



A guide to SATS in Key Stage One

Overview

During May all 7- and 11-year-olds are formally assessed. These assessments are shared with other staff in the school, yourselves, the Local Authority and Central Government. These tests are designed to check that children in all schools are making progress and to hold individual schools to account for their work.. This booklet explains what actually happens during the testing period and how you can help your child.

The law says

- All children must be assessed at the end of Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. That means at the end of the Year 2 and at the end of Year 6.
- Assessments must take place in May. Key Stage One children can be assessed at any time in this month.
- 7-year-olds are assessed on speaking and listening, reading, writing, spelling, maths and science. Key Stage One teachers make the assessments themselves, and their marking can be checked by the authority's advisors or inspectors through a moderation process. These assessments are a mixture of formal tests and teacher assessment.
- (Key Stage Two children across the country sit Statutory Assessment Tests, often called SATs during a defined SATs week, the date of which is set many months in advance. Key Stage Two tests are sent away to be marked by outside agencies. This is to make sure that all results are absolutely fair. 11-year-olds are also tested on Reading, Writing, and maths and a fourth subject, "Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar". Some schools are also chosen as 'sample' schools for the testing of knowledge and understanding in Science.)

What happens at the end of Key Stage 1?

The formal Teacher-Assessments are made by the teacher looking at a range of work gathered over time. At North Nibley teachers are very experienced at using the criteria to make judgements on where a child 'is' developmentally, and planning to meet their learning needs in order to support their further progress. Teachers also meet with other Year 2 teachers to moderate their assessments. The statutory Key Stage One assessment, therefore, is a continuation of every-day classroom practise. Each Year 2 teacher is supported in their assessments by a number of more formal tests. These can be administered at any time in May and in all likelihood your child will not notice anything 'special' about the work they are being asked to do in class. Further details of each assessment area are given below.

Reading

If the teacher decides to use a formal task to support the judgement, at some time from January to May, your child will read individually to a teacher or experienced teaching assistant from a list of approved books. They will share the reading with the teacher for some of the book, then read part of it without any help and answer some questions to show that they understand the story.



Then, during May, some pupils will be tested in written comprehension. The children will have a booklet containing a story and some information or non-fiction writing, which they will read and then answer questions about.

If they are able readers they may not have to read to the teacher, but will be tested with a comprehension booklet. This one will be a harder text to read and have more complicated questions to answer. The teacher will judge which test is the best one for your child and it will depend upon the level at which they are working at the time of the tests.

Writing

At some time around the end of April and beginning of May your child will do 2 pieces of writing, one short and one longer. These will be used to see how well your child can describe and explain things, use punctuation, spell and plan a piece of work. Handwriting will also be judged. The teacher will talk to the children before the test to explain what is expected, but during the test the children must work independently.



Spelling

Children have another booklet in which they write spellings of common words as the teacher reads them out. The spelling mark is not reported separately but is added to the writing mark to gain an overall result for writing.

Maths



Again, if the teacher decides to use a formal task to support the judgement, children will work through booklets of maths questions covering all of the work they have been doing in their numeracy lessons. Questions include aspects of number, shape, measuring, simple fractions, data handling and problem solving. Your child is allowed to use some equipment for counting and have a ruler, but, as in all the other tests, they are expected to work out the answers on their own. There may be questions for which they will have to write an explanation of their 'working out'. Children can ask the teacher to read the questions to them and the written answers are not judged on spelling or handwriting. There are 2 separate ones and your child will sit the paper which reflects the level at which they are working.

There are no official task/test materials for the assessment of speaking and listening or science. These assessments are based upon work done throughout the year.

Does my child have to be assessed?

Yes, although teachers can enter special codes against a child's name when reporting their attainment. Severe learning difficulties, total lack of English or serious illness are the kinds of reasons that might lead to 'disapplication'. Nationally less than 1% of 7 years olds are disapplied or registered absent. Unfortunately, you can't withdraw your child because you don't agree with testing or because you think it might upset them. On-going Teacher Assessment judgements will be used if at all possible.

What happens if my child misses a test?

At Key Stage 1, teachers will arrange for your child to take it at another time.

What happens if my child isn't ready for the tests?

If the task/test materials described above are not appropriate for your child, on-going Teacher Assessment judgements will be used.

What happens to the other children in the school?

They continue with their normal work. The government has produced tests for children in Years 3, 4 and 5 and, although they are optional, we choose to use them during SATs time to check that the other children are making progress.

How you can help

- Don't take your child on holiday during term time.
- Make sure they get plenty of sleep during the SATs period. Although we try not to make a fuss, and although these assessments are indistinguishable from every-day work, children still benefit from a chance to relax and get some fresh air and exercise when the school day is over.
- Try not to make a big thing of it. The tests, if we choose to use them, inform the on-going teacher assessments which take account of your child's work over the whole year. This helps to give a balanced picture of what they can do.
- You can practise some of the activities at home. Use the homework for some work to do with your child. Refer to our recent publications on Maths, Calculation Strategies, Spelling Strategies and other material we have produced to support learning. Opt in to the Maths Games initiative and, if you are able, use the on-line resources at Grid Club and Planet Sherston. All of these can be found from the school's own website.
- Don't move on to new ground too fast. Make sure that they are confident at one skill before moving on to more complicated tasks.

To sum up

National Assessments are an important milestone in school life. They give useful information to the school and to the government. But it's important to get them in proportion. They are just one of the ways the school works out how well your child is doing. They shouldn't be stressful, and your children will continue to thrive as long as they know they have your support and understanding.