

“They are children... not robots, not machines”

The introduction of Reception Baseline Assessment

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) jointly commissioned independent research on the impact of Baseline Assessment on schools, following its introduction in September 2015. Researchers conducted a survey of more than 1200 teachers, who between them had experience of all three providers of Baseline Assessment – Early Excellence, CEM and NFER.

The findings of their research clearly demonstrate that:

1. Baseline Assessment is inaccurate and therefore problematic as the basis for school accountability

- **Only 7%** of teachers surveyed think that Baseline Assessment is a good way to assess how schools perform

2. Baseline Assessment has potentially damaging effects on children - relating to low expectations and labelling

- **Only 8%** of teachers think that Baseline Assessment is an accurate and fair way of assessing children.
- **71%** think baseline assessment does not help to identify children who may have special educational needs
- **68%** think baseline assessment does not help to identify the needs of children who speak English as an additional language

3. Baseline Assessment increases teachers' workloads without providing useful information

- Nearly **85%** of teachers thought baseline assessment increased their work load, inside and outside the classroom
- **92%** of teachers underlined that their school **already** had assessment systems in place to support children's development and learning when they started school.

4. Baseline Assessment has cost and resource implications for schools

- *It would be relatively simple to provide accurate teacher judgements after the children have been in school for a full half term [...] This would not require paying companies monies that could go directly into schools to benefit children in need of extra support.* (Comment from a teacher)
- *It has cost my school additional money at a time when budgets are getting tight!* (Comment from a teacher)

The research was undertaken by Dr Alice Bradbury and Dr Guy Roberts-Holmes of the Institute of Education, University College London. Their full report is available for download at

www.teachers.org.uk/baseline or

<https://www.atl.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/campaigns/baseline-assessment.asp>