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2024 maladministration report

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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)
- phonics screening check
- 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
- incorrectly opened test papers

This report:

- details the numbers, sources and types of allegations of maladministration reported to STA throughout the academic year 2023 to 2024
- presents the numbers of amendments and annulments to results made in the academic year 2023 to 2024
- provides comparisons with the maladministration data in the academic year 2022 to 2023

Numbers of schools participating in assessments

In the academic year 2023 to 2024, there were:

- 16,442 primary schools eligible to administer the RBA
- 16,538 state-funded mainstream primary schools with year 1 phonics screening check results
- 16,353 primary schools that signed into the MTC service
- 16,393 state-funded mainstream primary schools with KS2 results

Establishments that make up primary schools with results are state schools, academies, free schools, independent schools that opt in, special schools and pupil

referral units.

Changes to maladministration procedures

Assessments at the end of key stage 1 (KS1) became non-statutory from the academic year 2023 to 2024 onwards. STA no longer investigates or reports on any allegation concerning the accuracy of optional KS1 test or teacher assessment results, and there is no statutory duty to do so.

This does not include the phonics screening check, which remains statutory.

Breakdown of maladministration cases

The table below details the number of maladministration cases STA investigated.

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

Year	RBA	Phonics	MTC	KS2*	Total number
2023	24 (0.1%)	42 (0.2%)	21 (0.1%)	431 (2.6%)	579**
2024	23 (0.1%)	26 (0.2%)	14 (0.1%)	609 (3.7%)	672

*including teacher assessment

**including 61 cases at the end of KS1

Sources of reported maladministration cases

Cases of alleged maladministration are reported to STA from several different sources. Table 2 details these sources and the percentages of these 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%)	1 (0.01%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Phonics	4 (0.02%)	16 (0.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (0.04%)	0 (0%)
MTC	0 (0%)	11 (0.07%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.01%)
KS2**	62 (0.38%)	229 (1.40%)	224 (1.37%)	15 (0.09%)	45 (0.27%)	22 (0.13%)

*School's senior leadership team

**includes teacher assessment

Other sources include:

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

Breakdown of allegation types

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

Table 3 - Allegation types (% against schools participating)

Allegation	RBA	Phonics	MTC	KS2 tests	KS2 teacher assessment
Incorrect completion of transcripts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	227 (1.38%)	0 (0%)
Test administrator over-aiding pupils	0 (0%)	10 (0.06%)	1 (0.01%)	155 (0.95%)	0 (0%)
Unauthorised test timetable variation	0 (0%)	1 (0.01%)	0 (0%)	88 (0.54%)	0 (0%)
Incorrect administration	9 (0.05%)	4 (0.02%)	10 (0.06%)	5 (0.03%)	0 (0%)
Wrongly opened test packs	0 (0%)	1 (0.01%)	0 (0%)	27 (0.16%)	0 (0%)
Test security breach	2 (0.01%)	1 (0.01%)	0 (0%)	15 (0.09%)	0 (0%)
Unauthorised additional time	0 (0%)	1 (0.01%)	0 (0%)	15 (0.09%)	0 (0%)
Incorrect completion of RBA	12 (0.07%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Displays not covered	0 (0%)	1 (0.01%)	1 (0.01%)	7 (0.04%)	0 (0%)
Changes to paper in another hand	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (0.04%)	0 (0%)
Inappropriate storage of tests	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (0.04%)	0 (0%)
Other	0 (0%)	7 (0.04%)	2 (0.01%)	52 (0.32%)	4 (0.02%)

Other allegation types include:

- incorrect papers given to pupils
- inappropriate room for the test or check
- inappropriate coaching of pupils
- inappropriate teacher assessment practices

Annulments and amendments to results

Following an investigation, if STA finds that the accuracy of a pupil's results is in doubt, we contact the school and ask it to provide any relevant information or representations that may enable us to understand the situation. Following this, if we conclude maladministration has occurred, 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. 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 the percentage of these against the total number of cases. Pupils who gained an advantage because of cheating are not included in this table.

In some cases, STA may conclude that maladministration has not occurred but there remain residual concerns – for example, findings may suggest potential inappropriate assistance. In those cases, STA will work with local authorities and schools to help improve test administration processes for the next test cycle.

Table 4 – Annulments in at least one subject (% against schools participating)

Annulments	RBA 2023	RBA 2024	Phonics 2023	Phonics 2024	MTC 2023	MTC 2024	KS2 tests 2023	KS2 tests 2024
Whole cohort	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.01%)	2 (0.01%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.01%)	3 (0.02)

Partial cohort	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (0.02%)	1 (0.01%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.01%)	4 (0.02%)
Individual pupil	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.01%)	3 (0.02%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	29 (0.10%)	39 (0.24%)
Total annulments	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (0.03%)	6 (0.04%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	34 (0.20%)	46 (0.28%)

Pupils who gained an advantage because of cheating are not included in the table above. There were 29 pupils with annulments due to notifications of cheating.

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