

2010 national curriculum assessments review outcomes (provisional)

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Introduction

This report provides provisional information on the outcomes of the reviews of marking for the 2010 key stage 2 national curriculum tests and single level tests. Data relating to single level test review outcomes focuses primarily on mathematics; mathematics single level tests were sat in place of national curriculum tests in mathematics for pupils in participating schools, with single level test outcomes reported in an accountability context for those pupils. Summary review outcome data for single level tests in English reading and writing, for which test outcomes were not reported for accountability, is also included in the data tables on pages 18 and 19 of this report.

The figures in this report relating to national curriculum tests are produced from data provided by the test operations agency.¹ For single level tests, the figures are produced from data provided by the onscreen marking supplier.² Both sets of figures were produced from the final results data feeds passed to the Department for Education (DfE). The information in this report is provisional and is subject to the outcomes of a very small number of outstanding reviews of marking and process reviews.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) does not believe that valid year-on-year comparisons of the number of review applications or outcomes of marking reviews can be made, because historical changes to review processes and the factors influencing the number and identity of schools making request reviews can vary. Valid comparisons between the 2010 data and data from previous years are particularly difficult to make due to a number of factors, including:

- changes to the reviews services offered to schools for national curriculum tests in 2010
- a reduction in the number of tests administered due to industrial action
- the use of single level tests in mathematics for accountability in some schools
- changes to the arrangements for the assessment of science at the end of key stage 2.

¹ The 2010 test operations agency was Edexcel Limited.

² RM Education Plc was the onscreen marking supplier for the December 2009 and June 2010 single level tests.

Reviews

A review is when a pupil's test script is checked to ensure that the original application of the mark scheme was appropriate and that no clerical errors were made. A request for a review should be considered when, in the opinion of school staff, a pupil has been awarded a national curriculum level above or below the level that their work is entitled to, according to the published mark scheme.

2010 national curriculum tests review services

Following feedback from schools and local authorities, a number of changes were made to the reviews services offered for the 2010 national curriculum test cycle, to simplify the reviews process for schools. Two review services were available for national curriculum tests in 2010:

- clerical review
- individual pupil review.

The key changes for 2010 included:

- group reviews were no longer offered
- individual pupil reviews were offered as a full review of the pupil's entire test script (at component level for English)
- the cost of an individual pupil review increased to reflect the additional time required to review the entire test script.

The group review service was discontinued to simplify the services offered and to prevent the risk of inappropriate selection of this service by schools. Key stage 2 schools are often better served by applying for individual pupil reviews for a number of pupils, rather than a group review.

Previously, an individual pupil review required schools to identify questions where they felt the mark scheme had either been incorrectly or inconsistently applied. The review marker would review the questions indicated by the school against the mark scheme but did not review the entire test script.

For 2010, the individual pupil review service involved a review of marking of the entire test script (at component level for English) to check that the published mark scheme was applied to the agreed national standard throughout the test script. In practice, the review marker reviewed the mark awarded for each item, question or writing strand against the mark scheme to confirm it was correctly applied.

An individual pupil review also included a clerical check of the addition of marks on all test scripts submitted for review. Where an individual pupil review request is not successful because the application of the mark scheme by the original marker is deemed appropriate, but a clerical error is detected, the review is reported as a clerical review rather than an individual pupil review.

In 2010, reviews continued to be available at component level for key stage 2 English. For example, a school that requested a clerical review for English reading for one pupil may have also submitted that pupil's English writing test script for an individual pupil review. Historically, review outcomes have been reported against the subject overall (in this case English), therefore these kinds of reviews are coded as 'mixed' in the tables for 2008, 2009 and 2010 to reflect a 'mix' of review types.

Schools that participated in the key stage 2 national curriculum tests received their marked test scripts and pupil results by the published deadline of Tuesday 6 July 2010. The deadline for requesting a review was Friday 16 July 2010. In 2010, the system of collecting the national data was aligned with the 2009 approach, but the method for returning results to schools was adjusted. As per the 2009 process, markers transferred the component scores from marked pupil test scripts to marksheets. However, in a change for 2010, once the component scores had been collected, the aggregation of component scores and level setting was completed by a computer.

In 2009, duplicate copies of the marksheets were returned to schools along with the test scripts, but schools were instructed to wait until the official results were available before submitting an application for review. In 2010, marksheets were not returned to schools. Instead, schools received marked test scripts by Tuesday 6 July 2010, and the official results were published on the 'Pupil results' section of the *NCA tools* website on Tuesday 6 July 2010. This change in process reduced the risk of schools submitting review applications based on the results that appeared on the marksheets before the release of the official results.

Details on the 2010 national curriculum test reviews process can be found in the 2010 key stage 2 *Reviews guidance for schools* and on the 'Marking and reviews' page of the QCDA website at www.qcda.gov.uk/tests.

Single level tests review services

As single level tests were marked onscreen, only an individual pupil review service was available. This is because onscreen marking removes the possibility for totalling or transcription errors, which may give rise to a clerical review. The individual pupil review service offered was a review of the entire test script for that subject (by component for English), in line with the service offered for national curriculum tests.

Single level test results from the December 2009 test cycle were released on Wednesday 10 February 2010, and on Tuesday 7 September 2010 for the June 2010 test cycle. Official results were returned to schools via the *Key to Success* website. Electronic copies of pupils' test scripts were available to download from a secure website. An individual pupil review service was then available to schools.

Single level test review data reported

Data on single level test review applications and outcomes for year 6 pupils in English reading and English writing is included in the data tables on pages 18 and 19 of this report. Single level test outcomes for English reading and writing were not reported for accountability purposes and as such, review data is not reported alongside the key figures for 2010.

The data reported for single level tests is inclusive of year 6 pupils only. However, test entries and review applications were also permitted from pupils in years 3, 4 and 5 as part of the single level test pilot.

Details on the single level tests reviews process can be found on the QCDA website at www.qcda.gov.uk/singleleveltests.

Review fees and process reviews

Schools were informed that they would be charged for any review applications that did not result in a change to the test level reported (at subject level, or at component level for national curriculum tests in English). The 2010 national curriculum review fees were £5 for a clerical review and £9 for an individual pupil review. The fee for a single level test individual pupil review that did not result in the test level being achieved was £6.50.

A school may request a process review if they're not satisfied that the correct procedures have been followed in the conduct of the marking review. The outcome of a process review is final and there is no right of appeal.

Comparability

The nature of the review services offered in 2010 differed to those offered in 2009, making year on year comparisons difficult. The group review service was no longer offered and the individual pupil review service was widened to include a review of the pupil's entire test script.

It was anticipated that the total number of individual pupil review applications may increase, as pupil's test scripts that may previously have been included in a group review application would now be submitted for an individual pupil review. However, due to industrial action, 4,005 of the 15,515 maintained schools expected to administer the national curriculum tests in 2010, did not do so. Therefore, the population of schools from which review applications were submitted was 74.2 per cent of the expected national cohort of schools.

The national curriculum test mathematics cohort was also further reduced in 2010 because in the 225 schools in the single level test pilot, year 6 pupils did not sit national curriculum tests in mathematics, but did sit national curriculum tests in English. This reduced the national curriculum test mathematics cohort from which review applications could have been received, in comparison to previous years. The single level tests results in mathematics were reported for accountability purposes. Year 6 pupils may have sat a single level test in mathematics in December 2009 and in June 2010, so an individual pupil could be included twice in the pupil count for 2010.

Arrangements for the assessment of science at the end of key stage 2 were also different in 2010. National testing was replaced with a sampling arrangement whereby selected schools administered science sampling tests to all pupils within their cohort who were working at level 3 or above. The purpose of this sample, selected to be nationally representative, was for the DfE to monitor the proportion of pupils attaining level 4 and above. Given the purpose of the sample, individual pupil results were not returned to schools, and therefore a reviews service was not offered.

Since 2008, the marking process has been different in some respects from previous years, which makes direct comparisons with previous years problematic. The 'borderlining' process whereby pupils up to three marks below a level threshold had their test script reviewed by their original marker, was removed in 2008.

QCDA does not believe that the number of review applications received, or the outcomes of reviews of marking, can be used to draw conclusions about the quality of marking in any year.

Key figures for 2010

In 2010, 794,223 national curriculum tests in English and mathematics were marked. Review applications were received for 23,438 national curriculum tests in mathematics and English, representing 3.0 per cent of the total number of national curriculum test scripts that were marked.

Across the December 2009 and June 2010 test cycles, 12,056 single level tests in mathematics from year 6 pupils were marked. For single level tests, 49 review applications for mathematics test scripts were received, which represents 0.4 per cent of the total number of mathematics test scripts marked.

A total of 2,293 national curriculum tests received an overall subject level change (to a higher or lower level) as a result of a review application. This represents 0.3 per cent of the total number of national curriculum test scripts marked, and means that 9.8 per cent of review requests resulted in a level change.

For December 2009 and June 2010 single level tests in mathematics, 13 review applications resulted in the level being achieved. This represents 0.1 per cent of the total number of single level test mathematics test scripts that were marked, and means that 26.5 per cent of review applications in mathematics resulted in a level change.

The following tables show a breakdown of the figures for each test.

Table 1: 2010 national curriculum tests in English – reviews and outcomes

Key stage 2 English #	Schools	Reviews requested †	Outcome: lower level ‡	Outcome: higher level ‡
Clerical review	345	545	57	190
		0.1%	10.5%	34.9%
Individual pupil review	3,311	21,947	318	1,363
		5.5%	1.4%	6.2%
Mixed review*	28	45	2	12
		0.0%	4.4%	26.7%

Table 2: 2010 national curriculum tests in mathematics – reviews and outcomes

Key stage 2 mathematics	Schools	Reviews requested †	Outcome: lower level ‡	Outcome: higher level ‡
Clerical review	127	141	3	127
		0.0%	2.1%	90.1%
Individual pupil review	525	760	0	221
		0.2%	0.0%	29.1%

Table 3: 2010 single level tests in mathematics – reviews and outcomes

Single level test mathematics	Schools	Reviews requested †	Outcome: higher level ‡
Individual pupil review	27	49	13
		0.4%	26.5%

Key to tables:

† The percentage figures given in the 'Reviews requested' column use the cohort as the denominator in the calculation.

‡ The percentage figures given in the 'Outcome' columns use the value in the 'Reviews requested' column as the denominator in the calculation.

The total number of English national curriculum test reviews includes a pupil's reading and/or writing paper. If a reading and writing review application was placed for the same pupil, this would be counted as one in the total for English.

* Mixed review shows where a pupil's English reading and writing tests were both submitted for review, but for different review types.

Up to 2007, the data published on reviews of marking for national curriculum tests was based on the test operation agency's management information and not on the data feed provided to the DfE (formerly the Department for Children, Schools and Families). QCDA has republished the data from 2007 (using the information provided in the data feed to the DfE) together with the 2010 data, so that consistent business rules can be applied to all years.

Please note that in 2007, a standard cohort size of 650,000 was used to calculate the percentage of the cohort that had applied for a review of marking and to calculate the percentage of pupils who had a change of level following a review. From 2008 to 2010 inclusive, QCDA has used actual cohort figures for each year and has recalculated the 2007 percentages as appropriate.

Technical information

Population of interest

The population of interest, or cohort, for each key stage and subject covers all schools in England with pupils participating in the end of key stage 2 national curriculum tests and who achieve a valid test outcome (i.e. a national curriculum level 2, 3, 4, 5 or an award of 'N' where too few marks are gained for the award of a level). Also included are a small number of Service Children's Education schools that are located overseas and have pupils eligible for the tests.

Pupils are not included if they did not sit the tests because they were:

- absent
- working below the level of the test
- working at the level of the test but unable to access them.

Pupils who sat one or more components of the test, but who do not have a full set of marks either through partial absence, test scripts being lost or because results have been annulled due to maladministration, are not included.

Schools submitting more than one type of review application for different pupils in one subject are counted separately in the schools total for each type of review in tables 1, 2, 8, 9 and 10.

Cohort numbers

The calculations of the types of review as a percentage of the cohort given in tables 1 to 3, and 8 to 13 are based upon the following denominators in table 4, which are a count of pupils with national curriculum level 2, 3, 4, 5 or an award of 'N'. Comparative science data from 2007–2009 is included for completeness.

Table 4: Cohort numbers for key stage 2 national curriculum tests 2007–2010

Key stage 2	English	Mathematics	Science
2007	559,523	563,080	571,024
2008	569,066	573,508	580,645
2009	554,219	557,841	564,255
2010	398,601	395,622	-

Table 5: Cohort numbers for single level tests in December 2009 and June 2010

Single level tests	English reading	English writing	Mathematics
December 2009 and June 2010	5,510	5,513	12,056

Pupil numbers for each subject for each year may vary for of a number of reasons, including:

- take up of the tests by independent schools (national curriculum tests only)
- school entry decisions (single level tests only)
- absenteeism
- rates at which pupils make progress and complete the relevant programmes of study
- for 2010, schools not participating in the national curriculum tests due to industrial action
- for 2010, schools not participating in the national curriculum tests in mathematics due to involvement in the single level test pilot.

Data sets

The data sets used are given to QCDA by the test operations agency for national curriculum tests, and by the onscreen marking supplier for single level tests. The data sets analysed in this report are the data feeds referenced in table 6 below.

Table 6: Data sets for key stage 2 national curriculum tests 2007–2010

Year	Data feed reference	Date the data was provided to QCDA
2007	5	30 January 2008
2008	4k	6 October 2008
2009	6	16 October 2009
2010	6	7 September 2010

Table 7: Data sets for single level tests in December 2009 and June 2010

Year	Data feed reference	Date the data was provided to QCDA
December 2009	6	17 March 2010
June 2010	6	30 September 2010

Reviews upheld

For national curriculum tests, only reviews where the overall level for the subject changed as a consequence of the review are included in the totals for outcomes in tables 1, 2 and 8.

Table 8 records levels being achieved at component level for single level test English reading and English writing. This is because the single level test assessment model allowed for pupils to be entered in English reading and/or English writing, and at different test levels. Results were therefore not aggregated to generate an overall level for English.

Any amendments to results outside the reviews process are not counted. This will include, for example changes recorded as part of the primary Achievement and Attainment Tables checking exercise by schools.

Rounding

Any percentages given in this report are given to one decimal place. The rounding convention is as follows: any fractions of 0.05 and above will be rounded up, anything less than 0.05 will be rounded down. For example, 4.483 will be rounded to 4.5, and 4.445 will be rounded to 4.4. As a result of rounding, figures that are less than 0.05 per cent are rounded down and recorded as 0.0 per cent.

Key to tables:

- Not applicable.

~ Not available.

† The percentage figures given in the 'Reviews requested' column use the cohort as the denominator in the calculation.

‡ The percentage figures given in the 'Outcome' columns use the value in the 'Reviews requested' column as the denominator in the calculation.

The total number of English national curriculum test reviews includes a pupil's reading and/or writing paper. If a reading and writing review application was placed for the same pupil, this would be counted as one in the total for English.

* Mixed review shows where a pupil's English reading and writing tests were both submitted for review, but for different review types.

§ The group reviews, for which the application of the mark scheme by the original marker was deemed to be correct.

Table 8: Trends over time 2007–2009

Key stage 2	2007				2008				2009			
	Schools	Reviews requested†	Outcome: lower level‡	Outcome: higher level‡	Schools	Reviews requested†	Outcome: lower level‡	Outcome: higher level‡	Schools	Reviews requested†	Outcome: lower level‡	Outcome: higher level‡
English												
Clerical review	923	1,460	47	357	431	914	29	209	1,714	3,281	147	946
		0.3%	3.2%	24.5%		0.2%	3.2%	22.9%		0.6%	4.5%	28.8%
Individual pupil review	784	1,456	7	190	4,630	25,150	109	4,103	5,105	27,322	17	2,562
		0.3%	0.5%	13.0%		4.4%	0.4%	16.3%		4.9%	0.1%	9.4%
Group review	12	427	60	36	261	14,781	243	736	73	4,716	113	277
		0.1%	14.1%	8.4%		2.6%	1.6%	5.0%		0.9%	2.4%	5.9%
Group review§	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	184	9,989	-	-
		-	-	-		-	-	-		1.8%	-	-
Mixed review*	~	~	~	~	94	296	7	63	347	531	2	98
		-	-	-		0.1%	2.4%	21.3%		0.1%	0.4%	18.5%
Mathematics												
Clerical review	336	430	12	80	262	359	22	235	238	277	5	236
		0.1%	2.8%	18.6%		0.1%	6.1%	65.5%		0.0%	1.8%	85.2%
Individual pupil review	332	373	0	292	1,235	1,720	0	941	956	1,201	0	626
		0.1%	0.0%	78.3%		0.3%	0.0%	54.7%		0.2%	0.0%	52.1%
Group review	0	0	0	0	4	126	1	0	1	96	2	1
		-	-	-		0.0%	0.8%	0.0%		0.0%	2.1%	1.0%
Group review§	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	0	-	-

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		-	-	-		-	-	-		-	-	-
Mixed review*	~	~	~	~	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
		-	-	-		0.0%	0.0%	50.0%		-	-	-

2010 reviews data

The following tables show a breakdown of the figures for each test.

Table 9: 2010 national curriculum tests in English – reviews and outcomes

Key stage 2 English #	Schools	Reviews requested †	Outcome: lower level ‡	Outcome: higher level ‡
Clerical review	345	545	57	190
		0.1%	10.5%	34.9%
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Table 10: 2010 national curriculum tests in mathematics – reviews and outcomes

Key stage 2 mathematics	Schools	Reviews requested †	Outcome: lower level ‡	Outcome: higher level ‡
Clerical review	127	141	3	127
		0.0%	2.1%	90.1%
Individual pupil review	525	760	0	221
		0.2%	0.0%	29.1%

Table 11: December 2009 and June 2010 single level tests in English reading – reviews and outcomes

Single level test English reading	Schools	Reviews requested †	Outcome: higher level ‡
Individual pupil review	5	13	6
		0.2%	46.2%

Table 12: December 2009 and June 2010 single level tests in English writing – reviews and outcomes

Single level test English writing	Schools	Reviews requested †	Outcome: higher level ‡
Individual pupil review	8	20	12
		0.4%	60.0%

Table 13: December 2009 and June 2010 single level tests in mathematics – reviews and outcomes

Single level test mathematics	Schools	Reviews requested †	Outcome: higher level ‡
Individual pupil review	27	49	13
		0.4%	26.5%