

P-05-891 National Reading and Numeracy Tests for children from as young as age 6 need to be discontinued with immediate effect, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 29.07.19

I would like to thank the minister for taking the time to comment and offer her assurances. I would welcome the move away from formal written exams towards more flexible assessments as this is likely to reduce the pressure on pupils and teachers.

The minister stressed that schools should not be setting national test-related homework or working on multiple past papers but unfortunately this is an inevitable consequence of formal testing. The tests differ from the way in which the pupils have been taught, particularly in the lower key stages, so it is necessary to familiarise the pupils with the exam question styles. This inevitably results in the pupils being taken away from their ordinary learning in line with the curriculum.

Formal exam based testing as a snapshot of a very young child's ability adds very little to the parents' or teachers' perception of an individual child's ability. As a result, despite the changes to the national tests, the benefits of the tests are unlikely to outweigh the risks of harm from the stress and time spent deviating from the curriculum.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Tanya Beer