



Frequently Asked Questions – National Year 1 Literacy and Numeracy Check (Year 1 check)

1. What did the Expert Advisory Panel find?

As per its Terms of Reference, the Expert Advisory Panel (the Panel) undertook a review of current literacy and numeracy early years assessments in Australia. The Panel found that whilst most schools undertake early years and on-entry literacy and numeracy assessments in Foundation or Year 1, there is no consistent approach across states and territories or the non-government sector. In addition, after undertaking an analysis of the commonly used literacy and numeracy assessments, the Panel found these assessments do not assess all aspects of the Australian Curriculum to the same extent.

The Panel has provided a report detailing its findings. The report includes 25 recommendations for the development and implementation of national Year 1 checks in literacy and numeracy in Australia, including the following best practice principles for developing an assessment:

- conducted early and able to measure progress over time;
- measure core knowledge and skills that are strongly predictive of later achievement and accurately identify risk of low progress;
- conducted one on one with a member of teaching staff known to the child;
- brief in duration (to cater to attention of 5/6 year old children and time pressures in schools);
- provides results to teachers quickly;
- not 'high stakes' or linked to progression of year level;
- provides sufficient amount of detail to guide intervention at the student level, and changes to teaching practice at the school and system level where necessary.

2. Who did the Panel consult with?

The Panel undertook extensive consultation to inform its advice and recommendations, including meeting with expert stakeholders and hosting an online submission process.

The Panel contacted key stakeholders directly to invite them to consult on the proposed Year 1 check. This included government education departments, non-government school sector administrators, and a range of education organisations. These consultations were used to inform the Panel's advice and recommendations.

Between 4 March 2017 and 17 March 2017, the Panel invited interested stakeholders to make an online submission on the proposed national Year 1 check. The Panel received 94 submissions through this process from members of the public, teachers, education specialists, trainers, academics, principals, speech pathologists and education organisations.

Further information on the Panel's consultation process can be found in the Panel's report.

3. Why do we need the Year 1 check?

Large numbers of children in Australia are not meeting the expected learning outcomes and standards in literacy and numeracy in their schooling years. This has an impact on their future learning and development, and their ability to be productive and participate fully in society. Early success in reading and number sense is a powerful predictor of later achievement, and is strongly correlated with schooling performance across the curriculum.

The Australian Government is committed to introducing the Year 1 check to ensure that every parent and teacher is able to judge if a student is receiving effective literacy and numeracy instruction in the early years of schooling. It will identify, as early as possible, those students experiencing difficulties in literacy and numeracy so that appropriate intervention strategies can be put in place before the achievement gap grows.

4. What will it look like?

The Year 1 check will be a relaxed and interactive classroom-based check of a student's reading, phonics and numeracy abilities. It will not be a formal, NAPLAN-style test. Rather, it will be appropriately designed to be a light touch way of assessing young students.

Literacy checks will likely involve identifying letters and sounds that make up words, which will show if a child understands how language works. Numeracy checks will see children undertake simple tasks, such as counting and recognising shapes and numbers, to demonstrate basic measurement knowledge. These are things that students should already be doing in the classroom every week. The Year 1 check will help to identify those students that might need extra support.

5. How will it benefit students?

The Year 1 check will ensure those students who might need extra assistance are identified as early as possible so that interventions and teaching strategies can be used to target areas where these children need the most support.

A nationally consistent Year 1 check will ensure all students across Australia have access to an early years check, no matter what school they attend.

6. What are the next steps?

This is an important reform which cannot be rushed and must be introduced in a way that can deliver results for all Australian students. This is why the Government tasked a panel of experts to provide advice and recommendations to inform the development and implementation of a Year 1 check. The Panel has provided advice and recommendations to the Minister for Education and Training which includes considerations on the frequency, timing and core skills to be assessed by a Year 1 check.

The Minister will discuss the Panel's findings and advice with his state and territory colleagues at Education Council.