

# Assessment – what we stand for

## A summary



**More Than a Score believes that using test scores as high stakes accountability measures is deeply flawed, with negative effects on children and schools.**

It leads to teaching to the test in narrow core subjects which themselves become distorted. Pressure to improve test data places damaging stress on children and teachers, while depriving children of the rich, creative curriculum to which they are entitled.

**It is important that schools be held accountable for promoting children's learning and development.** Schools should be accountable to wider society, and to the children, their families and communities. **But there is a better way of ensuring that schools are accountable for the education they provide.**

### **What do we want from assessment?**

- We want assessment that supports children in their learning – and enables teachers to identify pupils' attainment and learning needs.
- We want assessment that treats young people in the round as whole persons.
- We want modes of assessment that are appropriate to children's development.
- We want assessment that helps to identify schools that need extra support.
- We want assessment that enables a dialogue between parents and teachers.
- We want assessment that enables schools to develop improvement strategies in line with their own values.
- We want assessment that tells us about national standards of attainment across the whole curriculum.

### **Assessment for learning should be separate from assessment for accountability.**

One form of assessment – currently national curriculum tests – cannot meet two very different purposes. Accountability at school level reaches back into teaching and learning, ignoring and devaluing children's unique characters, dispositions, interests and wider aspects of learning. This has a profound impact on children's progress. Children are more than a score.

### **Assessment for learning is a vital part of teaching.**

On-going formative assessment supports children while they are learning. It can engage children more fully and potentially enrich their own development and learning.

### **Accountability can include a variety of approaches.**

- The effectiveness of a school in promoting children's learning and development can be assessed through inter-school moderation of children's profiles, comparing progress made by their pupils against national standards.
- Schools should use assessment information to develop improvement strategies in line with their own values.
- School self-evaluation and development should be assisted through peer review and supportive inspection, considering the school and its context.
- National standards of attainment across the whole curriculum can be assessed through anonymised sampling methods, enabling analysis of strengths and areas for development in relation to national programmes, funding and priorities.