



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency

# **2012 Maladministration report**

**National curriculum assessments**

**April 2013**

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## Introduction

This report details the range of allegations of maladministration reported to the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) maladministration team throughout the 2012 test cycle. The report examines the patterns of allegations made and outcomes of cases in 2012 and compares these to data from 2010 and 2011.

The term 'maladministration' refers to any act that could jeopardise the integrity, security or confidentiality of the key stage 2 levels 3-5 and level 6 national curriculum tests, key stage 2 English writing sample tests, key stage 2 science sampling tests and the key stage 1 phonics screening check, and could lead to results that do not reflect the unaided abilities of children. This could refer to a range of actions, including test papers being incorrectly opened, children cheating, over-aiding of children by test administrators or changes being made to children's test scripts by someone other than the child.

# National curriculum assessments in 2012

## Number of schools

In 2012, approximately 16 000 schools participated in the key stage 2 levels 3-5 national curriculum tests and the phonics screening check. Approximately 6 350 schools also participated in the level 6 English reading test and 8 000 schools in the level 6 mathematics tests. Around 1 500 schools were part of the English writing sample while approximately 750 took part in the science sampling tests.

## Key changes

A number of changes to the assessments and new assessments were introduced in 2012.

At key stage 1 the phonics screening check was introduced.

At key stage 2, in addition to statutory levels 3-5 tests in English reading and mathematics and science sampling tests:

- level 6 tests for high attaining children were introduced in English reading and mathematics;
- schools were given the option to administer either an internally marked or externally marked levels 3-5 English writing test. These tests were to be used to inform English writing teacher assessment and results were not reported;
- approximately 1 500 schools were selected to administer the externally marked English writing test as part of a writing sample; and
- the number of days after the published date that a test could be administered increased from two to five days.

## Responsibilities

In 2012, STA had a statutory duty to investigate any matter brought to its attention relating to the accuracy and correctness of any results of any child in the key stage 2 levels 3-5 and level 6 national curriculum tests, the key stage 2 English writing sample tests or the key stage 2 science sampling tests. These instances were investigated in partnership with local authorities in accordance with the 2012 'Maladministration investigation procedures'.

Local authorities were responsible for investigating all allegations of maladministration relating to teacher assessment at key stage 1 and for the phonics screening check. STA

gave advice to local authorities about how to investigate the allegations and make decisions on changes to children's results.

Local authority maintained key stage 1 schools and academies (including free schools) had a statutory obligation to administer the phonics screening check to children in year 1 and were required to submit teacher assessment levels for English, mathematics and science using the key stage 1 tasks and tests to inform their decisions.

Local authority maintained key stage 2 schools and academies had a statutory obligation to administer the national curriculum tests to all eligible children. Schools selected to participate in the science and English writing samples had a statutory obligation to administer those tests.

## Key findings

- There was an increase in the total number of cases of maladministration reported to STA in 2012. In 2012, 370 cases were reported compared to 292 cases in 2011 and 168 cases in 2010.
- The increase in the total number of cases can be partly attributed to an increase in phonics screening check cases reported. Another cause was an increase in the number of cases of unauthorised key stage 2 test timetable variations, following a change in policy allowing the tests to be rescheduled for valid reasons up to a week after the published test dates.
- Across key stages 1 and 2, 45 per cent of cases were self-reported by schools. The majority of these cases concerned either a child cheating, or maladministration which did not affect the integrity or security of the tests.
- Local authorities reported 60 per cent of cases relating to key stage 1 assessment and the phonics screening check. The majority of these cases reported issues encountered during monitoring visits to schools administering the phonics check.
- Schools self-reported 45.2 per cent of cases relating to key stage 2 assessment and the national curriculum tests. Significant percentages of cases were also reported by local authority markers and anonymous sources, (23, 21 and 7 per cent respectively).
- 58 schools (approximately 0.36 per cent of schools who participated in the key stage 2 national curriculum tests) received amendments to - or annulments of - their results.
- 584 children received amendments to - or annulments of - their results. This represented less than 0.1 per cent of children who participated in the key stage 2 national curriculum tests.

## Breakdown of maladministration cases in 2012

Across key stages 1 and 2, 370 cases of alleged maladministration were reported in 2012, compared to 292 cases in 2011 and 168 cases in 2010. In contrast, in 2009, 346 cases were reported across key stages 1 and 2, showing that while there is some variation between 2010-12, the 2012 figure is consistent with the number of cases reported in other years.

There were 25 cases of reported maladministration in 2012 for key stage 1, compared to no cases in 2011 and four cases in 2010.

There were 345 cases reported in 2012 for key stage 2. This was greater than in 2011 when 292 cases were reported. There were 168 reported cases in 2010. It should be noted that approximately a quarter of schools boycotted the national curriculum tests in 2010, which explains the lower number of cases reported in that year.

	Total reported cases at key stage 1	% of total number of schools	Total reported cases at key stage 2	% of total number of schools
2010	4	0.03	168	1.46
2011	0	0	292	1.83
2012	25	0.16	345	2.16

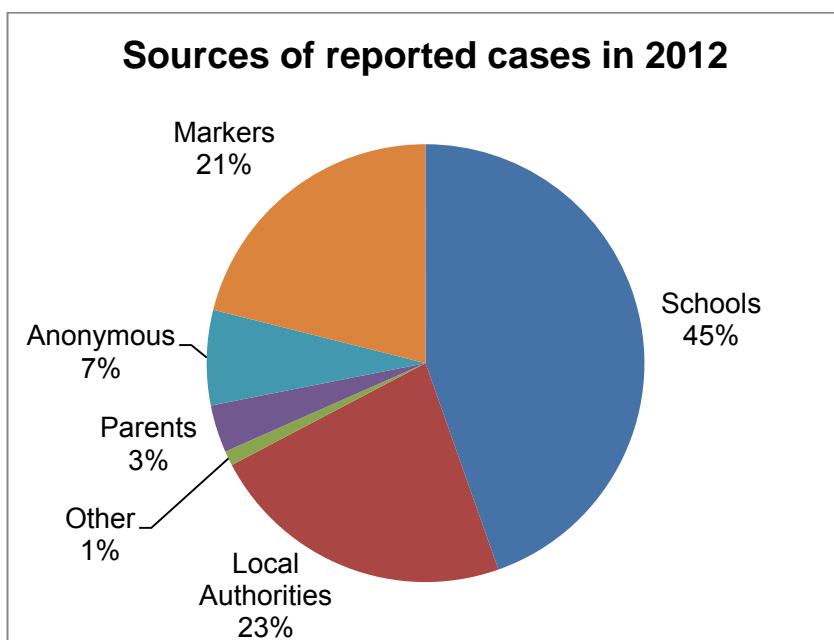
The introduction of the phonics screening check in 2012 saw an increase in the number of cases reported relating to key stage 1 assessments.

The increase in the number of cases reported at key stage 2 from 2011-12 could be attributed to an increase in the number of unauthorised timetable variations being administered following the change to the number of days after the published test date that tests can be administered if children are absent. The introduction of the level 6 tests did not lead to an increase in allegations.

## Sources of reported cases

Cases of alleged maladministration are reported to STA by a number of different sources. Across key stage 1 and 2, schools self-reported the largest proportion of cases: 45 per cent. The majority of the cases self-reported by schools concerned either a child cheating, or maladministration, which did not affect the integrity or security of the tests.

Significant percentages of cases were also reported by local authorities, markers, and anonymous sources (23, 21 and 7 per cent respectively).



#### Key stage 1 – 2010-12 – Reported cases from different sources

	Schools	Parents	Local authorities	Anonymous	Other
2010	25% (1 case)	-	-	50% (2 cases)	25% (1 case)
2011	-	-	-	-	-
2012	36% (9 cases)	4% (1 case)	60% (15 cases)	-	-

For cases that related to key stage 1 assessment and the phonics screening check, local authorities reported the largest percentage of cases: 60 per cent. Of the 15 cases reported, 13 of these were reported by local authorities following monitoring visits. Schools self-reported the majority of the remaining cases (36 per cent).

There were no maladministration cases relating to key stage 1 in 2011. The changes in allegation source at key stage 1 reflect the introduction of the phonics screening check, schools self-reporting cases and cases being reported following local authority monitoring visits.

## Key Stage 2 – 2010 to 2012 – Reported cases from different sources

	Schools	Parents	Local authorities	Anonymous	Markers	Other
2010	34.6% (56 cases)	2.5% (4 cases)	17.9% (29 cases)	6.8% (11 cases)	33.3% (54 cases)	4.9% (8 cases)
2011	34.2% (100 cases)	6.8% (20 cases)	19.2% (56 cases)	6.2% (18 cases)	27.7% (81 cases)	5.8% (17 cases)
2012	45.2% (156 cases)	3.5% (12 cases)	20.0% (69 cases)	7.5% (26 cases)	22.6% (78 cases)	1.2% (4 cases)

For cases related to key stage 2 assessments, schools reported the largest percentage of cases: 45.2 per cent. Compared to 2011, there was an 11 per cent increase in cases reported by schools in 2012. This can be attributed in part to an increase in schools reporting unauthorised timetable variations, which followed the change to the number of days after the published date which the tests can be taken.

Markers reported 22.6 per cent of cases, the second largest proportion. This was a decrease of 5.1 per cent from 2011. However, the number of cases reported (78) was similar to the 81 cases reported in 2011.

Local authorities reported the third largest percentage of cases: 20.0 per cent. This was an increase of 0.8 per cent on 2011. 27 of the 69 cases reported by local authorities followed monitoring visits.



## Types of maladministration allegation

### Key stage 1

Before the introduction of the phonics screening check in 2012, allegations relating to key stage 1 assessment only concerned the accuracy of teacher assessment. In 2012, STA also received allegations relating to the administration of the phonics screening check. As a consequence, in 2012, allegations reported to STA relating to the key stage 1 assessments can be divided into three categories:

- Before check administration – allegations relating to the receipt and secure storage of the check materials, accidental opening of the materials, the use of the content of the check materials being to prepare children before the administration of the check and unauthorised timetable variations, administering the check before the timetabled check week.
- During check administration – allegations relating to the administration of the check, such as check administrators over-aiding children or incorrect scoring of children’s responses.
- Moderation of teacher assessment – allegations relating to reporting of incorrect teacher assessment.

### Key stage 1 – 2010-12 – number of allegations reported in each category

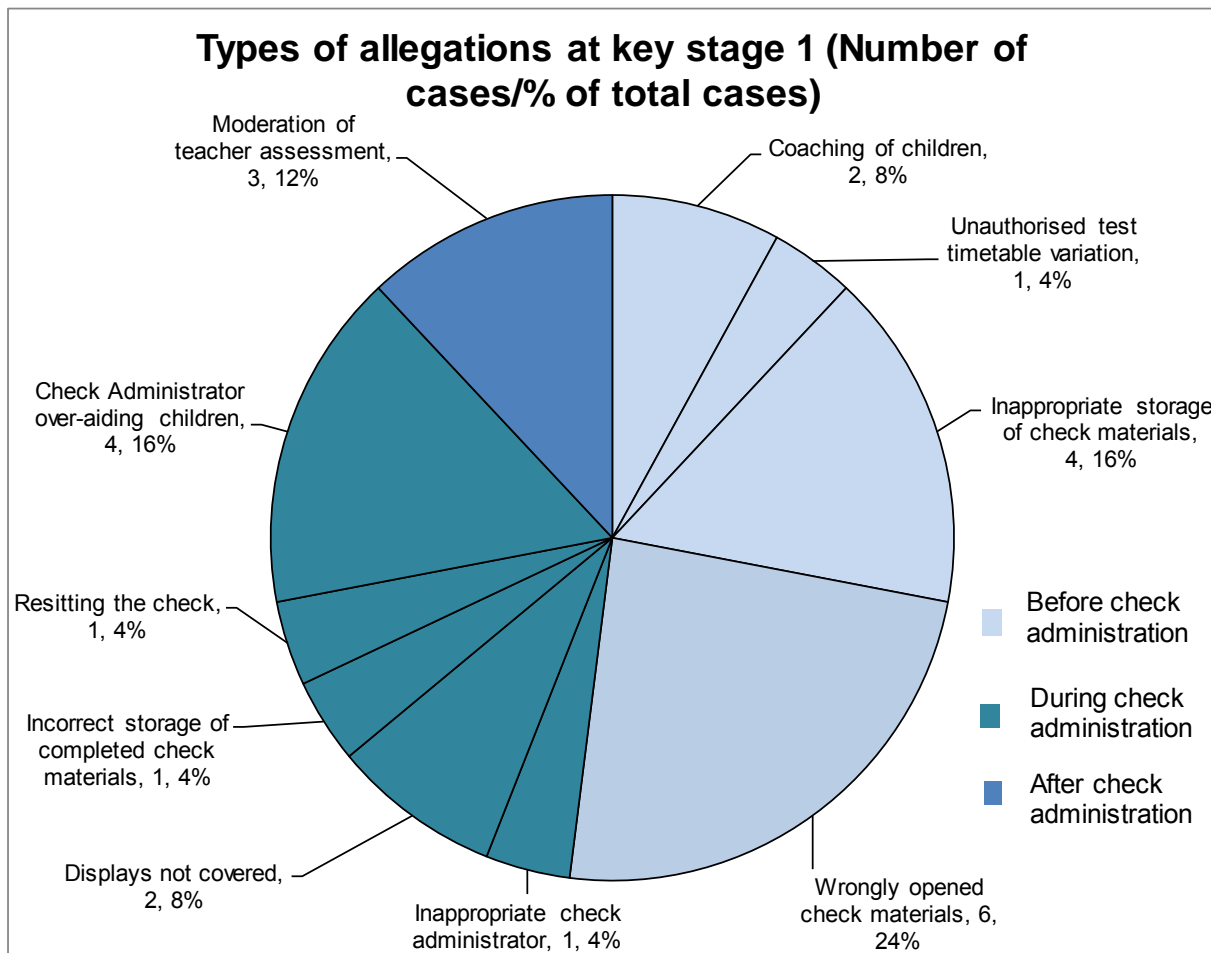
	Before check administration	During check administration	Moderation of teacher assessment
2010	0	0	4
2011	0	0	0
2012	13	9	3

13 of the 25 cases reported relating to key stage 1 assessment and the phonics screening check were in the ‘Before check administration’ category. The most common allegation in this category was that check materials had been opened wrongly. This concerned six cases; five of which were self-reported by schools after the check materials had been opened.

There were nine cases in the ‘During check administration’ category. The most common allegation in this category was of check administrators over-aiding children. In three of

the four cases, local authority monitoring visitors observed children being over-aided. In each instance, the monitoring visitors took appropriate action by discussing the issues with the check administrator to ensure that the check was properly administered.

The following pie chart shows the breakdown of the allegations received, also represented proportionally by category.



## Maladministration allegations at key stage 2

Allegations of maladministration reported to STA relating to the key stage 2 assessments can be divided into three categories:

- Before test administration – between the delivery of test materials to schools and when they are administered to children.
- During test administration – from when the tests are administered to children until the completed test scripts are sent for external marking.
- After test administration – once marked test scripts have been returned to schools.

## Key stage 2 – 2010 to 2012 – number/% of allegations reported in each category

	Before test administration		During test administration		After test administration	
	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases	No. of cases	% of total cases
2010	45	26.8	103	61.3	20	11.9
2011	60	20.5	224	76.7	8	2.7
2012	73	21.2	261	75.7	11	3.2

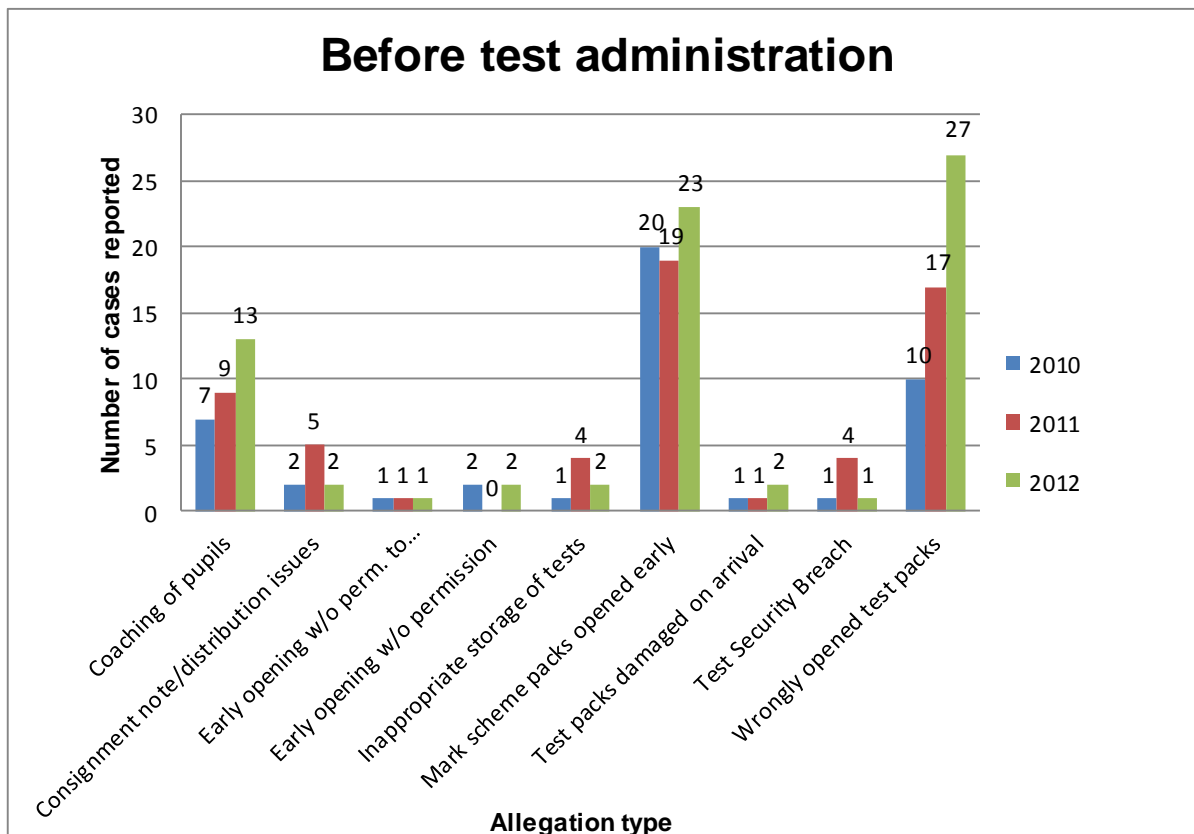
There were increases in the number of cases reported relating to the categories 'Before test administration' and 'During test administration' in 2012 compared to 2011. However, the percentages of cases in each category were comparable across the two years.

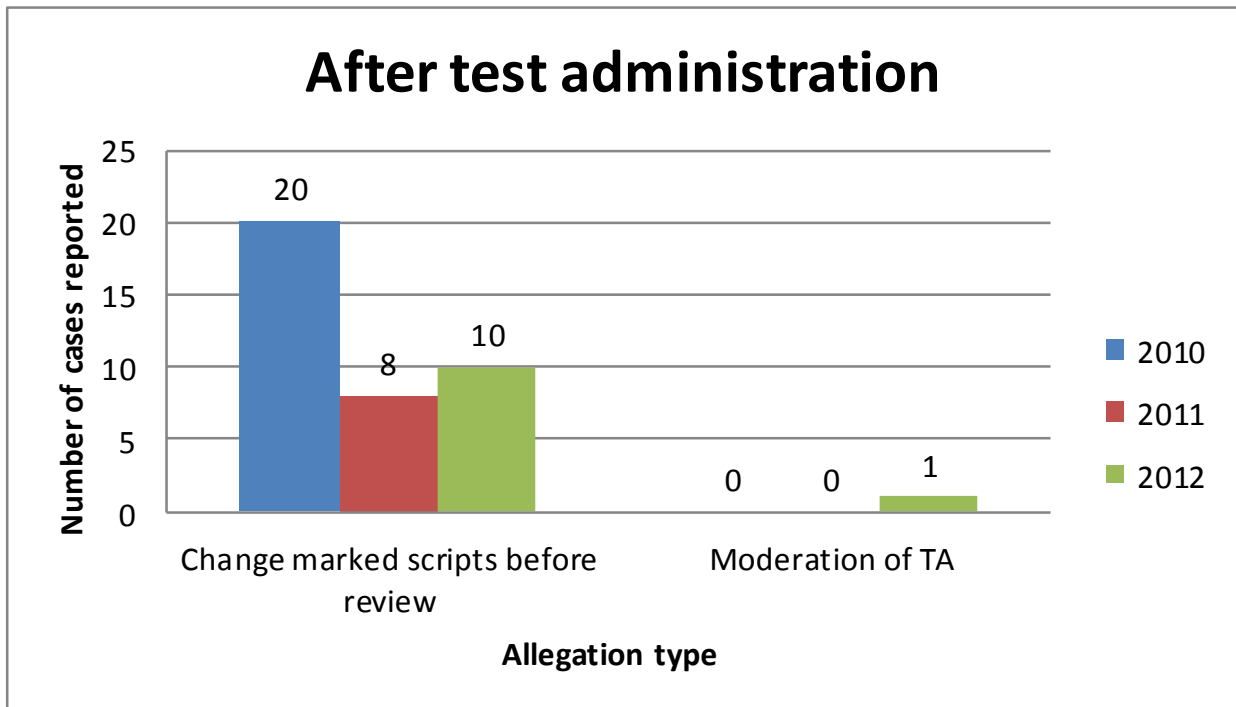
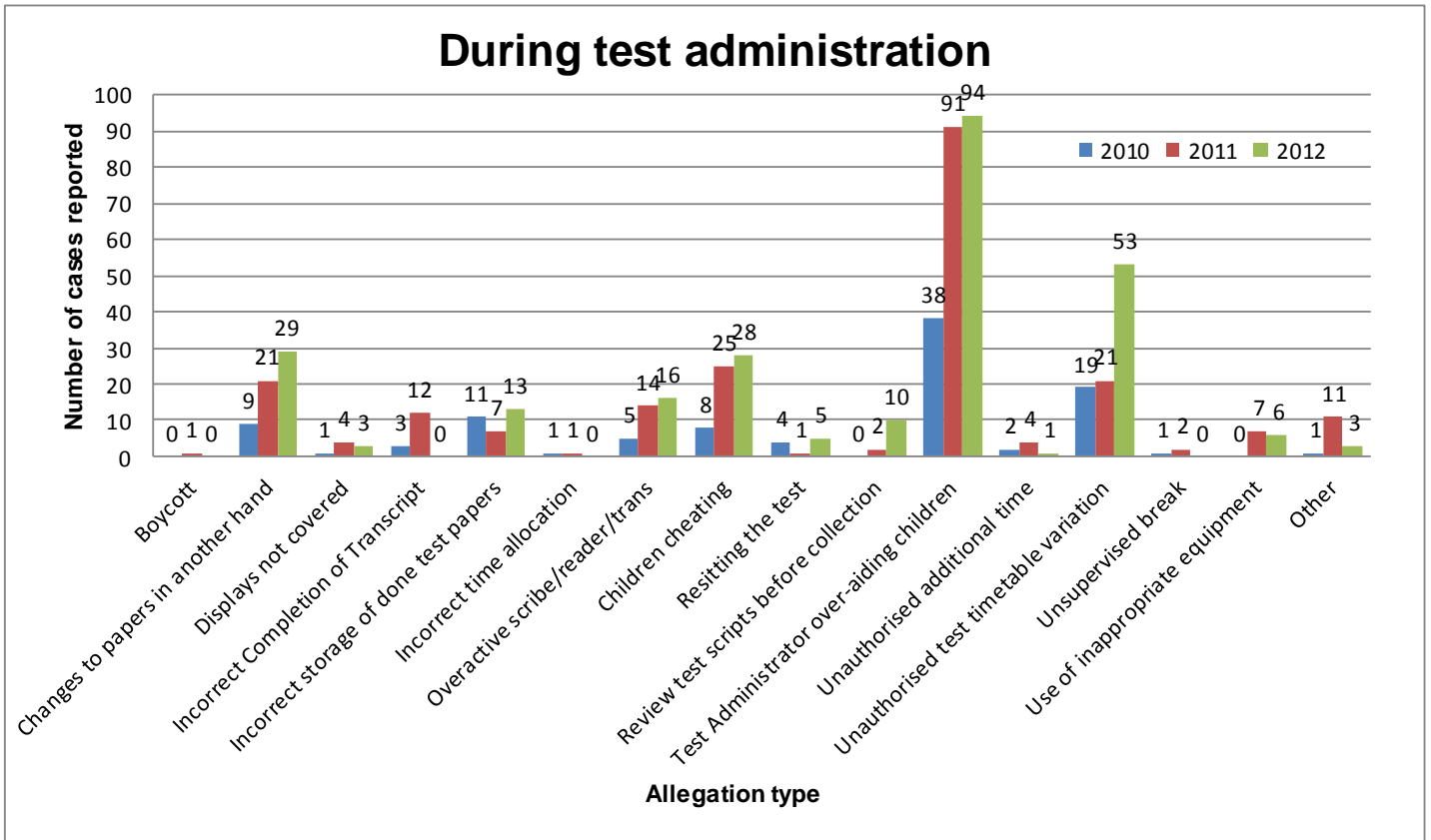
The increase in the number of cases reported in the 'During test administration' category can be attributed to the increase unauthorised timetable variations reported in 2012. The 2012 figure was 53, compared to 21 cases in 2011 and 19 in 2010. The increase in the number of unauthorised timetable variation cases reported directly correlates with the increase in the number of days after the tests that schools were allowed to administer timetable variations in 2012 (from two to five days after the original test dates).

The majority of cases reported relating to key stage 2 assessment and the national curriculum tests were in the 'During test administration' category: 75.7 per cent. This is comparable to the 76.7 per cent of cases in this category, reported in 2011. The most common allegation in this category was of test administrators over-aiding children (94 cases), which was comparable to the number reported in 2011: 91 cases. There were also 16 cases reported of overactive scribes, readers, translators and prompters; a similar figure to the 14 cases reported in 2011.

In the 'After test administration' category, there was a small increase in 2012 cases of 3.2%, compared to 2.7 per cent in 2011. However, the percentage remained low when compared to 11.9 per cent in 2010. The decrease in the percentage of cases in this category since 2010 is a result of the reduction in the number of cases of changes to marked scripts before review being reported. This reduction followed the introduction of more comprehensive advice to markers about error trapping on children's scripts, which meant there were fewer opportunities for children's answers to be changed before their scripts were sent for review.

The following graphs show the breakdown and comparison of allegation types from 2010-12, in each category.





## Amendments to, and annulments of, test results

Where a school believes a child has gained an advantage as a result of cheating, the headteacher notifies STA of the incident. In doing this, they agree to the removal of marks for the specific questions where the child has gained an advantage or the annulment of the child's paper.

Following an investigation, if STA's maladministration team finds that the accuracy or correctness of a child's test results is in doubt, the team makes recommendations for the amendment to or annulment of results to the school. The school then has the opportunity to either accept or reject the recommendations.

Where the school accepts the recommendations, the maladministration team make these amendments at the school's request. Where the school rejects the recommendations, the case is referred to STA's maladministration committee, which makes the decision to accept or reject the recommendations of the team.

In 2012, 16 schools self-reported children cheating and the maladministration team made recommendations to amend or annul the results of 43 schools. Of these 43 schools, 36 accepted the team's recommendations. Seven schools rejected the team's recommendations and these cases were referred to the maladministration committee. Six of the seven cases led to either annulment of - or amendments to - children's results. One case resulted in the release of the children's results without amendment following the committee's decision.

## Amendment and annulment breakdown by school

In summary:

- 16 schools had either amendments to, or annulment of, children's results after notifying STA of a child cheating.
- 36 schools had either amendments to, or annulment of, children's results following recommendations made by the maladministration team.
- Six schools had amendments to, or annulments of, children's results following committee decisions. '

In total, 58 schools (approximately 0.36 per cent of the total number of schools participating in the key stage 2 tests) had cases that led to an amendment to, or annulment of, children's results. Only one of the 58 cases related to the level 6 tests: this was self-reported by the school. One case related to the administration of the English writing sample.

## Number of key stage 2 schools with amendments or annulments to results in 2010–12

	Schools with whole cohort annulments	Schools with individual child annulments/ amendments to results	Percentage of all cases reported at key stage 2
2010	1	10	6.5
2011	7	30	12.7
2012	6	52	16.8

## Amendment and annulment breakdown by child and subject

The following amendments and annulments were made to children's key stage 2 national curriculum test results:

- 399 children at 20 schools had test results annulled in the levels 3-5 English reading and/or mathematics tests.
- 70 children at one school had test results annulled in the English writing sample.
- 114 children at 39 schools had test results amended in the levels 3-5 English reading and/or mathematics tests.
- One child at one school had a level 6 mathematics test result amended.
- Less than 0.1 per cent of children participating in the tests had test results either amended or annulled.

The very low percentages of schools where cases of maladministration led to either amendment to, or annulment of, children's results illustrates that the vast majority of schools who administered the 2012 national curriculum tests did so in accordance with STA's statutory guidance.



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