

# Primary Assessments 2026

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

April 2026

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### How to submit my results

#### Why are the deadline dates before the published DfE submission dates?

Staffordshire County Council ask for submissions at the requested dates to allow time for any work with schools to ensure that the data fully represents their pupils' achievements before a timely submission to the DfE on your behalf.

Delays in receiving your results slows the tight process timeline in getting all required Staffordshire County Council schools submitted to the DfE within the scheduled deadlines.

Process step	Description
Processing week	Staffordshire County Council collate and import phonics results from over 300 schools into the checking system
Data assurance checks	Check all information has been submitted, check for missing pupils, duplicate children etc
School checks	Reports are produced and sent to all schools allowing them time to check they are happy with the results they are submitting
Updates where required	Staffordshire County Council will update any marks, change data where required.
Submission to the DfE	Submission is made to the DfE COLLECT site on behalf of Staffordshire Schools
Cross county checks	As other Local Authority's upload their submissions, Staffordshire County Council has a responsibility to check duplicate submissions across county borders before the final date of collection

## **What format can I send my data in?**

Your submission should be made in XML in the DfE specified format. We are unable to accept submissions in word or excel

## **Can I change a result of a pupil?**

Yes, if within deadlines.

Please resubmit your data via the perspective lite file request. Please mark it with a version number so we can see it is a new version and please remember to also resubmit your permission to check form with the updated file name.

## **How do I correct a mistake after submitting my data?**

You can contact the Schools Data Team or resubmit your data via the perspective lite file request. Please mark it with a version number so we can see it is a new version and please remember to also resubmit your permission to check form with the updated file name.

## **How do I get help from the DfE**

### **How do I contact the DfE National Curriculum Assessments helpline?**

Their contact number is 0300 303 3013

### **I can't access NCA tools - who do I contact?**

Phone: 0300 303 3013

Email: [assessments@education.gov.uk](mailto:assessments@education.gov.uk)

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Queries**

Please refer to the latest version of the Early years foundation stage profile handbook [Early years foundation stage profile handbook - GOV.UK](#)

### **A pupil in my cohort has Special Educational Needs (SEN) do I need to submit for them?**

Yes. Children are not exempt from the profile on the basis of SEND and a profile should be submitted for all pupils in the cohort. For additional information please refer to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook - Completing the EYFS Profile - Completing the profile for children with SEND.

**For my EYFSP submission I have used the A code for pupils with SEN or pupils who have recently joined the school - is this ok?**

No. The A code (the assessment rating for a child who has an exemption) should only be used for children who have an individual exemption on the grounds of religious or philosophical beliefs. Schools who submit it for any other reason would not be meeting the statutory requirements of the EYFS. For further information please refer to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Completing the EYFS profile - Exemptions.

**A Reception pupil started after the May half term - do I submit the profile for them or does the previous school?**

If a child moves schools during the summer term the schools must agree which of them will complete the profile. In general, if a child starts at a new school on the first day of the second half of the summer term (or any time after that), then the previous school should submit the data. If a child moves school at any time before the summer term, then the new school should submit the data. Please refer to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - EYFS profile data collection and submission - Children transferring schools.

**A child in our school is going to remain in EYFS provision beyond the age of 5 - do I need to submit for them?**

No. In these exceptional circumstances you will not have to submit the profile for this child, as assessment should continue throughout the EYFS provision and the profile should be submitted only once at the end of the year before the child moves to year 1. However, please let the Schools Data Team know the pupil details so they can update the records to indicate that a profile will not be submitted until the following year. Please refer to the additional information in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - EYFS profile data collection and submission - Children who remain in EYFS provision beyond the age of 5.

**I have a pupil that joined our school from another country this academic year - do I need to submit for them?**

Yes. A submission is still required for pupils in this scenario. The EYFS profile must be completed for all children, including those who have not spent a long time in the school due to illness, arriving from abroad or not starting school until a substantial part of the year has gone by.

## Phonics Queries

### Which children do not have to sit the check?

Pupils shouldn't take the check if they:

- have not completed the first year of KS1 English programme of study
- haven't shown any understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences.
- have limited fluency in English.
- have recently moved to the country and are unable to understand letters and sounds in English.
- Use British sign language
- are non-verbal or selectively mute.

### If a child arrives at a school just before or during the check, do they need to take it?

Yes, unless any of the above criteria apply

### A pupil was absent during phonics testing week - what do I do?

The pupil will be able to take the test during the absentee testing period which is Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

### What happens if a child is absent for both weeks of the check period?

He/she has to be marked as absent when submitting the results.

### A pupil goes to two schools - who should submit the results?

The main registration school should submit the marks for the pupil. Please ensure you speak to the other school to agree who is submitting and duplication is avoided.

### Which children have to re-take the check in Y2?

Children who:

- didn't reach the expected standard in Y1 the previous year.
- were absent when the check took place in Y1.
- had recently arrived in the country when the check took place in Y1 and could not speak confidently in English.
- entered the schooling system in Y2

**If a pupil doesn't meet the phonics pass mark in year 2 - can they resit again in year 3?**

No. Pupils can only resit once in year 2.

**Who is allowed to administer the check with the children?**

The check must be carried out one-to-one by a teacher or suitably trained staff member. Schools must ensure that all check materials are kept secure and confidential.

**How long will I need to do the test with a class of 30 children?**

As a guide, 1 day or 2 half days should be sufficient. Each check is likely to take no more than 10 minutes (including admin).

**Do I need to cover any wall displays?**

If you believe a display could help children in anyway, it should be removed/covered before the check starts.

**What adaptations can we make to the check materials for children with SEN?**

Adaptations should be based on normal classroom practice for pupils with specific needs. Modified versions of the check can be downloaded from NCA portal from Monday 8th June. Children who use coloured overlays as part of normal classroom practice, can do so during the check.

These include versions with no pictures/black and white pictures (for those children who would find them distracting). You can make the following changes to these downloadable materials:

- change the font
- change the font size
- have fewer words per page
- printed onto different coloured paper.

It is not possible to list all the circumstances in which pupils may need adaptations. If you need to discuss access arrangements to meet a pupil's specific needs, you should use the 'Message us - access arrangements' form within the 'Test administration' tab on the NCA Portal.

**Can the check be done in more than one sitting for children who find it difficult to concentrate?**

Yes, but 'children should be isolated from the rest of the cohort during a rest break and the check must be completed on the same day'.

**How long can you give a child to read a word?**

There is no time limit.

**What happens if a child reads a word incorrectly, but then self corrects?**

Self-correction is allowed, but children must not be prompted to 'have another go'.

**If a child sounds out a word but doesn't blend it (ie. say the word), what happens?**

It has to be marked as incorrect.

**What happens if a child reads a word correctly and then changes his/her mind and reads something else?**

It has to be marked as incorrect.

**If a child is struggling, can I stop the check before the end?**

Yes, at any time.

**What should I write on the answer sheet?**

You only need to show whether the word was read correctly/incorrectly. However, it can be very useful to write what the child actually said if they make a mistake, so you can see what they might need to practise. Mistakes can also be used for a question level analysis to see if there were common mistakes made by more than one child. This could inform future teaching.

**Management Information System Queries****What SIMS Version do I need to be on to access the Key Stage Assessment Wizards?**

Schools will need to be on SIMS version 7.228 to access the Key Stage Assessment Wizards. To check your version of SIMS, please click on the Help button at the top of your SIMS screen and select About SIMS.Net, this will then show the version number.

**I cannot find or see the SIMS Key Stage Assessment Wizards.**

Following the upgrade to SIMS 7.228 the appropriate Key Stage Assessment Wizards should be available to use, however in some schools it may be missing. If you are unable to find the relevant Wizards, please refer to our guidance notes on KB0011883 <http://support.entrust-ed.co.uk>

## **Which SIMS Key Stage Assessment Wizard do I need to use for Key Stage 1?**

As the Key Stage 1 Wizard is no longer a statutory requirement, ESS SIMS have NOT provided a 2026 KS1 wizard so schools will need to re-use the 2024 KS1 wizard and edit the membership dates accordingly.

### **I am using SIMS Connected and cannot import or export the relevant files.**

Remember, when using SIMS Connected, SIMS cannot import/export files from and to your local machine.

Files will need to be transferred to or from SIMS Connected before/after the import and export processes can be performed.

If you have any questions or would like further support: Schools subscribing to Entrust can contact the Service Desk on 0333 300 1900 - [edtech@entrust-ed.co.uk](mailto:edtech@entrust-ed.co.uk) or visit the Entrust Support Portal, <http://support.entrust-ed.co.uk>

### **What do I need to do if I need to exclude or include additional pupils?**

The creation of a user defined group allows you to report on only the required students to be submitted, for example students who have left but need to be included or those who have recently arrived who need to be excluded. For further guidance, please refer to our guidance notes on KB0011883 <http://support.entrust-ed.co.uk>

## **Key Stage 1 Queries**

### **Do I have to send you my Key Stage 1 results?**

Key Stage 1 assessments are optional. Staffordshire County Council will not be collecting data from schools who do choose to undertake these assessments.

## **Key Stage 2 Queries**

### **Where do I submit my Key Stage 2 Teacher Assessments?**

These assessments are submitted to the STA via the NCA Portal. Schools can submit their assessments from Monday 18th May 2026, until the STA closes the submission window on Friday 26th June 2026.

<https://www.ncaportal.education.gov.uk/>