

# **“Exploring teacher opinions on the impact of statutory assessments on primary aged children’s emotional and mental well-being”**

Dissertation

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Throughout the conception of the education system, there have been many changes to the structure of how it is taught and how it is measured. In the 1980s, the government emphasised the need to raise attainment levels in primary-aged children and, as such, introduced target setting in schools and the publication of these results in the form of performance league tables. In 1991 came the introduction of statutory assessments in primary schools alongside the national curriculum (Machin and Vignoles, 2006; Beauvallet, 2015). Much like any policy change, there comes much debate and controversy regarding the importance and impact of statutory assessments on the various stakeholders, including teachers, schools, educational governing bodies, and arguably, most importantly, the children.

My interest in this topic stems from a lack of consensus regarding the potential adverse effects statutory assessments have on primary-aged children’s mental and emotional well-being throughout literature. Throughout my professional practice, I was able to see how the focus on teaching towards testing had a negative impact on the pupils I was teaching including, drastic changes in mood and energy levels during the testing period. One statistic that I found National Education Union conducted rather distressing (NEU) (2018) was that out of 1,200 teachers, 88% said that SEND students are disadvantaged, and 66% of those with English as an additional language were also at a disadvantage. With this in mind, I felt that it was essential to gain deeper insight into how all children can have equal and safe opportunities within their educational careers.

This research has been conducted in the way of a case study to ensure a holistic and real-world view when gaining teacher opinion. Teachers were contacted via email with an anonymous questionnaire with questions that were influenced by literature research. The importance of research like this is vital; if you take Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (1943) as a base understanding of the essential needs of a human, it states that a person

needs to feel safe physically and mentally before being able to reach a higher potential. With this in mind, it is vital to understand how, as teachers, we can best ensure that children can reach their highest potential in all aspects of their lives.

There is still much debate on this topic with no simple answer or solution. However, the consensus appears that there needs to be an agreement between all stakeholders in how best to test children with the most negligible detrimental impact on mental health and emotional well-being.

Contents

Introduction..... 1

Literature review:..... 5

Methodology:..... 10

Findings and discussions: ..... 13

Conclusion:..... 19

Appendices:..... 21

References:..... 25

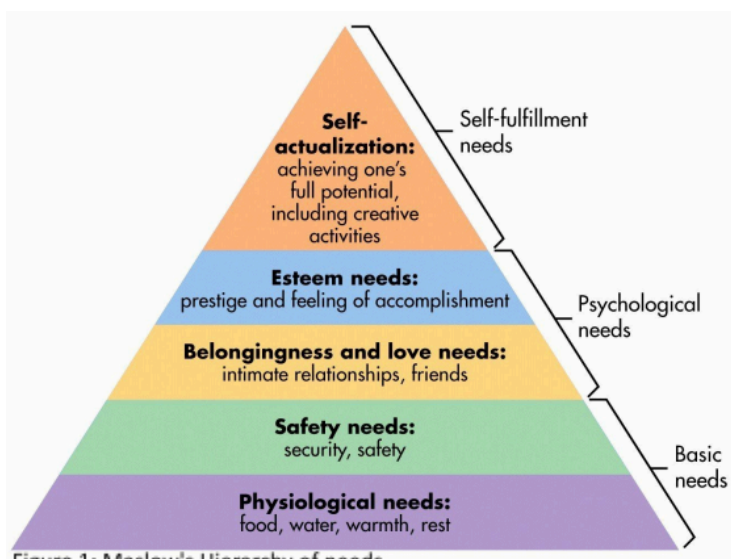
Introduction

**Background of research**

Since the 1980's the government has emphasised the need to raise attainment levels which led to the introduction of target setting in schools and the publication of these results in performance tables or league tables (Machin and Vignoles, 2006; Beauvallet, 2015). In 1991 came the introduction of statutory assessments in primary schools, alongside the release of the national curriculum (The Education (National Curriculum) (Assessment Arrangements for English, Mathematics, and Science) (Key Stage 1) Order 1991). With this change in educational structure comes much debate regarding the impact on the primary sector, including teachers, schools, local authorities, children, and the Department of Education. Though this topic has been explored over the years, I am particularly interested in the impact of statutory assessments on primary-aged children's emotional and mental health. I found that it is difficult to ascertain the emotional and mental impact of statutory assessment alone, as there are likely other factors that also play a part in children's emotional and mental health. With this in mind, I felt it was best to explore teachers' opinions regarding this topic by presenting participants with

questionnaires to reflect upon their observations and experiences in the classroom to gain a detailed insight as possible.

Before going further, I felt it was essential to understand the role education and the school system plays in today's society. According to Idris et al (2012), the primary purpose of school is to prepare and qualify them as functional members of society who play a pivotal role in the workforce and to enhance cultural transmission, whereby young people learn the values and morals of the society they will be entering after school. This research implies a need for school to provide young people with information, skills and adhere to societal behavioral expectations. Interestingly, Maslow (1943) argues that for a human to reach their highest level of potential, all of their needs must be met to be functioning members of society. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a psychological theory widely discussed, even today, where Maslow states that humans must first have basic needs and psychological needs met. Maslow's basic needs (figure 1) as the basic necessity are physiological needs such as food, water, warmth, rest, and then safety needs, leading to psychological needs and, therefore, self-fulfillment. As I was primarily interested in how a child's mental and emotional well-being may impact their overall educational career, I found Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to be an interesting theory to base my understanding of what constitutes emotional and mental well-being.



## Research Method and Methodologies

With this in mind, I think back to my own primary education and at my most recent professional placement, where I noticed a decrease in confidence and productivity and an increase in anxiety and disruptive behavior from the children when they needed to take part in statutory assessments. These experiences made me wonder if statutory assessments are the most productive way to assess primary-aged children and, indeed,

who these assessments benefited, if at all. To answer my questions, I decided to use a qualitative methodology such as a case study to analyse teacher opinions on the matter using an online questionnaire. Although my question concentrates on how primary-aged children are impacted, questioning children through self-reporting could be considered more likely to increase inaccurate and less representative data. Furthermore, it would bring up many ethical problems regarding gaining guardian permission to talk to the children and logistical problems of safely contacting primary-aged children during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Initially, I began by emailing all of the primary schools in the Bristol area, followed by phone calls if they were requested by the schools, which included a diverse range of schools (inner-city schools, outer-city schools, religious and non-religious, private, and state-funded) and therefore different perspectives. The schools were chosen purely on a geographical position as I wanted to ensure I looked at schools there were different from one another to gain a broader insight into the subject; this included ensuring that I spoke to a diverse range of teachers, ranging from recently graduated to teaching veterans. My reasoning for emailing was to ensure I was for many reasons; however, the main reasons are that emailing is a quicker way for me to get all of the initial information to the schools, which meant that schools could take a bit more time to respond.

I decided to conduct a case study as I felt it was important to gain real-world insight regarding teacher opinions rather than simply observing behavioral changes in children. As there is a lot of controversy and sensitivity surrounding this subject, I also felt it was important to give teachers space to freely discuss their opinions to be used as a springboard for deeper discussion and future research projects by myself or others. Case studies also ensure that I cannot solely base my findings on statistics, stifling open discussions.

### **Research Value**

I am conducting this research as, despite the abundance of debates and research regarding the advantages and drawbacks of statutory assessments, there still appears to be a lack of clarity or consensus on the subject throughout the literature. The main confusion I have noticed seems to primarily be around the importance of statutory assessments and which stakeholders benefit the most. My research aims to provide in-depth insight into how statutory assessments impact primary-aged children through the opinions and observations of those closest to the children- teachers.

Teachers are the people who provide children with the tools and knowledge to pass statutory assessments. Still, they also see and interact with the children regularly other than guardians and family. For this reason, this research was conducted to provide me with the awareness and understanding of how best to put into practice a safe and constructive way of preparing children for standardised tests, alongside gaining valuable insight into

the deeper issues that may impact academic attainment and emotional and mental well-being of my future pupils.

Furthermore, during my time on placement, I noticed drastic mood changes in children during exam season. I found that many children responded in quite distressing ways, such as crying, refusing to come into school, falling asleep in class, disruptive behaviour, and a lessened ability to regulate their emotions in situations they had previously been able to do this. I found it especially distressing that when researching that in a study conducted by the National Education Union (2018), out of 1,200 teachers, 88% said that SEND students are disadvantaged, and 66% of those with English as a second language were also disadvantaged. This is a startling number of teachers stating this, and this project delves deeper into some of their concerns and looks in-depth into the legitimacy behind these concerns.

Finally, this research aims to provide me with the foundations to conduct further research later in my career through a master's degree, primarily looking at the ways changes in policies impact classroom teaching and the potential benefits of a more holistic curriculum that teaches teachers and pupils how to prepare and cope with emotional and mental well-being. This research will also act as a springboard for me to be able to gain a deeper insight into the functionality of summative assessments and provide me with the tools to be able to understand how my teaching impacts children's development and to provide me with a more well-rounded thought process of how to make a positive impact, create a safe learning environment, and enhance academic attainment for my future practice.

### **Research Focus**

During my research, reading through various reports, journals, books and reflecting on my own experiences, I came to a specific set of questions that I aimed to answer throughout my research project. My questions were:

1. "Are standardised tests an accurate representation of children's academic understanding?"

Throughout my own education, I often gained good scores in classwork and coursework yet performed at average or just below average levels in exams, which at the time seemed to be the case for a lot of my peers, whereas others excelled in exams but did not perform as well in class. I believe that this is quite a common occurrence and lends insight into the idea that not all children learn or perform to the best of their abilities in the same formats- which brings up the thought that perhaps statutory assessments are not a fair nor accurate way to test children's academic understanding. I also noticed this same pattern throughout my placement with the year one children, thus triggering my focus on this question.

2. "Does standardised testing cause detrimental effects on children's emotional or mental well-being?"

During my initial research, I found reports that showed the negative impact that academic and exam pressure could do on children's emotional and mental well-being, which led me to reflect on my own education and my professional placement REF FROM LATER. Throughout my time on placement, I often noticed extreme mood changes in the children on the days that they were required to undertake assessments. These mood changes ranged from simply crying and refusing to do work to more worrying behaviours that were disruptive or harmful to others, including becoming angry and aggressive to peers and staff. Furthermore, I recognised that children who were usually very enthusiastic and motivated during lessons became unenthused and lacked the motivation to finish work, whilst also noticing a drop in their attention span. This raised concern for me and was the catalyst for my interest in this topic.

3. "Are there alternative methods to standardised testing other than exams?"

With the amount of debate around this controversial topic, I wanted to understand if there was a solution to the problems that are often being raised. I wanted to understand not only the problem but how experts in the education sector propose these issues be addressed. I also felt it was important to understand the various ways in which assessment can be utilised to better understand how I can enhance children's academic attainment to better my own future practice.

During my research and consideration of this particular subject, it was clear to see that a lot of research was based upon theories and reports that did not consider opinions and thoughts of those with, arguably, the most to lose and gain from this particular research, the children. With this in mind, it felt vital to gain insight from those closest to the children, the teachers. Teachers are the people who aid children with the skills and knowledge base to pass examinations and tests and are also the people that see the daily struggles academic pressures can place on the children in their classrooms. Thus, this research primarily focuses on teacher opinions and how accurately they link to research and literature and, therefore, will work as a springboard for further research in my future career.

## Literature review:

Since the introduction of the National Curriculum and statutory assessments, there has been much debate surrounding the importance, impact, and indeed role of these assessments within primary education. Throughout primary school alone, pupils are expected to reach age-related goals in various subjects, including a Phonics screening (in year one), Multiplication tables check (in year four) assessments in reading, writing,

and arithmetic (in year 2 and 6) and more as the education system continues to change (Department for Education n.d). This section will be taking an in-depth look into the various opinions from teachers, parents, governing bodies, and experts in education whilst considering the psychological, academic, and logistical impact of statutory assessments within primary school settings.

Considering the large role statutory assessments play in a child's education, it is important to recognise that there are a plethora of debates throughout the entire educational sector regarding the necessity of these in primary school education. Bunting (2004), in particular, emphasises the impact of statutory assessments on children's mental health and the lack of real-world application, where in an interview with The Guardian, she states, "we're raising kids to pass exams, but not face the world." This is an interesting outlook and could be suggested as not fitting in with the purpose of education. The purpose of which (Fazilah et al., 2011) suggests is to educate young people, to prepare and qualify them as functional members of society who play a pivotal role in the workforce and economy, to enhance socialisation and enable cultural transmission.

A study conducted by the National Educational Union on 1,200 teachers found that nine out of ten teachers felt that SATs are detrimental to children's well-being, with 88% of the teachers stating that SATs do not benefit children's learning and there was a belief that in year six, SATs limits pupils' access to a full curriculum as there is more concentration on the core subjects than others (SATs 'detrimental to children's well-being, says NEU, 2021). There appear to be growing concerns about the effect of statutory assessments on young people where The Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) (2016) stated in a report that ranked exam pressure alongside bullying, bereavement, and abuse as the leading cause of mental health problems in young people. Conversely, Smith (2004) raises similar concerns in her article "Britain Teenagers Driven to Depression," discuss the link between exam stress and the increasing levels of suicide in young people. Although this report refers to those in secondary education, the article goes on to discuss the rise in calls to ChildLine discussing exam stress. Interestingly, Prever (2006) believes that governing bodies place too much pressure on schools through targets to meet a certain level of expectations, which places pressure on teachers, which then transmits to the pupils, who feel pressure to achieve said targets.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs has been known to contribute to teaching and classroom management, which adopts a holistic approach to learning by looking at the complete physical, emotional, social, and intellectual aspects of an individual and how these may impact learning. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a theory comprising of a five-tier model of human needs (FIG1); the needs (from the bottom of the Hierarchy upwards) are Physiological (food and clothing), safety (job/home security), love, and belonging

(friendship/relationships), esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow states that the needs lower down must be satisfied before individuals can deal with the needs higher up. Interestingly, this implies that one must be able to have basic needs, including safety, to be able to fulfill the higher potential. Maslow states that an individual must meet their physiological needs before fulfilling their cognitive needs, which suggests that pupils must feel emotionally and physically safe in order to meet full academic potential (Maslow, 1943).

Glazzard and Trussler (2019) stated there are many negative effects to these needs not being met, such as drastic changes in moods, developing a need for perfection, emotional exhaustion, sleep disturbances, and even memory can become impaired during times of stress. This further supports the idea that exam stress is restricting pupils in their overall progress, thus becoming a source of great concern and debate. Beyond mental health, there are various other disadvantages that others have found with statutory assessments, such as the argument that statutory assessments, particularly SATs, do not represent or reflect the many other subjects being taught outside of the core subjects and ignores the contribution of extracurricular activities to a child's development (Glassard and Trussler., 2019). Furthermore, critics emphasise that the pressure on schools to perform to a certain standard for league tables encourages competition rather than collaboration. Others suggest that this competition can lead to schools and teachers creating an ethos of "teaching to the test," which researchers argue can lead to foundation subjects being viewed as less important as they are not tested, where it is argued that foundation subjects and extracurricular activities are integral to child development as much as core subjects (BBC News, 2019). The discussion of the importance of foundation subjects should not be ignored; however, it is just one of many cogs in the larger discussion surrounding the impact of statutory assessments on primary-aged children.

In 2016, after the educational reform, the National Union of Teachers called for SATs to be abandoned as they felt the targets were unachievable by teachers, which leads to the negative effects on pupils' well-being and teachers' morale (Busby, 2016). But the government responded to these criticisms reassuring that OFSTED and RSC will consider the 2016 education reform when assessing school's performance and emphasised that they are committed to keeping high standards (Nick Gibb, Department for Education., 2015). Nicky Morgan, Education Secretary, responded that much of the claims being made dangerous, continuing that the reform is to be used at the teacher's discretion, stating that the governing bodies trust teacher's judgment, continuing that the key idea is that each child should be encouraged to reach their full potential (Roberts, 2016). This statement could be seen as raises further questions regarding the weight that educational bodies place on schools and teachers; why is there so much pressure to reach certain expectations when it is meant to be used as a guideline that teachers can utilise at their discretion, but do not need to explicitly meet if they do not



deem it to be useful in the classroom? An inquiry by the Education Committee in 2017 found that the high stakes linking of assessment and accountability can lead to a narrowing of the curriculum, which can place emphasis on teaching the correct content and technique to pass the exam at the expense of pupil's overall learning. The inquiry led to a call for OFSTED to focus on a range of subjects such as foundation subjects and extracurricular activities, not just core subjects for this reason. Furthermore, the inquiry stressed that current writing assessments overemphasise technical aspects at the expense of creativity and composition skills (Education Committee., 2017).

But, if there are so many concerns surrounding statutory assessments, why are they still such a big part of the education system? According to a government consultation, the government has emphasised the importance of high academic attainment in reading, writing, and arithmetic for pupils to be fully prepared for secondary education and further. According to this government consultation, the Department for Education states, "Statutory assessment plays an important role in ensuring that every child is supported to leave primary school prepared to succeed" (Department for Education., 2017). From this statement, it appears that the governing bodies are primarily focused on how to better prepare pupils for life ahead, which arguably is the main point for schools.

There are arguments that SATs were not intended to be high-stakes tests, and it is usually down to the schools and teachers to use these assessments as a "force for good" (Montgomery, 2020). Interestingly it is suggested that most schools do not advocate a high-pressure build-up to the exams and instead advocate focusing on ways to incorporate other, more fun activities as a way of preparing for exams. It has also been found that many independent schools do not use SATs but often utilise annual standardised assessments such as CAT or CEM tests to monitor student progression. The use of continuous assessment has been recognised as being a valuable tool to take the pressure of final exams (Montgomery, 2020). Through research, it seems clear that teachers do understand the importance of assessment in general and recognise that there is not a simple alternative to statutory assessments that would also be quick, easy, and financially viable to implement. With this in mind, it could be that teachers and governing bodies should be working collaboratively to bring about a positive change that is beneficial for all stakeholders involved to the best of their ability.

Although there are many arguments against statutory tests in primary schools, there are just as many rebuttals. It has been argued that SATs provide pupils with an important introduction to testing before moving onto secondary education and stricter testing (Montgomery, 2020). It is also believed that SATs provide valuable question-level analysis; it enables teachers to understand what subject knowledge pupils have and the areas that pupils need to improve in to ensure they reach age-related targets (Bradbury., 2019). These

age-related targets may provide schools with invaluable information about whether or not pupils are performing below, at, or above these expectations so they can make informed decisions on what and how to deepen their education; furthermore, these types of assessments provides the ability to report to parents, governors, and others for external assessment purposes, while also validating teacher assessments (Montgomery, 2020). Supporting this is a statement from the Department for Education (2017), which goes on to state that statutory assessments are primarily about measuring school performance and holding schools accountable to their pupil's attainment, he states "primary assessment should not be about putting pressure on children," and Boustead (2018) goes on to state that the government must recognise the system they have created is the opposite of what they intended which is lowering the quality of education, demotivating and endangering the creative aspects of education.

Considering the various stakeholders in primary education, parents play an important role in a child's development and education which a survey conducted by More Than A Score (2019) titled "Too many tests for no good reason" stresses is not always the most informed party when it comes to their children's education. When asked about their knowledge of their children's education, only 4% of the 2,028 surveyed knew about the amount of testing in primary schools. After being told the amount of testing their children needed to go through, 73% stated that they felt that children were under too much pressure, with 6% saying there were too many statutory assessments in primary schools. Conversely, 44% believed that SATs had an adverse effect on children's well-being outside of school, including 1 in 3 saying this affected family life negatively. Furthermore, only 16% of those surveyed believed it is fair to use SATs to measure schools, where many argued that they were more likely to judge schools based on how happy their pupils were, also stating that they do not prioritise the data given to them by tests to make the bigger decisions, e.g., choice of school, about their child's education. These figures imply that guardians are not as involved as the government says they are in terms of how much they actually know about their child's education and indeed the amount and type of pressure placed on their own children in schools. This could be considered to be due to reason beyond the control of the schools and governing bodies- however, it could be argued that guardians simply prefer to know their children are happy and safe at school rather than their SAT results.

Throughout the research, it is clear that there is a clear lack of consensus between the various stakeholders regarding the impact and role of statutory assessments within the education system. Despite this, it does appear that there is a consensus regarding children's right to a high-quality education that will ensure that they reach their full potential beyond their academic careers. This literature review has utilised a variety of information formats, including research papers, governmental policies, newspaper articles, and more, to

discuss the ongoing debate, which provides a vast array of opinions and views on the subject. However, it also goes to prove that this ongoing debate is far more complicated and deeper rooted than a simple change in assessment methods. As such, it should be considered that future research should be solution focussed on how to positively change assessment methods to be child-centric, with the holistic development of children at the forefront of any decisions made.

## Methodology:

This research project was conducted using a case study methodology as I wanted a holistic and real-world perspective through gaining teacher opinions on the subject. I believe that due to the amount of controversy surrounding this subject, this is the best methodology to use as there are still many areas that require a more in-depth discussion, and simply gathering statistics is not the most representative of the reality of the impact of statutory assessments on primary aged children. Furthermore, due to the nature of this project, I believe that using an Action Research approach would not have been possible as it would be difficult to action and reflect on any changes on such a large scale in such a small amount of time. Though, I do aim to take my final research into account when it comes to future practice and to use this as a foundation of information to conduct further research that can impact potential policy changes.

Understanding the different methods and methodologies to use for a research project was an integral part of beginning my research. As I was interested in gaining insight into teacher opinions, I decided that a case study was the best methodology to conduct my research. Case studies tend to focus on open discussions, opinions, and lived experiences rather than statistics which Stake (2005) refers to as 'holistic.' Stake (2005) states that this type of holistic model is most frequently used in educational research as it focuses on a specific issue, problem or dilemma within the research. As I was the most interested in gaining a real-world perspective, it was important to me that I chose a methodology and method that was open-minded, promotes discussion, and was also flexible for both myself and the participants. As stated by Stake (2005), case studies are used to gain a rich understanding and holistic picture of an entity, using a variety of data collection, including gathering opinions, perceptions, and ideas of a diverse group of people. Case studies provide in-depth insights into the participants' experiences, which is the type of insight that this research was focused on.

I had considered action research which is becoming one of the major methodologies employed in educational research inquiries (Tekin et al., 2013); with its convenient and dynamic approach to observing a person or situation, it can provide a real-life look into the discussion at hand and provide insight into how changes should be acted upon within future practice. However, due to the nature of this project, I believe that using an Action

Research approach would not be possible. I believe it would be difficult to action and reflect on any changes on such a large scale in such a small amount of time. Though I do aim to take my final research into account when it comes to future practice, it is important to consider the limitations of this type of methodology. Furthermore, it is vital to understand that such limitations may change over time, which is, in turn, likely to impact the outcome of research conducted.

When deciding the method in which I would conduct my research, it was important that I choose an appropriate format to do so. As we were in the middle of a pandemic, whereby it was impossible to go physically into schools or, indeed, to continuously contact schools, it was important to me that I used the least intrusive method I could. Choosing to use an online questionnaire format to gather information for this case study was the best way I felt I could get honest opinions without causing too much stress or pressure for the participants. Questionnaires require all questions to be impartial, and for the purpose of my project, I wanted to ensure I was employing qualitative methods, meaning that all of my questions were to be open-ended to promote discussion and critical analysis rather than statistics. By using an online questionnaire, I felt that it would give the participants a platform whereby they could take their time to answer the questions anonymously about a widely considered, sensitive subject without fear of being judged.

Although I am confident, I approached the research project with ethical considerations considered; much like any other method, it does have its own drawbacks. It is difficult to generalise the findings with a low response rate. As I have had a limited amount of time, and participants are already over-run with their own workload during the pandemic, many schools and teachers did not want to participate as they were already overwhelmed. With this in mind, I am still glad that I took the route that was the least intrusive; however it does mean that my findings are limited and therefore cannot be applied to the wider population. Though, this is a good springboard and foundation for further research.

My participants were originally year two and year six teachers who currently teach in primary schools across England. The reason for this choice was because these are the years when SATs take place, which throughout much of the literature are the most common statutory assessments spoken about. However, throughout the course of sending out the questionnaires, I found that it was difficult to get responses from such a restricted group, especially during exam season. This led me to reach out to all years in primary schools as assessments do take place throughout each year in primary education, and many teachers still have some level of experience in the years where statutory assessments such as SATs take place.

I contacted each school individually by a phone call then email as I wanted to ensure they were actually interested and had the ability to ask any questions about the research project. When emailing them, I attached the research proposal, participant information sheet, and consent form, including the UWE privacy notice, external ethics approval, and the questionnaire/ survey. The sample sizing was a challenging choice to make as it was difficult to determine how many responses I would actually receive, so with that in mind, I had decided to keep sending out questionnaires until I had received at least ten responses from at least three different schools. Unfortunately, due to various reasons, I only received five responses from 5 different schools. This is a small number of participants, and as such, it is important to note that such a low response rate will not be truly reflective or applicable to wider society. However, despite this, the responses still brought up very interesting points.

Much like any research project, this one came with potential ethical challenges, including, though not limited to, emotional and psychological impact and the potential for data protection risks. In further detail, the emotional and psychological risks I foresaw were due to the questions surrounding an emotionally difficult topic. When talking to teachers in my professional placement, the one thing I noted was that people often became quite emotional and agitated when discussing this topic. With this in mind, I knew it would be important to ensure that questions were unbiased, not leading questions, and were open questions that would give participants an opportunity to give their open opinions. Furthermore, it was important that these questions were not influenced by my own opinions and thoughts, which is why I made sure to have them approved by my dissertation supervisor, an impartial educator who would be able to help me word questions appropriately.

Another ethical issue that could have arisen was the potential for participants to feel anxious or worried that their responses would be shared with their employers, colleagues, or others, which would not only breach data protection acts but could also mean that the participants would not be completely honest and open with their responses. With this in mind, it was vital that I reassured the participants that none of their responses would be shared. By using a safe platform (as approved by the university) such as Qualtrics, I was able to create a questionnaire where participants would not need to share any personal information such as name, school, children's names, or anything else that may indicate who the participant is. Furthermore, all participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the research project up until the beginning of January 2021; this was provided as a safety net for participants in case they had changed their mind; fortunately, I had no withdrawals from this research project.

My main issue with this project was the lack of responses; I knew that this would be a problem going into the project as it was being conducted in the middle of a worldwide pandemic which already placed limitations in terms of the willingness of schools to participate and lack of face to face contact. Further, although I still believe that questionnaires were the most appropriate way of interacting with participants, the time-consuming nature of them seems to be the general reason that people do not respond. For this reason, I made sure that the questionnaires had enough closed-ended questions and open-ended questions so that participants could get through the questions quicker. I also wanted to ensure that participants were able to access the questionnaires on their mobile devices, including phones and laptops; my reasoning for this is so that participants had the ability to take their time with their answers in comfortable environments and with less potential for pressure, e.g., at work where they may feel they could be seen or judged by colleagues or management.

Overall, I am content with the results of this research project due to the conversations the responses opened up. I am very aware that this project is only a small-scale one with little to no real-world application, which does not support my original goals. However, I feel that considering the weight of this topic, these responses emphasise the need for further research. In future practice, I aim to understand the policies that impact teaching and learning with regard to statutory assessments and would like to conduct a larger research project over a longer period of time with the aim of finding an assessment technique that is beneficial for all stakeholders, but primarily children.

## Findings and discussions:

The findings have been particularly interesting as I was not expecting such in-depth responses. Whilst I was aware that there is a lot of debate about this topic, I was unsure how participants would respond due to the controversial nature of the topic.

***Q3 - Do you believe that standardised testing is a fair reflection of pupils' academic understanding? Please elaborate***

Participant A stated: *"some children will succeed in the lesson but forget the skill by the next week. However, some children have better memories, so find this easier. I have high ability children that don't perform well in tests as they get so nervous so it is not a good representation".*

Participant B stated: *"No. Even as adults, it's difficult to find a way to measure an ability/skill using only one way.[...] It's interesting to think about whether SATs are there to test children's knowledge/understanding/ability, or is it used to measure the school's provisions for teaching and learning?"*

Participant C stated: *"No, I do not believe that standardised testing is a fair reflection of pupils academic understanding as it is simply a test of whether pupils can get the 'right answer' on a certain day [...] Standardised testing takes no account of individual strengths and weaknesses and also does not reflect the board curriculum now taught in Primary school [...] SATs can limit pupils' potential to develop their understanding across a much more diverse range of subjects and topics".*

Participant D stated: *"For some it will be, however there are many factors which can affect a child's capacity on the day of the test, meaning that in some cases, test results do not accurately reflect the child's ability."*

Through reading the responses to this question, it appears that the general consensus was that the participants do not believe that standardised testing is a fair reflection of pupil's academic understanding. Participants appear to agree that standardised testing is only suitable for a select number of pupils and can, in some cases, lead to detrimental effects on a child's emotional and mental well-being and even other academic subjects. These responses appear to support research by researchers such as Glazzard and Trussler (2019) where they state that exams and statutory assessments can be detrimental to the child in ways of emotional and mental distress. The research also suggests that foundation subjects, which are said to be integral to childhood development, become less important, and children lose out on certain skills or knowledge that they may gain in foundation subjects, where participant C states, *"SATs can limit pupils' potential to develop their understanding across a much more diverse range of subjects and topics."*

#### ***Q4 - Do you believe that SATs are accessible for all pupils? Please elaborate.***

Participant A states: *"I think working at is accessible for most children and there are clear questions that will show greater understanding. Whilst some can't access the SATs, I feel like any standardised testing would be similar as working independently they struggle"*

Participant B states: *"it only works for children who enjoy solitary work, where they're already holding a lot of information in the short term and/or long term memory!"*

Participant C states: *"No, I don't think the SATs are accessible for all pupils. The language and structure used on the tests can be difficult for pupils who have English as a additional language and also students with Learning difficulties or disabilities."*

Participant D states: *"No, children with SALT difficulties, including dyslexia for example are unfairly disadvantaged by the format of SATs tests"*

Following on from the previous question, it was interesting to see the participants elaborating even further on their previous comments. From these responses, it is clear to see that there is indeed further discussion needed, with three out of four responses leaning towards the view that standardised tests are currently not accessible to all students; however, the remaining one seems to be of the opinion that though there are limitations, it would be the same for other types of testing. Interestingly research such as National Education Union (2018) suggests that SATs result negatively and disproportionately impact those who have English as an additional language. This research suggests that, much like most of the respondents said, SATs are not accessible to all and suggests that there should be other forms of assessment techniques used, either alongside statutory testing or instead of statutory testing.

***Q5 - Do you believe that children benefit from standardised testing? Please elaborate.***

Participant A states: *"I do as it trains them to problem solve and time keep. Providing a positive attitude to them and calling them quizzes can reduce the stress for you younger years"*

Participant B states: *"No. Testing does not help the individual being tested. Teachers use a variety of ways to assess the knowledge and skills of children without having to use testing."*

Participant C states: *"No, I most certainly do not believe that children benefit from Standardised testing. It is just not right to place such immense pressure on young children and this can have serious effects on their well being and how they feel about themselves and their abilities"*

Participant D states: *"No. The tests enable an audit of the performance of a school."*

Delving further into the potential benefits or drawbacks of statutory testing, it was important to gain an understanding of whether or not teachers could see the benefits of statutory testing for their pupils. Interestingly it once again seemed that three out of four participants appear to be of the opinion that standardised testing does not benefit children and is instead a way of measuring the success of individual



teachers and schools, thus providing more benefits for teachers, schools, and even parents. The one participant felt that standardised tests could be a positive experience for children if there was less stress put on them to get the correct answers and approaching them with a positive attitude.

Interestingly, (Montgomery 2020) stated that SATs were not intended to be high stakes, and the intention was for them to be used as a force of good and at the discretion of the class teachers. Furthermore, researchers appear to believe that SATs are used as a way of developing skills such as problem-solving and questioning, which has the aim of enriching children for their futures outside of education. However, there is an equal, if not more, amount of research that suggests that exam pressure is one of the leading causes of mental health problems in young people (Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership, 2016). It appears that the same questions raised within academic research appear to also be raised in academic practice.

***Q6 - What impact, if any, do you believe teaching for SATs has on foundation subjects?***

Participant A stated: *"I find I plan for questions that will come up in a test, that I wouldn't normally teach. For example, present perfect tense was taught only for the SPAG paper".*

Participant B stated: *"It takes away from the time children could be exploring the world around them. Subjects like drama, music, art, design technology are the first to be sacrificed, when a child/class needs to catch up/go over a SATs topic/subject."*

Participant C stated: *"I think they can have a very negative impact as these subjects often become neglected or are not even taught at all. These subjects are still very important to children's learning and teaching for SATs leaves schools and teachers no time to cover these subjects."*

Participant D stated: *"In some cases, time which would have been dedicated to foundation subjects can be impacted on by the additional time which is assigned to SATs preparation."*

Continuing from Glassard and Trussler (2019) and BBC News (2019), who states that SATs have a detrimental effect on foundation subjects, it is important to understand teacher opinions on the alleged effect SATs have on the teaching and learning of the foundation subjects. Through reading the responses, it seems that teachers appear to disproportionately spend more time ensuring they are preparing for SATs questions rather than teaching foundation subjects; the reasoning behind this could be that foundation subjects are not tested at the primary school level. Participant B stated that the focus on SATs means that children are

losing out on time they could be exploring the world around them through other foundation subjects such as drama, music, and art, which interestingly research by Glassard and Trussler (2019) suggests are vital to childhood development. It appears there is uncertainty on the importance and impact of statutory assessments.

**Q 7 and 8: "During SATs teaching and testing, do you notice changes in children's mood or attitudes in the classroom? (figure 1) / do parents mention changes (figure 2)? If so, what appear to be the most common changes?"**

As much of my research was concentrating on the emotional and mental impact of statutory assessments on primary children, I felt it was important to see if teachers and guardians noticed any differences in their moods or actions within the classroom and at home, specifically during the exam season. I presented the participants with two questions, one aimed at classroom observations by faculty and the other aimed at observations from parents (during conversations with class teachers).

Below are the responses.

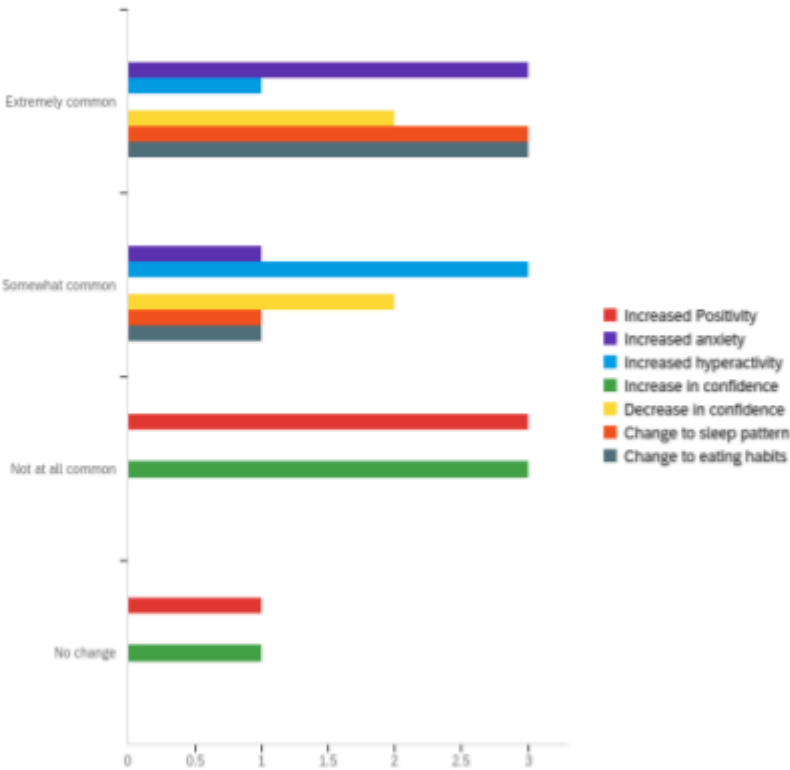


Figure : Impact on mood at home

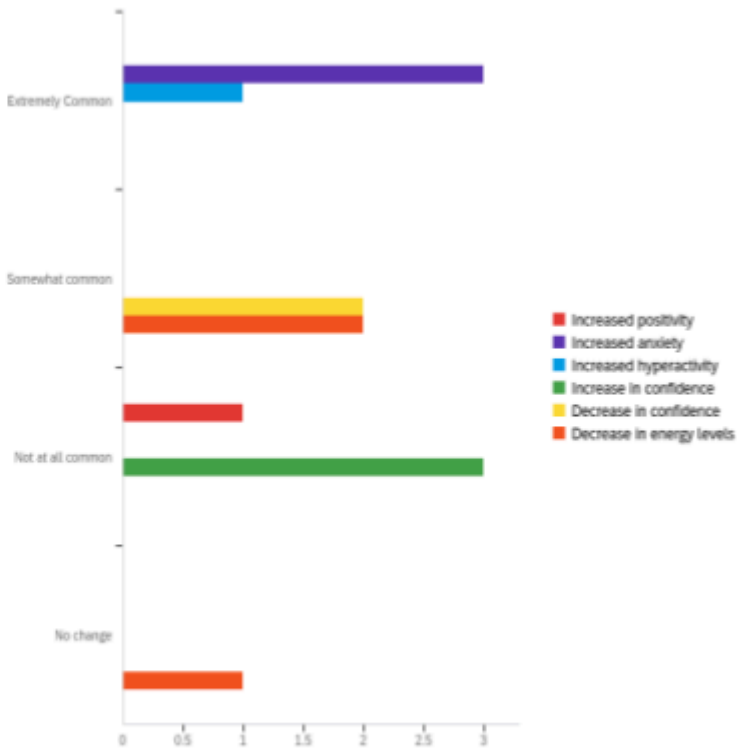
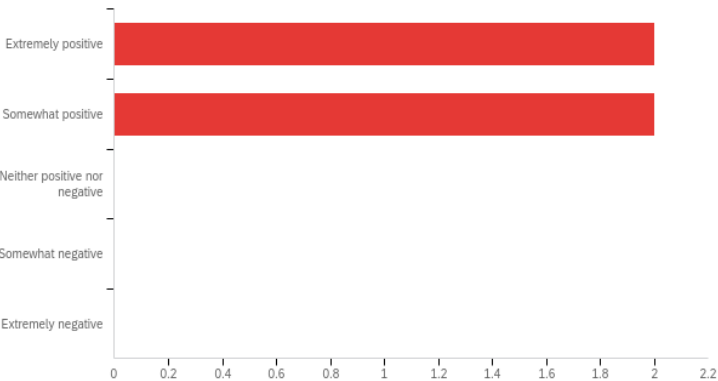


Figure 1: Impact on mood in school

In keeping with the behavioural and emotional changes I noticed throughout my professional placements, there seems to be a consistent agreement that a decrease in confidence and increase in anxiety is somewhat too extremely common in both the classroom and at home. It could be suggested that a lack of confidence can have a detrimental effect on children's overall performance in school. Interestingly participants reported that parents rarely mentioned a negative effect on sleep patterns yet did notice some change in energy levels in the classroom. Much like adults, children too need energy in order to focus and absorb information. Despite the lack of reports on lack of sleep, it is interesting to see that when in school, they seem to lack energy. This suggests that their mood is indeed more affected in school rather than at home. Alongside a decrease in energy levels, there seemed to be a somewhat common report of increased hyperactivity at home but an extremely common report of hyperactivity in the classroom. Hyperactivity can be caused by various factors; however, it is vital to note that hyperactivity is commonly seen as a classroom disturbance and means that pupils are less likely to be able to focus o concentrate on their tasks, thus unable to take in the information presented to them.

***Q9 - How do you feel about the following statement? "We need to prepare children for life, not just for exams."***

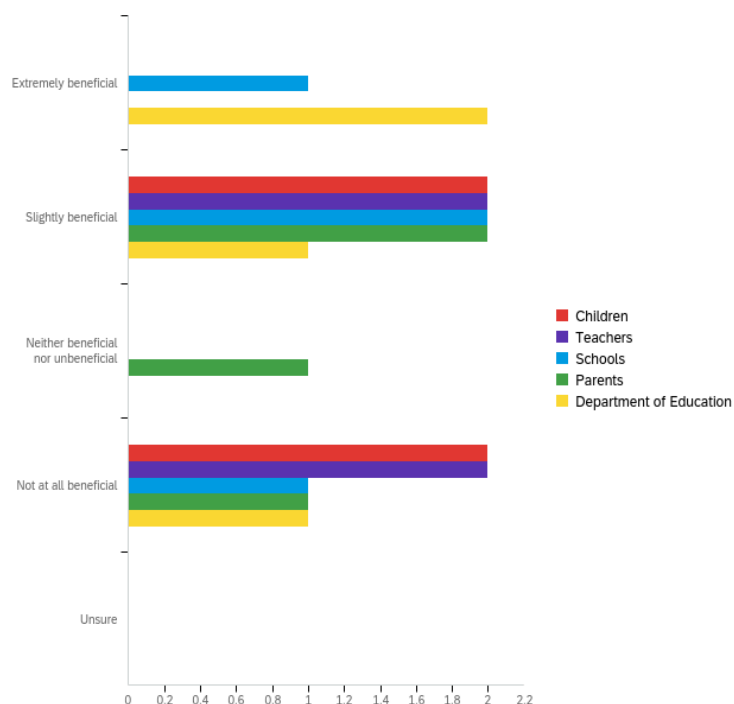
During my initial research, I found that there were many people such as BBC News (2019), National Education Union (2018), and More Than A Score (2019) that repeatedly mentioned that the current education system does not reflect real-world skills and that teaching has become teaching to the test rather than teaching



useable skills. A speech made by Corbyn (2019) emphasises this point by stating, "we need to prepare children for life, not just for exams." Since I was researching teacher opinions, I felt it was important to include this in my questionnaire. Participants responded 50/50 with Somewhat positive and extremely positive.

This was not a surprising result after seeing participant's responses to previous questions. This implies that the participants do in some way agree with this statement, which suggests that they see an issue with the current way pupils are being taught during testing periods.

***Q11 - To what extent do you believe SATs are beneficial for the following groups?***



Following research regarding the importance of the education system, I often found that not all felt the system takes into account the benefits or drawbacks for each stakeholder. The stakeholders I felt were the most important for my research were the children, teachers, parents/guardians, schools, and the Department of Education. When presenting participants with the above question, I was interested in the results; participants seemed to be split across the board with regards to who benefits from testing. It is difficult to determine what these results imply other than supporting the fact that this is a debate that still has a lot of

discussion and research left to be done. It appears that the opinion is that children do not benefit from testing as much schools and the Department of Education and in keeping with the literature.

## Conclusion:

While researching the impact of statutory assessments on primary-aged children's emotional and mental well-being, I found that there is still much debate surrounding this subject between all stakeholders, governing bodies, teachers, academics, political bodies, and even guardians. This constant and deep-rooted debate brought up many interesting points from all of these stakeholders. I found it particularly interesting that according to Machin and Vignoles (2006) and Beauvallet (2015). the government introduced statutory assessments as a way to assess school progress. However, throughout this research, I have found many arguments that suggest that statutory assessments are not the most beneficial way to do this, alongside some arguing that statutory assessments are, instead, detrimental to primary-aged children.

The combination of academic and news reports and personal experience in professional practice, and knowledge of psychological theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, drew me to the desire to understand the emotional and mental impact of statutory assessments on primary-aged children. Maslow stresses that in order for children to reach their full potential, all needs must be met; the basic needs are physiological needs such as food, water, warmth, and rest; and then safety needs, which will then lead into

psychological needs and therefore self-fulfillment. With this in mind, it was important that I understood the role of statutory assessments in those needs.

Due to the nature and amount of debate surrounding this subject, it was important to complete this research in an unbiased and safe environment. I chose to conduct a questionnaire aimed at teachers so as to explore teacher opinions on the impact they notice in their classrooms. I did this as I felt that although speaking to the children themselves may have given me a deeper understanding, it could have been difficult to gain trust and honesty from the young people to get them to answer the questions as honestly as possible. It would also require a level of self-understanding and reflection that the children may not yet possess. Alongside this, it was more beneficial to the short-term research project to gain ethical permission to conduct it with adults rather than children. The research was conducted via questionnaire as this means that participants can be anonymous, which aimed to encourage them to answer truthfully.

Before conducting my own research, I began looking further into the literature regarding this topic which brought about many interesting points, including those that I had not previously considered. One argument made by Montgomery (2020) was that statutory assessments were not intended to be stressful, and it was instead open to interpretation and up to schools and teachers to conduct teaching and assessment preparation in a way they felt suitable. (Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership, 2016) also stated that statutory assessments such as SATs have benefits for the future preparation of pupils as it prepares them for exams in secondary school and also promotes valuable question level analysis. Furthermore, it is a useful tool for teachers' assessments of the academic progress of the pupils in their class so they can better prepare for their teaching (Montgomery, 2020).

By comparing my own findings to the literature that was found during the initial research stages, I found that there are a lot of teachers that do not agree with the use of statutory assessments and those teachers who feel passionately about developing more child-centric forms of assessment, which matches with the literature. Going into this research, I realised that I too had a biased opinion on this topic, however through research and discussion, I have come to realise that the issue is far more than simply being about whether statutory assessments should be used or not and the impact on a child's emotional and mental well-being. The issues are far more deep-rooted, and this has fuelled my own passion and curiosity to understand how we, as educators, can best work alongside other stakeholders to create a positive, motivating, and enriching education for all children.

## Appendices:



What year group do you teach?

☐ Year 2

To what extent do you believe SATs are beneficial for the following groups?

	Extremely beneficial	Slightly beneficial	Neither beneficial nor unbeneficial	Not at all beneficial	Unsure
Children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Department of Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How prepared do you feel children are for SATs?

	Extremely prepared	Somewhat prepared	Somewhat unprepared	Extremely unprepared	Hard to tell
How prepared?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

☐ 30+ years

Do you believe that standardised testing is a fair reflection of pupils academic understanding? Please elaborate...

Do you believe that SATs are accessible for all pupils? Please elaborate...

Do you believe that children benefit from standardised testing? Please elaborate...

What impact, if any, do you believe teaching for SATs has on foundation subjects?

Finally, please feel free to write any further comments or opinions regarding your experience with teaching/ preparing pupils for SATs

	Increased Positivity	Increased anxiety	Increased hyperactivity	Increase in confidence	Decrease in confidence	Change to sleep pattern	Change to eating habits
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

During SATs teaching and testing, do you notice changes in children's mood or attitudes in the classroom? If so, what appear to be the most common changes?

	Extremely Common	Somewhat common	Not at all common	No change
Increased positivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased hyperactivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase in confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decrease in confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decrease in energy levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How do you feel about the following statement? "We need to prepare children for life, not just for exams".

	Extremely positive	Somewhat positive	Neither positive nor negative	Somewhat negative	Extremely negative
Please select one of the following	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you believe that SATs are relevant in today's society? Why?

## Appendix 2: Ethics form.

### Ethical Review Application Form – MA, PGCE and BA (Hons) Students in Education & Childhood



What recruitment information will you give potential participants?

I will inform the potential participants of the title of my project and give more detailed information regarding the aims and themes of the project. This information will include the start and end date of the project, the project title and the main themes of the project, the participant characteristics required for the project, how their data and answers will be used, how their data will be safely secured during the project, how their data will be securely destroyed after the project, their right to withdraw and how they may do this, the complaints process, my details and my dissertation supervisors details.

- The student has the skills to carry out the research;
- The participant information sheet is appropriate; and procedures for recruitment of research

How will you gain informed written consent from the participants?

Through sending out a consent form with all of the information about the project. It will include the project start and end dates, what the project is researching, my research method and methodology, how they may withdraw from the project, who they can contact if they wish to make any complaints, how their information will be stored, and how their information will be securely destroyed once the project is over. I will ensure that participants do not need to include any personal details about themselves, others, or the school they work for.

What arrangements are in place for participants to withdraw from the study?

Participants will be able to contact me via email or phone to withdraw from the study. Their data will then be securely deleted from private files and will not be included in my final project.

#### Section 5: Data Collection, Storage and Disposal

Research undertaken at UWE by staff and students must be GDPR compliant. For further guidance see [Research and GDPR compliance](#)

☒ Please confirm that you have included the UWE Privacy Notice with the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

☒ By ticking this box, I confirm that I have read the [Data Protection Research Standard](#), understand my responsibilities as a researcher and that my project has been designed in accordance with the Standard.

#### Section 5.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Which of these data collection methods will you be using? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Interviews
- ☒ Questionnaires/surveys
- ☐ Focus groups
- ☐ Observation
- ☐ Secondary sources
- ☐ Clinical measurement
- ☐ Digital media
- ☐ Sample collection
- ☐ Other

If Other, please specify: Click or tap here to enter text.

Please note that online surveys must only be administered via [Qualtrics](#)

What type of data will you be collecting?

- ☐ Quantitative data
- ☒ Qualitative data

Please describe the data analysis and data anonymisation methods.

Participants will not need to share their names, their schools, their roles, or any information which may make it obvious where they work.

#### Section 5.2 Data Storage, Access and Security

Where will you store the data? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ H:\ drive on UWE network
- ☐ Restricted folder on S:\ drive
- ☒ Restricted folder on UWE OneDrive
- ☐ Other (including secure physical storage)

If Other, please specify:

Please explain who will have access to the data.

Only I will have access to the raw data. After, my dissertation supervisor and dissertation marker may also have access to the final findings.

Please describe how you will maintain the security of the data and, where applicable, how you will transfer data between co-researchers.

Data will not be transferred except in the format of findings in the final project. Security will be maintained by ensuring that only I have access to the data, not using shared computers, not using any names or personal details for the correspondence and using a secure email to correspond with participants where needed.

#### Section 5.3 Data Disposal

Please explain **when** and how you will destroy personal data.

I will permanently delete any correspondence via email and securely dispose of any physical copies by shredding all documents. This will happen if a participant withdraws from the project and/ or once the final project has been completed- January 2021 will be the end date for this.

#### Section 3: Human Participants

Does the project involve human participants or their data? Yes  
If not, please proceed to Section 5: Data Collection, Storage and Disposal, you do not need to complete sections 3-4.

#### Section 3.1: Participant Selection

Who are your participants?

#### Section 6: Other Ethical Issues

What risks, if any, do the participants (or donors, if your project involves human tissue) face in taking part in the project and how will you address these risks?

Ethical issues may include emotional risks. Some participants may feel that some questions bring up some difficult discussions. To address this I will ensure that all participants can contact me to discuss further if they feel that would help, and I will also ensure to the best of my ability that

questions are worded in such a way that it will not evoke negative feelings for the participants.

All participants will have the right to withdraw, and the right to complain. I will also check with my dissertation supervisor if the questions are suitable before sending these out to participants.

Considering risks to all who are involved it is important for the reputations of the school, UWE, myself and the individual participant that all data is kept securely, that all involved are aware of how their data will be used and who will be able to see it. I will ensure that all identifying information is kept in a secure location in a restricted folder on UWE One Drive.

Are there any potential risks to researchers and any other people as a consequence of undertaking this project that are greater than those encountered in normal day-to-day life? For further information, see [guidance on safety of social researchers](#).

How will the results of the project be reported and disseminated? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Written assignment
- ☐ Conference presentation
- ☐ Internal report
- ☒ Dissertation/thesis
- ☐ Written feedback to participants
- ☐ Presentation to participants
- ☐ Report to funders
- ☐ Digital media
- ☐ Other

If Other, please specify:

Does the project involve research that may be considered to be security sensitive?

For further information, see [UREC guidance for security sensitive research](#).

No- there will be no need for teachers to share any personal information about themselves, their schools or any children in particular.

- Anyone who is seriously ill or has a terminal illness

#### Section 7: Supporting Documentation

Please ensure that you provide copies of all relevant documentation, otherwise the review of your application will be delayed. Relevant documentation should include a copy of:

- The research proposal or project design.
- The participant information sheet and consent form, including a UWE privacy notice.
- The questionnaire/survey.
- External ethics approval and any supporting documentation.

Please clearly label each document - ensure you include the applicant's name, document type and version/date (e.g. Joe Bloqs - Questionnaire v1.5 191018).

#### Section 8: Declaration

☒ By ticking this box, I confirm that the information contained in this application, including any accompanying information is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and correct. I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations and the right of the participants.

Name: Katie Roberts

Date: 31/10/2020

Supervisor Signature Matt Wilkinson



**UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND, BRISTOL**

**Frenchay Campus**  
**Coldharbour Lane**  
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**BS16 1QY**  
**Tel: (0117) 9656261**

**3 YEAR BA (HONS) Primary Education ITE**

To whom it may concern,

My name is Katie Roberts I am a student on the BA (Hons) ITE degree programme at the University of the West of England in the Department of Education and Childhood. As part of my studies, I am interested in researching teacher opinions regarding the impact standardised testing, in particular SAT's, has on year 2 and year 6 children. Before you decide whether you are willing to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and if you have any queries or would like more information please contact me, my details are below.

The research is looking at the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the mental and emotional impact SATs have on year 2 and year 6 pupils. To gather the data for the study I will be conducting an anonymised questionnaire through Qualtrics. This questionnaire will need to be completed by the end of November. All questionnaires will be anonymous and there will be no need to share any specific personal information about yourself, your school, or any children. When filling in the questionnaire you do not need to answer a question if you do not wish to do so.

All data generated by the study will be maintained according to the university's ethical guidelines for research. These guidelines require that data are anonymised (no actual names will be used, and the setting name will be confidential), stored securely and deleted after the study is complete. The only circumstance where I will need to pass on information is in the event if someone discloses something to me which is of concern. In this event, I will inform the setting's safeguarding lead. Hard copy research material will be kept in a restricted file on the UWE One Drive, where only myself has access to this file.

The results of my study will be analysed and used in my final year dissertation. The findings will be read by university tutors, may be shared with the setting and may be shared with other students in classroom discussions. If you would like further details about the study please ask me or, if you prefer, my university tutor.

My details are: **Katie Roberts**- my email address is [katie8.roberts@live.uwe.ac.uk](mailto:katie8.roberts@live.uwe.ac.uk)

My university tutor's details are: **Matt Wilkinson**- his email is [matt.wilkinson@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:matt.wilkinson@uwe.ac.uk)

To understand further the ways in which the University of the West of England regulates the use of participant's data, please read the attached Privacy Notice for Research Participants.

You do not have to take part in this research. It is up to you to decide whether or not to be involved. If you wish to take part, you are able to withdraw from the research without giving a reason until the point that your data has been processed and analysed. Thereafter, no further data relating to you will be gathered. If you want to withdraw from the study within this period, please email me.

---

If you are willing to be part of this study, please sign the consent form below and return as soon as possible. Once completed a questionnaire will be sent out.

Thank you for your interest in the study,

Katie Roberts



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