



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency

# **2013 Maladministration report**

**National curriculum assessments**

**November 2014**

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## Introduction

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) has a statutory duty to investigate any matter brought to its attention relating to the accuracy and correctness of any results of any child in the key stage 2 levels 3-5 and level 6 national curriculum tests as well as the phonics screening check. These instances were investigated in partnership with local authorities in accordance with the 2013 'Maladministration investigation procedures'.

The term 'maladministration' refers to any act that could jeopardise the integrity, security or confidentiality of the national curriculum tests and the phonics screening check, and could lead to results that do not reflect the unaided abilities of children. This could refer to a range of actions, including test papers being incorrectly opened, children cheating, over-aiding of children by test administrators or changes being made to children's test scripts by someone other than the child.

Following an investigation, if STA's maladministration team finds that the accuracy or correctness of a child's test results is in doubt, the team makes a decision to amend or annul results.

This report details the numbers, sources and types of allegations of maladministration reported to the STA maladministration team throughout the 2013 test cycle across key stages 1 and 2. It also presents the numbers of amendments and annulments to results made in 2013. Comparisons are made with the data from 2011 and 2012.

# National curriculum assessments in 2013

## Number of schools

In 2013, approximately 15 400 schools participated in the key stage 2 levels 3-5 national curriculum tests. Approximately 9 500 schools also participated in the level 6 English reading test, 7 700 schools in the level 6 English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests and 11 300 schools in the level 6 mathematics tests. Approximately 16 000 schools participated in the phonics screening check.

## Key changes to the assessments in 2012 and 2013

In 2012 a number of changes to the assessments and new assessments were introduced.

At key stage 1 the phonics screening check was introduced.

At key stage 2, in addition to statutory levels 3-5 tests in English reading and mathematics and science sampling tests:

- level 6 tests for high attaining children were introduced in English reading and mathematics;
- schools were given the option to administer either an internally marked or externally marked levels 3-5 English writing test. These tests were to be used to inform English writing teacher assessment and results were not reported;
- approximately 1 500 schools were selected to administer the externally marked English writing test as part of a writing sample; and
- the number of days after the published date that a test could be administered increased from two to five days.

In 2013 a number of further changes to the assessments were introduced.

At key stage 1 the phonics screening check was administered to children in Year 2 if they had not taken the check in Year 1 or did not reach the expected standard in Year 1 in 2012.

At key stage 2, in addition to statutory levels 3-5 tests in English reading and mathematics:

- a new statutory English grammar, punctuation and spelling test was introduced to replace the English writing test/sample;
- a new level 6 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test was made available for schools to enter children for;
- there was no science sampling this year.

The key stage 2 level 6 tests were scheduled to be administered in the same week as the levels 3-5 tests. The level 6 tests been administered in the week following the levels 3-5 tests in 2012.

## **Changes to the investigation procedures**

Changes were also made to the Maladministration investigation procedures. The maladministration committee and the option to appeal the decision of the committee were removed from the investigation process. The decisions made by the maladministration team at the conclusion of their investigations were final.

## **Key findings**

- There was an increase in the total number of cases of alleged maladministration reported to STA in 2013 across key stage 1 and 2. In 2013, 511 cases were reported compared to 370 cases in 2012 and 292 cases in 2011.
- There was an increase in the number of cases reported at key stage 2, 438 in 2013 compared to 345 in 2012. However, this increase can be largely attributed to an increase in the number of tests that schools had to administer following the introduction of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. There were 92 cases which related directly to the administration of the levels 3-5 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test and 4 related to the level 6 test.
- There was also an increase in the number of cases reported relating to the key stage 1 assessments, which includes the phonics screening check, 73 in 2013 compared to 25 in 2012. Whilst the overall number of cases relating to key stage 1 was approximately three times as many as in 2012 the number was still low as a percentage of the number of schools that participated in the key stage 1 assessments, less than 0.5 per cent.
- There was no one cause for the increase in the number of cases reported at key stage 1. There was a general increase in the number of cases reported for each allegation type. (See diagrams 2 and 3) However, no allegation type had more than 9 cases and only 5 allegation types had more than 5 cases reported.
- Local authorities reported 53.4 per cent of cases relating to key stage 1 assessment and the phonics screening check. The majority of these cases reported issues encountered during monitoring visits to schools administering the phonics screening check.
- Schools self-reported 39.7 per cent of cases relating to key stage 2 assessment and the national curriculum tests. Significant percentages of cases were also reported by markers and local authorities (26.9 and 15.5 per cent respectively).

- 85 schools (19.4 per cent of the cases reported at key stage 2, but only 0.55 per cent of schools who participated in the key stage 2 national curriculum tests) received amendments to, or annulments of, their results.
- 37 schools had whole cohort annulments of at least one key stage 2 test.

## Breakdown of maladministration cases in 2013

Across key stages 1 and 2, 511 cases of alleged maladministration were reported in 2013, compared to 370 cases in 2012 and 292 cases in 2011.

There were 73 cases in 2013 for key stage 1, compared to 25 cases in 2012 and no cases in 2011.

There were 438 cases reported in 2013 for key stage 2. This was greater than in 2012 when 345 cases were reported. There were 292 reported cases in 2011.

**Table 1. Total reported cases at key stage 1 and 2**

Year	Total reported cases at key stage 1	% of total number of participated schools	Total reported cases at key stage 2	% of total number of participated schools
2011	0	0	292	1.83
2012	25	0.16	345	2.16
2013	73	0.46	438	2.72

There was no one cause for the increase in the number of cases reported at key stage 1. There was a general increase in the number of cases reported for each allegation type.

Whilst the overall number of cases relating to key stage 1 was approximately three times as many as in 2012 the number was still low as a percentage of the number of schools that participated in the phonics screening check, less than 0.5 per cent.

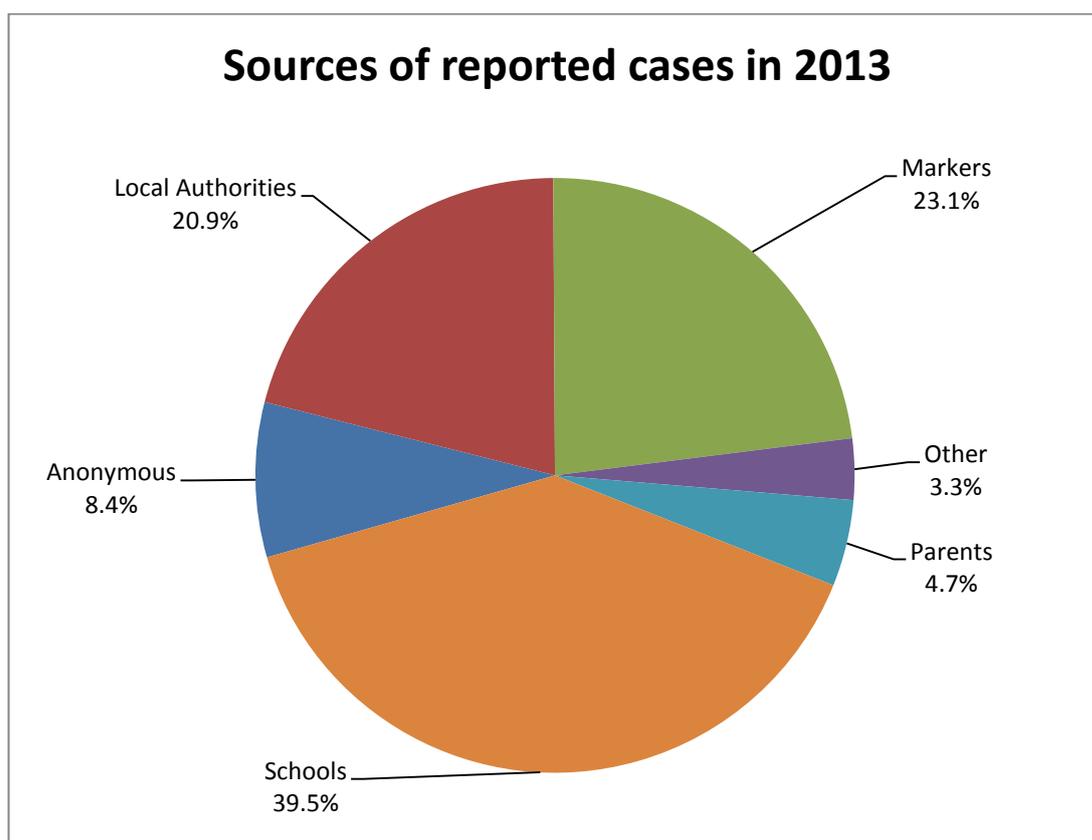
The increase in the number of cases reported at key stage 2 from 2012-13 can be largely attributed an increase in the number of tests that schools had to administer following the introduction of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. There were 92 cases which related directly to the administration of the levels 3-5 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test and 4 related to the level 6 test.

## Sources of reported cases

Cases of alleged maladministration are reported to STA by a number of different sources. Across key stage 1 and 2, schools self-reported the largest proportion of cases: 39.5 per cent. The majority of these cases concerned issues which did not affect the integrity or security of the tests.

Significant percentages of cases were also reported by local authorities and markers (20.9 and 23.1 per cent respectively).

**Diagram 1. Sources of reported cases in 2013**



The following tables show the sources of reported cases for each key stage.

**Table 2. Key stage 1 assessments – 2011-13 – Reported cases from different sources**

Year	Schools	Parents	Local authorities	Anonymous	Other
2011	0 cases	0 cases	0 cases	0 cases	0 cases
2012	36.0% (9 cases)	4.0% (1 case)	60.0% (15 cases)	0 cases	0 cases
2013	38.4% (28 cases)	4.1% (3 cases)	53.4% (39 cases)	4.1% (3 cases)	0 cases

For cases that related to key stage 1 assessments, including the phonics screening check, local authorities reported the largest percentage of cases: 53.4 per cent. Of the 39 cases reported by local authorities, 28 followed monitoring visits. Schools self-reported the majority of the remaining cases (38.4 per cent).

**Table 3. Key Stage 2 – 2011 to 2013 – Reported cases from different sources**

Year	Schools	Parents	Local authorities	Anonymous	Markers	Other
2011	34.2% (100 cases)	6.8% (20 cases)	19.2% (56 cases)	6.2% (18 cases)	27.7% (81 cases)	5.8% (17 cases)
2012	45.2% (156 cases)	3.5% (12 cases)	20.0% (69 cases)	7.5% (26 cases)	22.6% (78 cases)	1.2% (4 cases)
2013	39.7% (174 cases)	4.8% (21 cases)	15.5% (68 cases)	9.1% (40 cases)	26.9% (118 cases)	3.9% (17 cases)

For cases related to key stage 2 assessments, schools reported the largest percentage of cases: 39.7 per cent. Compared to 2012, there was a 5.5 per cent decrease in cases reported by schools in 2013. However, schools actually reported a greater number of cases than in previous years. The drop in overall percentage follows the increase in the total number of cases reported in 2013.

Markers reported 26.9 per cent of cases, the second largest proportion. This was an increase of 4.3 per cent compared to 2012. The number of reported cases rose by 40 cases between 2012 and 2013. 34 of the 118 cases reported by markers were related to the transcriptions made to the newly introduced English grammar, punctuation and spelling test.

Local authorities reported the third largest percentage of cases: 15.5 per cent. This was a decrease of 4.5per cent on 2012, but the number of cases reported in 2012 and 2013 are comparable. 40 of the 68 cases reported by local authorities followed monitoring visits.

## Types of maladministration allegation

### Key stage 1

Allegations reported to STA relating to the key stage 1 assessments can be divided into three categories:

- Before check administration – allegations relating to the receipt and secure storage of the check materials, accidental opening of the materials, the use of the content of the check materials to prepare children before the administration of the check and unauthorised timetable variations, administering the check before the timetabled check week.
- During check administration – allegations relating to the administration of the check, such as check administrators over-aiding children or incorrect scoring of children’s responses.
- Moderation of teacher assessment – allegations relating to reporting of incorrect teacher assessment.

**Table 4. Key stage 1 – 2011 to 2013 – number / % of allegations reported in each category**

Year	Before check administration		During check administration		Moderation of teacher assessment	
	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases
2011	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
2012	9	36.0	13	52	3	12
2013	28	38.4	39	53.4	6	8.2

Note: The phonics screening check was introduced in 2012. As a consequence there are no figures for before check administration or during check administration for 2011.

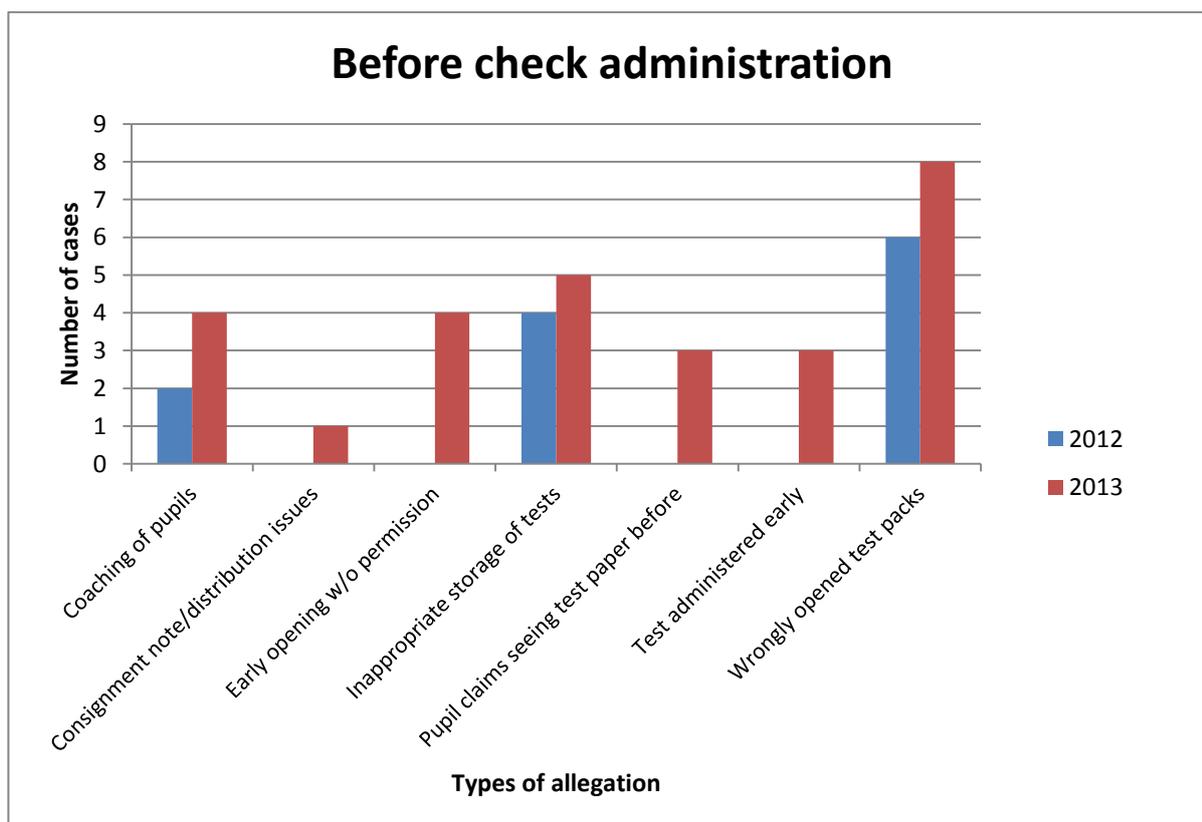
28 of the 73 cases reported relating to key stage 1 assessments and the phonics screening check were in the ‘Before check administration’ category. The most common allegation in this category was that check materials had been wrongly opened. There were eight cases in this category, six of which were self-reported by schools after the check materials had been opened by mistake.

There were 39 cases in the ‘During check administration’ category. In this category, there were seven cases of children resitting the check, five of which were reported by the schools. In each instance, the data that most accurately reflected the children’s abilities was submitted following investigation. Other common allegations in this category were

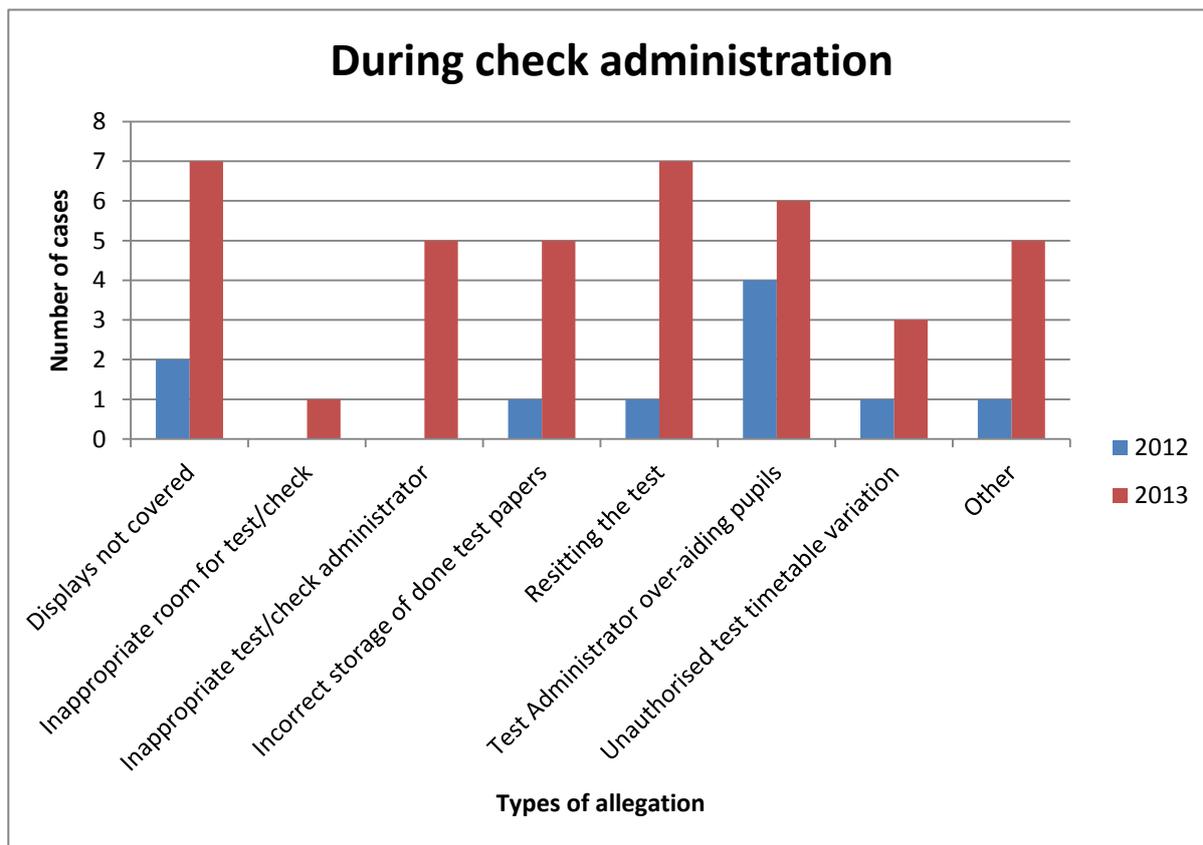
displays not being covered and check administrators over-aiding the children during the check. All seven cases relating to displays not being covered and four out of the six cases relating to over-aiding were reported by local authorities following monitoring visits. In each instance the local authority discussed the issue(s) with the school and subsequent checks were conducted correctly. No allegation type at key stage 1 had more than 9 cases and only 5 allegation types had more than 5 cases reported.

The following graphs show the breakdown and comparison of allegation types from 2012-13, in the categories 'Before check administration' and 'During check administration'.

**Diagram 2. Breakdown of allegations in the category 'Before check administration'**



**Diagram 3. Breakdown of allegations in the category 'During check administration'**



## Key stage 2

Allegations of maladministration reported to STA relating to the key stage 2 assessments can also be divided into three categories:

- Before test administration – between the delivery of test materials to schools and when they are administered to children.
- During test administration – from when the tests are administered to children until the completed test scripts are sent for external marking.
- After test administration – once marked test scripts have been returned to schools.

**Table 5. Key stage 2 – 2011 to 2013 – number / % of allegations reported in each category**

Year	Before test administration		During test administration		After test administration	
	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases
2011	60	20.5	224	76.8	8	2.7
2012	73	21.2	261	75.6	11	3.2
2013	97	22.1	321	73.3	20	4.6

There were increases in the number of cases reported relating to all categories in 2013 compared to 2012. However, the percentages of cases in each category are comparable across the last three years.

The majority of cases reported relating to key stage 2 assessment and the national curriculum tests were in the ‘During test administration’ category at 73.3 per cent. As in 2012, the most common allegation in this category was of test administrators over-aiding children (85 cases).

The ‘During test administration’ category also had the largest increase in number of cases, 60 cases. This can largely be attributed to the introduction of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test.

In particular, in 2013 there were 34 cases reported by markers, logged in the category ‘overactive scribe/reader/transcriber’, which related to the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. Upon investigation these scripts were found to be incorrectly transcribed. There was only one similar case in 2012 where an answer on a child’s reading test had been incorrectly transcribed. STA acknowledge the need for clearer guidance on creating transcripts for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests. In the majority of these cases markers were able to mark the child’s original responses and award the correct marks.

In the ‘Before test administration’ category, there was a small increase in 2013 cases to 22.1 per cent compared to 21.2 per cent in 2012. The most common allegation in this category was of schools accidentally opening the wrong test packs. In 2013 there was an increase in this category to 47 cases compared to 27 in 2012. The test packs have been redesigned for 2014 in order to help address both of these issues.

In the ‘After test administration’ category, there was a small increase in 2013 cases to 4.6 per cent, compared to 3.2 per cent in 2012. There was an increase in the number of cases relating to changes to marked scripts before review, 17 in 2013 compared to 10 in 2012 and 8 in 2011, the number was comparable to the number reported in 2010 when

there were 20 cases reported in this allegation type. Overall, the number of cases in this category still remains low.

The following graphs show the breakdown and comparison of allegation types from 2011-13, in each category.

Diagram 4. Breakdown of allegations in the category 'Before test administration'

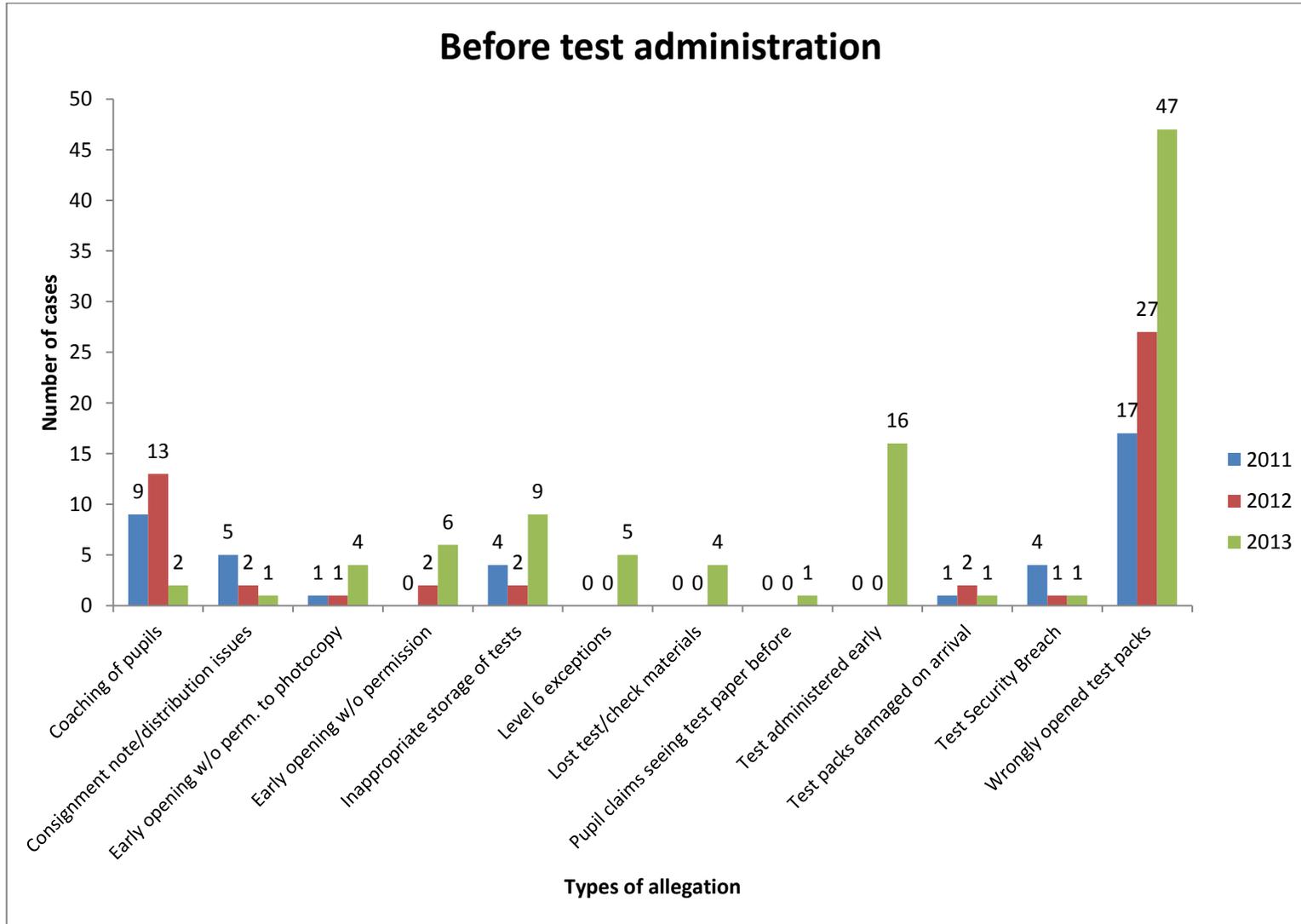
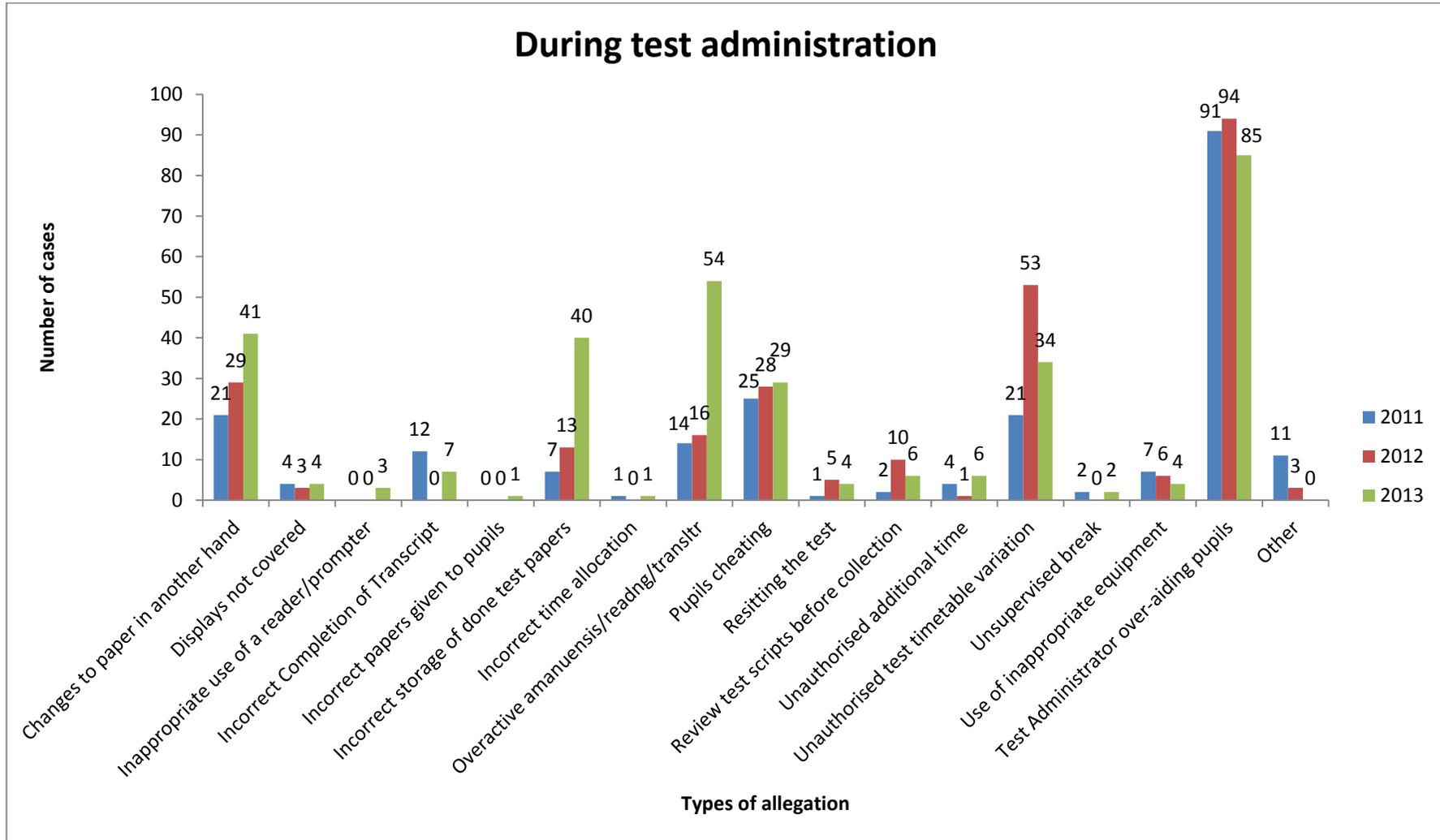
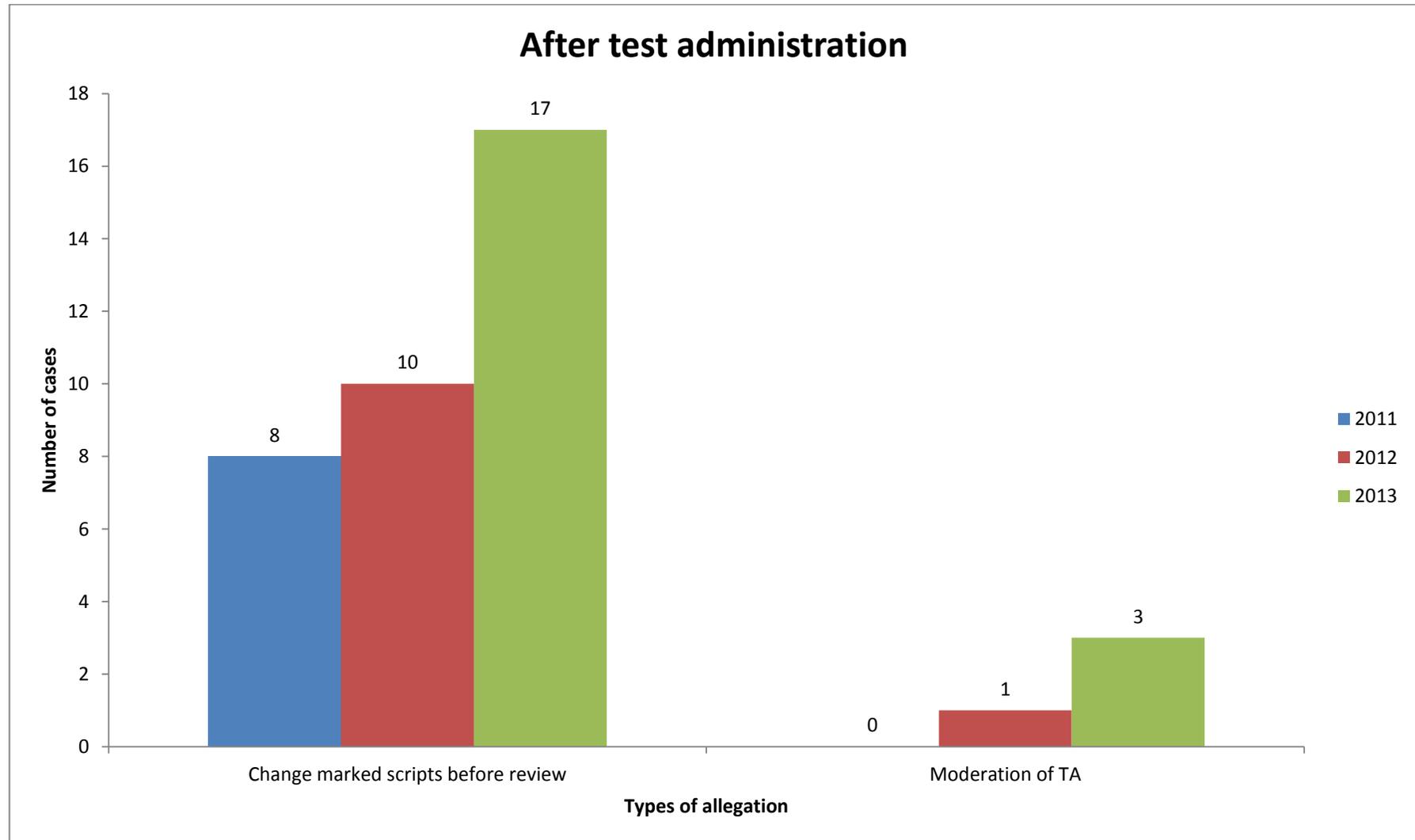


Diagram 5. Breakdown of allegations in the category 'During test administration'



Please note that one Boycott case reported in 2011 has been omitted from this chart as we have not had any similar cases in 2012 or 2013.

Diagram 6. Breakdown of allegations in the category 'After test administration'



## Amendments to, and annulments of, test results

Following an investigation, if STA's maladministration team finds that the accuracy or correctness of a child's test results is in doubt, the team makes a decision to amend or annul results and communicates this to the school. In addition, where a school believes a child has gained an advantage as a result of cheating, the headteacher notifies STA of the incident. In doing this, they agree to the removal of marks for the specific questions where the child has gained an advantage or the annulment of the child's paper.

### Amendment and annulment breakdown by school

In summary for 2013:

- 34 schools had either amendments to, or annulment of, children's key stage 2 test results after notifying STA of a child cheating.
- 51 schools (approximately 0.33 per cent of the total number of schools participating in the key stage 2 tests) had either amendments to, or annulment of, children's results following decisions made by the maladministration team.

**Table 6. Number of key stage 2 schools with amendments or annulments to results in 2011–13**

Year	Schools with whole cohort annulments of at least one subject	Schools with individual child annulments/amendments to results in at least one subject	% of all cases reported at key stage 2
2011	7	30	12.7
2012	6	52	16.8
2013	37	51	19.2

3 schools which had at least one subject annulled for the whole cohort also had individual children's results amended or annulled in other subjects.

There was a large increase in the number of schools where results were annulled for the whole cohort. More decisions were made to annul rather than to amend children's results in 2013. In particular, where the doubt could not be limited to individual children or groups of children, decisions were made to annul the results for whole cohorts.



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