



Department
for Education

Standards
& Testing
Agency

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Statutory guidance

The national curriculum tests

Updated 22 January 2015

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1.

Overview of the key stage 2 tests

The [key stage 2 \(KS2\) national curriculum tests](#) are designed to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding of specific elements of the KS2 programmes of study. They provide a snapshot of a pupil's attainment at the end of the key stage.

1.1 The levels 3-5 tests

Participating schools must administer the following levels 3-5 tests:

- English reading
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling
- mathematics

Results will be published as scores and corresponding levels for each test.

1.2 The level 6 tests

Participating schools may also choose to administer the following level 6 tests to pupils who are working at, or close to, level 6:

- English reading
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling

- mathematics

A pupil must achieve a level 5 in the levels 3-5 test and pass the corresponding level 6 test in the same year to be awarded an overall level 6 result. If the pupil doesn't pass the level 6 test they will be awarded the level achieved in the levels 3-5 test.

2.

Schools that should administer the tests

Participation in the tests depends on the type of school.

2.1 Maintained schools

All maintained schools and maintained special schools must participate.

2.2 Academies and free schools in England

Academies and free schools must participate where it forms part of their funding agreement.

2.3 Pupil referral units and maintained hospitals schools

If you have pupils who are on the register at a maintained school or academy they are required to take the tests.

Children not on the register of a maintained school or academy that attend a PRU or hospital school are not required to take the tests. They are expected to receive a comparable

education to a pupil in a mainstream school. Therefore it is recommended that KS2 assessments form part of their educational provision where appropriate.

2.4 Overseas schools

Service Children's Education schools must participate.

2.5 Non-maintained special schools

Non-maintained special schools may participate, although they are not required to do so. If you choose to participate you must follow the arrangements described here.

2.6 Independent schools in England

Independent schools may participate, although they are not required to do so. If you choose to participate you must follow the arrangements described here.

3.

Pupils that should take the tests

The majority of pupils working at level 3 or above in May 2015 must take the levels 3-5 tests in the year they complete the KS2 programme of study. Exceptions are described below.

Pupils may also take the level 6 tests. Headteachers should consider a pupil's expected attainment before registering them for the level 6 tests. They should be demonstrating attainment above level 5.

Pupils must take the levels 3-5 and corresponding level 6 test in the same year. If a school wishes to enter pupils for a levels 3-5 test early they should consider whether to enter them for the corresponding level 6 test. Pupils will not be allowed to take it in following years.

3.1 Pupils who may take the tests at the headteacher's discretion

Headteachers should refer to [the guidance](#) when deciding whether it's appropriate for the following pupils to sit the tests. The headteacher's decision regarding participation is final.

Pupils who:

- are older than 11 at the end of ^{KS2}
- are working at level 3 but who are unable to access them, eg because of absence or disability
- have recently joined your school from a different educational system
- have English as an additional language (^{EAL})

If you decide a pupil shouldn't sit a test you should explain your decision to the pupil's [parents](#). If appropriate, you should provide the parents with documentary evidence to support your decision.

4.

Registering pupils

All pupils at participating schools must be registered for the levels 3-5 tests, regardless of whether they will actually sit them.

Pupils must be registered on the 'Pupil registration' section of the [NCA tools website](#) _____. This opens on Monday 23 February.

Any pupils that you haven't registered for the level 6 tests by Friday 20 March will not be able to participate in them. You may register pupils for the level 6 tests and subsequently withdraw them.

You must continue to register pupils for the levels 3-5 tests if they arrive at your school after Friday 20 March.

Independent schools that have not completed pupil registration by Friday 20 March will not be allowed to participate in the 2015 tests.

5.

When to administer the tests

All tests must be administered on the days specified in the statutory test timetable unless you have had a [timetable variation](#) approved. Tests must not be taken before the day specified in the statutory timetable. Headteachers are responsible for deciding the start time for the tests each day. If your school is taking part in a level 6 test, the corresponding levels 3-5 test must be administered earlier the same day.

All of your pupils should take each test at the same time. If this isn't possible you may:

- move the test for individual pupils within the scheduled day
- schedule a second sitting of a particular test

The second sitting must immediately follow the first.

5.1 Changes to the statutory test timetable

If a school uses a [timetable variation](#) the headteacher must ensure that:

- the pupil takes the test(s) at the nominated time(s)
- we are informed of any variation to the nominated time

You must also make sure affected pupils haven't had the opportunity to communicate with any other pupils who have already taken the test. You must gain assurance from [parents](#) that the pupil:

- is kept apart from other pupils taking or who have taken the test
- hasn't had access to the internet during the test period

6.

How to administer the tests

The tests must be administered in accordance with the Standards and Testing Agency's (STA's) [test administration guidance](#) and the guidance which accompanies the test materials. Headteachers must make sure the guidance is read and followed by all teachers, teaching assistants and others involved in administering the tests.

The test administration guidance on GOV.UK will be updated for the 2015 tests by March 2015. We won't be printing the 'Test administrators' guide'.

6.1 Administering the tests away from school

In exceptional circumstances and at the headteacher's discretion, schools may administer tests at a different location within the UK, eg another school, the pupil's home, a hospital or pupil referral unit. You must still ensure the [test administration guidance](#) is followed correctly.

Monitoring the tests

7.

Monitoring visitors, for example local authority (LA) or STA representatives, will make unannounced visits to schools administering the tests. They will look to see if your school is following our [procedures](#) on:

- keeping the test materials secure
- administering the tests

If you receive a monitoring visit you must allow visitors to:

- see all ^{KS2} test materials and any relevant delivery notes
- observe any tests being administered
- see evidence to show that pupils using access arrangements, eg prompters or scribes, are doing so in accordance with normal classroom practice
- see copies of correspondence and other documents sent to and received from your ^{LA} or us about the administration of the tests

We will carry out a full investigation if a monitoring visitor sees:

- administrative irregularities
- potential maladministration

This will help us to make a decision on the accuracy or correctness of a pupil's results.

You should refer to the [guidance on monitoring visits](#) for further information. This will be revised in April.

7.1 Maintained schools

LAs have a statutory duty to make monitoring visits to at least 10% of maintained schools in

their authority before, during and after the test period.

7.2 Academies

Academies created before 1 September 2014 must choose which LA they come under for monitoring purposes. This can be your geographical LA or another LA. We will ask you to confirm your choice in the autumn term, 2014.

If you became an academy after 1 September 2014 you will be part of your geographical LA's arrangements.

8.

Maladministration

The term 'maladministration' refers to any act that:

- affects the integrity, security or confidentiality of the ^{KS2} tests
- could lead to results that don't reflect pupils' unaided work

Your school could be subject to investigations of maladministration if it doesn't comply with:

- the 'Assessment and reporting arrangements'
- our [test administration guidance](#)

You should report any issue with the administration of the test and/or any allegations of maladministration you receive by calling the [national curriculum assessments helpline](#).

We have a statutory duty to investigate any matter brought to our attention relating to the accuracy or correctness of any pupil's results in the national curriculum tests. The ['Maladministration investigation procedures'](#) explain how we do this.

9.

Access arrangements

The [access arrangements guidance](#) explains how readers, scribes and other arrangements can be used in each test, and what you need to do to use them.

Access arrangements may be appropriate for a pupil:

- with a statement of special educational need (^{SEN}) or an Education Health and Care Plan as described in [SEN Code of Practice](#) or a local equivalent such as an Individual Pupil Resourcing Agreement (IPRA)
- for whom provision is being made in school using the ^{SEN} Support system or the School Action or School Action Plus aspect of the SEN code of practice and whose learning difficulty or disability significantly affects their ability to access the tests
- who requires alternative access arrangements because of a disability (which may or may not give rise to a special educational need)
- who is unable to sit and work for a long period because of a disability or because of social, emotional or mental health difficulties
- with ^{EAL} and who has limited fluency in English

You must make sure you have documentation to show that a pupil is eligible for access arrangements. This must include evidence that resources are routinely committed to providing this support in the classroom. You must be able to show the documentation if you have a [monitoring visit](#).

If schools use access arrangements for a pupil inappropriately, the pupil's results may be annulled.

Access arrangements are adjustments that you must consider before the tests. They should be based primarily on normal classroom practice for pupils with particular needs. Access arrangements must never provide an unfair advantage. The support given must not change the test questions and the answers must be the pupil's own.

10.

Materials for the tests

Schools will receive test materials based on the number of pupils they register for the tests by Friday 20 March, the pupil registration deadline. All participating schools must complete pupil registration.

If you need additional copies of the mental mathematics CD you must use the [NCA tools website](#) to place an order by Friday 28 November.

Independent schools must place a test order by Friday 28 November. If you miss this deadline you will not be able to take part in the 2015 test cycle.

10.1 Modified versions of the tests

Schools can administer braille, modified large print or enlarged print versions of the tests. You may order:

- modified test materials for pupils with a visual impairment or other special educational needs
- modified mental mathematics test materials for pupils with a hearing impairment, pupils who use sign language and pupils who have difficulty accessing the aural version of the test

Please read the [guidance about ordering materials for pupils with a visual or hearing impairment](#) before placing your order. Our [modified test helpline](#) can also offer advice.

You should order modified test materials from the 'Test orders' section of [NCA tools](#) by Friday 28 November.

Orders for modified versions of the level 6 tests will only be fulfilled for schools that are registered for the level 6 tests by Friday 20 March.

10.2 Test deliveries

You will receive test materials, including modified materials, in the week commencing 27 April.

Materials will be delivered to school addresses taken from [EduBase](#). Please make sure your details are up to date.

You won't receive mark scheme packs or mark scheme amendments for the modified tests.

These will be published on the [NCA tools website](#) after all test scripts have been collected for marking in May.

10.3 Security of the test materials

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that the integrity of the tests is maintained so that no pupil has an unfair advantage over another. You must [keep your test materials secure](#) and treat them as confidential from the point your school receives them until [Friday 22 May](#) (the end of the timetable variation period).

Test packs should be opened in the test room when the pupils are ready to start the test unless we have granted permission for [opening them early](#).

Teachers and test administrators mustn't discuss the content of the test papers with anyone or use question-specific information to prepare pupils for the test. In particular, you mustn't discuss specific content which could compromise the test on social media or publish it in blogs.

After the tests have been administered the test scripts must be kept securely until they are collected for marking.

11.

Test results

11.1 Return of results to schools

Results will be published as marks and levels for each test. Schools will be able to view their results on Tuesday 7 July from the 'Pupil results' section of the [NCA tools website](#) .

Level threshold tables for the tests will be published on [GOV.UK](#) on Tuesday 7 July.

11.2 Return of test scripts to schools

Marked test scripts will be available on or by Tuesday 7 July as follows. Test scripts marked:

- in hard copy will be returned to you in the same format
- on screen will be available to access and print via NCA tools

You may return marked test scripts to your pupils but you aren't required to do so. [↗](#)

You must report any missing marked test scripts immediately to the [national curriculum assessments helpline](#).

11.3 Reviews of marking

Schools can apply for a [review of marking](#) if they believe there is evidence that a mark scheme has not been applied correctly or a clerical error has occurred. The deadline for applications is Friday 17 July.

You will be informed of the outcome of review applications by Friday 4 September. You will receive your reviewed hard copy test scripts during the week commencing 31 August. Test scripts marked on screen will be available on Friday 4 September.

11.4 How the Department for Education uses test results

The Department for Education (DfE) includes all pupils who have completed KS2 when calculating school-level performance measures in [performance tables](#) and on the [RAISEonline website](#). This includes pupils:

- with special educational needs
- working below the level of the tests
- unable to access the tests
- who were absent when the tests were administered

During the [performance tables data checking exercise](#), schools can apply for pupils who are recently arrived from overseas to be discounted from these calculations. To be discounted, a pupil must meet all 3 of the following criteria:

- they were admitted to an English school for the first time during the 2013/14 or 2014/15 school year
- they arrived from overseas before their admission
- English is not an official language of the country they came from

The DfE's performance tables data checking exercise takes place in September each year. If you have queries about this or the performance tables contact the [DfE's national enquiry line](#).

12.

‘Parent’ - a definition

The term ‘parent’ is used here as defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

- parents of a pupil
- any person who is not a parent of a pupil but who has parental responsibility for the pupil
- any person who has care of a pupil

13.

Getting help

Standards and Testing Agency

53-55 Butts Road
Earlsdon Park

Coventry
CV1 3BH

Email

assessments@education.gov.uk

National curriculum assessments
helpline

0300 303 3013

Standards and Testing Agency

Email

schooltests@rnib.org.uk

STA modified test helpline
0300 303 3019

For guidance on ordering modified test
materials.

DfE enquiries

Central newsdesk
020 7783 8300

General enquiries

0370 000 2288

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