

**Key Stage 2
writing
moderation
guidance
2012**

Introduction

Key Stage 2 writing moderation in 2012

Following Lord Bew's independent review of testing, assessment and accountability at the end of Key Stage 2, changes are being introduced to the way writing is assessed. As Lord Bew recommended, schools' teacher assessment in writing will be reported and used for accountability purposes. External moderation will help ensure that teacher judgements are accurate and consistent with national standards.

Moderation is only one part of the teacher assessment process. It is important for teachers to build a shared understanding of educational standards and to discuss their assessment of pupils' work with colleagues. Schools may wish to collaborate so that teachers from a range of schools can share experience to develop their assessment skills. This guidance is only concerned with external moderation visits, designed to ensure that teacher judgements are accurate and consistent with national standards.

In 2012 Key Stage 2 writing moderation is not statutory. This will enable the moderation processes and activities outlined in this document to be evaluated and refined before statutory moderation requirements are introduced from 2013. The 2012 moderation arrangements have been designed to be flexible and minimise burdens on schools. As far as possible, the guidance in this document reflects existing processes for Key Stage 1 assessments.

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) will oversee the moderation of Key Stage 2 writing, Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) and Key Stage 1 assessments. STA will scrutinise practice in some local authorities (LAs), informing the evaluation of the 2012 arrangements.

From 2013 a statutory duty will be introduced for LAs to moderate 25 per cent of their maintained schools, ensuring that each school is moderated at least once every four years. We are keen to explore the impact of the 2012 moderation cycle on a representative sample of schools, to ensure it is effective and minimises burdens on schools.

Who is this guidance for?

This is non-statutory guidance providing information for:

- LA moderation managers;
- moderators; and
- primary school head teachers and Year 6 teachers preparing for a moderation visit.

Information for LA moderation managers

In line with their existing roles overseeing moderation of EYFSP and Key Stage 1 assessments, LAs will be responsible for organising moderation visits for Key Stage 2 writing.

The Department has selected a sample of schools to receive moderation visits (15 per cent of schools in each LA, including Academies and Free Schools, but excluding special schools and schools in the externally-marked writing sample), so that we can evaluate the impact of moderation on a representative range of schools. In addition, funding is available for LAs to moderate an additional 10 per cent of their maintained schools (which may include special schools and schools in the externally-marked writing sample).

The role of the moderation manager

LA moderation managers are responsible for moderating Key Stage 2 writing teacher assessment judgements in the agreed sample of schools, ensuring that Year 6 teachers are making judgements which are consistent with national standards. They are responsible for recruiting, training, quality assuring and overseeing a team of moderators.

Moderators should be qualified teachers with recent experience of teaching and/or moderating Key Stage 2 writing. Detailed guidance about the recruitment of moderators has been supplied to LA moderation managers. These instructions included the standardisation exercises which LAs should administer to ensure that moderators understand and can apply national standards. LA moderation managers should ensure that moderators are not asked to visit schools with which they have a potential conflict of interest.

Each LA should provide training for moderators to ensure that they understand the process for moderation visits set out in this guidance. The moderation manager should support moderators as necessary. Any disagreements between a school and a moderator should be referred to the LA moderation manager for resolution.

Funding

Details of the funding arrangements for the 15 per cent sample of schools to be moderated were communicated to LAs in January 2012. Each LA has been able to request additional funding to moderate a further 10 per cent of its schools, up to a total of 25 per cent. For 2012 only, we will provide funding for moderation of Academies directly to the relevant local authority.

This funding will be included within the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) in 2012-13. This does not affect the terms of the EIG, which remains unringfenced.

Moderation visits

Moderation visits should take place between April and June 2012. In order to discourage schools from preparing excessively, we recommend that LAs should not give formal notice that a school will receive a moderation visit more than two weeks in advance.

After each visit, the moderator should send a short written summary to the school and to the LA moderation manager. This summary should cover:

- overall feedback on the school's Key Stage 2 writing teacher assessment processes and points for future consideration;
- if necessary, the moderator's recommendations for how the school's teacher assessments should be changed and their reasons; and
- the number of pupils whose work was moderated (anonymised), including their teacher assessment levels before and after moderation.

Reporting on the moderation process

At the end of the academic year, LAs should provide the STA with:

- a short summary of how well the moderation process worked and any points to note;
- the number of pupils whose work was moderated in each school (anonymised), including teacher assessment levels before and after moderation; and

- the number of schools (anonymised) who raised questions over moderators' judgements, and how these were resolved.

The Department will evaluate the 2012 moderation cycle to ensure it is effective and minimises burdens on schools. We will therefore approach LA moderators, moderation managers and schools which received moderation visits to gather feedback on how the process worked.

Conducting the moderation visit

Purpose of moderation

The purpose of the external moderation visit is to confirm whether the school's teacher assessment in writing is consistent with national standards and, if not, how the school should change it. It is for the external moderator to provide an independent professional evaluation of the school's teacher assessment. A moderator may request that the school changes some or all of its teacher assessment judgements and should explain the reasons. The moderator should also provide the school with feedback on its teacher assessment in writing.

The moderation visit will take place before the deadline for schools to submit teacher assessment data (Friday 13 July). Therefore the moderation visit should focus on ensuring that teacher assessment judgements are consistent with national standards. Where issues are identified, the moderator should explain clearly how the school should review and change its teacher assessment judgements before submitting data, to ensure that the reported data will be robust and fit for accountability purposes.

Schools – preparing for a moderation visit

When a school is notified that it will receive a moderation visit, it should:

- submit the current teacher assessment levels for all Year 6 pupils to the LA. This should be undertaken directly after notification of the visit;
- ensure there is a quiet space available so the moderator can review evidence;
- prepare a list of Year 6 pupils, together with their teacher assessment judgements and (if available) writing test results;
- ensure that the moderator has access to Year 6 pupils' exercise books and other evidence of their writing from across the year (in whatever format it is routinely kept). Schools should not create portfolios of work or prepare 'show-piece' examples purely for a moderation visit. There is no need for schools to separate out individual pupils' work if it is not normally stored in this way; and
- ensure that there is an opportunity for the moderator to meet Year 6 teachers to discuss their teacher assessments.

The best way for a school to prepare for a moderation visit is to have robust teacher assessment processes, based on teachers' strong understanding of national standards. Moderation should focus on pupils' ordinary written work and should not require any addition to teachers' workload.

Similarly, there is no need for schools to keep additional records justifying their teacher assessment judgements. If moderators have questions concerning a teacher's judgement or the evidence supporting it, they should discuss them with the teacher.

Structuring moderation visits

An example outline structure for a typical visit is provided below. However, moderators should be flexible to suit local circumstances, such as the school size or timetable.

- On arrival, the moderator should meet the head teacher or a senior leader and Year 6 teachers, to confirm the purpose and expected outcomes from the visit. Moderators should select which pupils' work will be moderated from the list provided by the school, though they should discuss their choices with Year 6 teachers.
- In the quiet area provided, the moderator should review the evidence for the selected pupils, making judgements against the national criteria, and comparing them with the school's teacher assessment.
- The moderator should have a discussion with Year 6 teachers, either individually or together, to ask questions about the evidence seen or about the teacher assessment process. The moderator should use this opportunity to provide informal feedback to individual teachers.
- If moderators have concerns, they may ask to see evidence from additional pupils.
- When the moderator is satisfied that they have seen sufficient evidence, they should explain their decisions to the head teacher or a senior leader; we would strongly encourage Year 6 teachers to be present. The moderator should provide general feedback on the school's teacher assessment and, if necessary, recommend how teacher assessments should be changed.

While it is inevitable that a moderation visit will cause some disruption to the normal routine of a school (for example since Year 6 pupils' work will need to be available to moderators), this should be kept to a minimum. Moderators will wish to speak to Year 6 teachers during the course of the visit, but discussions should not be longer than necessary to avoid disrupting teaching.

Evidence for moderators to consider

Schools should provide moderators with a list of whole-level teacher assessment judgements, together with writing test results (if available) for all of their Year 6 pupils. There is no need to moderate sub-levels, though the school may have made judgements in this way. Moderators should review the order of attainment in which schools have placed pupils, especially around level borderlines.

Moderators should scrutinise evidence from sufficient pupils to be satisfied that the school's teacher assessment of higher, middle and lower-attainment is accurate and consistent with national standards. Moderators should sample a range of writing from several pupils in each class so they can be confident that each level is assessed accurately.

The moderation process should not impose additional burdens on teachers. Schools should not create portfolios of work or specially prepared 'show-piece' examples for a moderation visit. By reviewing marked work produced during everyday teaching in Year 6, a moderator will get a strong sense both of pupils' attainment and the accuracy of teachers' assessment, without creating any additional workload.

Moderators should consider the following evidence:

- pupils' exercise books and other examples of written work in a variety of forms and for a range of purposes and audiences, taken from the whole of Year 6. This should include 'rough' work as well as 'finished' examples;
- written work from other subjects as well as English, including cross-curricular projects; and
- if the results of the writing test are available, moderators should review them to confirm that they are satisfied with the way they have informed teacher assessment judgements. There is no requirement for the moderator to see the test papers or for the school to have these available.

Moderators will expect to see evidence from a range of text types and writing genres, including examples of both fiction and non-fiction forms. A list of the main text types is provided at Annex A.

Moderators will consider pupils' independent writing (which provides the clearest evidence of pupils' embedded learning), as well as work supported through direct modelling, use of prompts or guided group work. If moderators are unclear about the extent of support a pupil has received in completing a particular piece of writing, they should speak to the Year 6 teacher.

Moderators should meet Year 6 teachers, individually or together, so they can ask questions about the evidence they have seen or about the teacher assessment process more generally. This will allow moderators to understand the level of support pupils have received and to explore cases where the evidence for a pupil's attainment appears incomplete or shows considerable variation. Moderators should also provide informal feedback to individual Year 6 teachers, either individually or together.

Forming judgements

In forming judgements, moderators should refer to the national standards. Level criteria describing the key features of the three strands of writing (sentence structure and punctuation; text structure and organisation; composition and effect) can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/monitoring>.

Pupils do not necessarily achieve uniformly and the criteria allow teachers and moderators to consider the relative strengths and weaknesses of a pupil's work. There should be sufficient evidence to justify the teacher's assessment across a range of writing and within each of the three strands. It is quite possible that pupils may have moved from one level to another during the course of Year 6. In such cases, a pupil may be accurately judged to be working at the higher level if there is sufficient evidence from the end of the year, even if evidence from earlier in the year reflects a lower level.

It is particularly important to refer to the level criteria when moderating pupils whose writing is close to a level boundary. Teachers and moderators should balance the evidence across all strands to understand where the 'centre of gravity' lies, and to ensure fair comparison with the work of other children.

Teacher assessment in writing is reported as whole-level judgements. There is no expectation that moderators should moderate sub-levels, though the school may have made judgements in this way.

Teacher assessment judgements of pupils who are working below level 2 should be moderated internally, ideally with support from Key Stage 1 colleagues. Where pupils are working within P scales, this should be supported by the school's Special Educational Needs (SEN) lead. For further information with regard to the use of P scales, please refer to the 2012 Key Stage 2 *Assessment and Reporting Arrangements*.

Where a moderator's judgement differs from the school's

If the moderator is not satisfied that the evidence provided confirms that accurate judgements have been made, they should examine evidence from additional pupils.

Where a moderator has reason to believe that teacher assessments are not consistent with national standards, they should request that the school changes some or all of its teacher assessment judgements. The moderator should indicate which teacher assessments need to be changed and explain the reasons. Discussions should focus on agreeing the steps the school should take before submitting its final teacher assessment in July.

If the school does not accept these recommendations, the moderator should inform the LA moderation manager. Alternatively, the school may contact the moderation manager to question the moderator's recommendations.

The LA moderation manager should take appropriate action to resolve such issues, which should include further discussion with the school and may lead to an additional moderation visit. STA will provide moderation managers with further advice on how any issues should be resolved in 2012. The moderation manager may wish to discuss possible actions with STA's moderation team (moderation.ks2@education.gsi.gov.uk).

Concluding the moderation visit

At the end of the visit, the moderator should explain in broad terms to the head teacher or a senior leader where the assessments have been accurate and where they have needed amendment, including making any recommendations on how teacher assessment judgements should be changed. Year 6 teachers are strongly encouraged to be present. If moderators have concerns over individual teachers' judgements, these should be raised separately with the head teacher or a senior leader, since the moderator's feedback should cover the school's teacher assessment as a whole.

Moderators should provide a short written summary of their visit, outlining their judgements and reasons. This will confirm whether teacher assessment in writing is being carried out in accordance with national standards and, if not, what changes should be made. The head teacher and LA moderation manager should receive copies.

It is possible that a school's writing teacher assessments for some pupils may change between a moderation visit and the deadline for their submission in July, especially where moderation visits take place in April or early May. There is no expectation that a further moderation visit is required in such cases, since moderation should look at the quality of the school's teacher assessment processes as a whole.

Data Submission

Schools must submit teacher assessment judgements in each attainment target in English, mathematics and science, together with an overall subject level, as set out in the *Key Stage 2 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements* document, available at www.education.gov.uk/assessment. Schools must submit their teacher assessment judgements by Friday 13 July 2012.

Contacts and questions

For further information on Key Stage 2 writing moderation, please visit www.education.gov.uk/ks2. For any queries, please email moderation.ks2@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Annex A – Writing text types

The following list outlines the main writing text types which a moderator might expect to see. The list is not definitive and evidence is not required for every pupil in every text type.

- **Recount:** a sequential retelling of events, e.g. a diary entry, newspaper report, factual story based on people or events.
- **Procedure or Instruction:** guides the reader by stating how to do/make something, how to take care of something, e.g. a guide to taming a dragon, a set of instructions for playing a game of tag rugby.
- **Narrative:** generally a fictitious story although may be based on fact. Can be written in different genres, e.g. traditional tale, adventure, science fiction, historical, ghost.
- **Report:** describes what something is or was like and provides information about it, e.g. an informative leaflet, a report on a school project, a letter, a news report.
- **Explanation:** explains how or why something happens or works. Is usually organised logically and/or sequentially, e.g. a PowerPoint slide to explain how a bicycle works, a written outcome of a science experiment.
- **Argument and persuasion:** presents opinion and points of view which may be biased or balanced, e.g. a letter to persuade or protest, a book review, a speech, a play script.
- **Poetry:** e.g. to entertain, to reflect, to convey information, to tell a story, to share knowledge or to pass on cultural heritage.

© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This document/publication is also available on our website at www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/monitoring. Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to us at moderation.ks2@education.gsi.gov.uk.