

Multiplication tables check

Trial administration guidance

January 2019

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1. Introduction

This document provides guidance for the sample of schools administering the multiplication tables check (MTC) during the trial period from Monday 18 February to Friday 1 March 2019. It includes information to help administrators:

- understand the requirements of the trial
- understand the role of the check administrator
- plan for the trial
- access the MTC system
- administer the check
- provide feedback on the MTC service and check administration process

1.1 Background

In January 2016, the government announced its intention to introduce the MTC during key stage 2. The check is intended to help teachers identify pupils who have not yet mastered this important mathematical skill so schools can give them additional support.

The <u>2017 primary assessment consultation</u>¹ invited views from schools and teachers on how and when the check should be administered. The preferred option was that the check should be taken at the end of year 4 and that it should not be burdensome for schools, both in terms of the time taken to administer the check and the requirements for reporting data. Following the consultation exercise, and having listened to this feedback, the department confirmed in September 2017 that the check would be administered to pupils at the end of year 4, and be designed so as to place minimal additional burdens on school staff and pupils.

The MTC will become statutory in the 2019/20 academic year.

1.2 Overview of the MTC trial

Schools will administer an on-screen check to assess whether pupils are able to recall their multiplication tables up to 12, through a set of timed questions. Pupils will answer 3 practice questions before the check begins.

The actual check will consist of 10 questions. Pupils will have 6 seconds to answer each question, with a 3-second pause between questions.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/primary-assessment-in-england

The purpose of the trial is to:

- test the end-to-end service before the national voluntary rollout in June 2019
- gather feedback from schools about how the check administration process and guidance can be improved

The text contained within some screenshots included in this guidance may change slightly before the trial, based on feedback from users.

1.3 Summary of actions for schools

As part of the trial in February 2019, you should:

- register pupils to take the check
- ensure that access arrangements are provided for any pupils who require them
- generate a school password and pupil identification numbers (PINs) on the days you are administering the check
- administer the check to pupils
- complete the headteacher's declaration form (HDF) to confirm you have administered the check according to this guidance
- view your pupils' results after submitting the HDF
- provide feedback to the MTC development team

1.4 Help and support

For queries regarding the MTC, including this trial, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email assessments@education.gov.uk.

1.5 Expiry date

This guidance will be reviewed and updated before the national voluntary pilot of the MTC between April to June 2019.

2. Preparing for the check

2.1 Preparing rooms

Schools should administer the check in a room that is quiet and provides a comfortable, well-lit space. When planning your timetable for pupils to take the check, you should consider how many pupils you will administer the check to at the same time. You may consider administering the check to a whole class, small groups or individuals, depending on the number of digital devices² and check administrators you have available. Pupils who have taken the check do not need to be kept separate from pupils who have not yet taken it.

To prepare rooms for the check, you should:

- remove or cover any displays or teaching materials that could provide pupils with an unfair advantage
- ensure seating arrangements will allow all pupils to work quietly and independently
- make sure pupils will not be distracted by other pupils or their digital devices
- ensure the digital devices that the pupils will use are switched on, charged and in good working order before pupils are admitted to the room

During the trial, your pupils will access the check through a web browser and sign in using a school password and PIN. They will need the MTC web address³ to access the check. It may be helpful for schools to ensure the sign-in page is loaded on devices before pupils enter the room.

2.2 Equipment required

Schools can use any of the following digital devices to access the check:

- PC
- Mac
- laptop
- tablet

² For the purpose of this document, the term 'digital devices' refers to the IT equipment that pupils will use to take the check (see section 2.2).

³ https://multiplication-tables-check-trial.service.gov.uk

2.3 Requirements for check administrators

The check should be administered by a member of school staff, such as a teacher or teaching assistant, who is:

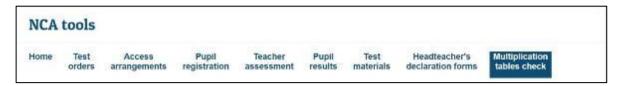
- · familiar with this guidance
- familiar with the digital devices being used
- known to the pupils
- able to provide feedback on the process

2.4 Registering pupils for the trial

In this trial, schools should administer the check to all pupils in year 4 unless the headteacher decides it would not be appropriate for a pupil to take the check (see section 2.5). After the check, schools will see how their pupils performed, but this data will not be published by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) or used to analyse the school's performance.

You will need to sign in to NCA tools⁴ to access your school's MTC homepage and register your pupils. The website will automatically log users out after 5 minutes of inactivity.

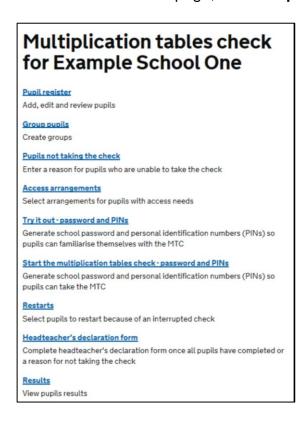
On the NCA tools homepage, select Multiplication tables check in the top menu bar.



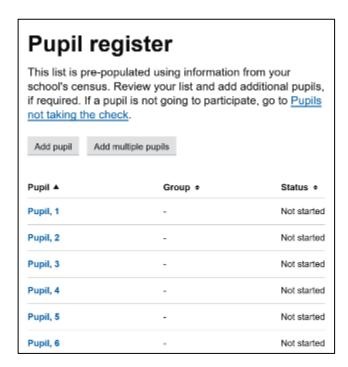
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⁴ https://ncatools.education.gov.uk

From the school homepage, select **Pupil register**.



You can then add pupils to the attendance register by selecting **Add pupil** or **Add multiple pupils**.



Grouping pupils

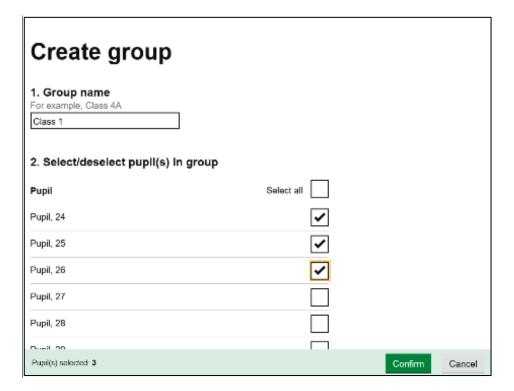
If you choose to, you can organise pupils into classes or smaller groups to make preparing for, or administering the check, easier. This means you will be able to select a

group when generating PINs, choosing access arrangements or marking pupils as not taking the check.

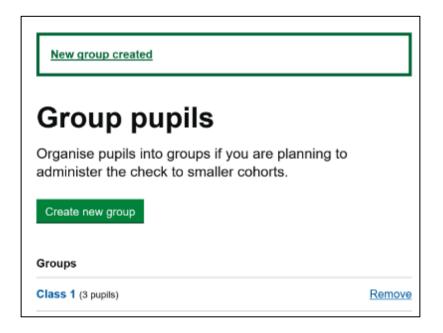
To organise pupils, select **Group pupils** and then **Create new group** from your school's homepage.



Name the group and select pupils to join it, then select **Confirm**.



You'll see confirmation your group has been created. To create more groups, select **Create new group** and follow the process again.



2.5 Pupils who should not take the check

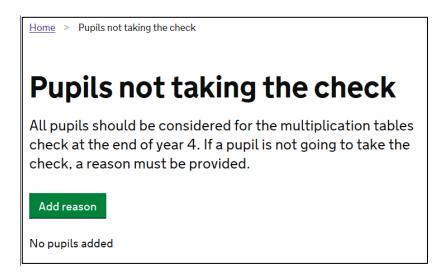
Headteachers may decide it is not appropriate for a pupil to take the check. The headteacher's decision regarding participation is final.

Pupils should not take the check if any of the following apply:

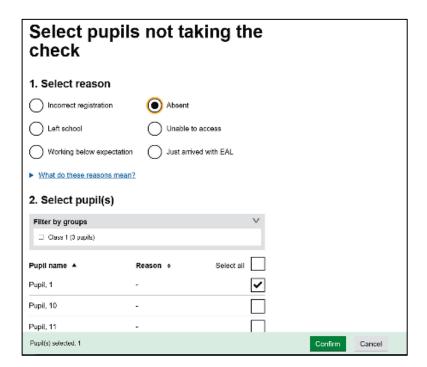
- they are absent during the entire check period
- they are unable to access the check, even when using suitable access arrangements
- they are considered unable to answer the easiest questions or are working below expectation for <u>year 2 in multiplication tables</u>⁵
- they have just arrived in school during the check window, with English as an additional language (EAL), and there is not enough time to establish the standard they are working at

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-mathematics-programmes-of-study

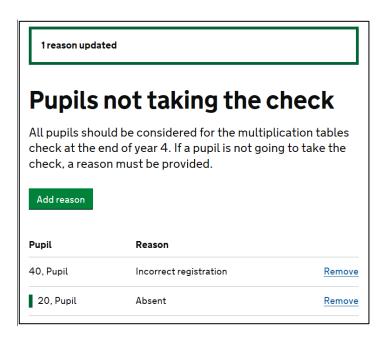
If there are pupils on the register who will not take the check, select **Pupils not taking the check** on the school's homepage, then **Add reason.**



Choose a reason and the pupil or group of pupils who will not take the check, then select **Confirm**. If you are withdrawing multiple pupils for different reasons, you should repeat the process.



These pupils will then appear on the 'Pupils not taking the check' page with their reason. If a pupil has been selected in error, select **Remove**.

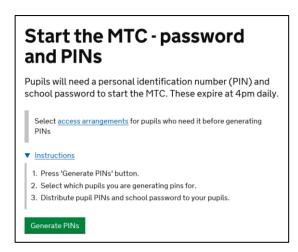


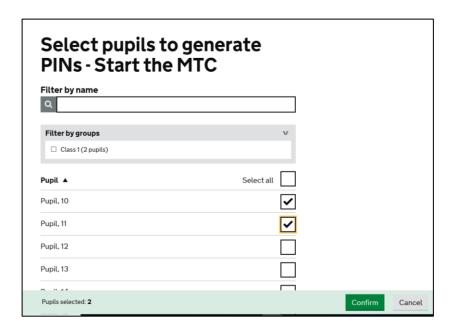
2.6 Generating PINs

Pupils must sign in to the MTC system by entering the school password along with their PIN. This is to ensure each pupil only takes the check using the PIN assigned to them. School passwords and PINs have been designed to enable most year 4 pupils to sign in by themselves, but a check administrator should supervise the process.

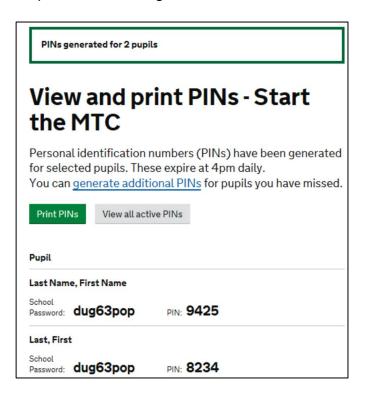
Your school's password will change each day. Pupils will need the school password along with their own PIN to sign in and take the check. PINs will become invalid at 4pm on the day they were generated.

You can generate PINs in the 'Start the multiplication tables check – password and PINs' section. Select the pupil, or group of pupils, and select **Generate PINs**. This will generate a unique PIN for each pupil selected.





To print a list of the generated PINs, select **Print PINs**.



2.7 Access arrangements

Access arrangements may be appropriate for pupils:

- with an Education, Health and Care plan
- for whom provision is being made in school using the SEN support system, or whose learning difficulty or disability significantly affects their ability to access the check
- who have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties
- with EAL and who have limited fluency in English

Schools do not need to request permission from STA to use any access arrangements for the MTC. However, the support given must never advantage or disadvantage individual pupils, and must be based on usual classroom practice.

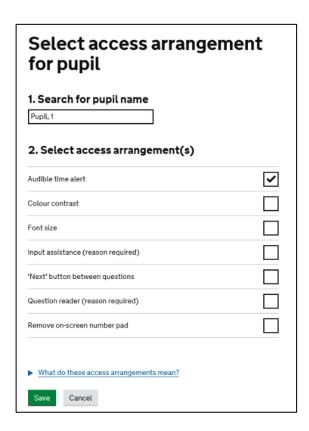
Pupils cannot be granted additional time to complete the MTC. The purpose of the check is to determine whether pupils can recall their times tables fluently. Additional time would remove the fluent recall element of the check and make results incomparable.

Enabling access arrangements for pupils with specific needs

Check administrators can enable access arrangements for pupils with specific needs. Select **Access arrangements** from your school's homepage, then **Select pupil and arrangement.**

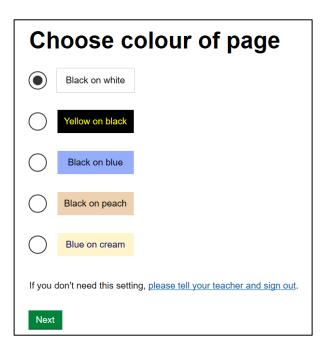
Access arrangements Modify multiplication tables check for pupils with specific needs. Modifications should be previewed in the pupil's familiarisation check. Select pupil and arrangement

Type the pupil's name into the search bar and select the access arrangements required, then **Save**.



The following access arrangements are available: Colour contrast

If colour contrast is enabled for a pupil, the pupil will be able to change the font and background colours if they would prefer not to work with black text on a white background.



Font size

If font size is enabled for a pupil, they will be able to increase or decrease the size of the text and number pad on the screen.



'Next' button between questions

The standard version of the check includes a 3-second pause between questions. If this is not long enough for a specific pupil, or the pace of the check may disadvantage the pupil, a 'Next' button can be enabled. Instead of a 3-second pause between questions, the pupil can press the 'Next' button when they are ready to start a new question. The check administrator should be aware that the next question will not appear until the pupil presses the 'Next' button and may consider prompting them to press it, if needed. There is a 30-minute time limit to complete the check using this access arrangement.

Remove on-screen number pad

Enabling this feature will remove the on-screen number pad. This may be useful to support pupils who are distracted by the on-screen number pad, or do not plan to use it. Only the question and answer box will show on the screen. A keyboard will be required to enter the pupil's response.

Input assistance

An input assistant is someone who enters answers dictated by the pupil. An input assistant can be used when a pupil is:

- unable to enter their own answers
- able to input, but inputting causes physical discomfort
- able to input, but inputs very slowly
- able to input, but finds inputting very difficult

The input assistant must enter the answer dictated by the pupil accurately. They must not be another pupil or a relative, carer or guardian of the pupil.

Question reader

If the question reader is enabled, it will read aloud all text displayed on the screen, including the instructions, questions and the answer input after each key press. Pupils can also use 'Tab' and 'Shift + Tab' to navigate through the screens. We recommend that schools administer the MTC to pupils who are using the question reader in a separate room, or provide headphones to the pupil to avoid the question reader distracting other pupils taking the check at the same time.

The MTC does not support third-party screen readers due to compatibility with the timed element of the check.

We recommend using the Chrome or Safari web browsers with this feature. The question reader will not work with Internet Explorer or Edge due to technical limitations.

Audible time alert

Pupils with a visual impairment may not be able to see the on-screen question timer. If the audible time alert is enabled for a pupil, a beep will sound 2 seconds before the end of each question, then a different beep at the end of each question.

Reviewing and testing access arrangements

Pupils should practise with access arrangements in the try it out area before taking the live check to ensure the arrangements meet their needs.

If access arrangements have been enabled for a pupil, the arrangements will automatically be available to the pupil in the try it out area and the live check.

When the pupil signs in, they will see a list of the access arrangements enabled:

Your settings You have the following settings on your check. 1. Time alert 2. Input assistant 3. Edit colour of page 4. Edit size of words and numbers 5. Question reader 6. Remove number pad

If you need to add or remove any settings, please tell your teacher and

2.8 Try it out area

sign out.

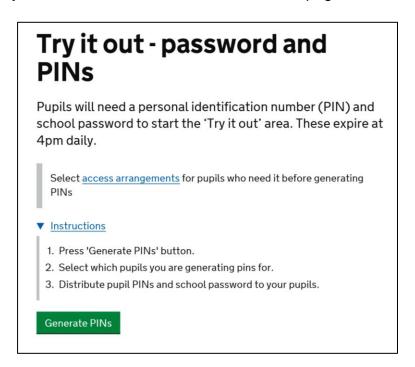
Next

Schools should use the try it out area of the MTC website with pupils before administering the live check.

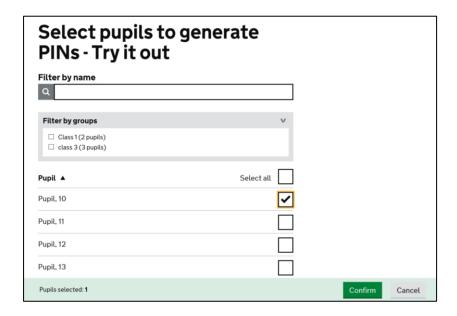
The try it out area consists of 3 practice questions, followed by 10 questions. Pupils will not receive a result for any questions they complete in the try it out area. In most cases, pupils will only need to access the try it out area once.

Pupils will need a school password and PIN to access the try it out area.

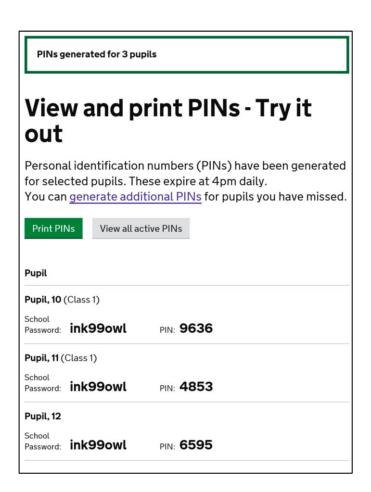
To generate a school password and PIN for the try it out area, select **Try it out – password and PINs** from the MTC homepage, then **Generate PINs**.



Select a pupil or group of pupils, then **Confirm** to generate PINs for those pupils.



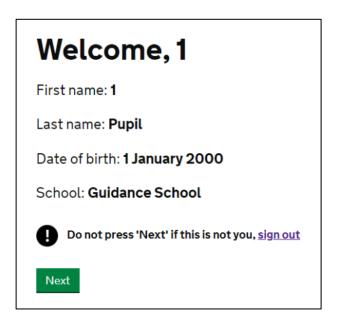
Schools should **Print PINs** to print copies of the school password and PINs and distribute them to pupils before they sign in to the pupil site. Ensure pupils use a try it out PIN to access the try it out area. If they sign in using a 'Start the multiplication tables check' PIN, they will access the actual pilot live check instead.



When they sign in to the pupil site, pupils will see the sign-in screen. They should enter the school password and their PIN, then press **Sign in**.



When pupils sign in to the try it out area using their try it out PIN and the school password, they will see the welcome screen showing the pupil's details and school name.



Pupils should select **Next** if their details are correct. If they are incorrect, they should press **Sign out** to return to the sign-in screen and tell the check administrator.

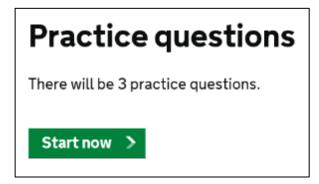
After the welcome screen, pupils will then see the introduction screen. They should select **Next** to begin the practice questions.

What to expect

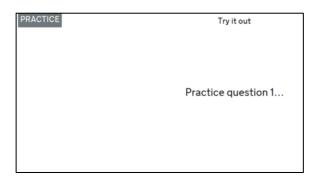
- There will be 3 practice questions.
- Then there will be 25 questions.
- Each question will show for 6 seconds.



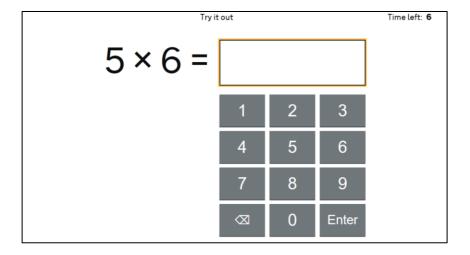
Pupils should press **Start now** to begin the 3 practice questions.



A loading screen will show for 3 seconds before the first question.



Pupils will see the first of 3 practice questions. Pupils can use the mouse, touchscreen or keyboard to enter their answers. They will have 6 seconds to answer each question. An on-screen timer will count down the time available. To submit their answer, pupils can select **Enter** on screen via the mouse or touchscreen, or press the **Enter** button. If they do not select or press **Enter**, the system will accept the answer in the box at the end of the 6 seconds.



When they have completed all 3 practice questions, they will see the 'Practice completed' screen. Pupils should select **Next** to start the try it out check.



The try it out check follows the format of the practice questions, and consists of 10 questions. When the try it out check has been completed, they will see the 'Thank you' screen.

Thank you

You can start again if you would like another go.

Sign out

Pupils can select **start again** to try the try it out check again, or **Sign out** to leave the try it out area.

PINs for the try it out area can be used multiple times throughout the day. PINs will expire at 4pm each day, so schools will have to generate new PINs if pupils will use the try it out area over more than one day.

3. Administering the live check

This trial will take place between Monday 18 February and Friday 1 March. Headteachers should decide their own schedule for administering the live check. The check may be administered to individuals, small groups or a whole class. Schools can administer the check to their pupils on the same day, or over multiple days within the check window. A school password and PINs will need to be generated each day that pupils take the check.

3.1 Instructions to pupils

You should introduce the MTC as consistently as possible, bearing in mind some pupils may require more explanation to understand the instructions.

The following text provides an example of how you could introduce the check:

"In this activity, you are going to be asked 10 times tables questions.

First, there are 3 practice questions. Have a go at these to familiarise yourself with the system.

You can use these to practise putting in your answers."

(For pupils using a PC or laptop with a touchscreen) "You can use the number pad on your keyboard, the numbers on screen using the mouse, or the numbers on screen using a touchscreen."

(For pupils using a tablet) "Put in your answer using the numbers on the touchscreen."

"When the questions start, you will have 6 seconds to answer each question. The system will automatically accept your answer after 6 seconds.

You do not need to press the 'Enter' button if you do not want to, but you can bring up the next question sooner by pressing or selecting 'Enter' to save your answer.

There will be a 3-second pause between each question.

You cannot pause or stop the check once you have started.

When you have finished the check, you can give feedback about the system if you want to.

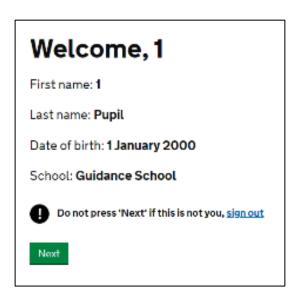
Does anybody have any questions before we begin?

You can now enter your details to sign in."

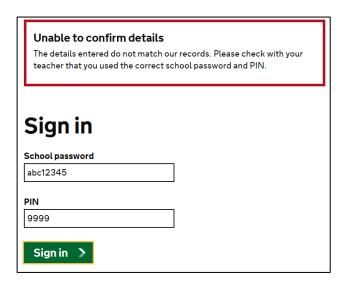
The first screen pupils will see requires the school password and their PIN.



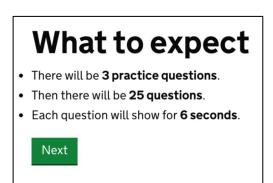
The pupil will see a screen with their name, date of birth, and the school name. If their details are correct, they can press **Next** to continue.



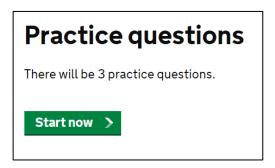
If a pupil makes an error when entering their PIN, they will see the following message:



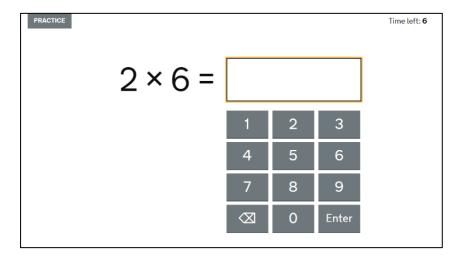
If this occurs, the check administrator should confirm they have the correct details. When the pupil has entered their PIN correctly, and selected **Next** on the welcome screen, they will see the instructions screen. Allow pupils time to read the instructions.



The practice questions screen is shown below. Pupils must select **Start now** to begin the practice questions.



The pupil will see the first of 3 practice questions.



When they have completed the 3 practice questions, they will see the following screen.



When they are ready, the pupil should select **Next** to move to the MTC start page.

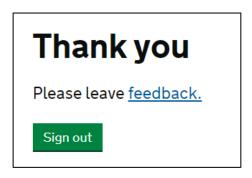
They can then select **Start now** to start the check.



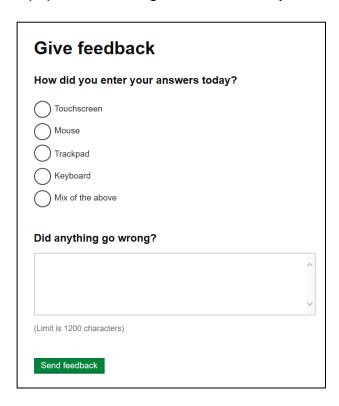
When pupils have completed the check, they will see the following screen while the check uploads.



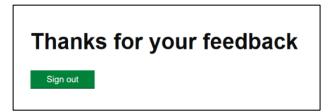
When the check results have uploaded, pupils can select **Sign out** to exit the check, or **feedback** to give feedback to STA about their experience.



If pupils choose to give feedback, they will see the feedback screen.



They can then **Sign out** to exit the check.



3.2 Problems or queries during check administration

Answering pupils' questions

There is no option for a pupil to pause or stop the check once it has started unless the 'Next question' access arrangement has been enabled in advance.

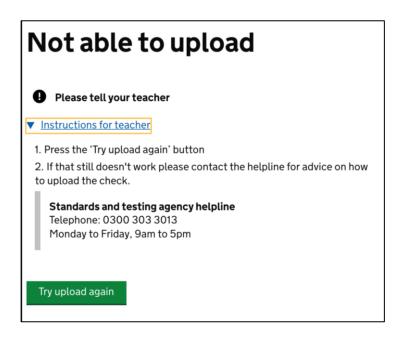
Check administrators should be careful not do anything that might give a pupil an advantage. If a pupil asks you how to answer a particular question, explain that you will discuss it with them after the check has finished and ask them to continue.

IT issues

If you have IT issues during the check, speak to your local IT support in the first instance. If you need additional advice, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or assessments@education.gov.uk.

Upload error

If you lose internet connection at the end of the check during the check upload process, pupils will see the following screen.



If this error occurs, select **Try upload again**. If this does not solve the issue, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013.

3.3 Pupil Register

Once a pupil completes the live check, the pupil register will automatically update their status to 'Check completed'. The register will also display the reasons for any pupils marked as 'Not taking the check' (see section 2.5).

3.4 Restarts

If a pupil was interrupted during the check, you can allow them to restart it. The pupil will see a different set of questions from their previous attempt. Only the outcome of their final completed attempt will be reported.

Schools must not allow a pupil to restart the check simply to 'have another go', unless they suffered a significant disruption described below. Pupils can only restart the check twice (allowing them a maximum of 3 attempts).

Restarts are allowed for the following reasons:

 classroom disruption: a pupil was unable to complete the check due to disruption (for example, a fire alarm, illness during the check, or high level behavioural disruption)

- did not complete: a pupil did not complete the check (for example, if they accidentally closed the check window)
- IT issues: there was an issue with the digital device the pupil was using (for example, device hard drive failure, or power loss)
- prolonged loss of internet connection during the check and the data could not be recovered at the end

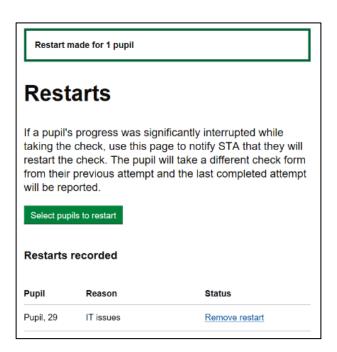
To notify STA of a pupil restarting the check, select **Restarts** from your school's MTC homepage, then **Select pupils to restart**.

Restarts If a pupil's progress was significantly interrupted while taking the check, use this page to notify STA that they will restart the check. The pupil will take a different check form from their previous attempt and the last completed attempt will be reported. Select pupils to restart No pupils selected to restart the check.

Select the reason the restart is necessary and which pupils were affected, then select **Confirm**. You may be asked to provide further information about the reason for the restart.

Select pupils for restart	
1. Select reason for restart	
Loss of internet	
O IT issues	
Classroom disruption	
Did not complete	
If necessary, please provide further information:	
► What do these reasons mean?	
2. Select pupils	
No pupils found.	

If a pupil has been selected for a restart in error, select Remove restart.

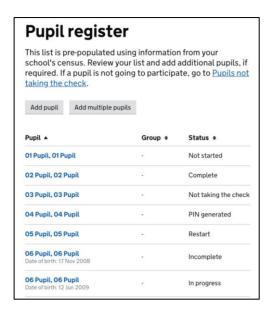


Pupils will require a new PIN to sign into the check again, even if they restart the check on the same day as their original attempt. PINs expire at 4pm on the day they are generated.

4. After the check

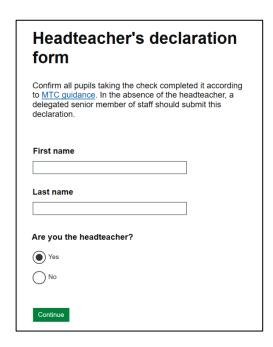
4.1 Attendance register

When all pupils have completed the check or have been given a reason for not taking the check, select **Pupil register** from your school's MTC homepage and then select **Submit** at the bottom of the attendance register.



4.2 Headteacher's declaration form

Headteachers should then complete the HDF, shown below. The HDF either confirms that the check has been administered according to the guidance, or that any issues have been reported to STA. You will not be able to complete the HDF until the attendance register has been submitted.

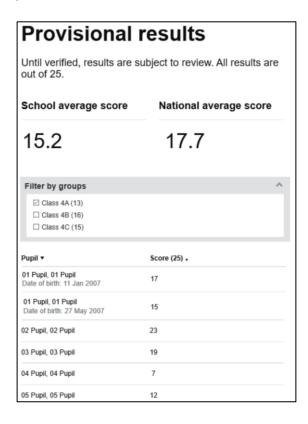


4.3 Results

Pupils will not see their individual result when they complete the check. Individual pupils' results will be available in the 'Results' section from 4 March; the following actions must have been completed by Friday 1 March:

- all pupils have completed the check or have been marked as 'not taking the check'
- the HDF has been signed

Results from the trial will be presented as each pupil's overall score and the school's average. When the check is rolled out nationally, a national average will also be available. When the check becomes statutory in the 2019/20 academic year all results will be provisional until the statistical release on Analyse School Performance (ASP)6. Results from the trial will not be published on ASP, and there will be no statistical publication.



Trial data will not be published by STA or used to analyse a school's performance. Results should not be considered on their own as an accurate assessment of a pupil's knowledge of the multiplication tables.

⁶ https://services.signin.education.gov.uk

4.4 Feedback

There will be a questionnaire on the homepage where teachers can provide feedback after the check. They will be asked how satisfied they were with their experience of using system, how easy it was to use and how we might improve it.

Pupils will also be asked for their feedback after they have completed the check (see section 3.1).

Annex A: IT specifications

IT checklist

Before administering the check, schools should ensure all devices are in good working order and charged. The recommended browsers are:

• on Windows: Google Chrome

on MAC/IOS: Safari/Google Chromeon Android tablets: Google Chrome

• on Apple tablets: Safari

Task	Y/N
Ensure MTC site is 'unblocked' from devices/schools network	
Ensure the devices intended for use are PC, Mac, laptop or tablet	
Ensure all devices are fully charged	
Test devices for any issues (for example, slow running)	
If the device requires a mouse, ensure the mouse has sufficient battery life and is fully functioning with the device	
Ensure the device operating system is up to date and has no updates scheduled	
Ensure the latest browser version is downloaded, where possible	
Ensure all devices are safe to use, such as without exposed wires	
Ensure internet connectivity is stable. If you are using a wireless connection, consider using a location or room closer to the router for a more stable connection	
Disable standby/hibernate mode	
Check the website compatibility with devices	
Ensure devices are kept out of direct sunlight to avoid overheating	
Disable privacy (incognito) mode on internet browsers	
Ensure all other tabs and applications are closed (except MTC)	
Ensure cookies are enabled	
Engage the number lock on the keyboard number pad	
If using Safari, allow pop-ups	

Access arrangements: compatible browsers

The table below shows which access arrangements are compatible with each device:

Access Arrangement	Recommended Browser / Device
Audible time alert	Not compatible with Internet Explorer or Edge
Colour contrast	Any browser/device
Font size	Any browser/device
Input assistance	Any browser/device
'Next' button between questions	Any browser/device
Question reader	Not recommended for IOS 9.3 Not compatible with Internet Explorer or Edge
Remove on-screen number pad	External keyboard required for tablets

Accessibility settings

In order to update the accessibility settings on your device, follow the appropriate instructions below:

- lpad⁷
- Mac⁸
- Windows 10⁹
- Android¹⁰

⁷ https://help.apple.com/ipad/12/#/iPad9a2465f9

⁸ https://support.apple.com/en-gb/accessibility/mac

⁹ www.microsoft.com/en-us/accessibility/windows?activetab=pivot_1%3aprimaryr2

¹⁰ https://support.google.com/accessibility/android/answer/6006564?hl=en-GB



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