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Statutory guidance

Key stage 2 tests: monitoring visits guidance

Updated 24 March 2025

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Introduction

This guidance is for local authorities undertaking monitoring visits for the key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests. It also contains instructions for completing the [KS2 monitoring visit form](#).

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to monitor the administration of KS2 national curriculum tests for 10% of their schools. The legal basis for this activity is set out in [The Education \(National Curriculum\) \(Key Stage 2 Assessment Arrangements\) \(England\) Order 2003 \(as amended\)](#).

Monitoring visits help ensure that schools maintain the integrity, security and confidentiality of test materials and that they administer KS2 national curriculum tests correctly and consistently.

Monitoring visits are not required for the multiplication tables check (MTC).

Changes for the academic year 2024 to 2025

If assessments are administered in multiple rooms, monitoring visitors should now record on the KS2 monitoring visit form which rooms they visited.

Preparing for a visit

To carry out a monitoring visit correctly, you should ensure you have read and understood this guidance.

You should also be familiar with the following 2025 guidance:

- [KS2 assessment and reporting arrangements \(ARA\)](#)
- [KS2 test administration guidance \(TAG\)](#)
- [KS2 modified test administration guidance \(MTAG\)](#)
- [Varying the KS2 test timetable](#)
- [KS2 access arrangements](#)
- [Returning KS2 test scripts](#)

Reviewing applications

On the [Primary Assessment Gateway \(PAG\)](#), local authorities will be able to access the:

- early opening application report

- additional time – all applications report
- additional time – high percentage application report
- timetable variation application report

When selecting schools for a monitoring visit, you should look for schools that are:

- making multiple applications for individual pupils
- making more applications than expected
- making applications without having evidence to support them

During a monitoring visit, you may ask the school for evidence to support the use of access arrangements. Examples of the evidence you may request include:

- notes recorded in teaching plans
- individual pupil support plans
- a pupil's classwork

Downloading early opening, additional time and timetable variation reports

To view the schools that have applied for early opening, additional time and timetable variations, local authorities can select 'Download access arrangements reports' on the [PAG](#).

You can download a single report or select multiple reports to download at the same time, following these steps:

1. Select 'Download access arrangements reports'.
2. Select the reports you wish to download.
3. Select 'Generate'.
4. Select 'Download' for those reports you wish to download. We recommend using Microsoft Excel to view file data, as this will allow you to apply filters.

Carrying out a visit

Depending on when your visit takes place, you will need to observe certain aspects of test administration to ensure the school is following the published guidance correctly.

Your local authority's monitoring visits co-ordinator, or relevant person from your organisation, will give you specific information before each visit.

When carrying out a monitoring visit, you should take with you:

- information taken from the 'KS2 delivery note generator' STA provides via email in mid-April, which shows the quantity of KS2 test materials the school should have received
- reports from the [PAG](#) showing whether the school has approval to open test packs early, use timetable variations, or give any pupils additional time
- copies of the KS2 monitoring visit form and this guidance
- photo identification to present on arrival at the school – this can be a passport, driving licence or official work pass

Complete the monitoring visit form as directed. At the end of the visit, you will need to meet with the headteacher, or delegated member of staff, to discuss your findings.

Visits before the test period

These monitoring visits take place during the week beginning Tuesday 6 May.

Schools should have received their initial KS2 test materials consignment, which includes any modified tests they ordered, along with the stationery pack, in the week commencing Monday 28 April. Schools will receive additional test materials from Tuesday 6 May if they have updated their pupil registration data or placed new orders for modified tests.

Schools should follow the [2025 KS2 TAG](#) on storing test materials securely.

During your visits you should:

- check that schools have received the correct number and type of test packs in their initial KS2 consignment, and they are unopened, undamaged, and stored securely
- review other elements of the planned administration, such as the rooms where the tests will take place

Receipt and storage of key stage 2 test packs

Your monitoring visits co-ordinator will give you details of the number of test packs delivered to the school, taken from STA's 'KS2 delivery note generator'.

Schools receive a printed delivery note in their test materials consignment. They should have:

- used it to check they received all materials listed
- annotated it to confirm the quantity and type of materials were correct

Ask the headteacher, or delegated member of staff, to show you their delivery note and where the test packs are stored. Check that:

- the number and types of test packs match the delivery note
- all test packs are sealed and stored securely

Damaged test packs

Schools should check their test materials on receipt and report damaged items to the national curriculum assessments helpline immediately on 0300 303 3013.

Check whether the school received any damaged test packs and reported them. If they have not already done so, advise them to contact the national curriculum assessments helpline immediately.

Early opening of key stage 2 test materials

Schools must have STA's approval to open any test packs before the scheduled test day. They must apply for early opening through the PAG and will receive confirmation explaining the earliest allowed opening date.

STA will only allow schools to open standard test materials more than one school day before the scheduled test date, or modified materials more than 2 school days before the scheduled test date, in exceptional circumstances.

Your monitoring visits co-ordinator will give you a report from the PAG, showing

whether STA has approved the early opening of test packs. However, schools may have received approval for early opening in the time since the report was generated.

During your visit:

- ask any school who has opened a test pack before the scheduled test day to show you confirmation of STA’s early opening approval
- check that opened packs are stored securely

If you find test packs have been opened early without STA’s approval, you must record this on the monitoring visit form and discuss it with the headteacher, or delegated member of staff, at the end of your visit.

Visits during test week

These visits take place between Monday 12 May and Thursday 15 May. The timetable for the KS2 tests is:

Monday 12 May	English grammar, punctuation and spelling Papers 1 and 2
Tuesday 13 May	English reading
Wednesday 14 May	Mathematics Papers 1 and 2
Thursday 15 May	Mathematics Paper 3

You should arrive at the school at the beginning of the school day, before the start of the tests, so that you can observe the complete test administration process, including:

- opening of the test packs
- administration of the tests
- packing of the test scripts (the test papers containing the pupils’ answers)
- storing of the test scripts securely

Opening the test packs

Check that:

- the school opens test papers just before administration of the test, unless they have STA approval for early opening
- the correct KS2 test is being administered, according to the scheduled timetable or an approved timetable variation

Administering the tests

If the school administers a test in more than one room, you should try to monitor the test administration in each room. Record which assessment rooms you visited on the KS2 monitoring visit form.

You should agree with the headteacher or test administrator at the start of your visit whether they should explain your presence to the observed pupils before the test begins. Take care to ensure your monitoring activity does not disturb pupils as they take the tests.

Check that:

- wall displays or items that could help pupils have been removed or covered up, including items that could help in the spelling test
- seating arrangements allow all pupils to work quietly and independently
- the school administers the papers in the correct test order
- pupils are not using equipment listed as 'not allowed' in the printed test administration instructions (provided with the test materials) and the [KS2 TAG](#) or [KS2 MTAG](#)
- the school adheres to the time allowed for each test
- test administrators, or other members of staff (such as readers, scribes or prompters), do not give inappropriate assistance to pupils
- access arrangements used by pupils have been approved, or notification was given, as applicable
- access arrangements are administered in accordance with the [KS2 access arrangements guidance](#)
- the school has evidence to show that access arrangements are used in accordance with normal classroom practice

Packing and storing test scripts

You should observe school staff packing and storing the whole cohort's test scripts. The headteacher, or delegated member of staff, should carry out this activity, using the guidance for [returning test scripts](#).

Schools should pack:

- standard test scripts in the clear inner bags
- scribed, transcribed, translated or modified scripts, including modifications produced in school, any photocopied papers, or papers with attachments, in the green-panelled inner bags
- braille scripts in the supplied padded envelopes

If a school is administering a test in multiple sittings on the scheduled day, they should:

- pack the scripts from the first sitting in the appropriate inner bags or envelopes, but leave them unsealed
- place the inner bags and envelopes into a white script return bag, apply one Parcelforce address label which corresponds with the test scripts' subject, and leave the bag unsealed (larger schools may need to use multiple white script return bags)
- store the bags securely between sittings
- add the scripts from further sittings to the appropriate inner bag or envelope

Once all sittings are complete on the scheduled day, the clear inner bags with standard test scripts must be sealed.

If administration of the KS2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling and KS2 English reading tests is complete, the green-panelled inner bags and padded braille envelopes must also be sealed.

For KS2 mathematics, the green-panelled inner bag and padded braille envelope must be left unsealed until Paper 3 administration is complete, which is scheduled for Thursday 15 May.

If the school has an approved timetable variation to administer a test on another day:

- the white script return bag must be left unsealed, so that papers from the timetable variation sittings can be added to it
- standard test scripts from timetable variations do not need to be packaged in clear inner bags – they should be added loosely into the white script return bag
- braille papers from timetable variation sittings should be put into a padded envelope, if possible

- unsealed white script return bags must be stored securely until all timetable variation sittings for that subject are complete

You may also find it helpful to watch STA's video which demonstrates how schools should pack pupils' test scripts to send for marking:

[STA YouTube video: returning KS2 test scripts](#)

Dispatching test scripts

STA's courier, Parcelforce Worldwide, will attempt to collect the white script return bags between 9am and 4pm on the following dates:

Group A – if the school's DfE number ends with an even digit	Group B – if the school's DfE number ends with an odd digit
Monday 12 May	Tuesday 13 May
Wednesday 14 May	Thursday 15 May
Friday 16 May	Friday 16 May, if necessary

If the school has sent test scripts for marking:

- ask to see their dispatch log – the Parcelforce driver should have signed this and schools should have attached labels with the tracking numbers matching their packages
- check that there are no test scripts for marking still on site, where the school has fully completed administration for the subject and is not expecting a timetable variation for the subject, and packages for the subject have been collected
- where there are still test scripts on site, and the school has no more scheduled Parcelforce collections, they can ask for further collections by calling the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 – they can also request additional script dispatch stationery, such as labels and script return bags

Visits after the test period

These visits take place immediately after test week, from Monday 19 May to Friday 23 May.

You should use these visits to ensure that the school has securely stored any KS2 test scripts awaiting collection. Unused test papers must be kept secure until Friday 23 May.

If the school is still administering KS2 tests because they have an approved timetable variation, you should also carry out the checks outlined for test week.

Storing and dispatching test scripts

All test materials remain confidential until Friday 23 May and must be stored securely. Depending on the school's circumstances, in their secure storage area you should expect to see either:

- sealed script return bags and any unused test materials, securely stored in a locked cupboard
- a dispatch log, to show the school has sent test scripts for marking

You should only find unsealed script return bags if the school is still administering a test using an approved timetable variation. In this case, check that they are securely stored in a locked cupboard, and the rest of the cohort's KS2 test scripts are sealed in transparent inner bags. The script return bags should be sealed as soon as possible once the final test using an approved timetable variation is administered.

Test script packages, including timetable variations administered during test week, should have been collected on the school's next scheduled collection, up to Friday 16 May. Otherwise, STA will send Parcelforce to the school on the day after the final approved timetable variation for each paper, up to Friday 23 May.

Schools can call the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 to confirm these arrangements.

Completing the monitoring visit form

You must complete the [2025 KS2 monitoring visit form](#) for each school you visit. You must complete sections A and B in full, and the appropriate boxes in section C.

Form section A: Key stage 2 test-specific information

Complete the status with '✓' to indicate correct processes, 'X' where you have concerns or 'N/A' if you have not observed the process.

Test date	Test paper	Unopened test packs securely stored	Tests administered according to guidance	Completed test scripts securely stored	Test scripts collected
Monday 12 May	English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1				
Monday 12 May	English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 2				
Tuesday 13 May	English reading				
Wednesday 14 May	Mathematics Paper 1				
Wednesday 14 May	Mathematics Paper 2				
Thursday 15 May	Mathematics Paper 3				

Refer to the [Carrying out a visit](#) section of this guidance for information on:

- visits during test week
- visits after the test period

Use '✓' to indicate that you have observed the correct processes.

Use 'X' where you have concerns. Briefly explain what you have observed in section C. Concerns may include:

- inappropriate support during a test
- a pupil cheating
- incorrectly sealed or stored test scripts
- test packs appear to be tampered with
- test packs have been opened before the date in the statutory test timetable, without STA approval for early opening, or more than one hour before the test is administered

Use 'N/A' to indicate you have not observed the process.

Form section B: General administration

Question	✓ or X	Notes
Q1. Have all correct test materials been received?		
Q2. Is there evidence that the consignments were checked on arrival?		
Q3. Are all test materials stored securely?		

Refer to the [Carrying out a visit](#) section of this guidance for information on:

- checking test packs
- reporting damaged test packs
- early opening of test materials
- storing test materials securely

Use '✓' to indicate that you have observed the correct general administration.

Use 'X' where you have concerns. Briefly explain what you have observed in the notes section.

Form section C: Notes

Numbers or names of assessment rooms visited (do not include staff names)	
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Only complete the following section if you have entered an 'X' in section A. If you have any other concerns about the administration of assessments, also report them here.

Short description of issues identified and any action you have taken (including resolution, where applicable):
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Record which assessment rooms you have observed during your visit. Specify the rooms' names or numbers, but do not include staff names.

In the next box, record concerns only. Briefly explain your concerns if you have entered an 'X' in section A. Any other issues arising during the visit may also be recorded here. If you are aware of a sensitive matter relating to potential maladministration, which you determine should remain confidential from the school, discuss your concerns with the monitoring visits co-ordinator immediately. You can also report the matter directly to sta.maladministration@education.gov.uk.

If you have concerns about the integrity of a test, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 for further advice. Discuss the issues with your monitoring visits co-ordinator as soon as possible.

If you identify any irregularities during your visit that require an urgent response, discuss this with your monitoring visits co-ordinator so they can immediately email the completed form to sta.maladministration@education.gov.uk.

Meeting with the headteacher

Before you leave the school, you should meet with the headteacher, or delegated member of staff, to discuss your findings from the visit. If you have placed an 'X' in any box on the monitoring visit form, you should advise whether the school should make changes to its test administration procedures for any remaining tests. Record your recommendations on the KS2 monitoring visit form . If you did not find anything that concerned you, make this clear in your verbal feedback, but do not record good practice on the monitoring visit form.

You and the headteacher, or delegated member of staff, should sign and date the monitoring visit form. This confirms that the visit took place, you have given any feedback about the administration of the KS2 tests to the school, and they agree to what you have noted.

You should leave a copy of the monitoring visit form, and any delivery notes you have annotated, with the headteacher or delegated member of staff. You must not add any additional detail or make changes to the monitoring visit form after this point.

After the monitoring visit: submitting the form

Review and send the completed KS2 monitoring visit form to your local authority's monitoring visits co-ordinator immediately after the visit, and discuss any findings. The deadline for sending completed KS2 monitoring visit forms to your co-ordinator is Tuesday 27 May.

The monitoring visits co-ordinator should then email a scanned, unencrypted copy of the KS2 monitoring visit form to sta.maladministration@education.gov.uk using the following subject line:

KS2MVF-geographical area-local authority number (three digits)-number of schools

Example: KS2MVF-Coventry-123-8

If you identified any irregularities during your visit that require an urgent response from STA, discuss your concerns with the monitoring visits co-ordinator immediately. In this case, the monitoring visits co-ordinator should send the monitoring visit form

to sta.maladministration@education.gov.uk using the following subject line instead:

Urgent-KS2MVF-geographical area-school DfE number

Example: Urgent-KS2MVF-Coventry-1234567

The final deadline for local authority monitoring visits co-ordinators to send KS2 monitoring visit forms to STA is Friday 6 June.

Help and support

If you have questions about carrying out monitoring visits, you should speak to your monitoring visits co-ordinator.

If they are unable to help, you can contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or at assessments@education.gov.uk.

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