

Council Question

13 October 2016

Public Question No. 7C

Theresa Turner of Gillingham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

With regard to the Medway Test, how can it be fair to give the children different topics for creative writing?

Children who sit the test on the Saturday have the opportunity to research what the topics are and study to prepare for it. To make it a fair test all the children should have the test on the same day with the same creative writing topic. If it means all children have the test in a test centre so be it. At least it would all be fair.

The Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, Councillor Potter, on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, provided the following written response:

The topic chosen each year for the extended writing paper is the same for all of the test days, however, the actual questions change according to the test day. Student Services works with the School Challenge and Improvement Team and the Lead Marker to ensure that a selection of questions are created within the same topic, linked to a full mark scheme. This ensures consistency across all questions and all marking.

By using different questions, we are able to limit the amount of specific preparation that those children testing on later dates can achieve.

Analysis completed in 2012 and 2013, demonstrated that no benefit was conferred on those children who tested on the Saturday.

Ideally Medway Council would like all children to test in school during the week. However, we cannot enforce this across all schools and academies and therefore provide the two testing options; testing mid week and on the Saturday. We have received very positive feedback from parents and students since the test has returned to Medway schools and would prefer that testing in schools remains the preferred test scenario for Medway children.