

## End league tables, say governors

School governors are calling for an end to the current system of league tables and national tests in England.

The National Governors' Association (NGA) said the tables held information that was too narrow and misrepresented what happened in schools. Instead it wants schools to be given a grade based on comparisons with others in similar circumstances, and tests that check individual pupils' progress. The government said parents used a wide range of sources to judge schools.



The NGA is the latest educational body to call for an end to league tables and the national testing regime, which sees children taking exams at ages 11 and 14.

The system is also opposed by teaching unions which want to see more internal teachers' assessments, which are now the method used primarily to check children's attainment at the age of seven - bolstered by tests if they wish. The NGA said tests taken at the end of national curriculum "key stages" were seen as "targets to be reached and hurdles to be jumped over" rather than a true reflection of how well children or schools were doing. NGA chief executive Phil Revell told his association's conference in London: "Currently governors are being held to account for the results of an assessment system that many people argue is unfit for purpose."

"Many schools are justifiably proud of their examination and test results, but the system does not judge schools accurately in terms of the real progress pupils make as they progress through the system."

NGA chairwoman Judith Bennett said current league tables did not provide information about schools that was detailed enough to allow parents to judge their performance. She said:

"We've got no objections to accountability, what we are clear about is that the league tables are not really very informative."

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Phil Revell  
NGA chief executive

Mrs Bennett said she would prefer to see league tables scrapped or replaced with a system of grading based on comparisons between similar schools. It was not fair to judge a grammar school's performance against that of a comprehensive, for example, as they had very different intakes. The government attempted to put schools' performance in context by including what is known as a contextual value added score - which takes a school's particular circumstances into account. But Mrs Bennett said even this was too narrow and many parents did not understand how to read the scores. The NGA added that primary school tests did not look at individual children's progress and had led to "cramming for 10-year-olds" in many schools.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families said: "We see no reason to change the system already in place which sees inspectors visiting schools, compiling detailed reports and making them available to parents. "This is just one of the options available when choosing a school and most parents also recognise that it is important to actually visit schools and talk to teachers to see if the school would be right for their child."

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