

# Support the campaign to: **End SATs and league tables**



*"Abolish SATs – they're utterly useless."*

**Michael Rosen**

## **Public support for the campaign**

We have powerful voices who agree with our arguments:

**Politicians** – The powerful House of Commons' Children, Schools and Families Select Committee said in January 2010:

*"Schools feel so constrained by the fear of failure according to the narrow criteria of the performance tables that they resort to measures such as teaching to the test, narrowing the curriculum and an inappropriate focusing of resources on borderline candidates ..."*

The Select Committee also said: *"The chances of engaging children's interest in learning are low with an approach that stifles creativity and focuses on assessment output."*

**Parents** – Many parents have signed our petition to end SATs and the campaigning organisation Parents Outloud has given its support to our campaign. Justine Roberts, the managing director of the popular website *Mumsnet*, recently said: *"Parents are broadly supportive of a boycott... There is a lot of anecdotal evidence that in the weeks running up to the tests, school work becomes one-dimensional and only about the SATs."*

**Academics** – Research by leading academics Paul Black and Dylan William of Kings College, says that SATs are *"useless as a measure of educational progress ... the inherent unreliability of the tests stems from the limited knowledge and skills tested ... and variations in individuals performance on the day of the test."*



## **High profile authors have added their weight to the campaign**

“They should be put away at once. Children, their teachers, their schools and society itself will all eventually feel the benefit.” **Philip Pullman**

“SATs have a disastrous effect on children’s education.” **Alan Gibbons**

“Abolish SATs – they’re utterly useless.” **Michael Rosen**

## **What’s the NUT’s alternative to SATs?**

Some accuse the NUT of being afraid of accountability and of wanting to deprive parents of information. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our alternative plans would give good information to all concerned – without the negative consequences of SATs and league tables.

The NUT and NAHT’s dispute on SATs could be resolved by the Secretary of State, Ed Balls, lifting the statutory requirement for tests in English and mathematics in year 6 and introducing a national sampling system for those subjects, which they have already done for science in year 6 and for all subjects in year 10.

## **Government would still receive information about national standards:**

Data to provide information about national standards should be provided by sampling – as the Government itself is doing for Key Stage 2 science and the Key Stage 3 core subjects this year. These results would be used to give a national picture of achievement and wouldn’t identify individual schools or children.

## **Assessment would benefit teachers and pupils:**

The most important use of assessment is to improve teaching and learning. SATs don’t help with this at all. All the money currently wasted on SATs should be ploughed back into increased resourcing and training for assessment for learning – assessment that comes out of regular teaching activities, rather than additional work.

## **Parents will still find out how their child is progressing:**

Reports to parents should come from teacher assessment, as is currently done in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Schools could decide for themselves which system to use. Academics agree with us that teacher assessment is more accurate than SATs.

## **What about accountability?**

Under our proposals, moderation, properly funded so that it could be carried out during the school day, would ensure consistency and support children’s learning. League tables are not about genuine accountability because they are so unfair. They should be abandoned – as they have been in Wales.

## **Our campaign is gathering lots of influential support – but we need your involvement to win**

### **Please do what you can to help our campaign against SATs and league tables**

1. 30,000 have already signed our petition to end SATs. Please help our petition get even bigger by signing up online at [www.teachers.org.uk/assessment](http://www.teachers.org.uk/assessment) and asking your friends to sign up too.
2. Go to [www.teachers.org.uk/assessment](http://www.teachers.org.uk/assessment) to write to your MP about the problems with SATs. You will also find information about how to contact candidates who are standing for election in your constituency.
3. Request a meeting of parents and teachers in your school to consider ways that you might support the campaign.
4. Write to your local newspaper or post messages on internet blogs and say why you support the campaign to end SATs. You could also suggest some things that could happen in schools during SATs week instead of sitting the tests. Could you a theatre group or storyteller come into school during SATs week? Could you organise an enterprise or arts week or other event celebrate the breadth of children's learning?
5. Download additional copies of this leaflet and distribute them amongst parents.

### **Industrial action ballot**

The NUT and National Association of Head Teachers are balloting leadership members in schools because they have a contractual requirement to administer the tests and need the protection of a ballot to refuse. The trade dispute relates to the effect that SATs have on the working lives and conditions of service of members of the leadership team in schools.

- Please tell your head teacher and your parent governor that you would fully support their action to not administer SATs in 2010.