

2017 national curriculum assessments

Key stage 2

2017 teacher assessment external moderation: key stage 2 writing

For schools and local authorities

October 2016



Standards
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1. Summary

This publication provides statutory guidance from the Standards and Testing Agency (STA), an executive agency of the Department for Education. It has been produced to help local authorities (LAs) and schools understand the statutory requirements for teacher assessment (TA) in 2017.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before September 2017.

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- LAs
- school leaders, school staff and governing bodies in all maintained schools, academies and free schools

Main points

This guidance is to support schools and LAs involved in key stage 2 (KS2) TA and statutory moderation in 2017.

We reviewed the operation of the external moderation process in 2016 and have used this evaluation to improve the approach for 2017.

External moderation arrangements communicated to schools by LAs outside of this document are by local agreement only and must be clearly stated as non-statutory.

2. Introduction

External moderation is a collaborative process between the LA external moderator and the school. Teachers should consider it a positive part of their professional development. It offers the opportunity to discuss judgements on pupil performance against the requirements of the [interim TA framework](#)¹.

KS2 writing TA forms part of schools' published accountability data. Statutory external moderation helps quality assure these judgements. It is used to confirm that TA judgements for KS2 writing are accurate and consistent with national standards, as stated in the [Education Order 2003](#)², as amended. This ensures that schools are assessing accurately against national standards and the system is fair to all pupils.

If you are responsible for KS2 writing TA in a school or LA, you must comply with the following guidance to ensure that the external moderation process results in valid and accurate TA judgements. It should be used alongside the [KS2 assessment and reporting arrangements](#)³ (ARA).

LAs are required to externally moderate a sample of at least 25% of LA maintained schools, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education, to validate KS2 writing TA judgements.

Academies are responsible for confirming their choice of LA external moderation provider to STA during the autumn term. Academies are treated in the same way as maintained schools in the external moderation process. LAs must ensure that academies are moderated once every 4 years or more frequently if required, in addition to the 25% sample of LA maintained schools.

Any LA arrangement communicated to schools that is outside of this document is by local agreement only and is non-statutory.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-interim-frameworks-for-teacher-assessment-at-the-end-of-key-stage-2

² www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/1038/made

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-key-stage-2-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara

3. Important dates

Date	Activity
Autumn term 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Academies confirm their choice of external moderation provider with STA.
Tuesday 31 January 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LAs submit to STA a full plan that details how they will deliver their statutory duties for KS2 writing external moderation.
Friday 19 May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Schools informed by the LA on, or after, this date if they are going to receive an external moderation visit.
Monday 5 to Thursday 29 June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LAs undertake external moderation of KS2 TA data.
Thursday 29 June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Final deadline for TA data to be submitted via the 'Teacher assessment' section of NCA tools. If LAs are submitting on behalf of their schools, they must ensure that data is submitted by this date.

4. External moderation process

4.1 Overview

LAs must tell their schools on, or after, Friday 19 May 2017 if they are going to be moderated. They must give at least 48 hours' notice for an external moderation visit and let the school know who will be attending. Visits will take place between Monday 5 and Thursday 29 June 2017.

The best way for a school to prepare for an external moderation visit is to have robust internal assessment processes, based on teachers' understanding of the [interim TA frameworks](#)⁴ and collaboration with other schools.

Evidence of pupil performance should be derived from normal classroom practice across the curriculum. LAs must not dictate what schools' evidence should look like or how it is presented for an external moderation visit. Teachers should not set specific tasks to generate evidence for moderation or produce portfolios of pupils' work in preparation for an external moderation visit.

STA does not require LAs to ask schools for pupil data in advance of an external moderation visit.

In the majority of cases, we would expect only one LA external moderator per visit. If the school has a large cohort, for example, or the LA external moderator is being quality assured, we would expect additional LA external moderators to take part in the visit. Where applicable, the school must be made aware of this in advance of the visit by the LA.

The LA external moderator(s) will visit the school to review work from a sample of pupils from the cohort. The sample of pupils chosen by the LA must include all standards awarded within the interim TA framework across the cohort. This does not include pupils working within the [interim pre-key stage standards](#)⁵.

To confirm that a pupil within the sample has met the specified standards within the interim TA framework, the LA external moderator(s) must review the presented pupil's work and hold a professional discussion with the year 6 teacher(s).

The pupil's work must show that they consistently demonstrate attainment in line with the wording of all the 'pupil can' statements within the standard they have been awarded,

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-interim-frameworks-for-teacher-assessment-at-the-end-of-key-stage-2

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-pre-key-stage-2-pupils-working-below-the-test-standard

taking account of any qualifiers. This does not mean that the pupil must demonstrate the 'pupil can' statements 100% of the time. Pupils are likely to have improved over the course of the year and may make a mistake with something the teacher knows they are actually secure in. In making a decision that a pupil consistently demonstrates attainment of a 'pupil can' statement, we expect teachers to exercise their professional judgement. They should be prepared to discuss this with the LA external moderator(s), with reference to the pupil's work.

The teacher and LA external moderator(s) must be confident that the pupil meets all the 'pupil can' statements in the preceding standards, but there is no requirement to produce specific evidence for them. It is likely that the pupil's work for the standard they have been awarded will also evidence the 'pupil can' statements in the preceding standard(s).

LAs may refer to the [KS2 exemplification material](#)⁶ if guidance is required when undertaking an external moderation visit.

Schools may choose to use the KS2 exemplification material to support teachers making TA judgements or to validate judgements across the school. If teachers are confident in their judgements, there is no requirement to refer to the exemplification material.

If there is insufficient evidence from pupils' work to support teachers' judgements, the LA external moderator(s) will request to see other examples and potentially expand the sample. Following this, if there is a systematic lack of evidence to support TA judgements, this must be reported to STA as maladministration by contacting the NCA helpline on 0300 303 3013.

At the time of the external moderation visit, there may be pupils who haven't met a small number of the 'pupil can' statements. If the school and the LA external moderators agree that these pupils will be able to consistently demonstrate the relevant knowledge or skills after the external moderation visit, but before the deadline for TA submission of Thursday 29 June 2017, the LA can agree to accept additional evidence for the pupils in order to validate the proposed standard.

- If the school TA judgements were accepted in full by the LA external moderators, any pupils that the school and the LA external moderators agree demonstrate the potential to meet the next standard (before the data submission deadline) can have evidence internally moderated by the school without the need for a LA review.
- If the school TA judgements were not fully accepted by the LA external moderators, any pupils that the school and the LA external moderators agree demonstrate the potential to meet the next standard (before the data submission

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/2016-teacher-assessment-exemplification-ks2-english-writing

deadline) must have evidence reviewed by the LA before final submission of the TA data.

Each LA must have an appeals process for schools which, after escalation within the LA, includes a second external moderation visit or review by a different LA.

4.2 In advance of an external moderation visit

LAs must:

- confirm arrangements to schools, regarding the process and location (if held at a venue other than the school)
- ensure that where external moderation takes place at a venue other than the school, all statutory requirements for a school visit are in place
- not ask schools to provide TA judgements in advance of an external moderation visit
- give schools at least 48 hours' notice of an external moderation visit
- choose how many LA external moderators are appropriate for each visit dependent on the size of cohort, quality assurance, training processes and resources available
- clearly communicate with the school the number of LA external moderators that will be attending, who they are and their role in the external moderation process. The school must be aware of this in advance of the meeting
- ensure that any additional LA arrangements are communicated as non-statutory

The best way for a school to prepare for an external moderation visit is to have robust internal assessment processes, based on teachers' understanding of the interim TA framework and collaboration with other schools. Evidence of pupil performance should be derived from normal classroom practice across the curriculum. To avoid creating any additional workload for the year 6 teacher, they should not set specific tasks to generate evidence for moderation or produce portfolios of pupils' work in preparation for an LA external moderation visit.

Schools must ensure that:

- TA judgements against the interim TA framework are available for external moderation and have been subject to internal moderation prior to an LA external moderation visit
- evidence of pupils' work is available for external moderation in order to demonstrate attainment of the 'pupil can' statements at the standard awarded. This should be in the form of day-to-day work from across the curriculum, although English and literacy work may produce the depth of evidence required

4.3 During the external moderation visit

LA external moderator(s) must:

- ensure that all individuals present at the external moderation visit are aware of each other's roles and responsibilities, especially if there is more than one LA external moderator
- ensure that a clear timetable is agreed for the visit, including when teachers are required and when they can be released
- not dictate what schools' evidence should look like or how it is presented for an external moderation visit. In particular, LAs should not expect portfolios or checklists of evidence
- select a minimum sample of 15% of pupils from across the cohort or, in the case of a single class, a minimum of 5 pupils
- review evidence for each pupil in the sample against the 'pupil can' statements from the interim TA framework within the standard awarded (including any preceding standards)
- hold a professional discussion with the year 6 teacher(s) to understand how the TA judgements have been reached and to discuss any gaps in evidence against the interim TA framework
- be satisfied that pupils' writing is independent by using the criteria within this document (see section 5). If a pupil has received additional support, this should be clarified by the school. However, the provision of class learning aims and objectives does not constitute additional support
- request additional evidence and / or expand the sample if there is insufficient evidence or concern about the accuracy of a judgement. In certain cases, the sample may be expanded to include the whole cohort
- ensure that the school is aware of the LA appeals process
- report the school to STA's maladministration team via the NCA helpline on 0300 303 3013, if unable to validate judgements due to a systematic lack of evidence

LAs may refer to the KS2 exemplification materials if guidance is required when reviewing evidence.

Schools must:

- ensure that the LA external moderator(s) have a quiet area to conduct the external moderation visit
- meet requests from the LA external moderator(s) for samples of pupils' day-to-day classwork or any other information reasonably required
- ensure that the evidence presented demonstrates each of the 'pupil can' statements within the standard awarded
- ensure that the year 6 teachers are released for all, or part of, the visit for a professional discussion of the evidence presented

- encourage teachers to draw upon examples of pupils' written work from across the curriculum to make their judgements, although English and literacy work may produce the depth of evidence required
- identify independent writing, and clarify the degree of support a pupil has received

4.4 End of an external moderation visit

LA external moderator(s) must:

- provide formal feedback to the headteacher or a representative of the senior leadership team
- explain the process for how the LA will carry out any agreed re-moderation of pupil evidence
- provide the school with a completed LA record of the visit, which includes:
 - the agreed validated judgements for all moderated pupils
 - any revised judgements if the LA external moderator(s) judged that there was insufficient evidence for the standard awarded, or if the LA external moderator(s) considered the pupil to be working at a higher standard
 - any decisions that the school intends to appeal
 - any concerns that require further action by the school or LA (such as a re-visit)

If the school and the LA external moderators agree some pupils have the potential to meet the proposed standard before the data submission deadline, the LA record of visit should also include the next steps:

- if school TA judgements were accepted in full by the LA, the additional evidence must have been internally re-moderated by the school and submitted by the TA submission date, or
- if school TA judgements were not accepted in full by the LA, the additional evidence must be submitted to the LA for review prior to the TA submission date

The record of the visit must be signed by the headteacher (or representative) and LA external moderator(s).

At the end of the external moderation visit schools must:

- ensure that the headteacher or representative is available to meet with the LA external moderator(s) to receive formal feedback and to sign the written record of the visit
- ensure that any changes to TA judgements as a result of an external moderation visit are accurately reflected in their submitted TA data

4.5 Data submission

After the external moderation visit, schools must:

- submit accurate TA data via NCA tools, or via their LA, by Thursday 29 June 2017
- only re-submit data after Thursday 29 June 2017 when required to do so by STA or the LA. If authorisation is not provided, it will be investigated as maladministration. STA should be informed via the NCA helpline on 0300 303 3013

After the external moderation visit, LAs must:

- have a process which ensures that all pupil evidence provided for re-moderation is reviewed by the LA and that only the LA can confirm the final TA judgement for that pupil. This process is not to be used if the school is allowed to re-moderate without LA review
- have a process to analyse submitted TA data to check that it matches external moderation decisions
- have a defined data validation process, using local intelligence to investigate any unexpected pattern of attainment for any school
- escalate any concerns about the integrity of the assessment to STA's maladministration team via the NCA helpline on 0300 303 3013. If the school is appealing the LA's decision, the escalation to STA must include details of the appeal

4.6 Appeals

LAs must:

- make schools aware of the LA's appeals process prior to, and at the beginning of, the visit
- ensure that LA external moderator(s) directly refer to the LA's appeals process during the external moderation visit if any judgements have been amended
- include details of an independent review by the LA and arrangements for a different LA to conduct either a second external moderation visit or a review of evidence in their appeals process

Schools must:

- provide evidence to the LA to support any appeals claim before it is processed. The evidence can only be based on that seen by the external moderator during the LA external moderation visit

5. Additional guidance for English writing

5.1 Independent writing

Writing is likely to be independent if it:

- emerges from a quality text, topic, visit, or curriculum experience, in which pupils have had a range of opportunities to explore and discuss what is to be written about
- enables pupils to apply their learning independently, possibly with an element of choice, for example writing from the perspective of a chosen character
- has been independently edited and / or redrafted by the pupil. This may be in response to self, peer, or group evaluation
- is produced by pupils who have independently drawn on classroom resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses, word banks, classroom displays, books or websites for support or ideas
- is informed by clear learning objectives and limited success criteria which are not over detailed and do not over-aid pupils

Writing is not independent if it has been:

- modelled or heavily scaffolded
- copied or paraphrased
- supported by success criteria that are over-detailed and over-aids pupils
- edited as a result of direct intervention by a teacher or other adult, for example where the pupil has been directed to change specific words for greater impact, or where incorrect or omitted punctuation has been indicated
- produced with the support of electronic aids that automatically provide correct spelling, synonyms, punctuation, or predictive text

5.2 Word lists

The word lists in the [National Curriculum English programme of study Appendix 1](#)⁷ for years 3 and 4, and years 5 and 6, are statutory. They include words that pupils use frequently in their writing, but often misspell. Pupils are not required to evidence all of these words across their range of writing. However, where listed words are used, some, or most, must be spelt correctly in line with the interim TA framework 'pupil can' statements.

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study

There are no 'common exception words' within the KS2 programme of study. The [National Curriculum English programme of study Appendix 1](#)⁸ for years 3 and 4, and years 5 and 6, includes some words that do not follow the taught rules and guidance, but they are not 'common exception words'. There is no statutory requirement for pupils to include these words in their writing. However, where listed words are used, some, or most, must be spelt correctly in line with the interim TA framework 'pupil can' statements.

5.3 Handwriting

Any pupil whose work does not evidence one, or more than one, of the statements relating to handwriting can be awarded the 'working towards the expected standard' or 'working at the expected standard', but cannot be awarded 'working at greater depth within the expected standard'.

To be awarded 'working at greater depth within the expected standard' at the end of KS2, pupils must meet all of the statements relating to handwriting in the preceding standards.

For pupils 'working at greater depth within the expected standard', handwriting books or handwriting exercises can provide evidence of pupils' independent application of handwriting. However, there must be evidence that the 'expected' handwriting statements are met in some pieces of independent writing.

Pupils who have a physical disability that prevents them from being able to write as part of day-to-day classroom practice are exempt from having to meet the statements for handwriting for the 'working towards the expected standard', 'working at the expected standard', and 'working at greater depth within the expected standard'.

Pupils who are physically unable to write may use a word processor.

Pupils who are physically able to write may choose to word process some of their writing, where appropriate. When using a word processor, it is advised that the spelling and grammar check functions are disabled, in order to verify that a pupil is independently able to meet the relevant 'pupil can' statements.

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study

6. LA management of the external moderation process

6.1 Local authority responsibilities

LAs have a statutory responsibility to externally moderate a minimum sample of 25% of their LA maintained schools, plus 25% of academies that opt to be included in the LA's external moderation provision.

LAs must:

- be accountable to STA (on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education) for delivery of their statutory duties in relation to external moderation of KS2 TA and, if chosen for the 2016 to 2017 academic year, comply with requirements for an STA external moderation visit
- have a named accountable LA officer who is strategically responsible for planning, implementing and quality assuring external moderation of KS2 writing TA
- provide STA with the contact details for the accountable officer and external moderation manager and make sure STA is updated with any changes. If the roles are held by the same individual, details of a senior LA manager or director must be provided to STA
- submit to STA, by Tuesday 31 January 2017, a full plan that details how the LA will deliver their statutory duties for external moderation of KS2 writing TA. The plan must address any concerns that arose from the 2016 external moderation process
- base their sample of maintained schools for external moderation on their own local intelligence. Triggers for external moderation may include:
 - new teaching staff
 - new senior leadership team
 - Ofsted concern
 - unusual patterns of attainment
 - date and / or outcome of last external moderation visit
 - concern relating to the 2015 to 2016 assessment cycle, including maladministration
- ensure academies that have opted into their externally moderated provision are included at least once every 4 years, or more frequently if required. Any academy changing their previously-chosen LA provider must give the new provider a copy of the outcomes of their most recent external moderation visit
- maintain an accurate record of external moderation visits, including the reasons for each visit
- be responsible for making sure their external moderators do not visit schools where they have a potential or perceived conflict of interest

6.2 Recruitment of LA moderators

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 interim TA framework, throughout the external moderation window.

All LA external moderators must:

- be qualified teachers with recent and relevant experience of KS2 writing assessment and internal or external moderation
- undertake the STA standardisation exercise as part of the LA recruitment process
- be able to:
 - systematically review evidence against the interim TA framework ensuring that they adhere to STA guidance
 - manage a professional discussion with teachers about the evidence presented and how it meets the standard awarded
 - 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



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