

SYNCHRONY BANK
optimizer⁺plus^{*}
*Trademark of Synchrony Bank. †See disclosures.

Big Plus Offer: **0.95%** APY¹
on all balances

High Yield Savings
Open an account today

The Telegraph

Friday 01 August 2014 | UK News feed

- Home
- News**
- World Sport Finance Comment Culture Travel Life Women Fashion Luxury Tech Cars Video
- Politics | Investigations | Obits | Education | Earth | Science | Defence | Health | Scotland | Royal | Celebrities | Weird

HOME » NEWS » UK NEWS

Heads lash out at the 'tyranny of testing'



Unreasonable pressure? Critics say tests narrow academic achievement in primary schools

By **Julie Henry, Education Correspondent**

12:01AM GMT 09 Dec 2007

Tests and league tables are "deeply damaging" the quality of schoolchildren's lives and their education, a major report by head teachers will warn this week.

Print this article

Share 0

Facebook 0

Twitter 0

Email

LinkedIn 0

0

Try brain training tested by dozens of researchers



lumosity

Start Training →

Latest Video»



Dramatic moment gas



Bill Clinton: I could

The obsession with national assessment that has seen pupils in England become the world's most tested is putting huge pressure on children, stigmatising them as failures and forcing teachers to narrow the curriculum, according to the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT).



The report, to be published this week following a 10-month inquiry by the NAHT, calls for the "examinations factory" in England's schools to be scrapped and radically redesigned. It adds to concerns about the National Curriculum tests, known as key stage tests or "Sats", and their effect on millions of children.

Just last month, two reports revealed widespread disquiet about the regime. In a review of primary school education, Prof Robin Alexander, from Cambridge University, concluded that the tests heaped stress on children and produced inaccurate results. This was followed by a report from the influential Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, which listed a series of "damaging side effects", including teachers drilling children to pass tests and the "unreasonable pressure" of continual testing.

Related Articles

- [Parents targeted to boost children's education](#) 08 Dec 2007
- [Stocking filler with a difference: a spelling guide](#) 08 Dec 2007
- [No books to study in new English exam](#) 08 Dec 2007
- [Probe into effect of TV ads on children](#) 09 Dec 2007

Mick Brookes, the NAHT general secretary, said: "Teaching to the test is



Eastbourne Pier fire, in pictures



Freak storms hit southern England



Ukip merchandise



Opening ceremony: in pictures



Last night of the Circus

blasts blow up Taiwan street



Amazon rainforest tribe makes contact with outside world

have killed bin Laden



Ebola outbreak explained in 60 seconds



Bloody aftermath of Gaza shopping area attack



Waitrose: summer seafood recipes

More From The Web

NEWSmax

- [Dick Morris: 'I Wouldn't Be Surprised if Obama Resigned'](#)
- [CIA's Brennan Admits Spying on Senate](#)
- [Boehner Border Bill Deserted by House](#)
- [Bill Kristol: Legalizing Pot 'Plays With Our Kids' Futures'](#)
- [Deport Illegal Children Now or Later? Vote Here](#)
- [How Older Men Are Increasing Testosterone](#)
- [Anti Aging Pill Shocks Doctors With Results](#)
- [Breakthrough Diet Aid is Raising Excitement](#)

having a disastrous effect on the curriculum and on children." He added that the report had uncovered "overwhelming evidence" of the "tyranny of the testing regime".

According to the association's inquiry, a broad and balanced curriculum is being sacrificed on the altar of statutory assessment.

It quotes numerous subject specialists, who have raised concerns about the system. The Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education, for instance, said that the continual testing and practising for tests "had resulted in a narrow and impoverished maths curriculum and poor quality teaching of that curriculum".

Sue Palmer, the author of Toxic Childhood who gave evidence to the inquiry, raised fears about the effect of "conveyor belt" testing on pupils' wellbeing. "Parents often tell me about the tears, nightmares and anxiety that accompany Sats week," she said. "I've spoken to many children who are convinced that their performance at the age of 11 on a batch of papers will determine their future chances of happiness."

Some contributors cast doubt on government claims that the tests were driving up standards, pointing to the international league tables published last week which showed that since 2000 England had nose-dived out of the top 10 in maths, reading and science. "Our school population is the most tested in the industrialised world," said Judith Bennett, the chair of the National Governors' Association.

The yearly publication of schools' test results in league tables is also condemned by the association. It said that schools that struggle to cope with high numbers of children who do not speak English or who have special needs are unfairly compared with schools with higher-performing intakes.

The report calls for the current system to be scrapped and replaced with a bank of tests that are available throughout the year so that teachers can informally check a child's progress. The results would be given to parents but not published in tables. While the Government has steadfastly refused to accept that the current system is flawed, it is

More From The Web



**\$149+: 3-Nts Walt Disney World® Resorts:
Orlando, FL**

Save up to 30%

[Click for More Offers](#)

Powered By **DunhillTravelDeals**
TRAVEL DEALS SINCE 2008

News Most Viewed

TODAY PAST WEEK PAST MONTH

1. Rome ice cream price row reignited as US tourists call police over £33 bill
2. Miranda Kerr: the face that launched a thousand spats
3. Ebola: tiny airport in Sierra Leone with direct link to Britain
4. Dubai's Emirates Airline is to suspend flights to Guinea - live
5. Driver who used two phones at the wheel

testing a new "lighter touch" form of assessment.

A pilot project which started in 500 primary and secondary schools this month will see pupils taking tests when the teachers decide they are ready. Jim Knight, the schools minister, said: "Our system provides the best combination of valid, reliable data on children's attainment. Since 1997 there have been dramatic improvements in standards at all key stages."

Testing times

Age five: Statutory assessment of skills in six areas, including social development, language and literacy and numbers.

Age seven: Key Stage 1 assessment in speaking and listening, reading and writing, maths and science.

Age 11: Key Stage 2 tests in maths, English and science.

Age 14: Key Stage 3 tests in maths, English and science.

Age 16: GCSEs. Most pupils take eight or nine subjects but some sit as many as 12.

Age 17: AS exams, worth half an A-level. Most pupils take four subjects.

Age 18: A2 exams. The second part of the full A-level. Most take three or four.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority also produces "optional" tests for eight-, nine-, 10-, 12- and 13- year-olds.

Schools often run their own GCSE mock exams half way through the course.

If schools use these optional and mock exams, children will face tests every year of their school lives, apart from one.



5. Driver who used two phones at the wheel jailed for killing man



Promoted stories



Mississippi man creates fictitious shrimping business to exploit Gulf... The State of the Gulf



The vital F1 job you never see on TV Tech Page One



Digging Up Decades at World's Fair Grounds PTC

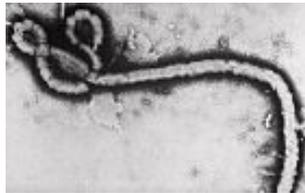


El Paso Releases Video of Cop Executing Handcuffed Man — Where's the... VICE

More from The Telegraph



Drunk woman attacks plane crew with prosthetic leg 31 Jul 2014



Ebola outbreak: suspected case at British immigration centre 31 Jul 2014



Cycling row: 'Here's what women really experience in the slow lane' 01 Aug 2014



Why skinny is no longer sexy 24 Jul 2014

Recommended by outbrain

Read More UK News

Irish government 'disappointed' over Paddy Power hack



Questions remain as to why gambling website Paddy Power did not admit that hackers stole the personal details of more than 600,000 customers in a 2010 cyber attack until yesterday

Comments

Pilot jumps from glider at 4,500 feet following mid-air crash

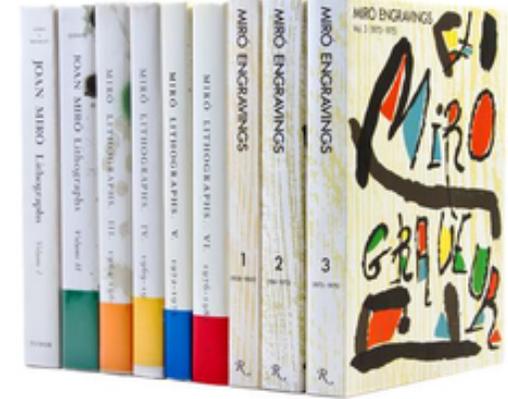


Glider pilot leaps from cockpit and parachutes to safety after wing

More From The Web»

Barnebys.co.uk

All Auctions In One Place



(MIRO, JOAN)

Estimate: \$ 3000

Leslie Hindman Auctioneers

[VIEW LOT!](#)



[SEARCH ALL AUCTIONS](#)

Promoted stories





breaks off his aircraft in midair collision

[Comments](#)

Pictures of the day



A cheetah and her doggy pal, a badly parked SUV and the Taiwan gas blast

Nick Clegg: time to 'turn the page' on Michael Gove



The Deputy Prime Minister has said that the departure of the former Education Secretary presents an opportunity to reset the 'acrimonious relationship' between Government and school teachers

[Comments](#)

'Hopefully' genome project could help my daughter



Video

Edward Sherley-Price, whose 11-year-old daughter has been diagnosed with a genetic development condition, hopes a 'landmark' genome project will help her

Why footballers should always take a penalty to the same corner



Measured by a different yardstick
(Jpost)



5 Unbelievably Helpful Tips For Learning A Foreign Language
(Post-it® Brand)



Child Stars Who Went From Pretty To Not-So-Pretty
(Styleblazer)



7 Tasks Kids Should Do for Themselves
(Education.com)

Recommended by outbrain



Researchers have calculated how football players can fool the goalkeeper in a penalty shoot-out – by going for the same corner again and again

 [Comments](#)

Willie Walsh apologises for Gatwick bag chaos



Video

International Airlines Group CEO Willie Walsh apologises for baggage delays at Gatwick Airport and promises 'these problems will be addressed'

George Osborne urged to share £1.6 billion property tax windfall



Treasury receipts from inheritance tax and stamp duty overshoot forecasts from previous year, as more middle class families dragged into tax intended for rich

 [Comments](#)

Celebrity sightings



Featuring: Taylor Swift, Katy Perry and Reese Witherspoon

Gatwick chaos: British Airways becomes latest airline threatening to drop troubled baggage handling firm



International Airlines, holding company for BA and Iberia, will "look at other opportunities" if Swissport delays continue, says chief executive Willie Walsh

MORE FROM TELEGRAPH.CO.UK

GOODWOOD



The very best of Goodwood's Moving Motor Show in pictures

[View](#)

AMAZON



Infographic: Who is today's entrepreneur?

[View](#)

SOOQINI



Are there enough hours in your day? Get help from an expert task assistant

[View](#)

BARNEBY'S AUCTIONS



The Art of Collecting

[View](#)

[Back to top](#)



HOME

News
UK News
Politics

Long Reads

Wikileaks

Jobs

World News

Europe
USA
China

Royal Family News

Celebrity news

Dating

Finance

Education
Defence
Health

Weird News

Editor's Choice

Financial Services

Pictures

Video
Matt
Alex

Comment

Blogs

Crossword

Contact Us

Privacy and Cookies
Advertising
Fantasy Football

Tickets

Announcements
Reader Prints



Follow Us

Apps
Epaper
Expat

Promotions
Subscriber
Syndication

