



# Ensuring consistency in teacher assessment

Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3



# Ensuring consistency in teacher assessment: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3

<b>Audience</b>	Teachers, headteachers and governing bodies of maintained schools in Wales; local education authorities; teacher unions and school representatives; church diocesan authorities; national bodies in Wales with an interest in education.
<b>Overview</b>	This booklet provides updated support for teacher assessment, based on current good practice within schools and LEAs, by offering a range of effective and manageable ways for teachers to make their statutory end of key stage assessments accurate and consistent.
<b>Action required</b>	To review approaches and procedures to promote consistency in teacher assessment in light of the revised statutory assessment arrangement.
<b>Further information</b>	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: 3–14 Curriculum and Assessment Division Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Welsh Assembly Government Floor 10, Southgate House Wood Street Cardiff CF10 1EW Tel: 0800 083 6003 Fax: 029 2037 5496 e-mail: C&A3-14.C&A3-14@wales.gsi.gov.uk
<b>Additional copies</b>	Can be obtained from: Tel: 029 2037 5427 Fax: 029 2037 5494 Or by visiting the Welsh Assembly Government's website <a href="http://www.wales.gov.uk">www.wales.gov.uk</a>

# Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Teacher assessment and the national curriculum subject orders	5
Supporting and securing teacher assessment at Key Stages 2 and 3	7
Consistency in teacher assessment	9
Planning of learning, teaching and assessment	12
Reaching a common understanding of standards	14
Case studies: Standardisation within individual schools	18
Case studies: Standardisation within cluster groups	22
Making judgements at the end of a key stage	27
Case studies: In-school moderation	29
Case studies: Cluster moderation	36
Transition	41
Monitoring and evaluation	42
Appendix 1: Relationship between Foundation Phase Outcomes, National Curriculum Outcomes, level descriptions and qualifications	43
Appendix 2: The uses and limitations of standardised tests	44
Appendix 3: Roles and responsibilities – cluster moderation	47
Appendix 4: Support materials	49
Acknowledgment	52



## Foreword

In 1995, schools received guidance on teacher assessment in the form of *Consistency in teacher assessment* (CITA). Many of the messages in that original publication remain equally relevant today. The guidance within this new publication reiterates fundamental points and presents new information which reflects current good practice within schools in Wales.

This 2007 update is designed to support schools during the implementation of revisions to assessment arrangements, following the national consultation on future assessment arrangements, which was held from 31 October 2006 to 12 January 2007. The report on the findings and outcomes, *Future assessment arrangements for Key Stages 2 and 3*, is available electronically and can be accessed on the Welsh Assembly Government's website:  
[www.wales.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.wales.gov.uk/consultations)

This document is also available electronically on:  
[www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills](http://www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills)

## Introduction

Since the introduction of the national curriculum and its associated assessment arrangements, the term 'teacher assessment' has been commonly used to describe both everyday assessment which takes place throughout a key stage, and the judgements made by teachers at the end of a key stage; that is:

- ongoing, formative assessment - assessment **for** learning - focusing on the learners' achievement and on details of ways in which they can move forward rather than on the national curriculum outcomes and level descriptions
- statutory teacher assessment which involves teachers using the knowledge gained from everyday assessments to make and record their judgements on learners' overall attainment at the end of a key stage. Here the focus is on assessment **of** learning, or summative assessment.

The acceptance of the need to reduce reliance on national statutory tests and data derived from these was reflected, from September 2005, by revised statutory assessment and reporting arrangements that placed a sole focus on teacher assessment. This decision places increased emphasis on teachers' understanding and application of the national curriculum level descriptions.

This booklet provides updated support for teacher assessment, based on current good practice within schools and local education authorities (LEAs), by offering a range of effective and manageable ways for teachers to make their statutory end of key stage assessments accurate and consistent. The guidance is also equally applicable to assessment in religious education and in national curriculum subjects where teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 is not statutorily required.

## Teacher assessment and the national curriculum subject orders

National curriculum outcomes and level descriptions have been developed for summative assessment of learning at the end of a key stage, i.e. assessment **of** learning. They are not related to a particular phase or key stage but describe the types and range of performance that learners working at a particular outcome or level should characteristically demonstrate. They refer to a learner's achievement over time and over a range of work, providing a holistic view of a number of different characteristics. A judgement is reached by a best fit analysis, where each description is considered in conjunction with the descriptions for adjacent outcomes or levels, and a learner is allocated the outcome or level at which s/he is secure. It is likely that the learner will exhibit some characteristics of the adjacent outcomes or levels but summative judgement must relate to the outcome or level that best fits the learner's overall achievement. Arbitrary subdivisions within a level are not part of their design or intended use.

Learners' progress will not necessarily be regular or linear; they might regress in some aspects of their work, might reach a plateau for a while or might progress significantly in one or more aspect. However, the broad expectation remains that, in most subjects, an 'average' learner in Key Stages 2 and 3 will progress one level over two years. This means that over-frequent 'levelling' of a learner's work is counter-productive and often meaningless, as well as being confusing and demoralising for learners and parents/guardians.

National curriculum outcomes and levels are neither designed for day-to-day use with learners nor for the production, for example, of half-termly or termly data. A single piece of work should not be levelled. It cannot provide an overall assessment of what level at which the learner is working, although it may demonstrate characteristics of a particular level.

The relationship between Foundation Phase outcomes, national curriculum outcomes, level descriptions and qualifications is set out in a diagram reproduced in Appendix 1.

If schools plan to use standardised tests, they should ensure that the use and purpose of norm-referenced tests is clearly set out within an agreed whole-school policy on assessment, recording and reporting (ARR). Standardised tests, if used, should complement other assessment activities and contribute to more effective monitoring of progress on an individual, class and whole-school basis, and be used, as appropriate, to enhance the quality of learning and teaching. Standardised tests may be used to support assessment **for** learning as well as assessment **of** learning.

However, these tests must not, by themselves, be used to determine end of key stage judgements. As has been indicated previously, this judgement is reached by teachers undertaking a best fit analysis and referring to a learner's achievement over time and across a range of work. A brief examination of the uses and limitations of standardised tests is provided in Appendix 2.



## Supporting and securing teacher assessment at Key Stages 2 and 3

Following the phasing out of statutory end of key stage testing, consultation proposals outlined plans for supporting and strengthening both the consistency and accuracy of teacher assessment. The models for each of the two key stages, as outlined in the consultation, were developed on the basis of existing good practice in schools across Wales. They share the same starting point in terms of the fundamental importance of strong communication between teachers, both within each school and across schools. For each subject, as appropriate to the key stage, these communications include a clear focus on agreeing a shared understanding of national curriculum standards. In turn, school-based systems and procedures, to ensure the accuracy of teacher assessment and on-going consistency of assessment, need to involve regular opportunities for teachers to engage in internal standardisation and moderation. Schools' reference materials for these meetings will be based on samples of learners' work and teachers' commentary on the standards exemplified. Such systems and communications should help to underpin high-quality teaching and learning experiences for all learners.

Future teacher assessment arrangements at both key stages will require headteachers to ensure that effective systems and procedures are in place so that teachers have appropriate opportunities to meet and to agree, or reaffirm, a shared understanding of standards, for those subjects and levels of attainment that are relevant to their work. These requirements will be set out in detail in the annual *Statutory assessment and reporting arrangements* booklets for primary and secondary (Key Stage 3) schools.

Arrangements to support and strengthen teacher assessment will have a particular focus in relation to the point of transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. From the school year 2008/09, primary and secondary schools will be required to have in place effective arrangements for cluster group moderation. The assessment arrangements should link closely to transition arrangements between primary and secondary schools. The timing of the revised statutory arrangements is designed to dovetail with transition arrangements.

For Key Stage 3, the consultation also set out plans for external moderation of subject departments' understanding of standards and for verification of school-based systems and procedures. The model for accreditation of Key Stage 3 teacher assessment has been shaped and tested extensively for value and manageability through this close partnership working with schools and LEAs; and the sample evidence requirements for external moderation are based squarely on evidence selected from learners' routine classroom and out-of-class activities and output.

Elaborate arrangements for recording assessments and retaining evidence are neither required by the national curriculum, nor necessary to satisfy Estyn inspections, although inspectors will want to consider the extent to which schools' arrangements are effective, manageable and appropriate. This will include arrangements for reporting to parents/guardians.

## Consistency in teacher assessment

Consistency in assessment helps to ensure that, when judgements about individual learners are made against the standards in the national curriculum at the end of a key stage, there is fairness for learners across classes, schools and key stages. It gives headteachers, governors, teachers, parents/guardians and learners confidence in the validity of judgements reached in schools.

Effective approaches to consistency enhance teachers' knowledge and increase confidence in their own assessments. A basis for trust in the judgement of other teachers is established. This, in turn, results in a greater willingness to value and build on prior assessment of learners.

### **Processes involved in ensuring consistency in teacher assessment**

Effective systems and procedures for **standardisation** and **moderation at the end of a key stage** should be put in place to ensure consistency in teacher assessment.

**Standardisation** involves a process of using samples of the work of the same learner or of different learners to enable teachers to reach agreement on levels of attainment by confirming a shared understanding of the characteristics of a level.

This may be regarded as the precursor of **moderation at the end of a key stage**, where a 'best fit' judgement on an individual learner's level of attainment is made. Some foundation subjects at Key Stage 3 combine standardisation and moderation in a single process, for example, physical education.

To aid clarity within this booklet, materials collated for standardisation purposes, to support teachers' understanding of the national curriculum level descriptions, are described as the school, department or cluster **standardisation portfolio** which is used as a reference source of evidence.

Many schools have also found it useful to collate materials and other information which are linked to a range of work of an individual learner, a learner profile. These are used for exemplification purposes to assist judgements to be made at the end of a key stage, through moderation. To alleviate work load, a learner's exercise books have been included, as appropriate. Within this booklet, these materials have been described as the school, department or cluster **end of key stage learner profiles**.

## Using this booklet

This booklet is intended for all schools with learners in Key Stages 2 and/or 3. Schools should interpret references to schools, departments, and to staff with particular roles in ways appropriate to their circumstances.

The approaches in this booklet are based on successful case studies undertaken by LEAs and their schools during 2005–07 and work carried out evaluating a range of approaches to promote consistency in teacher assessment. Account has also been taken of the booklet *Consistency in teacher assessment: Guidance for schools*, published by Awdurdod Cwricwlwm and Asesu Cymru/the Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACAC) in 1995.

Schools and cluster groups should find this guidance helpful, in light of the revised statutory assessment arrangements, as they consider which approaches to, and procedures for, assessment are most appropriate to their circumstances. It is for schools and cluster groups to decide their main areas of focus to ensure successful implementation.

Decisions on these issues will be influenced by the size and type of school, the number of staff and learners, and the way in which the school/cluster group is organised. Decisions will also depend on schools' and cluster groups' existing assessment procedures. For schools that already have well-established procedures in place, this booklet may confirm their practice. For schools that are looking to review or develop their procedures, this booklet provides both recognition of steps already taken and further guidance.

Within the national consultation responses, a number of questions were raised about the precise organisation and monitoring of cluster group standardisation and moderation arrangements between schools. This guidance addresses such matters, but is not intended to be used in a prescriptive manner. Rather, the guidance will set out how existing school clusters are operating effective and manageable arrangements, and will highlight the benefits that the teachers have identified. Case studies and other information relating to this aspect have been collated from work undertaken within LEAs and individual schools. The guidance also seeks to address particular challenges that may occur, for example for small, rural schools.

From spring 2008, schools will have access to the revised curriculum orders, frameworks and linked exemplification of standards. Over time, these new materials should assist teachers in confirming, individually and as part of group discussions, their understanding and application of standards. Where appropriate, the school, department or cluster standardisation portfolio and end of key stage learner profiles, will be amended to match the revised national curriculum level descriptions and outcomes. The processes described in this booklet will remain applicable.

# Planning of learning, teaching and assessment

The document *Making the most of learning: Implementing the revised curriculum* focuses in detail on the issues of:

- planning learning
- learning and teaching
- assessing learning.

In the section on assessing learning, the document draws attention to a succinct comparison of the different forms of assessment made by the Assessment Reform Group (1999):

A clear distinction should be made between assessment of learning for the purpose of grading and reporting, which has its own well-established procedure and assessment for learning, which calls for different priorities, new procedures and new commitment.

## Assessment for learning

As has been previously indicated in this booklet, for ongoing, formative assessment – assessment **for** learning – it is necessary to focus on the learners' achievement and on details of ways in which they can move forward rather than on the national curriculum outcomes and level descriptions. This will involve learners gaining understanding of specific learning goals and the associated success criteria so that, supported by the teacher, they can develop their capacity for self and peer assessment. In this way, they can establish their current position, set and move towards targets and recognise if and when the targets have been reached. Individual targets should be linked to improving the quality of a learner's work, as highlighted through formative feedback, and therefore linked to success criteria for specific tasks. They cannot be linked directly with outcomes or level descriptions as these describe attainment over a range of tasks at the end of a key stage.

Teachers need to ensure that, if they are to make progress, learners know:

- where they are in the learning continuum
- where they need to go
- **how** best to get there.

This booklet does not deal with assessment **for** learning. Previous guidance deals with this aspect.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Details of the development programme and its associated booklets, *Why develop thinking and assessment for learning* and *How to develop thinking and assessment for learning*, can be found at [www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills](http://www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills)

## Assessment of learning

This booklet deals with assessment **of** learning and the processes needed to secure a shared understanding of the demands of the programmes of study and attainment targets, and shared expectations of performance. In particular, it deals with the processes involved in:

- reaching a common understanding of standards within individual departments, schools and within cluster groups
- enabling judgements to be made at the end of a key stage through in-school and cluster moderation.

The approaches outlined in the following sections are more effectively implemented as part of a whole school policy on assessment. Such a policy, putting the learner at the fore, sets clear and agreed guidelines, that help teachers to work together and to share information, and identifies assessment responsibilities.

When teachers work together to plan learning, teaching and assessment, this can result in a shared understanding of the demands of the programmes of study and attainment targets, and shared expectations of performance. Assessment that is planned and integral to the curriculum is likely to provide the most useful information about performance. This, in turn, helps teachers to be more consistent and confident in making judgements at the end of a key stage.

Ways of teachers working together on learning, teaching, and assessment may involve:

- joint planning between teachers in the same year or department, across years or across key stages
- using the programme(s) of study to agree objectives for learning, teaching, and assessment
- developing common activities focused on agreed objectives
- discussing and assessing work to develop shared expectations of performance, including in-school and cluster based standardisation sessions
- moderating a range of work of individual learners to enable more secure and consistent judgements at the end of a key stage, at in-school and cluster based meetings
- comparing the performance of learners from different classes on common activities.

## Reaching a common understanding of standards

From the school year 2007/08, primary and secondary schools should ensure that they have in place internal arrangements, based on standardisation and moderation, to strengthen teacher assessment.

For secondary schools, the roll-out of arrangements for external moderation of sample evidence from schools' subject departments continues. For core subjects, these arrangements involved a voluntary national implementation exercise in the last school year, 2006/07. Remaining core subject departments need to send their sample evidence for external moderation in this school year 2007/08. For non-core subjects, last year's pilot will be used to confirm detailed future arrangements, taking careful account of any subject-specific matters.

### **The way forward**

All teachers, not only those with learners in Years 6 and 9, need to ensure that their assessment is based on a shared understanding of national curriculum level description characteristics, so that standards are applied consistently when coming to a judgement on each learner's performance at the end of a key stage. Schools/departments involved in case studies described below, indicate that facilitating this aspect is crucial and indeed impacts on learners' experiences.

Developing a common understanding of standards in a subject should include consideration of:

- samples of learners' work from a range of contexts relating to characteristics of particular level descriptions
- teachers' overall judgements about the work of individual learners

and might include the use of:

- DELLS/ACCAC's optional assessment materials
- DCELLS exemplification materials linked to the revised curriculum (in process of development).

Appendix 2 lists materials, published recently to support consistency in teacher assessment and transition.



These approaches, that involve discussing or comparing teachers' assessments to reach a shared understanding of standards (including level characteristics), can take place at any time during a key stage. They may take place within a school or department or involve teachers from different schools, either within or across key stages, meeting together periodically. Teachers, particularly those in small schools or departments, have found it very helpful to work with teachers in other schools to develop a common understanding of standards in the national curriculum.

### **Demonstrating standards through a school, department or cluster reference source of evidence**

One outcome of reaching a common understanding of standards is the development, over time, of a collection of material that demonstrates the agreed standards. This is defined earlier in this booklet as a school, department or cluster **standardisation portfolio**, demonstrating teachers' understanding and application of the national curriculum level descriptions and outcomes. These materials include samples of learners' work with brief commentaries and annotations, showing how they reflect national standards. They may also include evidence, such as photographs, audio-visual and teacher written records, particularly for activities that do not result in written outcomes.

It should be noted that, as indicated earlier, individual samples of work may demonstrate characteristics of a level, but, as single items, should not be allocated a 'level'.

A school, department or cluster standardisation portfolio can serve as a reference point for all teachers both during a key stage and when judgements are made at the end of a key stage. It removes the pressure on individual teachers to build up their own collection of work to support their judgements. It can also be used as a suitable vehicle to discuss and exemplify standards for teachers new to the school and for visitors, inspectors and other schools. For Key Stage 3, it forms the basis of selection for external moderation.

A checklist for the development of a school, department or cluster standardisation portfolio is provided on the next page.

## Checklist to consider when planning and preparing for school-based, department or cluster meetings to develop a standardisation portfolio

Staff involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will lead/coordinate the work?</li> <li>• Who will be involved in the development of the sample evidence?</li> <li>• How will the school/department ensure that the sample evidence represents the agreed understanding of teachers in the school or department?</li> </ul>
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What subjects will be included?</li> <li>• Which year group(s) will be represented?</li> <li>• What range of levels will be included?</li> </ul>
Timescale for development and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the timescale for development?</li> <li>• How often/how will the reference materials be updated?</li> </ul>
Range and nature of material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much material will be used? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sample evidence from various learners</li> <li>- Selection from a range of tasks</li> <li>- What types of material will be used? For example, will it be written evidence or audio/video evidence?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Type and extent of commentary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the audience/rationale?</li> <li>• How much, and what kind of commentary or annotation is needed? e.g. does it provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- context for the work?</li> <li>- a brief explanation of why a piece of work demonstrates characteristics of a level?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Other supporting information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other items is it useful to include? For example, will it include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a summary of a development plan, if applicable?</li> <li>- examples of assessment activities?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• At Key Stage 3, has the work been seen by external moderators/verifiers?</li> </ul>

## Examples of approaches in developing a standardisation portfolio

In a primary or special school, work might be led by a deputy head or assessment coordinator. All teachers in the school should be involved in discussing learners' work and considering exemplification materials.

In a secondary school, work might be led by a head of department or faculty or an assessment coordinator. All staff in the department should be involved in discussing learners' work and considering exemplification materials.

The school-based standardisation portfolio might include materials relating to all attainment targets and the range of levels likely, in the core and non-core subjects. In Key Stage 3 for core subjects, this is a requirement by 2007/08. Schools/departments indicate that time spent on this aspect is far more productive than 'levelling' learners periodically during the term.

A development plan might be established with initial priorities dependent on the work the school/department has previously undertaken in developing a standardisation portfolio. A review (possibly annually) might involve replacing examples of learner's work with better or more recent examples. Good practice involves teachers having the opportunity/CPD to discuss standards and agree a shared understanding.

The different nature of the subjects and the attainment targets will influence the materials that might be included. Materials can take a variety of forms, including, for example:

- learners' written work (hand written or word-processed, or extracts from them) artefacts, photographs, audio or video evidence of performance/attainment
- learners' self-assessment records or logs, validated by their teacher
- extracts from teachers, records, mark books or notes of ephemeral, practical, visual or other evidence, dependent on subject and learners' needs/level of development.

The materials will be collections of work from different learners that, together, help teachers to understand expectations in a particular attainment target.

Commentaries might include:

- statements that provide a context or focus for samples of work
- annotation to indicate the agreed features of performance in pieces of work
- a summary showing how a collection of work demonstrates the characteristics of a particular level description.

Some school or department standardisation portfolios include a contents sheet and a brief summary of the strategies and timescales for developing and reviewing the evidence.

## Case studies: Standardisation within individual schools

This section provides guidance for reaching, within individual schools, a common understanding of national curriculum standards so that they can be applied consistently when coming to a judgement on each learner's performance at the end of Key Stage 2. This process is generally well established within schools.

The case studies have been developed and activities trialled at local level, sometimes involving collaboration between schools and LEAs. Each case study defines the focus, the process involved and the outcomes.

**Case study 1:** A focus on English/Welsh writing, using exemplification developed by an LEA from Early Years to Key Stage 3

**Case study 2:** A focus on language and communication skills and mathematical development in a special school

# 1 Case study

A focus on English/Welsh writing, using exemplification developed by an LEA from Early Years to Key Stage 3

## The process

An LEA has developed a file *Progress in Learning – Progression in writing in English/Welsh from Early Years to Key Stage 3* which presents examples of learners' writing from early years, through the primary phase, into Key Stage 3. These are supplemented with a commentary which highlights characteristics of levels of different genres. Guidance materials provided from ACCAC for the purpose of standardisation have informed the process. The file demonstrates the type of progress learners make as they develop as writers, and offers guidance about how work might be assessed and the steps needed for improvement.

The materials were used:

- by individual teachers wishing to develop an overview of progress and come to an understanding of standards
- by groups of teachers working within an age group who wished to develop an overview of progress and to share understanding of standards and make comparisons with work produced by their own learners.

## Outcomes

The standardisation portfolio helped inform teachers working in separate phases or locations about the development stages and skills level evident in learners' written work prior to, or after they had left, a particular class or group. This facilitated the process of standardisation within individual schools.

# 2

Case study

A focus on language and communication skills and mathematical development in a special school

## Background

Within an all age special school which meets the needs of 85 learners who have severe/profound and multiple learning difficulties, assessments are carried out annually using PIVATS<sup>2</sup> (published by Lancashire LEA). Summative assessment will involve the use of national curriculum outcomes following their introduction in 2008/09, but the process of standardisation, described below, will remain the same.

Due to concern about differences in P scale judgements, both within and between local schools, a standardisation day was held, involving all the special school staff and staff from nine units, plus representatives from the LEA HI service and pre school liaison service.

## The process

The special school had previously tried to standardise its PIVATS judgements using an alternative, commercially published P Scale assessment scheme. This proved to be unsatisfactory as the alternative materials relied upon the completion of discrete tasks to support the achievement of each level. These tasks frequently did not support the teacher's 'best fit' judgements and discussion amongst those working with the learner in different situations had proved of more value.

Following an input about the effective use of P scales and the need for standardisation, staff (in groups) looked at samples of learners' work. These were taken from a range of contexts and were not labelled. Reference was also made to some published exemplification materials which gave examples of work at various P levels.

Staff discussed the work samples and came to a shared understanding of various P level characteristics. This was done to ensure that standards were applied consistently when staff would make their end of key stage judgements. Staff also looked critically at the effectiveness of any comments which accompanied the work. This had been a focus of recent work in the special school. For learners at P1–4, evidence was largely in the form of video, photographs and teacher comments, while for learners working above P4, there were additionally annotated samples of work.

<sup>2</sup> Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting – a scheme which extends the P scales.

## Outcomes

The day provided valuable professional development for staff. In particular, benefits included:

- improving teachers' assessment skills and confidence in understanding the characteristics of P scales
- increasing teachers' understanding of the standardisation process
- raising awareness of the need to write informative rather than descriptive comments on learners' work, providing an appropriate rationale
- an updated school standardisation portfolio.

Following the standardisation exercise, the following aspects were identified for future development:

- Further work on the use of video for learners working at earlier levels and on the Routes for Learning Routemap.
- Future sessions to focus on moderating 'best fit' judgements at the end of a key stage, by looking at samples of an individual learner's work over time and in a variety of contexts.
- The development of a glossary of terms to support staff in making consistent judgements at the end of a key stage, where learners may have varying levels of support for some activities. The use of such support has to be taken on board when moderation takes place, as 'prompts' or 'coactive' support may vary widely, both within classes and establishments.

## Case studies: Standardisation within cluster groups

This section again provides guidance for reaching a common understanding of national curriculum standards so that they can be applied consistently when coming to a judgement on each learner's performance at the end of Key Stage 2, but this time within cluster groups, involving primary and secondary schools.

If work with other schools is to be beneficial, and the time and resources involved are to be well spent, careful planning and preparation are necessary. In particular, for schools starting this process, agreement is needed concerning the following key areas:

- Preparations/raised awareness in schools before cluster meetings.
- Cluster administrative arrangements.
- Nature of the learners' work to be standardised.
- Assessment criteria to be used.
- Arrangements to ensure a spread of samples from each participating school.
- The standardisation day/days' process, including agenda.
- Process for brief review and capture of main findings.
- Mechanism for agreeing future arrangements and agreed action plan.
- Effective strategies for ensuring agreed actions implemented in individual schools.
- Effective reporting back to colleagues after cluster meetings.

Experience has indicated that teachers involved in cluster standardisation meetings, from both primary and secondary schools, have found the sessions professionally stimulating. They have helped to develop consistency in teacher assessment and to raise expectations of learners' attainment.

It is important to make sure that arrangements for reaching a common understanding of standards are feasible and manageable. The points highlighted on page 16 should again be taken into consideration.

**Case study 3:** A focus on the core subjects of Welsh, English, mathematics and science

**Case study 4:** A focus on English (Oracy, Reading and Writing)

**Case study 5:** A focus on English (Reading Levels 3–5)



# 3

Case study

A focus on the core subjects of Welsh, English, mathematics and science

## The process

Four separate cluster groups, comprising four secondary schools and their associate primary schools, worked through the processes needed to carry out an effective Key Stage 2/3 cross-phase standardisation event, as a professional development activity. The schools covered a wide diversity of settings and included a Welsh-medium cluster group. A total of 19 schools took part.

The project was coordinated by a LEA adviser and an advisory teacher, with specific responsibility for assessment within the primary phase. Three out of four cluster groups related to the specific subject adviser who was the designated link adviser. This arrangement helped in terms of the planning and organisation of the meetings.

Two teachers from each primary school, normally a Year 6 teacher and either the subject leader or assessment coordinator, and the subject head of department or Key Stage 3 from the secondary school attended each standardisation meeting. They were led by the LEA advisory teacher.

The timetable for the entire process stretched over a three-month period and involved:

- an initial cluster meeting (after school) to discuss the way forward
- examples of learners' work being sent by the participating schools to the advisory team
- the collation of the samples of learners' work by advisory staff and its return to the schools
- an in-school moderation day with 0.5 supply cover being provided for two teachers
- a designated moderation day (supply cover provided per teacher).

The individual cluster groups focused on the core subjects of English, Welsh, mathematics and science.

The standardisation models varied across the subjects. The models used for both English and Welsh were based on individual schools sending examples of learners' work, covering Level 2 to Level 5. This work was identified from learners' class books or folders. In addition to the attainment targets of Reading and Writing, the Welsh group agreed to use the 2005 Optional Key Stage 2 Welsh task materials to standardise Oracy judgements.

The models used for mathematics and science were different in that the clusters agreed that learners in Year 5, 6 and 7 would undertake specific tasks from the Optional Assessment Materials (OAMs), previously developed by ACCAC. The units to be undertaken were pre-determined at an initial cluster meeting.

The LEA collated a pack of learners' work for each subject, which was sent to all schools in the cluster. Two teachers within each school met to agree characteristics of levels for each item, prior to the cluster meeting.

At the cluster meetings, the groups discussed the level characteristics of each sample of work in relation to what teachers had previously decided. In particular, they discussed any differences. At the meeting, the cluster group agreed characteristics of a level for each piece of work with an annotated justification.

## Outcomes

- Clusters of schools were provided with sound, practical advice on how to set up this kind of activity for themselves.
- The LEA circulated each cluster with a summary report identifying characteristics of a level agreed for each piece of work together with a justification.
- As a result of collecting samples of work from the participating schools, the LEA published these as exemplars to provide benchmarking materials which schools might use alongside their own standardisation portfolio. Pro-formats were provided on a memory stick.
- Arrangements were made for all head teachers to receive a presentation on the above model and Key Stage 2/3 coordinators also had a half-day CPD session.

# 4

Case study

## A focus on English (Oracy, Reading and Writing)

### The process

A representative from every secondary school in the LEA (including a special school) attended, together with ten Year 6 teachers and/or assessment coordinators who had demonstrated commitment to the project.

A total of four meetings were held and each group member brought along a selection of learners' work to be standardised. Genres were identified in advance to ensure coverage of the range. Members were also asked to provide samples covering the range Level 3 to Level 7.

The group assessed all pieces provided and made a selection of the work to be presented from the samples received, exemplifying characteristics of different levels within Oracy, Reading and Writing. Oracy tasks were presented through records giving a brief description of the task and the use of 'can do' statements to demonstrate how decisions had been arrived at.

Some exemplar tasks outlining good practice, showing units of work that demonstrate sound and effective assessment procedures, were also identified.

### Outcomes

- A standardisation portfolio, exemplifying characteristics of different levels within Oracy, Reading and Writing were presented to all Key Stage 2/3 schools in the LEA.
- Guidance on effective and manageable standardisation procedures was also provided.

# 5

Case study

## A focus on English (Reading Levels 3–5)

### The process

An initial half-day training session for three clusters took place to discuss the use and choice of materials, as the basis for a common cross-phase task to help reach agreement on standards in Reading. Teachers implemented the task in Years 6 and 7 and, on an agreed date, brought a selection of learner outcomes for a day's standardisation session.

The approach taken was based on a comprehension-style activity: a fiction or non-fiction text with questions to answer in writing. This approach was adopted as it limited the amount of paper circulating amongst staff during the sessions, had none of the complexities associated with assessing wider reading or independent research and created a 'level playing field', a commonality, in terms of materials and methodology. The materials chosen were those already in existence in schools, to reduce burden and because they were already familiar to teachers: Fiction and non-fiction texts from past Key Stage 2 statutory test papers; in this instance: 'Saving Our Environment'.

Though the test texts were used, the presentation of the questions and the mark scheme were modified. The numerical mark scheme was eradicated so that teachers could concentrate on reading skills at Levels 3–5. The 'answer booklet' was rejected in favour of A4 paper in order to bring less paper to the moderating table. The number of questions was reduced where a particular skill was repeatedly targeted. Some questions were modified and others were added to provide more challenge for Level 4 and Level 5 readers. The tasks were not timed; learners were allowed to work at their own, reasonable pace.

### Outcomes

- Teachers found the staged structure of the comprehension task allowed them to focus sharply as a group on specific learner responses to specific questions.
- It was particularly useful for those questions demanding higher-order skills (complex inference, authorial style/intention etc.) where the mark scheme suggested possible outcomes but teachers could use their professional judgement to award any valid alternative.
- For cross-phase standardisation, it was recommended that the tasks were used late in Year 6 and in Year 7 so that the materials remained age-appropriate and learners were reasonably close in terms of maturation.

## Making judgements at the end of a key stage

Teachers are required to make and record judgements against attainment targets at the end of a key stage in some national curriculum subjects and report them to parents/guardians. Achievement in all national curriculum subjects must also be reported annually to parents/guardians. Details and guidance relating to statutory assessment and reporting arrangements are sent to schools annually, in the *Statutory assessment and reporting arrangements* booklet for the appropriate key stage.

An agreed understanding of the standards set out in the national curriculum enables teachers to make consistent judgements on each learner's performance at the end of a key stage. As a result, teachers will be able to:

- confirm judgements on the basis of existing knowledge and records of learners' performance across a range of contexts and over time. It should not be necessary to assemble further evidence to support the judgement on each learner, nor should teachers need to assess each learner afresh
- identify learners for whom it is difficult to make a clear judgement, because of inconsistent performance, for example.

The teacher may then find it useful to review the learners' work, to refer to exemplification materials and the school, department or cluster standardisation portfolio, or to consult with other teachers.

Cluster moderation requirements will be introduced from September 2008 for core subjects. These should support and strengthen teacher assessment and Key Stages 2–3 links by:

- enhancing existing arrangements for contact between teachers and the transfer of information about learners' attainment
- developing a higher level of agreement of standards between primary and secondary schools, and
- increasing trust in the reliability of data in relation to individual learners' attainment.

Moderation, it must be emphasised, must be based on a range of an individual learner's work. This section works through the processes needed to carry out effective school-based and, in particular, Key Stages 2/3 cross-phase moderation events, as professional development activities, where a 'best-fit' judgement on an individual learner's level of attainment is determined.

A checklist is provided on the next page. Decisions/preparations will be influenced whether the meetings are school-based or cross-phase.

## Checklist to consider when planning for school-based/cross-phase moderation meetings to secure end of key stage judgements

Staff involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will lead/coordinate the work?</li> <li>• Who will be involved in putting together a suitable range of a learner's work? How will this be decided?</li> </ul>
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What subjects will be included?</li> <li>• Which learners will be represented? How many?</li> <li>• What range of levels will be included?</li> <li>• Will some examples of learners' attainment be on the cusp between levels?</li> <li>• How will the school/department ensure that the learner's work allows a judgement to be made?</li> </ul>
Timescale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the timescale?</li> <li>• How often will the moderation meetings take place? Who will decide the rationale?</li> <li>• Will the meetings be linked specifically to transfer of end of key stage information?</li> </ul>
Range and nature of material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much material will be used?</li> <li>• Which range of tasks/activities will be used?</li> </ul> <p>The different nature of the subjects and the attainment targets (and statutory requirements at KS2/3) will influence the materials that might be included. Materials can take a variety of forms, including, e.g:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learners' written work (hand written or word-processed, or extracts from them) artefacts, photographs, audio or video evidence of performance/attainment.</li> </ul>
Type and extent of commentary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the audience/rationale?</li> <li>• How much, and what kind of commentary or annotation is needed? e.g. will it provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a context for the range of work?</li> <li>- details of the support that was provided?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Other supporting information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other items should be included with the learner's range of work? e.g. will it include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- additional information, if applicable, such as a statement of educational need?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Appendix 3 suggests role and responsibilities for key personnel involved in the process of cross-phase moderation through cluster groups.

## Case studies: In-school moderation

**Case study 6:** To develop further the process of securing teacher assessment at Key Stage 2 by carrying out in-school moderation, following earlier standardisation meetings, in the core subjects of Welsh, English, mathematics and science

**Case study 7:** A focus on a Welsh-medium primary school's planning of moderation sessions to raise standards of achievement through learning and teaching

**Case study 8:** A focus on physical education at Key Stage 3, using the exemplification of standards materials (video and booklet) produced in 2000

# 6

Case study

To develop further the process of securing teacher assessment at Key Stage 2 by carrying out in-school moderation, following earlier standardisation meetings, in the core subjects of Welsh, English, mathematics and science

## The process

One LEA has worked closely with its schools to further develop the process of securing teacher assessment at Key Stage 2 by carrying out moderation meetings following a process of in-school standardisation. An annual programme has been developed that includes:

- autumn staff development sessions to either prepare or update a school-based standardisation portfolio for each core subject
- end of year moderation of learner profiles, where a 'best fit' judgement has been undertaken.

The LEA has suggested that these two sections should contain:

- examples of learners' work that show the characteristics of the national curriculum levels in each of the attainment targets, accompanied by a commentary on the achievement that the work demonstrates
- a selection of work of individual learners at each level. Only a range of work over a period of time will enable teachers to make a decision about a particular learner's overall level of attainment. The commentaries should indicate the level-related qualities of the work. Over time, Levels 1–5 will be included in the end of key stage learner profiles. All judgements about learners' levels of attainment, however, will need to be 'best fit'. Where assessment has been based on listening or observation, brief notes from the teacher's record can be copied or summarised.

## Outcomes

- An updated standardisation portfolio and end of key stage learner profiles containing a section of moderated learners' work has been developed.
- The LEA has also produced a model example of how to set up a moderation meeting, accompanied by a worked through agenda describing the process.



# 7

Case study

A focus on a Welsh medium primary school's planning of moderation sessions to raise standards of achievement through learning and teaching

## Background

Moderation sessions have always featured prominently in a Welsh-medium primary school's constant goal to raise standards of achievement through teaching and learning. The first end of key stage moderated learner profiles was put together as long ago as 1993. Practice has evolved and developed during the ensuing years. End of key stage learner profiles now exist in core and foundation subjects, but the moderation process still features in the school's long term planning. This is because the staff feels that the process is as important, if not more important, than the finished product and it is essential to have an on-going dialogue regarding standards of achievement within subjects.

Over the years the school has identified the following benefits from moderation sessions:

- A progressively increased understanding of national curriculum requirements has come about.
- Experienced staff share their ideas and expertise with less-experienced staff.
- Teacher expectations are raised and the next steps in the learning process are identified.
- Staff grow in confidence as more understanding is gained.
- Subject leaders have an added opportunity to:
  - monitor standards of achievement within their subjects, and
  - ensure that their schemes of work and planned activities meet with the requirements of the national curriculum and stimulate learners to show what they can do.

## The process

Although moderation is well established at the school, it still finds that it needs careful planning. It maintains a rolling programme of sessions over a two or three year period so that all subjects are covered. The plan is flexible and can be adapted to suit the findings from subject monitoring and information from assessment, both summative and formative. Every member of staff has a role to play in the process, some roles more clearly defined than others.

- **Assessment, Recording and Reporting (ARR) coordinator**  
The programme of moderation usually forms part of the ARR coordinator's development plan. The coordinator oversees the process, organises sessions and tracks progress, liaising and working closely with the subject leaders.
- **Subject leaders**  
Each subject leader has a key role to play in the process. They collect samples of work and familiarise themselves with the material and then prepare the samples as packs for moderation, ensuring anonymity as regards learners and classes. They lead the moderation sessions, sharing their expertise in the subject. They go on to plan the next steps based on the information gained as in terms of standards of achievement and teaching and learning within their subject. The subject leader and the ARR coordinator have met with the subject adviser to plan cross-phase sessions (a new development) and provided material for moderation from learners' books and from the school's end of key stage learner profiles.
- **Class teachers**  
Class teachers provide the material for moderation at all levels. They are prepared to discuss individual learners in an objective way, and are ready to take on board other people's views. They are also prepared to implement any changes in practice in light of moderation.
- **Headteacher/senior management**  
The headteacher and senior management are the facilitators and are the ones that ensure enough time is given to the process. CPD is planned. They give subject leaders the opportunity to attend LEA-based moderation sessions, cluster and cross-phase sessions. The headteacher has ensured that communication with the high school has been established and dialogue is maintained during regular meetings. Senior management has ensured that lessons learnt are put into practice on a whole-school basis.

## Outcomes

Over the years the school has realised that, for the process to work effectively and efficiently, there are issues that need to be considered carefully:

- Provision has to be made for staff time and costs, such as photocopying, even for a single school-based session.
- The school has a large staff and needs to be in small groups to moderate work effectively, coming together at the end to discuss findings. The staff needs to be grouped carefully during these sessions to ensure a balance as regards key stages and level of experience.
- Time is a major issue at all levels and the compilation of end of key stage learner profiles must be regarded as a long term project. This is also true in maintaining a system that uses moderation as a way of raising standards.
- It is also important to be flexible as regards long term planning as there is a need to prioritise in terms of subjects to be dealt with, taking into account assessment information, monitoring findings or School Improvement Plan priorities.
- The school ensures the end of key stage learner profiles are kept in the staff room for easy access. They are also used with governors when discussing assessment procedures and with parents/guardians, especially when discussing end of key stage teacher assessment. The end of key stage learner profiles are regarded as an easily accessible catalogue of standards within the school to be used by anyone as necessary.

To summarise, the school feels that it benefits from having a clear focus on moderation and that this can become a regular feature in the work of the cluster group.

# 8

Case study

A focus on physical education (PE) at Key Stage 3, using the exemplification of standards materials (video and booklet) produced in 2000

## The process

A comprehensive school used a PE consultant to provide support in understanding and applying the standards associated with PE at Key Stage 3. All members of the PE department attended the half-day professional development activity which focused specifically on the application of Year 9 summative assessment in their school.

The video was used to:

- discuss and judge the standards of learners whose work was shown on the video
- compare the judgements made by male and female staff in the department
- stimulate discussion about how final, best-fit judgements were made for learners whose profiles were particularly uneven.

In order to make judgements at the end of Year 9, evidence of learner progress needed to be kept on an ongoing basis during Key Stage 3. This was particularly important when members of staff took different activities with a cohort of learners, when student teachers were used and where staff changes occurred over the period.

Staff reported their different ways of recording assessment information, which included:

- a comment in a register during a unit of work
- a judgement of level characteristics seen or heard consistently at the end of a unit of work
- occasional filming of learner performance, particularly in Year 9
- ticks in boxes against level characteristics associated with specific activities
- remembering learners' achievements but not recording anything.

Concern was expressed that different methods of gathering information might lead to inconsistencies among staff.

Fresh, unseen learner profiles were provided by the consultant for all staff to see. They were encouraged to share their thoughts out loud about the standards they thought they were seeing on the video profiles. In some cases, additional information was given about the teams in which learners played and there was discussion about the usefulness of this information.

## Outcomes

- The staff felt reassured at the end of this exercise that most of them were interpreting the standards correctly.
- The most successful part of the exercise was in the interpretation of the unseen profiles, which led to useful discussion about how the level characteristics were being interpreted by staff. Learners seen engaging in athletic activities revealed a reliance by staff on 'results' which helped to pin the standard in the activity itself, but such reliance meant that other aspects of the level characteristics were not always being used, such as a learner's ability to evaluate his own and others' work.
- Making a best fit judgement did not prove to be as difficult as staff had originally thought. No formula was applied. Staff looked holistically at the profile, making sure that all aspects of the learner's work were considered, not only the performance skills. They read the adjacent level descriptions to the one they thought might apply. Further discussion reassured them that there was still a 'range' within a level, for example, a strong Level 4 might include characteristics of Level 5, whereas a weaker Level 4 might include some Level 3 characteristics.
- A decision was made that all staff responsible for a unit of work should note briefly in their register a comment about every learner's achievements by the end of that unit. The comment should make particular reference to aspects of level characteristics in the context of the activity.
- One important consequence of this activity was the realisation that whereas a learner might not have secure performance skills in an activity, s/he might have very secure knowledge, sound skills of communication, and good observation and evaluation. It became clear that in some cases learners were not being fully credited for their overall work in PE and perhaps they had actually reached a higher level, or more secure level of attainment than was being given at the end of the key stage.
- A decision was taken to engage in unseen learner profile analysis every two years, or more frequently if staff turnover was high in a particular year.

## Case studies: Cluster moderation

**Case study 9:** A focus on English, mathematics and science

**Case study 10:** A suggested model for a Key Stage 2/3 cross-phase moderation day focussing on the work of individual learners – those involved and possible outcomes (based on LEA pilot study)

**Case study 11:** A focus on how a cluster of English-medium schools, developed a process to help make judgements at the end of Key Stage 2 in Welsh second language

# 9

Case study

## A focus on English, Welsh, mathematics and science

### The process

The LEA held end of key stage moderation meetings in the four core subjects of English, Welsh, mathematics and science. The moderation meetings were held for half a day and teachers brought learners' work books with them to the moderation meeting. The project was organised and coordinated by a LEA subject adviser, with specific responsibility for assessment. Each subject group was derived from the same cluster group.

Two teachers from each primary school, normally a Year 6 teacher and either the subject leader or assessment coordinator, and two representatives from the secondary school, normally the subject head of department and a Key Stage 3 teacher attended each moderation meeting. The moderation meetings were led by the LEA advisory teacher for that subject. The LEA advisory teacher initially took the lead in a mini-training session, focusing on the requirements and also the LEA end of key stage learner profiles as a source of exemplification material.

Following this, the teachers exchanged workbooks from their own schools with colleagues from other schools. Teachers then made judgements based on several pieces of work from within the books, prior to finding out from the relevant class teacher what their judgement was. If a difference in judgement was identified, further discussion ensued with the wider group.

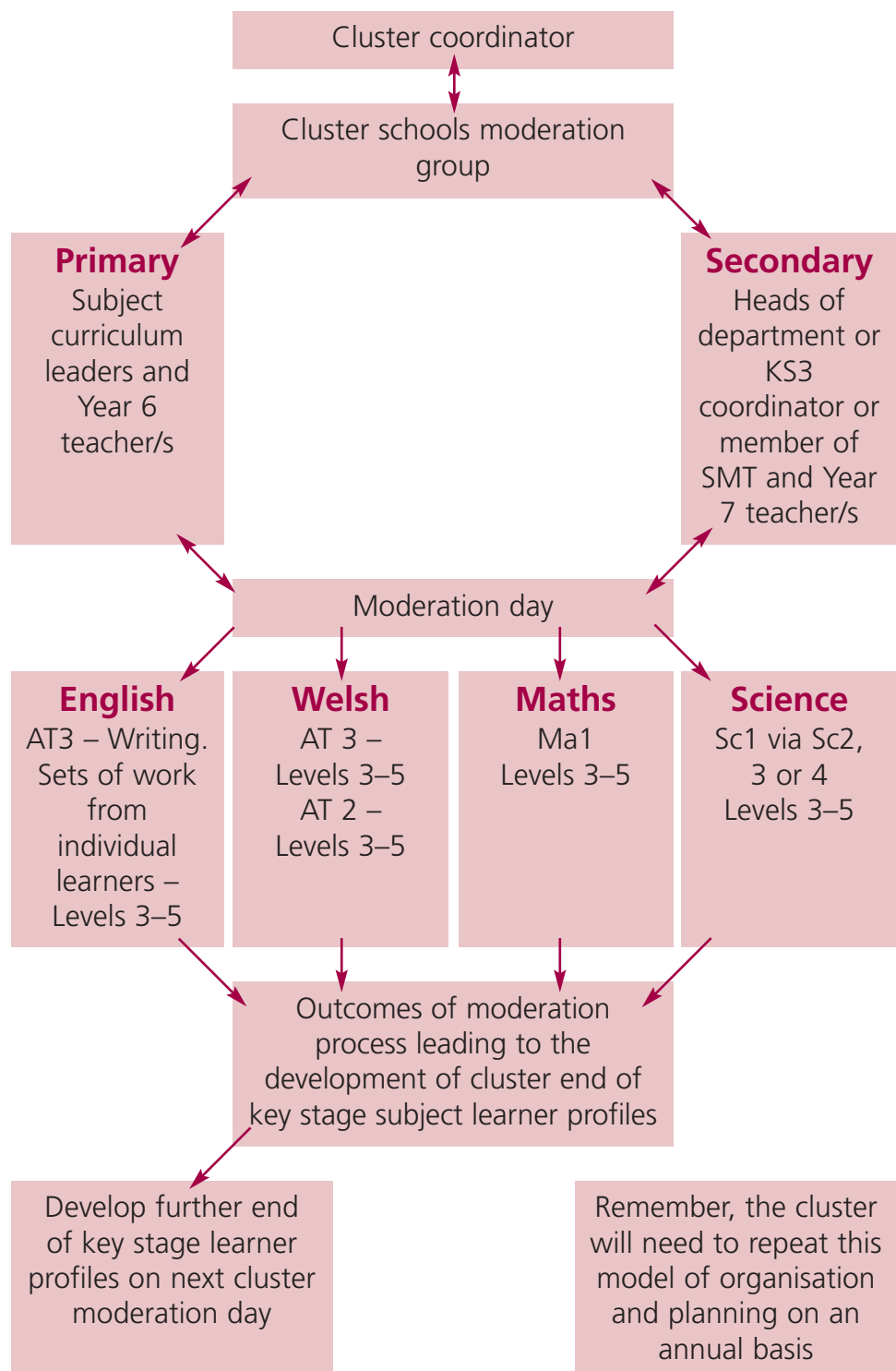
### Outcomes

- The LEA completed moderation sessions with all its cluster groups. Plans are already in place to hold similar sessions that will focus on learners on the cusp between levels.
- The use of detailed assessment criteria for specific pieces of work/tasks helped teachers to moderate work more effectively. Mark schemes from previous Key Stage 2/3 tests in English and Welsh were seen as particularly useful reference materials.
- Teachers identified issues around the recording of information about pieces of work, for instance, the extent of teacher intervention, and the need to give some contextual information regarding particular pieces that may be used for moderation purposes.
- The use of learner workbooks minimised the administrative burden.

# 10

**Case study**

A suggested model for a Key Stage 2/3 cross-phase moderation day focusing on the work of individual learners, those involved and possible outcomes. (Based on LEA pilot study). The model may be adapted by special schools.





# 11

Case study

A focus on how a cluster of English-medium schools developed a process to help make judgements at the end of Key Stage 2 in Welsh second language

## Background

In one cluster of primary schools who all transfer pupils to the same secondary school, an LEA resources/activities pack had been given to learners during their final half-term in Year 6. The pack was then continued in the secondary school during the first half-term in Year 7. This gave learners an opportunity to revise previous work and for teachers to become better acquainted with them and their attainment. Although this enabled the secondary school to acquire examples of all the learners' work, it did not include any reference to levels. As the process of making judgements at the end of key stage 2 will become statutory in the school year 2009/10, it was decided to review the arrangement for transferring information for transition purposes in order to incorporate this aspect.

## The process

It was decided that:

- the Athrawes fro with responsibility for the cluster would arrange a number of meetings and prepare an agenda
- the head of department and the secondary transition teacher, who happens to teach Welsh second language, would attend meetings on behalf of the secondary school
- the Welsh second language coordinator and the teacher who taught the subject to Year 6 in each of the cluster schools would attend meetings on behalf of the primary schools.

At the first meeting, everybody was asked to bring examples of work so that characteristics of levels could be discussed and compared. There were some differences between the expectations of different schools and between the primary schools and the secondary school. It also became apparent that there was a significant difference in the quality, amount and type of oral evidence gathered by the primary schools, with some having recorded or filmed many activities and others having only kept written records. In planning ahead for the remainder of the series of meetings, it was decided to:

- concentrate initially on the most common levels for pupils in this area, namely Level 2 and 3
- consider individual learner profiles
- ask the primary representatives to bring the work of two learners using the county's teaching pack to the next meeting.

During the meeting, it was observed that the secondary teachers tended to lead and set levels. There was also a tendency to level individual pieces of work and the teachers had to constantly remind teachers to look at a range of activities. Working in this way, it was observed that the packs did not contain a sufficient variety of activities, even though some of them were very substantial. The problem was that the packs contained too many of the same type of activities, e.g. posters and copying sentences under pictures. Ascribing levels to individual learner profiles was also difficult because the teachers were concerned about issues such as the amount of help given, uncertainty as to whether the work was drafted and a lack of contextual information. There was, however, general agreement that collaborating to set levels made the work considerably easier and raised confidence in this area

## Outcomes

By the end of the series of meetings, individual teachers had a better understanding of level characteristics. The teachers were encouraged to use this information when planning their teaching, and by targeting learners' weaknesses they hoped to raise standards in the future. The Local Education Authority also identified a number of issues to be considered in the county's future training programme. There was a need to:

- consider ways of recording Oracy to ensure greater consistency – consider possible options, e.g. written records, filming, recording etc
- develop a portfolio for standardisation purposes. It was decided to do this as a cluster rather than have teachers working individually in their schools
- encourage teachers to include a greater variety of tasks in order to display the full extent of the programmes of study
- create end of key stage learner profiles for the primary cluster with some examples also common to the secondary school.

## Transition

As a result of Wales-only legislation in the Education Act 2002, maintained secondary schools and their associated primary schools are required to jointly draw up plans to facilitate learners' transition from primary to secondary school. Transition plans are to be in place by September 2007 to support those Year 6 learners making the move to secondary school in September 2008. *Guidance on the preparation of Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 Transition Plans* (National Assembly for Wales Circular No. 30, published September 2006) has been distributed to all maintained schools in Wales, LEAs and other interested organisations (see [www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills](http://www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills)).

Schools will be aware that, as part of the core content, transition plans must set out how secondary and primary schools will work together to address achieving consistency in assessment.

The plan should summarise current activity to improve consistency in assessment that will continue and identify any areas for improvement. With regard to areas for improvement there will be a need to agree priorities. The plan might therefore summarise key areas for improvement over the three-year period with a more detailed project plan appended for specific areas to be addressed in 2007/08.

The *Guidance on the preparation of Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 transition plans* provides the following questions to help identify priorities:

- What opportunities are provided for teachers from both phases to come together to discuss and assess learners' work so that a common understanding of standards and progression is reached?
- How much common practice in assessment strategies is there between the associated primary schools and the secondary school?
- What information about learners' overall achievement is currently shared across the cluster of schools?
- What information about individual learner's achievement passes from the primary school to the secondary school at transition?
- How can the data be used more effectively in the secondary school to help curriculum planning, set targets for subjects, departments, classes and individual learners?

## Monitoring and evaluation

Within the new statutory teacher assessment arrangements, schools will need to check that their judgements continue to be consistent and accurate, and that their arrangements for assessing learners are effective and manageable. A member of the school's management team and/or the assessment coordinator, curriculum coordinator or head of department may oversee this work (see Appendix 3).

From spring 2008, schools will have access to the revised curriculum orders, frameworks and linked exemplification of standards. Over time, these new materials should assist teachers in confirming, individually and as part of group discussions, their understanding and application of standards. Where appropriate, the school, department or cluster standardisation portfolio and end of key stage learner profiles will be amended to match the revised national curriculum level descriptions and outcomes.

To be manageable, a school's monitoring and evaluation of its approaches should:

- be set in the context of the broader aims and objectives outlined in the school development plan and transition plan
- involve discussion with teachers about the nature and scope of the monitoring
- focus on a limited number of areas in any one year.

Methods for monitoring the consistency of assessment within a school or department will include:

- participating in school or cluster based meetings about reaching a common understanding of standards
- comparing the school's interpretation of standards with external points of reference, such as ACCAC's/DCELLS exemplification materials
- moderating a sample of teachers' judgements on learners' performance at the end of a key stage against agreed interpretations of standards and external points of reference.

Monitoring should lead to an evaluation of the effectiveness and manageability of a school's approaches to achieving consistency. A school can then determine the action necessary to consolidate and improve its approaches.

## Appendix 1: Relationship between Foundation Phase Outcomes, National Curriculum Outcomes, level descriptions and qualifications

Age 3	7	14 Qualifications
Routes for Learning		
Foundation Phase Outcome 1	National Curriculum Outcome 1	Pre Entry
Foundation Phase Outcome 2	National Curriculum Outcome 2	
Foundation Phase Outcome 3	National Curriculum Outcome 3	
Foundation Phase Outcome 4	National Curriculum Level 1	
Foundation Phase Outcome 5	National Curriculum Level 2	Entry 2
Foundation Phase Outcome 6	National Curriculum Level 3	Entry 3
	National Curriculum Level 4	GCSE
	National Curriculum Level 5	
	National Curriculum Level 6	
	National Curriculum Level 7	
	National Curriculum Level 8	
	Exceptional Performance	

## Appendix 2: The uses and limitations of standardised tests

### **Limitations of standardised tests**

Norm-referenced tests cannot easily provide the detailed assessments required to influence learning and teaching across the breadth of the curriculum.

In a sense they are limited by their rigorous construction. Norm-referenced tests must include items capable of being administered and scored in a standard way. The marking scheme must be clear and unambiguous to ensure that there is uniformity in determining a correct response. The length of time to undertake the test must not be too long. Items incorporated in the test need to be graded in difficulty to be suitable for learners from a range of ability and backgrounds.

As a consequence, it is acknowledged that some kinds of knowledge or skills lend themselves better to this form of testing than others. Test items tend to involve basic skills and do not assess more complex areas. Items involving higher order skills tend to have low levels of reliability, particularly in terms of marking responses, and as such are generally avoided. This may not be as true of more recently-constructed tests.

Some believe this is a fundamental criticism of some tests and question their value and content validity. Others, again, in pointing out the limiting nature of the assessment, stress that the elements included are generally not linked to the wider requirements of the national curriculum orders. Older norm-referenced tests were devised prior to the current statutory regulations and not all have been updated. Vocabulary can become out of date and the use of certain phrases in some tests appears anachronistic and strange to the modern reader.

The issue of the variability of learner performance must also be recognised, particularly when dealing with young learners. For instance, learners could be unwell when undertaking the test; they could also be very nervous, which might affect their performance. Furthermore, the most reliable of tests can only estimate standardised scores within certain limits of confidence. Not all manuals make reference to this aspect.

## Uses of standardised tests

Whilst acknowledging these limitations, schools should recognise the possible use of impartial norm-referenced information provided by standardised tests in assessing certain skills on an individual or group basis, within a pre-determined time scale.

In selecting and using standardised tests, schools should do so with a clear understanding of their place within an overall assessment structure.

## Appropriate use of standardised tests and information derived from them

In making appropriate decisions concerning the use of standardised tests and the information derived from them, schools should critically assess their worth and question their construction.

They should promote debate about:

- choice
- purpose
- information provided and its use within and external to the school
- time and ease of administration
- expense.

Questions relating to the worth of the tests will include the following:

- Is the test part of a whole-school assessment policy?
- Is the choice of test largely historical? Is there a need to reassess the testing policy?
- What original purpose did the school have in choosing the test? Does it provide the required data? Is all the information realised by the test utilised?
- Is the test suitable for the age group? Is the vocabulary suitable for the cohort being tested and for learners from all ethnic backgrounds?
- Is the test used consistently across the school? When was INSET/CPD last provided to ensure consistency in administering and scoring the tests?
- Does the test provide any additional information or does it merely confirm teacher assessment? Is there any point in using the test?

- Are the results used in a limited way, such as reporting to parents/guardians, or are they used to inform learning and teaching? What was the original purpose?
- Is the time and expense spent on the tests appropriate?
- Is the governing body aware of their use? Is there a potential for using the outcomes in informing governors of standards of achievement within schools at a particular time and over time?

Questions relating to test construction will include the following:

- Is an individual or group test more appropriate?
- Is the test constructed for the purpose identified by the school?
- When was the test devised and standardised?
- Are the instructions for its administration and scoring clear and unambiguous?
- What time will be spent in marking and scoring the test? Is this appropriate?
- Is the test reliable?
- Is the test valid?
- What are the limits of confidence?



## Appendix 3: Roles and responsibilities – cluster moderation

### **The role of the headteacher**

- To be responsible at a strategic level for leading and ensuring that schools implement arrangements for cluster moderation of teacher assessment judgements.

What this means in practice:

- Putting in place arrangements to facilitate effective cross-phase moderation. This might involve the appointment of a cluster/transition coordinator with an appropriate job description.
- Supporting the development of an agreed cluster action plan.
- Ensuring that adequate time is provided for teachers so that those elements associated with the moderation process, e.g. gathering samples of individual learners' work can be effectively carried out.
- Ensuring an evaluation of the cross-phase moderation process is undertaken as part of the school's self-improvement process in relation to the aspect area of assessment, recording and reporting.
- Identifying strengths and shortcomings as part of the school's self-evaluation exercise are used to improve the quality of the curriculum, learning and teaching and leadership and management.

### **The role of the cluster coordinator supported by the headteachers**

- To lead and manage the cluster moderation exercise.
- To establish and sustain communication channels throughout the moderation exercise.
- To ensure that the momentum of the moderation exercise is maintained through regular contact with the participants.
- To organise and manage the cluster moderation session.

What this means in practice:

- Establishing initial contact with cluster group members, e.g. subject curriculum leaders and Year 6 and 7 teachers.
- Coordinating a cluster group meeting/s to decide the scope of the moderation exercise, the personnel to be involved, the key dates and the outcomes of the moderation exercise.

- Circulating details of the exercise, e.g. outcomes of initial meeting - contact list, timetable, details of work to be submitted for moderation.
- Liaising with subject curriculum leaders regarding the collection, collation and redistribution of samples of work of individual learner.
- Identifying the venue for the cluster moderation session.
- Providing participants with a plan of the moderation session.
- Coordinating the outcomes of the session, e.g. cluster end of key stage learner profiles.

### **The role of the head of department/subject curriculum leader**

- To liaise closely with cluster colleagues and the cluster coordinator.

What this means in practice:

- Identifying details of samples of work, assessment criteria and annotation proformae to be used for the moderation exercise.
- Collecting and organising samples of work of individual learners from school colleagues that might involve the collection, collation and redistribution of the samples from within the cluster prior to the cluster moderation session.
- Organising in-school moderation with colleagues prior to the cluster moderation session.
- Supporting non-subject specialist colleagues during the moderation process.
- Recording, on an agreed annotation proforma, reasons why a learner has been awarded a particular level.
- Contributing to the outcomes of the moderation exercise, e.g. the compilation of a cluster end of key stage learner profiles in a particular subject.

### **The role of the Year 6 and Year 7 teacher**

- To liaise with the subject curriculum leader or head of department.

What this means in practice:

- Providing subject curriculum leaders with appropriate samples of work of an individual learner.
- Participating in in-school moderation with colleagues prior to the cluster moderation session.
- Using professional experience and sharing classroom expertise when identifying characteristics of levels within samples of work.
- Giving clear reasons for awarding a level to a sample of work of an individual learner.
- Contributing to the outcomes of the moderation exercise, e.g. the compilation of cluster end of key stage learner profiles in a particular subject.

## Appendix 4: Support materials

### Transition

ACCAC produced a booklet *Bridging the Gap* which provides guidance to primary and secondary schools on developing and using units to support effective transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 and how to achieve better continuity in teaching and learning at the time of transition. This was distributed to schools in November 2004.

Other related publications include:

*Raising Standards: Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3*, BBC Wales/Estyn/Welsh Assembly Government/ACCAC, 2004 (video pack, available from BBC Wales)

*Moving On ... Effective Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3*, Estyn/Welsh Assembly Government/ACCAC, 2004 (available from Estyn)

*Moving On ... Improving Learning, Effective Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3*, Estyn/Welsh Assembly Government/ACCAC, 2004 (Estyn website publication)

*Changes in Teaching and Learning promoted by the Aiming for Excellence programme 2005–06*, includes a chapter on transition that describes some current practice (Estyn website publication 2006)

*A Survey of Welsh as a second language in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 and Transition*, Estyn 2004

*Review of the contribution of the Aiming for Excellence programme to the raising of standards in Key Stage 3*, also includes a section on transition, Estyn, 2006.

## Exemplification of standards

The following materials were produced by ACCAC prior to the creation of the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) in April 2006. They are listed here because they remain valid and otherwise informative as support materials for teacher assessment:

*Optional Assessment Materials for English at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 1999*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Welsh at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2002*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Welsh second language at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2003*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Mathematics at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2003*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Science at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2001*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Design and Technology at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2002*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Information Technology at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2002*

*Optional Assessment Materials for History at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2002*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Geography at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2001*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Art at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2001*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Music at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2002*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Religious Education at Key Stage 2, ACCAC, 2004*

*Optional Assessment Materials for English at Key Stage 3, ACCAC, 2000*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Welsh at Key Stage 3, ACCAC, 2003*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Welsh second language at Key Stage 3, ACCAC, 2000*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Mathematics at Key Stage 3, ACCAC, 2003*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Science at Key Stage 3, ACCAC, 2001*

*Optional Assessment Materials for History, Geography, Design and Technology Levels 1-2, at Key Stage 3, ACCAC, 2001*

*Optional Assessment Materials for Religious Education at Key Stage 3, ACCAC, 2004*

To support teachers in making judgements at the end of Key Stage 3 in art, music and physical education, ACCAC published the following materials:

*Art: Exemplification of Standards, Key Stage 3, ACCAC, 2000*

*Music: Exemplification of Standards, Key Stage 3, ACCAC, 2000*

*Physical Education: Exemplification of Standards, Key Stage 1, 2 and 3, ACCAC, 2000.*

A CD of the exemplification of standards material in the core subjects Key Stages 1–3 (originally produced in 1995) was re-issued to schools in the summer term of 2005.

## Acknowledgement

DCELLS would like to thank the many teachers, schools, local authorities and consultants who have helped in the production of these materials.