



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Response to the Estyn thematic review on
moderation of teacher assessment at Key Stages 2 and 3:
a review of accuracy and consistency**

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

OGILBY

Digital ISBN 978 1 4734 7598 4
© Crown copyright September 2016
WG28054

Report title:

Moderation of teacher assessment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3: a review of accuracy and consistency

Report details:

This report is written in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Minister's annual remit letter to Estyn for 2016-2017. The report examines the effectiveness of cluster moderation and standardisation procedures in securing reliable end of key stage 2 and 3 teacher assessment.

Summary of main findings:

In-school moderation of teacher assessment is effective where there is enough evidence available. However, in a minority of schools, the range of evidence does not cover all areas of the level descriptor or show evidence of drafting or teacher support in completing work. In these cases, schools award the level despite a limited range of evidence. Where the evidence focuses on final versions or selected best pieces, this leads to inflation of levels achieved.

In cluster moderation, most schools bring either work that illustrates secure or higher-end version of levels. As a result, meetings focus too much on moderating levels of work that teachers already know to be accurate. This means that clusters waste time in focusing on activities that do not add value. There is not enough focus in the cluster moderation meeting on discussing pupils' work that is on the borderline between levels.

In a few cases, teachers consider the whole range of a pupil's work, including whole workbooks and drafts, during in-school and cluster moderation meetings. This means that teachers can gain a more holistic, 'best fit' view of the pupil's standards, by sampling from the whole range of the pupil's work during moderation. This strengthens the moderation process by reducing unconscious bias in using selected pieces of work, such as final drafts, that make up a learner profile.

Only a minority of schools refer to their own or to Welsh Government exemplification and standardisation materials to check their decisions during internal moderation meetings. In most cluster moderation meetings, exemplification and standardisation materials are available, but these materials are rarely referred to or used.

Nearly all schools undertake additional assessment work to prepare learner profiles for the cluster moderation meeting. These include extensive labelling of learners' work, identifying the evidence for each element of the level descriptor, and preparing 'pupil commentaries' to explain the level awarded. While this practice is useful in strengthening teachers' understanding of the criteria for levels, it is often an unnecessary task for cluster moderation meetings, as the profiles submitted generally illustrate a secure level and there is little disagreement about

the levels.

Cluster reports following moderation meetings focus mainly on procedural matters with very few identifying actions to review and amend the levels of learner profiles. While many schools would alter the level of individual learner profiles if directed by the cluster, the extent of agreement found in cluster moderation meetings limits the need for further action. Schools do not routinely review and amend the levels of learner profiles for the rest of the cohort.

Local authorities and regional consortia support most schools well in the procedures for moderation. However, the role of local authorities and regional consortia representatives in the moderation of standards is unclear regarding their role in ensuring consistency of levels across clusters.

This year, cluster moderation focused on English and Welsh. The range of evidence to support pupils' standards in writing is stronger than that for reading, especially in secondary schools. In a few secondary schools there is not enough variety or opportunity in pupils' work to assess the different types of reading skills, particularly higher-order skills such as synthesis. In a minority of primary and secondary schools there is either too little recorded evidence or evidence of poor quality to support teacher assessment of oracy.

Recommendations:

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

R1 Develop training opportunities for schools to ensure consistency in the judgements for oracy, sufficiency of the evidence base, better application of the 'best fit' method, and moderation of work on the borderline between levels

R2 Review their role in ensuring consistency of standards across clusters, authorities and regions

Schools should:

R3 Take account of a wide range of pupils' work when assessing and moderating levels

R4 Take appropriate account of the level of support, drafting processes, the impact of teachers' marking and the sufficiency of evidence when awarding a final level

R5 Focus on pupils' work that is on the lower borderline of levels when moderating in schools and in cluster meetings

R6 Make sure that all levels are reviewed and adjusted suitably after internal and cluster moderation and before submitting final levels

R7 Refer to standardised materials when assessing, moderating and standardising in schools and in cluster meetings

Response from Welsh Government:

We accept the majority of these recommendations in full and one in principle. In responding to them, we expect local authorities, regional consortia and schools to have due regard to the latest Welsh Government guidance '[Statutory Assessment Arrangements](#)', which was published in November 2015 and refer to [The National Curriculum \(Moderation of Assessment Arrangements for the Second and Third Key Stages\) \(Wales\) Order 2015](#).

The Welsh Government will publicise Estyn's report to local authorities, regional consortia and schools through the Dysg newsletter and will encourage them to address the recommendations contained within it.

Publication details.

The report was published on 22 September 2016 on Estyn's website:
www.estyn.gov.uk