



Guidance

Overview of the moderation process

Updated 22 October 2014

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1.

Overview

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) and Department for Education (DfE) have updated this guidance for the 2014 to 2015 academic year. If you are responsible for key stage 1 (KS1) teacher assessment (TA) and moderation in a local authority (LA) or school, you must comply with this guidance to ensure that moderation processes provide valid and accurate TA judgements. It must be used in conjunction with the 2015 KS1 [‘Assessment and reporting arrangements’](#) (ARA).

KS1 TA will form part of schools’ published accountability data. Schools must ensure that it is robust and credible.

External moderation is statutory and confirms that TA judgements for KS1 are accurate and consistent with national standards.

2.

How this guidance applies to different types of schools

Maintained schools

Schools will receive an LA external moderation visit to review their KS1 TA judgements at least once every 4 years. During the visit LA external moderators will check teachers’ understanding of national standards and look at pupils’ work in multiple subjects from across the year. If the LA external moderators raise concerns regarding the school’s TA judgements, the school must amend these to ensure that they are in line with national standards.

The emphasis of a moderation visit is on the professional discussion between the year 2 teacher and the LA external moderator. Schools must be able to justify their TA judgements from the pupils' work available. Schools do not need to create portfolios or prepare showpiece examples for a moderation visit.

It is expected that, from within the school's overall resources, teachers carrying out TA will have adequate opportunities to undertake moderation activities within the moderation cycle.

Teachers and LA external moderators must refer to the [national level descriptions](#) at all times when confirming judgements. This is especially important when moderating pupils on the borderline between levels. Teachers and LA external moderators must balance the evidence across all strands to understand where the best fit lies.

Please note that there are no national sub-levels for level 1 or level 3 for assessing reading, writing and mathematics. If the school believes a pupil is working above level 4, the school should submit level 4.

The national curriculum levels are:

- level 1
- level 2C, 2B, 2A
- level 3
- level 4

Schools are accountable for submitting accurate and valid KS1 TA judgements. Regardless of whether schools receive an LA moderation visit in 2015, headteachers must ensure that robust moderation processes (internal and with other schools or stakeholders) are followed and that the national level descriptions are referred to at all times during that process.

Schools must submit accurate TA data to their LA which reflects any

changes made as a result of an LA moderation visit. If a school submits TA data which is different from that agreed during the LA external moderation visit, the school must contact the LA in advance. The school will need to give evidence to justify their changes and reach agreement on final data. There could be a maladministration investigation of the school's TA if the school submit changed data without the LA's consent.

Academies and free schools in England

All reference to academies include free schools, as in law they are academies. Academies must comply with the requirements for maintained schools within this document and in the KS1 [ARA](#).

All academies as of 1 September 2014, must confirm to us which LA they have an agreement with for moderation of TA. Academies may be charged by LAs for this service. Academies must provide the LA with proof of their most recent moderation visit and the outcome. We will ask academies to submit details of their KS1 TA moderation arrangements in the autumn term 2014.

Independent schools in England

Independent schools may submit their results to the DfE for inclusion in the national summary of results. If an independent school wishes to do so, it must be moderated in the first year it participates and then at least once in every 4 year cycle.

An independent school can only claim that its results are comparable with national or local results if it has taken part in the LA moderation process at least once in a 4 year cycle.

3.

Responsibilities

Headteachers

Headteachers and governing bodies of participating schools are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of teacher assessment judgements in their school.

The [KS1 ARA](#) gives the statutory requirements for TA and responsibilities for headteachers.

This guidance includes specific requirements for schools which identify important elements and examples of effective practice.

Local authorities

LAs must make arrangements for a robust programme of moderation to ensure that its statutory duty in relation to the moderation of KS1 teacher assessment is met. The '[Assessment and reporting arrangements](#)' gives the statutory requirements for LAs.

This guidance includes specific requirements for schools which identify important elements and examples of effective practice.

LAs must notify schools of the dates for their moderation visits during the final week of the spring term. Moderation visits must be completed by the end of the summer term. We will ask LAs to evaluate and submit KS1 TA

data changed by moderation in the 2015 summer term.

4.

Funding for KS1 statutory moderation

Each LA receives funding from the DfE in the form of a non-ring-fenced grant through the Education Services Grant. STA does not hold information in relation to how much each LA is funded for their KS1 moderation activities. The LA is responsible for dividing the grant appropriately. Additional funding for the increase in the infant school sample for 2015 will be provided to those LAs affected .

Academies receive direct funding through DfE grants for KS1 statutory moderation.

5.

The moderation process

Schools must engage fully with each stage of the moderation process to ensure that TA is accurate and in line with national standards. Moderation is made up of several components, external moderation visits are only one part of the assessment process.

Ongoing assessment

Teachers make day to day professional judgements on pupil progress and attainment to inform next steps in learning.

KS1 tasks and tests can be administered at any time during the year.

Teachers can analyse pupils' responses to these and use this information to contribute to day to day learning.

Standardisation

This is a professional development activity where teachers secure their understanding of national curriculum levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. It involves teachers making a level judgement on a collection of work with the teacher's comments and then comparing their judgement with a corresponding annotated version. Where there are differences, teachers must review their judgements and align them with national standards.

Teacher assessment

Following standardisation, teachers make informed judgements about pupils' levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. This is with reference to the [national curriculum level descriptions](#), supported by task and test outcomes.

Internal school moderation

Teachers collectively use the [national curriculum level descriptions](#) to review a selection of the judgements and supporting evidence for reading, writing and mathematics to check their accuracy and consistency. This includes task and test outcomes where available. Disagreement must be resolved to ensure that all judgements are in line with national standards and may require revisiting all previous TA judgements.

External LA moderation

LA external moderators will carry out visits to review teachers' judgements in reading, writing and mathematics, across the range of attainment (levels 1 to 3 and any level 4s). This is to ensure that TA is accurate and in line with national standards. Teachers will discuss their judgements with the LA external moderator with reference to a range of evidence, for a sample of pupils.

6.

Purpose of external moderation

External moderation focuses on a professional discussion between the LA external moderator and the year 2 teacher. The moderator will provide an independent, professional validation of the school's TA by reviewing a sample of evidence. This is to validate that each TA judgement is accurate and consistent with national standards.

The professional discussion between the year 2 teachers and the LA external moderator is essential. This allows the teacher to talk through their judgements using the necessary evidence to support their TA.

Evidence will consist of:

- examples of pupils' work
- any records that teachers might keep, eg from statutory tasks and tests
- their knowledge of the pupil

Teachers must demonstrate their judgements with the evidence they choose

to present. If there is insufficient evidence to support teachers' judgements, the LA external moderator must request to see other examples.

The LA external moderator will provide the school with suitable feedback about:

- the accuracy of the judgements
- quality of evidence
- appropriate support if necessary

Where TA judgements can't be validated, the LA external moderator will explain clearly how the school must review and change its TA judgements before submitting data. This ensures that the reported data accurately reflects the outcomes of the moderation visit. If the LA external moderator is unable to validate judgements due to a systematic lack of evidence they must refer the school to STA.

7.

Minimising bias

Research studies have shown that teachers' assessment of a pupil's work may be influenced by external factors such as behaviour, gender, ethnicity and special educational needs. For example, teachers might be influenced by the previous performance of members of the same ethnic group. Similarly, the 'halo' effect shows that attainment in 1 subject (or verbal ability) can affect judgements in other subjects. LA external moderators and teachers should be aware of this.

A school's internal assessment and moderation processes, as well as external moderation visits, should provide an element of objective scrutiny, to support or challenge teachers' judgements where necessary. They should be based on sound evidence.

If the LA external moderator feels that TA judgements are not supported by the evidence provided, they must challenge the teacher and seek further information.

8.

Maladministration

Where an LA or other party identifies potential maladministration this should be reported to STA. Examples of maladministration include:

- a concern regarding the TA evidence and processes within the school
- lack of independent work
- changes to TA judgements by school staff to influence school assessment outcomes
- a concern about the pattern of attainment

You should use the contact details below for further advice or to report any issue with TA. Our maladministration team will work closely with LAs to investigate any allegations of maladministration.

9.

Getting help

Standards and Testing Agency

Email

assessments@education.gov.uk

National curriculum assessments
helpline

0300 303 3013

For general enquiries about national curriculum tests.

Maladministration team

Email

testadmin.STA@education.gsi.gov.uk

National curriculum assessments
helpline

0300 303 3013

For reporting concerns about the national
curriculum assessments

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