

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017**

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000447

Senator Collins, Jacinta provided in writing.

Early years' testing

Question

What early years testing is already being conducted in different states and systems?

- To what extent do they test phonics?
- Why was Year 1 selected as the appropriate testing year to assess phonics?

Answer

There are a range of early year's assessments and on-entry assessments used by jurisdictions and school sectors in Australia. There is, however, no consistent approach in the type of assessment or in what grade the assessment takes place. Where early years assessments occur, not all assessments have both literacy and numeracy components.

The extent to which phonics is tested in existing assessments in Australia is one of the matters being investigated by the Expert Advisory Panel. The panel was appointed in January 2017 by Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training, to provide advice on the implementation and development of a national Year 1 literacy and numeracy check.

A nationally consistent check in Year 1 will ensure those students falling behind are identified early and can be targeted with appropriate interventions before the achievement gap grows. Evidence suggests that effective literacy and numeracy instruction in the early years of schooling is critical to students' academic performance in later years. At the national level, the first evidence of student progress in literacy and numeracy is through the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Year 3. For those students who may need additional help the earlier the intervention, the more effective it is for future progress through schooling.