

# Question and answer guide to Key Stage 3 teacher assessment arrangements, school year 2009–2010

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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
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# Question and answer guide to Key Stage 3 teacher assessment arrangements, school year 2009–2010

This question and answer guide addresses the most frequently asked questions from schools, local authorities and teacher unions, about the statutory assessment arrangements.

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This guide is designed for use by teachers and local authority advisory staff in conjunction with the *Statutory assessment arrangements for the school year 2009–2010 – Key Stage 3* booklet (September 2009).

For queries on the Key Stage 2/3 reporting to parents and national data collection, telephone 029 2082 6014

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For queries on Key Stage 2/3 assessment arrangements telephone the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) assessment helpline on 0800 083 6003.

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Schools will receive separate guidance on national data collection and reporting to parents in the summer term 2010.

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## 1 Understanding the statutory assessment requirements

### What exactly are the statutory requirements for the school year 2009–2010?

Headteachers must have arrangements in place for:

- end of key stage teacher assessment in summer 2010 (all core/non-core subjects – at attainment target and overall subject level with regard to the school curriculum implemented from September 2008)
- school-based standardisation and moderation (for core and non-core subjects)
- Key Stage 2/3 cluster group moderation (in English, Welsh first language, Welsh second language, mathematics and science)
- selection of sample evidence for external moderation (for all non-core subject departments not already externally moderated) – key dates supplied via the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)
- external verifiers' school visit to support schools' procedures for teacher assessment (for all schools not already visited by the external verifiers in 2008–2009) – dates will be advised to individual schools via WJEC.

### Where can I find the statutory assessment arrangements?

These are summarised in a DCELLS letter to all headteachers, sent in the first week of September. Full details are given in the *Statutory assessment arrangements for the school year 2009–2010 – Key Stage 3* booklet, sent to schools in September 2009.

### Are the statutory requirement for the school year 2009–2010 different from previous years?

Teacher assessment must be based on the revised school curriculum (Curriculum 2008). The subject Orders (published Spring 2008) set out the programmes of study. The statutory assessment arrangements booklets for the school year 2009–10 summarise the implications for teacher assessment.

Key stage 2/3 cluster group moderation should include Welsh second language (in addition to English, Welsh first language, mathematics and science).

### Special schools – what is statutory for us?

The statutory arrangements cover special schools and mainstream schools. The arrangements for external moderation and verifiers' visits also apply to special schools. Guidance from the WJEC explains how the arrangements will be implemented with due regard to special schools' needs.

## **2 Implementing the statutory assessment arrangements in my school**

### **What steps has DCELLS taken to ensure the manageability and value of these arrangements for schools?**

The assessment arrangements have been developed in partnership with schools and local authorities.

Identifying examples of learners' work for Key Stage 3 external moderation and Key Stage 2/3 cluster group moderation are not additional requirements. This should be part of subject departments' internal standardisation and moderation.

### **Which teachers should be involved in the statutory assessment arrangements?**

All teachers who teach the curriculum to learners in Key Stage 3, and/or are assessment coordinators for the key stage.

Teachers and/or coordinators for Key Stage 2/3 cluster group moderation.

### **At what stages in the school year should the statutory assessment arrangements take place?**

School-based standardisation and moderation should form an integral part of each school's systems and procedures for ensuring high-quality teacher assessment. This work should be part of the whole school year to ensure that each teacher is confident about national standards (Curriculum 2008).

As an integral part of Key Stage 2/3 transition requirements, planning for cluster groups to undertake moderation of learners' work should also be across the school year. It is for individual Key Stage 2/3 cluster groups to decide the timing and frequency of their meetings. Cluster group moderation should only need to take place once during the school year.

### **Do the statutory assessment arrangements require teachers to level individual examples of learners' work?**

No. Statutory assessment is required at the end of the key stage on a 'best-fit' basis – over time and across a range of work. Teachers should, however, be able to recognise characteristics of national curriculum levels within individual pieces of work. They need this both to guide learners on improving and also for internal standardisation and moderation, Key Stage 2/3 cluster group moderation, and Key Stage 3 external moderation. Please see Section 4 concerning DCELLS guidance (published 2008) for further clarification.

### **Do the statutory assessment arrangements require teachers to make regular assessments of learners' attainment?**

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The statutory assessment requirements relate to summative assessments, using level descriptions that are intended to be made only at the end of each key stage. However, formative (diagnostic) teacher assessment should operate throughout the key stage to monitor each learner's progress and to provide qualitative feedback to learners and their parents. Please see Section 4 concerning DCELLS guidance (published 2008) for further clarification.

### **Who, within a Key Stage 2/3 cluster group, is responsible for confirming teachers' collective understanding of national curriculum standards?**

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The cluster group should reach a consensus, based on review of selected examples of the schools' Key Stages 2 and 3 learners' work and referring to national guidance. The group should then ensure that this shared understanding of standards is applied within each of the cluster's schools.

### **How do standardisation and moderation of teacher assessment relate to end of key stage teacher assessment and national data collection (NDC) and reporting?**

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The statutory requirements for internal and external standardisation and moderation are intended to support and secure teacher assessment. They give confidence that data generated by these assessments are accurate, consistent and aligned with national standards. (DCELLS will provide separate guidance and instructions on national data collection and reporting for the school year 2009–10. For queries on national data collection and reporting, please telephone 029 2082 6014.)

### **When will my school receive a verification visit?**

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Schools which were visited by the verifiers during 2008–09 will have already received a verifiers' report. Verifiers will be arranging visits to the remaining schools during the school year 2009–2010. Schools will be notified in advance by the verifiers during the school term in which the verifiers plan to visit. Each school will receive only one visit during the period 2008–2010.

## What does 'external verification' entail?

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This entails a visit from external verifiers who will review whether a school's systems and procedures for assessment are fit for purpose.

The verifiers will **review jointly** with each school:

- the school's systems and procedures for ensuring accurate and consistent teacher assessment
- the school's understanding and implementation of current statutory requirements (i.e. internal and cluster group standardisation and moderation) plus external moderation
- outcomes from the external moderators' feedback reports which will have highlighted individual subject departments' strengths and identified, where applicable, areas for development.

The verifiers will aim to support each school's ongoing monitoring and review of its teacher assessment, to ensure best practice in terms of manageability, reliability and alignment to national standards (Curriculum 2008).

In summary, schools' preparations should be focused primarily on their own audit and review of their systems and teacher assessment outcomes. The verifiers' visit will offer an opportunity for objective external feedback as part of this process. It will also offer an opportunity for the verifiers to listen to local issues and to give guidance, for example, on useful sources of best practice and points of contact.

The WJEC has provided all Key Stage 3 schools with written guidance on external verifiers' visits. Information on the external verifiers' school visit is also included in DCELLS' *Statutory assessment arrangements for the school year 2009–2010: Key Stage 3* booklet.

## How and when will schools' teacher assessment be 'accredited'?

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To achieve 'accreditation' each school will need to demonstrate the extent to which its assessment arrangements are secure. The school's external moderation reports (separate report for each core and non-core subject) and external verification report (one report covering school's systems and procedures) will constitute a valuable body of evidence of the reliability of teacher assessment. DCELLS will write to each school to confirm the extent to which the school's teacher assessment has been accredited. This will provide each school with a benchmark to inform future planning for teacher assessment.

## What reference will future Estyn inspections make to the statutory assessment arrangements?

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Estyn teams may request access to external moderators' and verifiers' reports as evidence about a school's assessment arrangements.

### **3 How the assessment arrangements relate to the revised school curriculum**

#### **How will the revised school curriculum impact on this year's assessment arrangements?**

This year's end of Key Stage 3 assessment must be made against the Curriculum 2008 Orders for the first time.

The WJEC provided Key Stage 3 schools with guidance, in September 2008, which clarifies how external moderation operates.

#### **What planning is being undertaken for teacher assessment in future school years?**

DCELLS' strategic planning and policy development includes focus on future arrangements to support and strengthen teacher assessment. Proposals for the future will be formulated and developed in conjunction with schools, local authorities and teaching unions.

### **4 Making full use of support for schools**

#### **What guidance is DCELLS providing to support teachers?**

##### ***School Year 2007–2008***

*Ensuring consistency in teacher assessment: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3* provides non-statutory guidance on best practice together with case studies from schools and local authorities.

*Making the most of learning: Implementing the revised curriculum* covers learning, teaching and assessment of learning in relation to the revised school curriculum (Curriculum 2008).

##### ***School Year 2008–2009***

Exemplification materials for most subjects to support planning for learning, teaching and assessment against Curriculum 2008.

Guidance on higher-order literacy skills in January 2009 including examples of learners' work (English and Welsh) to support learning, teaching and assessment of higher-order literacy skills.

##### ***Autumn term 2009***

An INSET pack to help teachers improve the teaching of writing in Key Stages 2 and 3.

During spring 2010 schools will be provided with further guidance on developing higher order skills covering literacy across the curriculum, numeracy and mathematics and scientific enquiry.

### **What arrangements has DCELLS made to assist schools to implement the curriculum and assessment revised arrangements?**

In addition to the statutory and non-statutory guidance provided, two additional INSET days will be available in the school year 2009–2010 (announced in May 2008 via a letter to headteachers). Better Schools Funding in this school year supports the curriculum and assessment arrangements.

### **What specific guidance has been provided on external moderation and external verification?**

DCELLS has commissioned the WJEC to provide guidance and support to Key Stage 3 schools. The WJEC Helpline can be contacted on 0800 056 2066 to answer any queries on the arrangements.

### **What further support can schools expect if external moderators' reports highlight 'issues'?**

External moderation feedback and support will guide departments in terms of the extent to which moderators have been able to agree with teachers' understanding and application of national standards.

In cases where the moderators have been unable to agree with a department's sample evidence, Key Stage 3 schools should receive further general advice from the external verifiers. DCELLS is also working with local authorities to ensure that support is available at the local level. This 'tri-level' approach fits with the wider aims and objectives of the School Effectiveness Framework.