

# Education and Skills Select Committee: Inquiry on Testing and Assessment

## Assessment in the Future: Building the Case for Change

Memorandum by the General Teaching Council

### Executive Summary

The GTC hopes that the Education and Skills Select Committee (ESSC) will, as a result of this inquiry, urge the Government to undertake a fundamental and urgent review of the testing and assessment regime in maintained schools.

England's pupils are among the most frequently tested in the world, but tests in themselves do not raise standards. Tests are used for too many purposes and this compromises their reliability and validity. The tests can depress pupils' motivation and increase anxiety. They do not adequately serve the interests of parents or pupils and they lead to a narrowed curriculum and encourage "teaching to the test". The system diminishes teachers' professional judgements because summative outcomes reached by the teacher carry less public weight than the outcomes from end of Key Stage (KS) tests, although the received wisdom that KS tests and public examinations are error-free methods of assessing pupil attainment is misleading

### GTC's proposals

*Ongoing classroom assessment combined with a timely use of a nationally devised bank of tests*

- Continued Government support for teachers' use of assessment for pupil learning to ensure it has maximum impact across schools.
- The development of a nationally-devised bank of tests/tasks to be used during the key stage when the teacher judges that the pupil/pupils are ready
- Teachers overseeing all forms of assessment including the bank of tests, and their professional judgments on pupils' performance being given increasing weight over time.
- Increased Government investment in teachers' assessment skills

*School Improvement and Accountability – focused away from the centre and towards the community, parents and pupils*

- The development of a richer dialogue between schools and parents based on enhanced information resulting from teachers' assessment of their pupils.
- An entitlement for parents to be fully and regularly informed about progress and attainment
- Using the School Profile to communicate a broader range of school accountability information to parents

*Monitoring National Standards – a more cost effective and efficient system of collecting data*

- Introducing a system of cohort sampling involving a limited number of pupils in a limited number of schools to collect data for monitoring national standards