



A guide to SATS in Key Stage Two

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 the Department for Education. 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. Key Stage Two children across the country sit special tests often called SATs (Statutory Assessment Tests) during SATs week, the date of which is set many months in advance.
- 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.
- Key Stage Two tests are sent away to be marked by outside experts. This is to make sure that all results are absolutely fair. 11-year-olds sit formal tests on reading, maths and 'SPAG' (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar). Some schools are also chosen as 'sample' schools for the testing of knowledge and understanding in science. There is also a Teacher Assessment in writing.

What happens at the end of Key Stage 2?

Although we already have a well-proven system for the on-going assessment of each child's abilities, alongside nearly every other Year 6 child in the country, every child is considered for inclusion in the government's Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs). The tests sent to the school are new each year and are marked externally. The tests are formal tests, with start times and a strict limit on the duration of the test. The test timetable is followed by all schools at the same time.

Reading



During the Reading Test children will be tested in written comprehension. The children will have a booklet containing a number of different texts – perhaps a story or recount, a diary, biography or other piece of non-fiction writing. After reading the booklet they answer questions about the texts they have read, and also about features of the writing, styles of presentation and authorial intention. They also have opportunities to share their own reactions and opinions on the texts. Children who struggle with reading are not allowed to be supported during the reading test.

Writing



Writing is assessed by the class teacher over the year, drawing evidence from a range of different types of writing. The judgements made are moderated both within school and externally with other local Year 6 teachers. The Local Authority has oversight of this moderation process. A variety of aspects of writing as assessed, such as sentence construction, punctuation, awareness of audience, richness of vocabulary and understanding of the particular features of different types of text.

Spelling, Punctuation And Grammar tests (SPAG)



Children demonstrate their understanding by choosing words which best fit a given sentence, matching tense, and completing sentences with the correct punctuation. Children also need to be able to assign a word to the correct class, for example is it an adverb, or a noun. The spelling tests, like all the tests, contain words which remain sealed in their packets until the time of the test.

Maths



Children are given three papers in maths – a short 'mental/oral' paper where quick thinking is required in response to timed questions played from an official CD. Two further papers are given which allow children to work through a series of questions at their own speed. These questions cover all of the work they have been doing in their numeracy lessons, including aspects of number, calculation, shape and space, measuring, fractions, decimals, percentages and proportions, data handling, problem solving and a little algebra. Your child has permission to use some equipment – tracing paper, protractors and mirrors – in both papers, but no calculators are allowed. Children 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 an adult to read the questions to them and the written answers are not judged on spelling or handwriting.

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 11 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.

In addition to the formal tests, schools have to submit a Teacher Assessment judgement which will also be reported to the DfE and to parents.

What happens if my child misses a test, or isn't ready for the tests?

If your child is absent, or if the tests described above are not appropriate for your child, on-going Teacher Assessment judgements will be used. Your child will not feature in the judgement on school effectiveness.

What happens to the other children in the school?

They continue with their normal work, though during this 'testing period' we also administer end-of-year tests children in Years 3, 4 and 5 to provide an additional check that all 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 there is no disguising what is happening, 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. Reassure children that if it 'goes wrong' on the day, we also submit Teacher Assessment data drawn from our knowledge of each child's work across the year. This assessment should carry an equal weighting with SATs and 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.
- Other useful sites include
 - www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks2bitesize/
 - www.e-learningforkids.org
 - www.writingfun.com
- 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.
- Practical activities which allow children to practise skills are particularly beneficial: for example, if cooking with your child, ask them to weigh ingredients.
- Give children the chance to talk over any worries.

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 our children will continue to thrive as long as they know they have your support and understanding.