

# Foundation stage profile

*Local authority moderation requirements booklet for 2007–8*

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December 2007

QCA/07/3476

# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction .....  | 3  |
| Local authority moderation .....  | 3  |
| Information for settings .....  | 4  |
| Moderation requirements .....   | 4  |
| Key features of effective implementation and moderation of the foundation stage profile . | 6  |
| Changes to the foundation stage profile .....   | 11 |
| Moderation timeline: 2007–8 .....   | 12 |

## Introduction

The *Local authority moderation requirements booklet for 2007-8* sets out the procedures and requirements for moderation and details the key aspects of effective practice. The information contained in this guidance document is based on Chapter 7 and Annex 1 of the *Foundation stage profile handbook* (QCA/03/1006) and additional guidance published by the National Assessment Agency (NAA). NAA is remitted by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to implement and moderate the foundation stage profile (FSP).

## Local authority moderation

Details of your foundation stage profile moderation plans should already have been submitted to the foundation stage team at the NAA as part of the evaluation and planning form, which local authorities and agencies were asked to return to the NAA by 31 July 2007. This form also requested details of training and moderation events being provided by the local authority during 2007–8 and, where possible, details of settings that will be externally moderated. Some local authorities may wish to supply this information nearer the time. The NAA will contact you if further clarification is required

The NAA will visit a number of local authorities during the summer term, to fulfil its statutory remit to audit the implementation of the foundation stage profile and local authorities' moderation processes and undertake an external moderation of local authorities' approaches and procedures. A representative sample of local authorities will be visited, and foundation stage profile moderation managers will be informed by the end of February 2008 if their local authority is part of the sample.

The role of the NAA external moderator will be to:

Visit local authorities selected as part of annual national representation to examine approaches to implementation and moderation of the foundation stage profile by:

- meeting with the foundation stage profile moderation manager and appropriate personnel to discuss the approaches to moderation, training and support
- attending a moderation meeting / moderation visit undertaken by the local authority
- reporting to the foundation stage profile manager / principal officer on the quality of the approaches used by local authorities and the robustness of the model employed.

The NAA uses information from the evaluation and planning form, along with data analysis and the results of external moderation, to assign each local authority a level of risk status (red/amber/green - RAG) for the standard of their moderation and data security. The RAG rating will indicate the success of the local authority's approach, and how the most effective practice is demonstrated. Both of these factors are discussed in more detail later in this document. A red RAG rating indicates that the local authority's systems for implementation and moderation require development and/or their data is insecure or potentially insecure. These local authorities will be assigned a foundation stage profile support and development officer (SDO), whose role will be to support the development of an action plan that will improve the standard of moderation. SDOs will work alongside appropriate personnel in the local authority to support them, focusing on identifying obstacles or potential obstacles to the accuracy of, and confidence in, the foundation stage profile data. They will then report on the local authority's progress against the issues identified.

All local authorities will receive a letter informing them of their RAG rating, highlighting their good practice and areas for development. Copies will be sent to the foundation stage profile moderation manager and the director of children's services. This letter will form the basis for discussion of the quality of foundation stage profile moderation and its impact on the accuracy of data during the Priorities meetings with Primary National Strategy regional advisers.

### **Information for settings**

Local authorities should inform settings about moderation activities. Those settings which are to be visited should be informed by 30 March 2008. Individual settings can be added to your sample after this date, if particular issues arise.

### **Moderation requirements**

The requirements for moderation processes are set out on pages 121–127 of the *Foundation stage profile handbook*.

Local authorities have the following responsibilities:

- to ensure that all practitioners responsible for the completion of foundation stage profiles take part in moderation activities at least once annually
- to appoint moderators with appropriate experience of the Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance (early years foundation stage 2007–8), the stepping stones (EYFS Development Matters, which includes the early learning goals) to secure consistent standards in assessment

- to ensure that the moderators are trained and participate regularly in local authority and cross-local authority moderation activities, and have a good understanding of how to promote progress within the foundation stage and ease the transition to key stage 1
- to ensure that all settings are visited regularly as part of a cycle of moderation visits by a local authority moderator, and that settings with identified problems or other particular circumstances are visited more frequently. Local authorities should have a view of what constitutes quality in the foundation stage and have systems for auditing this.
- in the light of the moderation visit, to notify the headteacher/manager of the setting whether foundation stage profile assessments are being carried out in accordance with requirements
- where the moderator judges that the assessment is not in line with the exemplified standards, to ask the headteacher/manager to arrange for practitioners to participate in further training/moderation activities, and to reconsider their assessments as advised by the moderator.

All practitioners and settings implementing the foundation stage profile are entitled to access moderation. Moderation can be in the form of:

- a visit carried out by a suitably experienced and trained external moderator
- a meeting of a cluster of settings (two or more) or a local authority-organised session.

The suggested schedule for the focus of and balance of moderation is tabled on page 6.

Local authorities and agencies may wish to refine and modify the approach suggested in the *Foundation stage profile handbook* in order to respond to the specific needs of their settings and practitioners. However, it is imperative that all 13 scales are moderated, at the minimum as part of a three-year cycle. Moderation cannot continually focus on a specific scale to the exclusion of others. Local authorities and agencies may wish to increase the percentage of schools and settings visited, or to offer moderation meetings to 100 per cent of practitioners.

In addition to these minimum requirements, local authorities should demonstrate that their approaches to moderation appropriately address all associated issues, adopting the features of the most effective practice in order to provide assurance on the accuracy and reliability of outcomes.

## Key features of effective implementation and moderation of the foundation stage profile

Local authority RAG ratings for the quality of implementation and moderation of the foundation stage profile will be based on consideration of the following criteria.

|  | Successful moderation systems will:   | The most effective practice is demonstrated when:   |
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| <b>Development of the moderation plan</b>                      | Agree details of moderation in advance with settings and stakeholders.  | The moderation plan is reviewed and developed in conjunction with representatives from all stakeholders, including private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings, and is responsive to the review of the previous year's moderation.  |
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| <b>Training and support for foundation stage practitioners</b> | <p>Training and support established for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-practitioners new to reception in observation skills and completing the foundation stage profile</li> <li>-experienced reception practitioners in developing their understanding of the process and purpose of the foundation stage profile</li> <li>-practitioners with sole responsibility for reception, especially in small settings</li> <li>-teaching assistants and support staff working in reception classes</li> </ul> | <p>A clear system is in place for training and supporting practitioners.</p> <p>Practitioners have access to training that focuses on the principles of effective assessment and the aims, principles, purpose and uses of the foundation stage profile. Practitioners are supported through briefings, meetings, updates, visits and / or drop-in, surgery and telephone support as appropriate.</p> <p>Staff new to the foundation stage profile are identified by the local authority and their attendance at training and meetings is monitored.</p> <p>Additional support is offered and their settings are visited as an integral</p> |

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|   | -practitioners in PVI settings required to implement the foundation stage profile.   | part of the annual moderation cycle.  |
| <b>Training and support for foundation stage profile stakeholders</b> | Provide LA staff, headteachers, year 1 teachers and subject leaders in infant, primary and special schools with specific foundation stage profile training.  | Training, briefings and updates are regularly provided for all levels of school and local authority management. Attendance is high and continuously monitored.  |
| <b>External moderation visits</b>                                     | Identify a range of schools and settings that will receive a visit as part of the moderation cycle.  | Schools and settings are identified for moderation visits through a range of triggers. These may be cyclical (where 50 per cent of schools and settings are visited annually), or include schools where staff are new to the foundation stage profile. Triggers may also include concerns identified by the SIP or headteacher, anomalies in data, concerns during previous moderation visits, and non-attendance at training and/or moderation meetings. |
|   | Moderate/check understanding of scale point judgements by talking to practitioners and discussing evidence and judgements during a visit to a setting and/or moderation meeting, drawing upon national agreed exemplification. | The moderation visit focuses on a professional dialogue with the practitioner to explore their understanding of foundation stage profile scale points in relation to the attainment of the children in the moderation sample. Moderators also explore the ratio of adult-directed and child-initiated evidence that is used to secure a judgement. Where appropriate a 'joint observation' between practitioner and moderator                             |

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|                   |   | may take place to further examine the approach.   |
|                   | Offer each practitioner an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of scale point judgements by discussing assessments of a small number of individual children. | The moderation model focuses on evidence of children's attainment within three bands of the foundation stage profile; scale points 1–3, scale points 4–8, and scale point 9.  |
|                   | Check understanding of scale point judgements by sampling from all of the focused scales for moderation.  | All scales are moderated as part of a cycle and in response to the evaluation of previous moderations.  |
|                   | Promote judgements that are derived from a balance of focused assessments and observational evidence.   | Judgements are made mainly from the observation of knowledge, skills and understanding demonstrated by children engaged in self-initiated activities, using focused / directed assessments to consolidate judgements. |
|                   | Encourage settings to develop and maintain the emphasis on practitioner assessment throughout the setting and between settings.   | Schools and settings engage in continual moderation between foundation stage practitioners and with year 1 staff.   |
|                   | Provide settings with clear feedback as soon as possible after moderation activity.   | Written feedback is provided to schools as evidence of the visit and as judgement on the accuracy of foundation stage profile data.   |
|                   | Allow for follow up activity where there is evidence of a lack of understanding of standards.   | Headteachers and senior managers are aware of their responsibility to act upon feedback given by the moderator and adjust assessments accordingly.  |
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| <b>Moderation</b> | Ensure that all practitioners have the opportunity  | Meetings take place throughout the year, providing practitioners with   |



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| <b>meetings</b>                      | to attend at least one moderation / evidence trialling meeting annually.   | the opportunity to participate in evidence trialling and review approaches to assessment, recording and making judgements. Attendance is high and continuously monitored.  |
| <b>Moderators</b>                    | Have suitably qualified and experienced staff involved in the moderation process and ensure they have opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage profile. | The moderation team reflects a balance of serving practitioners and local authority personnel. All members of the team have substantial and appropriate early years experience. Moderators are regularly briefed and have the opportunity to participate in evidence trialling within the team.  |
|                                      | Engage in inter-local authority moderation of foundation stage profile judgements.   | The moderation manager participates regularly in moderation activities with other local authorities, discussing approaches to moderation and evidence trialling specific foundation stage profile scale points. This might take place through early years adviser / consultant meetings, national conferences, moderator meetings, or regional events organised by the Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment. |
| <b>Foundation stage profile data</b> | Promote and support the understanding and use of foundation stage profile data.  | Foundation stage profile data is used effectively and appropriately by all stakeholders as the result of ongoing training and support; particularly by year 1 teachers, school management, assessment coordinators and subject leaders.  |
|                                      | Quality assure foundation stage profile data prior   | Foundation stage profile data from schools and settings is scrutinised   |

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|  | to submission to DCSF.   | by the moderation manager and the local authority data team. Apparent anomalies and inconsistencies are identified and highlighted to schools and settings for review.                      |
|  | Provide foundation stage profile data analysis by the local authority at local and school level. | The local authority provides summary data for the school / settings compared to the local and national averages. Data is analysed to indicate trends and highlighted areas for development. |

## Changes to the foundation stage profile

Following the Rose Review, *Independent review of the teaching of early reading* (March 2006), the early learning goal ‘Hear and say initial and final sounds in words, and short vowels within words’ has now been changed to ‘Hear sounds in words in the order in which they occur’. The associated communication, language and literacy scale of the foundation stage profile has been amended to read:

CL&L: LSL SP 5: Hears and says sounds in words

CL&L: LSL SP 6: Blends sounds in words

This new wording has been extensively trialled with practitioners and we are confident that they will find it straightforward to make judgements on this basis. Local authorities were informed of the changes by a letter from QCA, sent in September 2007. Appropriate guidance and exemplification has been already been distributed to ensure consistency of interpretation across settings. Additional information and downloadable copies of the changed materials are also available from [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_11958.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_11958.aspx).

From September 2008, the foundation stage profile will be replaced by the early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP), which will remain broadly the same. Guidance, information, responsibilities and exemplification will be modified and updated to include recent developments, reaffirming the principles and process of effective and accurate assessment. Local authorities will be informed about access to these materials nearer the time. The eProfile will still be available and will be updated to reflect the EYFSP. The *Foundation stage profile optional booklet* will be discontinued from September 2008.

## Moderation timeline: 2007–8

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| <b>December 2007 / January 2008</b> | Moderation requirements for 2007/8 booklet distributed to local authorities and agencies.  |
| <b>End of February 2008</b>         | NAA notify local authorities if they are to be visited.  |
| <b>30 March 2008</b>                | Local authorities notify their settings of moderation activities and those that are being visited as part of the moderation sample in 2008.  |
| <b>End of April 2008</b>            | NAA distributes foundation stage profile moderation evaluation and planning forms to local authorities.  |
| <b>May / June 2008</b>              | NAA undertake external moderation of representative sample of local authorities and provides written feedback to local authorities.  |
| <b>27 July 2008</b>                 | Local authorities submit their completed moderation evaluation and planning forms to NAA.  |
| <b>September 2008</b>               | NAA assigns foundation stage profile moderation and data security RAG rating to all local authorities and informs them of their rating and strengths and weaknesses.                       |
| <b>September 2008</b>               | NAA informs local authorities assigned a red RAG rating that they are identified as requiring additional support. Foundation stage profile support and development officers are allocated. |
| <b>October 2008</b>                 | All local authorities receive a detailed written response to the submitted evaluation and planning form.   |
| <b>October 2008</b>                 | NAA publishes its annual report on 2006–7 moderation.  |