

National curriculum assessments

KEY STAGE
2

YEARS
3-6

Guidance for key stage 2 teacher assessment moderation

2014



Standards
& Testing
Agency

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2014 Guidance for key stage 2 teacher assessment moderation

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Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.2 The role of the Standards and Testing Agency	4
2. Responsibilities	5
2.1 Local authorities	5
2.2 Academies and free schools	5
2.3 Independent schools	5
3. Overview of arrangements for 2014	6
3.1 Minimising bias	7
3.2 What is moderation?	8
3.3 Purpose of external moderation	8
4. School moderation requirements	9
4.1 Internal moderation and moderation with external partners	9
4.2 School preparation for a local authority external moderation visit	10
5. Organisation of the local authority moderation process	11
5.1 Local authority recruitment of moderators	12
6. Prior to a moderation visit to a school	13
7. Selecting the sample of children for moderation	14
8. Suitable evidence for moderation	15
8.1 The variety of evidence	15
8.2 The range of evidence	15
8.3 Independence in writing	15
8.4 Spelling and handwriting	16
9. The moderation professional discussion	17
10. Moderation feedback	18
11. Appeals, data submission and potential maladministration	19
Annex A - Writing text types	21
Annex B - Structuring external moderation visits	22

1. Introduction

This document details arrangements for the statutory moderation of key stage 2 writing teacher assessment in 2014.

It must be used in conjunction with the 2014 key stage 2 'Assessment and reporting arrangements' (ARA) and the national exemplification. These are available from the Department for Education's (DfE's) website at www.education.gov.uk/ks2.

1.2 The role of the Standards and Testing Agency

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) will oversee the moderation of the key stage 2 writing teacher assessment process. STA will scrutinise practice in all local authorities (LAs) and undertake external moderation visits to a sample of LAs to ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities. STA will also monitor school submission of data to ensure that it is accurate and will support any concern raised regarding irregularities of submitted teacher assessment data by schools.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Local authorities

LA moderation managers, LA external moderators and all primary phase headteachers, senior school staff and year 6 teachers must be familiar with this document and its requirements, to ensure that the school and LA moderation processes provide valid and accurate teacher assessment judgements.

It is expected that, from within the school's overall resources, teachers engaged in carrying out teacher assessments will have adequate opportunities to undertake activities within the moderation cycle (please see section 3.2) using national exemplification materials.

2.2 Academies and free schools

Academies (all reference to academies in this document will include free schools) must comply with statutory requirements for key stage 2 assessment, which includes LA moderation requests. All academies, as of September 1 2013, must confirm to STA which LA they wish to use to conduct moderation visits. 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. STA will ask academies to provide details of their key stage 2 writing teacher assessment moderation arrangements in the autumn term of 2013.

2.3 Independent schools

Independent schools may submit their results to the DfE for inclusion in the national summary of results, but this is not statutory. If an independent school wishes to do so it must be moderated in the first year it participates, and then at least once in each four-year cycle.

An independent school can only claim that its results are comparable with those published nationally or locally if it has taken part in the LA moderation process at least once in a four-year cycle.

3. Overview of arrangements for 2014

External moderation is statutory and gives confidence that teacher assessment judgements for key stage 2 writing are accurate and consistent with national standards. The process confirms whether a school's key stage 2 writing teacher assessment is consistent with national standards and, if not, how the school must change it.

It helps to ensure that teacher assessment results are fair for children and are useful to schools and others who evaluate children's performance and progress. Key stage 2 teacher assessment must be robust and credible as it will form part of schools' published accountability data.

Schools will receive an LA external moderation visit to review their key stage 2 writing teacher assessment judgements at least once every four years. During the visit LA external moderators will check teachers' understanding of standards and look at children's written work and other evidence from across the year.

The emphasis of a moderation visit is on the professional discussion between the year 6 teacher and the LA external moderator. Schools should not create portfolios of work or prepare 'showpiece' examples for a moderation visit, as there is no need for schools to keep additional records justifying their teacher assessment judgements.

Children do not necessarily achieve uniformly and teachers and LA external moderators must consider the relative strengths and weaknesses of a child's written work. There should be sufficient evidence to justify the teacher's assessment across a range of writing.

It is possible for children to move from one level to another during the course of year 6. In such cases, a child 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.

In confirming judgements, teachers and LA external moderators must refer to the national level descriptions at all times. Teachers and LA external moderators must balance the evidence to understand where the best fit lies, and to ensure fair comparison with the work of other children.

Schools are accountable for submitting accurate and valid key stage 2 writing teacher assessment judgements. Regardless of whether schools receive an LA moderation visit in 2014, headteachers should ensure that robust moderation processes (internal and with other schools / stakeholders) are followed and that the national level descriptions are referred to at all times during that process.

Where school-submitted teacher assessment data differs from the agreed moderated judgements (without prior agreement) or where the pattern of attainment raises concerns, the LA must investigate this as possible maladministration and, potentially, refer it to STA (see section 11).

3.1 Minimising bias

A range of research studies has shown that teachers' assessment of a child's work can sometimes 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 one 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 and ensure they are based on sound evidence.

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

There must be evidence of independent writing in order to be secure in a level.

3.2 What is moderation?

External moderation visits are only one part of the assessment process. It is important for schools to engage fully with each stage of the process to ensure that their teacher assessment is accurate and in line with national standards.

Moderation as a whole includes:

Component	Description
Ongoing assessment	Teachers make day-to-day professional judgements on children's progress and attainment to inform next steps in learning.
Standardisation	A professional development activity where teachers secure their understanding of national curriculum levels of attainment. Where there are differences, teachers must review their judgements and align them with national standards.
Teacher assessment	Following standardisation, teachers make informed judgements about children's levels of attainment with reference to the national curriculum level descriptions, supported by the exemplification materials and the revised criteria for writing.
School / cluster moderation	With colleagues, teachers use the national curriculum level descriptions to review a selection of the judgements and supporting evidence to check their accuracy and consistency. Any disagreement must be resolved by reference to national exemplification materials to ensure that all judgements are in line with national standards and may require revisiting all previous teacher assessment judgements.
External LA moderation	Visits by LA external moderators to review teachers' judgements, across the range of attainment (levels 2 – 6) to ensure that teacher assessments are accurate and in line with national standards. Teachers will discuss their judgements with the moderator with reference to a range of evidence for a sample of children.

3.3 Purpose of external moderation

External moderation involves a professional discussion between the external moderator and the year 6 teacher in which a sample of evidence is reviewed to validate that each teacher assessment judgement is accurate and consistent with national standards.

Where teacher assessment judgements cannot be validated, the LA external moderator will explain clearly how the school must review and change its teacher assessment judgements before submitting data. This ensures that the reported data accurately reflects the outcomes of the moderation visit.

The LA external moderator will provide an independent professional validation of the school's teacher assessment, and will provide the school with suitable feedback about the accuracy of the judgements and quality of evidence, suggesting appropriate support if necessary.

4. School moderation requirements

Headteachers and governing bodies are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the teacher assessment judgements in their school. They have the following specific duties:

- to permit the LA external moderator to enter the school premises at all reasonable times;
- to meet requests from the LA external moderator for samples of children's classwork or any other information reasonably required;
- to make time for teachers to discuss their teacher assessment judgements with the LA external moderator;
- to ensure the senior management team and year 6 teachers are available for feedback on the moderation visit by the LA external moderator; and
- to ensure that all submitted teacher assessment data is accurate and in line with national standards.

4.1 Internal moderation and moderation with external partners

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

For any internal / external moderation with other stakeholders / schools (including secondary schools) to be valid, schools should use national curriculum level descriptions. If these are not used, the outcomes of the internal moderation would not be useable for an LA external moderation visit.

4.2 School preparation for a local authority external moderation visit

Schools will receive an LA external moderation visit during the summer term. The visit will take place prior to the LA deadline for schools to submit their teacher assessment judgements. The school will not receive formal notice of a visit before the final week of the spring term, to avoid excessive preparation.

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

- a ranked list of year 6 teacher assessment judgements by class, (the LA moderation manager may ask to see the school's provisional teacher assessment judgements in advance of the visit) is provided;
- the LA external moderator and year 6 teachers have a quiet area and access to year 6 children's evidence of ongoing learning and assessment, in whatever format it is routinely kept;
- year 6 teachers have a professional discussion with the LA external moderator to look at how the evidence supports their teacher assessment judgements, and to receive feedback; and
- there is an opportunity for the LA external moderator to meet the headteacher (and any other relevant school staff) to offer formal feedback at the end of the visit.

There is no expectation that teachers should produce any evidence that is over and above what is normally available from day-to-day teaching and learning. If LA external moderators have questions concerning the evidence to support a teacher's judgement, they should discuss them with the teacher.

Schools are required to report teacher assessment judgements in writing as whole-level judgements. There is no expectation that LA external moderators will discuss any internal sub-levels, even if the school has made judgements in this way.

Schools are able to appeal the outcome of the LA external moderation visit through the LA appeals process. Schools must have sufficient evidence to support any appeal.

Schools should be aware that all LA external moderators should have undertaken the STA standardisation exercise as part of the LA recruitment process. This gives confidence to schools that the moderator is competent in key stage 2 writing.

Schools must be fully aware of the statutory requirements regarding the submission of key stage 2 writing teacher assessment data and the legal requirement for accuracy of pupil data.

Schools should also refer to the tables on the following pages for detailed information about the external moderation process.

5. Organisation of the local authority moderation process

STA expects the LA to plan an annual programme to ensure that their statutory duties in relation to the moderation of key stage 2 writing judgements are met.

Key requirements	Examples of effective practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STA requires a completed moderation plan for key stage 2 writing in the autumn term. This will inform STA intervention during the 2013 to 2014 moderation year. • An accountable LA officer must be detailed in the plan. • The plan must contain sufficient detail to inform STA of how the LA will ensure its statutory duties are met. • The plan must address and evidence any STA action points from the 2012 to 2013 moderation year for moderated LAs. • The plan must include a specific appeals procedure in relation to the moderation of key stage 2 writing teacher assessment judgements. • The moderation process must be evaluated each year in consultation with all stakeholders and the plan revised accordingly. • STA requires a completed evaluation for key stage 2 writing alongside details of changes to teacher assessment judgements in the summer term. This will inform STA planning for the 2014 to 2015 moderation year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the moderation process are communicated to all relevant stakeholders early in the autumn term. <p>The stakeholder group includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA colleagues • headteachers / managers of schools and settings • practitioners • moderation team • LA data teams. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning is shared across LAs to support consistency. • Address and evidence any STA points for consideration within the previous year's LA feedback letter. • LA evaluation includes school and moderator feedback and any outcomes are shared with schools.

5.1 Local authority recruitment of moderators

In order to ensure that the LA undertakes consistent and accurate moderation of teacher assessment judgements, the LA is required to recruit, train and quality assure a moderation team with appropriate and recent experience of key stage 2 writing assessment.

Key requirements	Examples of effective practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The LA must have an effective process for the recruitment of moderators. ● The moderation team must consist of competent individuals with recent and relevant experience of key stage 2 writing assessment and moderation. ● All moderators are expected to undertake the 2013 to 2014 standardisation exercise to support confidence in, and credibility of, the LA moderation processes. ● All LA external moderators must be qualified teachers. They must be able to demonstrate their ability to engage teachers in a professional discussion and feedback appropriately. ● The LA must provide an effective training programme based on national standards to ensure validity and reliability of the moderation process. ● Quality assurance of LA moderators must be in place to ensure consistent and effective practice during the moderation window. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As part of their induction, newly appointed moderators have access to a mentor and opportunities to shadow a more experienced colleague. ● Each moderator receives a quality assurance shadow visit as early as possible in the moderation window. ● The moderation team includes a balance of LA and school-based moderators. ● The moderation manager has a comprehensive understanding of assessment and appropriate subject knowledge. ● The moderation manager and team participate in inter-LA moderation activities, using exemplification of national standards to ensure consistency. ● Pairing arrangements between moderators from different LAs provide opportunities for the promotion of consistency and to share good practice.

6. Prior to a moderation visit to a school

In order to ensure that the LA undertakes consistent and accurate moderation of teacher assessment judgements, the LA must ensure that at least 25 per cent of all maintained schools with children at the end of key stage 2 are moderated annually. Visits must be arranged and children selected in line with STA's requirements. LAs must ensure that schools are aware of external moderation processes.

Key elements	Examples of effective practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LAs must communicate moderation arrangements to all schools. ● Schools are selected for a moderation visit on a four-year cycle or more frequently if there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● previously escalated issues ● historically inaccurate teacher assessment data sets ● Ofsted category or STA concerns ● new to year 6, newly qualified teachers (NQTs), new headteachers or senior management teams ● Schools can also request a moderation visit. ● LAs must be aware of arrangements for moderating academies and independent schools. ● Schools are notified within the final week of the 2013 to 2014 spring term. ● External moderation visits take place during the summer term. ● LA moderation managers must ensure that external moderators are not asked to visit schools with which they have a potential or perceived conflict of interest. For example, external moderators who are serving teachers should not visit schools in their immediate vicinity. Similarly, external moderators should not visit schools where they have recently provided support or intervention activities, such as those designed to raise child attainment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain an accurate list / database to drive targeted moderation visits that draws on LA intelligence (including monitoring non-attendance at training). ● Consistent and effective communications with schools include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● headteacher briefings ● regular updates ● LA moderation handbook / timeline ● dissemination of national exemplification materials ● Training programme for all year 6 teachers (with additional focus on NQTs / new to year 6). ● Provide opportunities for schools to standardise and moderate (within and beyond schools including cross-phase). ● All schools not receiving an external moderation visit attend a central moderation meeting to ensure consistency of national standards across the LA.

7. Selecting the sample of children for moderation

Key elements	Examples of effective practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools must provide the LA with a ranked list of year 6 teacher assessment judgements by class. • LA notification of the chosen children in the sample to be detailed to schools either on the day of the visit or no earlier than a day in advance. • The moderator selects a minimum sample of 15 per cent across the cohort or in the case of a single class, a minimum of five children. The sample must cover the full range of attainment (levels 2 to 6); this will form the basis of the professional discussion. • The exact number of children discussed during the external moderation visit will vary, depending on the school's size and circumstances. Final sample selection must rest with the LA external moderator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools may ask LA external moderators to discuss the work of additional children, in order to help them review the quality of their teacher assessment judgements. Providing there is time and opportunity, LA external moderators should try to accommodate this. • Teacher assessment judgements of children who are working below level 2 should be moderated internally, ideally with support from key stage 1 colleagues. Where children 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 2014 key stage 2 ARA which is available from the DfE's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks2.

8. Suitable evidence for moderation

LA external moderators will consider the following evidence which could be used for internal or external moderation.

8.1 The variety of evidence

- Children's 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.
- Examples of children's independent writing.
- Other evidence which the school considers relevant.

8.2 The range of evidence

LA external moderators will expect to see a range of writing that includes both fiction and non-fiction forms. The main text types include:

- recount;
- procedure or instruction;
- narrative;
- report;
- explanation;
- argument and persuasion; and
- poetry.

(Please see Annex A for further information on text types).

If the evidence for children's writing is limited in variety and range of texts, it is likely that the school's teacher assessment in writing will not be consistent with national standards.

8.3 Independence in writing

LA external moderators will expect to see examples of children's independent writing, as well as work supported through direct modelling, use of prompts, or guided group work. Clearest evidence for independence is likely to come from writing which is cross curricular and / or which requires children to make decisions about audience, purpose or form. Teachers should ensure that moderators are clear about the amount of support a child has received in completing a particular piece of writing.

8.4 Spelling and handwriting

When assessing spelling and handwriting, reference should be made to the national curriculum level descriptions. When assessing a collection of work, spelling and handwriting should be considered and used to refine judgements but should not be given such weight as to change or define the overall level judgement.

9. The moderation professional discussion

The professional discussion between the year 6 teachers and the LA external moderator is essential. This will ensure the teachers can talk through their judgements and supporting evidence.

Key requirements	Examples of most effective practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits take place at an agreed time within the school day, with all year 6 teachers released for the visit. • The moderator reviews the evidence for each child before or during the professional discussion. • During the professional discussion the teacher articulates the reasons for their judgements, demonstrating their understanding of national standards. • Reference must be made to the national curriculum level descriptions and the national exemplification materials. • There must be discussion about the context of the writing and the level of independence. • Where there is insufficient evidence or concerns about the accuracy of the teachers' judgements, moderators may request additional evidence. • There is no expectation that moderators should discuss sub-levels as they are not part of the key stage 2 statutory assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole school assessment processes are evaluated during the professional discussion. • Outcomes of internal moderation are considered within the professional discussion. Moderators establish how schools undertake internal and cluster moderation processes and check that they are referencing national curriculum level descriptions and STA exemplification. • LAs ensure that teachers are familiar with any additional STA guidance materials and moderators reference these (where relevant) during the moderation visit. • Other school staff (including any year 7 representatives) have an opportunity to observe the moderation visit.

10. Moderation feedback

Key requirements	Examples of most effective practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of the visit, the moderator will inform the headteacher or delegate, of the outcome of the external moderation visit. • Where the assessment is not in line with national standards, the moderator will inform the school of the action to be taken. • The moderator will provide the school with a completed LA record of the visit, detailing the teacher and moderator judgements, which must be signed by the headteacher (or delegate) and moderator. • The LA record of visit details the number of children in the cohort at each level and any potential levels that may change by the teacher assessment submission date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal and written feedback is provided to each year 6 teacher, including points for development, strengths and any concerns. • Verbal and written feedback on whole-school processes is provided to the headteacher or delegate. • Where schools have an effective whole-school approach to assessment, this is recognised and reflected in feedback to the school.

11. Appeals, data submission and potential maladministration

LAs are required to have an appeals process and share it with schools. Headteachers are responsible for the submission of accurate teacher assessment data which must reflect any changes made as a result of an LA moderation visit.

Where an LA or other party identifies potential maladministration this should be investigated by the LA. Examples are:

- a concern regarding the teacher assessment process within the school;
- lack of independent work or only highly scaffolded evidence; or
- changes to teacher assessment judgements by senior school staff to influence school assessment outcomes.

The LA can contact STA's maladministration team for further advice and potentially escalate to STA for further consideration/investigation.

Where an LA or other party identifies potential maladministration they should contact the national curriculum helpline on 0300 303 3013 or by email at assessments@education.gov.uk.

Key requirements	Examples of most effective practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools must have access to an LA appeals process. • Schools must have evidence to support any appeal claim before the appeal is processed (the evidence can only be based on that viewed during the moderation visit). • Appeals that cannot be resolved at LA level can, subject to strict qualifying criteria, be escalated to STA by the LA on behalf of the school. • Schools must have an appropriate system to record and submit teacher assessment data to STA by the deadline date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LA collects teacher assessment data on behalf of all schools, or accesses reports from the NCA tools website at www.education.gov.uk/ncatools to allow for a robust check of submitted data. • LAs proactively communicate the appeals process to schools. • LA intelligence is used to drive scrutiny of teacher assessment submission data.

Key elements	Examples of most effective practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schools must submit teacher assessment judgements to an LA or to STA. Data submissions must include any required changes to teacher assessment as a result of an LA external moderation visit. ● Moderated schools must inform the LA of their intention to amend any teacher assessment level prior to data submission. The LA must deal with each request on a case by case basis, which may include a review of any additional evidence. ● Where submitted data differs from the moderated data, the LA must investigate this as possible maladministration and can potentially refer the issue to STA. ● Schools not receiving a moderation visit are also required to submit accurate teacher assessment data. The LA must investigate any possible maladministration due to an unexpected pattern of attainment and can potentially refer the issue to STA. ● The LA must investigate any concerns raised regarding potential maladministration of school practices regarding teacher assessment and can potentially refer the issue to STA. 	

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 child in every text type.

Text type	Example
Recount	A sequential retelling of events, eg a diary entry, newspaper report, factual story based on people or events.
Procedure or instruction	Guides the reader by stating how to do or make something, or how to take care of something, eg 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, eg traditional tale, adventure, science fiction, historical, ghost.
Report	Describes what something is or was like and provides information about it, eg 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, eg presentation slides 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, eg a letter to persuade or protest, a book review, a speech, a play script.
Poetry	For example to entertain, to reflect, to convey information, to tell a story, to share knowledge or to pass on cultural heritage.

Annex B - Structuring external moderation visits

LA moderators should be flexible to suit local circumstances, such as the school size or timetable. The focus of the moderation visit should be the professional discussion between year 6 teachers and LA moderators.

Steps – time indication	Actions	Personnel involved
1. On arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make introductions. • Reaffirm the structure, purpose and expected outcomes of the visit. 	LA moderator(s), headteacher (or senior leader) and year 6 teacher(s)
2. Short introductory discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the whole-school assessment processes, including standardisation and moderation both within and beyond the school. • Review list of children and their current teacher assessment levels and discuss selection of a sample of children for moderation. 	LA moderator(s) and year 6 teacher(s)
3. Short engagement with writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrete reading time for moderators to engage fully with children’s writing. • If year 6 teacher(s) choose to be present, they must allow moderators to read entire pieces of writing before engaging in discussion about them. 	LA moderator(s) and year 6 teachers
4. Extensive discussion	<p>Please note, this section must form the substantive part of the visit in which all year 6 teacher(s) will engage with the moderators in a discussion. (Steps 3 and 4 could be combined.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority moderators must ensure that teachers have the opportunity to articulate the reasons for their judgements with close reference to the children’s work and national exemplification materials, enabling the teachers to demonstrate their secure understanding of national curriculum level descriptions. • If LA moderators have concerns about a teacher’s understanding of national standards, they will ask for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more evidence from the sample children • evidence from additional children and further discussion with year 6 teachers • LA moderators must use this time to provide informal feedback to individual teachers. 	LA moderator(s) and year 6 teacher(s)

Steps – time indication	Actions	Personnel involved
<p>5. Final, brief feedback</p>	<p>Provide verbal feedback covering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain where teacher assessment judgements have been accurate and where levels have been changed. ● Explain what the school should do if levels have been changed (eg gather more evidence, arrange a re-visit, change data for submission). ● Provide feedback about whole-school assessment processes. ● If there are concerns over an individual teacher's judgements, these should be raised separately with the headteacher or senior leader. ● Provide a short written record of the visit, outlining the moderators' judgements and reasons, which is signed by the headteacher (or delegate) and moderators. 	<p>LA moderator(s), headteacher and year 6 teacher(s)</p>



About this publication

Who is it for?

This is statutory guidance for:

- LA moderation managers
- LA external moderators
- All primary phase headteachers, senior school staff and year 6 teachers

What does it cover?

- School moderation requirements
- LA moderation processes
- Suitable evidence for moderation
- The moderation visit

Related information

Visit the Department for Education's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks2 for all related information.

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