

The 2017 KS2 National Tests

A Parent's Guide



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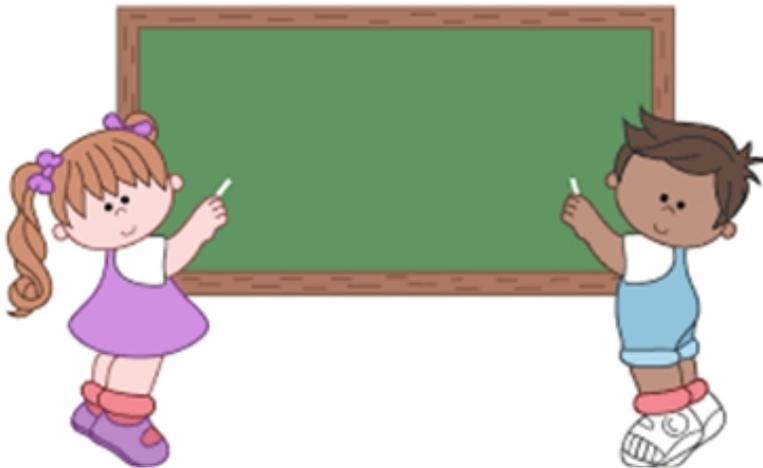
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Introduction

For an increasing number of today's parents and carers, the national curriculum tests are not the entirely unfamiliar concept they once were. However, after many years of familiarity, 2016 saw an overhaul of the tests to match the newly updated national curriculum. This guide helps to explain what you can expect and how you can support your children in the run-up to the tests this year.

About the tests

The tests take place during the first full teaching week of May each year (i.e. the week after Bank Holiday Monday) and in recent years have been spread across four days. Schools have some flexibility in how they organise pupils for the tests, at St. James' the tests will take place in the children's classrooms. In some cases, individuals or small groups of children who are entitled to additional support, such as a reader or prompt, will take the tests in a separate room.

Over the course of the week, there are three tests altogether covering the various areas of English and Mathematics.

2017 Timetable of tests

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8 th May	9 th May	10 th May	11 th May	12 th May
Reading Test	Grammar, punctuation and spellings Paper 1	Maths Paper 1 Arithmetic	Maths Paper 3 Reasoning	
	Grammar, punctuation and spellings Paper 2	Maths Paper 2 Reasoning		

The Mathematics test

There are three papers in the mathematics test for Year 6.

Paper 1 - Arithmetic

The first is an arithmetic paper that will test your child's number and calculation skills. The test has 36 questions and is worth 40 marks, making up just over one third of the total marks available for mathematics. Some of the questions will require children to know some number facts, such as multiplication tables (and the related division facts); others test the use of calculation methods.

Towards the end of the paper there are some more challenging calculations such as those using fractions, or examples of calculations with larger numbers. For multiplication and division questions, 2 marks are available. If your child's final answer is incorrect, they may still earn 1 mark for showing correct use of the formal long multiplication or long division methods. This 'method mark' is not available, though, if they use any other calculation method than the expected formal one.

Papers 2 & 3 - Mathematical Reasoning

The questions on these papers, as with the arithmetic one, are set out in approximate order of difficulty, so children who are less confident with more challenging mathematics may not finish the whole paper. That's fine; nobody expects a perfect score!

The reasoning questions often include some background information, such as solving problems to do with purchasing things in a shop, or dealing with measurements such as weight or area. These test papers cover the wider areas of mathematics such as geometry and statistics, as well as using arithmetic and number knowledge to solve problems.

Several questions are likely to involve more than one step and so will be worth 2 marks. Overall, each reasoning paper is worth 35 marks.

The English tests

There are two tests for English: Reading; and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS). The reading test has one paper and the grammar, punctuation and spelling test has two papers.

The Reading test

Paper 1 - Reading test

The reading test lasts for 1 hour. During this time your child will be given around three different texts to read - often a mix of fiction, non-fiction and poetry - and a separate booklet of questions to answer about the texts. Your child's teacher will probably teach them strategies for tackling this paper, such as answering the questions about each text one section at a time.

Several of the questions in this test will involve ticking the correct box, or picking out a single word from the text. These often require finding straightforward information directly from the text. However, in more complex questions - such as those asking for an explanation of the author's choices - there will be several lines for free text, and up to 3 marks may be available for more detailed answers which use evidence given in the texts.

The Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test

Paper 1 - Grammar, punctuation and vocabulary

Paper 1 assesses grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. This is an area that has changed significantly in the new curriculum and questions will refer to both children's knowledge of grammatical terms (such as pronoun and conjunction) and use of language in the right context. Some questions will also require children to put in the appropriate punctuation marks to clauses or sentences or to use a particular sentence structure.

Paper 2 - Spelling test

Paper 2 assesses spelling and requires children to spell 20 words. Each word is read out as part of a sentence that is printed in the answer booklet. Your child will be asked to write the missing word into the gap. The words in the test will be based on the spelling rules taught across Key Stage 2, in increasing difficulty. There are 70 marks altogether, made up of the scores from both papers to achieve an overall score for grammar, punctuation and spelling.

How you can help your child prepare for the tests

During Year 6, your child's class teacher may well flag up areas of learning in which your child would benefit from some extra practice, as well as completing their normal homework such as reading and learning spellings.

Here are some useful resources you could use at home to help your child prepare for the tests in May.

- CPG books: Reading, Grammar, punctuation and spellings and Maths. These can be found at <https://www.cgpbooks.co.uk/Parent/books>
- Collins Books : Reading, Grammar, punctuation and spellings and Maths. These can be found at <http://www.collins.co.uk/page/collinsks2revision>
- Rising Stars Revision Books www.risingstars-uk.com/achieveks2

As a school we will also be sending home past papers and homework to support your child in preparation for the up and coming tests.

If you would like any further help and support please contact your child's class teacher who would be more than happy to help.

Thank you for your continued support