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Statutory guidance

2026 key stage 2 test administration guidance

Updated 9 March 2026

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This guidance is for schools administering the 2026 key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests. The information expands on the 'Test administration' section of the [2026 KS2 assessment and reporting arrangements \(ARA\)](#).

It ensures schools can:

- understand the statutory requirements for the KS2 tests
- plan for the tests
- receive and securely store test materials
- administer the tests correctly

Each test pack includes test administration instructions. There are separate instructions provided for the standard, modified large print (MLP) and braille versions of the tests. [Modified test administration guidance](#) is also available.

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. Changes for 2026

The Primary Assessment Gateway has been replaced by the [National Curriculum Assessments Portal \(NCA Portal\)](#). This has been developed by Pearson.

The NCA Portal uses multi-factor authentication (MFA) to help protect pupil data and ensure secure access. On the first sign-in of each day, users will need to enter a unique 6-digit verification code that will be sent to their registered email address.

Schools can use the NCA Portal to:

- order additional stationery materials
- register pupils for the tests
- amend pupil registration
- apply for or notify the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) about the use of

access arrangements

- apply for a timetable variation
- notify STA of a pupil cheating
- complete and submit online test attendance registers
- submit the KS2 headteacher's declaration form (HDF)

For full instructions and support on how to access the system and manage user accounts, please refer to the guidance on [how to access the NCA Portal](#).

2. 2026 key stage 2 tests

You can find more information on the types of schools and pupils required to take the tests in the 'Legal requirements and responsibilities' section of the [2026 KS2 ARA](#).

2.1 Test timetable

The KS2 test timetable is as follows:

| Date | Test |
|------------------|--|
| Monday 11 May | English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1: questions |
| Monday 11 May | English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 2: spelling |
| Tuesday 12 May | English reading |
| Wednesday 13 May | Mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic |
| Wednesday 13 May | Mathematics Paper 2: reasoning |
| Thursday 14 May | Mathematics Paper 3: reasoning |

Schools must administer the KS2 tests on the dates specified in the test timetable, and papers for each subject must be administered in order, unless there are

exceptional circumstances – for example, a start time variation or an approved [timetable variation](#). Schools can choose their own start times for each test and, where possible, should administer them to the whole cohort at the same time.

If necessary, schools can administer a test in multiple sittings between 7am and 7pm, so an individual pupil or group can take a test on the scheduled date but at a different time from the rest of the cohort. Pupils who have not taken a test must not have any opportunity to discuss test content with pupils who have already taken it.

Pupils should be reminded not to share test content, including on social media.

Important dates for the KS2 tests are outlined in the ‘Important dates’ section of the [2026 KS2 ARA](#). Schools can also download these dates from the [KS2 assessments calendar 2025 to 2026](#) (482 KB).

2.2 Timetable variations

If a pupil is absent on the scheduled day of a test, schools must have an approved timetable variation application to move a test up to 5 school days after the scheduled test date. Any missed test must not be administered until the school receives this confirmation.

In the case of pupils who live in the same household, if one pupil is absent on the day of a test but other pupils from the same household are in school, and the school intends to administer the test to all pupils in the household, the school should consider delaying the test for all the pupils in the household. This is to ensure that the integrity, security and confidentiality of the test are maintained. The school must ensure the pupils do not have any opportunity to discuss test content with pupils who have already taken the test.

Schools must submit an application for a [timetable variation](#) using the ‘Submit timetable variation’ form, available in the ‘Test administration’ tab on the [NCA Portal](#).

3. Headteachers’ responsibilities

As the headteacher at a school administering the KS2 tests, you have specific responsibilities, which are detailed in the ‘Responsibilities’ section of the [2026 KS2](#)

4. Demonstrating correct test administration

We recommend inviting a governor, a trusted member of the school community or a staff member from a nearby secondary school, who is not otherwise involved in administering the tests, to observe test administration.

An independent observer can provide support and, at the same time, improve their understanding of test administration. Anyone observing the tests must be familiar with this guidance, the [modified test administration guidance](#) and the [2026 KS2 ARA](#). We recommend observers attend any training your school or local authority is running for staff.

Observers should expect to witness the complete administration of each test assigned to them. They should check that:

- all test administrators are familiar with the procedures, including what is and is not permitted during the administration of all tests
- test packs are stored securely in a locked cupboard and have remained unopened until, at most, one hour before the test taking place on the published test date, unless STA has approved an early opening application
- pupils are suitably seated and supervised, and classroom displays have been removed or covered, as appropriate
- the school is administering the tests in the order published in the test timetable, and access arrangements are being used correctly
- test scripts are collected from the test room immediately after the test and packaged securely in a locked cupboard until they are dispatched for marking
- any unused test papers are accounted for and stored securely until Friday 22 May

Invited observers do not replace monitoring visits. A sample of at least 10% of schools will receive a monitoring visit from the local authority. Schools should refer to the [monitoring visits guidance](#), which gives information about what local authorities will look for during their visits.

5. Maladministration

In relation to the KS2 tests, the term maladministration refers to any act that:

- affects the integrity, security or confidentiality of the national curriculum assessments
- could lead to results that do not reflect pupils' unaided work

Your school could be subject to a [maladministration investigation](#) if it does not comply with:

- this test administration guidance
- the [KS2 modified test administration guidance](#)
- the [2026 KS2 ARA](#)
- the [KS2 access arrangements guidance](#)
- the [timetable variation guidance](#)
- the [KS2 special consideration guidance](#)
- the [KS2 returning test scripts guidance](#)
- the test administration instructions provided with the test materials

You should consider taking steps to protect staff involved in administering the tests. Misinterpretations about correct test administration can lead to allegations of maladministration. To avoid this, ensure all staff, participating pupils and their parents understand:

- how the tests will be administered
- the date each test should be administered
- what assistance is and is not allowed in the tests
- how any access arrangements will be used
- how timetable variations can be used

Anyone with concerns about the assessments, their administration, or any allegations of maladministration, which could include a pupil cheating, should report them to STA's Maladministration team at STA.maladministration@education.gov.uk or call the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013.

6. Preparing test administrators

Headteachers will need to consider the staff resource required to administer the tests. We recommend having at least 2 test administrators in each test room so the headteacher can have confidence in the integrity of test administration.

Internal arrangements should also be in place in case a pupil needs to leave the test room – for example, if they are disruptive or begin to feel unwell.

Test administrators will usually be headteachers, teachers or teaching assistants. Test administrators should be trained in how the tests will be administered. This will help to avoid misunderstandings about test administration and misinterpretation of valid access arrangements or assistance.

If a test administrator is a relative, carer or guardian of a pupil they are supervising, there should be at least one other test administrator, who is not related to the pupil, present at all times.

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

We encourage schools to hold training sessions for those involved in administering KS2 tests. If schools have arranged independent observation of the tests, observers should also attend this training. Before administering the tests, test administrators should familiarise themselves with this guidance and with:

- the 'Test administration' section of the [2026 KS2 ARA](#)
- past test papers available in the collection of [past test materials](#)
- which test is being administered on each day, as detailed in the [test timetable](#)
- the [KS2 access arrangements guidance](#) and those pupils needing arrangements
- test administration instructions provided with test materials, including:
 - what equipment is required for a particular test
 - the length of the test
 - what assistance is allowed for each test

- the [notes for readers in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests](#), which give examples of how to read particular types of questions

7. Receiving and storing test materials

We will deliver test materials in the week beginning Monday 27 April, to school addresses taken from [Get Information about Schools \(GIAS\)](#) on Friday 6 March. You can update your school's details by signing in to GIAS, using [Department for Education \(DfE\) Sign-in](#).

The quantities of KS2 test materials, including any modified test orders and stationery materials, will be taken from the pupil registration and modified test orders data on the [NCA Portal](#) on Friday 6 March.

If you have not received your test materials by Friday 1 May, or if your order is incomplete, you should contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013.

7.1 Checking your test papers and stationery delivery

We recommend the headteacher or delegated member of staff, and at least one other member of school staff, check your delivery against the delivery note on receipt. Schools should check their delivery to ensure:

- the delivery is for your school
- the school's details are correct
- the boxes and test packs are sealed and undamaged

You should contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 if any boxes or test packs are unsealed or damaged on arrival. We may ask you to send a photograph of any damaged boxes or test packs.

Do not open the test packs but use the delivery note, which you will find at the top of one of the boxes, to confirm:

- the number and type of test packs received match the delivery note

- you have all the stationery items, including script return bags, labels and [returning test scripts guidance](#)

When you have finished your checks, store all materials securely, in a locked cupboard. Keep your annotated copy of the delivery note somewhere accessible, in the event you receive a [monitoring visit](#).

7.2 Security of test materials

Headteachers must ensure the integrity, security and confidentiality of the KS2 test materials are maintained from the point they arrive in school or are downloaded from the NCA Portal until Friday 22 May. This is the school day after a KS2 test can be administered to pupils with an approved timetable variation application.

Headteachers should ensure teachers and all other staff who may handle the materials understand their sensitivity.

Schools must store KS2 test materials securely in a locked cupboard. The headteacher should allocate responsibility for overseeing the secure storage of test materials to a member of staff not directly involved with the administration of the tests. As part of that responsibility, this member of staff should keep a log of requests for access to the materials, so they are able to give an accurate account of everyone with access to the test materials from the point they arrive in school or are downloaded from the NCA Portal until Friday 22 May and all test scripts have been collected for marking.

Teachers and test administrators must not discuss the content of the test papers with anyone and must ensure content from the tests materials is not used to prepare pupils taking the tests. Specific content that could compromise a test must not be discussed, including sharing with colleagues, online, on internal digital channels or on social media.

You must not open test packs before the scheduled [test timetable](#). You must only open them when the test is going to be administered for the first time, unless you have an approved early opening application.

All test materials must be stored securely in a locked cupboard. If any test papers from an opened pack are unused, they must be stored securely and can be used for any subsequent administration of the test, such as an approved [timetable variation](#).

KS2 test materials include:

- test papers
- reading booklets
- answer booklets
- stationery items, including test administration instructions, script return bags and labels

Practical advice for keeping materials secure

For all KS2 test materials, schools should:

- put the unopened materials back into the original delivery box
- store test materials in a room where no IT equipment is kept, as this equipment is often targeted during burglaries
- limit access to the location of the materials
- check the boxes regularly to ensure they have not been tampered with
- plan a reporting procedure in the event of a problem – for example, if keys are lost or stolen
- check individual test packs have not been opened before the test date, unless the school has an approved early opening application
- where test materials are being adapted using an approved early opening application, reseal the original test pack while making the adaptations and keep all test materials secure, then return the adapted test materials to the test pack and reseal it again

Split-site schools

If test materials need to be sent to a location away from the main school site before administration, the headteacher must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to maintain the integrity, security and confidentiality of test content.

For transporting the test materials to and from a different site on a scheduled test day or with an approved timetable variation, schools can follow the guidance on [administering a test at an alternative location](#).

Schools used as a polling station or to host public events

If your school is used as a polling station or to host a public event, you should:

- ensure test materials are secure and kept away from the polling station area and visitors

- check the materials before the opening and after the closing of the polling station or public event

If you suspect or experience a security breach, you must report the incident immediately to the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013.

8. Preparing to administer the tests

8.1 Pupil registration

You should have [registered](#) and confirmed all pupils who are at the end of KS2, using the 'Manage key stage 2 pupil registration' form within the 'Activities' section on the NCA Portal, by Friday 6 March.

However, it is important you update your school's data to reflect any pupils who have left or joined your school after the deadline. You can make amendments to the 'Manage key stage 2 pupil registration' form within the 'Activities' section on the [NCA Portal](#) until Thursday 14 May.

It is essential that you add any pupils who join the school after Friday 6 March to your pupil registration data on the NCA Portal, including those not taking some or all of the tests, such as pupils working below the standard.

8.2 Access arrangements

Test administrators should have a list of pupils requiring access arrangements and must follow the [KS2 access arrangements guidance](#).

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.

You should also consider explaining to parents and pupils what support is allowed in the tests.

8.3 Preparing test rooms

Schools should prepare the test rooms to ensure a quiet space is available to all pupils. If you support a pupil with an access arrangement which may disturb or aid other pupils, you should consider administering the tests to them in a separate room.

To prepare any rooms where tests will take place, you should:

- remove or cover any displays or materials that could help pupils, including removing items that could help in the spelling test
- ensure seating arrangements will allow all pupils to work quietly and independently
- ensure pupils will not be able to view each other's test papers
- ensure a clock is visible to pupils, to help them pace themselves

Test administrators should ensure the full school name and DfE number are known and clearly visible to pupils at the front of the test room. Pupils should copy this onto their answer booklet or test paper and any additional paper they use. This information will ensure accurate tracking of test scripts during the marking process. Test administrators should also ensure the start and finish times of the tests are known and visible to pupils.

Test administrators are allowed to give reminders of the time remaining in a test – for example, saying “You are now halfway through the amount of time allowed in the test” or “You now have 5 minutes left in this test”.

8.4 Equipment

A list of specific equipment needed for each test is detailed in sections 10 to 13.

Rubbers are allowed, but you should encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out.

Pupils must use a dark pencil or a blue or black pen to provide their answers.

Pupils must not write their answers using highlighter pens, erasable pens, glitter pens, gel pens or other coloured pens. The ink from these pens does not show up when scanned for onscreen marking.

Pupils may highlight passages of text in any of the tests, provided this is normal classroom practice, but pupils must not write their answers with a highlighter pen.

Word processors, dictionaries and other reference material

If it is normal classroom practice, pupils may use word processors or other technical or electronic aids in the tests, provided the functionality does not give the pupil an advantage.

Bilingual word lists, electronic translators and electronic spell checkers can only be used as specified for each test, provided this is normal classroom practice.

Pupils must not use a dictionary or thesaurus during any of the tests.

Pupils must not have any items that may cause disturbances during the tests. You should collect all mobile phones and smart watches from pupils before administering the tests.

Additional paper

Pupils may use additional paper, if required.

Before the pupil's test script is sent for marking, ensure any additional paper they used to record their answers is:

- labelled with the pupil's name, school name and school DfE number
- securely attached to the pupil's test script at the end of the test

Squared paper

Mathematics test papers include space for working out, with gridlines included where these are useful to pupils. We discourage the use of additional squared paper, as pupils may lose marks if they make an error or omission when they transfer their working to the test paper.

However, if using squared paper is part of normal classroom practice, then it can be used as an access arrangement. Schools do not need to notify or receive approval

from STA for this.

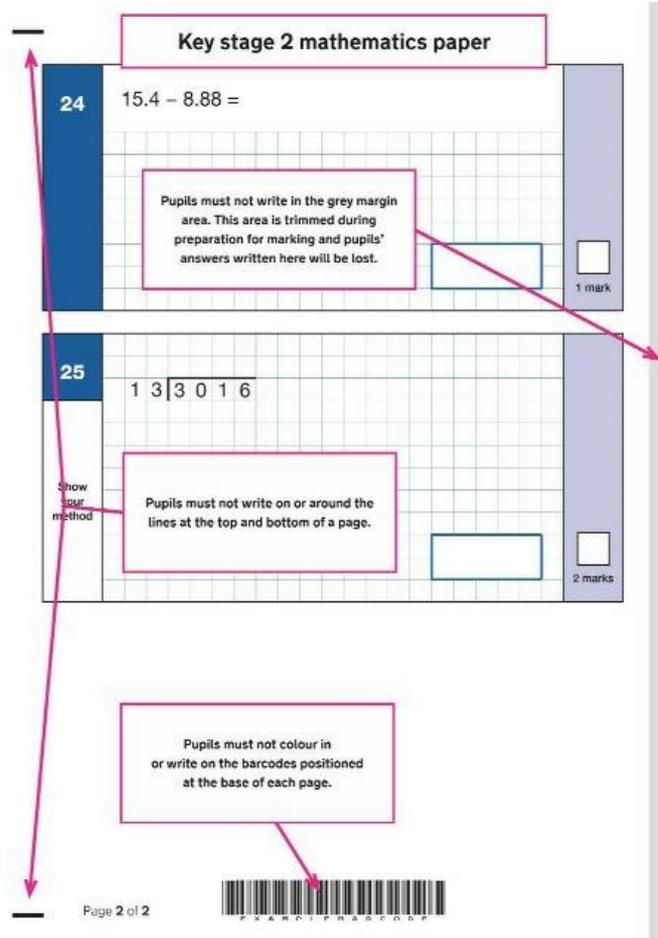
Before the pupil's test script is sent for marking, ensure the additional squared paper is:

- labelled with the pupil's name, school name and school DfE number
- securely attached to the pupil's test script at the end of the test

8.5 Ensuring pupils' test scripts can be marked on screen

To ensure the majority of KS2 test scripts can be scanned, and answers read and marked on screen, schools should ensure pupils:

- use a dark pencil or a blue or black pen to provide their answers
- pupils do not write their answers using highlighter pens, erasable pens, glitter pens, gel pens or other coloured pens, as the ink from these pens does not show up when scanned for onscreen marking
- cross out their incorrect answer, rather than rub it out, and write their new answer next to it – rubbed out answers may reappear during the scanning process, which could result in a pupil's answer being marked as incorrect
- fully rub out their original answer before recording their new answer, in the case of mathematics questions where drawing is required
- keep their test scripts in good condition and do not fold or crumple their answer booklets, as folded or crumpled scripts do not scan clearly
- write their answers and show their working out in the area provided – responses in the margins or the grey area will not be marked, as answer booklets will be cut and scanned for onscreen marking (see image below)
- do not colour in or write on the barcodes positioned at the base of each page in the answer booklets – this could hinder the scanning and marking process, as the barcodes ensure that each page of a test script is associated with the correct pupil



8.6 Administering a test at an alternative location

At the headteacher's discretion, the tests can be administered at an alternative location. This may include a pupil referral unit, alternative provision or the pupil's home, as long as the pupil is in a fit state.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring the integrity, security and confidentiality of the tests are maintained, including the transporting of test papers to and from the alternative location, and that the tests are administered according to this KS2 test administration guidance.

There is no requirement to make an application or notification to administer the tests at an alternative location.

On the day of the test:

1. Take out a copy of the test paper from the pack and immediately put it into a sealed, windowless envelope. On days where there are 2 tests scheduled, you can take a copy of each test paper to administer both on the day – for example, English grammar, punctuation and spelling Papers 1 and 2, or Mathematics

Papers 1 and 2.

2. Reseal the rest of the test papers in their original package and return them to their box, then reseal the box and return it to the secured cupboard until you are ready to administer the test to the rest of the cohort.
3. We recommend 2 test administrators transport the test paper in the envelope to the alternative location and administer the test to the pupil following the test administration guidance.
4. When the test has been administered, seal the completed test script immediately in a windowless envelope.
5. Take the sealed windowless envelope back to the school and add it to the other test scripts in the white script return bag before it is sealed and sent off for marking.

To administer a test on an alternative date, up to 5 school days later, you will need to submit a [timetable variation](#) application and wait for STA's approval before administering it.

8.7 Schools affected by disruption

In line with emergency planning guidance, schools' emergency plans should include contingency arrangements for possible disruption to assessments. This may include alternative venues or arrangements for assessments as appropriate. Schools are encouraged to review contingency plans well in advance of assessments.

Where school facilities are affected by disruption, such as fire, flood or building closures due to reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC), you may wish to make use of the flexibilities within the assessment arrangements. These include:

- applying for a [timetable variation](#) for one or more pupils
- administering the test to 2 or more groups of pupils at different times on the scheduled day, rather than the whole cohort at the same time (see [2026 key stage 2 tests](#))
- [administering a test at an alternative location](#)

Where schools have concerns that they may still be unable to administer a test or assessment, they should contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or at assessments@education.gov.uk.

9. Administering the tests

9.1 At the start of a test

A member of staff should collect the test packs from your secure storage. This should be recorded on a log. If more than one test paper is administered on the same day, you should only collect packs for a particular test when you are ready to administer it.

You should open the test packs in front of the pupils in the room where they are administered, immediately before the administration of the test. You should do this with another member of staff present. If tests are administered in multiple rooms, schools should take sealed packs to each room, then open them in front of the children.

You should take care to ensure you open the correct test packs. If an incorrect test pack is opened, you must reseal the pack immediately and call the national curriculum assessments helpline to advise STA on 0300 303 3013.

You must ensure that nothing you say or do during the tests could be interpreted as giving pupils an advantage – for example, indicating that an answer is correct or incorrect, or suggesting the pupil look at an answer again.

If it is normal classroom practice for a pupil to read questions or their answers aloud, you should consider administering the test to the pupil in a separate room, to support them and avoid distractions for other pupils. You should consider having 2 test administrators present in the room, to help avoid any allegations of maladministration. If required, you could also consider the use of a start time variation or a [timetable variation](#).

9.2 Additional test materials and stationery

We will check for changes to the pupil registration data and modified test orders made after Friday 6 March. If required, we will dispatch additional test materials daily

from Monday 27 April up to the day of each test.

In the event additional KS2 test materials are required on the day of a test, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 as soon as possible to discuss options including a same-day delivery.

If your school does not have enough test papers to administer a test, you can photocopy up to 9 test papers after opening the test packs on the day of the test, without seeking permission from STA. When photocopying the papers, ensure no pages are omitted or duplicated. We are unable to make allowances for pupils where schools have incorrectly modified test papers.

If your school does not wish to take this step, or requires more than 9 test papers, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013.

Schools can order additional stationery items in the 'Activities' tab on the [NCA Portal](#) from Friday 24 April until Tuesday 9 June.

Additional stationery, such as test administration instructions, script return bags and labels, is only available to order on the [NCA Portal](#).

Please do not contact the national curriculum assessments helpline to request additional stationery, as our helpline colleagues will be unable to process this for you.

9.3 Early opening of test packs

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.

You can open test packs up to one hour before the start of a test, without approval, if:

- you need to adapt a test paper to meet the needs of individual pupils
- you need to prepare equipment
- a translator or signer is making preparations

- a written translation is required for a mathematics test

If you need to open test packs more than one hour early to make adaptations, the school should have applied for early opening using the 'Submit access arrangements applications' form within the 'Test administration' tab on the NCA Portal by Friday 6 March.

You can only open test packs more than one hour before you are due to administer a test if you have an approved application for early opening.

9.4 Absence during the test period

If a pupil is absent and does not return within 5 school days of the scheduled test date, or an application for a timetable variation is rejected, you should record the pupil as 'A' (absent) on the online test attendance register on the [NCA Portal](#).

Pupils who do not take all test papers for a subject will receive a raw score for the papers they have taken, but they may not receive a scaled score for the subject overall on return of results. This applies to the English grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics tests.

In the scenario where a pupil is absent for one of the test papers in these subjects, STA will provide an overall outcome for the pupil in the subject as 'At standard' (AS) only where all of the following criteria apply:

1. The pupil was unable to take that paper at any point during the test timetable variation window.
2. The pupil completes one or all the remaining test papers for the subject.
3. The pupil achieves enough raw marks to meet the expected standard for that subject.

If the pupil does not achieve enough raw marks to meet the expected standard, STA will record the pupil's overall outcome in the subject as 'Absent'.

DfE will reflect this information in the published performance data.

10. Test administration on Monday 11 May

10.1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1: questions

Format

'Paper 1: questions' is a combined question and answer booklet.

Pupils will have 45 minutes to answer the questions. The paper is worth 50 marks in total.

Equipment

Each pupil will need a dark pencil or a blue or black pen.

Rubbers are allowed, but please encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out.

Pupils may use highlighter pens if this is normal classroom practice.

Pupils are not allowed:

- a dictionary or thesaurus
- electronic spell checkers
- bilingual word lists or electronic translators

Assistance

There is no specific hearing impairment guidance for this test but, if signing, be careful to ensure you do not convey information that would give pupils an advantage.

The modified test packs include guidance for administering the test to pupils with a visual impairment.

You can also refer to the [notes for readers in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests](#), which give examples of how to read particular types of questions.

If a pupil requests it, you may read a question to them on a one-to-one basis.

If a pupil asks a question about test content, you may explain or rephrase a question, provided you do not give away subject-specific information – for example, if a question asks to “insert a pair of commas”, you may explain ‘insert’ but not ‘commas’.

The following examples illustrate how to deal with some common situations:

Question: “I do not understand the question.”

Answer: “Read the question again and pay attention to words that tell you what to do.”

Question: “What does ‘adverb’ mean?”

Answer: “I cannot tell you, but think hard and try to remember. We can talk about it after the test.”

You must not explain any subject-specific terminology. If any other word in a question is unfamiliar to pupils, you may explain it or show them objects or pictures to help them understand.

This example is taken from the 2016 sample KS2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling ‘Paper 1: questions’:

Question 11: Circle all the pronouns in the sentence below.

They bought new jumpers for themselves and a warm scarf for Dad.

In this example, you may explain words to help the pupil understand the context and instructions, such as ‘circle’, ‘jumpers’, ‘scarf’, or explain that ‘Dad’ is a person’s name. You must not explain any subject-specific vocabulary that might give the pupil an advantage, such as ‘pronouns’. You must not identify people’s names in questions asking which word requires a capital letter or why a capital letter is needed.

10.2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling

Paper 2: spelling

Format

'Paper 2: spelling' includes a test transcript and an answer booklet. The test administrator should read the test transcript, and the pupil should write 20 spellings in the answer booklet.

Pupils will have approximately 15 minutes to complete the test, but it is not strictly timed. The paper is worth 20 marks in total.

Equipment

Each pupil will need a dark pencil or a blue or black pen.

Rubbers are allowed, but please encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out.

Pupils may use highlighter pens if this is normal classroom practice.

Pupils are not allowed:

- a dictionary or thesaurus
- electronic spell checkers
- bilingual word lists or electronic translators

Assistance

There is no specific hearing impairment guidance for this test but, if signing, be careful to ensure you do not convey information that could give pupils an advantage. If you present this paper through sign language, you must not use fingerspelling.

The modified test packs include guidance for administering the test to pupils with a visual impairment.

You should take care not to overemphasise spelling when reading out the words that pupils need to spell.

Pupils should not require any assistance during the administration of this paper.

11. Test administration on Tuesday 12 May

11.1 English reading

Format

This test consists of a reading answer booklet and a separate reading booklet. All pupils must receive an unused reading booklet. Do not reuse reading booklets if you administer the test to groups of pupils at different times.

Pupils will have one hour to read the 3 texts in the reading booklet and complete the questions at their own pace. They can approach the test as they choose – for example, working through one text and answering the questions before moving on to the next. The paper is worth 50 marks in total.

Equipment

Each pupil will need a dark pencil or a blue or black pen.

Rubbers are allowed, but please encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out.

If it is normal classroom practice, pupils may use:

- monolingual English electronic spell checkers, provided they do not give definitions of words
- highlighter pens

Pupils must not use a dictionary or thesaurus.

You may give pupils additional lined paper if they request it. However, pupils should be encouraged to use the extra space in the answer booklet before using additional paper. The answer space provided in the answer booklet should be sufficient for most pupils and gives a guide to the length of answer expected for each question.

Assistance

There is no specific hearing impairment guidance for this test but, if signing, be careful to ensure you do not convey information that would give pupils an advantage.

The modified test packs include guidance for administering the test to pupils with a visual impairment.

As the English reading test is assessing reading skills, you must not read it to individuals or to a group, except for the general instructions. However, you may read

and rephrase, if necessary, the information provided in the test instructions on page 3 of the reading answer booklet to ensure all pupils understand them. No other part of the reading answer booklet or reading booklet may be read to pupils or rephrased.

If a pupil asks a question about test content, you must not explain the meaning of any words or expressions.

The following example illustrates how to deal with a common situation:

Question: “I do not understand the question.”

Answer: “Read the question again and pay attention to words that tell you what to do.”

12. Test administration on Wednesday 13 May

12.1 Mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic

Format

Paper 1 assesses arithmetic.

Pupils will have 30 minutes to answer the questions. The paper is worth 40 marks in total.

Equipment

Each pupil will need:

- a dark pencil or a blue or black pen
- a ruler, showing centimetres and millimetres

Rubbers are allowed, but please encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out.

Pupils may use highlighter pens if this is normal classroom practice.

Pupils are not allowed:

- calculators
- squared paper, unless used as an access arrangement (see [Equipment](#))
- tracing paper
- other mathematical equipment, such as angle measurers or mirrors

Assistance

There is no specific hearing impairment guidance for this test, but be careful if signing numbers, mathematical symbols and words. You must ensure you do not convey information that would give pupils an advantage.

The modified test packs include guidance for administering the test to pupils with a visual impairment.

If a pupil requests it, you may read a question to them on a one-to-one basis.

If reading to a pupil, you can read words and numbers but not mathematical symbols. This is to ensure pupils are not given an advantage by having the function inadvertently explained by reading its name.

The following example illustrates how to deal with a common situation:

Question: “Do I need to multiply when I calculate 95% of 240?”

Answer: “I cannot tell you, but think hard and try to remember. We can talk about it after the test.”

12.2 Mathematics Paper 2: reasoning

Format

Paper 2 assesses reasoning.

Pupils will have 40 minutes to answer the questions. The paper is worth 35 marks in total.

Equipment

Each pupil will need:

- a dark pencil or a blue or black pen
- a sharp, dark pencil for mathematical drawing
- a ruler, showing centimetres and millimetres
- an angle measurer or protractor
- a mirror

Rubbers are allowed, but please encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out.

If it is normal classroom practice, pupils may use:

- monolingual English electronic spell checkers
- bilingual word lists
- bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators, provided they only give word-for-word translations
- highlighter pens

Pupils are not allowed:

- calculators
- squared paper, unless used as an access arrangement (see [Equipment](#))
- tracing paper

Assistance

For pupils with a hearing impairment, be careful if signing numbers, mathematical symbols and words. The standard test packs include guidance on any specific words that should be signed in a particular way.

The modified test packs include guidance for administering the test to pupils with a visual impairment.

If a pupil requests it, you may read a question to them on a one-to-one basis.

If reading to a pupil, you can read words and numbers but not mathematical symbols. This is to ensure pupils are not given an advantage by having the function inadvertently explained by reading its name.

At a pupil's request, you may point to parts of the test paper such as charts, diagrams, statements and equations, but you must not explain the information or help the pupil by interpreting it.

You must not explain any subject-specific terminology. If any context or words related to a question are unfamiliar to a pupil, you may provide explanations or show the pupil related objects or pictures to help them understand.

The following examples illustrate how to deal with some common situations:

Question: "What does 'quadrilateral' or '>' or '<' mean?"

Answer: "I cannot tell you, but think hard and try to remember. We can talk about it after the test."

Question: "What is '0.6'?"

Answer: "That is nought point six."

13. Test administration on Thursday 14 May

13.1 Mathematics Paper 3: reasoning

Format

Paper 3 assesses reasoning.

Pupils will have 40 minutes to answer the questions. The paper is worth 35 marks in total.

Equipment

Each pupil will need:

- a dark pencil or a blue or black pen

- a sharp, dark pencil for mathematical drawing
- a ruler, showing centimetres and millimetres
- an angle measurer or protractor
- a mirror

Rubbers are allowed, but please encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out.

If it is normal classroom practice, pupils may use:

- monolingual English electronic spell checkers
- bilingual word lists
- bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators, provided they only give word-for-word translations
- highlighter pens

Pupils are not allowed:

- calculators
- squared paper, unless used as an access arrangement (see [Equipment](#))
- tracing paper

Assistance

For pupils with a hearing impairment, be careful if signing numbers, mathematical symbols and words. The standard test packs include guidance on any specific words that should be signed in a particular way.

The modified test packs include guidance for administering the test to pupils with a visual impairment.

If a pupil requests it, you may read a question to them on a one-to-one basis.

If reading to a pupil, you can read words and numbers but not mathematical symbols. This is to ensure pupils are not given an advantage by having the function inadvertently explained by reading its name.

At a pupil's request, you may point to parts of the test paper such as charts, diagrams, statements and equations, but you must not explain the information or help the pupil by interpreting it.

You must not explain any subject-specific terminology. If any context or words related to a question are unfamiliar to a pupil, you may provide explanations or show the pupil related objects or pictures to help them understand.

The following example illustrates how to deal with some common situations:

Question: “What does ‘quadrilateral’ or ‘>’ or ‘<’ mean?”

Answer: “I cannot tell you, but think hard and try to remember. We can talk about it after the test.”

Question: “What is ‘0.6’?”

Answer: “That is nought point six.”

14. Problems or queries during test administration

14.1 Dealing with issues during the tests

It is impossible to plan for every scenario. Whatever action is taken, pupil safety and wellbeing must always be your first consideration. This section provides guidance on what to do in certain situations. If any unexpected situations occur during a test, you should brief your headteacher on how the incident was dealt with once the test is over.

If a fire alarm goes off

Stop the test and note the time. Evacuate the room following school procedures. Pupils should be supervised at all times to ensure they do not have any opportunity to discuss test content. The test papers should be left in the test room.

Once it is safe, pupils may continue with the test using the correct amount of remaining time. If pupils do talk to each other about test content, you must call the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 for advice before you

continue.

If a pupil is unwell

If you have reason to believe a pupil is feeling unwell or is not in a fit state to take a test, you should not administer the test to the pupil. The school could administer the test later in the day, when the pupil is feeling better, or apply for a timetable variation to administer the test on a different day.

If a pupil becomes unwell during a test, stop the test for the individual pupil and note the time. After a rest break, if the pupil is well enough, you should give them the correct amount of remaining time to continue with the test. The pupil must complete the test on the same day. Schools must supervise pupils and keep them under test conditions during a rest break and there must be no opportunity to discuss test content with pupils who have taken the test. If the pupil is too ill to continue the test, you must send the partially completed test script for marking. If the pupil leaves the school during their rest break, they will have left test conditions and must not be allowed to continue the test.

If the test script is spoiled, give the pupil a new one to continue with the remaining questions. After the pupil has completed the test and is still under test conditions, a member of staff should make a transcript by copying the answers from the spoiled test script onto the new test paper. If the test script is unreadable, ask the pupil for their answers at the end of the test and scribe them in a different colour, but not red, on the new test paper. Do not send the spoiled test script for marking, but ensure it is kept secure and treated as confidential until Friday 22 May.

Schools must notify STA about the use of a transcribe or scribe in the tests by completing the 'Manage attendance register and notification of aid' forms, available in the 'Activities' tab on the [NCA Portal](#).

If other pupils have been disturbed, you may stop the test for all the pupils in the room. Make a note of the time to ensure pupils receive the correct amount of remaining time to complete the test. If necessary, move the pupils to another room.

If a pupil needs to leave the test room

Pupils taking the tests must be supervised at all times. If a pupil needs to leave the test room, a test administrator must accompany them.

When deciding on the number of test administrators needed to maintain adequate supervision during a test, you should consider the possibility that at least one test administrator might need to leave the room with a pupil.

You should also take into consideration that test administrators who administer tests

on their own are more vulnerable to allegations of maladministration, as they do not have another adult to verify the test administration procedures.

If a pupil is found using a mobile phone or smart watch

Pupils must not have any items that may cause disturbances during the tests. You should collect all mobile phones and smart watches from pupils before the tests.

If a pupil is found using a mobile phone, smart watch or similar device, you should remove it from the pupil. After the test, follow the school's usual behaviour and disciplinary procedures.

If a pupil is cheating

If you identify a pupil cheating, or if a pupil has gained an advantage from using a mobile phone, smart watch or similar device, you should record the details, including:

- the pupil's name
- the name of the test
- any specific questions in which the pupil was advantaged by cheating

If appropriate, move the pupil to another location for the remainder of the test.

If you believe the pupil has gained an advantage as a result of cheating, notify STA using the 'Notification of pupil cheating' form, which will be available within the 'Incidents' tab on the [NCA Portal](#).

By completing the form, the headteacher agrees for STA to either:

- remove marks for the specific questions where the pupil has gained an advantage
- annul the pupil's result in that test

The pupil's test script must be collated with the other pupils' test scripts. Do not enclose any information about the incident when sending the test scripts for marking.

You do not need to notify STA if the pupil gained no advantage from their actions. You should follow your school's usual behaviour policy in dealing with such incidents.

To report any allegations of pupils cheating after Friday 22 May, when the 'Notification of pupil cheating' form on the NCA Portal is closed, please email STA's Maladministration team at STA.maladministration@education.gov.uk or call the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013.

If a pupil is disruptive

If a pupil's behaviour is disturbing other pupils, stop the test, note the time and remove the pupil from the test room. Decide whether the disruptive pupil should continue the test in a separate room. If they do not complete the remainder of the test, you must send the partially completed test script for marking.

Give the other pupils a few moments to refocus and then continue the test with the correct amount of remaining time.

If test papers are incorrectly collated or the print is illegible

Stop the test for the affected pupils, making a note of the time, and tell them you will organise replacement papers. The pupils must not discuss test content while the replacement papers are being arranged. Once the replacements are provided, give the affected pupils the correct amount of remaining time to complete the remainder of the test. Pupils must not be allowed to start the test from the beginning.

Schools receive additional copies of each test paper. If there are insufficient additional copies, schools can photocopy up to 9 test papers without seeking permission from STA. If the school does not wish to take this step, or requires more than 9 test papers, it should contact the national curriculum assessments helpline for advice on 0300 303 3013.

At the end of the test, attach the replacement test paper to the original incorrect paper and inform the headteacher of the action you took. You should return the test scripts in the same clear bag as all the other test scripts for marking.

When photocopying papers or making any adaptations to photocopied test papers to meet a pupil's specific needs, ensure that no pages are omitted or duplicated. STA is unable to compensate or give special consideration where schools have incorrectly photocopied or adapted test papers.

If a pupil asks for additional paper

The test papers and answer booklets have been designed so that most pupils will have enough room to record their answers. You may give pupils additional paper if they need more space for their answers.

Before the pupil's test script is sent for marking, ensure any additional paper they used to record their answers are:

- labelled with the pupil's name, school name and school DfE number
- securely attached to the pupil's test script at the end of the test

You should return the test scripts in the same clear bag as all other test scripts for marking.

If a test was administered on the wrong day

If a test was incorrectly administered before the scheduled test date, you must keep the pupils under test conditions and immediately contact the national curriculum assessments helpline for advice on 0300 303 3013.

14.2 Transcribing test scripts

If a marker would find it difficult to read a pupil's writing, you can transcribe all or part of the pupil's test script. Test administrators should know which pupils will likely need a transcript before administering the tests.

When only part of the test paper needs transcribing, write alongside the pupil's answers in a different coloured pen, but not red, and avoid writing directly on the pupil's work.

If making extensive or full transcripts, complete this on a new test paper and return the pupil's original test script with the transcript securely attached.

You must always send the pupil's original test script for marking along with the transcript, unless the original has been spoiled.

Return all transcribed test papers in the same clear bag as all the other test scripts for marking.

Keep the pupil under test conditions until the transcript is complete. Test administrators must follow the guidance outlined in the 'Transcribes' section of the [KS2 access arrangements guidance](#). If the marker can read the pupil's writing, they will mark the original work.

Schools must notify STA about the use of a transcribe in the tests by completing the 'Manage attendance register and notification of aid' form, available in the 'Activities' tab on the [NCA Portal](#).

Braille test scripts must not be transcribed in full onto a separate test paper.

STA will make appropriate marking arrangements.

15. After the tests

15.1 Packing and sending tests scripts for marking

Headteachers are responsible for making sure every participating pupil's completed test script is accounted for and dispatched for marking. Test scripts must be packaged and available for collection at the earliest opportunity, considering further test scripts from approved timetable variations may still need to be added and returned alongside the test scripts from the scheduled day.

Where a pupil has been supported by a scribe or transcribe, or has used a word processor or other technical or electronic aid to provide their answers on additional paper or a second test script, before the pupil's test script is sent for marking, ensure they are:

- labelled with the pupil's name, school name and school DfE number
- securely attached to the pupil's test script at the end of the test

You should return the test scripts in the same clear bag as all the other test scripts for marking.

If you administered test papers from a previous year to a pupil for any reason, you must not send these papers for marking.

All completed KS2 test scripts will be collected by Parcelforce. Schools must ensure that packages are given only to Parcelforce and are not returned by any other means.

Each school will initially have 2 collections on alternating days during test week, based on their DfE number. Parcelforce will then revisit any school with remaining packages on Friday 15 May. We will arrange additional collections throughout the

week commencing Monday 18 May for schools with approved timetable variations.

You can find more information about this, and about how to complete attendance registers and pack standard and modified test scripts, in the [returning test scripts guidance](#).

15.2 Special consideration

If a pupil takes the tests and the school determines the pupil has been affected by extremely distressing circumstances during test week or the weeks immediately before, the school can apply for [special consideration](#) for the pupil.

Special consideration is designed to allow schools to highlight instances where pupils' KS2 test results may be affected by traumatic circumstances at the time of the tests. It is intended to cover a narrow range of circumstances and is for exceptional cases only.

Special consideration does not benefit the pupil and only affects DfE's calculations for the primary school performance measures. The pupil's individual test result remains unchanged.

Headteachers have a responsibility to ensure that pupils only take the KS2 tests if they:

- are in a fit physical and mental state
- are working at the standard of the tests
- have completed the full KS2 programme of study

Schools can submit applications using the 'Special consideration application' form within the 'Activities tab' on the [NCA Portal](#) from Thursday 14 May.

15.3 The headteacher's declaration form

Once all attendance registers have been submitted and after all test scripts have been collected for marking, headteachers must complete and submit the KS2 HDF as detailed in Section 5 (4) of [The Education \(National Curriculum\) \(Key Stage 2 Assessment Arrangements\) \(England\) Order 2003](#).

The HDF confirms you have either administered the tests according to the published guidance, or you have reported any issues to STA. If there were issues, you should only complete the form once you have made all the relevant notifications.

The HDF will be available within the 'Activities tab' on the [NCA Portal](#) from Thursday 14 May and must be submitted by 5pm on Friday 29 May.

If you or a delegated member of staff cannot complete the HDF, need help completing it, or have made any errors when completing it, you should contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or at assessments@education.gov.uk.

You cannot amend the HDF after submission.

Failure to complete the HDF by the deadline may result in a maladministration investigation.

15.4 Treatment of single test annulments

Where a pupil's result for a single test paper in either English grammar, punctuation and spelling or mathematics is annulled following a maladministration investigation, STA will record the pupil's overall outcome in the relevant subject as 'At standard' (AS) if the pupil achieves enough raw marks on the non-annulled test papers to meet the expected standard. The outcome for the individual test paper that was annulled will remain as 'Q'.

This information will be reflected in the performance data published by DfE.

16. Help and support

General enquiries

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

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](#).

Modified tests

You can find full details of which modified tests are available in the '2026 national curriculum tests' section (paragraph 5.5) of the [KS2 ARA](#).

Schools can discuss the suitability and order requirements of braille and MLP versions of the KS2 tests by calling the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or emailing MTH@iwanttoconnect.co.uk.

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

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