Suffolk County Council

Assessment and Moderation Team

Moderation Handbook

Academic year 2025-2026

Suffolk Assessment and Moderation Team

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Introduction

The Standards & Testing Agency (STA) is an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE) and is responsible for the development and delivery of all statutory assessments from early years through to the end of key stage 2. STA documents explain statutory requirements and guidance for assessment and reporting arrangements, including external moderation.
The information contained within this handbook reflects the most recent guidance issued by the STA at the time of publication.

Further information is available via the STA website - https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/standards-and-testing-agency.

Key stage 2 The following statutory and supporting guidance documents are relevant to assessment and moderation at the end of key stage 2:
Key stage 2 assessment and reporting arrangements
Key stage 2 teacher assessment guidance 2026
Pre-key stage 2: pupils working below the national curriculum assessment standard – Teacher assessment framework
Teacher assessment frameworks at the end of key stage 2
Teacher assessment exemplification: Writing
Teacher assessment exemplification: Science

Note: Schools are strongly advised to use the online versions of these documents to ensure they are accessing the most up-to-date information.

The moderation process

Moderation is an integral part of effective assessment ensuring that standards in the assessment of writing are consistent across teachers, schools and local authorities (LAs), and that these standards are maintained year on year. External moderation visits form only one aspect of the overall moderation process. Schools are expected to engage fully with all elements of moderation to ensure that teacher assessment judgements are accurate and aligned with national standards on an annual basis.

Moderation encompasses the following activities:

Ongoing assessment	Teachers make regular, day-to-day professional judgements about pupils' progress and attainment to inform teaching and identify next steps in learning.
Standardisation	A professional development process through which teachers develop a shared and secure understanding of national standards, as defined in the teacher assessment frameworks. Where discrepancies arise, judgements must be reviewed and amended to ensure alignment with national expectations.
Teacher assessment	Following standardisation, teachers reach informed judgements about pupils' attainment against the teacher assessment frameworks. These judgements must be based on a broad range of evidence that reflects pupils' independent work over time.
School/cluster moderation	Teachers work collaboratively with colleagues within their own school and, where possible, with other schools, using the teacher assessment frameworks and exemplification materials to review samples of judgements and supporting evidence. Any inconsistencies must be resolved to ensure that all judgements are securely in line with national standards. This process may require the reconsideration of previously agreed judgements.
Statutory external LA moderation	External moderation visits are carried out by the local authority to review teachers' judgements across the full range of attainment. This ensures that assessments are consistently accurate and in line with national standards, as set out in the teacher assessment frameworks. During the visit, teachers engage in professional dialogue with the moderator, referring to a range of evidence for a selected sample of pupils

School leadership teams have a responsibility to ensure that assessment judgements are accurate, robust, and reliable. It is essential that all assessments are agreed within the school—by both teachers and school leaders—prior to any external statutory moderation visit and before assessment outcomes are submitted.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile 2025 – 2026

In the summer term of 2026, and no later than **26 June 2026**, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile must be completed for each child, in accordance with the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage.'

The EYFS Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners, and teachers with a comprehensive overview of a child's knowledge, understanding, and abilities. It summarises attainment against the expected levels within the Early Learning Goals and supports an informed understanding of a child's readiness for Year 1. The Profile should be based on practitioners' secure knowledge of the child and their professional judgement.

School moderation

Following teacher assessment against the 17 Early Learning Goals, schools and settings should undertake internal moderation of the EYFS Profile for each child. Teachers, teaching assistants, and Year 1 teachers should work collaboratively to review and discuss evidence of children's development and to agree judgements, ensuring accuracy and consistency across the setting.

Practitioners may find the Department for Education's (DfE) EYFS exemplification materials and the EYFS Profile assessment support website helpful in supporting professional dialogue and strengthening the consistency of judgements. The statutory guidance 'Early years foundation stage profile: 2026 handbook' and the non-statutory guidance 'Development Matters' may also support effective assessment practice.

New for 2025–2026

The DfE is funding LA facilitated EYFSP assessment support sessions for all EYFS practitioners. These sessions will commence in the summer term. Further details are available via the Suffolk Learning website - *Assessment and Moderation – Suffolk Learning*.

Supporting guidance and resources

Early years foundation stage: exemplification materials - Early years foundation stage: exemplification materials - GOV.UK

EYFS profile assessment support website - Help for early years providers : EYFS profile assessment support

Early years foundation stage profile: 2026 handbook -
Early years foundation stage profile: 2026 handbook (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Development Matters - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2

Key stage 1 2025-2026

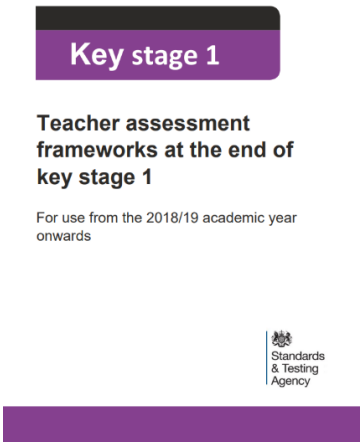
There is no statutory requirement for schools to undertake end of key stage 1 (KS1) teacher assessment. This reflects the fact that the first cohort to complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) have now reached the end of KS1. The RBA enables the STA to produce primary school progress measures, tracking pupils' progress from Reception through to the end of key stage 2 (KS2).

Similarly, from the academic year 2023–24 onwards, local authorities no longer have a statutory duty to externally moderate KS1 teacher assessment. In addition, the KS1 national curriculum tests (SATs) for English reading and mathematics remain optional.

However, the KS1 SATs and teacher assessment frameworks remain available for schools that choose to use them. The STA has published supporting guidance to assist schools in implementing these assessments where appropriate.

The following non-statutory guidance and materials are available:

Non-statutory teacher assessment frameworks at the end of key stage 1
Optional key stage 1 teacher assessment guidance 2026
Optional key stage 1 tests


Key stage 1

Teacher assessment frameworks at the end of key stage 1

For use from the 2018/19 academic year onwards

Standards & Testing Agency

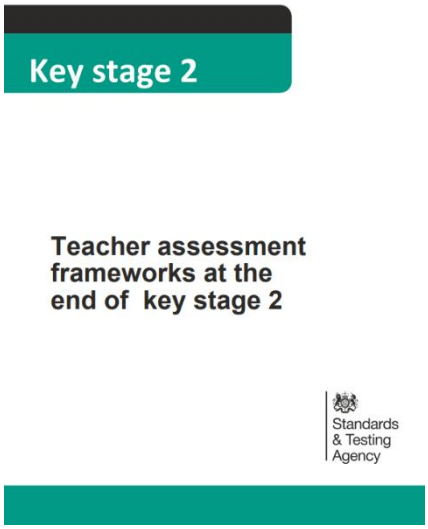
School moderation

The STA strongly recommends that schools continue to engage in internal moderation activity. This should be carried out within the school and, where possible, collaboratively with other schools. Internal moderation is most effective when undertaken throughout the academic year and across key stages, supporting the quality assurance of teacher assessment judgements and offering valuable professional development opportunities.

The Suffolk Assessment and Moderation Team will support this approach through the delivery of KS1 area moderation events in June 2026. Further information is available via the Suffolk Learning website: Assessment Training – Suffolk Learning.

Key stage 2 2025-26

Teacher assessment at the end of key stage 2 (KS2) is reported in writing and science. Throughout Year 6, teachers develop a secure and holistic understanding of each pupil's attainment in writing by drawing on evidence from everyday teaching and learning activities. As pupils approach the end of the key stage, teachers are required to reach a final teacher assessment judgement for each child.
Teacher assessment judgements must be made using the most recent Teacher Assessment Frameworks (TAF) for KS2. The frameworks remain unchanged for 2026 and are therefore dated 2018/19. In order to be assessed at a particular standard, pupils must demonstrate that they can meet **all** of the 'pupil can' statements within that standard.



Moderation of KS2 assessments - writing

Schools are advised to ensure there are opportunities for robust internal moderation between classes in the same school. Where possible, clusters and groups of schools are encouraged to undertake informal, non-statutory moderation activities collaboratively to further support consistency of judgments.

The Suffolk Assessment and Moderation team will be supporting this aim through the delivery of non-statutory KS2 area moderation in June 2026. Further information is available via the Suffolk Learning website - Assessment Training – Suffolk Learning. Please note – these sessions are available only to schools NOT receiving a statutory moderation visit.

The LA has a statutory duty to externally moderate teacher assessment judgements in writing at the end of Year 6. Each year, a minimum of 25% of schools will receive a moderation visit. Schools selected for moderation will be informed on, or after, Friday 15 May. Moderation visits will take place between Monday 1 June and Friday 26 June.
All moderation visits are conducted by experienced Year 6 teachers or suitably qualified LA officers. All moderators are required to successfully complete a STA assessment to ensure their secure application of national standards.

Schools selected for a visit will be contacted by the LA and informed of the date and time of the moderation, along with the name(s) of the moderator(s). Schools will be asked to prepare a list of pupils and the agreed teacher assessment standard for each. It is essential that all judgements are agreed and authorised by the Headteacher prior to the moderation visit.

Section 9.8 of the KS2 teacher assessment guidance explains schools' responsibilities during an external moderation visit.
'*Schools must:*

- *ensure that local authority moderators have a quiet area to conduct the external moderation visit*
- *provide moderators with a breakdown of TA judgements against the TA frameworks for the cohort, categorised by standard*
- *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*
- *prioritise and limit the number of school representatives who attend the professional discussion to those who have immediate understanding of the pupil's ability and judgement awarded, to help maintain an effective discussion*
- *encourage teachers to draw on 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*.'

Upon arrival at the school, the moderator will select a sample comprising a minimum of 15% of the cohort. The sample will include pupils assessed at all standards within the Teacher Assessment Framework (working towards the expected standard, working at the expected standard, and working at greater depth). Pupils assessed against Pre-Key Stage standards are not included in this sample. Moderators will engage in professional dialogue with teachers and evaluate whether the evidence presented demonstrates a secure fit against the criteria.

Moderation visits begin at either 9:00am or 1:00pm and typically last approximately half a day. During the visit, the moderators and the Year 6 teacher(s) will discuss the judgements the school has made and how they have been arrived at. The Year 6 teacher(s) need to be released from teaching so they can take part in the process and share their knowledge of the attainment of the pupil in different contexts.
Where evidence is stored electronically, schools must ensure that it is accessible to both teachers and moderators during the meeting.

In cases where a pupil has narrowly not met a small number of 'pupil can' statements, schools may submit additional evidence for re-moderation, in line with STA guidance. These cases will be clearly recorded by the moderator on the moderation form, along with details of the specific evidence required. In most instances, additional evidence can be reviewed without the need for a further visit.

Additional evidence should be scanned and submitted by email to ks2moderation@suffolk.gov.uk with the subject line: *CONFIDENTIAL – School name*. A copy of the completed additional evidence form must be included to ensure clarity regarding the evidence requested.

The LA will review the submitted evidence and notify the school of the outcome. Schools are strongly advised to submit any additional evidence as early as possible, and no later than 12:00 noon on Wednesday 24 June 2026**,** as this deadline is close to the statutory data submission date.

If, during moderation, judgements are found to be inconsistent with national standards, the moderator will inform the Headteacher. Where necessary, the Headteacher will be required to arrange for judgements to be reconsidered by the relevant teachers and to oversee this process. The LA has a statutory responsibility to ensure that accurate judgements are ultimately submitted.

At the conclusion of the visit, the moderator will provide a brief written report, with a copy left in school. A further copy will be sent to the moderation manager and added to the visit records on Perspective Lite.

Appeals Process 2026

This process outlines the steps to be followed in the event of a disagreement between a school and a moderator and applies specifically to KS2 writing moderation.

Moderation meetings and visits are based on professional dialogue between the teacher and the moderator. In most cases, any disagreement can be resolved during the visit through discussion of the evidence presented and reference to national exemplification materials. During the meeting, the moderator may request additional evidence, or the school may choose to identify further evidence to support the judgement.

If a disagreement cannot be resolved during the moderation meeting, the moderator or the Headteacher should record this on the moderation form. The moderator must then contact the moderation manager by telephone or email to ensure they are informed of the situation.

If the school believes that an appeal should be submitted after the moderation meeting has concluded, the school should contact the moderation manager as soon as possible to discuss the next steps.

Stage 1

- If an appeal is made, the moderation manager will arrange for a second visit to take place conducted by a different member of the moderation team. The moderation manager may also attend. It should be noted that at this second visit, the moderation can only be based on the evidence used during the initial moderation visit.

Stage 2

- In the event of the school remaining unsatisfied, the material will be submitted to the moderation manager in a neighbouring local authority for their professional opinion and the outcomes will be sent to the school. Agreements are in place with neighbouring authorities in case this happens. The outcome at this point is final.

The purpose of the appeals process is to ensure that, in the unlikely event of a disagreement, it can be resolved promptly and fairly for all parties. The overriding priority is to ensure that assessment judgements are accurate, so that pupils, their parents or carers, and receiving teachers at the next key stage have reliable information about pupils' attainment.

If a school chooses not to appeal and refuses to amend submitted data in line with the outcome of a moderation visit, the local authority will refer the matter to the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) maladministration team.

Information correct at time of publishing –15 April 2026