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# National Assessment Systems in England: Supporting Standards?

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# Introduction

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Two major factors have influenced assessment in England:

- A focus on measures to judge school performance such as national tests and subject examinations
- A focus on the external testing of content learned and the production of numeric data

# Until June 2007:

- National Tests in English, Science, Mathematics at ages of 7, 11, 14
- National Examinations at age 16+

# From summer 2009

- National Tests at 11
- National Examinations at 16

# Cost – benefit

- There are approximately 625 000 in each cohort
  - 2007/08:
    - QCA running costs £200 million
    - Test Contracting £165 million
    - Examinations at 16+£175 million
- total            **£540 million**  
691.2m Euro

# QCA / Ofsted evidence

- 1) Narrowing of curriculum
- 2) Unsuitable course selection
- 3) Teaching to test

# Headline from BBC news

Why ministers scrapped the tests

'Marking fiasco'

After the fiasco of last summer's test marking, and the departure of the marking company ETS, a new contractor had to be found to mark next year's tests.

It is a sign of the government's desperation that they have scrapped the tests now long before they know exactly what will replace them.

It is only because of the general delight at the scrapping of the tests that the government has not been given a much harder time over the extraordinary hastiness of this decision.

# Moving on....

“The current system of curriculum and assessment has been in place for 15 years. It has delivered all that it can. Results have plateaued. No more can be squeezed out of it.”

Ken Boston, Chief Executive of the Qualifications and curriculum Authority speaking with ministers to the national press.



# Challenges

- To think about designing a curriculum rather than “coverage” of set content
- To think about planning for inclusion rather than “access” to a fixed curriculum
- What does *personalisation* actually mean?