

# Pre-key stage standards: information for parents



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency



# Pre-key stage standards

## What are the pre-key stage standards?

The pre-key stage standards are teacher assessment and attainment target setting tools. Schools use them to support pupils who are working below the standard of the national curriculum tests and assessments but remain engaged in subject-specific study.

This includes pupils who have not completed the full programme of study for the relevant key stage – for example, those who joined the school part way through the academic year and those who have English as an additional language.

There are two pre-key stage standards available for schools to use - the:

- [pre-key stage 1 standards](#)<sup>1</sup>, for the optional assessment of pupils in year 2
- [pre-key stage 2 standards](#)<sup>2</sup>, for the statutory assessment of pupils in year 6

Pupils who are not engaged in subject-specific study are assessed using the [engagement model](#)<sup>3</sup>.

## Will my child be assessed using pre-key stage standards?

If you have a child in year 6 who is engaged in subject-specific study but working below the standard of the national curriculum, they will not take part in the end of key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests, which some people refer to as SATs. Instead, your child will be assessed under the pre-key stage 2 standards.

Your child's teacher will make a teacher assessment judgement based on several 'pupil can' statements linked to one of three subject areas:

- English language comprehension and reading
- English writing
- mathematics

The 'pupil can' statements seek to determine if pupils can demonstrate recognisable and specific skills, knowledge and understanding in these subject areas. The assessment will be supported by a broad range of evidence, which will come from your child's day-to-day work in the classroom.

---

1. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-key-stage-1-standards](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-key-stage-1-standards)

2. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-key-stage-2-standards](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-key-stage-2-standards)

3. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-engagement-model-information-for-parents](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-engagement-model-information-for-parents)

Ultimately, the assessment will help teachers understand how pupils are performing and where they may need further support to allow them to progress.

The pre-key stage 1 standards can be used to assess pupils in year 2 to help measure pupils' progress and inform classroom practice. However, this assessment became optional from the academic year 2023 to 2024 and is at the school's discretion to administer.

## **Will I receive information on my child's performance?**

If your child is assessed under the pre-key stage 2 standards in year 6, their school will include information about your child's achievements and progress in the subjects studied in their annual school report, provided to you at the end of the school year. In some cases, schools will report to parents more regularly.

If you have a child in year 2 and their school chooses to assess them under the optional pre-key stage 1 standards, they may include information about this in your child's annual school report, but it is not mandatory for schools to do so.

## **Who else will be able to see my child's results?**

At the end of KS2, schools must report to the Department for Education (DfE):

- which pupils were assessed using the pre-key stage 2 standards
- the standard each pupil achieved

DfE collects this data to understand how many pupils are assessed in this way and what the outcomes of the assessments are. DfE also includes the outcomes of teacher assessments under the pre-key stage 2 standards when calculating primary school attainment and progress measures at national, regional and school level. However, information on individual pupil performance under the pre-key stage 2 standards is not publicly released.

DfE no longer collects any information on the use of the pre-key stage 1 standards and schools are not required to report assessment outcomes for this, as this assessment is now optional.

## **Further information**

Your child's teacher will be able to answer any questions you may have about the pre-key stage standards.

For more details, you can also visit [www.gov.uk/STA](http://www.gov.uk/STA).

© Crown copyright 2025

Pre-key stage standards: information for parents

Electronic version product code: STA/25/8937/e ISBN: 978-1-78957-931-4



You may re-use this document/publication (not including logos or images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3).

This document is available for download at [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications).

Image: [iStock.com/JohnnyGreig](https://www.istock.com/JohnnyGreig)