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Guidance

Reception baseline assessment: validity framework

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About this validity framework

This validity framework is an appendix to the [reception baseline assessment \(RBA\) handbook](#) and provides validity evidence gathered throughout every stage of the development of the 2025 RBA onwards.

This publication is for assessment developers and others with an interest in assessment. It has been produced to help those with an interest in assessment to understand the validity argument that supports the RBA.

Claim 1: The assessment is representative of a range of literacy, communication and language (LCL) and mathematics skills and knowledge appropriate to the age and development of children at the start of reception

1.1 The assessable areas of LCL and mathematics are clearly defined as a content domain

- The content domains are defined in section 4 of the [RBA framework](#).
- The content domains are linked to the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS). Due to the length and nature of the reception baseline, however, not all areas of the EYFS are assessed. The content domains also link to the English and mathematics key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2) curricula.
- The content domains were initially developed by assessment researchers from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in consultation with the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) and published in 2019. They were then updated by STA's RBA assessment development researchers (TDRs) to reflect developments to the assessment.
- The revised content domains have been developed in consultation with education specialists and an assessment review group, and have been reviewed by teacher panels and independent curriculum advisors. The updated RBA framework was published in 2025.

1.2 The areas of the content domain are an accurate reflection of the range of skills and knowledge of children of this age and stage of development

The content domain is linked to the learning and development requirements of the EYFS, focusing on aspects of LCL and mathematics seen in reception classes at the start of the year.

The RBA content domain samples from the range of elements of early learning, as set out in the EYFS documentation [Development Matters](#). This includes statements that indicate typical development for children aged from 22 months through to the early learning goals that are used to assess pupils at the end of the reception year.

It is necessary for the assessment to be suitable for the full range of attainment that can be seen with this age group. This is to ensure that it reflects the variety of experience that different pupils will bring with them to reception. In order to avoid a ceiling effect, where pupils cannot demonstrate their actual attainment because the questions being presented are too easy, it is important to include more challenging questions. However, as it is not the expectation that all pupils will be able to successfully answer all questions, the assessment is routed. This means that pupils should not be presented with a significant number of questions that are too difficult for them.

The content domain has evolved during the assessment development process to take account of feedback and analysis at various stages. Early development work included expert review panels that considered what skills and knowledge should be assessed in order to develop appropriate content domains for the RBA.

STA TDRs and assessment researchers also reviewed existing research into which aspects of mathematics and LCL have been shown to be related to later attainment to ensure that the most suitable content of the EYFS was sampled in the assessment and reflected in the content domains.

1.3 The cognitive domain provides an accurate reflection of the scope of learning at the start of reception

The following list explains how the cognitive domain was developed to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the intended scope of learning at the start of reception:

- The cognitive domains are defined in section 5 of the [RBA framework](#).
- Before developing the cognitive domains, STA assessment researchers reviewed the domains for the KS1 and KS2 national curriculum assessments as defined in the [national curriculum assessment frameworks](#). The CRAS framework^[footnote 1], itself a development of earlier theoretical models, was a key influence in the development of these cognitive domains. CRAS stands for each of the strands in the original framework – complexity, resources, abstractness and strategy, with strategy being split into response strategy and task strategy in a 2007 iteration of the framework^[footnote 2]. An evaluation of the specific demands on pupils of the RBA using this framework identified key overarching characteristics which were incorporated into the RBA cognitive domains.
- Curriculum experts and panels of teachers reviewed the assessment framework, including the cognitive domains, during its development. In addition, pairs of TDRs independently classified items against the cognitive domains and compared their classifications.
- Each question in the assessment has been rated against the strands of the cognitive domains to provide an indication of the cognitive demand presented by each item. This information was carefully considered at the construction stage to ensure that the final assessment is appropriate to the level of children's knowledge acquisition and skill at the start of reception.

1.4 Questions have been rigorously reviewed for their validity by a range of appropriate stakeholders

All items in the RBA are developed according to our rigorous assessment development process, which was designed to ensure a range of stakeholders review and validate items throughout development. These stages are:

1. Expert review 1 and 2: Panel membership is as representative as possible in terms of protected characteristics as well as school type and location. A wide range of stakeholders review the items to confirm they are appropriate. This stakeholder group includes teachers, subject experts, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) experts, inclusion experts, equity experts, and local authority staff. TDRs collate the feedback and decide on the amendments to the items in a resolution meeting with STA staff and curriculum advisors.
2. Item finalisation after trialling: There are two types of trial. An item validation trial (IVT) followed by a technical pre-test (TPT). Trials for the RBA take place in the

autumn term. TDRs and psychometricians review items after each trial using the evidence of how the item performed. TDRs can recommend changes to items based on this evidence. Items that are changed may be considered ready to be included in a TPT, however no changes to items are allowed following that TPT. If the change is more significant, TDRs may decide that they need to review the item further.

3. Expert review 3: STA holds a final expert review after constructing the live assessment. At this meeting, STA asks stakeholders to review the completed assessment. If the panel identifies a problem with any items, STA may replace these items.

Not every item requires expert review 1 or an IVT, but all items are taken through expert review 2 and TPT.

STA keeps the evidence relating to the review and validation of individual items.

1.5 Questions and responses from trialling have been suitably interrogated to ensure only the desired construct is being assessed (and that construct irrelevant variance is minimised)

Following each trial, an item finalisation meeting takes place involving TDRs and psychometricians. The purpose of the meeting is to review all available evidence and make decisions on the most appropriate next stage for each item. Examples of the evidence that is reviewed includes:

- classical analysis and item response theory (IRT) analysis of the performance of items, including difficulty and discrimination
- differential item functioning (DIF) analysis, by gender for the IVT and by gender and English as an additional language (EAL) for the TPT
- for items that are automatically marked in the system, timing and interaction data are analysed to understand how pupils are interacting with questions
- for selected items that are marked by the practitioner, reviews of pupils' responses are collected and reviewed

After the IVT, where applicable, the following outcomes are available for each item:

- Proceed to expert review 2 stage unamended, since there is sufficient evidence

that the question is performing as intended.

- Proceed to expert review 2 stage with amendments since, although there is some evidence that the item is not performing as intended, the issue has been identified and corrected.
- Revert to expert review 1 stage with amendments since the issues identified are considered major and the item will need to be included in an additional IVT.
- Archive the item, as major issues have been identified that cannot be corrected.

After the TPT, the following outcomes are available for each item:

- Item is available for inclusion in a live assessment, since the evidence shows it is performing as intended.
- Item requires minor amendments and will need to be re-trialled before inclusion in a live assessment.
- Item is archived, as a major issue has been identified that cannot be corrected.

Any item that is determined to be available for inclusion in a live assessment has therefore demonstrated that it assesses the appropriate construct.

1.6 The final assessment provides sufficient coverage of the content domain (whilst meeting the requirements within the assessment framework)

The content domains outlined in the [RBA framework](#) constitute the entirety of the assessment. As part of the item selection process, STA looked at the balance between the assessment components (LCL and mathematics) and also the balance across and between the content domains.

Proportions of the different content domains were also compared with the proportions outlined in the KS1 and KS2 assessment frameworks.

Another consideration when selecting the questions was the balance of the demands on practitioner and child time, whilst collecting sufficient information to inform the measure. Therefore, interaction and timing data were considered in tandem with item information as part of the item selection process.

At assessment construction, the constraints and specifications listed in the RBA framework are taken into account, to ensure coverage in terms of item type, marks

awarded, and cognitive domains.

Teachers, subject experts, inclusion experts and independent curriculum advisors review the final assessments at expert review 3.

The TDR presents the assessments, along with the comments provided by experts and panels, at STA's project board 3 and the deputy director for assessment development and research signs off the assessment.

Claim 2: Assessment results provide a fair and accurate measure of pupil performance

2.1 Item-level data is used when the assessments are constructed to ensure only items that are functioning appropriately in terms of psychometric properties and qualitative information are included in the assessments

STA trials all assessment materials in a TPT, in which approximately 1,000 pupils from a stratified sample of schools see each item. This trial provides STA with enough item-level data to be confident it knows how an item will perform in a live assessment.

STA also reviews qualitative and quantitative data from the TPT and reports on each item's reliability and validity. TDRs remove from the pool of available items any items that do not function well or that had poor feedback from practitioners or pupils. These items may be amended and re-trialled in a future trial.

STA holds an assessment construction meeting to select the items for the live assessment form. The meeting participants consider:

- the item's facility (its level of difficulty)
- the ability of the item to differentiate between groups of varying ability

- the accessibility of the item
- the item type
- presentational aspects
- interaction and timing data
- question contexts
- coverage in terms of assessing the content and cognitive domains
- conflicts between what is assessed within components and across the assessment as a whole

At this stage, TDRs and psychometricians may swap items in or out of the assessment to improve its overall quality and suitability.

TDRs and psychometricians use a computer algorithm and item-level data to construct an assessment that maximises information across the ability range. The TDRs and psychometricians consider the construction information alongside the assessment specification constraints and their own expertise to make a final decision on assessment construction.

2.2 Qualitative data is used in assessment construction to ensure only items that are effectively measuring the desired construct are included in the assessment

STA collects qualitative data from a range of stakeholders throughout the assessment development cycle and uses the data to develop items that are fit for purpose. STA consults stakeholders through:

- three independent expert review panels:
 - teacher panel (at expert reviews 1, 2 and 3)
 - inclusion panel (at expert review 1)
 - assessment review group panel (at expert reviews 1, 2 and 3)
- practitioner and administrator questionnaires
- reviews of pupil responses
- observations of trialling

- curriculum expert reports

In the development of the RBA, additional qualitative data was collected through usability testing conducted by user researchers to support the development of the digital assessment service. Where feedback was elicited relating to item design, it was considered alongside the other qualitative data STA collects, as outlined above.

TDRs and psychometricians analyse qualitative data at each stage of the process in preparation for trials and live assessments alongside the quantitative data gathered. TDRs revisit quantitative and qualitative data throughout the development process to ensure they are making reliable judgements about the item and the construct it is measuring. STA considered the results of the analysis at key governance meetings:

- item finalisation
- resolution
- project board

Following the TPT, a range of qualitative data is collected and analysed, including:

- pre-trial qualitative data from previous expert reviews and trials
- reviews of pupil responses for a small number of questions
- practitioner questionnaires
- curriculum advisor report from resolution
- modified agency report comments

TDRs and psychometricians analyse this data alongside quantitative data before item finalisation. The TDR summarises the information and presents it at an item finalisation meeting.

The lead test development researcher (LTDR), the TDR, the lead psychometrician and either the head of psychometrics, head of assessment development or the deputy director for assessment development and research attend item finalisation meetings. The attendees consider the information the TDR presents and decide whether items are suitable for live assessment construction.

The TDRs and psychometricians select items for live assessment construction based on the outcomes of item finalisation. They use qualitative data to confirm that the items selected are suitable. The TDRs and psychometricians consider:

- each item's suitability in meeting the content domain it is intended to assess

- stakeholders' views on the demand and relevance of the item
- any perceived construct-irrelevant variance
- enemy checks – items that cannot appear in the assessment together
- context
- positioning and ordering of items
- unintentional sources of easiness or difficulty

A combination of stakeholders review the proposed live assessments at expert review 3. This group includes teachers, inclusion, curriculum, assessment and subject experts. At this meeting, panellists can challenge items and the TDRs may use the item data to either support or refute the challenge. If the panel deems an item unacceptable, the TDRs may swap it with a suitable item from the TPT.

The TDR collates the data from expert review 3 and presents it alongside the quantitative data for the live assessment at project board 3. The purpose of this meeting is to scrutinise and critically challenge the data to ensure the assessment meets the expectations published in the [RBA framework](#).

2.3 A range of valid and age-appropriate items are included that allow children of the full ability range to demonstrate their capabilities

The following list outlines examples of the evidence sources used to ensure that an appropriate range of items are included in the final assessment:

- STA assessment development researchers write the items that make up the assessments.
- Item writing guidance and a style guide are used to support the creation of items suitable for the RBA.
- A range of experts, including independent curriculum advisors, review the materials as part of expert review 1. STA asks panel members to consider whether the materials are appropriate for children at the start of reception.
- STA also invites practitioners who have administered the assessment to give feedback on the assessment materials in a questionnaire.
- The assessment is made up of a range of different cognitive domains, as

specified in the [RBA framework](#).

- TDRs and psychometricians consider the order of items in terms of difficulty and content domain as part of the assessment construction process. The TDRs and psychometricians make decisions on the difficulty of each item using information from both classical analysis and IRT. Items are selected to ensure there is information at both the lower end and at the higher end of the ability range. The data on individual items helps to make up a picture of the overall assessment characteristics.
- Within each component, there are several places where routing rules may be applied based on how a pupil responds to each question they are presented with. The routing rules have been developed by psychometricians and TDRs based on data from trialling. Questions that the pupil answers incorrectly and questions that are not presented to the pupil due to routing will score 0 marks. The system will automatically route the pupil through the assessment.

2.4 Social justice and anti-racist content is intentionally and explicitly integrated into assessment materials to ensure positive representation of minoritised populations and that pupils' experience is as positive as possible

The following demonstrates STA's approach to justice-orientated, anti-racist assessment practice:

- A range of social groups is represented within the test materials. TDRs work to actively promote positive representations, and disrupt negative stereotypes, of minoritised populations.
- The content of the materials over time does not privilege one particular cultural way of thinking or making sense of the world. TDRs take on board a range of views from different groups and experts to ensure that a white, Eurocentric view of the world is not the only view that pupils experience, as this may not reflect their own lived experience.
- When engaging with external stakeholders, at all stages of the test development cycle, we actively encourage a wide representation of different groups. We ensure to brief all stakeholders involved in the test development process on our approach to justice and anti-racism in assessment, empowering all to provide challenge.

- As assessment professionals, we encourage self-reflection and analysis of our own social identities and relationships to power, and how these identities and power relationships are enacted in our research and work.
- STA continues to use a range of equity, diversity and inclusion experts as part of the expert review panels embedded in the test development process. These stakeholders represent a range of groups regarding protected characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. They should continue to provide challenge where they see test content in development which does not meet best practice regarding equity and social justice.

2.5 Qualitative and quantitative data is used to ensure the assessment does not disproportionately advantage or disadvantage any subgroups

The following list demonstrates the ways STA ensures the RBA does not disproportionately advantage or disadvantage any subgroups:

- TDRs interpret a wide range of evidence to ensure the RBA does not disproportionately advantage or disadvantage the following subgroups: non-EAL and EAL, girls and boys, non-SEN and SEN, pupils with visual impairments and pupils who are deaf or hearing impaired.
- Expert panels of practitioners, educational experts and inclusion specialists review the items and consider whether they are suitable for inclusion in a trial. The inclusion panels consist of representation from hearing and visual impairment experts, a SEND representative, an EAL representative, equity advisors and an educational psychologist. Within this review process, panellists highlight any potential bias and suggest ways to remove it. The TDRs consider all the available evidence and present it in a resolution meeting to decide which recommendations to implement.
- Data relating to the performance of pupils with and without EAL, and girls and boys, are identified in classical analysis after the TPT. The TDRs use this quantitative information (facility and percentage omitted), along with the qualitative evidence from the practitioner questionnaires, to flag any items that appear to be disproportionately advantaging or disadvantaging a group. STA acknowledges that pupils in these groups have a wide range of ability so treats this information with some caution during the decision-making process for each item.
- STA also conducts a statistical analysis – DIF – after the trial. The purpose of this

is to identify differences in item performance between pupils with and without EAL, and between girls and boys. Moderate and large levels of DIF are flagged. As DIF only indicates differential item performance between groups that have the same overall performance, the assessment development team considers qualitative evidence from the practitioner questionnaires and previous expert review panels to help determine whether the item is biased or unfair.

- All items are reviewed by a modified assessment agency. TDRs and modifiers carefully consider any modifications to minimise the possibility of disadvantaging or advantaging certain groups of pupils who may require accessibility settings applied to items in the assessment service, or those who require a paper version of the assessment.

In the development of the 2025 RBA onwards, additional qualitative data was collected to support the development of accessibility settings with the assessment service. The development of these was informed by:

- a literature review of access arrangements for digital assessments, including the modified and adaptation research conducted in the development of the multiplication tables check
- exploratory interviews with a range of SEND specialists
- targeted user research, testing initial access arrangement prototypes, including review by experts and school visits
- 2 panels of inclusion experts in addition to those outlined above
- questionnaires sent to schools who had previously requested modified assessment material for the RBA

2.6 Pupil responses are interrogated to ensure pupils are engaging with the questions as intended

The following list demonstrates how STA interrogates pupil responses for the RBA:

- STA collects pupil responses for the assessments in the trials. For some questions, practitioners are asked to enter the verbal response given by the pupil into the assessment service while administering the assessment.
- From the pupil verbal responses, STA identifies the range of creditworthy and non-creditworthy responses pupils might give. TDRs develop marking guidance, identifying the expected response and, where applicable, alternative responses

that can and cannot be accepted.

- STA psychometricians provide classical and distractor analysis to TDRs at IVT and TPT, plus IRT analysis at TPT. They also provide TDRs with analysis of timing and interaction data.
- TDRs present the information they have collected from response reviews with other evidence at the item finalisation meeting. TDRs use this evidence to make recommendations for each item.

2.7 The rationale for what is creditworthy is robust and valid and can be applied unambiguously

The questions in the RBA are either automatically marked within the assessment service, based on the pupil's interaction with the screen, or marked by the practitioner administering the assessment. For practitioner-marked questions, onscreen mark schemes indicate the required response to support a mark of correct or incorrect. A 'no response' option is also available to practitioners.

The majority of questions only have one correct answer and, due to the nature of the constructs being assessed, these answers are unambiguous. Where different responses are permissible, marking guidance has been developed throughout the item development process to ensure that practitioners are able to easily decide whether the response is correct or incorrect.

2.8 The mark schemes and scoring guidance provide appropriate detail and information for practitioners to mark reliably

TDRs write questions for the RBA in-house. At the same time, they identify possible creditworthy responses for the question. Only questions with clear and unambiguous responses are included in the constructed assessment. TDRs may also include responses that are not creditworthy.

Each correct response is credited with one mark and the marks gained constitute the final raw score for each pupil.

The RBA is administered to pupils individually, and the answers are marked as

correct or incorrect at the time of administration. Marks are recorded by the practitioner administering the assessment, or by computer marking based on the pupil's interactions with the screen.

The scoring guidance is refined through qualitative reviews by TDRs during the development process. This includes input from expert review panellists and analysis of responses made by pupils during trialling.

Pupil responses for some questions are collected during trialling and reviewed by TDRs. A selection of these, both correct and incorrect, is added to the training materials provided to schools. TDRs discuss creditworthy and non-creditworthy responses with stakeholders at the expert review panels.

Claim 3: Pupil performance is comparable within and across schools

3.1 Potential bias against particular subgroups is managed and addressed when constructing the assessment

The following list demonstrates how STA considers potential bias:

- In assessment development, bias is identified as any construct-irrelevant element that results in consistently different scores for specific groups of assessment takers. The development of the RBA explicitly takes into account such elements and how they can affect performance across particular subgroups, based on gender, SEND, disability, whether English is spoken as a first or additional language, and socioeconomic status.
- STA contracts equity advisors who comment on the materials at relevant stages throughout development to ensure no materials are biased against or in favour of particular subgroups.
- During assessment development, fairness, accessibility and bias of each question in the RBA is reviewed by a number of external experts (curriculum, early years and educational psychology experts). The review includes considering pupils with SEND and materials are also examined from a cultural perspective to

ensure that they do not unfairly advantage or disadvantage particular groups of pupils. Questions that raise concerns about bias or unfairness are identified and further examined in-house, to either minimise the identified bias or remove the question from the assessment if no revision is possible.

- Quantitative data is collected for each question to ensure bias is minimised. DIF is calculated for each question to identify whether any differential functioning is present for or against pupils of particular genders, or who are or are not native English speakers. This statistical measure helps assessment developers to determine whether bias is present for any items flagged with DIF and guides assessment construction to minimise bias.
- Versions with simplified images or greyscale images are made available for pupils who are unable to access the standard assessment form. Guidance is given to practitioners about further adaptations they can make to personalise the screen settings for pupils, and regarding alternative delivery methods for pupils with specific needs – for example, use of a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.

Further information about diversity and inclusion can be found in in section 7 of the [RBA framework](#).

3.2 Systems are in place to ensure the security of assessment materials during development and administration

The following list demonstrates how STA ensures security:

- All staff within STA who handle assessment materials have undertaken ‘security of information’ training and have signed confidentiality agreements. Suppliers are also bound by confidentiality agreements relating to assessment content.
- Throughout the assessment development process, external stakeholders are asked to review assessment items, predominantly as part of expert reviews. All those involved in expert review panels are required to sign confidentiality forms, and the requirements on them for maintaining security are clearly and repeatedly stated at the start and throughout the meetings. Teacher panels are provided with a pack of items in the meeting to comment on, which are signed back in to STA at the end of the day. When forms or items are reviewed digitally or remotely, appropriate security measures are followed in line with Department for Education (DfE) advice and the STA security policy.

- When schools participate in trialling of assessment materials, they sign a confidentiality agreement committing to the continued safekeeping of all resources and preventing any member of staff from discussing the assessment content in any forum, including on social media. Materials are delivered securely through the assessment service.
- [IT guidance](#) is issued to schools ahead of the administration window and can also be accessed online throughout the year. This guidance reminds schools to make sure their devices and internet connections are prepared before administering the assessment to ensure the RBA runs smoothly and securely.
- Schools are advised of their statutory responsibilities relating to the security of materials in the [RBA assessment and reporting arrangements](#).
- The assessment service can only be accessed by approved users through DfE Sign-in. A DfE Sign-in approver can add the service to their own or other user accounts. School employees can create a DfE Sign-in account and request their account to be linked to an organisation. The school's DfE Sign-in approver must approve this request before school employees are able to view services for their school.
- To enable pupils to take the assessment, schools are required to register pupils using the unique pupil number allocated to each pupil by DfE on entry to school. At the start of administration, the practitioner pairs the practitioner and pupil devices to ensure that the correct pupil is having marks assigned to them in the service.
- An annual IT health check is carried out on the service. The health check provides an audit of the service and seeks out any potential vulnerabilities or issues so that risks can be identified rapidly and remediation action taken to ensure the digital service is secure.
- Government Digital Service (GDS) assessments are periodically carried out. These are formal reviews measuring compliance of the service against the Service Standards, including user needs, accessibility, security, agile delivery, and reliable operation.
- Schools that make use of any paper materials to deliver the assessment are required to store them securely, in line with requirements for other confidential assessments.
- At the end of administration, headteachers must complete and submit a statutory headteacher's declaration form (HDF) to STA. The HDF confirms that the assessments have been administered according to the published guidance and that any issues have been reported to STA.

- STA monitors media stories and social media and ensures appropriate action is taken to address security concerns.

3.3 Administration guidance is available, understood and implemented consistently across schools

STA publishes [RBA guidance on GOV.UK](#) throughout the assessment cycle to support schools. This guidance is developed to ensure consistency of administration across schools.

Guidance has been developed alongside the assessment, making use of user research, expert panels and user feedback to inform its development and ensure it is understood and can be implemented consistently. This includes:

- [administration guidance](#) which gives schools information about how to prepare for, administer and complete post-administration tasks – videos are also available to support with common questions
- [IT guidance](#) to help schools prepare devices for check administration – this is also regularly signposted in STA’s assessment update emails to schools
- training topics to support practitioners deliver the assessment – these are available in the assessment service and include information on preparing for the assessment, administering the assessment, marking guidance for specific questions, and accessibility and inclusion
- [modified administration guidance](#) which provides information on how to assess pupils with additional needs

Feedback on the guidance is gathered via practitioner questionnaires during trialling, and via helpdesk queries and an exit questionnaire during live administration.

Implementation is monitored through the data collected by the service.

3.4 The available arrangements to support access are appropriate

The RBA has been designed to be accessible to the vast majority of pupils on entry to reception. The one-to-one administration approach allows practitioners to adjust

their delivery of the assessment to support the needs of individual pupils. The practitioner can:

- move through the assessment at a pace that suits the pupil as there is no time limit
- pause the assessment to take breaks as required
- support the pupil to interact with their touchscreen

Accessibility settings are available in the assessment service. They can be applied by the practitioner to adapt the appearance of the standard assessment if required. Settings can be used to:

- change the background colour
- add borders to numbers
- change the colour contrast of numerals
- change images to simplified or greyscale versions

STA also publishes [RBA modified administration guidance](#) about the range of arrangements available to help pupils with specific needs access the RBA. These can be used to support pupils:

- with a hearing impairment
- with a visual impairment
- who use sign language
- who have difficulty concentrating
- who have processing difficulties

If a pupil cannot access a touchscreen, a paper version is available which allows the assessment to be administered using the practitioner device and paper assessment materials for the pupil, or using paper materials for both.

Any adaptations made to assessment materials or to the administration of the RBA should neither advantage nor disadvantage the pupil. Any support should be based primarily on usual classroom practice. The assessment questions must not be changed and should be delivered as stated on the assessment service or in the relevant guidance. The pupil's responses should be their own.

Headteachers and practitioners must consider whether any of their pupils will need additional arrangements before they administer the RBA. They can use the 'Preview

the assessment questions' section in the assessment service to see the questions that will appear in the assessment and the 'Preview the assessment with 2 devices' section to practise administering the assessment and interacting with it as a pupil will.

Schools can contact the [RBA helpline](#) for specific advice about how to meet the needs of individual pupils.

Ultimately, however, a small number of pupils may not be able to access the RBA despite the provision of additional arrangements.

Claim 4: The meaning of total scores is clear to those responsible for creating the progress measures [The meaning of assessment scores is clear to stakeholders]

4.1 Appropriate guidance is available to ensure the DfE data teams understand the reported scores

The data collected as part of the RBA and sent to the DfE data teams includes raw scores and some pupil information (as specified in the [privacy notice](#)). This data is under field headings that are simple to understand and that have been agreed with the DfE data teams. The data specification adds further information about this data, to ensure that the DfE data teams understand what has been collected.

No pupil or school-level RBA scores are shared with schools and no national, regional or school-level data is published for the RBA by STA or DfE. Instead, the raw scores are stored in the National Pupil Database (NPD) for use 7 years later in producing the progress measure.

4.2 The unintended consequences of the assessment

are known, and threats to validity have been investigated and mitigated

Possible unintended consequences of the assessment have been considered as part of the formulation of this policy and, in particular, the unintended consequences that might arise from what is done with the raw scores and with whom this data is shared. Two main risks were identified:

1. the potential for streaming or labelling of the pupils, based on their scores
2. the potential for retrospective judgement of early years provision

To mitigate these risks, DfE will not share raw scores with schools, teachers or parents. This data will be stored in the NPD and will only be used to form the progress measure at the end of KS2. This will help to prevent scores being used as a grouping mechanism, and it will mean that there is a reduced risk of any early years settings being assessed based on a school's RBA total scores. This will also help to reinforce the important message that no preparation is necessary ahead of the assessment, and that neither schools nor parents need to do any practice beforehand.

This RBA is not designed to be used for any purpose other than the progress measure. It is intended to assess a child's early LCL and mathematics skills and knowledge to form the start of the cohort-level progress measure. The raw scores are not intended to be used for any diagnostic purposes or outcome measures. This has been communicated clearly in the information published by DfE about the assessment.

1. Hughes, S., Pollit, A. and Ahmed, A. (1998). 'The development of a tool for gauging demands of GCSE and A-Level exam questions'. Paper presented at the BERA conference, The Queen's University Belfast. [↵](#)
2. Pollitt, A., Ahmed, A. and Crisp, V. (2007). The demands on examination syllabuses and question papers. In: P. Newton, J-A. Baird, H. Goldstein, H. Patrick, and P. Tymms (Eds.), Techniques for monitoring the comparability of examination standards. 166–206. London: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. [↵](#)

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