

An online literacy and numeracy exam paves the way to success for NSW Department of Education Year 7 students.

The NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) selected Janison to build and deliver a new assessment under the **Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017-2020**, a four-year plan to ensure students have the essential literacy and numeracy skills they need for success in learning and in life.

The Brief

The Department was looking for a specialist digital assessment provider to help it achieve the key aim of the new assessment: to quickly identify students at risk of falling behind and pinpoint what type of support they need. The window for the opt-in assessment, called *Best Start Year 7*, would run over 31 school days in February-March 2019, for more than 40,000 students across the state.

As well as offering government-grade security, the solution needed to be Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) that scales easily year to year and seamlessly integrates with all schools' existing systems. Examiners also required the ability to author a number of different question types to create an engaging test for students.

The Challenge

As acknowledged by former Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, in the strategy document, literacy and numeracy skills are the foundation for the next generation's success in learning and in life.

The Department entrusted Janison to deliver technology that could provide precise evaluation



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NSW Department of Education spokesman



41,000

students across NSW sat the inaugural Best Start Year 7 exam in 2019



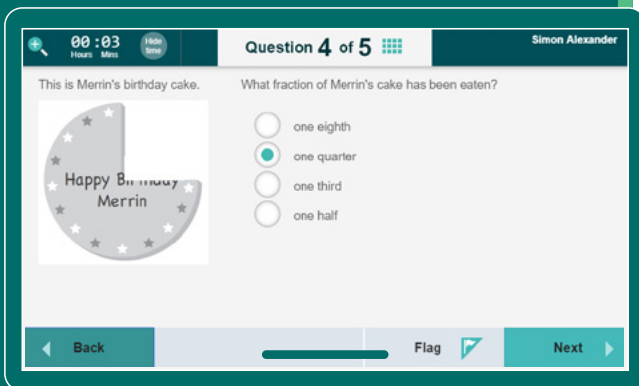
>6,673

completions per day



75,000

tests completed



of students' skills at a critical juncture in their education – the first weeks of Year 7 – and quickly provide intricate diagnostic data to inform teaching intervention.

The technology also needed to be user friendly to cater to all levels of technical literacy among staff. It also had to operate seamlessly within varying levels of IT infrastructure between the 321 schools across the state taking part.

Our Solution

Best Start Year 7 demanded a sophisticated platform that could efficiently deliver and process a considerable daily number of test completions and feed a large volume of real-time data into NSW DoE systems, making valuable analytical information available for teachers almost instantly.

Janison partnered with the NSW DoE and tailored its cloud-based platform, *Janison Insights*, to deliver on these key needs.

Through weekly video conferences and conversations with NSW DoE stakeholders, Janison's project team pinpointed the necessary features and adaptations to allow teachers to more easily perform tasks within the system. During the meetings, Janison and NSW DoE clearly demarcated responsibility in managing the school IT networks, to allow for the smoothest possible running of the exam window.

The Result

A *NSW DoE survey* of 293 early adopter schools who took part in the pilot, found that more than 95 per cent agreed that the exam will help to identify students requiring additional support in literacy and numeracy.

Janison hosted the live assessment event over 31 school days, which comprised three streams:

reading, numeracy and writing. It delivered the end-to-end assessment solution to schools across the state, including the set-up, configuration, hosting, data extract, support and marking.

A total of 41,000 students sat these assessments, with an average of 2,400 tests completed daily. The highest number of tests in one day during the exam period was 6,673.

The literacy and numeracy portions were auto-marked, enabling real-time data delivery to the NSW DoE, while the platform's discrete marking features streamlined the process for the teachers who marked the writing portion of the exam. The platform operated seamlessly with schools' existing IT infrastructure, including student devices such as laptops, desktops, PCs and tablets.

Janison's operations team carried out real-time monitoring of the infrastructure performance throughout the 31-day window, to ensure that any issues could be dealt with instantly. There were no delivery problems or slowdowns reported and NSW DoE stakeholders commended the smooth delivery.

Speaking of the event, a Department spokesman said: "Janison has worked collaboratively with the Best Start Year 7 team to successfully deliver an online literacy and numeracy assessment to NSW Department of Education students. Teachers administering the test found the system easy to use and the online format successfully engaged students to demonstrate their skills and understanding."

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