

Key Stage Test Results 2008

The DCSF schedule of publications

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000782/index.shtml> includes the following entries for August:

National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 2 in England, 2008 (Provisional). This SFR will be published on the first Tuesday in August (5th August 2008)

National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 3 in England, 2008 (Provisional). This SFR will be published on the second Tuesday in August (12th August 2008)

Since National Curriculum tests were introduced over a decade ago, there have been a number of changes to the process by which the tests are run and marked. The profile of national tests can be affected by such changes.

Readers will be aware that the National Curriculum tests are a measurement of achievement against the precise attainment targets of the National Curriculum rather than any generalised concept of ability in any of the subject areas. Pupil performance can be affected by a number of factors which mean that small year on year changes should not necessarily be considered to be significant.

Administrative changes to the 2008 National Curriculum tests, which include the removal of borderlining, were announced recently by the National Assessment Agency (NAA). The NAA press notice can be found [here](#). For 2008 the removal of borderlining is the change which is likely to have the biggest impact on the national results profile. A document listing the changes over the last decade to the testing process and an assessment of the impact of those changes can be found [here](#).

Analysis of results data for previous years by NAA allows us to estimate the impact of the process changes. This analysis indicates that the removal of borderlining in 2008 is expected to cause a fall in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level by up to two percentage points. The impact will vary by Key Stage, level and subject with English being affected more by the removal of borderlining than either mathematics or science.

The SFRs to be published in August will include a guide to interpreting the national and LA figures and year on year changes. This will cover both the process changes mentioned above and the impact of other factors such as the reduction in absence levels.