



Standards
& Testing
Agency

2019 maladministration report

**National curriculum assessments at key
stage 1 and key stage 2**

January 2021

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Introduction

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) investigates any matter concerning the accuracy of results, relating to the:

- key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests and assessments
- phonics screening check

We investigate any concerns alongside local authorities (LAs), in accordance with the [‘Maladministration investigation procedures’](#)¹.

Maladministration refers to any act that could jeopardise the integrity, security or confidentiality of the national curriculum assessments and could lead to results that do not reflect the unaided attainment of pupils. This could refer to a range of actions, including:

- test papers being incorrectly opened
- pupils cheating
- over-aiding of pupils by test administrators
- changes being made to a pupil’s test script by someone other than the pupil
- inflation or deflation of teacher assessment (TA) judgements

This report:

- details the numbers, sources and types of allegations of maladministration reported to STA throughout the 2018 test cycle across KS1 and KS2
- presents the numbers of amendments and annulments to results made in 2019
- provides comparisons with the maladministration data from 2017 and 2018

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stages-1-and-2-investigating-allegations-of-maladministration

National curriculum assessments in 2019

Number of schools participating in 2019

16, 507 schools participated in end of KS1 assessments.

16,424 schools participated in the phonics screening check.

16,189 schools participated in end of KS2 national curriculum tests.

Changes to statutory assessment in 2019

STA removed the requirement for schools to submit a notification form to notify STA of alternative locations. In previous years, schools were required to submit a notification form to STA. The headteacher was responsible for ensuring that the security and confidentiality of the tests was maintained and the tests were administered according to the test administration guidance.

Maladministration investigation procedures

In 2019, STA introduced 'representations provided by schools under investigations'. If STA considered that there was doubt over the accuracy or correctness of results, the headteacher was notified and provided with their conclusions and findings. The headteacher was given the opportunity to make written representations on behalf of the school (and a deadline of 10 working days was given for receipt of these representations by the investigator). Any representations that were received by the deadline were then considered by STA, who made the final decision at the decision meeting (part of the existing process).

Maladministration investigations in 2019

Main findings from 2019

The main findings from 2019 maladministration investigations were as follows:

- there was an increase in the number of KS1 maladministration investigations in 2019 compared to 2018 from 149 to 157 (see Table 1)
- there was a decrease in the number of KS2 maladministration investigations in 2019 compared to 2018 from 644 to 586 (see Table 1)
- there was a decrease in the number of cases at KS1 resulting in amendment or annulment of results from 2018 to 2019 —there were 13 cases, compared to 21 in 2018
- there was a decrease in the number of cases at KS2 resulting in amendment or annulment of results from 2018 to 2019—there were 73 cases in 2019, compared to 122 in 2018
- the main source for allegations was schools—this made up 50% of investigations (48% in 2018)
- the main type of allegation was a test administrator over-aiding—this made up 35% of investigations (33% in 2018)

Breakdown of maladministration cases in 2019

The table below details the number of cases of maladministration investigated by STA at each key stage from 2017 to 2019.

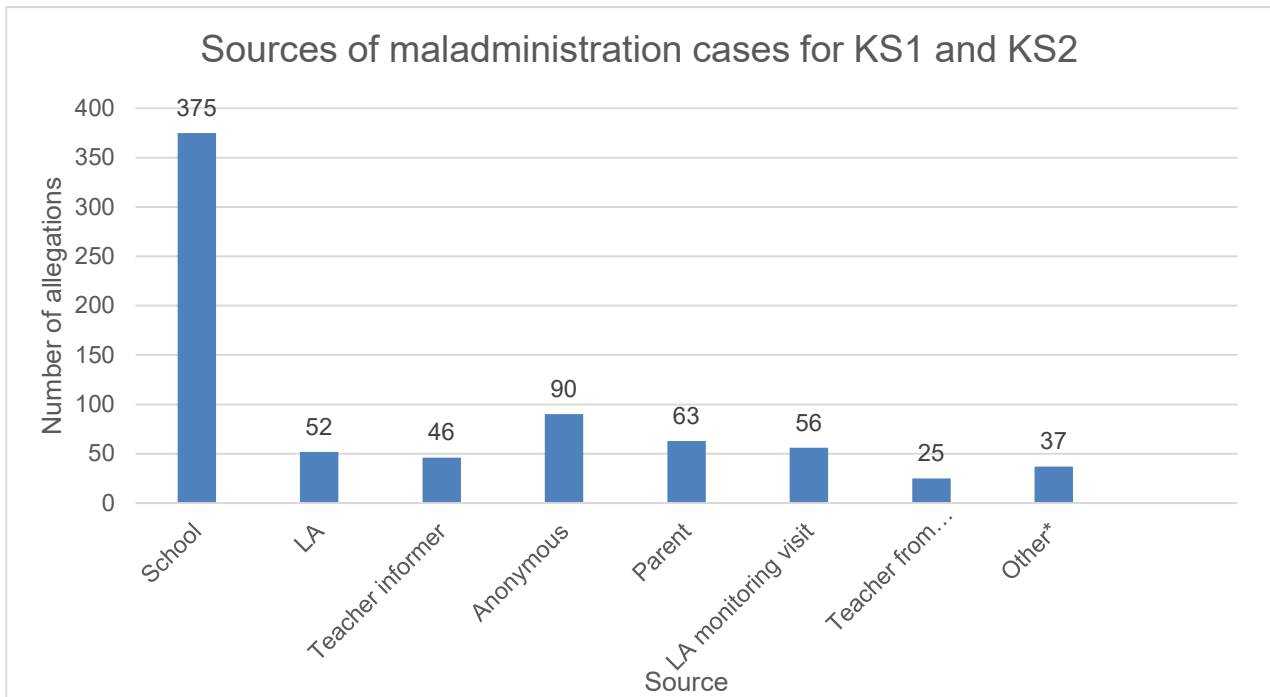
Table 1: Total number of cases investigated at KS1 and KS2

Year	Total number of KS1 and KS2 investigations	Total number of KS1 investigations	Total number of KS2 investigations
2017	599	138	461
2018	793	149	644
2019	743	157	586

Sources of reported maladministration cases

Cases of alleged maladministration are reported to STA from a number of different sources. Across both KS1 and KS2, schools self-reported 50% of cases. LAs reported 14% of cases, including those reported following LA monitoring visits.

Diagram 1: Sources of reported cases in 2019



'Other' sources within diagram 1 include:

- governing body
- parent of another child
- marker
- secondary school
- referrals from Ofqual

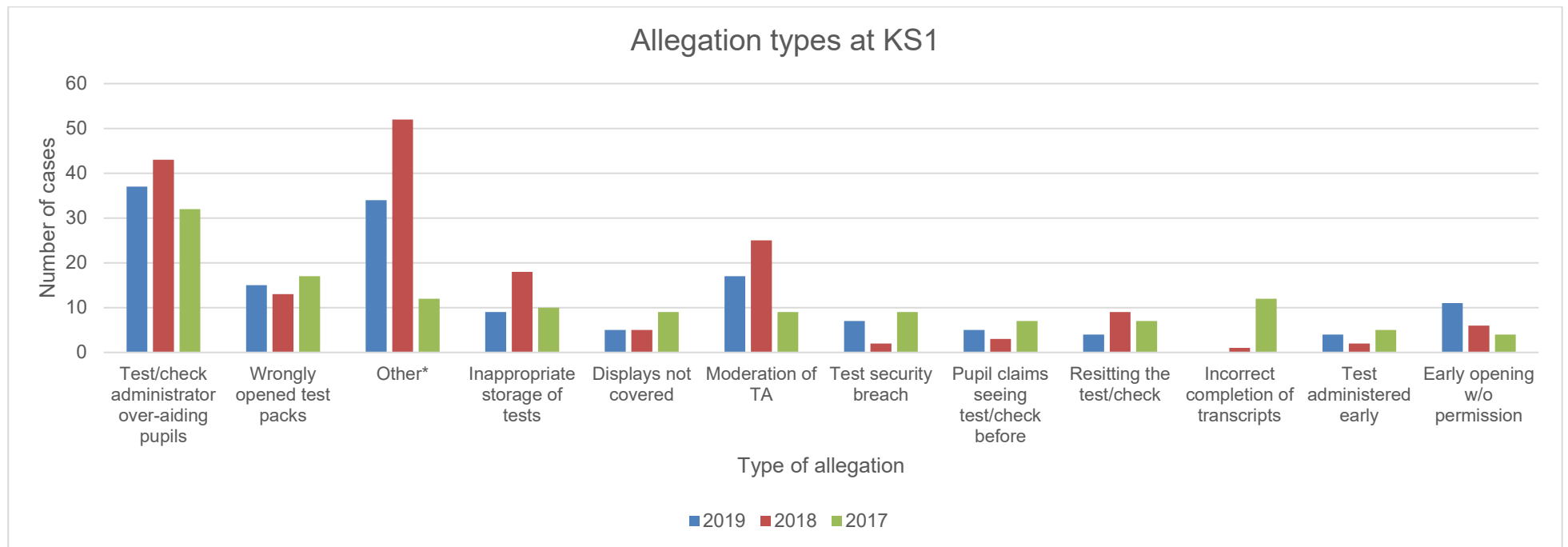
Key stage 1 maladministration investigations

In 2019:

- 60 allegations were made about the administration of the phonics screening check
- 80 allegations were made about KS1 tests
- 17 allegations were made about teacher assessment

The graph below gives a breakdown of allegations by type.

Diagram 2: Allegation types at KS1



'Other' allegations within Diagram 2 include:

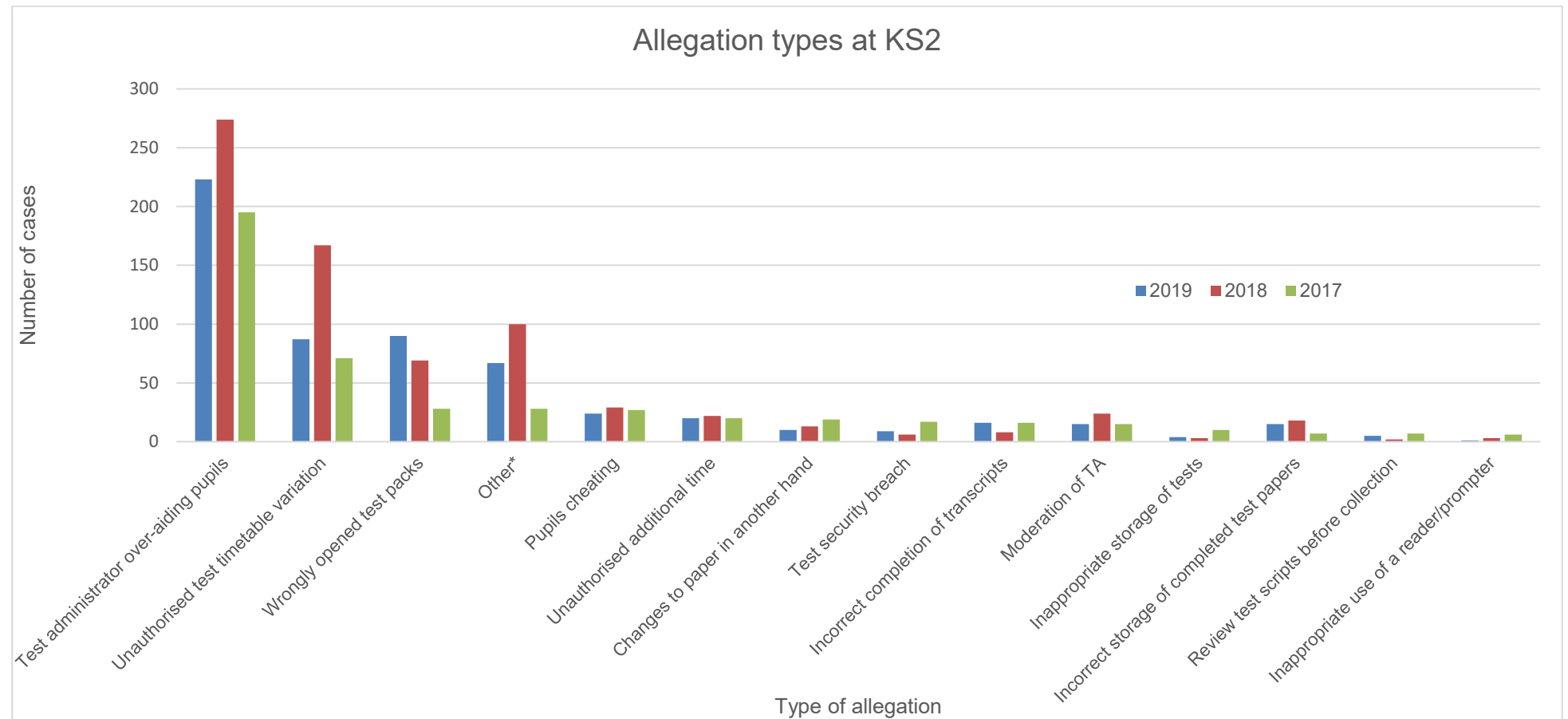
- incorrect papers given to pupils
- incorrect storage of completed test papers
- inappropriate room for the test or check
- inappropriate test or check administrator
- lost test or check materials
- over-emphasising the spelling, over-active reader or over-active translator
- unauthorised test or check timetable variation
- inappropriate coaching of pupils
- pupil cheating
- changes to paper in another hand
- mark scheme opened early
- test or check packs damaged on arrival

The largest number of allegations at KS1 were about test or check administrators over-aiding pupils during the KS1 tests and phonics screening check.

Key stage 2 maladministration investigations

There were a total of 586 maladministration allegations received for KS2 in 2019. 569 allegations related to the tests and 17 allegations related to teacher assessment.

Diagram 3: Allegation types at KS2



'Other' allegations within Diagram 3 include:

- incorrect papers given to pupils
- test packs damaged on arrival
- incorrect time allocation
- lost test materials
- coaching of pupils
- early opening without permission
- test administered to a child working below the level
- resitting the test
- consignment note or distribution issues
- test administered early

The most common allegation type at KS2 in 2019 concerned test administrators over-aiding pupils during the tests. In 2019, 35% of allegations were of this type, compared to 33% in 2018.

Amendments and annulments to test results

Following an investigation, if STA finds that the accuracy of a pupil's test results is in doubt, a senior manager makes a decision to amend or annul results. STA communicates this decision to the school.

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

Amendment and annulment at key stage 1

8.3% of all KS1 cases in 2019 resulted in an amendment or annulment of results. In summary:

- 2 schools had pupils' KS1 teacher assessment results amended or annulled
- 6 schools had their KS1 test results annulled—these schools were informed that they should not use these results to inform their teacher assessment judgements
- 5 schools had their phonics screening check results amended or annulled—these schools were advised that they would need to re-administer the phonics screening check in 2018 to the pupils affected

Table 2: Number of schools with amendments or annulments to KS1 results from 2017 to 2018

Year	Teacher assessment	National curriculum tests	Phonics screening check	% of all cases at KS1
2017	2	7	10	13.8
2018	4	9	8	14
2019	2	6	5	12

In 2019, approximately 0.07% of schools that participated in the KS1 assessments had their results amended

Amendment and annulment at key stage 2

In summary, for KS2 in 2019:

- 73 schools had pupils' results amended or annulled, as a result of maladministration
- of the 73 schools with amended or annulled results, 8 schools had a whole cohort annulment for at least one subject

- 24 schools had pupils' test results amended or annulled after notifying STA of a pupil cheating

Table 3: Number of schools with amendments or annulments to KS2 results from 2017 to 2019

Year	Schools with whole cohort annulments of at least one subject	Schools with individual pupil annulments or amendments to results in at least one subject	Total of schools with amendments or annulments to their results	% of all cases at KS2
2017	24	54	78	16.9
2018	34	88	122	15.8
2019	8	65	73	12.5

In 2019, approximately 0.45% of schools that participated in the KS2 assessments had their results amended.



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