



Key stage 2 (KS2) English writing teacher assessment moderation: national training 2019/20

Table discussion 2 handout – effective practice in the recruitment, training and quality assurance of moderators

Excerpt from KS2 teacher assessment (TA) guidance

11.2 Recruitment of local authority moderators

Local authorities (LAs) must recruit an external moderation team with appropriate and recent experience of KS2 English writing. They must also train, and quality assure LA external moderators so that external moderation is delivered consistently and accurately against the standards within the TA frameworks. Moderation visits must be conducted impartially, and any conflict of interest must be managed. Anyone responsible for managing or carrying out school visits should not have a potential or perceived conflict of interest with the school or any member of school staff.

All LA external moderators must:

- be qualified teachers, with recent and relevant experience of KS2 English writing assessment and internal or external moderation
- successfully complete the STA standardisation process for moderation of KS2 writing

Be able to:

- systematically review evidence against the TA frameworks and adhere to STA guidance
- manage a professional discussion with teachers about the evidence presented and how a pupil's work meets the standard
- where appropriate, discuss and explain why a school's TA judgements cannot be validated
- provide accurate written and verbal feedback to the teacher(s) and headteacher

This handout contains examples of effective practice observed during the 2019 moderation cycle. It is important to remember that there is no set way of recruiting, training and quality assuring moderators, provided that the LA's approach meets the purposes outlined in the teacher assessment guidance.

Recruitment

At the end of the annual moderation cycle, senior LA moderators review the performance of the LA pool moderators. If the review is positive, moderators are invited to be part of the team for the subsequent year. Current LA advisors also recommend potential new moderators, who have had a successful LA external moderation. Schools are also invited to suggest practitioners who they feel would make good moderators, many of whom are experienced English leaders or have leadership roles within their schools. Local intelligence is used to shortlist these expressions of interest.

The LA's application pack includes a person specification, details about what the role entails and details of the application process. Where a moderator has previous experience in a different LA, the moderation manager contacts their former LA to ascertain their credentials. Successful applicants are invited to a recruitment day where they are required to review a collection of writing and identify the standard correctly. They must then articulate why they believe the collection meets the standard.

Headteachers and experienced moderators provide the moderation manager with the names of potential new moderators who have good subject knowledge and demonstrate a good understanding of the moderation process. Potential LA moderators are required to complete an expression of interest form. Successful applicants are invited to an LA recruitment day where they are interviewed in relation to their knowledge of national standards and present evidence for a pupil in their class and justify their judgements. Role play is utilised to explore their responses to potential scenarios and assess their interpersonal skills.

Training

Moderators attend LA dissemination of the national training and then complete the standardisation exercise. If successful, they attend a comprehensive programme of LA training, which includes a training session where paperwork and protocols are agreed. At this meeting, moderators receive a folder with all relevant paperwork in it. They receive a moderator prompt sheet that explicitly describes what they should do in each part of the visit. Moderators also review the statutory requirements and revisit the exemplification materials. In addition, lead moderators receive LA training on managing a team, as well as mentoring and supporting other moderators.

All moderators who successfully complete a standardisation exercise attend LA training sessions, covering key discussion points from standardisation exercises, the skills of being a moderator (systematic review and professional discussion), code of practice, the visit form, feedback and STA guidance. The LA training also involves role-playing various possible moderation scenarios and considering potential challenges. Moderators also attend termly centralised writing moderation

sessions (LA or cluster) where they are asked to lead a table discussion. This provides good practice for moderation visits and giving feedback. This is followed by LA training in May on visit protocols, data protection, maladministration and independence of evidence.

The LA training process is comprised of several elements. It includes a focus on the TA frameworks and exemplification materials, and the role of the LA moderator before, during and after the visit. Within these elements, training and guidance focuses on how to manage the professional discussion with teachers, the varied nature of evidence and when to expand the sample, as well as guidance on discussing the level of independence of writing. In addition, LA moderators are trained on completing the visit report, including the process for re-moderation if applicable, and providing feedback to the headteacher. There is also local guidance on the point at which to contact LA officers before any situation becomes difficult or too uncomfortable.

Quality assurance

New moderators shadow a visit undertaken by experienced LA moderators (proven to have a thorough understanding of the frameworks) early in the window before carrying out their own visits. All new moderators receive an LA quality assurance (QA) visit. All QA visits are conducted by the moderation manager who uses comprehensive notes of the visit to provide feedback. Following the visit, the moderation manager seeks a range of perspectives, triangulating their own observations with those of headteachers and moderators.

A QA pro forma, aligned to national guidance, is used to focus observations. It includes a section that comments on the accuracy of validated judgements and the quality of the professional discussion. The QA record is used for feedback to moderators and to support the overall LA evaluation of moderation. During LA training, moderators are observed role playing the professional discussion and in the 'meet the moderators' meeting, they are observed discussing the process of LA external moderation with the schools. Lead moderators also quality assure the process in a warehouse model, supported by an electronic file sharing system, which alerts them to any potentially difficult decisions.

The moderation manager and an external consultant conduct formal, planned QA visits as well as drop-in QA visits. All LA moderators receive timely feedback following the visit observed, and during the visit if necessary. Any learning points are quickly cascaded to the whole team. Each year, the moderation manager creates a report based on the performance and experiences of the moderation team, which is used to improve processes. This document is also sent to all headteachers at the end of the year.