

# Countdown



## Key stage 3 ICT onscreen test

January 2007

To: The Headteacher

cc: Strategy manager, ICT subject leader



### Important information

*Dr Ken Boston, Chief Executive, QCA*

The NAA has been piloting the innovative KS3 ICT test for three years and over 90 per cent of schools are getting ready to take part in the 2007 national pilot. To build on this success and make the test more beneficial to each individual pupil, a new focus for the ICT test has been recommended by QCA.

Following QCA's advice, Minister Jim Knight has announced that the test will no longer become statutory. Instead, it will serve as a valuable educational tool aimed at supporting teaching and learning, to promote pupil progression. Therefore, in accordance with this aim, improvements will be made to the existing ICT test, to make it more useful for formative assessment.

The test is moving away from being an end of key stage summative assessment, to a new focus on formative assessment materials. These materials will provide feedback for both teachers and pupils that can be used to achieve better progress and results. It will also provide greater flexibility, allowing schools to decide when the best time is for individual pupils to be assessed.

We encourage you to continue with your preparations for the 2007 pilot, which will go ahead as planned this summer and continue to influence the shape of e-assessment. The next issue of *Countdown* will arrive later this term, and will provide details about the changes we will make.

Finally, we recognise and thank you for the efforts you have made and hope that you make the most of the many advantages the test offers.

## [Insert school name], you are now ready to start practising

You and your colleagues have made good progress to ensure that your school is fully accredited for participation in the 2007 pilot and your efforts are commended.

Having already installed the 2007 software, you are now ready to run the 2007 practice test, which will be available for your server to automatically download from mid January.

The practice test enables teachers to become familiar with a KS3 ICT test and enables pupils to experience taking a KS3 ICT test. Immediately after a full 2-session practice test, a detailed report is available to pupils and teachers, which provides feedback on pupils' performance and what they need to do to improve.

## Stay on target for the 2007 test pilot

Here are four good reasons why **Sample School** should take part.

- 1 Pupils will be able to take the practice test and both they and their teacher will be able to use the formative reports to inform progress.
- 2 The test will provide an independent assessment of pupils' ICT capability and give a national curriculum ICT level for all pupils who complete the summative test. These results can be used to inform teachers' own assessments.
- 3 Staff administering the pilot will gain valuable experience in using onscreen assessment systems and pupils will gain experience of taking e-assessments.
- 4 The test can be used for standardising teacher assessment as it provides consistency across all the ICT subject teachers in a school.

The NAA encourages as full a participation as possible. However, if you are selecting a smaller group, you may want to consider using the test for a targeted cross section of pupils or for those pupils where you are uncertain of a level.

## The accreditation and participation process

Your school is here



Expressed  
interest in pilot

Started  
network audit

Passed  
network audit

Technically  
accredited –  
installed 2007  
software

Autumn term –  
planning for  
2007 pilot

Spring term –  
detailed  
preparation  
for 2007 pilot

Summer term –  
implement 2007  
pilot and review



## Steps you need to take this spring

Here are the key activities that should be in your plan for the coming weeks. *The essential guide: Preparing your school for the key stage 3 ICT test* will help you determine who should lead each activity.

- 1** Ensure that you plan and run familiarisation sessions and practice tests for your pupils. Local strategy consultants provide excellent support to subject leaders in preparing pupils for the test.
- 2** ICT subject leaders should provide accurate initial level assessments for pupils. The exams officer will need these so that pupils are presented with the most appropriate test tier.
- 3** Input pupil data into the test software. The most convenient time for this is soon after the school census return has been completed.
- 4** Identify who your test administrators will be and prepare them.
- 5** Review with the SENCO any access arrangements that might be needed.

Looking ahead to the end of term you should be communicating with parents to make them aware of when their children will be taking the test, establishing your test rota and ensuring a trouble-free network for the duration of the test sessions.



## Use *Countdown* in conjunction with *The essential guide*

Don't forget, you can use *Countdown* in conjunction with *The essential guide: Preparing your school for the key stage 3 ICT test*, which was sent to schools at the end of October 2006.

## Staying on track

### Where your school should be now

Now is the right time to take stock of your plans and make preparations for the coming term to make sure your school is as ready as possible. By now you should have:

- formed a team from across the school to share responsibilities and build a plan and made sure your plan is communicated across the school
- installed the 2007 test infrastructure software
- downloaded the 2007 test software documentation
- developed test schedule requirements. These will explain to the exams officer how you would prefer the tests to be scheduled.

## How to ensure successful preparation

For help in all the areas listed above and opposite, see *The essential guide: Preparing your school for the key stage 3 ICT test* or better still bookmark [www.naa.org.uk/ks3ictipilot](http://www.naa.org.uk/ks3ictipilot) and visit regularly. The website allows straightforward access to highly relevant advice, to documentation and to supporting tools and templates.

In addition, many local authorities are providing excellent familiarisation and training sessions for subject leaders and NAA field support officers are working with groups of exams officers. Make sure that your school takes advantage of these opportunities.

## Your next steps

- To start your preparations for the 2007 pilot, refer to the section opposite – 'Steps you need to take this spring'.
- Refer to *The essential guide* for advice on the final preparations or visit [www.naa.org.uk/ks3ictipilot](http://www.naa.org.uk/ks3ictipilot).

**Restart now.**

**The countdown has begun.**

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