



Standards
& Testing
Agency

2018 maladministration report

**National curriculum assessments at key
stage 1 and key stage 2**

January 2020

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Introduction

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) has a statutory duty to investigate any matter brought to its attention concerning the accuracy of results of key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests and assessments, including the phonics screening check. We investigate any concerns in partnership with local authorities (LAs), in accordance with the [‘Maladministration investigation procedures’](#)¹.

The term 'maladministration' refers to any act that could jeopardise the integrity, security or confidentiality of the national curriculum assessments and could lead to results that do not reflect the unaided abilities of pupils. This could refer to a range of actions, including:

- test papers being incorrectly opened
- pupils cheating
- over-aiding of pupils by test administrators
- changes being made to a pupil's test script by someone other than the pupil
- inflation or deflation of teacher assessment (TA) judgements

Following an investigation, if STA's maladministration team finds that the accuracy of a pupil's test results is in doubt, a senior manager within STA decides whether to amend or annul results.

This report:

- details the numbers, sources and types of allegations of maladministration reported to STA throughout the 2018 test cycle across KS1 and KS2
- presents the numbers of amendments and annulments to results made in 2018
- provides comparisons with the maladministration data from 2016 and 2017

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stages-1-and-2-investigating-allegations-of-maladministration

National curriculum assessments in 2018

Number of schools participating in 2018

16,449 schools participated in end of KS1 assessments.

16,383 schools participated in the phonics screening check.

16,110 schools participated in end of KS2 national curriculum tests.

Changes to statutory assessment in 2018

STA introduced revised TA frameworks in English Writing only. This included:

- a move to a more flexible approach which allowed teachers to use their discretion to ensure that, on occasion, a particular weakness did not prevent an accurate judgment of a pupil's attainment overall being made
- revised 'pupil can' statements—a greater emphasis on composition, while statements relating to the more 'technical' aspects of English writing (grammar, punctuation and spelling) were less prescriptive

All changes were in line with the attainment targets for the KS1 or KS2 programme of study respectively.

Maladministration investigation procedures

There were no changes to the 'Maladministration investigation procedures' guidance.

Maladministration investigations in 2018

Main findings from 2018

The main findings from 2018 maladministration investigations were as follows:

- there was an increase in the number of KS1 and KS2 maladministration investigations in 2018 compared to 2017 (see Table 1) from 599 to 793
- there was an increase in the number of cases at KS1 resulting in amendment or annulment of results from 2017 to 2018—there were 21 cases, compared to 19 in 2017
- there was an increase in the number of cases at KS2 resulting in amendment or annulment of results from 2017 to 2018—there were 122 cases in 2018, compared to 78 in 2017
- the main source for allegations was schools—this made up 48% of investigations
- the main type of allegation was a test administrator over-aiding—this made up 33% of investigations

Breakdown of maladministration cases in 2018

The table below details the number of cases of maladministration investigated by STA at each key stage from 2016 to 2018.

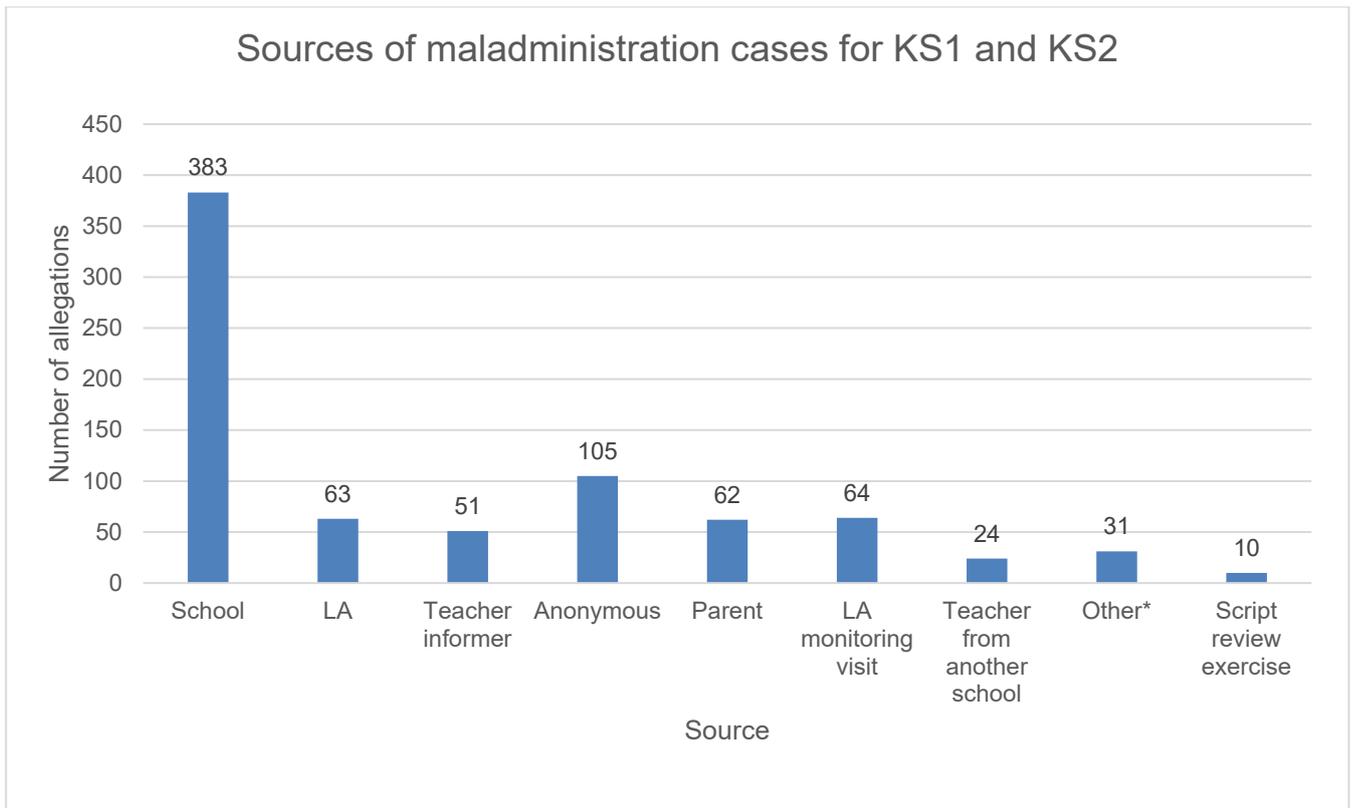
Table 1: Total number of cases investigated at KS1 and KS2

Year	Total number of KS1 and KS2 investigations	Total number of KS1 investigations	Total number of KS2 investigations
2016	524	94	430
2017	599	138	461
2018	793	149	644

Sources of reported maladministration cases

Cases of alleged maladministration are reported to STA from a number of different sources. Across both KS1 and KS2, schools self-reported 48% of cases. LAs reported 16% of cases, including those reported following LA monitoring visits.

Diagram 1: Sources of reported cases in 2018



'Other' sources within diagram 1 include:

- governing bodies
- referrals from Ofqual

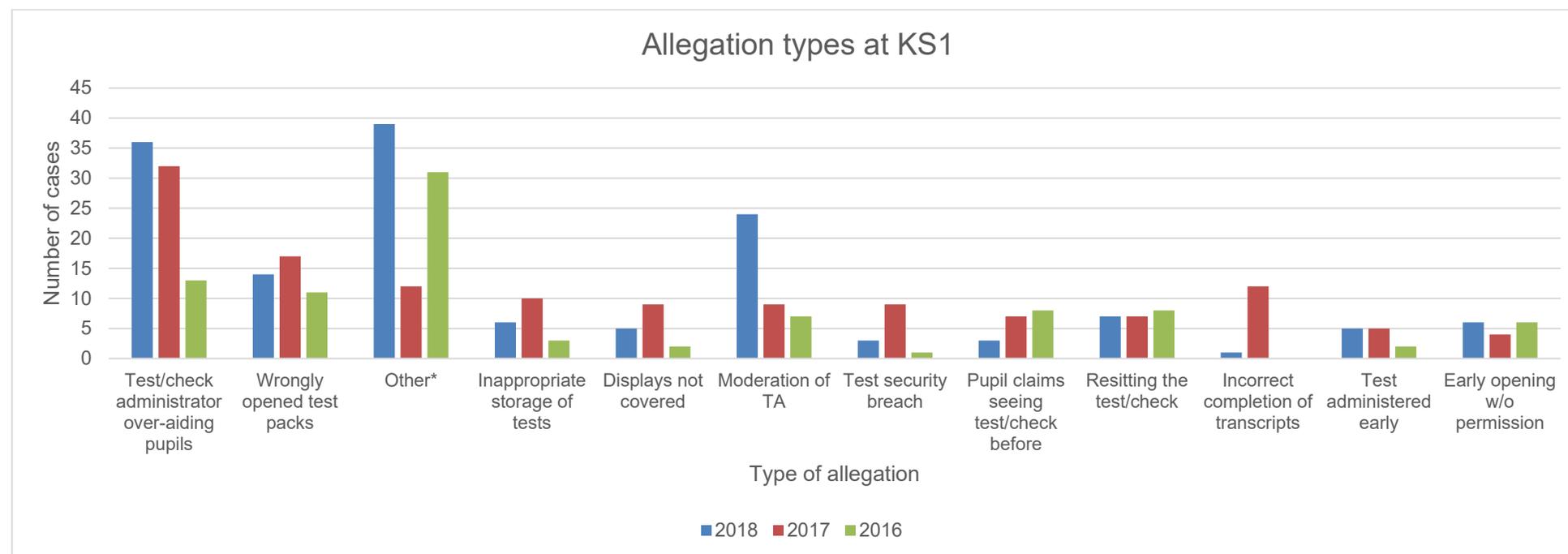
Key stage 1 maladministration investigations

In 2018:

- 62 allegations were made about the administration of the phonics screening check
- 66 allegations were made about KS1 tests
- 21 allegations were made about teacher assessment

The graph below gives a breakdown of allegations by type.

Diagram 2: Allegation types at KS1



'Other' allegations within Diagram 2 include:

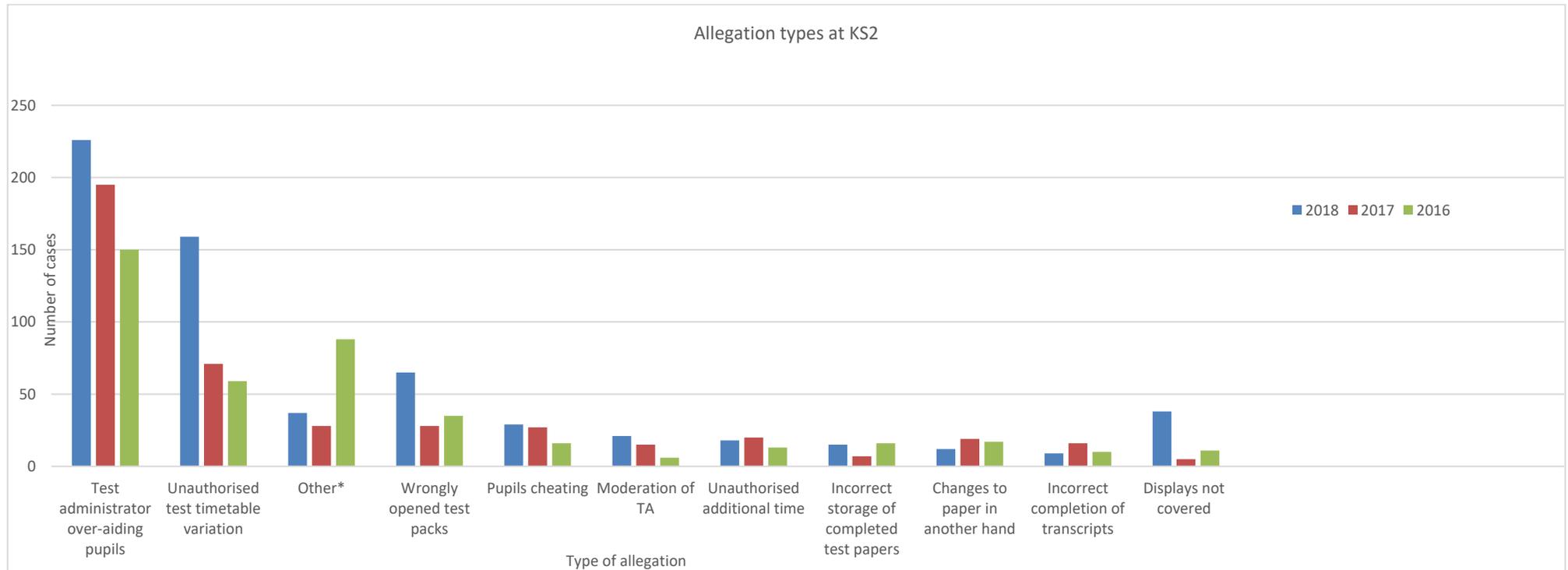
- incorrect papers given to pupils
- incorrect storage of completed test papers
- inappropriate room for the test or check
- inappropriate test or check administrator
- lost test or check materials
- over-emphasising the spelling, over-active reader or over-active translator
- unauthorised test or check timetable variation
- inappropriate coaching of pupils
- pupil cheating
- changes to paper in another hand
- mark scheme opened early
- test or check packs damaged on arrival

The largest number of allegations at KS1 were about test or check administrators over-aiding pupils during the KS1 tests and phonics screening check.

Key stage 2 maladministration investigations

There were a total of 644 maladministration allegations received for KS2 in 2018. 623 allegations related to the tests and 21 allegations related to teacher assessment.

Diagram 3: Allegation types at KS2



'Other' allegations within Diagram 3 include:

- incorrect papers given to pupils
- test packs damaged on arrival
- incorrect time allocation
- lost test materials
- inappropriate coaching of pupils
- early opening without permission
- unsupervised break
- boycott
- changes to marked scripts before review
- test administered to a child working below the level
- use of inappropriate equipment
- over-emphasising the spelling, over-active reader or over-active translator
- pupil claims to have seen the test paper before
- resitting the test
- issues before, during and after the test
- consignment note or distribution issues
- inappropriate room for a test
- inappropriate test administrator
- mark scheme packs opened early
- test administered early

The most common allegation type at KS2 in 2018 concerned test administrators over-aiding pupils during the tests. In 2017, 42.3 % of allegations were of this type, compared to 35% in 2018.

Amendments and annulments to test results

Following an investigation, if STA finds that the accuracy of a pupil's test results is in doubt, a senior manager makes a decision to amend or annul results. STA communicates this decision to the school.

Where a school believes a pupil has gained an advantage as a result of cheating, the headteacher notifies STA of the incident. In doing this, they agree to either the removal of marks for the specific questions where the pupil has gained an advantage or the annulment of the pupil's paper.

Amendment and annulment at key stage 1

14% of all KS1 cases in 2018 resulted in an amendment or annulment of results. In summary:

- 4 schools had pupils' KS1 teacher assessment results amended or annulled
- 8 schools had their phonics screening check results amended or annulled—these schools were advised that they would need to re-administer the phonics screening check in 2018 to the pupils affected
- 9 schools had their KS1 test results annulled—these schools were informed that they should not use these results to inform their teacher assessment judgements

Table 2: Number of schools with amendments or annulments to KS1 results from 2016 to 2018

Year	Teacher assessment	National curriculum tests	Phonics screening check	% of all cases at KS1
2016	0	0	2	2.1
2017	2	7	10	13.8
2018	4	9	8	14

Amendment and annulment at key stage 2

In summary, for KS2 in 2018:

- 122 schools had pupils' results amended or annulled as a result of maladministration—10 of these schools were identified from the script review exercise
- of the 122 schools with amended or annulled results, 33 schools had a whole cohort annulment for at least one subject
- 19 schools had pupils' test results amended or annulled after notifying STA of a pupil cheating

Table 3: Number of schools with amendments or annulments to KS2 results from 2016 to 2018

Year	Schools with whole cohort annulments of at least one subject	Schools with individual pupil annulments or amendments to results in at least one subject	Total of schools with amendments or annulments to their results	% of all cases at KS2
2016	5	60*	65*	15.1
2017	24	54	78	16.9
2018	34	88	122	15.8

*Please note, one school in 2016 had amendments or annulments as a result of pupil cheating and a separate maladministration investigation.

In 2018, approximately 0.8% of schools that participated in the KS2 assessments had their results amended. There was a 0.2 percentage point increase from the number of maladministration cases in 2017 that resulted in an amendment or annulment of a school's KS2 results.



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About this publication:

Any enquiries about this publication should be sent to us at
assessments@education.gov.uk

Download: www.education.gov.uk/assessment

Reference: 978-1-78957-508-8 STA/20/8525/e 2018 maladministration report



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