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Primary review: scrap Sats tests, experts say

Sats tests for 11-year-olds should be scrapped, according to the Cambridge Primary Review.



The Cambridge Primary Review called for SATs to be replaced by a system of less formal

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Gillian Harvev



By **Graeme Paton**, Education Editor

7:30AM BST 16 Oct 2009

Comment

League tables that rate schools on pupils' performance in English and mathematics should also be axed, it recommended.

Academics said the existing system caused significant "collateral damage" as children were drilled to pass exams, marginalising other subjects such as history, geography, art and science.

It called for exams to be replaced by a system of less formal teacher assessment throughout primary school. A random sample of a small number of children could then take place at 11 to gauge national performance in all subjects.

The study said: "The prospect of testing, especially high-stakes testing undertaken in the public arena, forces teachers, pupils and parents to concentrate their attention on those areas of learning to be tested, too often to the exclusion of other activities of considerable educational importance."

It added: "As children move through the primary phase, their statutory entitlement to a broad and balanced education is increasingly but needlessly compromised by a 'standards' agenda which combines high-stakes testing and the national strategies' exclusive focus on literacy and numeracy."

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Vernon Coaker, the Schools Minister, insisted the review represented a "backward step".

"The report is at best woolly and unclear on how schools should be accountable to the public – we're clear that it would be a retrograde step to return to days when the real achievements of schools were hidden," he said.

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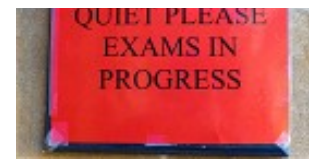
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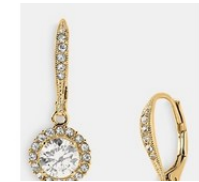
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