

Key stage 1 moderation annual report 2009/10

October 2010

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Introduction

The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) is remitted by the Department for Education (DfE) to support the accuracy and consistency of key stage 1 results. The following success measure was agreed for 2009-10:

KS1 results are robust and reliable as a consequence of moderation by September 2010.

This report summarises key points from activity undertaken in pursuit of this success measure.

QCDA ensures the accuracy of the moderation process for key stage 1 assessment in a number of ways.

- all Local Authorities (LAs) must complete a moderation plan in the autumn term detailing the process they intend to follow in the forthcoming moderation cycle and outlining the changes they have made in response to QCDA's recommendations in the previous year
- plans are scrutinised by QCDA and follow-up contact is made with LAs where further clarification is needed or where there is any suggestion that LAs may not be planning to carry out their statutory obligations
- as a result of the scrutiny of plans and any subsequent discussions, decisions are taken about which LAs are going to be visited by QCDA during the year. QCDA visits 25 per cent of LAs each year. Criteria for a visit can include factors such as time since last visit, new or inexperienced LA staff or evidence of particularly good practice
- visits to the selected 25 per cent of LAs take place during the summer term. They are undertaken by experienced colleagues appointed by QCDA as external moderators. They normally involve the QCDA colleague accompanying a local authority moderator on a school visit and a discussion with the LA moderation manager on their planning and processes. Following the visit, the LA receives a letter setting out main findings from the visit, highlighting the strengths of what has been seen and identifying areas for development
- LAs that are not being visited receive a letter detailing the strengths of their plan and outlining areas for development

- following the moderation period all LAs must complete an evaluation report form and send this to QCDA.

The evidence in this annual report is compiled from information gathered in the process described above as well as from visits, meetings, telephone conversations and other correspondence received during the school year.

Key findings

The large majority (almost 95 per cent) of LAs carried out moderation as set out in their plans including 28 per cent which carried out some extra moderation activities some of which were prompted by QCDA feedback on their plans. Five per cent carried out fewer activities than those outlined in their plan and this was generally attributable to changes in personnel during the year.

Data checks

The vast majority of LAs carried out data checks during 2009-10. Only three LAs did not carry out any checks and these will be followed up as part of the planning process for 2011. The types of checks carried out can generally be broken down into the following three categories:

1. Technical checks

These can include:

- numbers of pupils compared with most recent census figures
- gender breakdown
- correct return of English as an additional language (EAL) data
- appropriateness of levels and any obvious anomalies
- correct submission of data for pupils working towards level 1 including the use of p-scales
- any missing data
- temporary unique pupil numbers (UPNs)
- data imported into KEYPAS and data cleaning
- DfE Centralised Data Collection and Management System for Education (COLLECT) data
- suspect dates of birth

- pupils transferring between schools during terms 5/6.

These checks are usually carried out by the data team in the first instance, often liaising with assessment colleagues if any potential issues have been flagged. For example, these might include missing grades or obvious data entry errors.

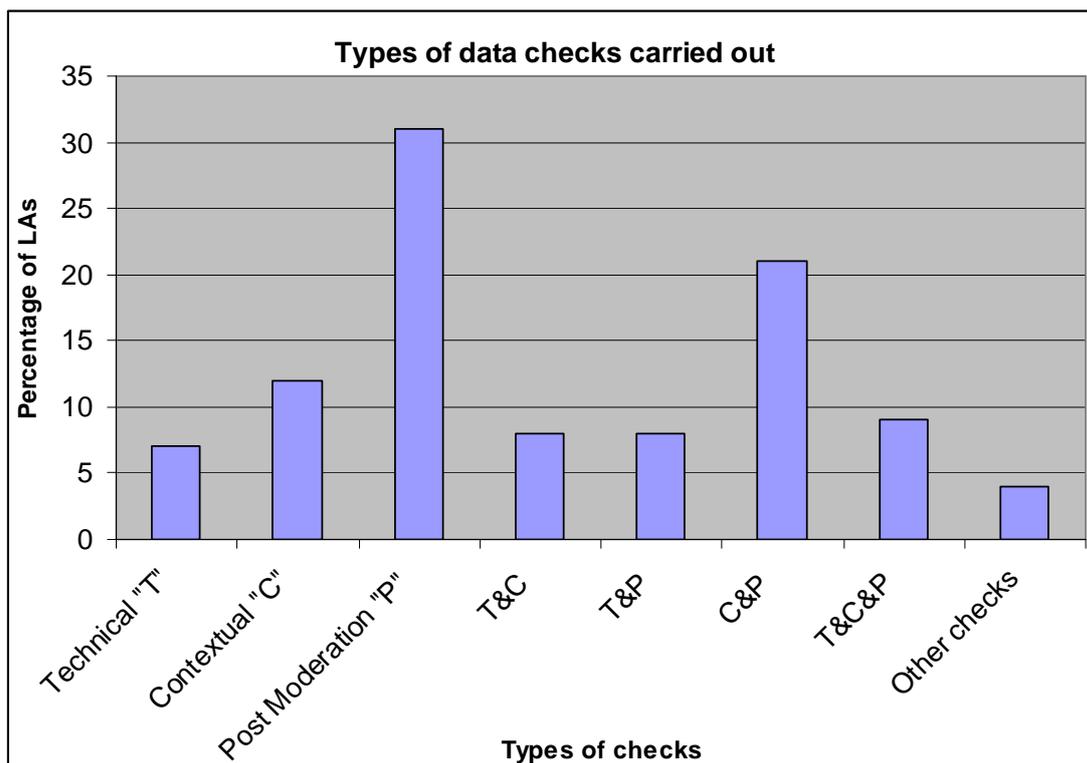
2. Contextual checks

These take place when results are scrutinised to see if they broadly correspond with what would be expected from that school. Checks would focus on schools with unusually low or high outcomes compared to previous years. Anomalies would result in follow-up calls to the school and might flag up the need to include the school in the LA's moderation sample for the following year.

3. Post moderation checks

These are checks carried out on results submitted by schools which have been moderated by the LA during that year. They are done in a variety of ways. Some LAs make a note of children discussed at moderation meetings and check against the data submitted. Some LAs ask moderated schools to predict end of key stage results which are then compared with those submitted. However these checks are undertaken, it is important to recognise that levels can change between the moderation visit and the submission at the end of the year. Discussions with schools should take this into account.

Following the checks, around a quarter of LAs send data back to schools for checking and sign-off before submission to the DfE.



Changes of judgements following moderation

This year QCDA collected information about the number of changes made to levels through moderation activity.

Table 1: Proportion of teacher assessment levels amended as a result of moderation

% of judgements amended	0	1-5	6-10	>10
Reading	23	58	11	8
Writing	11	43	24	22
Mathematics	19	51	21	9

Figures varied considerably with some LAs having quite high percentages of amendments as can be seen in Table 1 by the numbers who amended more than 10 per cent of schools' judgements. This appeared to be mainly due to different approaches to the timing

and style of moderation. Most LAs expected teachers and schools to have made firm judgements before they were moderated whereas a minority viewed moderation as being part of the process that established a teacher assessment level. QCDA endorses the former approach where teachers are asked for their judgement of pupils' performance at the time of the visit so that these judgements can be moderated. In normal circumstances, LAs would expect to correct fewer than 5 per cent of teacher assessment levels put forward for moderation.

It is noticeable that reading resulted in the fewest changes and writing the most. This could be because writing assessment is inherently more difficult and because of the greater emphasis which most LAs have traditionally placed on moderating it.

Table 2: Proportion of teacher assessment moderated because teachers are unsure of level and require guidance

<i>% of judgements moderated</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1-10</i>	<i>11-20</i>	<i>>20</i>
<i>Reading</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Writing</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>2</i>

Around half of LAs stated that their system requires teachers to put forward definite levels at the time of the moderation visit. Figures suggest that, even in these LAs, some teachers are unsure about some children and include them in order to get a second opinion. Many LAs have a system where teachers can, in addition to submitting their moderation sample, seek guidance on one or two children about whose assessment they are unsure. This does, of course, add to the LA moderation team's workload and may not be manageable in all cases. Some meetings, especially centrally-held moderation meetings, may encourage teachers to bring along samples of work from children where they are unsure, which can result in a meeting which falls between training and moderation.

Table 3: Proportion of teacher assessments disputed following the moderation discussion

<i>% of judgements disputed</i>	0	1	2	>2
<i>Reading</i>	92	6	1	1
<i>Writing</i>	83	11	2	4
<i>Mathematics</i>	87	8	1	4

As expected, the numbers of disputes were low and were mainly dealt with by the formal appeals process. Where the number of disputed cases was higher, this was generally due to the system used in the LA where a moderation meeting followed a school visit and schools felt more able to bring cases that had been previously discussed.

Involvement of year 3 teachers

The involvement of year 3 teachers in the key stage 1 moderation process increases each year although participation can be constrained, especially when resources are limited. One third of LAs said that take up of training by year 3 teachers was good. Thirty-one per cent said that they had invited year 3 teachers but take up had been low and 36 per cent not invited year 3 teachers to attend. An encouraging finding was that year 3 teachers were involved in moderation activities in schools or within clusters in 62 per cent of LAs. In 41 per cent of LAs, at least some year 3 teachers took part in key stage 1 moderation meetings, an increase from around 15 per cent last year.

Where year 3 teachers did get involved in the process it was generally seen as a very helpful development. One LA reported feedback from some year 3 teachers that took part in the moderation process:

"It was very useful and formed part of the transition process. It gave year 3 teachers a valuable insight into the breadth of curriculum as well as standards and achievements at the end of Y2."

Teachers who felt particular benefits from increased interaction between colleagues in years 2 and 3 were those in small schools who teach mixed year 2 and 3 classes.

Moderation activity gave them opportunities to meet colleagues in other schools to compare judgements and to share good practice.

Infant and junior schools working together

Around ten LAs organised specific events aimed at separate junior and feeder infant schools where they had sufficient numbers of such schools to make the events worthwhile. In the main these proved very successful for the teachers. LAs however did note that such events may not be sustainable in terms of cost and personnel. In one LA, particular pairings of schools were identified as needing further support and this was provided by advisers and advanced skills teachers. In the majority of LAs, year 3 teachers from separate junior schools were invited to general training and moderation meetings as indicated above.

Many more LAs referred to the work being done more informally between schools. It seems that moderation and other transfer activities between infant and junior schools have increased significantly, with mutual benefits accruing. As one LA said:

"Many of our infant and junior schools have established good working relationships that inform transition and sharing of staff expertise, good practice and records. While this is still developing, there has been a tangible sense of trust and understanding, along with far fewer 'disputes' in the year2/year3 standards debate. School improvement partners report greater correlation between the end of key stage 1 data and the start of key stage 2."

The perception that there are different interpretations of national standards at key stage 1 in separate infant schools compared to all-age primary schools is still seen as an issue in some LAs. Some infant schools feel that they are over-moderated whilst some junior schools remain suspicious of the levels reported at key stage 1. What is clear is that these problems are greatly alleviated where infant and junior schools work together on key stage 1 moderation. As one LA reported

"Schools are working together more, often without LA intervention. This is developing better trust and more effective use of data."

This issue may become less important as the number of separate infant and junior schools decreases due to amalgamation and federation.

Successes in 2010

In general, LAs are very positive about the key stage 1 moderation process. Major successes commonly mentioned are:

- clear expectations leading to a smoother process
- moderation visits viewed by schools as a good balance between rigour and support
- moderation teams are considered to be well balanced
- year 2 teachers being provided with non-contact time for moderation
- good range of evidence provided to back up assessments
- teachers much more confident about their assessments
- generally positive response from schools where weaknesses were found
- growing involvement of year 3 teachers in all-age primary schools (or first schools) and from separate junior schools
- cross-LA moderation, where it took place, was felt to be very positive
- large increase in data checking this year which enabled LAs to be more confident
- assessing pupils progress (APP) has been well used and has been seen as supportive in helping teachers make judgements against national curriculum level descriptions.

One experienced moderator said:

"Evidence is a hundred times better than it was four years ago. More teachers are aware of what needs to be taught for children to achieve a level 3 in mathematics. The statutory key stage 1 moderation process has been essential in developing teachers' accuracy in their assessment judgements, particularly since tests became a 'contributor' to the process rather than the 'final judgement'."

A newly qualified year 2 teacher said:

"A wonderful process! Don't wait to be asked, ask to be moderated."

The moderation process overall

Around ten LAs questioned whether or not there is still a need for statutory tasks and tests at key stage 1 and the issue of level 3s being counted as 21 points for the purpose of data published on RAISEOnline.

Approximately one in five LAs made comments, either via report forms or directly to QCDA, about uncertainty for 2011 and beyond in terms of staffing levels within the authority and the ability to comply with requirements.

The majority of correspondents felt that the revised moderation planning and evaluation forms were an improvement on previous years although two LAs felt that the previous system had been better. A number of correspondents asked for earlier notification of the types of information that need to be collected for the evaluation report.

QCDA monitoring visits were welcomed and seen to provide good support and pointers for further development. A few LAs mentioned that they would prefer more timely feedback after visits. This can be considered but depends on ensuring that feedback is consistent across all authorities.

Appendix 1

List of local authorities visited

<i>Bath and NE Somerset</i>	<i>Luton</i>
<i>Bexley</i>	<i>Merton</i>
<i>Blackpool</i>	<i>Newham</i>
<i>Bromley</i>	<i>North East Lincolnshire</i>
<i>Buckinghamshire</i>	<i>Nottingham City</i>
<i>Calderdale</i>	<i>Rutland</i>
<i>Derbyshire</i>	<i>Salford</i>
<i>Doncaster</i>	<i>Service Children's Education</i>
<i>Dorset</i>	<i>Shropshire</i>
<i>Dudley</i>	<i>Slough</i>
<i>Durham</i>	<i>Southend</i>
<i>Hackney</i>	<i>Staffordshire</i>
<i>Harrow</i>	<i>Tower Hamlets</i>
<i>Hillingdon</i>	<i>Trafford</i>
<i>Hounslow</i>	<i>Walsall</i>
<i>Knowsley</i>	<i>West Berkshire</i>
<i>Lambeth</i>	<i>Wirral</i>
<i>Lewisham</i>	<i>Wiltshire</i>

Appendix 2

Support materials for key stage 1 assessment

Building a picture

<http://www.qcda.gov.uk/resources/publication.aspx?id=a63f52fd-3d42-4a7e-8c97-9d5ef7b64482>

<http://www.qcda.gov.uk/resources/publication.aspx?id=4eb4f53f-8f61-4c45-b669-d65730fcb7bc>

Mathematics exemplification at levels 2A and 3

<http://www.qcda.gov.uk/assessment/4266.aspx>

Assessing pupils' progress (APP) materials

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