



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency

# **Standards and Testing Agency Business plan**

**1 April 2013 - 31 March 2014**

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## Remit

The policy framework set by Ministers defines the requirements for tests and assessments, for example as defined by the National Curriculum.

The Standards and Testing Agency's (STA) current remit is to provide an effective and robust testing, assessment and moderation system to measure and monitor pupils' progress from the early years up to the end of Key Stage 3. To provide an independent measure of national performance at Key Stage 4, STA will this year, subject to consultation, begin the development of statutory Key Stage 4 sample tests for the first time.

STA has responsibility for the development and delivery of statutory assessments and testing in England, under statutory instruments, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education. In carrying out these functions, STA:

- develops high quality and rigorous National Curriculum tests and assessments in line with Ministerial policy;
- undertakes operational delivery of National Curriculum tests and assessments (including printing, distribution, provision of systems, marking and data capture);
- supports the process of teacher assessment moderation in order that data is robust and can be used for national statistics; and
- supports schools and other stakeholders (by providing guidance, communications and helpdesk support).

STA is responsible for setting and maintaining test standards, including standards related to marking, and producing guidance and exemplification materials for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 English writing teacher assessment.

## Vision and mission

Supporting schools in raising standards in education, through the successful delivery of world class tests and assessments that enable every child to realise their unique potential.

‘Supporting schools’ means:

- providing clear, timely, accessible guidance and communications;
- providing a helpline that meets its service level agreement;
- ensuring customer complaints are investigated and resolved in a timely manner;
- ensuring that teacher assessment is properly moderated, based on a robust and reliable model, to ensure consistency against national standards;
- ensuring stakeholders are consulted when process changes are being considered, and that intelligence from complaints, the helpline and other forums is used to drive continual service improvements;
- where the integrity of children’s results is questioned investigating in a sensitive professional manner; and
- investigating potential cases of maladministration.

‘Successful delivery’ is:

- developing the required tests to the agreed timeline;
- providing systems that enable schools to order tests, register children, apply for access arrangements, submit teacher assessments and access children’s results;
- ensuring that schools receive their test papers on time;
- ensuring that opportunity for loss or breach of security of materials is minimised, including when transported to and from schools;
- ensuring marking is of a high quality and completed on time;
- ensuring that test results are returned to schools on time and accurately reflect the marks awarded;
- ensuring that teacher assessment is moderated to provide a robust and reliable national dataset;
- following rigorous procurement processes to ensure Value for Money and that high quality suppliers are in place to support delivery;
- ensuring all staff have access to learning and development opportunities that enable them to fulfil their role; and

- ensuring all deliverables are achieved within a tightly managed and controlled budget.

‘World class tests and assessments’ are:

- designed to meet the purpose of the assessment, with questions that appropriately assess the curriculum and standards that reflect the range of the pupils being assessed;
- intended to support the breadth and depth of teaching across the relevant curriculum
- developed using recognised procedures, such as pre-testing, expert review and statistical analysis;
- high quality such that they meet Ofqual’s common assessment criteria of validity, reliability, comparability, minimising bias and manageability.

## Business Plan April 2013 – March 2014

At March 2013 STA is responsible for:

- ensuring the consistency and accuracy of data generated by teacher assessment for the EYFS Profile, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 English writing through the monitoring and support of local authorities (LAs);
- implementing and supporting arrangements for the new 2013 EYFS Profile;
- test production and delivery of existing Key Stage 1 tests;
- the timely development and delivery of a valid and reliable phonics screening check;
- secure, timely preparation of valid and reliable statutory tests and assessments for the 2013, 2014 and 2015 test cycles, including the new test of technical English (spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary and handwriting) which will be delivered first in 2013;
- collecting statutory teacher assessment data for key stages 2 and 3;
- making Optional tests for years 3, 4 and 5, and years 7, 8 and 9 available for schools to order;
- developing new Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (full cohort) tests, to sit alongside the new National Curriculum, due for launch in 2016, and Key Stage 4 (sample) tests in 2017; and
- developing and preparing for operational delivery of the new matrix sampling Key Stage 2 science tests in 2014.

The *Assessment and reporting arrangements*, *Science sampling arrangements*, and *Teacher assessment and reporting arrangements* that the STA publishes jointly with the Department contain the statutory information and guidance on all aspects of National Curriculum assessment and reporting for the Early Years Foundation Stage, phonics screening check and key stages 1, 2 and 3. They cover topics such as administering the tests, access arrangements, teacher assessment and reporting pupils' achievements to parents.

The level-setting process includes the review of statistical and judgemental evidence to ensure standards are maintained year-on-year and is carried out in the presence of Ofqual and Teacher Association representatives. STA's Chief Executive has a specific role with respect to test standards and level-setting. The Chief Executive will sign off the content of the National Curriculum tests and the level-setting process, acting independently of the Department and Ministers to ensure confidence in the validity of test outcomes.

## **a) Key programmes**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The EYFS Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. STA is responsible for ensuring the consistency and accuracy of data generated by teacher assessment judgements. LAs have a responsibility for the implementation and moderation of the assessment process in schools and settings. STA will scrutinise practice in LAs and undertake external moderation visits to a sample of LAs to ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities.

An evaluation of 2013 arrangements will be undertaken to evaluate the moderation process and the effectiveness of the EYFS handbook and exemplification materials.

### **Key Stage 1**

#### **Key Stage 1 English and mathematics tests and moderation**

Teacher assessment is used to assess children at the end of Key Stage 1. STA is responsible for ensuring the consistency and accuracy of data generated by teacher assessment judgements. LAs have a responsibility for the implementation and moderation of the assessment process in schools and settings. STA will scrutinise practice in LAs and undertake external moderation visits to a sample of LAs to ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities.

#### **Key Stage 1**

The statutory Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tasks and tests are designed to help inform the final teacher assessment judgement reported for each child at the end of Key Stage 1. They must be administered to all eligible children who are working at level 1 or above in reading, writing and mathematics. STA provides a website facility for schools and LAs to order standard and modified tests, and manages the printing, production and delivery of the Key Stage 1 tests.

Work will also commence on new the development of new Key Stage 1 tests, to assess the new National Curriculum from 2016.

#### **Phonics screening check**

STA is responsible for the development and delivery of the phonics screening check. for maintained schools, academies and Free Schools (where it is part of their funding agreement) with Year 1 children, as well as those with Year 2 children who did not meet the standard last year.

To support the delivery of the check, STA provides a website facility to enable schools to order materials. STA manages the printing, collation and delivery of materials to schools.

## **Key Stage 2**

### **English and mathematics tests**

For the 2013 test cycle STA is responsible for the development and delivery of Key Stage 2 tests in English and mathematics covering levels 3-5 and 6. Following Lord Bew's independent review of Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability, in 2013 there will be a test of English grammar, punctuation and spelling, alongside teacher assessment of English writing. The result of these and the English reading test will be reported separately in 2013, rather than as an overall English level.

STA manages the printing, collation and delivery of the tests to schools. It also manages the collection, external marking and return of children's marked test scripts and provides a review marking service to schools.

To inform this activity, STA provides a website facility where schools and LAs can:

- order standard and modified tests;
- register children;
- make access arrangements applications; and
- receive children's test results.

STA supports schools and LAs in fulfilling their statutory duties with respect to the tests by:

- producing statutory and supporting guidance documents and communications; and
- providing a helpline and customer complaints facility.

STA is responsible for investigating any reported incident that casts doubt on the integrity of a school's test results.

STA is responsible for the development of Key Stage 2 tests in English and mathematics at levels 3-6. As the test development process takes up to three years in 2013-14 STA will be developing tests for use from 2014 to 2017. This includes work on new Key Stage 2 test development, to assess the new National Curriculum from 2016.

### **Moderation of Key Stage 2 English writing**

STA is responsible for supporting and ensuring implementation of the arrangements to moderate Key Stage 2 English writing teacher assessments. LAs have a responsibility for the implementation and moderation of the assessment process in schools and other



settings. STA will scrutinise practice in LAs by undertaking external moderation visits to a sample of LAs to ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities.

An evaluation of 2013 arrangements will be undertaken to assess the moderation process and the effectiveness of supporting documentation, for example Guidance, standardisation exercise and exemplification materials.

### **Science sampling tests**

Science sampling tests were introduced in 2010 to monitor national standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2. STA is responsible for the development and end-to-end delivery of an end of Key Stage 2 test in science, covering levels 3-5, that is administered in a sample of schools.

From 2014 this will be delivered as biannual pupil level matrix sampling. This will provide a better reflection of performance across the country, with a greater breadth of the curriculum covered. Under this system each school will be required to administer the test to a sample of their children, rather than a sample of schools administering the tests to all of their eligible children.

To enable this change to take place, tests will not be administered in 2013 but will be delivered, on this new basis, from 2014. This will also allow a benchmarking across the introduction of the new National Curriculum.

To better understand our children's performance in international comparison tests, STA will also investigate what can be learned from embedding questions from the Trends in Maths and Science Study (TIMSS) international survey within these sample tests.

### **Key stage 2 and 3 teacher assessments**

STA is responsible for the collection of teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in the core subjects at the end of key stages 2 and 3. STA manages the electronic collection of teacher assessment data from schools and LAs.

### **Key Stage 4 sample tests**

This year STA will begin the development of new Key Stage 4 sample tests in mathematics, English and science, subject to consultation. These will sit alongside the Secretary of State's plans for revised GCSE exams, to provide an independent measure of national performance. 2013-14 will require a period of intensive scoping, planning and recruitment to ensure that the right resources are in place to deliver this new work. The test development process for mathematics, the first subject to be implemented in 2017, will start during this year.

## Optional tests

Optional tests provide teachers with evidence to support teacher assessment. They are available for years 3, 4 and 5, and years 7, 8 and 9 in English and mathematics, and for science in Year 9. STA provides a process for schools (including international schools) to purchase optional tests, running this service on a cost recovery basis. STA manages the printing and delivery of optional tests.

*As the delivery period for these programmes aligns with the school year, the key milestones for these programmes, included in Annex A, largely cover the 2013 delivery cycle.*

## b) Performance indicators

<b>Guidance and support for schools and local authorities</b>
Publish and disseminate guidance on statutory national assessment arrangements (Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 3).
Provide a helpdesk to deal with enquiries, with 99.9% of these handled within the published Service Level Agreement (SLA).
<b>Project, programme and risk management</b>
Achievable plans and relevant project and programme management (PPM) documentation are in place to maintain tight control and visibility of all cycles. Risks and issues are continually identified and actively managed in accordance with the Risk and Issue Management strategy. As a result milestones detailed in Annex A are met.
<b>Financial and contractual management</b>
STA delivers its remit and operational business within the budget agreed for 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.
Rigorous procurement processes are followed to ensure Value for Money and that high quality suppliers are in place to deliver the programmes of work for all cycles.
Suppliers are managed consistently in a way that can demonstrate best value and contracts are monitored to ensure that supplier performance is as agreed.
<b>Improving services and processes</b>
A full evaluation for every workstream is completed by October 2013, to ensure that lessons learned can be used to make improvements to future cycles.
Stakeholder feedback is sought at regular intervals through a range of channels and stakeholders are consulted when process changes are being considered.

<b>2013 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and moderation</b>
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Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results are reliable as a consequence of moderation by October 2013.
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Early Years Foundation Stage Profile moderation arrangements are evaluated by December 2013.
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<b>2013 Key Stage 1</b>
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2013 Key Stage 1 results are reliable as a consequence of moderation by October 2013.
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Key Stage 1 test materials, free from printing errors, are provided to those schools that order them by the agreed date.
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<b>2013 Phonics screening check</b>
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Phonics screening check materials are developed and delivered to all schools with eligible children by the agreed date.
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<b>Development of all statutory tests and assessments</b>
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Tests are developed using recognised procedures, such as pre-testing, expert review and statistical analysis, which generate evidence to demonstrate that the tests satisfy Ofqual's common assessment criteria of validity, reliability, comparability, minimising bias and manageability. This includes additional processes required to introduce tests of the new National Curriculum.
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Develop and handover to print high quality test materials for 2014 test cycle by February 2014: Key Stage 2 English reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling, mathematics; Key Stage 2 science sample; and phonics screening check.
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A full plan is developed and resourced and delivery commenced (as necessary) to ensure that new Key Stage 4 sample tests are put in place to sit alongside revised GCSE awards from 2017.
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**2013 Key Stage 2 English and mathematics tests**

National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics are delivered successfully and securely in May 2013. 99.9% of results are available to schools by the agreed date, and levels of lost scripts and missing results are comparable to 2012. Quality of marking is at least as good as previous years.

All data feeds are sent to the Data Services Division as set out in the Assessment Technical Requirements Document.

Secure timely set-up and mobilisation of National Curriculum test contracts for 2014 delivery.

**2014 Moderation of end of Key Stage 2 English writing teacher assessment**

Key Stage 2 English writing moderation guidance and procedures are developed and evaluated by September 2013.

**2014 Key Stage 2 science sample test**

Planning and preparation is complete to successfully deliver Key Stage 2 science sample tests in summer term 2014

**Teacher assessment data collection**

Appropriate systems and arrangements are in place to collect statutory teacher assessment data for key stages 2 and 3 by the agreed date.

All data feeds are sent to the Data Services Division as set out in the Assessment Technical Requirements Document.

**Optional test materials**

Optional test materials are provided to those schools that order them by the agreed date.

## Annexes

### A. Programme delivery milestones

<b>2013 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and moderation</b>	<b>Date</b>
External moderation visits complete	June 2013
Completion of moderation process	September 2013

<b>2014 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile</b>	<b>Date</b>
Final exemplification, guidance and model published	December 2013

<b>2013 Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Date</b>
External moderation visits complete	July 2013
Completion of Key Stage 1 moderation process	September 2013

<b>2013 Phonics screening check</b>	<b>Date</b>
All phonics screening check materials in schools	June 2013
Phonics screening check week	17/06/2013 - 21/06/2013

<b>2013 Key Stage 2 English and mathematics tests</b>	<b>Date</b>
All Key Stage 2 test materials in schools	May 2013
Test week	13/05/13 - 17/05/13

Level setting for all 2013 Key Stage 2 statutory tests completed	June 2013
Statutory deadline for schools to submit teacher assessment data	28/06/2013
Return of children's results to schools and local authorities	09/07/2013
Reviews outcomes report published	November 2013

<b>2013 Moderation of end of Key Stage 2 English writing teacher assessment</b>	<b>Date</b>
External moderation visits complete	July 2013
Evaluation of Key Stage 2 writing moderation complete	September 2013

<b>2013 Key Stage 2 science sample test</b>	<b>Date</b>
THERE IS NO SCIENCE SAMPLE TEST IN 2013	

<b>Key Stage 3</b>	<b>Date</b>
Statutory deadline for schools to submit teacher assessment data	28/06/2013
Deadline for submission of 99% of teacher assessment data to Data Services Division	09/07/2013

<b>Development of statutory tests and assessments</b>	<b>Date</b>
Technical pre-test for future statutory tests undertaken	April to June 2013
Item validation trial for future statutory tests undertaken	June to October 2013
Item writing for future statutory tests of the new National Curriculum completed	October 2013
All 2014 statutory tests constructed and content signed off	October to January 2014
Expert review of future statutory tests undertaken	November 2013 to

	February 2014
All 2014 statutory tests sent to print (including modified tests)	February 2014
Development of mathematics test framework for Key Stage 4 sampling tests	May to September 2013
Procurement of new items for future statutory tests undertaken (including Key Stage 4 mathematics)	September 2013 to January 2014

<b>Delivery of 2014 statutory tests and assessments (provisional at this stage)</b>	<b>Date</b>
Early Years Foundation Stage <i>Assessment and reporting arrangements</i> published	
Key Stage 1 (including phonics screening check) <i>Assessment and reporting arrangements</i> published	October 2013
Key Stage 2 <i>Assessment and reporting arrangements</i> published	October 2013
Key Stage 3 <i>Teacher assessment and reporting arrangements</i> published	November 2013
Key Stage 1 Test orders deadline	November 2013
Key Stage 2 Test orders deadline	November 2013
<i>Science sampling arrangements</i> published	October 2013
All Key Stage 1 test materials in schools	February 2014



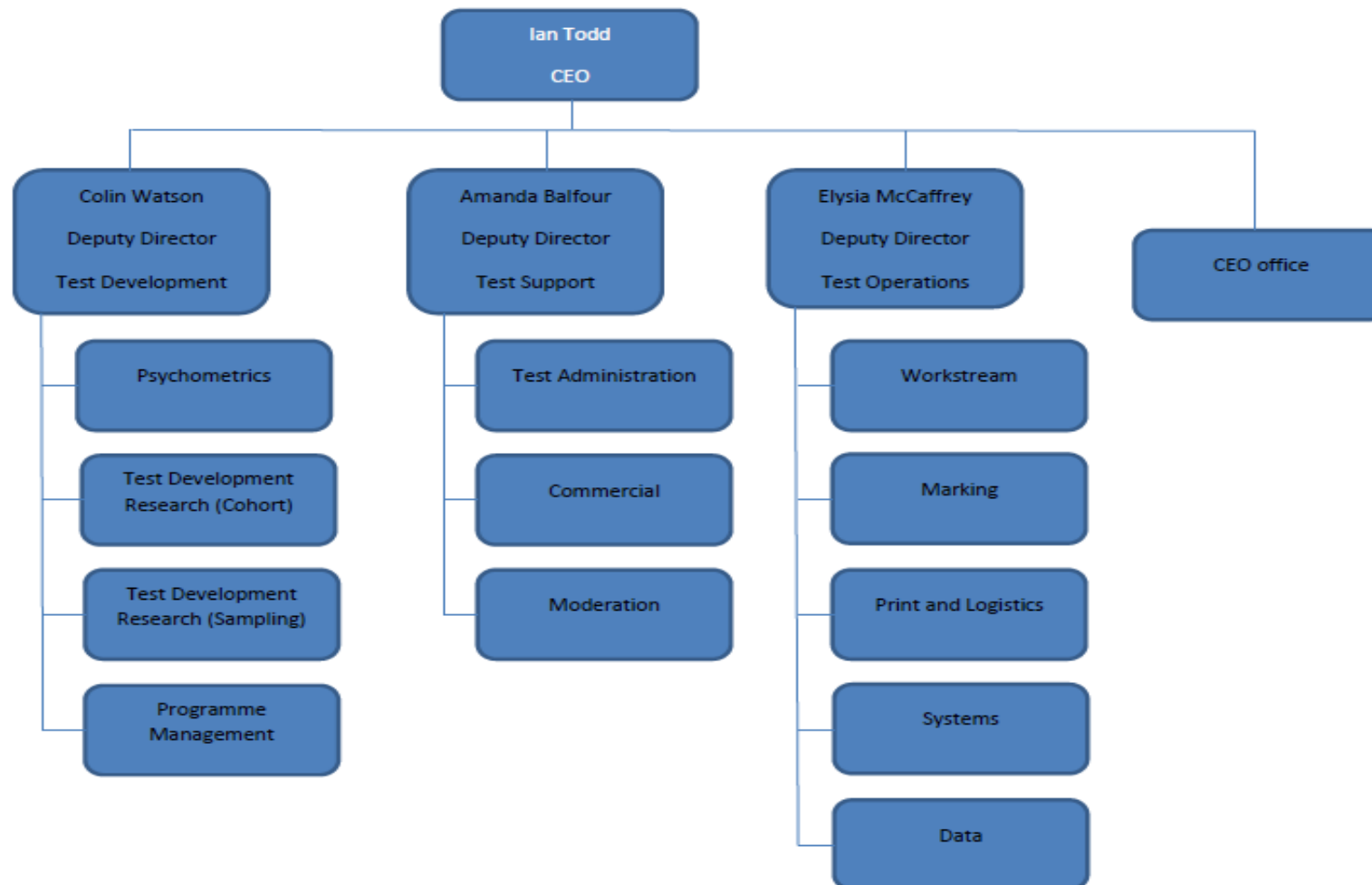
## B. Projected expenditure 2013-14

For the second full year of operation the Agency's projected expenditure is:

	£'000
Administration budget <sup>1</sup>	5,570
Programme budget	39,947
Capital budget	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,517</b>

<sup>1</sup> Shared services are accounted for on a nominal basis and are not, therefore, included in these figures

## C. Organisation Chart



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