

Online assessments set to replace paper for national reading and numeracy tests

National reading and numeracy tests in Welsh schools are set to replace paper with innovative online assessments that adapt to a pupil's abilities, Education Secretary Kirsty Williams announced today (Tues 2nd May).

Monday 01 May 2017

Currently the tests, taken by all pupils in years two to nine, are carried out on paper. They aim to find out about pupils' reading and numeracy skills in order to identify what each child needs to focus upon to progress.

The paper tests will be replaced with new personalised assessments to be taken online that have been specifically designed for use in Wales. The new assessments will automatically adjust the level of the questions to match the individual taking the test, providing an appropriate level of challenge for each learner.

The change to online tests will reduce marking time and administration.

Benefits include:

- Assessments tailored to individual pupils.
- More detailed information on a child's performance.
- A reduction in feedback times to teachers and learners.
- Schools will be able to test classes, small groups or individuals according to their facilities and at a time that works for them and their learners.

The new tests will be phased in over three years, starting from the 2018/19 academic year.

Kirsty Williams said:

"These tests are about raising standards by showing the next steps that children need to take in their learning. The move to online personalised assessments for reading and numeracy will benefit pupils, parents and teachers.

"Pupils will be taking assessments that will adapt to their needs and skills. They will have the benefits of automatic marking and schools will have feedback faster than before, giving them a better picture of how they can help all their learners to move on.

"This approach is tailor made for Wales. It shows how we are

investing in our schools to continue our national mission of education reform to drive up standards and make sure every pupil in Wales, whatever their background, has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.”

[May 2017](#)

M T W T F S S
[1](#) 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24 25 26 27 28
29 30 31
[<< Apr](#)

[Wales' links with the Middle East set to reach new heights](#)

Following Qatar Airways' decision to invest in a new direct service from Cardiff to Doha, the First Minister is meeting with the airline's CEO, HE Akbar Al Baker, as well as senior officials from Qatar International Islamic Bank, the Qatar Investment Authority and Qatar National Bank.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“The direct service between Cardiff and Doha is a huge boost for Wales. It will open up Wales' links with the rest of the world and deliver new economic, leisure and travel opportunities for Welsh businesses and the people of Wales.

“Providing a direct route into the world's fastest growing hub airport, Hamad International, will also bring Wales closer to leading global markets such as India, China, Singapore and Australasia.

“My visit to Doha this weekend, alongside the new service, is the beginning of a special relationship with Qatar and the Middle East.

“We will maximise the opportunities created by this new route and use it as catalyst for increased Middle Eastern investment, including from sovereign wealth funds, into new infrastructure projects in Wales.

“As we prepare for a future outside the EU, it is more important

than ever before to sell Wales to the world and meet with potential investors across the globe to show them exactly what Wales has to offer.”

Supporting midwives to support women in pregnancy and childbirth

Speaking at a special event in the Senedd, Cardiff Bay the CNO today announced the introduction of a new employer-led model of clinical supervision for midwives in Wales.

The new model will change from the previous statutory supervision of midwives in Wales provided through Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and the Local Supervising Authority.

The new employer led model will see full time clinical supervisors for midwives working within health boards, providing dedicated time and support to midwives, increasing their visibility and accessibility to midwives and supporting women’s birth experiences.

The change from the current model is a consequence of investigations into maternity services at Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust and the decision by the Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman that midwifery supervision and regulation be separated.

Professor White said:

“We expect the NHS in Wales to deliver maternity services which place the needs of the mother and family at the centre, so pregnancy and childbirth is a safe and positive experience where women are treated with dignity and respect.

“Clinical supervisors for midwives will motivate and support midwives to embrace the quality and safety culture that improves outcomes for women and their families. The new model will also support and enable midwives to help women in making choices about their maternity care.”

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething announces all-Wales PrEP trial

The announcement follows the decision on Truvada® by the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group. The study will run for at least three years and will begin this summer.

Vaughan Gething said:

“There is no doubt that Truvada® reduces rates of HIV infection when taken correctly and supported by wider, preventative sexual health services can help to reduce overall HIV transmission and infection rates. This is the advice of the World Health Organisation.

“The study that I have announced will mean that all those for whom the drug is clinically appropriate can access it.

“The study will help us to learn how best to provide the preventative treatment to reduce risks of HIV transmission in Wales and answer some of the questions raised by the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group around incidence rates.

“The All Wales Medicines Strategy Group is a highly regarded, independent expert group. I acknowledge their advice that there are uncertainties regarding cost-effectiveness and that they have not recommended the drug for routine use within NHS Wales at this time.

“I am asking Public Health Wales and the HIV Expert Group to work together to deliver the study.”

Ken Skates keen to explore further A55 improvements

Recent years and months have seen the Welsh Government make significant improvements to the road but the Economy Secretary was keen to stress that more needs to be done in order for the road to best serve as a key artery across North Wales and beyond.

Ken Skates said:

“Last month saw the culmination of four years of imperative improvement work to tunnels on the A55, and this is alongside recent road surface improvements, flood alleviation work and urgent maintenance work.

“Following the completion of these improvements, all maintenance and improvement works for the medium to long term can now be carried out overnight, when disruptions are minimal. I’ve been clear that only emergency work will disrupt passengers during the day this summer, banning any planned daytime roadwork between J11 and the English border until September at the earliest.

“The investment in improving the condition of our roads and the major proposals we have in the pipeline to address congestion points on the network will greatly improve the travelling experience along the A55. I am, however, determined to look beyond these interventions, ensuring journeys along the A55 are as reliable as possible – delivering for locals, businesses and visitors alike. The resilience study I am commissioning will help determine how best to achieve this.

“My intention is to look again at all aspects of the road, identifying where and how best to improve the travel experience and how to minimise the frequency and impact of incidents and breakdowns. This will complement existing plans for improvements whilst continuing to ensure the disruption of roadworks are kept to an absolute minimum.

“Over 70,000 cars use sections of the A55 at peak times and this study will help the Welsh Government continue to drive improvements, ensuring the A55 copes with demand and helps facilitate a strong and forward looking North Wales economy.”

The resilience study will look at the whole network from Holyhead to Post House junction and the first stage of the work is intended to be completed late summer, feeding into the existing schedule for improvements commencing from September.