

Level threshold tables

for year 7 progress tests in English and mathematics

2006



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Introduction

This booklet provides tables for converting marks on the year 7 progress tests into national curriculum levels.

Training and checking marking standards

All test papers are marked by trained markers, who mark the tests using the published mark schemes. A copy of the mark scheme was sent to all schools in the teacher packs for each subject. The procedures below are being followed in 2006.

- All appointed markers have a strong background in teaching the subject. All markers attended a full day's training in the use of the mark schemes.
- Each marker's marking is checked at least twice, once at the beginning of the marking process and once towards the end.
- For pupils whose total marks fall just below a level threshold, the markers review the original marking as a double-check. Review marking is carried out in black ink.

What to do when the results are received

Return of results

Schools will be notified of their pupils' test results through the return of completed marksheets by 4 July 2006. If they have not arrived by the end of the day on 4 July 2006, please contact the NAA external marking agency on 0870 2413540.

Checking results

The marking of pupils' scripts will have been checked carefully before the papers are returned to schools. However, schools may wish to undertake their own checks, particularly for any pupils who receive unexpected results. If it is considered that a pupil has been awarded the wrong level, a review can be requested. Guidance on requesting reviews is given in the *Information for schools* booklet, which was sent to schools in the week commencing 26 June 2006.

It is essential that requests for reviews follow the procedures set out in this booklet. This includes clearly identifying where the mark scheme has not been followed accurately in a question or questions. Requests for reviews must be dispatched to the NAA external marking agency by 14 July 2006 at the latest. No reviews can be discussed over the telephone.

Reporting results for the year 7 progress tests

There is no statutory requirement for schools to report year 7 progress test results. However, QCA would advise that it is good practice to give feedback to parents on pupils' performance in the tests and relate it to their overall performance during year 7 in English and mathematics. If the outcome of a review is pending, schools should report test results to parents as provisional. Schools may, if they wish, return the marked scripts to pupils.

How the levels are set

The national curriculum tests are written against the programmes of study and are designed to award levels that equate demand to the level descriptions.

QCA has in place a range of procedures, both statistical and judgemental, to ensure that the standards of performance required for the award of each level are maintained consistently from year to year. These procedures include extensive pre-testing of all test papers, obtaining the judgement of panels of teachers and the advice of the marking programme leader and deputy marking programme leaders once the marking is well under way. These procedures have enabled QCA to set threshold scores each year that have maintained standards since 1996.

Setting draft thresholds

QCA sets draft level thresholds with the test development agencies for each subject in January/March preceding the tests in May. The difficulty of the current test is considered by looking at pre-test data, which includes a number of measures designed to identify any variation in the underlying difficulty of the test papers from year to year. The draft level thresholds are used to inform the next stage of the process.

Setting level thresholds

Once the test has been taken and marking is under way, samples of marked scripts from year 7 pupils are collected from external markers. The scripts that fall close to the draft level thresholds are scrutinised in detail by senior markers.

A final level setting meeting is then convened in June to set the final level thresholds using all the evidence available.

The marks obtained by a sample of pupils in the 'live' tests are collected so that QCA can be aware of the impact of the decisions made in setting the thresholds.

Level thresholds

The mark schemes, which are provided in the teacher packs sent to schools with the test materials, give the acceptable answers for test questions and set out the criteria for the award of marks. They also contain guidance on the general criteria used by external markers in the application of the mark schemes. The marks awarded for each question are shown on pupils' scripts and the following method is used to note the marks awarded:

1 means that a creditworthy response has scored one mark

0 means that a response is not creditworthy.

Half marks are not awarded. Some questions are worth two or more marks.

Some pupils' test papers may contain two sets of marks – one in red and one in green. This occurs where markers' work is routinely and randomly checked. In all cases the green marks override the red.

The total number of marks awarded is recorded on each test paper and on the marksheet.

Pupils who narrowly fail to achieve level 3, the lowest level targeted by the tests, are awarded 'N'. There is no compensatory level awarded in the year 7 progress tests.

To arrive at an overall level for English and mathematics, the marks awarded on all the test papers in each subject are added together, then the tables on pages 6 and 7 are used to convert a pupil's total mark into a test level.

Pupils who were absent for one or more papers in a subject will be awarded 'A' overall for that subject.

The English tests

Reading test

The reading test is marked against the mark scheme, which includes descriptive criteria. For the more open questions, which carry several marks, judgements are made about how well a pupil's response fits these criteria.

Writing test

In marking the longer writing task, markers are required to make judgements against the criteria for *Sentence structure and punctuation*, *Text structure and organisation* and *Composition and effect* given in bands in the mark scheme. In marking the shorter writing task, markers are required to make judgements against criteria for *Sentence structure, punctuation and text organisation*, and *Composition and effect*. Markers are instructed to tick each page as they mark and to rule a line at the end of the pupil's writing. Markers are required not to place any further marks on the scripts.

Spelling test

The mark scheme gives the correct answers. The total number of correct spellings is converted to a mark using the table on the front page of the pupil's script.

Handwriting

Handwriting is assessed through the longer writing task. Marks are awarded according to the criteria given in the mark scheme. Pupils who are physically unable to write are awarded two marks.

The tables below give the mark ranges for the award of each pupil's year 7 progress test level for reading, writing and English overall.

Reading

| Level | Mark range |
|-------|------------|
| N | 0–13 |
| 3 | 14–21 |
| 4 | 22–40 |

Writing

| Level | Mark range |
|-------|------------|
| N | 0–13 |
| 3 | 14–25 |
| 4 | 26–38 |

English overall

| Level | Mark range |
|-------|------------|
| N | 0–27 |
| 3 | 28–47 |
| 4 | 48–78 |

The mathematics tests

Markers record the number of marks awarded in the margin of the test paper.

All questions, including those not attempted by the pupil, are marked with a '1', '0' or '-' (for 'no response').

Most of the questions carry one mark only, although some carry two. In some two-mark questions, if a pupil has not given the right answer, but there is evidence that an appropriate method or working has been used, '1' will be recorded in the appropriate mark space and '0' in the other space.

For the mental mathematics test, where pupils provided the correct answer, a score of '1' will have been recorded.

Where a pupil has left blank spaces, the marker will cross these through with a diagonal line.

Where the markers find answers which are not given explicitly in the mark scheme, they use their professional judgement to decide whether or not an answer is creditworthy.

Marks awarded for paper 1 and paper 2 and the mental mathematics test are totalled to provide an overall mark.

The table below gives the mark ranges for the award of each pupil's year 7 progress test level for mathematics.

| Level | Mark range |
|-------|------------|
| N | 0–34 |
| 3 | 35–65 |
| 4 | 66–100 |

About this publication

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|----------------------------|---|
| Who is it for? | Headteachers, English and mathematics teachers of year 7 pupils |
| What is it for? | This booklet provides tables for converting marks on the year 7 progress tests into national curriculum levels. |
| Related materials | Key stage 3 <i>Assessment and reporting arrangements</i> QCA/05/1638 |
| Contact information | NAA national curriculum tests helpline: 08700 60 60 40 Email: tests@naa.org.uk www.naa.org.uk/tests |

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