



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Reading and numeracy tests in Wales

**Information for parents
and carers of children
in Years 2 to 9**

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Information for parents and carers

Children in Years 2 to 9 now take national tests in reading and numeracy each summer. This leaflet explains what the tests involve and what the test results can tell you about your child’s learning.



Why do we have national tests in Wales?

Schools have always used tests to check how well children are doing. Having national tests developed especially for use in Wales means that teachers in all schools have the same information on the reading and numeracy skills of their pupils. The tests can show where individual children might need more help to improve their skills. Schools can compare achievement in reading and numeracy in their schools with what is happening locally.



What are the tests like?

Reading

The reading tests are made up of short questions based on two or more texts. Some of the questions check how well the text has been understood, others aim to find out if children are able to make judgements about what they are reading. Before the start of the test, children can try out some practice questions so that they will know what the different types of questions are like and what they may be asked.

There are reading tests in both English and Welsh. Each test takes up to an hour but younger children can take a break part-way through. Children in Years 4 to 9 in Welsh-medium schools take the tests in both languages. Children in Years 2 and 3 are only expected to take the Welsh reading test although schools may choose to let Year 3 pupils take the English reading test as well.

Numeracy

There are two kinds of numeracy tests.

1. The procedural test measures skills in things like numbers, measuring and data.
2. The reasoning test measures how well children can use what they know to solve everyday problems.

English and Welsh translations are available for both tests. Each of the numeracy tests takes up to half an hour, but again, younger children can take a break during the tests.



Do all children have to take the tests?

Most children should be able to take the tests, but some may need particular access arrangements. For example, large-print and Braille versions of the tests are available for children who have problems with their eyesight. A very small number of children may not be able to take the tests. Headteachers will carefully consider whether to enter some children for one or more of the tests.

When does testing take place?

Primary schools will give the tests to their pupils during the period from **5 to 12 May 2015**. Secondary and middle schools will give the tests to their pupils during the period **29 April to 12 May 2015**. Within this time, it is up to the school to timetable the tests and they should let you know the dates when your child will sit the tests. Children can take the tests in classroom groups or in larger groups, perhaps in a school hall.



What can the tests tell me about my child's learning?

The tests can provide useful information to add to what your child's teacher knows about their reading and numeracy from their work every day in the classroom. Teachers can use the results to identify strengths and also areas where more help may be needed. They may share this information with you at parent meetings.

However, any test can only look at a limited range of skills and abilities. The reading tests cannot provide any information on speaking, listening or writing skills. The numeracy tests cannot test your child's understanding of space and shape. Some children will not perform at their best on the day of the test. As a result, their test results alone may not give a full picture of their ability. Each test is designed to measure achievement across the range expected for each year group. The tests will not always give reliable information for children who are working at the extremes, or out of the range for their age.

It is important to discuss your child's progress with their teacher based on all the evidence they have, rather than just focusing on a single test result. It is also important to remember that children do not all make progress at the same rate.



How will I know how my child has done on the tests?

By the end of the summer term, your child's school will give you test results for each test that your child has taken. The results should be read alongside your child's annual report.

The tests provide two kinds of result, a standardised score and a progress measure. These two results are very different from results you may have come across in other situations, for example 9 out of 10 or 65%.



What is a standardised score?

Having a score of say '6 out of 10' does not take into account how hard a test is or show how one child has done compared with other children taking the test. If most of the others taking the test scored 9 out of 10, then 6 is not a good score. But if the average score was 2 out of 10, then 6 is a very good score. The standardised score from the national tests tells you how well your child has

done compared with other children of the same age (in years and months) taking the test at the same time. The average standardised score is set to 100 and about two-thirds of all children taking the test will have standardised scores between 85 and 115. So, a standardised score lower than 85 **might** suggest some difficulty with reading or numeracy as measured on the test.

In a few cases, the range of difficulty of the questions in the test may mean that it is not possible to register a standardised score for a child whose reading and numeracy skills are developing more slowly than would be expected. The score could only be given as 'less than 70'. If this is the case, your child's teacher will use other methods to assess how their skills are developing. One of the things a teacher might do is to let your child try the questions from a test for the year group below to see if this helps to get a better picture of where they may need more help to make progress.



Similarly, very high achievers can only be given a standardised score of 'more than 140' because the test does not measure the limit of their skills. Again, teachers will be able to give you more information about your child's ability.

What is a progress measure?

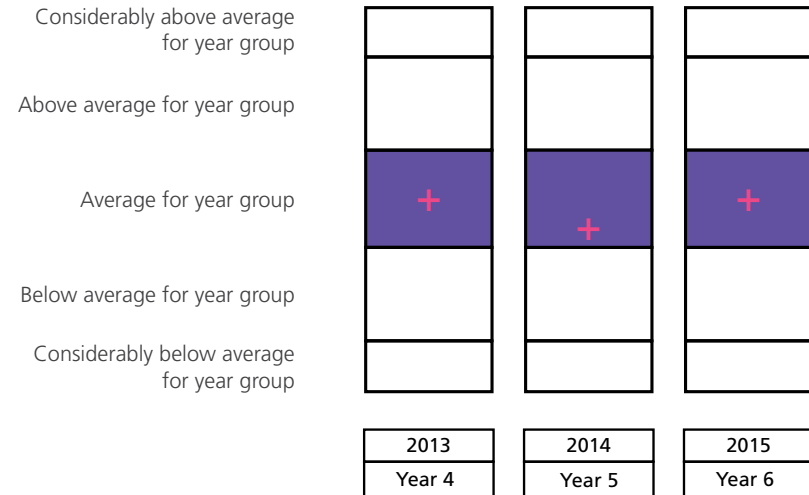
The progress measure for the test shows how well your child has done compared to every other learner taking the test in his or her year group. Looking at the progress measure from year to year will help you to track your child's achievement on the tests over time. Progress measures that are broadly similar from year to year would suggest that your child is making steady progress within their year group. Small variations from year to year are expected. If your child's marking remains in the same

shaded block from year to year this means your child is broadly maintaining their position in the year group. A movement between blocks across years (upward or downward) may suggest your child would benefit from greater support or challenge. Your child's teacher will be able to talk to you in more detail about the ways in which they are making progress in all aspects of reading or numeracy (not just on the tests) and what can be done to help to improve their skills.



Interpreting the progress measure charts

Procedural numeracy progress measure



This sample chart is taken from the results sheet produced for every child taking the tests. The child's baseline score in 2013 and then progress measure each year after is marked as a cross in a shaded block to show their test performance compared to other learners in their National Curriculum Year group. This child's chart shows that their scores for the Procedural Numeracy test are in line with the average for their year group in each of the three years. Over the three years they are making progress as expected and maintaining their position within their year group.



Should I help my child to prepare for the tests?

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No. The tests are just one piece of evidence about your child's achievement. The best way to prepare your child is to make sure that they are not worried or anxious.



Can I help my child to improve their reading and numeracy?

Yes, definitely! Getting involved in your child's learning while at home and out and about can make a big difference to their progress. Any of the following will be a huge help.

- Reading and talking about any kind of text such as books, magazines, web pages, leaflets, notices.
- Using numbers when shopping, planning trips, looking at football scores, times of TV programmes.
- Sharing activities that involve reading and numeracy such as cooking, playing board games, watching or playing sport, writing emails.
- Talking about words and numbers you come across in everyday life.
- For ideas on helping your children at home with fun activities go to www.facebook.com/beginsathome

Useful contacts

You can find more advice and guidance on supporting your child in reading and numeracy by visiting the following websites.

Education begins at home.

The things you do at home will help your child do so much better at school.

For some great ideas visit:

 [facebook.com/beginsathome](https://www.facebook.com/beginsathome)

Booktrust – has created a range of programmes and projects designed to help people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy reading and writing. www.booktrust.org.uk

National numeracy – help your child with numeracy.

www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/parents
(This website is only available in English.)

Bitesize – is the BBC’s free online resource to help children in the UK with their school work. www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize
(This website is only available in English.)

Lovereading4kids – will help you to explore books that will excite them and help them to fall in love with reading. www.lovereading4kids.co.uk
(This website is only available in English.)

Sumdog – is a site that offers games to make mathematics fun. They are all free to play with the option to subscribe for extra features. www.sumdog.com
(This website is only available in English.)

My local school – A website that provides information on schools’ performance across Wales. <http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk>

 [@edubeginsathome](https://twitter.com/edubeginsathome)

Estyn – find out more about how your child’s school is performing. www.estyn.gov.uk

Free school meals – find out if you are eligible. Go to www.gov.wales then go to Education and Skills and Schools section.

Change4life – gives you ideas and recipes to help you and your family be healthier and happier. www.change4lifewales.org.uk

MEIC – is the confidential helpline service for children and young people in Wales. From finding out what’s going on in your local area to helping deal with bullying. www.meiccymru.org

Summer reading challenge – help with reading through the summer holidays. www.summerreadingchallenge.org.uk

Hwb – the all Wales learning platform, full of useful resources. <http://hwb.wales.gov.uk>

Welsh in Education Resources Branch, Welsh Government Commissions Welsh and bilingual educational resources to support all National Curriculum subjects. You can get resources in a digital format through Hwb <http://hwb.wales.gov.uk/> and those in a print format are available from www.gwales.com.

For more information please contact welshresources@wales.gsi.gov.uk