

Towards 2014 – Preparing for Change

Guidance Sheet 5 (July 2014)

Assessment and Testing

Diagnostic Assessment

A **diagnostic test** is used to identify the nature and source of an individual's educational, psychological, or medical difficulties or disabilities in order to facilitate correction or remediation.

These tests are useful in helping to pinpoint what a pupil knows and what they still need to learn. They are therefore very useful for programme planning and target setting, as well as for benchmarking. They are usually administered individually.

The tests which you might use include:

- Miscue Analysis/Running Record of a pupil's reading
- A phonic check, which can be used to check both reading and spelling skills
- A test of phonological awareness eg Hatcher's Sound Linkage test
- A high frequency/tricky words checklist, which can be used to test reading and spelling of words
- Letter formation/handwriting checklist, including an analysis of 'writing behaviours' eg pencil grip, sitting position, handedness
- Analysis of a piece of unaided writing, which could include spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence construction, handwriting
- A non-word decoding test
- A test of short term/working memory eg The Digit Span Test, Turner and Risdale

Diagnostic tests are one element of **Formative Assessment**, which is defined as:

Any practice which provides information for:

- teachers about next steps in learning
- pupils about what to do to improve

The Cof P (6.38) says that identification 'should include high quality and accurate formative assessment.'

Standardised Testing

A **standardised test** is a test that is administered and scored in a consistent, or "standard", manner. Standardised tests are designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent and are administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner.

These tests are usually used to give a reading age or spelling age, which can be used as a measure of progress when the tests are repeated. They are also useful for grouping pupils according to ability. They are often administered individually, though some are designed to be administered to groups or classes.

The tests which you might use include:

- British Picture Vocabulary Scales 3rd edition (BPVS)
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)
- Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NARA)
- York Assessment of Reading
- Edinburgh Reading
- Salford Sentence Reading (revised)
- Phonological Abilities Test (PAT)
- Graded Word Spelling Test
- Single Word Spelling Test

Standardised tests are one element of **Summative Assessment**, which is defined as:

- Testing which provides a snapshot of the pupil's achievements at a given moment in time
- May be class-based, school-based or national e.g. A national test (SATs), a GCSE or an assessment set by the teacher (end of module test, end of term test)