

Local Authority	<i>Edinburgh City Council</i>
School	<i>East Craigs Primary School</i>
Headteacher	<i>Kirsten Johnston</i>

School Context

East Craigs Primary School is situated in Edinburgh. It has 426 pupils, with 45 Primary 1 pupils. The school is well supported by its parents/carers, with a strong Parent Council. Last year, the Scottish National Standardised Assessments were led by the headteacher and depute headteacher.

Before the assessment

How did you decide the right time to administer the SNSAs?

Having used commercially produced standardised assessments across all year groups in previous years, the school already had systems in place for the administration of the Scottish National Standardised Assessments. In addition, learning, teaching and assessment is well-planned for in the school. Edinburgh City Council had offered a flexible approach to carrying out the SNSAs in literacy and numeracy, with a suggested timeframe of May for primary 1 assessments. School staff considered this to be an appropriate time of year in which to carry them out.

How did you plan for the assessments?

Parents were sent the generic letter from the Scottish National Standardised Assessment website and there were no subsequent questions or concerns regarding the process. It is thought that this is due to the fact that most children already had experience of standardised assessments and the process was not new to parents/carers.

How did you prepare pupils for the SNSAs?

The children were not taught in preparation for sitting an assessment and the SNSAs were very much regarded as another learning activity. As such, pupils were encouraged to do their best work, similar to any other activity, and in keeping with the very positive school culture and ethos.

Were there any other preparations you had to make?

There were no additional arrangements required beyond the timetabling of the computer suite. Teachers and support assistants logged on to the machines, or supported the children to log on, as is normal practice every time the computer suite is used. The assessments took place over a period of three weeks, with three children timetabled to work with one adult at a time. This would either be the class teacher, or a pupil support assistant. In addition, the process was supported by the senior leadership team.

Any children identified as needing additional support worked 1-to-1 on the assessments, in a similar way to other classroom tasks and activities. To help, some

of these children completed assessments on tablets, as opposed to the conventional computer suite setup used by others. In primary 1, groups worked on one question at a time, rather than all working at different stages of the assessment. When all had completed a question, the group moved on.

Did you need support to figure out the system?

No support was sought other than the training that was delivered prior to implementing the assessments.

During the assessments

How did the children respond to the process?

Although standardised assessments were already being used in the school, these were paper based exercises, so the use of IT sparked the interest of the children as this made the assessments seem more relevant to them. The children coped well and appeared relaxed throughout the process. Those who required additional support made good use of tablets, which were familiar to them.

It was felt that the use of an animated character with a Scottish accent again helped ensure that the assessments felt relevant to the children.

What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?

While the questions were appropriate, for some primary 1 children, the amount of text was a challenge. If necessary, this was addressed by the supporting adult reading the text to the child, in addition to listening to the voice of the animated character.

On average, how long did the assessments take?

This varied depending on the needs of the child. One and a half hour slots were booked for the computer suite, allowing plenty of time for children to proceed at their own pace and providing the opportunity to build in plenty of flexibility for toilet breaks etc. The maximum time for children given to sit the assessment was 60 minutes. No child was left to struggle with an assessment.

What is the one piece of advice that you would give another school that is about to administer the assessments for the first time?

Make sure you plan the use of available staff to support the delivery of the assessments and timetable this in advance to ensure smooth running.

Discuss with teachers the modelling approach of positivity and keep the whole process fun, light-hearted and 'just another part of learning'.

Education Scotland comment on any issues raised within this case study:
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- *Reading to children – as described in this example, the advice is that whatever support is normally provided for children with specific needs can be provided for the assessment, including reading to the child if that is deemed appropriate. As this is a diagnostic assessment the teacher will then be aware of the impact of the support on the final outcomes*