the school curriculum. Other QCs gave Strathclyde and Lothian Regions the contrary opinion that, since no other school examinations were compulsory, there was no reason why National Tests should be. These two Regions and Tayside announced in January 1991 that they would take no action against parents who refused to allow their children to sit the tests. In the end, only the Western Isles Authority and Borders Regional Council insisted that all children had to be tested in 1991.

While the 1991 tests were proceeding, the SOED commissioned a team of eleven retired HMIs, advisers and headteachers to carry out a study of the operation of the test procedures and of the marking of the tests in a sample of 106 schools (including some special schools and ten independent schools) in every Region except Shetland.

The results of this study, published by the SOED in July 1991, indicated that there had been minor teething problems but no fundamental flaws in the 1991 round of tests. Children had generally enjoyed sitting the tests and had shown little sign of stress, although they had

experienced some difficulty in completing the Writing tests (i.e. those dealing with written expression) in the time available. The fact that they had to "write against the clock" distorted their normal levels of attainment. The marking of the Mathematics and Reading tests had been straightforward, each child's work taking only two or three minutes to correct; but the Mathematics units contained insufficient computation and were not well matched to the series of mathematics textbooks which most schools used (**Note 39**). On the other hand, teachers had found the Writing tests time-consuming and difficult to mark. This was due mainly to the complexity of the criteria which had to be applied in marking the tests and to the fact that teachers had had insufficient time to assimilate these criteria and little or no training in their application. The report recommended that the PAU should take the criticisms on board for the 1992 round of testing. In particular, the administration arrangements and the style and marking instructions for the Writing tests should be simplified. The limited period in which the tests had to be taken by the pupils had created considerable organisational problems, and it was clear that schools would have to be given more discretion regarding the timing of the tests, if testing was to be properly integrated into the normal work of the school. Preparation of concrete materials for the tests at Levels A and B had been particularly time-consuming for class teachers, and it was recommended that the PAU should provide resource packs. The teachers had been impressed by the innovative nature of some of the tests and by their quality. Most of them felt that the tests had told them nothing that they did not already know about their pupils, but they thought the information might be useful when the new-style national report card was introduced. They also agreed that they might find the tests more useful once they had gained more experience of them. By and large, teachers appeared to have played safe by entering pupils at Levels where they were bound to succeed.

In July 1991, the Government amended the Primary Testing Regulations to deal with the issues raised in the above report and to meet some other objections from opponents of National Testing. In August 1991, *A Framework for National Testing* (Working Paper No. 8) introduced revised arrangements for Session 1991-92. The tests would still be administered to pupils in P4 and P7, but they could be set at any time during the session, at the discretion of the teacher, instead of being confined to the months of March and April. The final date for ordering test materials was moved to the end of March in any school session. Summaries of results would be issued to School Boards only if that could be done without an individual pupil's results being revealed, as might happen in very small schools. Units were to be made available in Gaelic for both P4 and P7 in Gaelic-medium schools, though P7 pupils in those schools would also have to take the same tests in the English medium. The Secretary of State, Ian Lang, also promised to look at a suggestion from COSLA and others that the stock of tests should be expanded so that teachers could use them at all stages of the primary school and in S1-2 to confirm the accuracy of their own assessments of children's attainments. So that schools could order test materials at times which fitted in with their curricular arrangements, the SEB agreed to offer schools three deadlines for placing orders in Session 1991-92.

Scottish Office funding of the PAU, which had amounted to £240,995 in 1990, rose to £855,990 in 1991. A large proportion of the costs was for printing which had not been a significant item in the 1990 budget.

The final national guidelines on *English Language 5-14*, *Mathematics 5-14* and *Assessment 5-14* were published in June, August and October 1991 respectively. The first two documents laid out in great detail, not schemes of work, but broad outlines of how schools might plan the curriculum to ensure that there was balanced coverage of important knowledge, skills and attitude-building throughout the nine years from age 5 to age 14. Advice was also given on assessment and on the recording and reporting of pupils' achievements. Five levels of attainment (A to E) were identified and defined. Most pupils would be expected to attain Level A in the course of P1- P3, Level B by the end of P4, Level C in the course of P4-P6, Level D by the end of P7, and Level E by S2, though abler pupils would reach these levels at earlier stages.

The *Guidelines on Assessment* gave teachers advice on how to make their teaching more effective by planning in an integrated way, not only what they were going to teach, but also how they would assess what the children had learned, or not learned, and how they could use the results to improve the learning process and keep the parents informed of their children's progress. The document was very helpful and informative. It laid out in a clear way how the staffs of individual schools should work together to develop whole school policies and practices that would make assessment an integral part of the learning process. Nothing so elaborate had been issued before by the Department. They were only guidelines which schools were "invited" to adopt. However, it was pointed out that, even though every school did adopt them enthusiastically, there was no guarantee that all schools would be working to the same standards. National Tests would therefore be set "as a means of confirming classroom based assessment and of conveying information on progress to parents." Although they were an integral part of the overall 5-14 assessment strategy, the tests were not intended to replace the on-going assessments (both formal and informal) which teachers already carried out. Rather, they were there to help teachers gauge the attainments of their pupils against nationally agreed standards.

Most teachers welcomed the *English Language* and *Mathematics* guidelines and set about implementing them with a will. However, although those guidelines were clearly intended to tie in with National Testing, resistance to the latter was as resolute as ever. Certainly, the fact that the tests could be set at any time would provide a more useful tool in assessing the progress of individual children; but Michael Forsyth's continuing desire to use the results as a measure of individual school performances against national standards now made little sense, since there could be no valid comparison between the results of tests which P4 and P7 pupils sat in the early part of the year and those taken late in the session. Only two Scottish authorities (Western Isles and Borders Region) required all pupils to sit the tests in 1992, and over the country as a whole only about a third of the eligible pupils were tested.

On 10 February 1992, Michael Forsyth launched *A Parents' Guide to the 5-14 Programme*. 700,000 copies were issued.

Following the Conservative victory at the 1992 General Election, Ian Lang became Secretary of State for Scotland and Lord James Douglas-Hamilton was appointed Minister in charge of Education. A more conciliatory stance on National Testing became noticeable, and a consultation paper entitled *5-14 Development Programme: Arrangements for National Testing*, which was issued on 28 May 1992, held out the prospect of the removal of Regulations on Testing. It proposed that individual pupils should be tested in Reading, Writing and

Mathematics, at any stage between P1 and S2, when the teacher's own assessment indicated that they were ready to move from one level to the next. In effect, this would ultimately involve schools in more testing. Each pupil could now be assessed at all five levels, A-E, instead of taking only the two tests that were deemed appropriate for that pupil in P4 and P7; and all teachers from P1 to S2, and not only those at P4 and P7, would share the task of administering and marking the tests. It was hoped that the proposed arrangements could be in place by January 1993 and could be used for assessment and reporting in Session 1992-93. The headteacher would be expected to present to the School Board a summary of the number of pupils tested at each level, but there was a promise that there would be no central collation of test results. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English was a second language would not now require to be tested until they had largely completed work at Level A.

Reactions to the proposals were mixed. Several education authorities, the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, the Association of (Primary) Head Teachers in Scotland, the Forum on Scottish Education and even the Chairman of the SCCC continued openly to criticise National Testing arrangements on the grounds that the information which the tests produced did not justify the expenditure of so much time and money. Since pupils would be entered for a test only when the teacher thought they were able to pass it, the tests, by definition, merely confirmed what the teacher already knew and did not really give parents a clear picture of how their children's progress compared with that of other children nationally. Diagnostic tests would have been more helpful to teachers. Admittedly, since the testing could be spread over a longer period, it was less likely to be seen as a big occasion which might cause anxiety among pupils and parents and might even stigmatise some pupils and schools through adverse press publicity. However, there would be twice as much disruption of classwork, and no account appeared to have been taken of the fact that the organisational and curricular arrangements of the secondary school were very different from those of the primary school. The timescale of the proposed changes was unrealistic, since the training of the additional teachers who would now become involved could not be carried out in the time available, even if additional financial resources were on offer, which they were not. The timing was particularly bad for secondary schools which were shortly to face the turmoil of implementing the consequences of the Howie Report. The critics therefore concluded that postponement was necessary until proper piloting had taken place.

The EIS leadership, on the other hand, softened its opposition since the new arrangements for primary testing were in line with what it had been recommending to the Department since 1989, namely, that teachers should have available a bank of criterion-referenced external test items against which they could check their own continuous assessment of pupils' progress. However, the EIS strongly opposed the extension of compulsory National Testing into S1-2, which the Government now proposed should commence in January 1993. Like the bodies mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Institute also said that secondary schools already had enough on their plate coping with the on-going changes at the upper end of the school. It maintained that the organisational and curricular arrangements of secondary schools were so different from those of the primary school that this proposal could not possibly be implemented in the short time available. The tests, after all, had been written with the primary school curriculum in mind. A postponement of at least a year was essential.

Parents' organisations were split over the new proposals. Some felt that they offered something that was educationally acceptable, while others continued to regard them as an unnecessary intrusion.

The SOED view, as articulated by Douglas Osler, the Chief Inspector in charge of National Testing, was that it was remarkable that there was no national monitoring of standards for the first nine years of a child's schooling. Why should national monitoring happen only in the upper years of the secondary school? The tests enhanced rather than infringed the professionalism of teachers: the tests were written by serving teachers working for the PAU; teachers selected the level of unit most appropriate for each of their pupils; and they assessed the children's answers and interpreted them for parents. Continuous assessment would continue to be the prime measure for assessing pupils, but the National Tests gave teachers an additional means of monitoring their own assessments. He maintained that it would be some years before secondary teachers would have to deal with the Howie proposals. Sorting out the issues of attainment in S1-S2 needed immediate attention.

There were important differences between National Testing in Scotland and what happened south of the border. In Scotland, tests were confined to Reading, Writing and Mathematics, schools chose the tests they wished to use and pupils were tested in informal groups when the teacher thought they were ready. Testing arrangements were to be implemented by consent of the local authorities, and there was no central publication of results. In England, on the other hand, uniform tests in English, Mathematics and Science were issued by the School Examinations and Assessment Council, and there was a legal requirement for the tests to be taken on fixed dates by all pupils aged 7, 11 and 14. The law also required the results to be published.

One thing was now clear. Since the tests were to be spread over the whole session and all year groups, it would be virtually impossible to organise effective boycotts by parents.

In the first week of November 1992, Lord James Douglas-Hamilton announced that he would withdraw the existing Regulations on primary testing if education authorities would co-operate in carrying them out. He refused to amend the January 1993 implementation date for the new arrangements in primary schools, but he did agree to postpone testing in S1 and S2 for a year, until January 1994. He confirmed that test results of individual pupils would be given only to their own parents and this would be done as part of a new record card which would offer a full profile of the child's progress across the whole 5-14 curriculum. Aggregate results of each school would, however, be given to its school board, except in very small schools where doing this might breach individual confidentiality. Lord James also announced that the Committee on Testing, which had been in abeyance since March 1991, was to be re-constituted and would oversee any teething difficulties in implementing the new arrangements. Local authorities would be represented on it. Also in November, the SOED published *National Guidelines on Reporting* to help teachers report the progress of primary school pupils to parents.

COSLA welcomed the Minister's announcement as vindicating its own stance on testing and agreed to co-operate. Testing was to be used voluntarily by teachers to confirm their own assessments, and parents would now receive more informative reports. Its fear that the tests

would be used to reintroduce selection for entry to secondary school had now been removed. The EIS, too, accepted the proposals as more educationally acceptable, but it was still concerned about the administrative workload which they entailed and the timescale for implementation, particularly in secondary schools, in spite of the year's postponement.

The Government continued its more conciliatory approach when, at the end of January 1993, it announced that there would be no statutory imposition of National Tests and the existing Regulations dealing with testing in P4 and P7 would be lifted. In February, it published a circular confirming the new arrangements and stating that authorities should not encourage parents to withdraw children from testing but should rather emphasise the value of the tests as part of the normal school curriculum. Only Tayside insisted that it had an obligation to tell parents of their statutory right to have their children educated according to their wishes, which included the right to withdraw children from the National Tests.

The first meeting of the new national Committee on Testing was held on 17 February 1993. It was chaired by Douglas Osler, now Depute Senior Chief Inspector, and included two other Inspectors, two civil servants from the SOED, three local authority representatives, one secondary headteacher, one primary school headteacher, the junior school head of an independent school, a College of Education Principal, a member of the SCCC, the Depute Chief Executive of the SEB, and the two Development Officers who worked in the Five to Fourteen Assessment Unit (FFAU).

There was a further boost to the acceptance of National Testing in June 1993 when the Annual General Meeting of the EIS voted against a total boycott of the tests by the very narrow majority of 193 votes to 188. The delegates also supported the line adopted by the EIS National Executive that the timing of the tests depended on the professional decision of teachers and that the tests would be held within the normal contractual working week, within an acceptable workload. Local agreements would be worked out with the authorities.

A Teachers' Guide to National Testing in Secondary Schools, which had been compiled by the Committee on Testing, was issued by the SEB in August 1993. However, despite the year's postponement, there was still considerable opposition to the extension of National Testing into the secondary school. Both the authorities and the teachers' unions insisted that piloting was essential. Some Regional education committees merely criticised the national development plan. Grampian Region went further and decided in August 1993 that it would not start the secondary tests in January 1994 but would set its own programme for phasing in their introduction. Grampian maintained that teachers required more time to familiarise themselves with the test materials. It would therefore run only pilot tests in S1 in January 1994, followed by full testing in S1 in session 1994-95, while S2 testing would not take place until 1995-96. Strathclyde Region, on the other hand, told secondary headteachers that it expected to see substantial progress towards the implementation of testing in S1 and S2 by November 1994, while Lothian Region expected signs of progress by June 1994, when education authorities had to submit their plans for testing to the SOED.

A letter sent by the SOED to the Secretary of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) in September 1993 indicated a fairly conciliatory attitude towards authorities

and teachers' unions regarding testing. It stated that, while the Department would insist on the collation of all results at the end of the year, it would take account of the fact many pupils in Scotland would not have completed a level during 1993. When the results were collated, they showed that, of the 2,341 primary schools in Scotland, only 1,953 were using the tests and only 34 had so far reported results to school boards. Of the 439,042 pupils in P1-P7, only 38,906 had taken the Mathematics tests, 35,523 had taken Reading tests, and 22,959 had done the Writing tests. All the schools in Dumfries and Galloway, Grampian, Highland, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles were operating at least some of the tests. In Central and Fife Regions, less than half the schools had used the tests; in Tayside the percentage was less than 25%. Although these figures seemed disappointing, authorities reported that large numbers of schools claimed to be operating the testing arrangements, while others were making sure that their teachers were sufficiently familiar with the criteria before embarking on the tests. It was hoped, therefore, that the next collation of statistics would give a very different picture. By then, the Committee on Testing would have produced revised guidelines on the marking of Writing, which all schools reported to be difficult, and possibly also some exemplars.

The new agreement on National Testing put considerable pressure on the 5-14 Assessment Unit (FFAU), as the PAU was now called. Although the number of schools taking part in testing continued to be well below 100%, the FFAU staff were heavily involved in the in-service training of many more teachers in various aspects of assessment, and there was considerable pressure on the printing and distribution arrangements. To speed up procedures, the Unit had from the beginning undertaken the preparation of camera-ready copy for the printers. Following complaints about the unreliable delivery of test material to schools, the Board decided that the printing should be shared by two companies and that the FFAU itself should undertake the distribution of materials as from October 1993. A warehouse was rented, and thereafter there were few problems over deliveries.

In January 1994, Lord James Douglas Hamilton, the Scottish Education Minister, announced the Government's response to the long-standing complaints from teachers about the workload they now faced as a result of numerous Government initiatives. He made it clear that the Government had no intention of abandoning any of the initiatives, but he did concede that unnecessary paperwork had put pressure on teachers. Included in the 9-point "*adjustments*" to Government policies, which he announced, was the reassuring announcement that Standard Grade would remain in S4 and the post-Howie developments would be evolutionary rather than revolutionary, maximising the use of existing courses and materials. He also extended the date for the submission of school development plans from September 1994 to June 1995 and promised more consultation with teachers' unions, local authorities, directors of education and parents' groups, greater representation of class teachers on the SCCC and a decrease in the volume of written documents to be issued by the SOED, the Inspectorate and the SCCC.

At the same time, in recognition of the fact that schools had been overwhelmed by the avalanche of 5-14 documents, the SOED published *5-14: A Practical Guide for Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools*, which aimed to reassure teachers by indicating what HMIs would be looking for during school inspections regarding the implementation of the 5-14 Guidelines. The document stated that the detailed planning which had gone into the preparation of the Guidelines should relieve teachers of a task that they had previously had to carry out for themselves, so that

they should now have more time for teaching. It was accepted that schools could not implement all of the guidelines immediately, but all schools should at least have a strategy in place. For the first time, the Department indicated a timescale for implementation: the guidelines for English and Mathematics should be given priority and they, together with the National Tests associated with them, should be fully operational in all primary and secondary schools by the end of Session 1994-95; the guidelines for *either* Environmental Studies *or* the Expressive Arts *or* Religious and Moral Education should be in place by the summer of 1996; and the full 5-14 programme should be implemented by the end of Session 1998-99. In view of the announcements just made by the Education Minister, Inspectors would no longer accept from secondary schools claims that they were waiting for Government pronouncements on Standard Grade and the Howie Report as an excuse for not implementing the 5-14 Guidelines and testing programme in S1 and S2.

Critics attacked the step-by-step approach of the *Practical Guide* as patronising and irrelevant to the main problem facing teachers, i.e. dealing with the mountains of paper emanating from the Scottish Office. This theme was taken up later in the year by Frank Pignatelli, Director of Education for Strathclyde, when in August 1994 he said "*increasingly sophisticated approaches to assessment, recording and reporting are not merely imposing on teachers an increasing workload, but may also be diverting their time and energies away from the teaching and learning process.*" He admitted that the educational developments in themselves were good, but they did not take sufficient account of the time teachers had to devote to assimilating them before they could be put into practice, time that had to be taken from the planning of day-to-day work. Most of the authorities also realised the serious unrest within the teaching profession, and several of them were carrying out surveys of the effect which various initiatives were having on the workload of teachers.

In June 1994, the AGM of the EIS decided by 207 votes to 177 to re-impose a boycott of National Testing, but parents' associations warned that they would no longer support a boycott. Realising that testing was no longer an issue among parents or the majority of teachers, the National Council of the EIS decided not to ballot its members on a boycott of National Testing, although a ballot would be permitted in areas where no local agreement on workload could be reached with local authorities (**Note 40**).

Proof that the leadership of the EIS had read the mood of the profession better than the delegates at the AGM came in a report prepared by the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) and presented to the Committee on Testing (COT) in September 1994. This report contained the results of an analysis which SCRE had made of the responses to a questionnaire that COT had issued to primary schools in order to gauge teacher attitudes to the National Tests. In all, 224 teachers were surveyed. Satisfaction with the range of contexts for the test units was expressed by 84% of respondents, and 93% of schools stated they were happy with the arrangements for ordering the units, although there was criticism of incomplete deliveries of test units (**Note 41**). Although the questionnaire did not target them separately, the researchers noted that headteachers had more concerns than class teachers, among whom there was no great resentment. The main complaints centred on the time spent on tests which told teachers no more than they already knew, on the complexities of marking some of tests and on the problems of organising classes during periods of testing. Teachers had liked the contents of the tests and had

found them useful. Most pupils had enjoyed the tests and only 6% of them thought the tests were difficult, which possibly indicated that teachers were delaying testing until their pupils were well beyond the Level at which they were entered. The researchers concluded that there was still some misunderstanding in schools about the purpose of testing, mainly due to previous Government pronouncements and stated aims: *"The majority of headteachers and teachers continue to expect that the tests should tell them something about the pupils, whereas they are now intended to tell them something about their own assessment."* In other words, National Testing was a means of moderating the teachers' methods of assessment. A very encouraging outcome of the survey was the increased importance that assessment now had in lesson planning and the effect it was having on teaching methods. Results were also being recorded in a more structured way. Assessment now covered a much wider range of outcomes than previously, and it was taking place in a whole school rather than an individual classroom context. As HMIs kept saying, teachers tended to compare their present class with previous classes which they had taught previously, rather than with classes nationally.

The FFAU had been relocated in the main SEB offices in Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, in April 1994 and, during that year, it continued to develop and implement improvements in the arrangements for administering the National Tests that were designed to reduce the work for teachers. Besides adding colour coding to the catalogue of units to help teachers select appropriate units, the Unit greatly increased the number of units on offer, including items which would suit the different levels of maturity that would be required for testing secondary school pupils. It also ran training courses for new item writers to increase the pool of tests in the item bank. Since the Writing tests had come in for a great deal of criticism, the criteria for assessing Writing were extensively revised to simplify the marking arrangements. This was done in two ways. Firstly, general marking guidance was provided on a single A3 sheet of paper, using colour coding for all five levels of attainment and all strands of Writing. Secondly, task-type criteria were produced for each type of unit, and these were included in every packet of ten units supplied to schools.

When the results of testing for the first six months of 1994 were published in the autumn of 1994, they revealed that 30% of pupils in P1-P7 had sat Mathematics tests, 29% had taken the Reading tests and 16% the Writing tests. The corresponding figures for the period from August to December 1993 had been 8.3%, 7.4% and 2.2%. Although the Writing tests were still causing difficulty, it was beginning to be realised that there was more to them than testing. The techniques used in the tests were gradually giving teachers greater insight into ways of improving pupils' written expression, which has always been one of the most difficult tasks facing teachers of all age groups.

The Education Minister said that the Government was satisfied with the progress being made and, in October 1994, he announced the setting up of a 5-14 Implementation Committee, which would be chaired by Douglas Paterson, the Director of Education for Grampian Region (**Note 42**). Its task would be to monitor progress and judge when it was appropriate to take the next curriculum steps. It would begin by examining how schools approached planning, recording and assessment. The SOED also issued a video designed to make parents more knowledgeable about the aims of reporting on children's progress.

The Unit had taken over responsibility for the distribution of test materials in October 1993 and, by 1995, the SEB was able to report that schools in most cases were receiving delivery within a week of placing their orders. A questionnaire, produced by the Committee on Testing and analysed by SCRE, revealed that most of the secondary schools which responded were satisfied with the operation of National Testing. The Unit now had nine full-time staff, and 2.9 million separate test units were issued at a cost of around 85p per test. The SEB Chairman, a businessman, was proud to describe the Unit's achievement thus: *"By any standards that is a highly efficient operation."*

During 1995 also, efforts continued to extend the guidance made available to teachers on the marking of Writing tests. This was achieved by identifying criteria specific to different kinds of writing and by issuing exemplars. Although primary teachers especially seemed much happier after this, coverage of schools was far from complete at the beginning of Session 1995-96. For example, in Lothian Region, 37 of the Region's primary schools were still not using the tests and only four of its 46 secondary schools claimed to have test arrangements in place; and Grampian Region, which had already postponed the introduction of tests in secondary schools to Session 1994-95, now proposed a further delay until Session 1997-98 on the grounds that the project was insufficiently funded.

Figures issued in March 1996 showed how little progress had been made in implementing National Testing in secondary schools: in the previous session, only 9% of pupils in S1 and S2 had been tested in Mathematics, 9% in Reading and 6% in Writing. Raymond Robertson, the new Minister in charge of Education in Scotland, described this as *"completely unacceptable."* The Government was determined that the 5-14 Programme should not become one confined to 5-12 year olds because so little progress was being made in testing in S1 and S2. At the same time, the Inspectorate was now highlighting S1 and S2 as the least satisfactory years in the whole curriculum. In collaboration with ADES, therefore, the Inspectorate agreed to lead a series of local seminars for senior staff in secondary schools to spell out what was expected of them.

Although the Government had been expected to use the Annual Conference of the Scottish Conservative Party in May 1996 to announce plans to introduce compulsory testing in S1 and S2, it did not do so. A month later, however, Michael Forsyth, now Secretary of State for Scotland, announced plans to introduce externally marked tests in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. These proposals were immediately condemned as unworkable by parents, the EIS, ADES and local authorities, since under such an arrangement the tests would be completely divorced from the on-going work of the classroom and would contradict all that had been said about National Testing being an aid to better teaching. Even the Implementation Committee criticised the proposal, claiming that it would undo all the good work that had been achieved by the 5-14 programme in removing the traditional demarcation line between primary and secondary education. Whereas the aim had previously been to ensure that there was continuity and progression over the whole 5-14 age range, the Committee feared that compulsory testing in S1/S2 would undermine the considerable co-operation that now existed between the two sectors. It might even set the two sectors against each other, since primary teachers would look on the S1 tests as not only rejecting their own assessments as worthless, but possibly even questioning their professional abilities, while secondary schools would probably revert to the previous policy of

giving pupils a "*fresh start*" when they entered secondary school, a policy which was now regularly criticised by Ministers and Inspectors for leading to underachievement in S1 and S2.

The Government persisted, however, and in June 1996, during the debate on the Scotland Bill under which the new Scottish Qualifications Authority was to be established, Ministers announced that the testing of S1 and S2 would be one of the functions of the SQA. They insisted that this was necessary since secondary schools had not done what local authorities in 1993 had promised they would do. Ministers were unmoved by claims that such a proposal would abandon the spirit and concept of 5-14 testing, which was that pupils should take the National Tests at a level appropriate to their progress when the class teacher judged they were ready. They justified introducing the tests on two grounds: they would confirm the assessments which primary schools had made of pupils in P6 and P7, and they would provide national benchmarks and set a baseline against which to measure the subsequent progress of pupils, i.e. the "*value-added*" contribution of individual secondary schools. Since the tests would be marked externally, it would not create an extra burden for teachers. The Secretary of State also rejected the claim that this would re-introduce the "*11-plus*" on the grounds that there was a difference between testing pupils after they had begun secondary education and doing this prior to their entering secondary. There would be consultation over the timing and nature of the tests, but the likelihood was that pupils would be tested at the start of S1 and around Easter in S2. The Inspectorate had already been asked to investigate the relative merits of mixed ability teaching, setting and streaming in S1 and S2.

During the same debate, it was officially announced that a Level F would be introduced into the 5-14 Programme to stretch able pupils who had passed Level E in primary school or early in secondary. The idea of "*fast-tracking*" in Standard Grade, which *Higher Still* had suggested, was now being played down. As part of the 5-14 Programme, schools had several years prior to this been given suggestions for learning activities "*beyond Level E*" to provide a bridge between the 5-14 Programme and Standard Grade. As Level F would be no more than a formalising of these suggestions, there would be no need to rewrite the 5-14 guidelines. There would be consultation before these tests were introduced. For example, one question which had to be answered related to whether the increased gradient should be achieved through introducing more content or by testing the ability of pupils to understand and apply more difficult concepts.

In October 1996, the Inspectorate report *Achievement for All, a Report on Selection within Schools* recommended setting in P6 and P7 and greater use of attainment grouping in all subjects in S1 and S2. In rejecting criticisms from several Directors of Education, Douglas Osler, now HM Senior Chief Inspector, maintained it was strange that, although ability grouping in English and Mathematics was commonplace in primary schools and universal in Third and Fourth Years of secondaries, mixed ability grouping was still used so widely in S1 and S2. There had been some excuse for this in the past when there was a lack of reliable assessments coming from primary schools. There was no desire to reintroduce streaming, but 5-14 assessments now made it possible to group pupils in broad attainment bands.

A month later, on the occasion of the publication of the fifth set of secondary school examination results, HMSCI Osler said that the committee which was looking for ways in which "*value-added*" tables (**Note 43**) could be issued had concluded, after trials in eighteen primary schools,

that it would be impossible to use 5-14 assessments as a base-line for measuring the attainment level of the intakes of individual secondary schools.

The 1996 Annual Report of the SEB was quite upbeat about progress on National Testing. During the year, the FFAU had issued 3,356,000 test units, or 1¼ million complete tests in Reading, Writing and Mathematics to 89% of all primary schools and 65% of secondaries, which marked an increase of 25% over 1995. The same Report provides a useful picture of the continuous nature of item-writing procedures. Weekend courses for item writers had been provided in the Spring of 1996, and subsequently many new test materials had been produced. These had then been subjected to a rigorous scrutiny, firstly by item vetters and then by the 5-14 English and Mathematics Panels, before being issued to schools which had volunteered to pre-test them. The results of the pre-tests were then analysed and comments from the teachers taken into consideration before any item was accepted by the Panels as suitable for inclusion in the National Test Catalogue. Roughly half of the test units in the Catalogue were replaced annually. New test units in Mathematics were grouped in pairs and clusters to help teachers choose tests with a wide range of Attainment Targets. In Mathematics, too, computerised versions of some of the units had been developed, and the Committee on Testing had approved the use of these instead of the paper versions of tests.

In February 1997, the Scottish Office issued a consultation paper on compulsory testing in the secondary school. In presenting this paper, Michael Forsyth maintained that the tests were in tune with the fundamental principles of the 5-14 Programme which was being badly disrupted by the slow progress that secondary schools were making in introducing the tests in S1 and S2. Although 90% of primary pupils were now being tested, the secondary figures were 9% in Reading, 5% in Writing and 8% in Mathematics. The original proposals had been slightly modified in the light of comments received. Instead of the compulsory tests being set early in S1, they would now take place around Easter of the First Year, which would give the pupils time to settle into their new surroundings. Besides building on the information passed on by primary schools, these tests would provide a profile of the whole cohort and would help secondary schools organise class groupings in S2. Similarly, the S2 tests would help to inform choice for Standard Grade courses. The consultation paper suggested that there should be five levels of test and, in order to be fair to all pupils, including those with special educational needs, the teacher would select the most appropriate level for each pupil; and, since each test would cover two levels, pupils would have an opportunity later in the paper to tackle items from the next attainment level. Other test material would be available from the test catalogue to be used by teachers in the normal way. The tests would be set and marked by the SQA. The whole cohort would take them at the same time, and they would be easy to administer and mark. Either the SQA could issue special certificates, or they could be recorded on the National Record of Achievement which could be introduced in S1 instead of later. The SQA would be expected to collate all the results of tests in primary and secondary schools, and these would be published along with existing examination statistics. The results could later form the basis of a "*value-added*" system of reporting these statistics. Parents would have the right to withdraw children from the tests. Independent schools would not be forced to use the tests, but they could do so, if they wished, free of charge.

The SQA had made it clear that, as with other National Testing, it would expect the Scottish Office to meet the whole cost of printing and distributing the tests, of employing setters, Principal Examiners, invigilators and markers, and of issuing certificates. There would be about 360,000 tests each year, and the total cost would be in the region of £3.6 million. Ministers said they were willing to bear this cost.

The teaching unions were not the only bodies which criticised the proposals. COSLA and ADES both launched withering attacks on them, especially when it became clear that no attempt had been made to seek the advice of the Committee on Testing. Progress on testing in secondary schools had been slow, it was claimed, because of difficulties in carrying out the tests without too much disruption to the normal school curriculum; but there were signs that some secondaries had included National Testing in their development plans for 1996-97. Following the Government announcement in the summer of 1996, however, the schools had abandoned these plans.

In March 1997, the first league tables for primary schools in England and Wales were published. Secretary of State Forsyth had already pledged to publish school results for all 5-14 levels both nationally and locally despite a promise made by the Scottish Office in 1993 that there would be *"no central collection of results in Scotland and no league tables based on National Test results."*

At the General Election held on 1 May 1997, Labour was returned with a huge majority. Within a few weeks, Brian Wilson, the Minister for Education in Scotland in the new Labour Government, announced that compulsory testing in S1 and S2 was to be abandoned and the money saved from that exercise would be used to promote literacy in the early years of the primary school. However, he made it clear that he wanted secondary schools to start implementing the original 5-14 tests in earnest, and, at the same time, he indicated that plans to introduce Level F would go ahead in order to drive up standards (**Note 44**).

Several surveys were beginning to set alarm bells ringing over the attainment of Scottish pupils in *"the basics"*. The results of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, published in the early part of 1997, placed the performance of Scottish nine-year-olds and thirteen-year-olds in these subjects around the middle of the twenty-six countries surveyed. These findings were reflected in the Scottish Office's own Assessment of Achievement Programme in Mathematics, which suggested that standards might have even declined since the previous survey in 1991. In the Foreword of the Inspectorate report *Standards and Quality in Scottish Schools*, HMSCI Osler seemed to cast doubt on the efficacy of the National Tests in improving pupil performance by emphasising that schools should regard the 5-14 targets as minimum standards.

In July 1997, a completely new ball game was started when Brian Wilson wrote to all education authorities to announce that he was to chair a group which would set targets for every school in Scotland. These targets would be different from the raw examination statistics which had previously been published. The targets would be agreed with schools and education authorities, and they would take account of such matters as the nature of the school's catchment area and its existing level of performance (based on 5-14 attainments and results at Standard Grade and

Higher Grade). But, as I write these concluding paragraphs towards the end of 1999, compulsory testing is back on the agenda again. Is there to be no end to this sort of merry-go-round?

Statistically-set targets have now been in vogue for over a decade and show no signs of being abandoned as politicians of every hue compete with one another to appear tough on standards. Following the usual 25-30 year cycle of fashions in education, target-setting has probably quite a few years to run before it is overtaken by some other fashion. With that in view, it may be profitable to examine what National Testing set out to achieve and what it had actually achieved by 1999.

As far as I can tell, the idea originated from the assumption that improvements in education can be achieved by emulating the productivity targets of the business and manufacturing worlds. But one has to ask whether a philosophy of that nature, based on hard facts, can be legitimately transferred holus-bolus from one field of activity to another. Can the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, social, aesthetic and cultural development of human beings be measured in the same way as the products of an assembly line or the profits of a company? There is nothing wrong with target-setting. It is the way in which results are measured against the targets that is crucial.

Blame for the basic failings of to-day's pupils is usually laid at the door of the innovations of the 1960s, when there was undoubtedly a massive shift in educational philosophy, particularly in the primary school. Some of us who are old enough to know what these changes replaced are possibly less critical — the rote learning of facts which rapidly went out of date, a concentration on grammatical accuracy to the exclusion of expressiveness and inventiveness in writing, an emphasis on mechanical sums at the expense of using the arithmetic in real situations, access to the library limited to Friday afternoons when the teacher was completing the register, so much emphasis on the 3Rs that pupils who were weak in the basics were often denied other activities such as use of the library, and the giving of marks and credit only for activities which could be measured arithmetically, to mention but a few failed practices which I hope will never return to our schools. Things in the 1960s clearly needed to change, but then, as always, there was a tendency to over-react, to over-emphasise the need for change so that the pendulum swung too far in the opposite direction.

One cannot deny that too many pupils today cannot spell accurately, cannot do sums without a calculator and have little knowledge of how to construct sentences, and that something has to be done to rectify this. This is not a new phenomenon, however. I need to think back only to the many notes, containing lots of spelling and grammatical mistakes, that came to school from parents who had been brought up under the pre-1960s regime — many of them professional parents who had been educated at senior secondary schools. Nor must we ignore the many things that today's older pupils can do that we older people couldn't. My fear is that we may destroy these positive gains if we concentrate too much on the narrow goals of literacy and numeracy, important though these are. National and international surveys of literacy and numeracy can be useful, but I have yet to see similar surveys of wider aspects of the curriculum.

Two things puzzle me in the literacy/numeracy debate. Firstly, why is it that the Inspectorate has only fairly recently begun to hammer away at this particular theme? The deficiencies surely have not appeared overnight. Secondly, if pupils are doing so badly in the early stages of

secondary education, how does it come about that results in S4-S6 continue to show improvement year on year? Could at least part of the answer to both questions lie in the fact that there are now greater expectations of schools, and that literacy and numeracy have not shown the same improvement as has been seen in other areas of the curriculum? Or is it that there is little incentive for schools to spend much time on these skills, since the examinations based on the upper secondary curriculum give little credit for them, and employers and colleges/universities base their recruiting and enrolment procedures almost exclusively on the number of SCE passes gained, instead of using the wealth of other educational information available about applicants?

The Inspectorate has a proud record of driving forward change and improving standards. Mostly it has done this by concentrating on a limited area at any one time. This certainly achieves results, but the downside is that the teaching profession can sometimes respond too well to these initiatives. Just as the Inspectorate campaign to promote expressive writing in the 1960s resulted in less concentration on spelling and grammar, so there is a danger that the over-enthusiastic promotion of whole-class teaching and the 3Rs will result in a neglect of other important aspects of the curriculum — damage which will have to be undone in the next generation.

There is everything to be said for target-setting, but it should be much more personalised than the national initiatives attempted so far. Pupils are unlikely to achieve their full potential if they do not set goals for themselves. The overt reason for initiating National Testing was to improve national standards of literacy and numeracy; but, judging by the doom-laden sounds emanating from the Scottish Executive, their civil servants and certain sections of the media, it would appear that the tests have not achieved that aim. That is not to say that they have achieved nothing, however. In fact, they have achieved much that is worth retaining and improving upon. They have made teachers more aware of the inter-connection between teaching/learning and assessment, improved their expertise in the field of assessment and given them access to a bank of well-graded test material. This has had a knock-on effect on their teaching methods. Few teachers now work in isolation when planning what they are to teach and how they are to assess it. And negotiating targets with individual pupils is now commonplace. In other words, the benefit of the National Tests should be seen, not in the national statistics, but in the impact they have had on the education of individual children. That is why I find it so disappointing that, having moved away from a testing approach which sought to impose absolute standards to a more personalised use of the tests, there is now a proposal to go back to compulsory testing at fixed stages, which will certainly take us back to unjust comparisons between schools.

Attempts to produce a value-added system of assessing whether standards are improving have so far been unproductive. Several social measures (e.g. the social classes used in the Census, postal codes and parents' own educational qualifications) have been rejected as unreliable ways of showing how much "*value*" schools have added to the attainments of their pupils. The first set of "*value-added*" tables of examination results used free school meals as the weighting factor, although this also is widely regarded as an unreliable criterion. Lack of money is not the only factor which impoverishes children. Equally important are their home culture and the inability of many parents to provide an enriched environment simply because of their own educational and cultural limitations. (In fact, some children from homes in which there is a lot of money can suffer just as much as those from economically poor homes.) When making comparisons between schools, trying to group schools with supposedly similar intakes is highly subjective and

uses too broad a brush. Using Standard Grade results to gauge whether pupils' results in S5/S6 improve or slide back is also meaningless, since such a comparison takes no account of whether pupils have coasted through Standard Grade or been pushed to their limits by their teachers.

I am not surprised, therefore, that there is a desire among politicians and administrators to establish early in secondary school a baseline against which to measure progress through secondary schooling; and also to introduce two tests before that to assess how effective primary schools have been. But these will not produce a true baseline for primary schools, since the greatest progress is made in the period immediately after children enter school. The National Tests, as now used, are clearly unsuitable for setting these baselines, since the test units do not all cover the same ground and pupils sit the tests at various times in the session at an undefined interval after their teachers feel sure they will pass. Compulsory national tests set on fixed dates have an administrative attractiveness. But policy-making and administration exist to benefit the children in the schools, not to suit the administrative or political convenience of policy-makers and administrators. What will these tests try to measure? How rigorous will they be? Can short tests which are set at fixed points in the year and which try to assess only a limited part of the curriculum bear any relation to what has been taught in individual classrooms across the country? How many tests will be required if we are to avoid producing a distorted picture of what takes place in schools? What is to prevent teachers teaching towards these tests, as they do at present towards Standard Grades and Highers, and as they did towards the "*quali*," the "*control*" tests and the "*11+*" in the past, almost as if they were preparing pupils for the Round Britain Quiz? (At least the National Tests, as now used, can help to reinforce what is being taught.) Is it desirable for pupils to sit eight, possibly nine, national tests in eight or nine years of schooling up to S2, as will happen if the new compulsory tests are added to the National Tests? How can we trumpet the value of a broad education, and then concentrate so much on such a minute part of the total curriculum? And, in the end, will the statistics which are produced have any more than a surface-deep validity? By concentrating on outcomes which are measurable, will we be doing any more than reinforcing the utilitarian message which has been purveyed to our young people for some time now, namely, that only the knowledge and skills which will help them in their working lives are of any value? Are knowledge and skills all that young people will need for a happy life?

In answering questions such as these, politicians and administrators must satisfy themselves that the gains which will be made will outweigh the damage that will be done. Over-reaction is the last thing we need at present. The proposal to limit the use of calculators until children have mastered basic numeracy is a simple but sensible move, as is the early intervention strategy. Improving pupil's ability to write well is a much harder nut to crack, and compulsory tests will not provide the answer. Starting with tests of basic literacy is putting the cart before the horse. Rather the whole philosophy of how language is taught (both the English language and modern languages) has to be re-thought, and many teachers will need help because many of them are the products of a system which despised a logical approach to how language works.

Note 37: Originally, there was a Joint Committee on Assessment and Testing (JCAT), with a sub-committee on Testing and another on Assessment. The function of the former was to

spell out Government policy on testing procedures, while the latter dealt with formative testing. However, it became clear that there was a great deal of unnecessary overlap, and the main committee and the sub-committee on Assessment were wound up and a single Committee on Testing took over. That Committee was stood down in March 1991 but re-constituted in March 1993.

Note 38: The word "*most*" was not defined, but later papers which I found within the Scottish Office files stated that it meant "*around 80%*".

Note 39: Although the Mathematics tests were firmly grounded in the curriculum guidelines, these guidelines were still in draft form (Working Paper 3) and, not surprisingly, schools continued to use their existing schemes of work (notably the series produced by the Scottish Primary Mathematics Group which was in widespread use at the time).

Note 40: A year later, the 1995 EIS AGM did not re-impose the boycott on testing despite claims by activists that they were stifling good teaching practice.

Note 41: The SEB took comfort from the fact that the criticism about unreliable deliveries of tests units referred to the period when deliveries were the responsibility of the printers.

Note 42: In September 1995, after Paterson had become Chief Executive in Aberdeen, James Anderson, Director of Education in Tayside, took over as Chairman.

Note 43: Ever since the publication of "league tables" of SCE results, there had been complaints that schools in disadvantaged areas were unfairly criticised for their poor results. Schools had to work with the pupils they had, and it was a well-known fact that the ability of pupils drawn from more affluent areas was generally far higher than that of pupils from poor areas. Ways were therefore sought of providing a baseline against which to measure the extent to which individual schools had improved the performance of their pupils from S1 onwards ("*value added*").

Note 44: Following the decision to divorce plans for introducing Level F from the Higher Still Development Programme, the matter was handed over to the Committee on Implementation. Having decided that Level F should concentrate on English and Mathematics and should be targeted at secondary pupils, they delegated the task of preparing appropriate criteria and guidelines to a small group of part-time Development Officers working under a full-time Co-ordinator and supported by an Advisory Steering Committee. Their initial proposals were issued for consultation and then revised in the light of comments received. Level F Guidelines, which covered all curricular areas, were published in February 1999. The FFAU had the task of preparing test material to match the guidelines, and these tests were made available to any school which wished to use them. It was not expected that there would be a large uptake.

Table 10: Uptake of 5-14 National Tests 1993-98

Primary 1

	Size of Year Cohort ¹	Maths	Tests	Reading Tests		Writing Tests	
1993	63,845	58	0.1%	27	0.04%	0	0.00%
1993-94	63,084	361	0.6%	173	0.3%	40	0.04%
1994-95	62,922	252	0.4%	174	0.3%	37	0.04%
1995-96	62,283	225	0.4%	199	0.3%	44	0.07%
1996-97	63,370	253	0.4%	199	0.3%	40	0.06%
1997-98	62,022	1,457	2.3%	543	0.9%	279	0.4%

Primary 2

1993	64,274	1,490	2.3%	953	1.5%	382	0.6%
1993-94	64,237	10,376	16.1%	6,008	9.4%	1,501	2.3%
1994-95	62,437	13,662	21.9%	6,932	11.1%	1,283	2.0%
1005-96	62,136	16,533	26.6%	8,023	12.9%	1,741	2.8%
1996-97	63,094	20,447	32.4%	9,527	15.1%	2,175	3.4%
1997-98	64,100	32,274	50.3%	17,086	26.7%	4,924	7.7%

Primary 3

1993	63,336	6,002	9.5%	4,917	7.8%	2,568	4.1%
1993-94	63,904	28,888	45.2%	25,963	40.6%	11,624	18.2%
1994-95	63,701	33,706	52.9%	31,599	49.6%	14,475	22.7%
1995-96	61,953	36,910	59.6%	36,046	58.2%	18,154	29.3%
1996-97	61,450	28,638	46.6%	32,989	53.9%	21,362	34.8%
1997-98	65,579	39,699	61.4%	43,659	67.6%	31,203	48.3%

Primary 4

1993	63,273	6,925	10.9%	7,157	11.3%	4,603	7.3%
1993-94	63,184	32,448	51.3%	33,803	53.5%	17,476	27.6%
1994-95	63,328	34,197	54.0%	35,618	56.2%	19,223	30.4%
1995-96	62,931	40,203	63.9%	42,144	67.0%	24,604	39.1%
1996-97	62,477	37,242	59.6%	38,579	61.7%	27,160	43.5%
1997-98	61,473	45,127	73.4%	45,380	77.8%	35,031	57.0%

Primary 5

1993	62,024	6,972	11.2%	6,290	10.1%	4,230	6.8%
1993-94	62,516	28,544	45.7%	28,774	46.0%	14,857	23.8%
1994-95	62,598	30,105	48.1%	32,599	52.1%	17,203	27.5%
1995-96	62,617	35,306	56.4%	36,131	57.7%	21,449	34.4%
1996-97	63,104	32,340	51.2%	35,822	56.8%	24,229	38.4%
1997-98	63,119	40,378	64.0%	43,528	69.0%	33,666	53.3%

Primary 6

	Size of Year Cohort ¹	Maths Tests		Reading Tests		Writing Tests	
1993	61,295	7,693	12.6%	6,782	11.1%	4,413	7.2%
1993-94	61,387	31,681	51.6%	30,283	49.3%	15,989	26.0%
1994-95	61,912	34,044	55.0%	33,618	54.3%	17,500	28.3%
1995-96	61,882	39,498	63.8%	38,462	62.2%	22,657	36.6%
1996-97	62,170	33,011	53.1%	35,301	56.8%	25,411	40.9%
1997-98	63,119	43,217	68.3%	43,688	69.0%	35,201	55.6%

Primary 7

1993	60,995	9,766	16.0%	9,397	14.4%	6,763	11.1%
1993-94	60,833	37,329	61.4%	35,152	57.8%	19,276	31.7%
1994-95	60,348	39,072	64.7%	37,945	62.9%	21,640	35.9%
1995-96	60,892	44,639	73.3%	42,953	70.5%	26,383	43.3%
1996-97	62,976	40,029	63.6%	40,687	64.6%	28,808	45.7%
1997-98	62,163	46,775	75.2%	47,046	75.7%	37,444	60.2%

Secondary 1

1993-94	59,426	3,443	5.8%	3,006	5.1%	1,591	2.7%
1994-95	59,768	4,074	6.8%	6,005	10.0%	4,074	6.8%
1995-96	59,291	7,106	12.0%	9,415	15.9%	7,241	12.2%
1996-97	58,944	6,897	11.7%	11,355	19.3%	7,930	13.5%
1997-98	59,706	14,578	24.4%	21,067	35.3%	16,002	26.8%

Secondary 2

1993-94	61,085	2,871	4.7%	2,733	4.5%	1,300	2.1%
1994-95	61,028	6,855	11.2%	4,902	8.0%	3,360	5.5%
1995-96	58,799	11,467	19.5%	11,955	20.3%	8,297	14.1%
1996-97	58,507	12,946	22.1%	11,573	19.8%	8,836	14.3%
1997-98	58,904	24,603	41.8%	21,804	37.0%	16,837	28.6%

Note 1: In the years 1993-1996, the statistics were collected twice per year, and different cohort sizes were frequently quoted in the two collections. The size of the year cohort quoted above is the average of these two figures. As a result of this decision, the percentages will not be absolutely accurate, but they are close enough to give a broad indication of the uptake in the various years.

Note 2: No statistics are available for the number of passes at the various levels, but the following figures supplied by SQA indicate the number of tests which were issued to schools at their request:

Session	Maths Tests	Reading Tests	Writing Tests
1994-95	354,862	453,790	271,815
1995-96	421,142	504,085	331,930
1996-97	488,475	550,185	368,010
1997-98	534,592	617,950	434,630
1998-99	610,305	675,955	535,010