



# The Two Way Street

## ...SATs explained!

### Overview

During May, all 7 and 11 year olds sit the national tests called Standard Attainment Tasks (SATs for short). These tests are designed to check that children in all schools are making progress. This information sheet looks at what actually happens during the testing period and how you can help your child to get ready for them. (You will see that we have used 'she' for children – this is just to make it easier to read.)

The law says...

- All children must take SATs at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. That means at the end of the infants and at the end of the juniors.
- Testing must take place in May. Key Stage 1 children have the whole month to do the tests. Key Stage 2 children across the country sit their tests during SATs week.
- Year 2 and Year 6 children are tested on reading, writing, spelling and maths.
- Key Stage 1 teachers mark the tests themselves, but Key Stage 2 tests are sent away to be marked by outside experts. This is to make sure that all results are absolutely fair.

### **What happens at Key Stage 1?**

**Reading:** There is also a booklet containing a story and a bit of information writing which your child reads and then answers questions on.

In most schools, the whole class works through the booklet at once. This makes sure that there are no distractions and that everyone understands what they are doing. It usually takes about 45 minutes.

**Spellings:** Children have another booklet in which they fill in spellings of common words. Again, teachers usually do the spelling test with the whole class. It takes about 20 minutes.

**Writing:** Your child will carry out a short writing task and a longer writing task, which will be used to see how well she can describe and explain things, use punctuation and plan a piece of work. There is no time limit for this and in some classes children spend more than one session finishing their piece of writing.

**Maths:** Children work through a booklet of maths questions covering arithmetic, shape, measuring and simple fractions. Most teachers try to do the maths test as a whole-class exercise in the morning, when children are fresh. There is no time limit and, because the test is quite long, some teachers like to break it into two sections and allow a rest in the middle.

## ***What happens at Key Stage 2?***

For the 11 year olds, things are more formal. The Key Stage 2 SATs are mini-exams, done in silence and within a time limit. In each test your child will have a booklet to complete.

To make it fair, there is a timetable, which every school in the country must follow. This is now over a two week period.

### ***Maths test A***

(45 minutes long). Questions get harder as the paper goes on.

### ***Mental arithmetic***

This test lasts for 20 minutes and teachers play a CD with the questions on.

### ***Maths test B***

(45 minutes long). It's similar to test A, except that children are allowed to use a calculator.

### ***Reading test***

An hour is allowed. Children read and answer questions on a piece of text and piece of information writing.

### ***Spelling and handwriting test***

These are short activities, adding up to a total of 15 minutes.

### ***Writing test***

As at Key Stage 1, children have a choice of starting points for a piece of writing, which will show how well they can plan, describe, spell and punctuate.

## ***Does my child have to do SATs?***

Yes, unless you can give a very good reason why she shouldn't. Severe learning difficulties, total lack of English or serious illness are the kinds of reasons accepted by the Department for Education and Employment. Unfortunately you can't withdraw your child because you think it might upset her.

In fact, only a fraction of children in state school miss the SATs. Additional time can be applied for if there are grounds to do so. **Don't worry about them! Your child will have been very well prepared for them, so there are no surprises!**

## ***What happens if my child misses a test?***

It is always best for your child to do the test when all her peers are doing theirs. They feel more comfortable and supported. If however, your child is genuinely ill, teachers will arrange for your child to take it another time, however, this will not be an advantage to your child, and historically, they tend to do less well in these circumstances.

## ***How can you help***

- Don't take your child on holiday during SATs.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep during the SATs period. The Key Stage 2 SATs week can be tiring for 11 year olds, and your child will need 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. Not every child deals with exams well. The tests are backed up by teacher assessments, which take account of your child's work over the whole year. This helps to give a balanced picture of what she can do.
- You can help your child to get ready for SATs by practising some of the activities at home. Your child's class teacher will already be preparing for them and may be sending work home.

### To sum up

SATs are an important milestone in school life. They give useful information to your child's teacher 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 in fact many children enjoy the change in routine. Of course, this is all the more true when they know they can count on your support and understanding

If you have any comments, concerns or questions - why don't you email us on our brand new address specifically for the 'Two Way Street'

**Email address:**

[twowaystreet@st-johns.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:twowaystreet@st-johns.walsall.sch.uk)

