

# NEU campaign newsletter Nottingham District



**NEU indicative ballot starts on June 4<sup>th</sup> • make sure you vote**

## It's time to vote – vote YES to end the system of toxic testing

The NEU indicative ballot on primary testing starts on Tuesday June 4<sup>th</sup>.

The ballot will gather members' views on the NEU campaign to scrap standardised testing and whether they would be prepared to boycott all statutory high-stakes tests during the next academic year, including KS1 and KS2 SATs, the Phonics Check and Multiplication Check.

**It is vital that all primary members vote in this ballot so that we can take forward our campaign for an alternative system.**

The NEU believes our education system is obsessed with league tables, turning children into data points and denying them a broad, stimulating, education at key stages in their development. We believe it puts an unnecessary burden on teachers, students and parents alike.

High-stakes testing distorts the work of schools; it narrows the curriculum, increases stress on pupils and adds to teachers' workload.

Each year, in Union surveys, members consistently tell us that SATs are bad for children and education.

The OECD in 2013 stated that evaluation and assessment systems can distort how and what students are taught.

The OECD gives examples of teachers being forced to 'teach to the test', focusing solely on skills that are tested and giving less attention to students' wider developmental and educational needs.

There is now a widespread view amongst teachers, parents, politicians and education experts that the current assessment system needs to be replaced.

**This ballot gives us a great opportunity to press for change – please make sure you vote.**

### BALLOT TIMETABLE

- ☒ The ballot will run from 4<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July.
- ☒ The ballot will be run online through Survey Monkey.
- ☒ Members with a valid email address will receive an email with a link and a unique voter ID.
- ☒ Members without a valid email address will receive a letter in the post with a link and a unique voter ID.
- ☒ Members will receive a helpline number they can call if they have queries about their ballot

### What does an alternative look like?

Education Minister Damian Hinds recently claimed that without SATs we would have no means of checking whether 'our children can read, write and add up'

**That is, of course, nonsense.**

We believe that teachers can and should use their professional expertise and judgement to assess children's learning.

There are lots of examples where that is done very successfully without the need for high stakes testing, which is damaging to children, education professionals and schools.

In Finland, schools manage very well without external tests: they conduct self-evaluations as part of their responsibilities.

Beyond Finland, there is a wealth of work that sets out alternatives to SATs, which focus on 3 kinds of assessment:

- **formative assessment by teachers, across a broad range of learning.**
- **occasional use, at the teachers' discretion, of summative tests taken from a national text bank, to confirm teachers' judgments**
- **sampling – as with the international PISA tests a small proportion of learners would be tested, to evaluate trends in the school system as a whole.**

This ballot is an ideal opportunity for staff in schools to talk about an alternative vision of teaching, learning and assessment.

**SCRAP  
THE SATs**

From next year, primary school pupils will face baseline assessment in reception and high stakes standardised tests in years 1, 2, 4 and 6.

**Time to say enough is enough.**

**Vote YES to end toxic testing**

[neu.org.uk/toomuchtesting](http://neu.org.uk/toomuchtesting)  
[#TooMuchTesting](https://twitter.com/TooMuchTesting)

