



Standards
& Testing
Agency

Key stage 2 teacher assessment guidance

For schools and local authorities

September 2023

1 Summary

This guidance has been produced to help schools and local authorities understand the statutory requirements for key stage 2 (KS2) teacher assessment (TA) for the 2023/24 academic year, under [The Education \(National Curriculum\) \(Key Stage 2 Assessment Arrangements\) \(England\) Order 2003](#). It also provides non-statutory guidance to support both a rigorous and proportionate assessment processes.

We encourage schools and local authorities to sign up for assessment updates. This is where key information, such as dates and statutory requirements will be sent out by STA. You can [sign up](#) to ensure you receive these updates.

Local authorities should regularly review and update STA where a moderation manager or senior accountable manager's details change.

1.1 Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- headteachers, teachers, school staff and governing bodies in maintained schools, academies, free schools and special schools, alternative provisions, Service Children's Education schools and participating independent schools
- local authorities to support with queries and moderation delivery

1.2 Legal status

This document expands on section 8 of the KS2 assessment and reporting arrangements. It supports schools in making statutory TA judgements for pupils at the end of KS2, and schools and local authorities in undertaking statutory moderation of these judgements.

2 Changes for 2023/24

2.1 Academy compliance

This year local authorities and academies will have a longer window to put in place moderation agreements. STA have removed the checking and amendment window, and instead a list of academies will be provided to local authorities and they will be required to ensure that either, they have an agreement in place or have discussed with any academies who have nominated them but are yet to put an agreement in place. The statutory requirement is for local authorities to deliver moderation; therefore they must ensure that all academies within their geographic area have a moderation agreement in place with a local authority.

Academies must go on to the [Primary Assessment Gateway \(PAG\)](#) and notify STA if they are using a non-geographic local authority for KS2 monitoring and moderation. It is good practice for academies to inform their geographic local authority if they intend to use an alternative local authority.

3 Important dates for 2023/24

These dates may be subject to change.

Date	Activity
2023	
Monday 2 October	Online TA moderator training on English writing added to the PAG.
Monday 6 November to Friday 17 November	Completion period for standardisation exercise 1.
Monday 20 November	Commentaries for exercise 1 available on the PAG.
Monday 20 November to Friday 24 November	Return of exercise 1 results by local authorities.
Friday 8 December	Deadline for participating independent schools to report to STA on the PAG that they have a written agreement in place with a local authority who will monitor their KS2 tests and complete external moderation of their KS2 TA.
2024	
Monday 8 January to Friday 19 January	Completion period for standardisation exercise 2 for moderators.
Friday 12 January	Deadline for all academies to have a written agreement in place with the local authority that will monitor their KS2 tests and complete external moderation of their KS2 TA. Academies not using their geographic local authority must also have confirmed their chosen local authority on the PAG.
Monday 22 January	Commentaries for exercise 2 available on the PAG.
Monday 22 January to Friday 26 January	Return of exercise 2 results by local authorities.
Monday 12 February to Friday 23 February	Completion period for standardisation exercise 3 for moderators
Monday 26 February	Commentaries for standardisation exercise 3 available on the PAG.
Monday 26 February to Friday 1 March	Return of exercise 3 results by local authorities.
Friday 10 May	Local authorities begin informing schools if they will receive an external moderation visit for TA.

Monday 13 May	TA data submission form available on the PAG.
Monday 3 June to Friday 28 June	Local authorities undertake external moderation of KS2 English writing TA.
Friday 28 June	Deadline to submit KS2 TA data on the PAG.
Friday 23 August	Deadline for local authorities to confirm details of their moderation manager and strategic leads for 2024/25 to STA.

4 The purposes of assessment

4.1 Different forms of assessment

There are 3 main forms of teacher assessment in schools:

- day-to-day formative assessment – to inform teaching on an on-going basis
- in-school summative assessment – to understand pupil performance at the end of a period of teaching
- at the end of KS2 statutory summative assessment – to understand pupil performance in relation to national expectations and comparisons

A school's assessment policy forms the basis of a teacher's judgements about what pupils know and can do. This will provide the evidence needed for teachers to make statutory judgements against the TA frameworks. These judgements are designed only to report an outcome to the Department for Education (DfE) at the end of the key stage.

TA at the end of KS2 is statutory and helps teachers and parents understand what a pupil can do in relation to national expectations. It also enables the government to hold schools to account for the education they provide. However, pupils will have a wider range of knowledge and skills than those covered by statutory assessment. This may be evident through other forms of assessment that take place at school and should also be reported to parents.

Further information about the principles and purposes of assessment can be found in the [Final report of the Commission on Assessment Without Levels](#).

4.2 Data and teacher workload

Evidence to inform statutory TA should come from the teaching of core subjects and skills specified in the national curriculum. Teachers should not track or record evidence solely to show that pupils have achieved the statements within the frameworks. A school's assessment policy should outline when it is necessary to record assessment data. In developing their policies, schools should consider minimising teacher workload so that teachers can focus their efforts on teaching. When data needs to be recorded, this should follow the principles and practices outlined in [eliminating unnecessary workload associated with data management](#).

5 Making teacher assessment judgements

5.1 Overview of teacher assessment

TA is based on a broad range of evidence from across the curriculum and knowledge of how a pupil has performed over time and in a variety of contexts. It is carried out as part of teaching and learning. Teachers must consider the pupil's written, practical and oral classwork.

Teachers may not be able to provide a full TA judgement for some pupils, for example, if they have recently arrived, within the maximum of the last 12 weeks from overseas or because of long periods of absence. Schools will still need to include these pupils when they submit their TA data, using a relevant code (see section 15).

5.2 What teachers must assess

Teachers must make their TA judgements using the:

- [TA framework](#) in English writing and science – for pupils who have completed the KS2 programme of study and are working at the standard of national curriculum assessments
- [pre-key stage standards](#) in English reading, English writing and mathematics – for pupils who are working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and are engaged in subject-specific study, or who have not completed the relevant programme of study
- [the engagement model](#) if a pupil is working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and is not yet engaged in subject-specific study

The table below shows which framework to use when making TA judgements, depending on the subject and standard at which the pupil is working. [Exemplification materials](#) are also available to help teachers make their judgements if additional guidance is needed.

KS2 standard	Guidance	English reading	Maths	English writing	Science
Pupils working at the standard of the national curriculum assessments	TA frameworks	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes
Pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum assessments and engaged in subject specific study	Pre-KS2 standards	Yes	Yes	Yes	No pre-KS2 standards (HNM – has not met the expected standard)

For details of how to assess pupils working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and not yet engaged in subject-specific study, see section 5.7.

5.3 Teacher assessment frameworks

Teacher assessment frameworks contain ‘pupil can’ statements. Teachers should follow the guidance for each subject in the frameworks when making their judgements. Teachers should be confident that pupils have met the standards preceding the one at which they judge them to be working. However, they are not required to have specific evidence for the preceding standards. Pupils’ work that demonstrates they are meeting a standard is sufficient to show they are working above the preceding standards.

Framework for English writing

The KS2 English writing framework contains 3 standards:

- working towards the expected standard
- working at the expected standard
- working at greater depth

Pupils who have not completed the programme of study or who are not yet ‘working towards the expected standard’ should be assessed using the pre-key stage standards (see section 5.6).

Framework for science

The KS2 science framework contains one standard: working at the expected standard.

A pupil who has completed the programme of study will be judged as either 'working at the expected standard' or 'has not met the expected standard'.

5.4 'Pupil can' statements

'Pupil can' statements are performance indicators. They give a snapshot of a pupil's attainment at the end of the key stage. Each statement describes what a pupil working at that standard should be able to do. Teachers should follow the guidance for each framework to reach their judgement about whether a pupil has met a standard.

Qualifiers are used in some statements to indicate the extent to which pupils demonstrate the required knowledge or skill. Where qualifiers are used, they have consistent meaning:

- 'most' indicates that the statement is generally met, with only occasional errors
- 'many' indicates that the statement is met frequently, but not yet consistently
- 'some' indicates that the knowledge or skill is starting to be acquired and is demonstrated correctly on occasion but is not yet consistent or frequent

Examples are also used in some of the statements to clarify the required knowledge or skill. They do not dictate the required evidence, but only show how that statement might be met. Teachers should refer to the national curriculum to exemplify the statements and can use exemplification materials to support them if they choose (see section 5.8).

5.5 Evidence

While the teacher's knowledge of pupils can help inform judgements, the judgements must be based on reliable and demonstrable evidence. This ensures that judgements are as objective as possible, and consistent between classes and schools.

Evidence should come from day-to-day work in the classroom and can be drawn from a variety of sources. The type of evidence may vary for different schools, classes and pupils. A pupil's workbook will often have all the evidence a teacher needs but evidence might also come from projects, assessment notes, classroom tests and assessments. The form of evidence supporting a teacher's judgement is entirely up to the teacher, providing it meets the requirements of the frameworks.

Teachers should avoid excessive evidence gathering.

The frameworks make it clear that:

- a pupil's work in the subject being assessed may provide sufficient evidence to support the judgement, although evidence from other curriculum subjects may further support the framework being assessed
- teachers will see multiple statements evidenced across a collection of work but sometimes a single piece of work can provide evidence for multiple statements, depending on the statement and the nature of the evidence

In English writing:

- a single, comprehensive example of writing may be sufficient to show that a pupil can 'describe settings, characters and atmosphere and integrate dialogue to convey character and advance the action'
- pupils' work that demonstrates they have met a standard is sufficient to show that they are working above preceding standards – teachers should be confident that pupils have met the standards preceding the one at which they judge them to be working, though they are not required to have specific evidence for that judgement
- discrete test questions will only supplement evidence that pupils have met statements – for example, a spelling test or handwriting exercise can provide additional evidence for these statements in English writing, but if pupils do not use any of the words from the statutory lists in their day-to-day writing, evidence from these tests and exercises alone is sufficient

In science:

- one piece of work might show that a pupil can 'name, locate and describe the functions of the main parts of plants, while using the observable features of plants, animals and microorganisms to group, classify and identify them into broad groups, using keys or in other ways'
- there is no requirement to have evidence from the classroom showing that pupils have met statements relating to science before the final year of the key stage
- year 6 teachers are not expected to reassess the science content taught in years 3, 4 and 5 of the national curriculum – where possible, teachers should draw on assessment judgements that were made by year 3, 4 and 5 teachers in determining whether the pupil has grasped that science content
- a single test question may be sufficient to show that a pupil has grasped the knowledge or skill (for example, a pupil's answer in a science test might show that they can 'take accurate and precise measurements')

5.6 Pre-key stage standards

[Pre-key stage standards](#) must be used for statutory assessment of pupils at the end of KS2 who are working below the overall standard of national curriculum assessments and engaged in subject-specific study, as well as for pupils who are working below the standard of the national curriculum assessments because they:

- have not completed the KS2 programmes of study but are still moving onto KS3 with their current year group (and are engaged in subject-specific study)
- cannot communicate in English (and are engaged in subject-specific study)

The pre-key stage standards follow the same principles as the TA frameworks. They each contain 'pupil can' statements for teachers to assess against, providing evidence to show that pupils have met the standard they have been awarded. Teachers should follow the guidance for each subject in the pre-key stage standards when making their judgements.

The pre-KS2 standards for English reading, English writing and mathematics are:

- standard 6 (working at the KS1 expected standard)
- standard 5 (working towards the KS1 expected standard)
- standard 4
- standard 3
- standard 2
- standard 1

5.7 The engagement model

[The engagement model](#) is a TA tool formed of 5 areas of engagement: exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence and initiation. Each of the 5 areas are interrelated. Schools are required to:

- use the engagement model to assess pupils who are working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and not engaged in subject-specific study at the end of KS2
- report to DfE which pupils have been assessed using the engagement model for KS2. This is so the DfE is aware of how many pupils are not engaged in subject specific study and where they are being educated. Schools are not required to submit any other data to DfE about the progress of these pupils

Schools should follow the published guidance for best practice on how to use the engagement model to support teachers and staff involved in assessing these pupils.

Schools have autonomy over how they implement the engagement model but should ensure that the assessments are conducted regularly throughout the academic year. This is so schools can demonstrate whether the pupil is able to sustain the new skills, concepts and knowledge over time, rather than reflecting a snapshot of one activity or observation.

5.8 Exemplification

[Exemplification materials](#) may assist teachers when they are using the statutory frameworks to make judgements. Teachers can use the materials to help make TA judgements or to validate judgements across the school. If teachers are confident in their judgements, there is no requirement for them to refer to the exemplification materials.

Exemplification materials only illustrate how ‘pupil can’ statements in the frameworks might be met. They do not dictate a particular method of teaching, or the evidence expected from the classroom, which will vary from school to school.

Local authorities may find it useful to refer to exemplification materials to support external moderation visits. The materials show what meeting the ‘pupil can’ statements might look like, but moderators should not expect or require teachers to provide specific evidence like the examples in these documents.

6 Assessing English writing

6.1 A more flexible approach

The approach to English writing TA is different from other subjects. This difference reflects the nature of the subject and that a degree of subjectivity is needed to assess it. Teachers are therefore given more flexibility in reaching a rounded judgement about a pupil's overall attainment in writing.

A teacher must still assess a pupil against all 'pupil can' statements within the standard at which they are judged to be working. A pupil's writing should meet all the statements within that standard (since they represent the key elements of English writing within the national curriculum). However, teachers can use their discretion to ensure that a 'particular weakness' does not prevent an accurate judgement of a pupil's overall attainment. If a pupil is judged to have a 'particular weakness', a teacher's professional judgement about whether the pupil has met the standard overall takes precedence over the need for the pupil to meet all 'pupil can' statements. This does not mean that a teacher's professional judgement takes precedence over that of a moderator. Teachers must be able to justify their decisions with evidence during moderation.

When a teacher deems that a pupil meets a standard despite a particular weakness, they must have good reason to judge that this is the most accurate standard to describe the pupil's overall attainment. The reason for this is likely to vary from pupil to pupil but, in all instances, teachers must be confident that the weakness is an exception in terms of the pupil's overall attainment.

A 'particular weakness' can relate to a part or the whole of a statement (or statements). Teachers should consider whether it prevents an accurate judgement from being made overall. A 'particular weakness' may relate to a learning difficulty, but it is not limited to this. Similarly, a learning difficulty does not automatically constitute a particular weakness that would prevent an accurate judgement. The same overall standard must be applied equally to all pupils. This approach applies to English writing only.

During moderation, the teacher should use the professional discussion to explain to the moderator where a 'particular weakness' has been applied to reach an accurate judgement of the pupil's overall attainment.

6.2 Independent writing

Teachers' judgements must only be based on writing that has been produced independently by the pupil.

Teachers should keep in mind that the national curriculum states writing can also be produced through discussion with the teacher and peers. A piece of independent writing may therefore provide evidence of a pupil demonstrating some 'pupil can' statements independently, but not others. For example, a pupil may produce an independent piece of writing that meets many of the statements relating to composition and the use of grammar but does not demonstrate independent spelling. This could be because the teacher has provided the pupil with domain-specific words or corrected their spelling.

Teachers may use success criteria in lessons to help them judge whether a pupil has met the objectives for a piece of writing and to help pupils understand what they have learnt. Using success criteria does not mean that a pupil's writing is not independent, providing they are limited to describing the task and the intended overall purpose and effect of the writing, rather than modelling or over-scaffolding the expected outcome. Furthermore, using detailed success criteria as a teaching tool for one aspect of writing could still provide independent evidence of other 'pupil can' statements which have not been mentioned.

Writing is likely to be independent if it:

- emerges from a text, topic, visit or curriculum experience in which pupils have had opportunities to discuss and rehearse what is to be written about
- enables pupils to use their own ideas and provides them with an element of choice – for example, writing from the perspective of a character they have chosen themselves
- has been edited, if required, by the pupil without the support of the teacher, although this may be in response to self, peer or group evaluation
- is produced by pupils who have, if required, sought out classroom resources, such as a dictionary or thesaurus, without being prompted to do so by the teacher

Writing is not independent if it has been:

- modelled or heavily scaffolded - as part of external moderation, local authority moderators can discuss where they find modelled or scaffold writing, and they may ask for further examples of pupil work to support the standard and judgement
- copied or paraphrased, including producing work that demonstrates an over-reliance on a model text
- edited or re-written because of direct intervention by a teacher or other adult – for example, when the pupil has been directed to change specific words for greater impact, where incorrect or omitted punctuation has been indicated, or when incorrectly spelt words have been identified by an adult for the pupil to correct

- produced with the support of electronic aids that automatically provide correct spelling, synonyms, punctuation or predictive text. If the electronic aid is turned off, for example spell check in a word programme, this would be considered independent
- supported by detailed success criteria that specifically direct pupils what to include, or where to include it, in their writing – such as directing them to include specific vocabulary, grammatical features or punctuation

Schools that subscribe to writing schemes or frameworks should ensure that pupils are given enough opportunities to produce independent pieces of writing in line with the guidance above. Also, schools should ensure that they are able to provide evidence that writing is independent and fulfils ‘pupil can’ statements.

6.3 Spelling

A pupil’s standard in spelling should be evident throughout their writing. However, spelling tests can provide additional evidence of pupils’ independent spelling.

When assessing pupils’ writing, phonetically plausible but incorrect spellings should be regarded as errors unless the statement makes it explicit that they can be accepted.

The frameworks refer to the word lists within the spelling appendix to the [national curriculum](#) to exemplify words that pupils should be able to spell. At KS2, the lists for years 3, 4, 5 and 6 within the national curriculum are statutory. These are a mixture of words pupils frequently use in their writing and words they often spell incorrectly. As these form part of the curriculum, and should be assessed on an ongoing basis, they should generally be evident in pupils’ writing. However, if pupils do not use any of the words from the statutory lists in their day-to-day writing, evidence from tests and exercises alone is sufficient.

Teachers should be mindful of the guidance detailed in section 5.3 when assessing spelling. They should be confident that pupils have met the standards preceding the one at which they judge them to be working. This includes ensuring pupils assessed as WTS meet the requirements at PK6.

6.4 Handwriting

A pupil’s standard of handwriting should be evident throughout their writing. When assessing it, teachers should consider evidence from a pupil’s independent writing to judge whether the statements have been met. Handwriting books or handwriting exercises can provide additional evidence, but these would not be sufficient on their own. Although computers and digital devices can be used, sufficient handwritten examples meeting the ‘pupil can’ statements should be available to support TA judgements.

Pupils who are physically unable to write may use a word processor. Pupils who are physically able to write may also choose to word process some of their writing or use another method of recording, where appropriate. However, when assessing a pupil's writing, teachers should still be mindful of the 'pupil can' statements relating to handwriting. When pupils are using a word processor, it is advised that the spelling and grammar check functions are disabled. The teacher can then verify that the pupil is able to meet the relevant 'pupil can' statements independently.

7 Assessing pupils with disabilities

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. All schools are required to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities.

When teachers assess pupils against the 'pupil can' statements, they should base their judgements on what a pupil with a disability can do when reasonable adjustments are in place. For example, reducing anxiety by providing a quiet area or allowing more time to process instructions.

If a pupil has a disability that prevents them from demonstrating attainment in the way described in a 'pupil can' statement, their individual method of communication or learning is applicable. For example, using a visual phonics system for a pupil with a hearing impairment, or using a computer for a pupil with a visual impairment because they cannot read back their handwriting. Teachers should ensure that all pupils can demonstrate attainment with reasonable adjustments in place, but the standard of the assessment should not be compromised and must be met in an equivalent way.

If a pupil has a disability that physically prevents them from demonstrating a 'pupil can' statement altogether, even with reasonable adjustments in place, these statements can be excluded from the TA judgement. For example, handwriting if the pupil is physically restricted when writing, or phonics if a pupil is hearing impaired and unable to make use of a visual phonics system. Teachers should use their professional discretion in making such judgements for each pupil and be able to justify these during moderation.

8 Moderation

Moderation allows teachers to benchmark judgements, while ensuring consistent standards and reliable outcomes. In the context of TA, there are 2 forms of moderation.

Internal moderation is a non-statutory, but vital, process conducted in schools and, where possible, with other schools. Moderation should be a collaborative process undertaken throughout the academic year and normally with colleagues across key stages. This supports the quality assurance of TA judgements and provides an opportunity for professional development.

Local authorities conduct statutory external moderation of English writing outcomes. This is to validate judgements and ensure they are consistent with national standards (see section 9).

9 External moderation

9.1 External moderation of teacher assessment

External moderation is statutory. It gives confidence that schools' TA judgements are accurate and consistent with national standards, as specified in the [TA frameworks](#) and [exemplification materials](#).

Local authorities will inform schools on, or after, Friday 10 May 2024 if they are going to receive an external moderation visit. Local authorities will carry out moderation visits from Monday 3 June 2024 to Friday 28 June 2024.

Headteachers and local authorities must refer to the guidance to ensure that the essential requirements are met and that robust moderation processes are followed.

External moderation is a collaborative process between the local authority's moderator and the school. It offers the opportunity to discuss judgements on pupils' performance against the requirements of the TA frameworks.

9.2 Local authorities

Local authorities are required, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education, to validate a sample of KS2 TA judgements in English writing. External moderation is used to confirm that KS2 English writing TA judgements are accurate and consistent with national standards. This ensures that schools are assessing accurately, and the system is fair to all pupils.

Local authorities are required to externally moderate at least 25% of maintained schools, academies and participating independent schools that opt into local authorities external moderation provisions. Local authorities must ensure all schools they are responsible for are moderated at least once every 4 years (excluding 2020 and 2021), or more frequently if required. Local authorities should maintain a record of moderated schools to ensure this is met.

If the moderator does not meet with the teacher in person, they must satisfy themselves that the teacher's judgements are accurate and consistent with national standards. This means the moderator must be able to:

- check pupils' work
- hold a professional discussion with the year 6 teacher
- expand the sample, if needed
- signing of required forms

Local authorities not using a face-to-face model should be careful not to impose additional burdens on schools and must comply with UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) when pupils' work is shared.

STA will send a list of academies who have indicated that they have a moderation agreement with the local authority, following receiving this list local authorities will be required to ensure they either have an agreement in place or have discussed with any academies who have nominated them but are yet to have an agreement in place. In exceptional circumstances, where a local authority and academy cannot get an agreement in place, the local authority should contact STA to update the record that the academy will be moderated by their geographic local authority. Local authorities are required to deliver moderation; therefore they must ensure that all academies within their geographic area have a moderation agreement in place with a local authority.

9.3 Academies (including free schools)

Academies must choose which local authority is responsible for external moderation of their KS2 TA.

They must have a written agreement in place with their chosen local authority and should inform STA on the PAG if they intend to use a non-geographic local authority, by Friday 12 January. If academies do not respond by the deadline, they will no longer be able to choose non-geographic local authorities and must put an agreement in place with their geographic local authority. This is a requirement and therefore STA will record academies without a non-geographic local authority agreement in place by this date as being moderated by the geographic local authority. It is good practice for academies to inform their geographic local authority if they intend to use an alternative local authority for moderation.

STA will send a list of academies to local authorities and the local authority will be required to ensure they either have an agreement in place or have discussed with any academies who have nominated them but are yet to have an agreement in place. Where an agreement cannot be put in place with a non-geographic local authority, the academy will be reverted to their geographic local authority. Local authorities are required to deliver moderation, therefore must ensure that all academies within their geographic area have a moderation agreement in place with a local authority.

If a school became an academy on, or after, 2 September 2023, they will be part of their geographic local authority's arrangements for external moderation of their TA in 2023/24 and cannot select an alternate local authority until the 2024/25 academic year.

Academies may be charged for this service and should ensure costs for all moderation activities, including potential re-moderation, are agreed with the moderating local authority or geographic local authority in advance. They must give the local authority the record and outcome of their most recent external moderation visit.

Funding for these activities is paid directly to the geographic local authority in the first year following conversion to an academy. Subsequent payments are made directly to the academy every 4 years.

9.4 Independent schools

Participating independent schools that wish to compare their KS2 TA in English writing with local or national data will need an agreement in place with their chosen local authority to undertake external moderation of TA and must report this information to STA on the PAG by Friday 8 December.

An independent school can only claim that its results are comparable with national or local results if it has taken part in the local authority external moderation process and has been moderated in the subsequent years of its participation. Participating independent schools must also follow the same STA guidance, quality assurance and processes as maintained schools and academies if they wish to make these comparisons. Where a moderation agreement is not in place KS2 data and results may be annulled.

9.5 Funding for external moderation

Each local authority receives direct funding from DfE for moderating maintained schools. Academies receive direct funding from DfE for KS2 statutory external moderation.

Local authorities should factor in the costs of re-moderation activities at the beginning of the year as part of the funding that they retain centrally for maintained schools. They should not place additional charges on schools for appeals or re-moderation of TA judgements.

Further information on retaining funding can be found in the [pre-16 schools funding local authority guidance for 2023 to 2024](#). Further information about the provision of services and facilities by local authorities can be found in the [Schemes for financing schools](#).

9.6 Local agreements

External moderation arrangements that are communicated to schools by local authorities and lie outside the scope of this document are by local agreement only and must be clearly stated as non-statutory. Local agreements are in addition to, and do not replace, statutory guidance.

Local agreements should be drawn up in consultation with, and with the agreement of, all stakeholders and revised annually. A local agreement should be signed by both the local authority and school. Schools that do not want to enter into a local agreement can instead ask the local authority to revert to the statutory moderation arrangements. All

schools with a local agreement should have a written copy of this agreement from the local authority.

Local authorities should not charge maintained schools an additional fee if they submit appeals following changes to judgements during an external moderation visit. These costs are included as part of funding paid to local authorities for statutory moderation activities.

For appeals submitted by academies and participating independent schools, these costs should be agreed as part of the initial agreement between the school and local authority.

9.7 Preparing for an external moderation visit

Moderation visits will take place between Monday 3 June 2024 and Friday 28 June 2024. They should not involve any teachers working outside normal school hours.

Local authorities

Local authorities must tell schools on or after Friday 10 May 2024 if they are going to be moderated. Local authorities must give at least 2 school days' notice of an external moderation visit and let the school know who will be attending. In most cases, STA would expect only one local authority moderator per visit. However, if the school has a large cohort, the local authority moderator is being quality assured or the visit forms part of moderator induction, there may be additional local authority moderators conducting the visit. The school must be made aware of this in advance.

STA does not require local authorities to ask schools for pupil data in advance of an external moderation visit. During the visit, we would expect details of pupils within the cohort to be provided, categorised by the standard awarded.

Local authorities must:

- confirm arrangements with schools including the process, date and location (if held at a venue other than the school)
- ensure that, if external moderation takes place at a venue other than the school or is not conducted face-to-face, all statutory requirements for a school visit are in place
- conduct any school visits in accordance with government advice and [UK Health Security Agency](#) guidance
- ensure that any additional local authority arrangements are communicated as non-statutory, in the form of a written local agreement
- ensure that the school is aware of the appeals process

Schools

The best way for a school to prepare for an external moderation visit is to have robust internal assessment processes. These should be based on teachers' understanding of the TA frameworks and collaboration with other schools, where possible.

Schools must ensure that:

- judgements against the TA frameworks for the cohort are available for external moderation categorised by standard, and should also subject them to internal moderation prior to a local authority external moderation visit
- evidence of pupils' work is available for external moderation, to demonstrate attainment of the 'pupil can' statements at the standard the pupil has been judged to have met – this should be in the form of day-to-day work

9.8 During an external moderation visit

The local authority moderator will review work from a representative sample of pupils from the cohort. The sample chosen by the local authority must include a selection of pupils assessed at all standards within the TA frameworks. This does not include pupils working within the pre-key stage standards, or pupils assessed using the engagement model.

Local authorities

Local authority moderators must:

- ensure that all individuals present at the external moderation visit are aware of each other's roles and responsibilities, especially when more than one local authority moderator is present
- ensure that a clear timetable is agreed before the visit, including when teachers are required and when they can be released
- select an initial representative sample of 15% of pupils from across the cohort or, in the case of a single class, a minimum of 5 pupils per subject (this applies to pupils working above pre-key stage standards). Where a school has a cohort of less than this minimum the local authority should moderate all pupils in the cohort to ensure the school receives moderation as per the required moderation cycle
- review evidence for each pupil in the sample against the 'pupil can' statements from the TA frameworks within the standard they have met
- not dictate what schools' evidence should look like or how it is presented – in particular, local authorities should not expect portfolios or checklists of evidence
- hold a professional discussion with Year 6 teachers to understand how the TA judgements have been reached and to discuss any gaps in evidence against the TA frameworks
- provide the opportunity for Year 6 teachers to articulate their understanding of the standards as set out in the TA frameworks

- be satisfied that pupils' work is independent by using the criteria in sections 5 and 6 – if a pupil has received additional support, this should be clarified by the school
- ensure they refer the school to the local authority's appeals process if any judgements have been amended

Local authorities may refer to the KS2 exemplification materials if further guidance is required when reviewing evidence. If the evidence from pupils' work is not sufficient to support the teachers' judgements, the local authority moderator will request to see other examples and, potentially, will expand the sample. Following this, if the lack of evidence to support TA judgements is systematic, the local authority moderator must report this to STA's maladministration team by emailing sta.maladministration@education.gov.uk.

Schools

Schools must:

- ensure that local authority moderators have a quiet area to conduct the external moderation visit
- meet requests from local authority moderators for samples of pupils' day-to-day classwork or any other information reasonably required
- ensure that evidence demonstrates each of the 'pupil can' statements within the standard at which pupils have been judged
- ensure that 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' work from across the curriculum to support their judgements, although work in the subject being assessed alone may produce the depth of evidence required
- identify independent work, and clarify the degree of support a pupil has received

9.9 The professional discussion

To confirm that a pupil within the sample has met the specified standards within the TA frameworks, the local authority moderator must review the pupil's work and hold a professional discussion with the Year 6 teacher. This professional discussion is essential and should be central to the process. It should be a positive discussion, allowing teachers to talk through their judgements, using evidence to support their decisions and to articulate their understanding of the standards. It should provide a shared understanding of how judgements have been reached and the opportunity to discuss any gaps in evidence against the TA frameworks.

The pupil's work must show that they consistently demonstrate attainment in line with the wording of the 'pupil can' statements within the standard they have met, taking account of any qualifiers. This does not mean that the pupil must demonstrate the 'pupil can'

statement all the time. Pupils are likely to have improved over the course of the year and may make occasional mistakes with something the teacher knows they are secure in.

While teachers must assess their pupils against all aspects of the English writing frameworks, they can exercise professional judgement to determine that a pupil has met a standard overall. When a teacher deems that a pupil meets a standard in English writing, despite a particular weakness, the moderator should scrutinise whether there was good reason to reach this judgement. This simply means that, through a professional discussion, it is clear that the pupil's weakness is an exception to their overall attainment, and that the standard at which they are being judged has been convincingly met.

10 Re-moderation

Re-moderation only applies where pupils have the potential to meet the next standard before the deadline for data submission. It is not a method of further moderation to avoid appeals, nor is it part of the appeals process. At the time of the external moderation visit, there may be pupils who have not yet demonstrated a small number of the 'pupil can' statements for the next standard and have the potential to meet it. If the school and the local authority moderator 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 data submission of Friday 28 June 2024, then re-moderation can be undertaken. The local authority record of the visit should clearly set out the next steps for these pupils.

If a school's TA judgements are accepted in full by the local authority moderator, any pupils who the school and the moderator agree will be re-moderated can have evidence internally moderated by the school without the need for a local authority review of evidence. This also applies to pupils outside of the representative sample (see section 12).

If the school's TA judgements are not fully accepted by the local authority moderator, any pupils who the school and the local authority moderator agree will be re-moderated, must have evidence reviewed by the local authority before submission of the TA data. This also applies to pupils outside of the representative sample (see section 12).

Re-moderation dates need to be planned in advance by local authorities. Most moderators are teachers who may need to be involved in re-moderation. Schools need to be aware of the dates so they can make plans if teachers need to be out of school.

11 End of an external moderation visit

Local authority moderators must provide the school with the local authorities completed record of the visit, which includes:

- formal feedback to the headteacher or a representative of the senior leadership team
- the agreed, validated judgements for all moderated pupils
- any revised judgements, if the local authority moderator deemed that evidence for the standard a pupil was judged to have met was insufficient, including the implications for similar judgements made for pupils outside the sample
- any revised judgements, if the local authority moderator considered the pupil to be working at a higher standard, including the implications for similar judgements made for pupils outside the sample
- any decisions that the school intends to appeal
- any concerns that require further action by the school or local authority, such as a re-moderation
- details of next steps for any pupils the school and local authority agreed have the potential to meet the next standard before the TA data submission deadline and will be re-moderated
- where school submitted TA data does not match agreed judgments, local authorities should consider the impact of this and the steps they have taken to resolve. Where local authorities believe maladministration may have occurred, they should raise this with the maladministration team for review

The record of the visit must be signed by the headteacher (or representative) and the local authority moderator. At the end of the moderation visit, schools must:

- ensure that the headteacher or representative is available to meet with the local authority moderator to receive formal feedback and to sign the written record of the visit
- ensure that any changes to TA judgements because of an external moderation visit are accurately reflected in their submitted TA data. This includes where local authorities have requested amendments to TA judgments; schools must ensure these amendments are represented within final submitted TA data.

12 Pupils outside the moderation sample

When moderating, the focus is on pupils who are part of the representative sample. The sample is indicative of the rest of the cohort's judgements. Moderation is about ensuring the accuracy of the teacher's judgements and understanding of the standards. Therefore, judgements made for the pupils in the moderation sample will always have implications for similar judgements made for pupils outside that sample.

Where issues are identified in application of the standards, the moderator will make changes to the standards awarded to the pupils in the sample. The moderator and teacher will need to expand the sample to discuss, but not necessarily review in detail, the evidence for any similar pupils in the cohort.

Any potential changes to judgements between the moderation visit and the TA data submission (including re-moderation as outlined in section 10), must be noted on the local authority record of visit. Recording of pupil identifiable data should be considered and minimised taking into account UK GDPR without impacting local authority ability to track judgment review or changes.

13 Appeals

The process for undertaking the external moderation visit, including addressing any disagreement about the standards awarded, should be clearly defined before the visit. Where consensus on the accuracy of assessments cannot be reached, each local authority must have appeal arrangements for schools which, after escalation within the local authority, includes a second external moderation visit or review by a different local authority.

Local authorities must:

- make schools aware of their appeal arrangements
- ensure local authority moderators refer to the appeals process during the external moderation visit, if any judgements have been amended
- not charge schools for any appeals submitted
- ensure any appeal is conducted with due regard to confidentiality and by staff who have been approved by STA to moderate

Schools must:

- provide evidence to the local authority to support any appeal before it is processed – the evidence can only be based on pupil's work seen by the local authority moderator during the external moderation visit

14 Data Submission

14.1 Overview

Maintained schools, academies, special schools and participating independent schools must [submit TA data](#) for all pupils at the end of KS2 (including pre-key stage and the engagement model) by Friday 28 June 2024.

Schools must:

- submit accurate TA data on the [PAG](#) by Friday 28 June 2024 unless their local authority has agreed to submit on their behalf
- not submit their data until after the external moderation visit has taken place (if selected)
- only re-submit where you have previously successfully submitted data after Friday 28 June 2024 when required to do so by STA or the local authority – if authorisation is not provided, STA should be informed by contacting the maladministration team sta.maladministration@education.gov.uk.

A school's submission must include TA data for every pupil:

- registered by the school to take a KS2 national curriculum test (even if they did not subsequently take the test)
- registered as working below the overall standard of the tests

Local authorities must:

- have a defined data validation process, using local intelligence to investigate any unexpected patterns of attainment
- have a process which ensures that all pupil evidence provided for re-moderation is reviewed by the local authority and that only the local authority can confirm the final TA judgement for that pupil
- have a process to analyse submitted TA data to check that it matches external moderation decisions – this should be in partnership with any nominated non-geographic local authority (this process is not to be used if the school is allowed to re-moderate without local authority review)
- not shorten the moderation window by requesting TA data prior to midday on Thursday 20 June 2024
- escalate any concerns about the integrity of the assessment to STA via the maladministration team (sta.maladministration@education.gov.uk).
- submit TA data on the [PAG](#) by Friday 28 June 2024 if they are submitting on behalf of their schools

Academies

Academies must report TA in line with the arrangements in their funding agreements.

Independent schools and non-maintained special schools

Independent schools that wish to publish and compare their national curriculum assessment results with local or national data, and non-maintained special schools participating in the assessment and reporting arrangements, should submit TA on the PAG.

For further key dates please see section 3 of the KS2 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements guidance.

14.2 Pupils who change schools

If a pupil changes school:

- before test week – the receiving school must submit TA data for them
- during test week – the school where the pupil was registered at the beginning of test week must submit TA data for them
- after test week – the school where the pupil was registered during test week must submit data for them

If a pupil arrives during test week from a non-participating school or having been electively home educated (EHE), the receiving school must submit the TA data for them. If the pupil arrives after test week, they can no longer be registered for the tests, so data will not be expected.

14.3 How teacher assessment data will be used

Teacher assessment data will be used to calculate KS2 school performance measures for academic year 2023/24. The DfE intends to publish the normal suite of KS2 accountability measures at school level in performance tables, as far as this is possible. As primary tests and assessments were cancelled in academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to COVID-19 disruption, there will be no relevant KS1 data which is required to calculate primary progress measures for 2023/24 and 2024/25. Given the lack of a statistically robust alternative baseline to calculate primary progress measures, we will not be producing or publishing primary progress measures for 2023/24 and 2024/25, and instead will only publish the usual attainment measures for these years. Further information can be found in the [primary school accountability guidance](#).

KS2 school performance data for 2023/24 will be shared securely with primary schools, academy trusts and local authorities for school improvement purposes, and with Ofsted to inform inspection.

15 Teacher assessment codes

Schools must assess all pupils in English writing and science, providing a valid code for them. Schools must also assess pupils in English reading and mathematics where they are below the standard of the national curriculum assessments and provide a valid code for them.

The codes that should be used when submitting data are as follows:

KS2	Pupils working at the standard of the national curriculum assessments	Pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum assessments and engaged in subject specific study	Pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum assessments and not yet engaged in subject specific study	Other codes
English reading	Not applicable	PK1, PK2, PK3, PK4, PK5, PK6	EM	A
Mathematics	Not applicable	PK1, PK2, PK3, PK4, PK5, PK6	EM	A
English writing	GDS, EXS, WTS	PK1, PK2, PK3, PK4, PK5, PK6	EM	A, L, F, P
Science	EXS, HNM	HNM	HNM	A, L, F, P

The table below includes a description of each code:

Code	Description
GDS	Working at greater depth
EXS	Working at the expected standard
WTS	Working towards the expected standard
HNM	Has not met the expected standard
PK6	Pre-key stage standard 6
PK5	Pre-key stage standard 5
PK4	Pre-key stage standard 4
PK3	Pre-key stage standard 3
PK2	Pre-key stage standard 2
PK1	Pre-key stage standard 1
EM	Working below the level of the national curriculum and not yet engaged in subject-specific study.
A	Absent for long periods, recently arrived, or not enough information to provide a TA judgement
L	Pupil has left the school
F	Pupil will reach the end of the programme of study and complete the key stage in a future year
P	Pupil completed the key stage in a previous year and a TA judgement has already been submitted

16 Local authority management of the external moderation process

16.1 Local authority responsibilities

Local authorities 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 English writing TA
- have a named, accountable local authority officer who is strategically responsible for planning, implementing and quality assuring external moderation of KS2 English writing TA
- provide STA with the contact details of the accountable officer and external moderation manager and make sure STA is updated with any changes via survey response (if the roles are held by the same individual, details of a senior local authority manager or director must be provided to STA)
- have a full internal plan that details how the local authority will deliver its statutory duties for external moderation of KS2 English writing TA – the plan must address any previously identified areas for development (either through a lesson learned process or from an external moderation visit)
- base their sample of schools for external moderation on their own local intelligence

Although local authorities should be mindful of schools being selected repeatedly and a 4 year cycle should be in place. However more often external moderation may take place due to:

- new teaching staff
- new senior leadership team
- schools with a Year 6 cohort for the first time
- Ofsted concern

Local authorities must also:

- ensure academies and participating independent schools that have opted into their externally moderated provision are included at least once every 4 years (excluding 2020 and 2021), or more frequently if required – any school changing local authority providers 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 and frequency of visits
- ensure their external moderators do not visit schools where they have a potential or perceived conflict of interest

16.2 Recruitment of local authority moderators

Local authorities must recruit an external moderation team with appropriate and recent experience of KS2 English writing. They must also train, and quality assure 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 conflicts of interest must be managed.

All local authority moderators must:

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

They must also 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
- discuss and explain why a school's TA judgements cannot be validated, where appropriate
- provide accurate written and verbal feedback to the teacher and headteacher

16.3 Standardisation and approval to moderate for local authorities

Standardisation exercises are used to gain STA approval to moderate and are undertaken annually. Moderators must successfully complete a standardisation exercise to be added to the list of approved moderators for this year.

The local authority must ensure it has a robust recruitment, training and quality assurance process to support all moderators. The training materials produced by STA are extensive, and local authorities should use them in a way that best suits their training needs.

Standardisation will be delivered across three exercises; moderators must pass one of these exercises and may only have two attempts within the three exercises. All exercises will be open to pool moderators and moderation managers/lead moderators.

When completing a standardisation exercise, moderators should not assume that the exercise includes one collection from each of the standards. Instead, each collection should be judged individually. Local authorities will be required to send details of successful and unsuccessful moderator data to STA after each exercise window. Local authorities should maintain a list of all successful moderators and share these details with

STA when requested. Local authorities must ensure moderators only have a maximum of two attempts across the three exercise windows.

Local authorities must ensure they recruit an adequate number of moderators to meet their external moderation requirements. In doing so, they should consider the pass rates of moderators and have a contingency plan in place to account for the average exercise failure rates observed in previous years. Training materials will be available on the PAG for self-guided learning from Monday 2 October 2023. Additionally, training videos are available on the [STA YouTube playlist](#). There will be no face-to-face training events.

The training materials will stay on the PAG, with further materials being added in the 2023/24 academic year. The 2018/19, 2019/20, 2021/22 and 2022/23 standardisation training materials will also be available on the PAG for use if required. The training can be downloaded and delivered by the local authority or used as self-guided learning by local authority moderators.

Please refer to the [teacher assessment moderation: standardisation and training process](#) for further details.



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