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Research and analysis

2023 maladministration report

Published 28 March 2024

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Introduction

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) has a statutory duty to investigate any allegation concerning the accuracy of results, relating to the:

- reception baseline assessment (RBA)
- key stage 1 (KS1) national curriculum tests, including the phonics screening check and teacher assessment
- key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests, including the multiplication tables check (MTC) and teacher assessment

We investigate any concerns, alongside local authorities, in accordance with the [maladministration investigation procedures](#).

Maladministration refers to any act that could jeopardise the integrity, security or confidentiality of the national curriculum assessments. This could refer to a range of actions, including:

- changes made to a pupil's test script by someone other than the pupil
- over-aiding of pupils by test administrators
- inflation or deflation of teacher assessment judgements
- pupils cheating
- test papers incorrectly opened

This report:

- details the numbers, sources and types of allegations of maladministration reported to STA throughout the academic year 2022 to 2023
- presents the numbers of amendments and annulments to results made in 2023
- provides comparisons with the maladministration data from 2022

Number of schools participating in assessments

In the academic year 2022 to 2023, there were:

- 16,427 primary schools engaged with the RBA portal
- 16,531 state-funded mainstream primary schools with phonics screening check results
- 16,555 state-funded mainstream primary schools with KS1 results
- 16,371 primary schools that logged into the MTC service
- 16,390 state-funded mainstream primary schools with KS2 results

Establishments that make up primary schools with results are state schools, academies, free schools, independent schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Changes to statutory assessments

In 2023, the KS2 tests were all moved by one day because the Monday fell on a bank holiday. They took place in the same order, but from Tuesday 9 May to Friday 12 May.

The final dates on which KS2 tests could be administered with an approved timetable variation application changed to:

- Tuesday 16 May 2023 for English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1: questions
- Tuesday 16 May 2023 for English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 2: spelling
- Wednesday 17 May 2023 for English reading
- Thursday 18 May 2023 for mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic
- Thursday 18 May 2023 for mathematics Paper 2: reasoning
- Friday 19 May 2023 for mathematics Paper 3: reasoning

Changes to maladministration procedures

No changes were made to maladministration procedures in 2023.

Breakdown of maladministration cases

The table below details the number of maladministration cases STA investigated from 2023, at each key stage, compared with 2022.

Table 1 - Number of cases investigated (% against schools participating)

| Year | RBA | Phonics | KS1 | MTC | KS2 | Total number |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 2022 | 0 (0%) | 33 (0.2%) | 33 (0.2%) | 0 (0%) | 386 (2.3%) | 452 |
| 2023 | 24 (0.1%) | 42 (0.2%) | 61 (0.3%) | 21 (0.1%) | 431 (2.6%) | 579 |

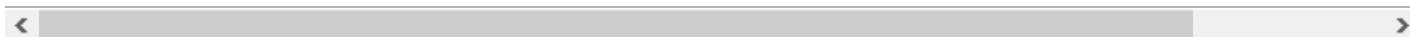
Sources of reported maladministration cases

Cases of alleged maladministration are reported to STA by several different sources. Table 2 details these sources and their percentages against the total number of cases received.

Table 2 - Sources of reported cases (% against schools participating)

| Assessment | Anonymous | School* | Marker | Teacher | Local authority | Parent |
|------------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|-----------------|--------|
| RBA | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | N/A | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

| | | | | | | |
|---------|------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Phonics | 1 (0.006%) | 25 (0.1%) | N/A | 2 (0.01%) | 14 (0.08%) | 0 (0%) |
| KS1 | 6 (0.03%) | 43 (0.2%) | N/A | 5 (0.03%) | 3 (0.01%) | 4 (0.02%) |
| MTC | 3 (0.01%) | 13 (0.07%) | N/A | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (0.02%) |
| KS2 | 46 (0.2%) | 218 (1.3%) | 57 (0.3%) | 27 (0.1%) | 28 (0.1%) | 29 (0.1%) |



*School's senior leadership team

**Other sources include:

- governing body
- parent of another pupil
- secondary school
- Ofqual
- Ofsted
- family member of pupil
- third party supplier

Breakdown of maladministration allegation types

The table below gives a breakdown of allegations by type and their percentage against the total number of cases.

Table 3 - Allegation types (% against schools participating)

| Allegation | RBA | Phonics | KS1 | MTC | KS2 |
|--------------------------|-----|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| Test administrator over- | 7 | 8 | 12 | 7 | 138 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| aiding pupils | (0.04%) | (0.04%) | (0.07%) | (0.04%) | (0.8%) |
| Inappropriate storage of tests | 0 (0%) | 4 (0.02%) | 2 (0.01%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (0.02%) |
| Coaching of pupils | 0 (0%) | 3 (0.01%) | 3 (0.01%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.01%) |
| Test security breach | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.006%) | 4 (0.02%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (0.03%) |
| Wrongly opened test packs | 0 (0%) | 5 (0.03%) | 21 (0.1%) | 0 (0%) | 82 (0.5%) |
| Displays not covered | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.006%) | 0 (0%) | 8 (0.05%) |
| Unauthorised additional time | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 14 (0.09%) |
| Unauthorised test timetable variation | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 50 (0.3%) |
| Changes to paper in another hand | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.006%) | 0 (0%) | 8 (0.05%) |
| Other* | 17 (0.1%) | 21 (0.1%) | 17 (0.1%) | 14 (0.08%) | 123 (0.7%) |

*Other allegation types include:

- incorrect papers given to pupils
- inappropriate room for the test or check
- over-emphasising the spelling, over-active reader or over-active translator
- inappropriate coaching of pupils
- mark scheme opened early

Annulments and amendments to test

results

Following an investigation, if STA finds that the accuracy of a pupil's results is in doubt, we give the school the opportunity to represent itself. Following this, STA may take the decision to annul or amend results. STA communicates this decision to the school.

Where a school believes a pupil has gained an advantage because they have cheated, the headteacher notifies STA of the incident on the Primary Assessment Gateway (PAG). In doing this, they agree to either the removal of marks for the specific questions where the pupil has gained an advantage or the annulment of the pupil's paper.

The table below gives a breakdown of annulments by type and their percentage against the total number of cases. Pupils that gained an advantage because of cheating are not included in this table.

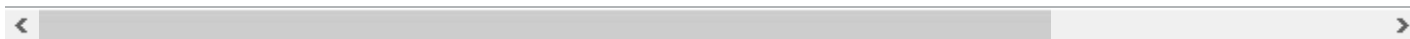
In some cases, STA may have residual concerns - for example, findings may suggest potential inappropriate assistance - and will work with local authorities and schools to help improve test administration processes for the next test cycle.

Table 4 – Annulments (% against schools participating)

| Annulments | RBA 2022 | RBA 2023 | Phonics 2022 | Phonics 2023 | KS1 2022 | KS1 2023 | MTC 2022 | MT 2023 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Whole cohort of at least one subject | N/A | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.006%) | 1 (0.006%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.006%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Individual pupil in at least one subject | N/A | 0 (0%) | 2 (0.01%) | 1 (0.006%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.006%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Partial cohort in at least one subject | N/A | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.006%) | 4 (0.02%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Total | N/A | 0 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

annulments (0%) (0.02%) (0.03%) (0%) (0.01%) (0%) (0%

to results



Pupils that gained an advantage because of cheating are not included in the table above. We had 24 pupils with annulments or mark removals in KS2 due to notifications of cheating.

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