



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Securing teacher assessment – programme of external verification

Programme report



Information

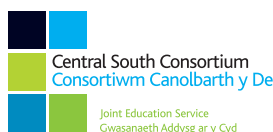
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Securing teacher assessment – programme of external verification

Programme report

Audience	Primary and secondary headteachers and heads of departments of maintained schools; secondary assessment coordinators and teachers at Key Stages 2 and 3, governing bodies of mainstream schools; local authorities; regional consortia and national bodies with an interest in education.
Overview	This publication is a report on the 2014–2015 outcomes of the external verification programme, designed to improve the accuracy and consistency of teacher assessment through high-quality feedback to all key stakeholders.
Action required	Teachers, headteachers and all key stakeholders are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the findings and recommendations of the first year of the external verification programme.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Assessment Branch Curriculum Division Infrastructure, Curriculum, Qualifications and Learner Support Directorate Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ Tel: 029 2082 3222 e-mail: Assessment@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at gov.wales/learning
Related documents	<i>National external verification programme: Frequently asked questions</i> (Welsh Government, 2016); <i>Teacher assessment: strengthening arrangements to improve reliability, consistency and confidence</i> (Welsh Government, 2015)



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

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Introduction

The Welsh Government consulted on proposals to strengthen teacher assessment arrangements (*Teacher assessment: Strengthening arrangements to improve reliability, consistency and confidence*) from December 2014 to March 2015. The proposals included strengthening cluster moderation and the introduction of an external verification programme.

A key outcome of this consultation was the announcement of a national programme, commencing in summer 2015, to provide external verification of mathematics and science in Year 1, with the focus moving in Year 2 to English/Welsh second language in English-medium schools; and Welsh/English in Welsh-medium schools.

The contract to manage the verification process was awarded to a partnership consisting of the four regional consortia and CDSM Interactive Solutions. The 'Partnership' jointly managed and implemented the programme in conjunction with school leaders and subject specialists. The Partnership was established with the support of ADEW, the Association of Directors of Education in Wales.

The key focus of the programme was to strengthen the accuracy and consistency of teacher assessment through high-quality feedback to teachers, headteachers and all key stakeholders.

The programme

A number of key tasks were undertaken, which were to:

- develop common processes and procedures for the verification process, including common templates to be used by all verifiers and lead verifiers
- deliver a nationally consistent training programme for all lead verifiers and verifiers
- develop and implement a school sampling methodology, in order to undertake visits to 10 per cent of the schools in Wales
- provide key information to selected schools about the process and the school visit
- develop a national process to deal with any disagreements in judgements
- provide all materials and resources bilingually.

Verifier allocation

Each consortium appointed a lead verifier to be responsible for a team of verifiers and to oversee the verification process in a different consortium area to their own.

- Lead verifier for CSC, from EAS.
- Lead verifier for EAS from CSC.
- Lead verifier for ERW from GwE.
- Lead verifier for GwE from ERW.

The majority of verifiers were practising headteachers/subject leaders from schools within the consortium of the lead verifier. To strengthen the credibility of the programme, team members undertook a proportion of visits in a different consortia area to their own and the main one to which they were allocated.

Visit summary

A total of 55 verifiers were deployed to 149 schools. Of these schools:

- 71 were English-medium Key Stage 2 settings
- 35 were Welsh-medium Key Stage 2 settings
- 28 were English-medium Key Stage 3 settings
- 15 were Welsh-medium Key Stage 3 settings.

In primary schools verification focused on both mathematics and science. Secondary schools were selected for either mathematics (22) or science (21).

As part of the programme verifiers were required to look at learner profiles submitted to cluster moderation events and the work of randomly selected learners.

Findings

In many instances verifiers agreed with the judgements of schools. However there was variance between key stages and subjects. They also found that the quality of evidence used to support teacher assessment was variable. In the best examples, learners' work represented full curriculum coverage and teacher assessment had sufficient detail to support the levels awarded. However, in both primary and secondary schools the work of a few learners had insufficient evidence for the verifier to be able to agree the level.

School moderation

In the majority of schools included in the sample, moderation and standardisation at individual school level is an established practice. However, in a minority of schools, insufficient time was devoted to the internal moderation process. In a very few schools no learner profiles were produced this year and no moderation exercises undertaken at school level.

Where learner profiles were produced, the majority provided sufficient evidence to be able to make a judgement on the level awarded. However, in a few schools there was a lack of sufficient evidence in the learner profiles on which to base a secure judgement. The work presented was too narrow and did not represent the full range and coverage needed to evidence the award of the level.

In the best examples small schools worked together to improve their assessment practices. However, some Year 6 teachers in small schools commented that they would benefit from the opportunity to discuss standards of attainment and the levelling of work with other colleagues prior to cluster moderation.

Cluster moderation

Nearly all schools sampled had taken part in end of key stage cluster moderation. For the majority this was a well-established practice in most subjects. There were however variances in the way in which meetings were organised and managed.

While attendance levels are generally high, this could vary depending on the subject being moderated. Not all cluster meetings were attended by a headteacher or relevant senior leader.

Inconsistencies were identified in the evidence that schools submitted for moderation at cluster events. There were many schools who remained unclear regarding the quantity and range of work required for the moderation process. Teacher commentaries did not always provide sufficient annotation to support the level awarded.

The outcomes from cluster moderation were not always fed back to schools and local authorities consistently, particularly where this may have had implications for the school's internal moderation procedures.

In many areas the attendance of officers from the consortium or local authority provided additional support to the cluster, particularly when officers had relevant subject expertise. They do not however have a formal role in the process.

Actions and recommendations

Actions undertaken

There were important lessons to be learned from Year 1 of the programme. These have been used to further develop the verification programme for Year 2 2015/16.

The initial draft report (July 2015) identified tasks that needed to be undertaken by the regional consortia, during the autumn term 2015, to enable them to consistently support their schools and clusters, in strengthening and developing teacher assessment arrangements. These were to:

- address the fundamentals of teacher assessment, including the evidence required to support best-fit judgements
- develop exemplification materials to support teacher assessment
- provide more detailed and consistent guidance on the organisation and delivery of effective cluster moderation
(This work has been addressed and materials produced, which are aligned with Welsh Government guidance. This work was funded through this programme. These materials will be distributed to schools and utilised to strengthen regional arrangements.)
- as part of the contract the programme was required to provide feedback to schools, local authorities and regional consortia. This has been completed in the form of a summary report highlighting the key findings. The regional consortia distributed this to all schools, with the programme team distributing copies to the main headteacher, teacher and support staff unions

- the planning processes for 2015/16 have been revised, including the production of a detailed timeline, a calendar of events and dates for key communication with schools.

Recommendations

The programme

These recommendations will need to be included in the 2015/16 programme plan, namely to:

- revise the training programme for verifiers in order to define more clearly its scope and content
- develop the online system, to ensure that it supports the administration of the programme, organises verifier workflow, and has robust data reporting tools
- strengthen the quality assurance processes at all levels of the programme, to increase confidence in the accuracy of all judgements made
- work with the Welsh Government to further refine the school sampling methodology to ensure improved targeting of schools.

Regional consortia

- Use the findings of the report to inform the programme of professional development they will provide, in order to support teacher assessment within their region.
- Use the programme's documentation when recruiting verifiers, in order to clearly communicate the role, responsibilities, time commitment and financial arrangements.

Welsh Government

Consideration should continue to raise the profile of assessment, so that:

- all key stakeholders give assessment a high priority
- it is integral to the training and development of those new to the profession.