

# **Key stage 1 moderation annual report 2008/9**

---

September 2009

QCDA/09/4518

# Contents

Introduction.....	3
Key findings .....	4
Evidence from planning and report forms.....	6
Recommendations.....	8
Evidence base .....	9
Appendix 1.....	10
Appendix 2.....	11

## Introduction

This is the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) annual monitoring report for 2008/9 on key stage 1 assessment. It provides a picture of how local authorities have carried out their moderation activities and identifies a number of issues. Examples of effective practice are detailed in the report.

### **Action plan to improve the monitoring of key stage 1 moderation**

The process for monitoring key stage 1 moderation was strengthened for 2007/8. The number of monitoring visits to local authorities was increased from the previous year, from 13 per cent to 25 per cent. The extra visits took an abbreviated form in 2007/8, but in 2008/9 full visits were made to 35 local authorities.

Another change for 2008/9 was that all local authorities who were not being visited received a feedback letter detailing strengths and areas for development. These have been welcomed by local authorities and will be used by QCDA when reviewing local authorities' plans for 2009/10.

In 2008/9, the moderation plan and report that local authorities were asked to complete followed the same pattern as in the previous few years. While many local authorities appreciated that this format had been introduced in response to feedback from local authorities, some felt that it has grown rather unwieldy, and the approach for 2009/10 will aim to be more focused. The reduction in the length of the plan will not impact the rigour of the process.

## Key findings

The use of exemplification is a key part of training for key stage 1 assessment. Materials most often mentioned are Building a Picture and the assessing pupils' progress (APP) materials.

The attitude of headteachers towards key stage 1 moderation is crucial. Where there is little commitment to the process, headteachers may insist that the key stage 1 tests take place during test week in May and may not wish to release teachers for meaningful discussions with moderators. In other schools, headteachers encourage a range of staff, apart from the year 2 teacher, to contribute to the moderation process.

Reports of cooperation between separate infant and junior schools are becoming more widespread.

The involvement of school staff, apart from year 2 teachers in training and moderation, is patchy. Merely letting schools know that year 3 teachers are encouraged to turn up for training can result in sparse attendance. Many local authorities report that whole school moderation is taking place but the quality of much of this is not particularly clear.

Local authorities report that as in previous years, teachers overwhelmingly find the process of key stage 1 moderation a supportive one.

Evidence provided by teachers during moderation is improving each year, mirroring their confidence in making judgements. Reading is often the area where teachers find it most difficult to produce evidence for moderators. Much time is often also taken up with judgements at the level 2A/level 3 threshold.

Many local authorities have engaged in checking data for the first time in 2008/9. All have found this process useful but some have felt that it has taken up a lot of time and are re-evaluating how they will carry this out in 2009/10.

Many local authorities still find it difficult to keep track of teacher movement during the school year leading to the danger that teachers new to year 2 may be carrying out key stage 1 assessment without appropriate support. It should be noted that knowing where newly qualified teachers are is not the same as knowing where teachers new to year 2 are.

One or two local authorities, while ensuring that schools did carry out tasks and tests, insisted that schools should not show these to moderators during their visit. This ensured that schools were focused on class activities.

Many authorities use a two-visit model. The first will often be quite short and will enable the moderator to meet staff and explain the process and what they will be examining when they return later for the second visit.

Increasingly, local authorities are asking schools to provide evidence for the maximum six pupils per class from which the moderator on the visit chooses the three pupils whose evidence will be looked at and discussed.

Looking across local authorities' moderation processes it is clear that links across early years foundation stage and key stage 1 are strengthening, which hopefully will aid transition.

## Evidence from planning and report forms

Seventy-nine per cent of local authorities know where their new to year 2 teachers are; although only 36 per cent keep this information up to date throughout the year.

Fifty-one per cent of local authorities involved teachers from other year groups in training sessions, although in 37 per cent this tended to be fairly minimal. The figures were almost identical for teachers from other year groups taking part in moderation.

Local authorities used the following as moderators:

- 69 per cent used local authority primary inspectors/advisers
- 82 per cent used local authority primary strategy team
- 86 per cent used experienced year 2 teachers
- 45 per cent used headteachers
- 53 per cent used other teachers
- 49 per cent used other consultants.

Sixty-six per cent of local authorities arranged 'meet the moderator' meetings.

Eighty-eight per cent of local authorities arranged cluster moderation meetings.

Seventy-eight per cent of local authorities asked teachers to provide evidence from three children per class per subject. The remainder asked for a greater number up to the six specified as a maximum in the moderation guidance.

Eighty-two per cent of local authorities provided moderation in science.

Sixteen per cent of local authorities provided moderation in speaking and listening.

Seventy per cent of local authorities state that they are active members of their local Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment (AAIA) group, and 63 per cent say that they have other local authority links.

In analysing the report forms, around 15 per cent of local authorities feel schools are confident in applying accurate and consistent judgements in all cases, with a further 70 per cent judging that standards are secure but that there is room for improvement.

Fifty-seven per cent of local authorities checked data to ensure that it was in line with discussions held at the time of moderation. Seventy-one per cent carried out 'sense checks' on data submitted to identify potential issues regarding missing or incorrect data or results that are out of the norm.

## Recommendations

Local authorities that do not do so should be more systematic in keeping track of teachers who are new to year 2, not just newly qualified teachers. Local authorities that rely on schools to inform them of changes are likely to miss staff that need support, whether in training, moderation or pairing up with a more experienced teacher. Ideally, local authorities will ask schools at the beginning of the year to let them know whether any teachers are new to year 2. This should be updated later in the year and can usually be included with other communications. Headteachers should be aware that it is not a bureaucratic exercise but a meaningful activity to ensure that those who will be making the teacher assessment judgements are supported to do so. In addition, all local authority staff in contact with schools, such as school improvement partners, should ensure that they ask the question about year 2 staff when in contact with schools and feed the information through to the moderation manager.

Local authorities should check data submitted by schools following moderation. There is no obligation to check results of individual children unless there were particularly protracted disagreements about levels that should be awarded. Local authorities should, however, check that reported data tallies with moderator discussions and that any issues that arise are investigated with the school concerned. The situation in a school can change between moderation and reporting, especially if the moderation is carried out early, but it should still be possible to identify whether further investigation is warranted.

Local authorities should make further checks on data submitted by all their schools. The first check will involve issues such as size of cohort, suspect dates of birth, range of levels reported, duplicate/incorrect unique pupil numbers, among other possible issues. The other checks should look at whether the reported results look inconsistent in terms of year on year trends or particularly abnormal-looking patterns. For example, are there large differences between schools in the proportion of level 2A/level 3?

Local authorities should continue to encourage staff other than year 2 teachers, especially year 3 teachers, to be involved in key stage 1 moderation. This should be more than merely informing schools that year 3 teachers are welcome to training. Successful local authorities have managed to persuade headteachers to release year 3 teachers to contribute to the moderation meeting alongside the year 2 teacher.



## **Evidence base**

This report has been compiled using information from:

- external consultants' moderation reports following visits to a 25 per cent sample of local authorities
- scrutiny of local authority moderation planning forms
- scrutiny of local authority moderation report forms.

### **Outline of the external monitoring process**

Local authorities and audit agencies were asked to provide the QCDA with their moderation plans. These were scrutinised and, where necessary, local authorities were contacted to verify certain details.

On behalf of QCDA, consultants visited a sample of 25 per cent of local authorities and agencies to discuss their approach to moderation and to observe the moderation process in action.

Local authorities and agencies were asked to provide QCDA with reports on their moderation process by the end of the academic year.

Scrutiny of all the evidence provided by local authorities and consultants took place, and responses were collated.

## Appendix 1

### List of local authorities visited

Barking & Dagenham	Milton Keynes
Bradford	Newcastle
Brent	Norfolk
Brighton	North Lincolnshire
Cheshire	Oldham
Cornwall	Portsmouth
Croydon	Redcar & Cleveland
Darlington	Rochdale
Doncaster	Sefton
Ealing	Sheffield
Essex	St Helens
Harrow	Suffolk
Isle of Wight	Surrey
Kensington	Sutton
Kingston upon Hull	Wakefield
Lancashire	Windsor
Liverpool	Wokingham
Medway	Worcester

## Appendix 2

### Support materials for key stage 1 assessment

*Building a picture*

<http://testsandexams.qcda.gov.uk/19631.aspx>

Mathematics exemplification at levels 2A and 3

<http://testsandexams.qcda.gov.uk/20896.aspx>

Assessing pupils' performance materials

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/assessment/assessingpupilsprogressapp>