



## National Reading and Numeracy Tests

In the text that follows, items in **black** are taken from the Welsh Government National Reading and Numeracy Tests – Test administration handbook 2018 234/2018 and the Welsh National Tests Data Collection (WNTDC) and reporting arrangements 2017/18.

Text in **blue** is guidance from the NASUWT. Those sections in **blue and bold** are taken from the NASUWT National Action instructions – Phase 4 issued in July 2016.

### **Purpose of the National Reading and Numeracy Tests and relationship to other tests available to schools**

The National Tests are for diagnostic use so that teachers in all maintained schools will have information on the reading and numeracy skills of their learners...

They are focused on understanding learner progress, and not school performance or accountability. This is why National Test results are not included in the set of performance measures for school categorisation.

The Welsh Government requires that they replace rather than supplement any reading and numeracy tests that were used in schools before their introduction.

### **NASUWT guidance**

The NASUWT has welcomed the recent realisation by the Welsh Government of the need to move away from a high-stakes accountability structure but has reserved judgement as the Union is yet to be convinced that the amendments proposed to existing regulations will be sufficient to ensure that assessment is focused on improving learning.

The NASUWT expects all schools to put in place arrangements that comply fully with the points made in this briefing.

Members should contact the Union by the means set out at the end of this briefing if there are any concerns as to the arrangements in their school.

### **Test administration**

All learners in Years 2 to 9 in maintained schools (including community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation) are required to take the National Reading Test, National Numeracy Test (Procedural) and National Numeracy Test (Reasoning).

Tests must be taken during the following periods:

- Primary schools: 2-9 May 2018.
- Secondary schools: 25 April 2018-9 May 2018.
- Middle schools: 25 April 2018-9 May 2018.

Because the Year 7 National Reading Test paper is the same as the paper taken by Year 6 learners, the Year 7 National Reading Test must be conducted during the period 2-9 May 2018.

Practical considerations such as allowing time for the required familiarisation with the stimulus materials for numerical reasoning in advance of the test should also be taken into account. Once a test timetable has been drawn up it must be shared in advance with the regional consortium, and should be notified to parents/carers and learners.

The tests should normally be administered to whole classes.

The National Reading Test and National Numeracy Test (Procedural) may be administered to a whole class in the classroom or to larger groups in larger rooms, e.g. to a year group in the school hall.

The National Numeracy Test (Reasoning), however, must be administered in an environment that allows every learner to readily see and hear the presentation of the stimulus materials that precede each test. This is likely to preclude the use of examination rooms or school halls.

To avoid the sharing of information about the test content, under normal circumstances schools should administer the tests so that sittings of an individual test take place on the same day.

The Numeracy Test (Procedural) and Numeracy Test (Reasoning) for a year group should not be taken on the same day, to avoid test overload for learners.

### **Tests in other settings (e.g. Pupil Referral Units)**

All learners in Years 2–9 who are registered in mainstream schools must sit the National Tests and their results must be submitted to Welsh Government.

The responsibility for ensuring the tests are administered to the learner rests with the headteacher of the mainstream school at which the learner is registered. If the tests are sat in the PRU the headteacher of the mainstream school remains legally responsible at all times for the proper administration of those tests.

### **Receiving and storing test materials**

Test booklets and markschemes must remain confidential until the tests are due to be taken. If they are opened to check the quantities enclosed, then they must immediately be re-sealed and stored in a secure place until required for test administration or marking.

With the exception of modifying materials, it is **not permitted** to make photocopies of any pages of the test booklets.

Also included in the consignment of materials are test administration guidance documents for each test. These items are non-confidential and are packed in clear film and clearly labelled '**IMPORTANT** This pack contains information on preparing for the tests. It should be opened and then handed to the person responsible for test administration immediately.'

Once administered, the completed test papers and materials should be kept under secure conditions for at least a year in case of any post-administration enquiries. After a year, the school must arrange for the test papers to be disposed of securely.

### **NASUWT guidance**

**Instruction 25: Members should refuse to undertake administrative and clerical tasks as exemplified in Annex 4 of the STPCD.**

Teachers cannot be required to routinely carry out administrative and clerical tasks.

- Administration of public and internal examinations

Members should safeguard themselves against any allegation of malpractice and, unless they are the headteacher or an appropriate delegate who is responsible as head of centre, should not be involved in the receiving and storing of materials for the tests.

### **Test familiarisation**

An essential part of the Numeracy Test (Reasoning) will be the delivery of stimulus materials to inform and support the response to test questions. Those delivering the stimulus sessions must familiarise themselves with these in advance of the test and should ensure that the disk containing the presentation is checked.

There are a number of classroom resources on Learning Wales which can be used to help familiarise learners with the type of activities they may encounter in the National Tests. There is, therefore, no requirement for significant lesson time to be spent on familiarising learners with test techniques.

Drilling for diagnostic tests has the potential to mask difficulties that some learners might be experiencing. All schools are expected to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the school year.

Overemphasis on preparation, 'practising' with past test questions and the use of test questions for homework can raise anxiety among learners and are inappropriate in the context of diagnostic tests.

### **NASUWT guidance**

The NASUWT has welcomed the advice from the Welsh Government on maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the school year and not teaching to the tests and its desire to engage with the NASUWT to review the impact of the accountability regime on assessment practice in schools.

The Union has urged the Welsh Government to seize the opportunity to secure greater freedom for teachers to use their professional judgement in adopting approaches to assessment that provide them with genuinely meaningful information and data about pupils' progress and achievement.

### **Taking the tests**

The tests must be administered under appropriate test conditions.

For learners in Years 2 and 3, for reasons of accuracy, you may wish to complete some of the learners' details yourself (e.g. school, date of birth, date of test).

Schools must ensure learners do not have access to materials that could, with reference to the test content, give them an unfair advantage, e.g. wall charts or similar classroom resources.

As the learners are working their way through the test, you should check periodically that they understand what they need to do and are working through all the questions.

National Reading Test - You should not read any part of the text or questions to the learners other than the 'Practice questions' section. In monitoring learners as they are doing the test, no help should be given in reading the text or locating the correct answers.

National Numeracy Tests - During the tests, help may be given to learners in reading the text but not in providing any explanation of numerical meaning.

### **NASUWT guidance**

**Instruction 25: Members should refuse to undertake administrative and clerical tasks as exemplified in Annex 4 of the STPCD.**

Teachers cannot be required to routinely carry out administrative and clerical tasks.

- Preparing, setting up and taking down classroom displays in accordance with decisions taken by teachers.

Teachers therefore should not be expected to prepare their classrooms for the tests.

### **Persons administering the tests**

Many schools are likely to have well-established protocols in place for annual testing of learners. Schools must be mindful of the provisions of the STPCD 2017.

Where the tests are administered in class bases, broadly in the context of normal timetabled teaching time, it may be reasonable to ask teachers to administer them.

Conversely, where the tests are sat in conditions which replicate those for external examinations, out of normal teaching time and in discrete examination conditions, such as on a year group basis in an examination hall, schools should be aware that they are likely to fall under paragraph 52.8 of Section 2.

*'A teacher should not be required routinely to participate in any administrative, clerical and organisational tasks which do not call for the exercise of a teacher's professional skills and judgement, including those associated with the arrangements for preparing pupils for external examinations such as invigilation.'*

## **NASUWT guidance**

### **Instruction 23: Members should refuse to invigilate any public examination, including GCSEs.**

No teacher, primary or secondary, is required to invigilate any public examinations. This includes GCSEs, A levels or any other nationally set examination or test.

Invigilation of examinations does not require the skills and abilities of a qualified teacher.

Invigilating examinations, particularly for groups and classes of pupils they teach, leaves teachers vulnerable to accusations of examination malpractice and undermines public confidence in the examination outcomes.

Where tests are carried out by teachers with the class or group they normally teach during their normal timetabled time and under the arrangements for the conduct of the lesson, this instruction would not apply.

Teachers should not be expected to administer the tests, unless they form part of a timetabled lesson and are undertaken in the teacher's classroom.

It is a reasonable expectation that a teacher should be present at the beginning of an external examination in their subject area to check the paper and to ensure that there are no problems with it.

Those invigilating the examination should be made aware of the procedure for dealing with emergencies and for contacting a teacher in the subject area under examination should any candidate raise a concern or problem with the paper which requires their professional judgement.

It may also be appropriate for a teacher to be present at the end of an external examination to ensure its efficient conclusion. When carrying out such tasks, teachers should not be expected to stay in the examination hall/room for any longer than is necessary to perform them.

Schools may employ external invigilators if they so wish.

It is important that the stimulus materials that precede the test are presented by someone who the learners are comfortable with.

## **NASUWT guidance**

### **Instruction 25: Members should refuse to undertake administrative and clerical tasks as exemplified in Annex 4 of the STPCD.**

Teachers cannot be required to routinely carry out administrative and clerical tasks.

- Administration of public and internal examinations

Members should safeguard themselves against any allegation of malpractice and need to have assurances that their presence at the beginning or end of the test would not compromise them.

## **Marking the tests**

All test papers must be marked by 6 June 2018 for the WNTDC in order to allow for timely uploading of scores. Local authorities may have arrangements in place for an earlier completion date.

Schools have discretion as to which of their staff mark the tests. Markschemes have been designed to be quickly and easily applied and, wherever possible, to minimise the need for professional judgement, but there will remain the need for some judgement to be applied in particular situations.

The markschemes for the National Reading and Numeracy Tests also provide a guide to interpreting and building on learner and class performance and schools should be mindful of this, and of the aforementioned provisions of paragraph 52.8 of Section 2 of STPCD 2017, in making any decisions as to who should mark the tests.

It is at schools' discretion whether they choose to give markers dedicated time for the task of marking.

## **NASUWT guidance**

### **Instruction 27: Members are instructed to refuse to comply with any marking and assessment policy**

### **which generates excessive workload and/or has not been agreed with the NASUWT.**

Until such time as a policy agreed with the NASUWT is introduced, members will mark and assess pupils in a manner consistent with the principles set out in the Union's guidance.

The instruction makes clear that members must not comply with marking and assessment policies which generate excessive workload and/or have not been agreed with the NASUWT.

Teachers should not be expected to mark the tests.

The NASUWT continues to be concerned by the workload burdens generated by the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and will continue to pursue these with the Welsh Government.

### **Data input and reporting**

The following information must be recorded and submitted to Welsh Government for each pupil:

- NRT raw score
- Test taken
- Date the test was taken

The test results presented must be shared with parents/carers as part of the normal reporting process. If schools are unable to provide reports to parents/carers by the end of the summer term 2017 these should be provided no later than 30 September 2018.

### **NASUWT guidance**

***Instruction 25: Members should refuse to undertake administrative and clerical tasks as exemplified in Annex 4 of the STPCD.***

Teachers cannot be required to routinely carry out administrative and clerical tasks.

- Keeping and filing records, including records based on data supplied by teachers.
- Producing analyses of examination results.
- Administration of public and internal examinations.
- Transferring manual data about pupils not covered by the above into computerised school management systems.

Teachers should not be expected to input data from the tests.

***Instruction 7: Members are instructed to produce only one written report annually to parents.***

Teachers should only produce one report per year for all of the pupils they teach which requires them to make comments about the pupils' progress and performance either in writing or using an electronic comment bank. Schools may continue to produce interim reports for all pupils or groups of pupils throughout the year providing that these can be generated administratively from the data the schools routinely collect on pupils, and teachers are not required to have any direct or specific involvement.

### **Malpractice**

If an instance is found where a learner's script does not represent that learner's own work for any reason, the headteacher must be informed and a record kept of which questions and responses might have been affected for the information of the marker, the local authority and any subsequent investigation.

### **NASUWT guidance**

***Instruction 27: Members are instructed to refuse to comply with any marking and assessment policy which generates excessive workload and/or has not been agreed with the NASUWT.***

Teachers should not be expected to mark the tests but if they do then members must ensure that they safeguard themselves against any allegation of malpractice and need to have assurances that their marking of the test would not compromise them.

## Headteacher's declaration

Within seven school days of the final date for data submission, the headteacher must sign and submit a declaration to the regional consortium (acting on behalf of the local authority) confirming that the test packs were received and stored securely, that the tests were administered correctly according to the requirements set out in the NT administration handbook (this handbook), and that the tests were marked in accordance with the markscheme.

## Monitoring of assessment arrangements

The local authority or regional consortium will carry out a programme of monitoring visits to a sample of schools. The visits may take place during any of the following periods.

- The week before the tests are administered to learners.
- The period during which the tests are administered to learners.
- Up to 20 school days after the last day on which any of the tests have been administered to learners.

## NASUWT guidance

**Instruction 25: Members should refuse to undertake administrative and clerical tasks as exemplified in Annex 4 of the STPCD.**

Teachers cannot be required to routinely carry out administrative and clerical tasks.

- Administration of public and internal examinations

Unless they are the headteacher, members should not be involved in the administration of the tests. Members' involvement in the monitoring should only be in so far as they carry out the invigilation of the tests in their own classroom.

Where it becomes apparent that teachers are being expected to prepare classrooms, administer the test, invigilate the test in a hall or similar setting and/or mark the test, contact should be made with:

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