



A headteacher's guide to preparing for a **successful** **SATs week**

SATs week for this year begins on Monday, 12th May 2025. While it can be a stressful time for both staff and Year 6 pupils, the right preparation can make a real difference.

Although the tests themselves take place over just a few days, ending on Thursday, 15th May, the groundwork starts months in advance.

From creating a calm and supportive school environment to ensuring staff and pupils feel ready, there are many ways you can lead your team through a smooth and positive SATs experience. With the right approach, you can help your staff support pupils effectively and give every child the best chance to succeed.

Our team of primary school experts has experienced SATs week firsthand and knows what works. In the guide, they've shared practical, tried-and-tested methods to help you support your teachers, pupils, and parents in the lead-up to SATs, ensuring a positive and well-managed experience for everyone.



10 simple but effective ways your staff can prepare for SATs

1 Identify gaps which need addressing

Spotting pupils who need extra support as early as possible ensures they get the help they need well in time for SATs week.

- Use past assessments and informal quizzes to identify knowledge gaps.
- Arrange small-group interventions focused on key areas.
- Encourage peer support by pairing confident pupils with those who need extra guidance.
- Provide links to SATs-style online quizzes for additional practice at home.
- Support teachers in using pre- and post-lesson assessments to reinforce learning.

Top tip: Consider inviting pupils who need extra support to before, or after-school tutoring groups. These focused sessions can help them strengthen specific areas and build confidence ahead of SATs.

2 Arrange a SATs meeting with Year 6 parents

Engaging parents early in the process ensures they know how to support their children in the lead-up to SATs and during the testing week.

- Ask your Year 6 teachers to host a parent meeting (in person or online) to explain the SATs schedule and how they can help at home.
- Highlight the importance of balanced routines, sleep, and healthy eating.
- Encourage parents to reassure their children and keep stress levels low.

3 Triple check you've covered everything on the curriculum

By this stage in the academic year, pupils are likely to have been taught many of the topics which will be assessed in the SATs. Now's the time for your staff to go over everything and identify any gaps.

- Ask your staff to check your school's records or use your pupil progress tracker to identify gaps and areas that need to be revised.
- Year 6 teachers can ask their pupils to self-assess their confidence levels in different topics and tailor revision accordingly.
- They can also run quick-fire quizzes and interactive activities to refresh knowledge in weaker areas.
- Teachers can also encourage pupils to keep a 'quick wins' notebook of key facts, formulas, and rules they can revisit easily.

4 Replicate test day in the classroom

Just like a runner training for a marathon, pupils need to experience test conditions before SATs week to build their confidence and familiarity.

- Teachers should dedicate portions of lessons to silent, independent work using past SATs papers.
- Start with shorter test-style activities (15-20 minutes) and gradually extend them to full-length papers.
- They could also arrange the classroom as it will be on test day to remove any surprises.
- Encourage pupils to use the same stationery they'll have on the day to create a sense of routine.
- Ensure pupils use the same access arrangements which they will use during the SATs to remove any surprises.

Top tip: Your Year 6 teaching staff should remind pupils that these sessions are for practice, not pressure! Keeping things light-hearted will help ease test-day nerves. They could also assign past test papers as homework to give them more practice at home.

5 Develop a clear revision plan

A structured revision plan ensures pupils feel in control of their learning and helps them stay focused.

- Teachers could provide a revision checklist that pupils can use at home and in school.
- Highlight specific areas for each pupil based on previous assessments.
- Balance revision with fun activities, including a mix of SATs-themed games and challenges.
- Staff can set achievable daily goals rather than overwhelming pupils with too much at once.

Top tip: Short, focused revision sessions before or after school can be effective. Encourage teachers to keep these sessions to 30 minutes for maximum impact.

6 Support pupils emotionally

SATs can be stressful, so emotional support for both teachers and pupils is just as important as academic preparation. Encourage a growth mindset and remind pupils that mistakes are part of learning.

- Reassure pupils that SATs are just one part of their education, not the be-all and end-all.
- Encourage your staff to have open conversations about any worries their pupils have and suggest that they teach practical coping strategies.
- Staff can also plan mindfulness activities, breathing exercises, or short movement breaks to help pupils stay calm.

Top tip: Your school could also create a [SATs survival guide](#) for parents, including tips on sleep, nutrition, and relaxation techniques.

7 Arrange a Year 6 breakfast club during SATs week

A good start to the day can make all the difference. Help your staff arrange breakfast at school each morning before SATs to ensure pupils arrive feeling settled, focused, and ready to go.

- Offer a simple, nutritious breakfast like toast, cereal, or fruit.
- Staff and pupils can use the time for light conversation and relaxation rather than last-minute revision.
- Encourage all Year 6 pupils to attend so no one feels left out.

8 Create a calm and positive SATs week with parents

When SATs week arrives, your Year 6 teachers can set the tone for a smooth and stress-free experience. Send a communication to parents encouraging them to do the same at home.

- Remind parents to stick to normal routines as much as possible to maintain a sense of normality.
- Teachers should avoid last-minute cramming and focus on confidence-boosting revision instead.
- Encourage parents to help their child get plenty of sleep each night to ensure they're rested and ready.
- Ensure pupils get outside and move between tests to prevent fatigue.
- Provide plenty of encouragement and remind pupils of how far they've come.

9 Plan a reward or small celebration for Year 6 pupils and their teachers to mark the end of SATs

After all their hard work, it's important to acknowledge and celebrate the pupils' and teachers' efforts.

- Suggest your Year 6 teachers plan a small celebration at the end of SATs week, such as a class picnic or movie afternoon.
- Offer rewards for achievements, like certificates or small prizes for effort and improvement and hand them out in assembly.
- Encourage pupils to reflect on their growth and accomplishments throughout the year.

10 Look after yourself and the staff too!

Teachers and Headteachers put in an incredible amount of work during SATs season, so don't forget to look after yourself and your staff.

- Encourage your staff to take breaks when they can - stepping outside for a few minutes can work wonders.
- Buy an extra box of biscuits or a fruit basket for the staff room during SATs week to keep morale high.
- Remind your staff that their hard work is making a real difference to their pupils!

Top tip: SATs are a team effort, so encourage your staff to lean on their colleagues for support, share resources, and celebrate the whole school's successes together.

Final thoughts

SATs are an important milestone, but they don't have to be overwhelming. With thoughtful preparation, a positive mindset, and plenty of encouragement, you can help your Year 6 teachers and pupils face SATs week with confidence.

Good luck, primary school's and your Year 6 pupils.

You've got this!





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