



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency

# **2014 Maladministration report**

**National curriculum assessments**

**December 2015**

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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 pupil in the key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum assessments, including the phonics screening check. These instances were investigated in partnership with local authorities in accordance with the 2014 'Maladministration investigation procedures'.

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 pupil's test scripts by someone other than the pupil or inflation of teacher assessment judgements.

Following an investigation, if STA's maladministration team finds that the accuracy or correctness of a pupil'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 2014 test cycle across key stages 1 and 2. It also presents the numbers of amendments and annulments to results made in 2014. Comparisons are made with the data from 2012 and 2013.

# National curriculum assessments in 2014

## Number of schools

In 2014, approximately 15,500 schools participated in the KS2 levels 3-5 national curriculum tests. Approximately 11,700 schools also participated in the level 6 English reading test; 10,600 schools in the level 6 English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests and 13,400 schools in the level 6 mathematics tests. Approximately 16,200 schools participated in the phonics screening check.

## Key changes to the assessments in 2014

There were some minor changes to the KS2 assessments in 2014.

Calculators were not allowed in any of the KS2 levels 3–5 mathematics papers. Previously calculators had been allowed in Paper 2 of the levels 3-5 mathematics test.

Schools were provided with transparent inner bags to securely store the levels 3–5 mental mathematics test and Paper 1 overnight after their administration on the scheduled test date. They were told that the completed scripts for the mental mathematics test and Paper 1 must be collated as soon as possible on the day of the test and then stored securely in the sealed transparent inner bag(s) overnight until mathematics Paper 2 had been administered the next day. Schools were also instructed not to keep the transparent bag containing the mental mathematics and Paper 1 scripts open for any timetable variation scripts.

Science sampling took place in 2014, but the tests were securely administered by a testing agency on behalf of STA. Test materials and completed scripts were handled by the testing agency's test administrators and school staff did not play a significant role in the administration of the tests.

## Investigation procedures

The 'Maladministration investigation procedures' remained the same following the changes introduced in 2013. Decisions at the conclusion of investigations continued to be made by the maladministration team.

## Key findings

- There was an increase in the total number of cases of alleged maladministration reported to STA in 2014 across key stages 1 and 2 (see table1).
- There was a slight increase in the number of cases reported relating to the key stage 1 (KS1) assessments, which includes the phonics screening check.
- Overall the number of cases in each category and allegation type at KS1 remained low and the total number of cases reported at KS1 represented just 0.55% of the total number of schools that participated in the KS1 assessments.
- Local authorities reported 57.3% of cases relating to KS1 assessment and the phonics screening check. The majority of these cases concerned issues encountered during monitoring visits to schools administering the phonics screening check.
- There was an increase in the number of cases reported related to the KS2 assessments.
- The total number of cases reported at KS2 represented 3.26% of the total number of schools that participated in the KS2 assessments.
- Schools self-reported 43.7% of cases relating to KS2 assessment and the national curriculum tests.
- Significant percentages of KS2 cases were also reported by markers and local authorities (20.4% and 19.0% respectively).
- 0.73% of schools that participated in the KS2 tests received amendments to, or annulments of, their results. This equates to 113 schools.
- 41 schools had whole cohort annulments of at least 1 KS2 subject.

## Breakdown of maladministration cases in 2014

The table below details the number of cases of maladministration reported at each key stage from 2012 to 2014.

**Table 1. Total reported cases at KS1 and KS2**

Year	Total reported cases at KS1	% of total number of participated schools	Total reported cases at KS2	% of total number of participated schools
2012	25	0.16	345	2.16
2013	73	0.46	438	2.72
2014	89	0.55	506	3.26

The increase in the number of cases reported at KS1 in 2014 can largely be attributed to increases in 3 allegation types in the 'During check administration' category<sup>1</sup>. There were 17 cases categorised as 'Other' in 2014, compared to 5 in 2013. Of those 17 cases, 12 were where schools failed to administer the phonics screening check to pupils in year 2 who should have retaken the check having not reached the standard in 2013. There were 13 cases categorised as 'Incorrect storage of completed check materials' in 2014 compared to 5 cases in 2013, and 7 cases categorised as 'Unauthorised timetable variations' in 2014 compared to 3 cases in 2013.

Whilst the numbers of cases relating to KS1 increased in 2014, the number as a percentage of the number of schools participating in the assessments remains very low at 0.55%.

The increase in the number of cases reported at KS2 in 2014 can largely be attributed to the number of cases reported in 3 categories in the 'During test administration' category<sup>2</sup>. There were 84 cases categorised as 'Changes to papers in another hand' in 2014 compared to 41 cases in 2013; 76 cases categorised as 'Incorrect storage of done test papers' in 2014, compared to 40 cases in 2013; and 112 cases categorised as 'Test administrator over-aiding' in 2014, compared to 85 cases in 2013.

The increase in the number of cases reported in those 3 categories was slightly off-set by a decrease in the number of cases related to overactive transcribers, only 9 cases in 2014 compared to 54 in 2013 as schools became more familiar with the guidelines around making transcripts for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests.

There was also an increase in the number of 'Wrongly opened test packs' cases reported, 61 cases in 2014 compared to 47 in 2013, but there was an overall decrease in the number of cases reported in the 'Before test administration category'.

<sup>1</sup> See Diagram 3. Breakdown of allegations in the category 'During check administration', on page 11.

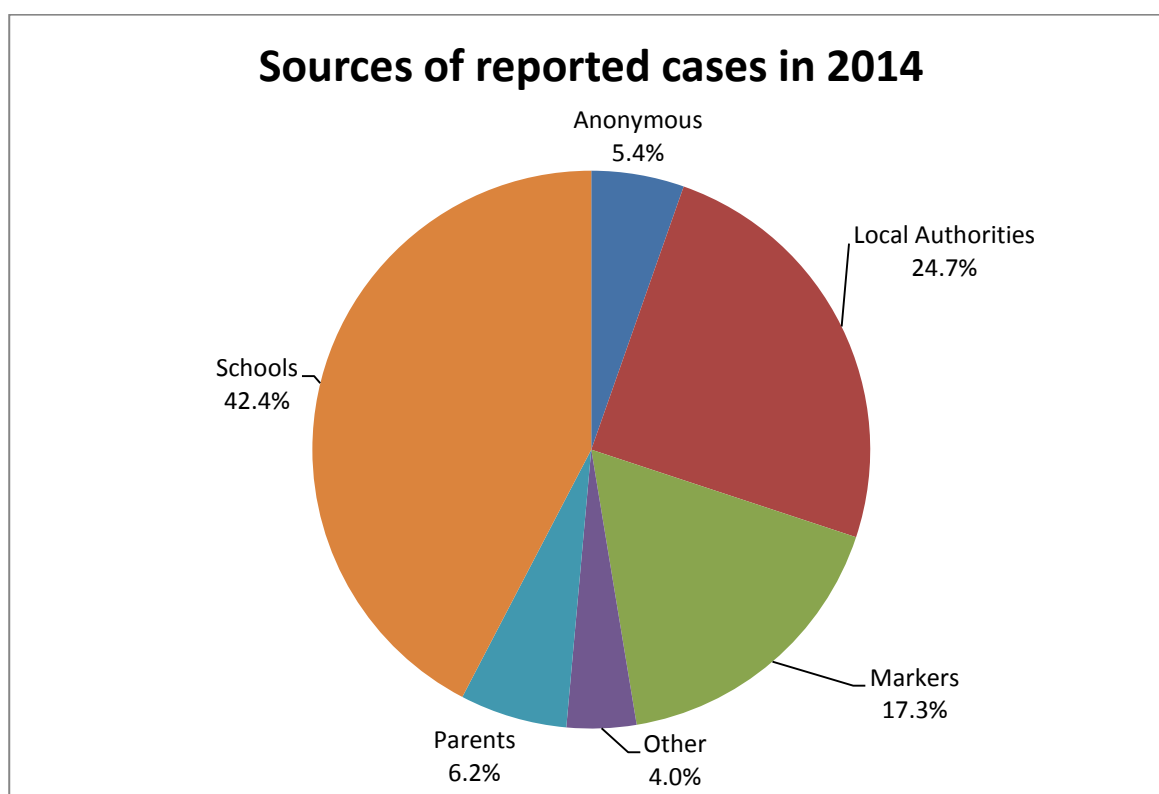
<sup>2</sup> See Diagram 5. Breakdown of allegations in the category 'During test administration', on page 16.

## Sources of reported cases

Cases of alleged maladministration are reported to STA by a number of different sources. Across KS1 and KS2, schools self-reported the largest proportion of cases: 42.4%. The majority of these cases concerned issues which did not affect the integrity or security of the assessments.

Significant percentages of cases were also reported by local authorities and markers (24.7% and 17.3% respectively).

**Diagram 1. Sources of reported cases in 2014**



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

**Table 2. KS1 assessments – 2012 to 2014 – reported cases from different sources**

Year	Schools	Parents	Local authorities	Anonymous	Other
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
2014	34.8% (31 cases)	3.4% (3 cases)	57.3% (51 cases)	2.25% (2 cases)	2.25% (2 cases)

For cases that related to the KS1 assessments, including the phonics screening check, local authorities reported the largest percentage of cases: 57.3%, a similar percentage to previous years. Of the 51 cases reported by local authorities, 43 were reported following monitoring visits for the phonics screening check. Schools self-reported the majority of the remaining cases (34.8%).

**Table 3. KS2 assessments – 2012 to 2014 – reported cases from different sources**

Year	Schools	Parents	Local authorities	Anonymous	Markers	Other
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)
2014	43.7% (221 cases)	6.7% (34 cases)	19.0% (96 cases)	5.9% (30 cases)	20.4% (103 cases)	4.3% (22 cases)

For cases related to the KS2 assessments, schools reported the largest percentage of cases, 43.7%, an increase of 4 percentage points on the percentage reported by schools in 2013. The percentage of cases reported by schools in 2014 was closer to the percentage from 2012. However the overall number of cases relating to the KS2 assessments reported by schools has increased over the last 3 years in line with the increase in overall cases reported.

Markers reported 20.4% of cases, the second largest proportion. While this was a decrease of 6.5 percentage points compared to 2013, there were only 15 fewer cases reported by markers, 103 cases in 2014, compared to 118 in 2013, and still more than in 2012 when they represented a higher percentage of the overall cases reported. Also, there were fewer issues with transcriptions of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test in 2014 as schools became more familiar with using access arrangements in the test.

Local authorities reported the third largest percentage of cases, 19.0%. This was an increase of 3.5 percentage points compared to 2013, but similar to the percentage reported in 2012. Of the 96 cases that originated from local authorities, 69 cases were reported following monitoring visits for the KS2 tests.

The percentage of cases at KS2 originating from parents increased by 1.9 percentage points, with 13 more cases reported by parents in 2014, 34 cases compared to 21 cases in 2013. The percentage of cases from anonymous sources decreased by 3.2% in 2014 compared to 2013, with 10 fewer anonymous cases in 2014 than in 2013.



## Types of maladministration allegation

### Key stage 1

Allegations reported to STA relating to the KS1 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 pupils before the administration of the check and 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 pupils or incorrect scoring of pupils' responses and unauthorised timetable variations, administering the check after the authorised timetable variation window.
- Moderation of teacher assessment – allegations relating to reporting of incorrect teacher assessment.

**Table 4. KS1 assessments – 2012 to 2014 – number / % of allegations reported in each category**

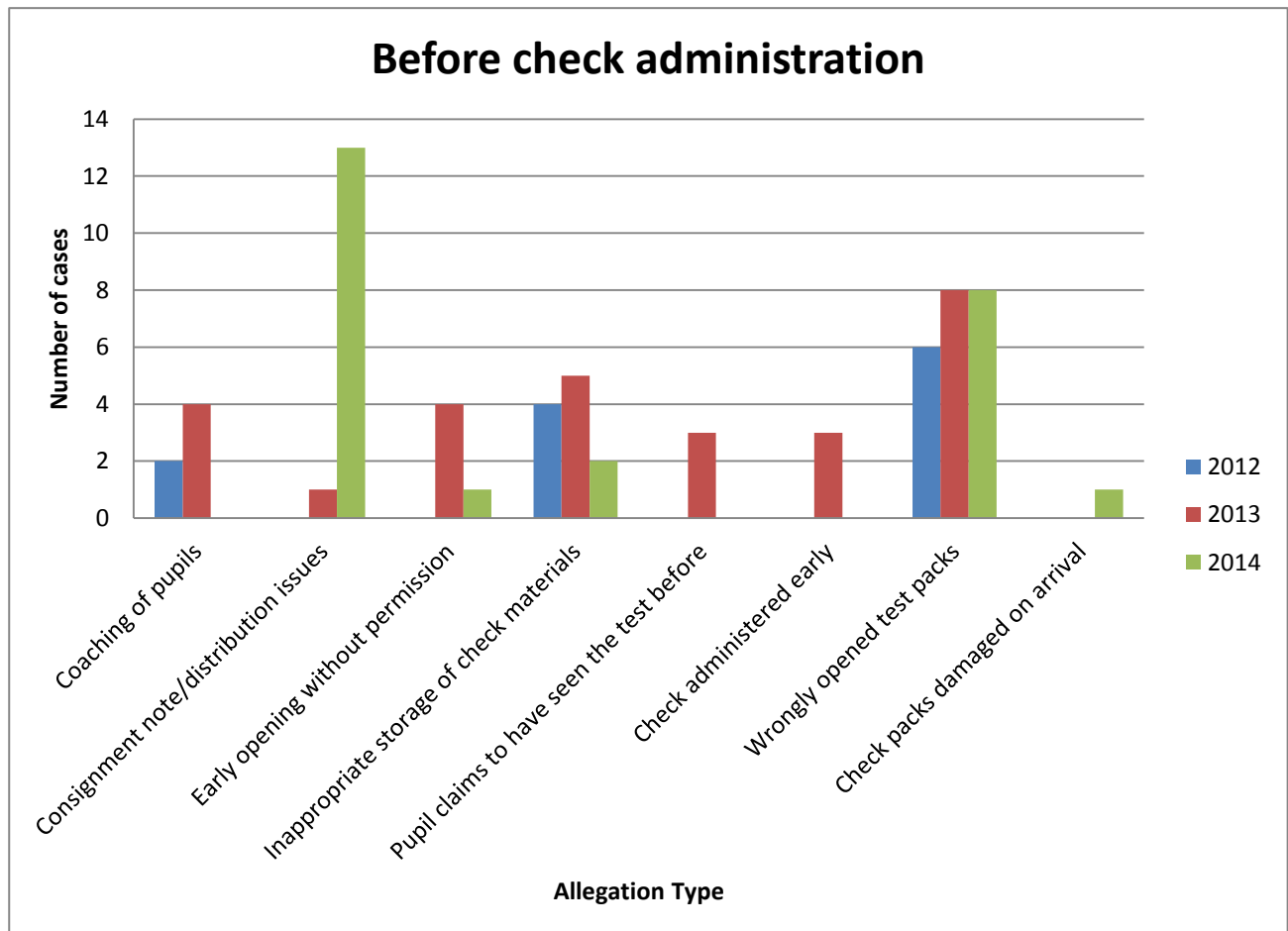
Year	Before check administration		During check administration		Moderation of teacher assessment	
	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases
2012	9	36.0	13	52	3	12
2013	28	38.4	39	53.4	6	8.2
2014	25	28.1	56	62.9	8	9.0

There was a 10.3 percentage points decrease in the number of cases reported in 2014 related to the KS1 assessments in the 'Before check administration' category compared to 2013, although there were only 3 fewer cases. There were 25 cases in 2014, compared to 28 cases in 2013.

The drop in percentage of cases in the 'Before check administration' category is a result of the increase in the number of cases that were reported in the 'During check administration' category: 56 cases in 2014 compared to 39 cases in 2013. The percentage of cases in the 'During check administration' category increased to 62.9% in 2014 compared to 53.4% in 2013.

The percentage of cases in the 'Moderation of teacher assessment' category increased to 9.0% in 2014 compared to 8.2% in 2013. There were 8 cases in 2014 compared to 6 cases in 2013.

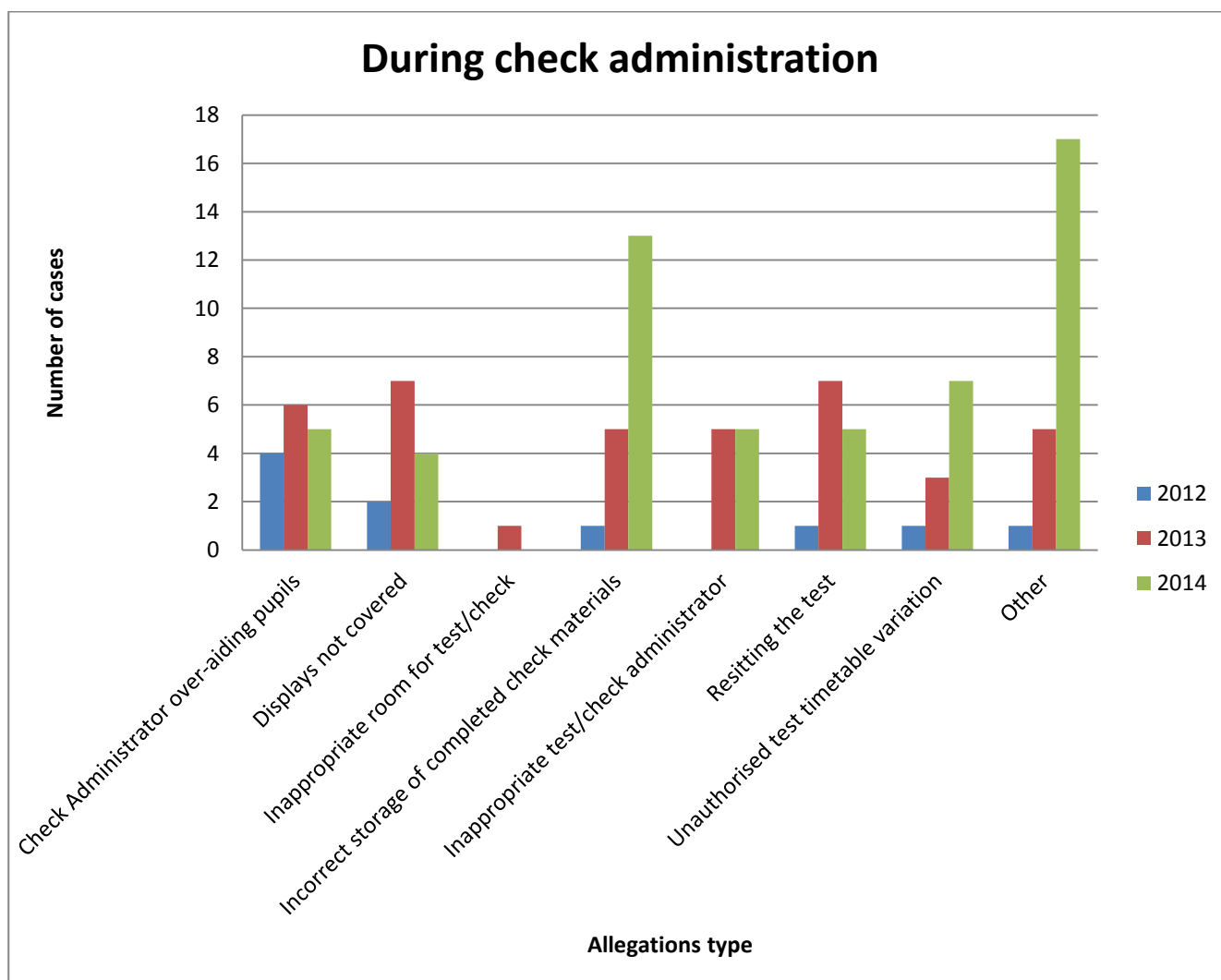
**Diagram 2. Breakdown of allegations in the category 'Before check administration'**



There was a large increase in the number of cases relating to consignment note/distribution issues: 13 in 2014 compared to just a single case in 2013. However, these cases were reported either where the schools' delivery notes were not available for monitoring visitors to check, having been thrown away or otherwise disposed of or, the quantities of the phonics screening check materials had not been checked against the delivery note upon arrival at the schools. These issues did not impact on the integrity of the check.

The second most common allegation in this category was that check materials had been wrongly opened. Of the 8 cases reported, 6 were reported directly by the schools having opened the materials by accident and the other 2 by the local authorities, having been contacted by the schools to report the issues.

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



The largest number of cases reported in this category were categorised as ‘Other’: 17 cases in 2014, compared to 5 cases in 2013. 12 of the cases in this category related to schools who had not administered the check to pupils in year 2 who should have re-taken the check having not reached the standard in year 1.

The second most common allegation related to the incorrect storage of completed check materials: 13 cases in 2014 compared to 5 cases in 2013. 11 of the cases in this category were reported by local authorities following monitoring visits for the phonics screening check. The other 2 cases were self-reported by the schools, but following local authority monitoring visits during which the issues had been discovered. In each instance the local authority monitoring visitors provided the schools with advice in order to ensure the security of the check materials. The overall security of the check was not affected by these incidents.

The third most common allegation related to unauthorised timetable variations for the administration of the check: 7 cases in 2014 compared to 3 cases in 2013. In each

instance the check was administered to pupils after both the scheduled check week and the authorised timetable variation week.

## Key stage 2

Allegations of maladministration reported to STA relating to the KS2 assessments can be divided into 4 categories:

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

**Table 5. KS2 – 2012 to 2014 – number / % of allegations reported in each category**

Year	Before test administration		During test administration		After test administration		Teacher assessment	
	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases
2012	73	21.2	261	75.7	10	2.9	1	0.3
2013	97	22.1	321	73.3	17	3.9	3	0.7
2014	87	17.2	403	79.6	12	2.4	4	0.8

There was an increase in the number of cases reported in the ‘During test administration’ category: 403 cases in 2014 compared to 321 cases in 2013. There were small decreases in the number of cases reported in the ‘Before test administration’ category: 87 cases in 2014 compared to 97 in 2013, and in the ‘After test administration’ category: 12 cases in 2014 compared to 17 in 2013.

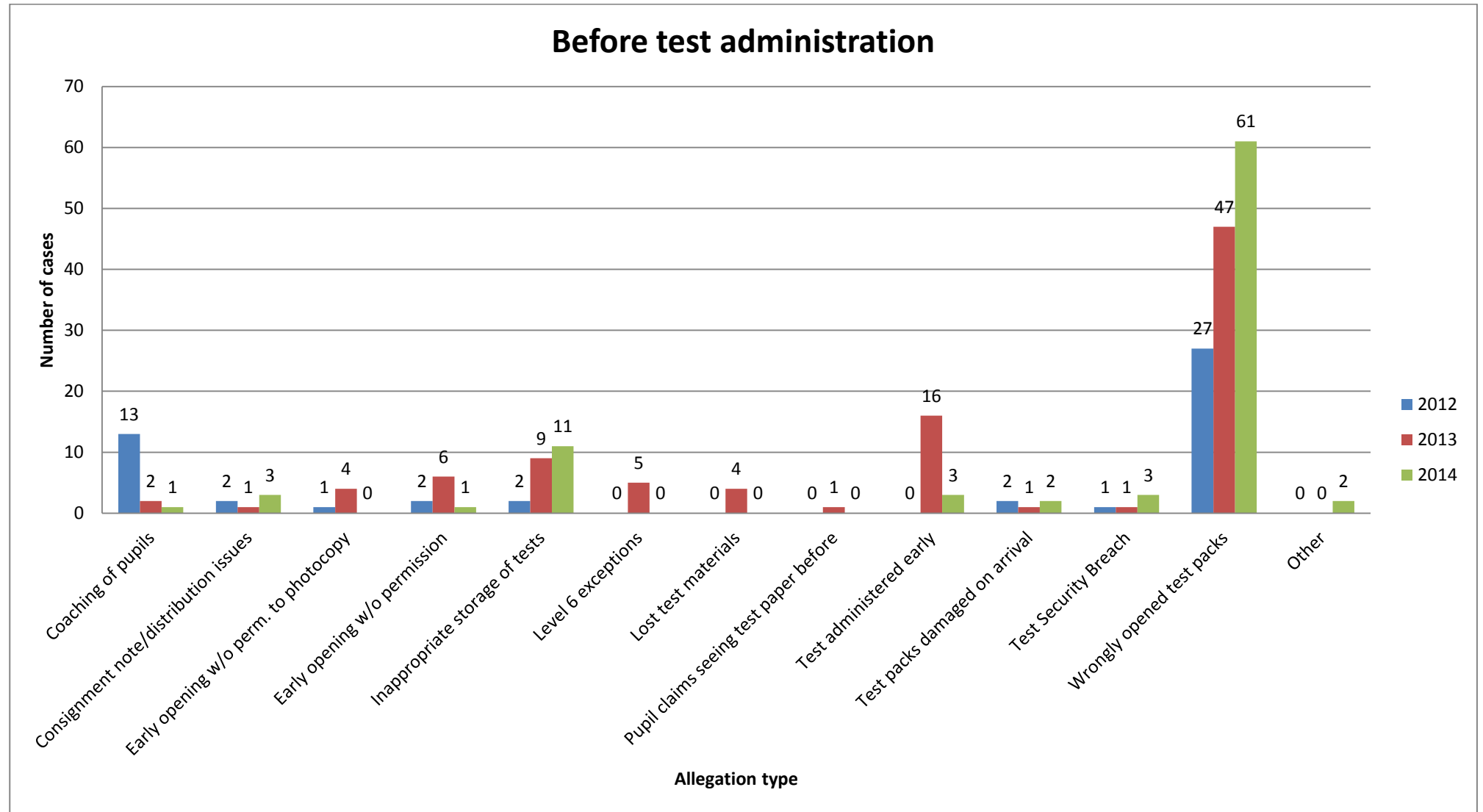
### **Before test administration**

The most common allegation in this category was of schools accidentally opening the wrong test packs. There were 61 cases reported in 2014 compared to 47 in 2013 and 27 in 2012. Of the 61 cases, 57 were self-reported by the schools.

The second most common allegation related to the inappropriate storage of test materials, but there were only 11 cases in 2014 and this represented only a slight increase on 2013 when there were 9 cases.

There was a decrease in the number of schools that administered tests early: only 3 cases in 2014 compared to 16 in 2013.

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



## **During test administration**

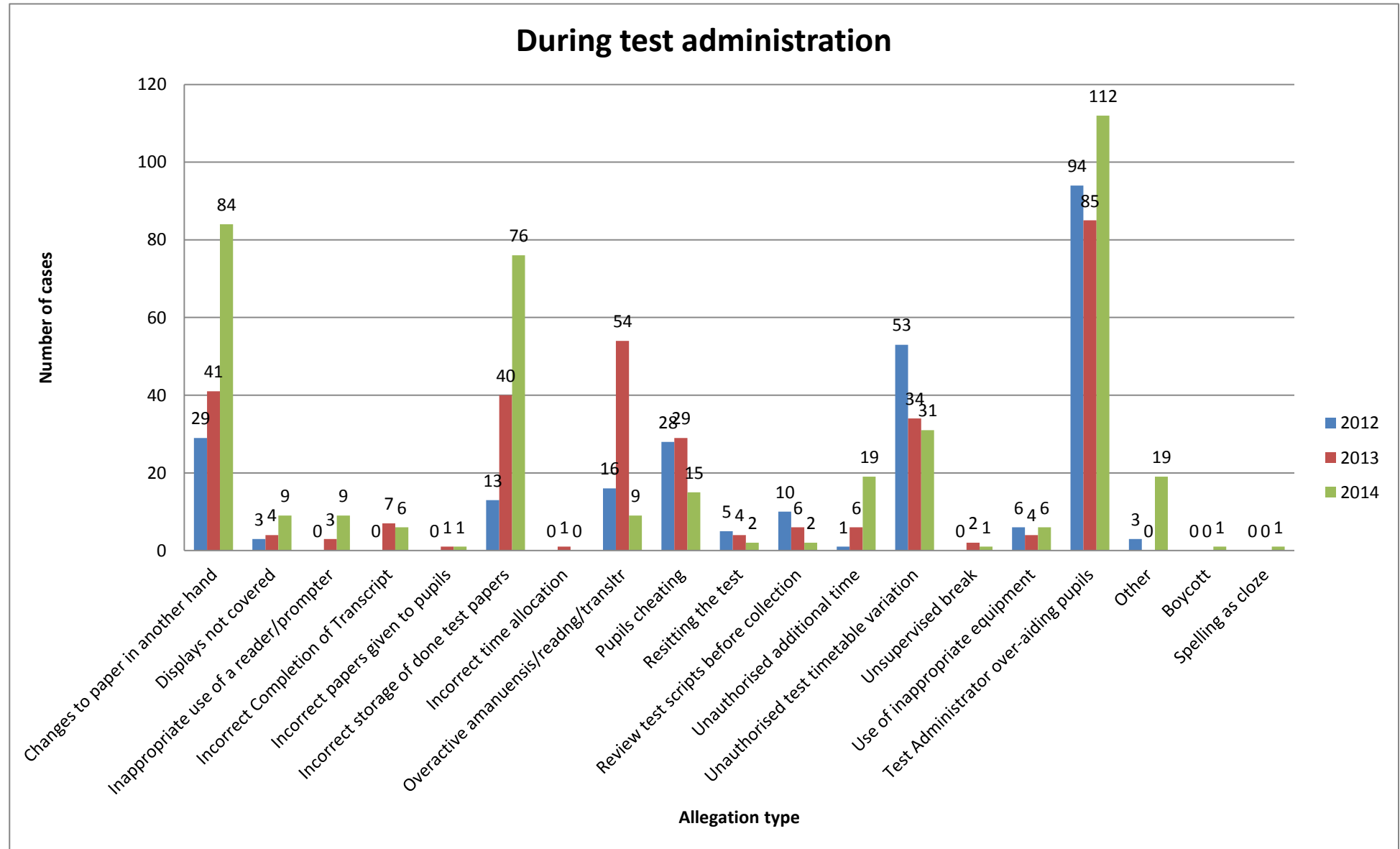
The majority of cases reported relating to KS2 were in the 'During test administration' category at 79.6%. As in 2013 and 2012, the most common allegation in this category was of test administrators over-aiding pupils (112 cases).

The 'During test administration' category also saw the largest increase in number of cases: 403 cases in 2014 compared to 321 cases in 2013. While there was a decrease in the number of cases related to overactive transcribers, 9 cases in 2014 compared to 54 in 2013, there were significant increases in the numbers of cases in 3 categories: 'Changes to papers in another hand', 84 cases in 2014 compared to 41 cases in 2013; 'Incorrect storage of done test papers', 76 cases in 2014 compared to 40 cases in 2013; and 'Test administrator over-aiding', 112 cases in 2014 compared to 85 cases in 2013.

Improved techniques developed by the maladministration investigation team for examining scripts for evidence that entries had been made on them outside of test conditions led to the increase in the number of cases in the 'Changes to papers in another hand'.

The introduction of the bag for the storage of the mental mathematics and mathematics Paper 1 scripts and schools who did not use that bag to securely store the papers overnight between Wednesday and Thursday of the test week led to the increase in cases in the 'Incorrect storage of done test papers' category. Of the 76 'Incorrect storage of done test papers' cases, 26 were reported following local authority monitoring visits, but schools also self-reported 46 cases in this category.

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



### **After test administration**

The percentage of cases in the 'After test administration' category decreased by 1.5 percentage points in 2014 compared to 2013. This was as a result of a decrease in the number of cases in the category, which only has a single specific allegation: 'Change to marked scripts before review', 12 cases in 2014 compared to 17 in 2013. This reduced further following the overall increase in cases across KS2. Year on year the number of cases in this category is generally low.

Table 6. Cases in the category 'After test administration'

	Change marked scripts before review
Year	No. of cases
2012	10
2013	17
2014	12

### **Teacher assessment**

Finally, the number of cases in the 'Teacher assessment' category remained low: less than 1% of the total cases at KS2 and only 4 cases in total in 2014.

Table 7. Cases in the category 'Teacher assessment'

	Moderation of TA	Change to English writing/reading level
Year	No. of cases	
2012	1	0
2013	3	0
2014	3	1



## Amendments to, and annulments of, test results

Following an investigation, if STA's maladministration team finds that the accuracy or correctness of a pupil'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 pupil 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 pupil has gained an advantage or the annulment of the pupil's paper.

### Amendment and annulment breakdown by school

In summary for 2014:

- 10 schools had either amendments to, or annulment of, pupils' KS2 test results after notifying STA of a pupil cheating.
- 103 schools (approximately 0.66% of the total number of schools participating in the KS2 tests) had either amendments to, or annulment of, pupils' results following decisions made by the maladministration team.

**Table 8. Number of KS2 schools with amendments or annulments to results in 2012–14**

Year	Schools with whole cohort annulments of at least 1 subject	Schools with individual pupil annulments/amendments to results in at least one subject	% of all cases reported at KS2
2012	6	52	16.8
2013	37	51	19.2
2014	41	74	22.3

Two schools which had at least 1 subject annulled for the whole cohort also had individual pupils' results amended or annulled in other subjects.

There was a decrease in the number of schools where annulments or amendments were made following notifications of pupils cheating: 10 cases in 2014 compared to 34 cases in 2013. Two schools made notifications of pupils cheating where the pupils had not gained marks for the questions the school had reported that they had cheated on. These pupils' results were not amended and the schools are not included in the figures above.

The number of schools where annulments or amendments were made following investigations undertaken by the STA more than doubled with 103 schools in 2014 compared to 51 schools in 2013. However, the number of schools where results in a subject were annulled for whole cohorts only saw a small increase: 41 schools in 2014 compared to 37 schools in 2013. Where doubt could be limited to individual pupils or groups of pupils, decisions were made not to annul results for whole cohorts.



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