



Department
for Education



About this release

This statistical first release (SFR) provides provisional information on the outcomes of clerical reviews and reviews of marking for the 2015 key stage (KS2) national curriculum tests at a national level.

In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

- KS2 cohort numbers, 2011-2015 (Excel.xls)
- Data set references, 2011-2015 (Excel .xls)
- KS2 reviews outcomes summary, 2011-2015 (Excel .xls)

The accompanying quality and methodology information document, provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

Feedback

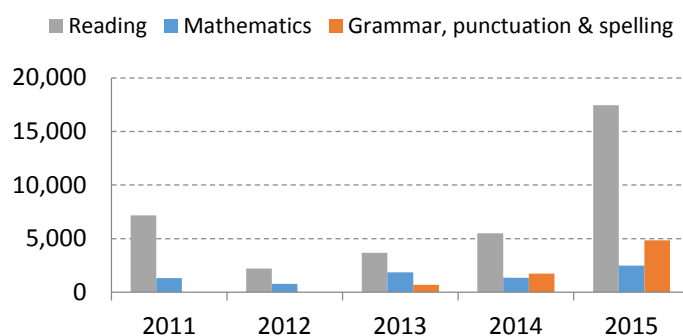
We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at DataAndSystems.STA@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Review outcomes of the 2015 key stage 2 national curriculum assessments in England (provisional)

The number of applications for reviews increased between 2014 and 2015

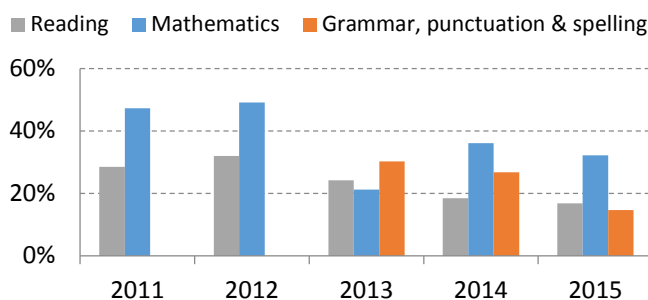
In 2015 there was an increase in review requests for all subjects to varying degrees. Levels 3-5 tests in reading and mathematics were marked onscreen for the first time in 2015 although English grammar, punctuation and spelling has been marked onscreen since 2013. This suggests there were other factors involved in the increase across all subjects.

Number of review applications for L3-5 tests from 2011-2015



As a percentage of applications made, the proportion of successful reviews has decreased

Proportion of L3-5 review applications resulting in a change in level from 2011-2015



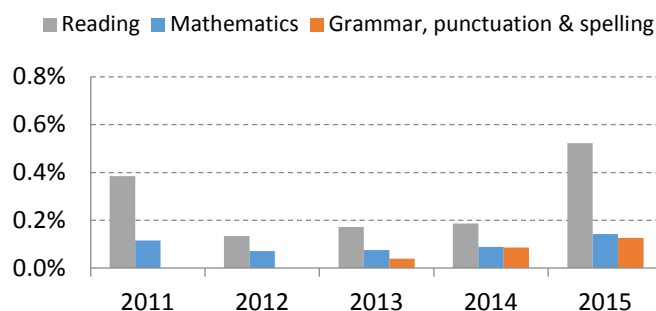
The proportion of review applications which resulted in a level change decreased for all subjects.

Grammar, punctuation and spelling in particular saw a 12 percentage point decrease between 2014 and 2015.

But overall this has led to a very small increase in the proportion of pupils with a change in level

The proportion of all pupils that had a change in level following a review increased in 2015. This proportion remained below 0.6% for reading, and below 0.2% for mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Proportion of pupils with a change to their L3-5 test outcome following a review from 2011-2015



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1. Introduction

This report provides provisional information on the outcomes of clerical reviews and individual reviews of marking for the 2015 key stage 2 national curriculum tests.

This report is published by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA), an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE). STA is responsible for developing and delivering all statutory assessments and tests from early years to the end of key stage 2.

Pupils were assessed at levels 3-5 in English reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling, and mathematics. Where schools opted to register them, pupils could also be assessed at level 6 in the same subjects.

Reviews

Schools can apply for a review and 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.

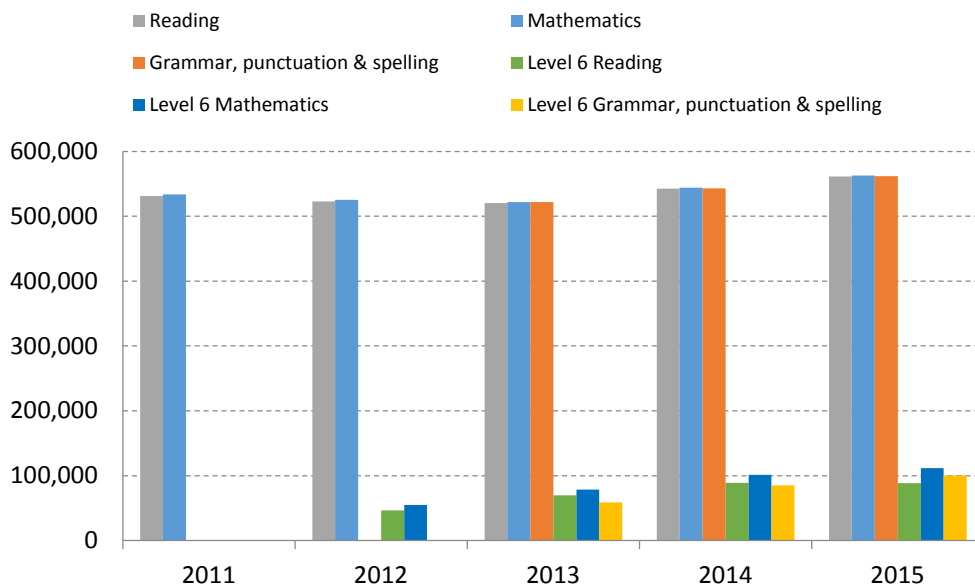
Reviews for the level 3-5 and level 6 tests are applied for and processed separately.

Review applications are split into clerical reviews and individual reviews. A clerical review is made to correct a transcription, attendance register or addition error, and an individual review is made to check the application of the mark scheme to the test script. For more information see the Quality and Methodology information document.

2. Key Figures for 2011 to 2015 (Figures 1-8)

Figure 1 below shows the number of pupils that sat the key stage 2 tests between 2011 and 2015.

Figure 1: Cohort numbers for 2011 to 2015 key stage 2 tests



Source: Provisional reviews outcomes data

Cohort sizes vary year on year due to school entry decisions. Other variances may be due to:

- fluctuations in the population
- take up of the tests by independent schools
- absenteeism
- the rate at which pupils make progress and complete the relevant programme of study

Level 6 tests were introduced in 2012, and the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test was introduced as a new subject in 2013. These have all been marked onscreen since their introduction. School entry decisions for level 6 affect cohort numbers between years and subjects.

In 2015, there were no clerical reviews for pupils that sat the tests. Figures 3-8 relate to individual review applications. Details of historical clerical reviews can be found in the additional tables.

Population of interest

The population of interest, or cohort, for each of the levels 3-5 and level 6 tests includes all schools in England with pupils participating in the relevant key stage 2 tests. 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
- deregistered (level 6 tests only)
- working below the level of the test (levels 3-5 tests only)
- working at the level of the tests but unable to access them, eg because of long term absence or disability (levels 3-5 tests only)

In addition, pupils are not included if they sat the level 6 test but were not registered by their school by the pupil registration deadline. A reviews service was not offered for pupils that had not been registered to participate but took a level 6 test using the spare test papers which are provided to schools.

Cohort numbers will differ slightly from figures published in SFR30/2015 due to pending maladministration cases at the time of publication and the inclusion of data for pupils who did not complete the key stage for all subjects in the same year.

Factors influencing school application decisions

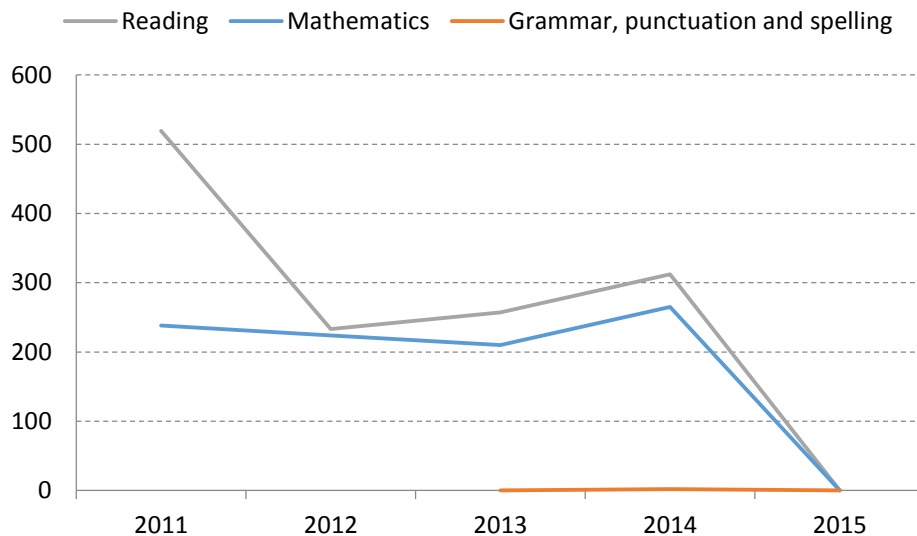
The statistics for 2015 show an increase in the volume of applications made for reviews compared to previous years. Although the overall proportion of pupils taking the tests who received a different outcome following a review remains constant at under 1% (less than 0.6% for English reading and less than 0.2% for mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling), there are some factors which STA believe may have contributed to this increase.

The Times Education Supplement (TES) published two articles in June and July highlighting concerns with the onscreen marking system. This included a recommendation from the headteacher union NAHT to encourage applications for reviews.

The move to onscreen marking means that the process of applying for a review is easier than when scripts were marked on paper. Applications are made electronically and unlike with paper marked scripts there is no need to package test papers and return them to the marking agency. This may have impacted on schools' decisions to apply for reviews on the English reading and mathematics papers in 2015.

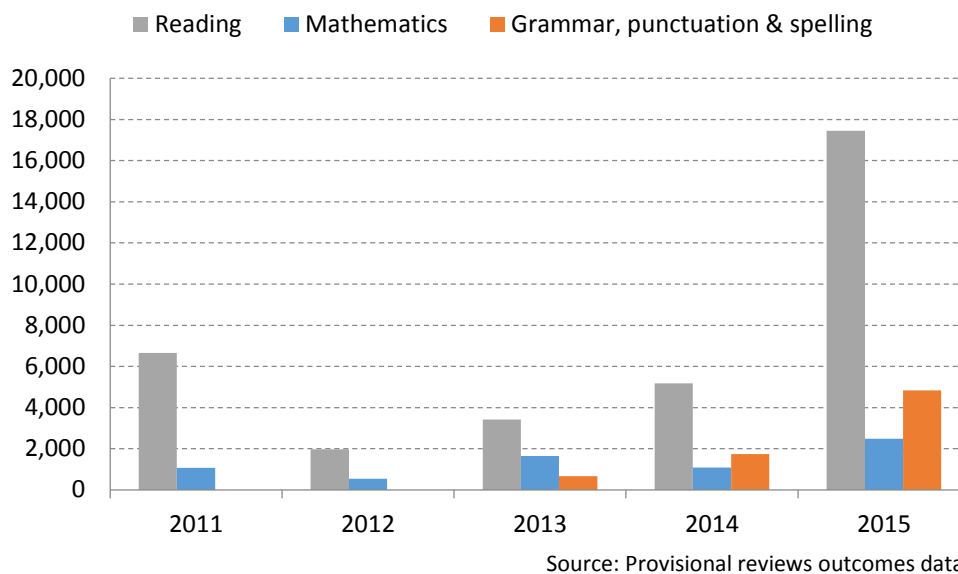
Levels 3-5 tests

Figure 2: Key stage 2 levels 3-5 tests – number of clerical review applications



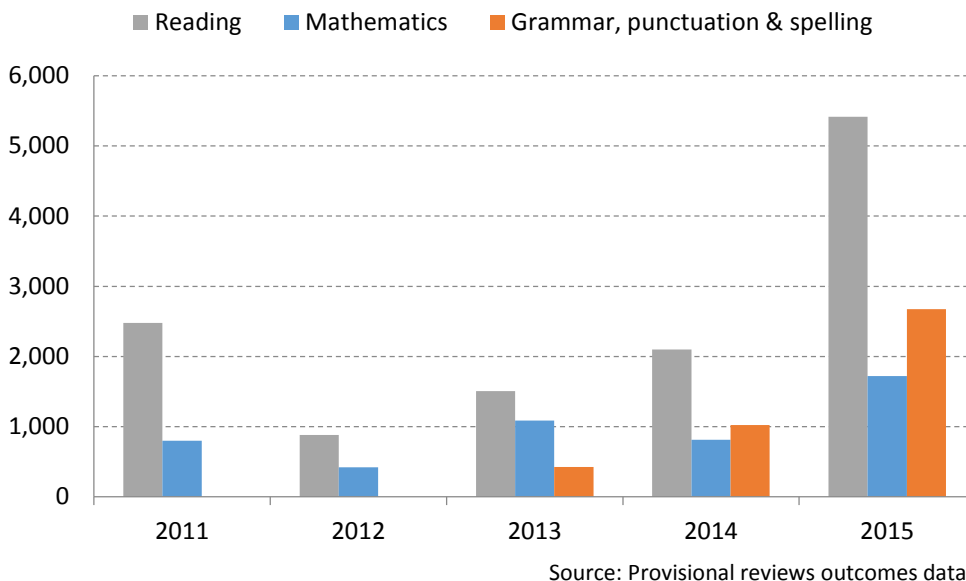
The move to onscreen marking for all subjects in 2015 saw the number of clerical review applications fall to zero. Onscreen marking means that errors caused by incorrectly totalling marks in papers, and transferring marks from papers to data capture systems are impossible for the majority of tests.

Figure 3: Key stage 2 levels 3-5 tests – number of individual review applications



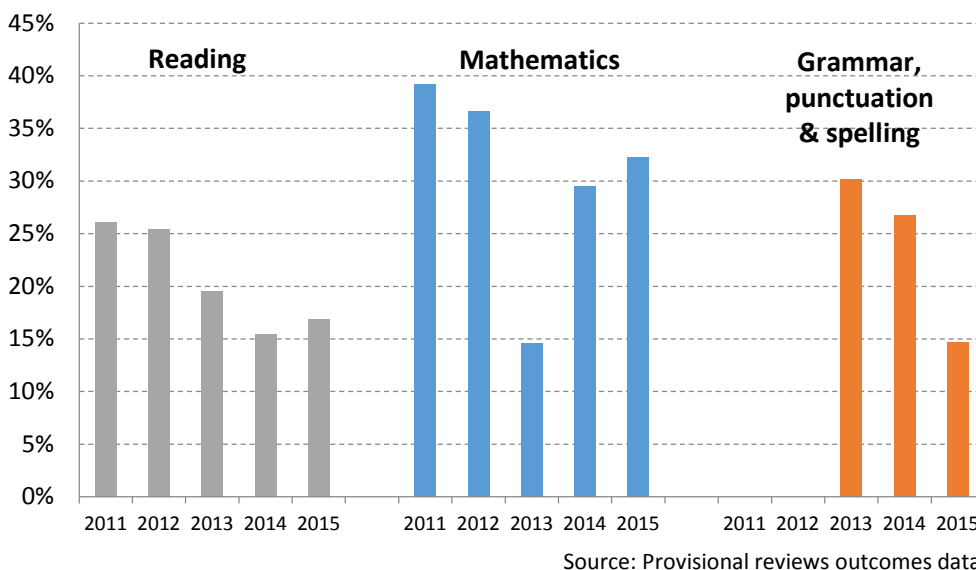
In 2015 there was an increase in individual review requests for all subjects to varying degrees. English grammar, punctuation and spelling has been marked onscreen since 2013 but has still seen an increase in applications this year, suggesting that the increase in applications is not solely attributable to onscreen marking.

Figure 4: Key stage 2 levels 3-5 tests – number of schools making individual review applications



In 2015 the number of schools making applications increased, as well as the average number of applications per school.

Figure 5: Key stage 2 levels 3-5 tests – proportion of individual review applications resulting in a change in level

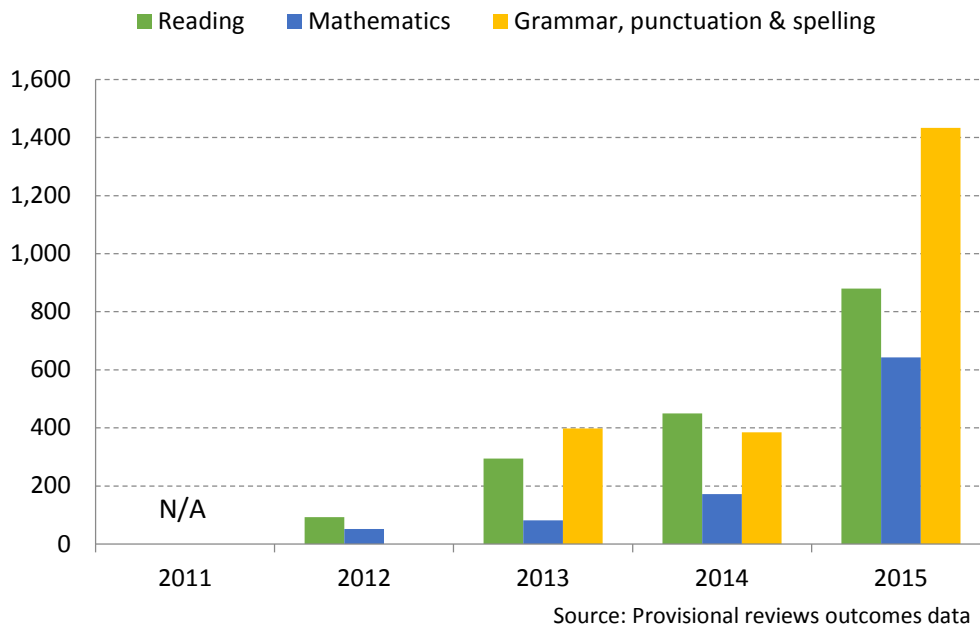


The proportion of reviews resulting in a level change is within the range seen over the past 5 years. For English reading and mathematics there has been a considerable overall decrease since 2011, although a small increase since 2014. English grammar, punctuation and spelling has continued to decrease since 2013.

Level 6 tests

Level 6 tests have been marked onscreen since their introduction in 2012. Clerical reviews form a negligible proportion of level 6 review applications. The following figures refer to individual reviews only.

Figure 6: Key stage 2 level 6 tests – number of review applications



In 2015 there was an increase in individual review applications for all subjects, although proportional increases were not as high as for levels 3-5 tests.

Figure 7: Key stage 2 level 6 tests – number of schools making review applications

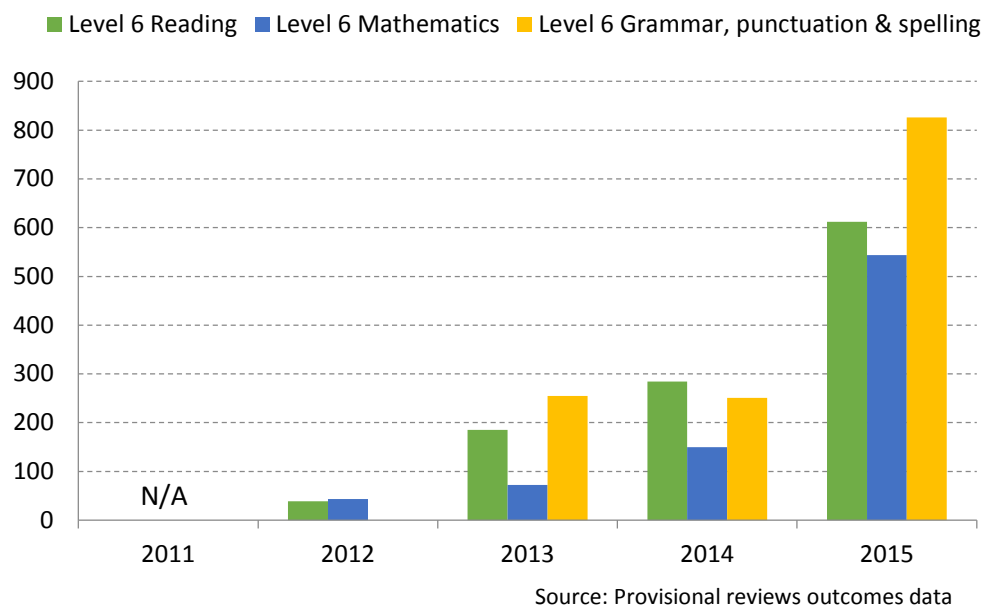
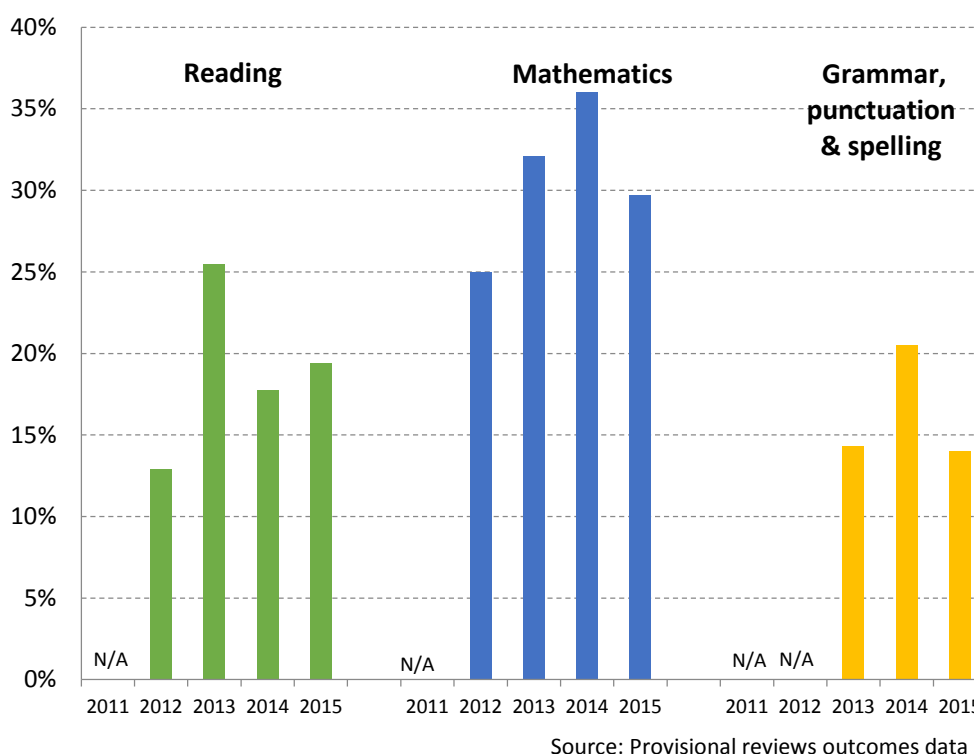


Figure 7 indicates that the number of schools submitting reviews for level 6 subjects increased. This might be due in part to the media coverage earlier in the year drawing attention to the reviews process as the level 6 marking process has not changed since last year.

Figure 8: Key stage 2 level 6 tests – proportion of review applications resulting in a change in level



As with the levels 3-5 tests, the proportion of reviews resulting in a level change are within the range seen in previous years. For level 6 mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling there were decreases compared to the previous two years. English reading saw a small increase in the proportion of level changes.

Notes on figures 2 - 8

The denominator used for calculating the proportion of reviews resulting in a level change shown in figures 5 and 8 is the number of reviews submitted, shown in figures 3 and 6 .

Any test papers annulled due to maladministration that also had a review application have been excluded from the review application figures.

For the key stage 2 levels 3-5 tests, only reviews where the level (not marks only) for the subject changed as a consequence of the review are included in the numerators in figure 5. For the level 6 tests, only reviews where the overall test outcome changed as a consequence of the review are included in the totals for outcomes in figure 8.

Any amendments to results outside the reviews process (eg as a result of a maladministration investigation) are not counted.

Headteachers were advised to consider a pupil's expected attainment before entering them for the level 6 tests as they should be demonstrating attainment above level 5 in the relevant subject. To be awarded a level 6, a pupil would have to achieve both a level 5 in the levels 3-5 test and pass the corresponding level 6 test in the same year. If the pupil did not pass the level 6 test they would be awarded the level achieved in the levels 3-5 test. Reviews for the levels 3-5 and level 6 tests were processed independently, and so it was possible for a school to request a review for both tests for the same pupil. In 2015 there were 26 cases of a review in both the levels 3-5 test and the level 6 tests for English reading, 23 cases for English grammar, punctuation and spelling and 5 cases for mathematics.

The nature of upheld reviews in 2015

All test papers go through extremely rigorous development and testing stages prior to being administered in schools and STA is fully confident in the suitability of the tests in terms of content, difficulty and coverage.

In order for the tests to assess all aspects of the curriculum, a wide range of question types are used, including some questions that require more marker consideration and judgement than others. English reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling papers in particular include a number of open questions which require a deeper understanding of the mark scheme. Mark schemes have very strict guidelines for marking questions which teachers may be less familiar with when making review applications.

The majority of changes made as a result of reviews were on these more challenging questions that required additional marker judgement.

Systematic variables affecting comparability

Valid comparisons between the 2015 statistics and previous years are difficult to make because:

- the marking and/or reviews process has differed slightly each year
- since 2013 our marking supplier has managed a phased introduction to onscreen marking, beginning with levels 3-5 English grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2013, the addition of all level 6 tests in 2014 and all tests were successfully transitioned to onscreen marking in 2015
- in 2013 the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test was introduced so review application decisions by schools may therefore vary between 2013 and 2015 as teachers become more familiar with the nature of the test and mark scheme content
- the results for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test are not aggregated with those for the English reading test, so schools' decisions about making review applications for each test should be independent
- the publication of the 'good level 4' performance measure tables from 2013 may influence schools' decisions about applying for a child whose level would not change as a result of a review, but whose sub-level may change to (or from) a 4b
- in 2014 there was a change in the marking provider for the level 6 tests
- since 2014 schools could only apply for a review of marking by using the NCA tools website (previously schools applied for reviews for the levels 3-5 tests on a paper-based form which they returned to STA's marking supplier for processing and schools applied for reviews for the level 6 tests using the website where they accessed images of their marked level 6 test scripts)
- from 2014 schools were no longer charged for a clerical review if a clerical error was found, but the level did not change
- the process of applying for a review is easier for onscreen marked tests than traditional paper marked tests as they do not have to be packaged and returned for marking
- the move to onscreen marking for English reading and mathematics for the levels 3-5 tests in 2015 may have influenced application decisions for these subjects compared to previous years
- level 6 test outcomes are aggregated with a pupil's levels 3-5 test result in the same subject, to generate an overall level so this can mean a pupil's outcome in one test influences a school's decision as to whether to apply for a review for the other test

Due to the introduction of new tests in 2013, comparisons between the 2015 tests and those prior to 2013 should be made with caution. Comparisons can be made to 2013/2014 but should take into account the variables mentioned above.

STA 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 due to:

- the changing nature of the reviews services offered
- the population of pupils sitting the tests
- varying factors influencing application decisions made by schools

3. Background and context

The levels 3-5 test reviews service is managed by STA's marking supplier. All schools applied for a review of marking through the NCA tools website.

In 2014 all national curriculum tests were marked onscreen except the levels 3-5 English reading and mathematics tests. In 2015 these two tests moved to onscreen marking meaning that the full suite of key stage 2 national curriculum tests were marked onscreen except for modified and unscannable test scripts.

Level 6 tests in English reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling, and mathematics were available as part of the suite of key stage 2 tests in 2015. Schools could choose whether to administer them in addition to the levels 3-5 tests.

The figures in this report are produced from the data feed provided by STA's marking supplier on Tuesday 29 September 2015. Data is provisional because a small number of maladministration investigations are outstanding, thus further review applications may be received following any release of results to these schools. In addition, STA's marking supplier has received one process review application for the levels 3-5 tests. The outcomes of this will not be released until November 2015 so is not incorporated in the data.

4. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's statistics website <https://www.gov.uk/government/>:

National tables

- 1 Cohort number for key stage 2 tests, 2011- 2015
- 2 Data set references for key stage 2 tests, 2011 – 2015
- 3 Summary of number of reviews in 2011 – 2015

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.
We round numbers	Because of this rounding, totals in text and in tables may not always equal the sum of their component parts. Similarly, differences quoted in text may not always be the same as differences shown in tables.
There are exclusions to the data	For 2011 to 2015 any review marks annulled due to malpractice during the review process have been excluded from the review application figures.

5. Further information is available

Previously published figures SFR44/2014 [Key Stage 2 national curriculum review outcomes, 2014](#)

6. National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

7. Got a query? Like to give feedback?

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If non-media	Martin Harris, Standards and Testing Agency, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT 024 7666 0027 DataAndSystems.STA@education.gsi.gov.uk



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