

- [Home](#) ▾
- [Education, training and skills](#) ▾
- [School curriculum](#) ▾
- [Primary curriculum, key stage 2](#)
  - [Tests and assessments \(key stage 2\)](#)
  - [Key stage 2 tests: modified test administration guidance \(MTAG\)](#)



[Standards  
& Testing  
Agency](#)

Statutory guidance

# 2026 key stage 2 modified test administration guidance: administering to pupils with a hearing impairment

Updated 9 March 2026

## Contents

- [1. Planning for the tests](#)
- [2. Administering the tests](#)
- [3. Help and support](#)

This guidance will help you prepare to administer the key stage 2 (KS2) tests to pupils with a hearing impairment. You should follow it to ensure these pupils can access the tests properly and are not at a disadvantage.

The information expands on the 'Test administration' section of the [2026 KS2 assessment and reporting arrangements \(ARA\)](#).

You should use this guidance together with the:

- [KS2 test administration guidance](#)
- test administration instructions provided with the standard test materials

The test administration instructions include information about what you should do before, during and after each test.

Schools may also want to use [past test papers](#) to help pupils prepare for the tests.

Headteachers are responsible for the test administration arrangements within their school. Failure to adhere to this guidance could lead to a [maladministration investigation](#).

# 1. Planning for the tests

## 1.1 Access arrangements

In addition to the [KS2 access arrangements guidance](#), you should follow the specific guidance below when administering the tests to pupils with a hearing impairment.

Adults providing support for an access arrangement must not be a relative, carer or guardian of the pupil.

Test administrators should note for their own records where an access arrangement was provided in the tests and, if appropriate, the name of the scribe, transcribe, reader, prompter, translator or word processor or other technical or electronic aid used by each pupil.

### **Making further adaptations to the tests**

Schools may open test papers up to one hour before a test is due to start, to make adaptations or preparations, without seeking permission from the Standards and Testing Agency (STA). This flexibility is designed to help schools that need to make adaptations to test papers to meet a pupil's needs, or if signers need access to the papers to prepare for the administration of the tests.

If you need to open test papers, including modified test papers, more than one hour

early to make complex adaptations, you must have an approved application for early opening. The deadline for applications was Friday 6 March. We will only accept applications after the deadline under exceptional circumstances – for example, where a pupil's needs have changed or a pupil joined the school after Friday 6 March.

In such cases, you should contact STA using the 'Message us – access arrangements' form within the 'Test administration' tab on the [National Curriculum Assessments Portal \(NCA Portal\)](#) to discuss the pupil's requirements.

### **Use of communicators and sign language**

You may support pupils who use British Sign Language or other sign-supported communication in the tests, if this is normal classroom practice. [Administering the tests](#) provides specific guidance for each test.

## **1.2 Compensatory marks for spelling**

Compensatory marks are available for the spelling paper of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test.

We may award compensatory marks to pupils who have a profound hearing impairment and who do not lipread or use a signing system, or who can only use fingerspelling signing.

You should apply for compensatory marks in advance, using the 'Submit access arrangements applications' form within the 'Test administration' tab on the [NCA Portal](#).

The deadline for applications is Monday 20 April. Applications after the deadline will only be considered under exceptional circumstances – for example, where a pupil's needs have changed or a pupil has joined the school after Monday 20 April.

In such cases, you should contact STA using the 'Message us – access arrangements' form within the 'Test administration' tab on the [NCA Portal](#) to discuss the pupil's requirements.

## **2. Administering the tests**

## 2.1 When to open test materials

The front of each test pack includes instructions detailing when the test materials can be opened to prepare for their administration.

You must not open test packs early to familiarise yourself with the test content.

## 2.2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling

You may only use sign language and give additional explanation as needed:

- to convey the general instructions
- where the test administration instructions advise you to read the questions to the pupil
- to read or sign back to the pupil any part of their response

### **Paper 1: questions**

You should use the [notes for readers in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests](#) to help you understand how to communicate particular types of questions.

### **Paper 2: spelling**

You may use a communicator or sign language interpreter. If you present the spelling paper through sign language, do not use fingerspelling.

### **Compensatory marks for spelling**

Pupils who have been granted a compensatory mark for 'Paper 2: spelling' due to a profound hearing impairment are exempt from this paper and must not attempt it. Mark them as 'A' (absent) on the online test attendance register on the [NCA Portal](#).

You will need raw scores from both English grammar, punctuation and spelling papers to calculate an overall scaled score. If the pupil takes the paper, you must send the test script for marking and their mark will stand. In these circumstances, we are unable to award a compensatory mark.

## 2.3 English reading

You can use sign language to convey and explain the general instructions, including the information on the front cover of the test papers and any directions that are not part of the actual questions or texts.

## 2.4 Mathematics

Test administration instructions for pupils with hearing impairments accompany the standard test materials.

For pupils with hearing impairments, you may use sign language to communicate the test questions, but be careful when signing numbers and mathematical signs. This is to ensure that you do not give pupils an advantage by having the function inadvertently explained to them.

We will include guidance on using sign language for specific questions in the standard test administration instructions, where appropriate.

# 3. Help and support

For general questions about administering the KS2 tests, you can contact the national curriculum assessments helpline:

### **National curriculum assessments helpline**

Call: 0300 303 3013

Email: [assessments@education.gov.uk](mailto:assessments@education.gov.uk)

Online: [NCA Portal](#) 'Support'

For enquiries relating to KS2 access arrangements to meet a pupil's specific needs, schools can use the 'Message us – access arrangements' form within the 'Test administration' tab on the [NCA Portal](#).

Do not include or discuss details of live test content in your enquiries.

[↑ Back to top](#)

## Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. [Please fill in this survey \(opens in a new tab\)](#).



### Services and information

---

[Benefits](#)

[Births, death, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

### Government activity

---

[Departments](#)

[News](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency](#)

[How government works](#)

[Get involved](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

---

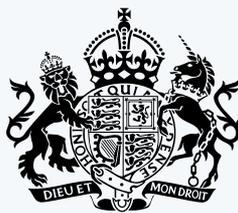
[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Contact](#)

[Terms and conditions](#) [Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#)

[Government Digital Service](#)

**OGI**

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



[© Crown copyright](#)