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Standards
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Agency

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Important dates

The next science sampling tests for pupils at the end of key stage 2 (KS2) take place in June 2018.

Selected pupils will sit the tests on a single day during a 2-week period from Monday 4 June to Friday 15 June 2018.

Each test consists of 3 papers, and each paper will take no longer than 25 minutes to complete. We will notify those schools selected to take part by email on 23 April 2018.

About the 2018 science tests

Pupils at the end of the KS2 programme of study do not routinely sit a science test, as their performance is ordinarily measured using teacher assessment judgements.

Every 2 years however, in order to gauge the overall performance of the national population, a sample of pupils sit tests in science.

Whole cohorts do not take the tests. Instead, we select a sample of approximately 1,900 schools to participate. In each of the selected schools we select up to 5 pupils to take the tests, so that approximately 9,500 pupils participate in the sampling tests. The sample is selected in such a way as to ensure it is representative of the population.

The KS2 science sampling tests are not subject to local authority monitoring visits.

Statutory duty

Headteachers of schools selected to participate in the science sampling tests have a statutory duty to implement the assessment arrangements in their schools. They must ensure that:

- teachers and other staff comply with the arrangements for the sampling tests
- selected pupils take the tests if they are working at the standard in science at the end of the KS2 programme of study

Some parents/carers may ask the headteacher that their child does not participate in the tests. In all instances the headteacher's decision regarding a pupil's participation is final. Headteachers should explain the school's decision to parents.

Test administration

For 2018, the Standards and Testing Agency has commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to conduct the statutory science sampling tests exercise in schools. The tests will be administered in schools by NFER administrators. A member of school staff should be present at all times during the tests to assist with any matters that might arise, such as a pupil being ill or behaviour issues.

NFER will send detailed information to selected schools about the administration process, along with a notification of selection letter.

NFER will then contact schools by the middle of May to agree which day they will visit the school to administer the tests. Consideration will be given to schools' existing commitments. NFER will also contact the school to confirm which pupils have been selected to take part.

Schools do not need to place test orders for these tests. The NFER test administrator will bring with them all necessary test materials when they attend participating schools and will take away pupils' completed test scripts for marking.

Test results

Test results will be reported as national data only. No individual school or pupil will be identified within the published data.

Individual pupil and school test results will not be:

- used for school accountability or performance tables
- shared with Ofsted, Regional Schools Commissioners or any other third party
- returned to schools or pupils

We will publish a report summarising the outcomes of the 2018 KS2 science sampling tests in the summer of 2019.

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