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Don't teach to the test, say children

Once again the review of primary schooling in England points to

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the way national Sats tests are distorting what is taught in the classroom.

Primary children get anxious about tests. But not half as anxious as the authors of the magisterial primary review being produced by Cambridge University.

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Once again the review of primary schooling in England points to the way national Sats tests are distorting what is taught in the classroom. Obsession with results is even pursuing them home and leading to the "scholarisation" of childhood.

"Pupils confirm what teachers themselves believe: that primary education is constrained and to a degree determined by the emphasis on Sats and Sat results.

"Pupils seem particularly concerned about the loss of curriculum breadth as their teachers concentrate on the tested core subjects," note Carol Robinson, of Sussex University, and Michael Fielding, of the London University's Institute of Education.

They say that in the early years of schooling pupils feel positive about teachers looking at their work because they believe that it will be evaluated sympathetically. "However, as children move through the primary school they become less eager to show teachers their work as they are worried about the

consequences of 'getting it wrong'", adds the report.

They concede that some pupils enjoy the challenge of testing, while others become worried, fearful and anxious.

But the general picture is that Sats figure "prominently" in the minds of pupils who are taking them in years 2 and 6 when they are aged seven



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and 11 and they are "generally aware that Sat results constitute some sort of official judgement of them".

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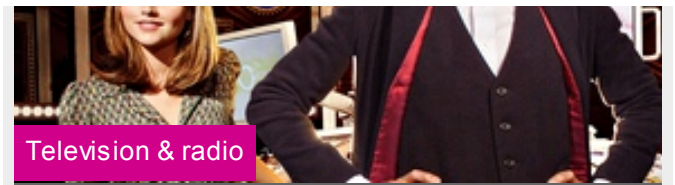
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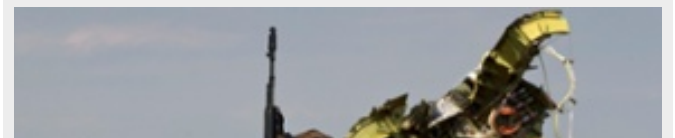
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