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Key Stage 2 (KS2) Writing Moderation: Evaluation of the 2011/12 Interim arrangements

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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1 Executive Summary

Introduction and Background

In response to the 2011 Bew review of Key Stage 2 (KS2) testing, assessment and accountability, the Government announced it will make moderated teacher assessment of writing at KS2 statutory in 2013, alongside the new, externally marked test of grammar punctuation and spelling. In 2012, non-statutory interim arrangements for the assessment of KS2 writing were put in place. Pupils' writing was assessed by teachers, informed by a test. Teachers' judgements in a minimum of 15% of schools (per local authority) were subject to external moderation.

The moderation process was designed to be flexible and minimise the burden for schools and, as far as possible to reflect existing Key Stage 1 (KS1) assessments. It was overseen by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) in the summer of 2012 and the DfE commissioned NatGen Social research, through the CAYT Research Centre¹, to undertake an evaluation of the process.

Surveys of LA moderation managers; moderators; headteachers and Y6 lead teachers were undertaken during June and July 2012. The aims of the evaluation were to explore the impact of the 2012 KS2 writing moderation arrangements on a representative sample of local authority (LA) moderation managers, moderators and schools to explore if the new process is effective and minimises the burden on schools.

Key Findings

- Overall, the new moderation process appears to have been successful.
- Schools' confidence in their moderators was very high – 97% of headteachers and Year 6 lead teachers were very or fairly confident in them.
- 80% of headteachers and 82% of Year 6 lead teachers thought there were positive benefits and outcomes as a result of the new moderation process. Many thought it had improved teachers' confidence in assessing writing at Key Stage 2.
- On average, each moderator assessed 28.9 pupils work and visited 3.9 schools, equating to 8 assessments per school. Moderators found that 84% of the judgements they looked at were assessed at the right level by teachers – 10% were too high and 5% too low.
- Headteachers and Year 6 lead teachers said they had changed the way they approached their teacher assessments in 2011/12 compared with previous years. The most common changes had been to introduce more, more regular or more thorough internal moderation in the school itself and the introduction of cross school/cluster moderation.
- Schools spent on average 14.1 hours on the moderation process. This was mainly spent on preparatory work (2.2 hours on preparatory training and 5.2 hours on other preparations for the visit) Whilst this may seem a relatively long time, it should be noted that some of the tasks represent general good teacher assessment practice and were not necessarily the result of being selected for a visit.

- Year 6 lead teachers spent on average 4.9 hours on the moderation process compared with 3.1 hours by the senior management team and 2.5 hours by the headteacher.
- The majority of moderation managers (80%) said the quality of reports written by moderators were up to the required standard all of the time and 21% most of the time.
- Only 19% of moderation managers were contacted by schools disagreeing with moderation decisions. On average they dealt with 1.5 disagreements.
- When moderators carried out assessments in schools where National Curriculum writing tests were available (67% of visits), the correlation between these and teacher assessments were high (95% said 'very' or 'quite' correlated).
- The majority of local authority moderation managers (87%) thought the information, guidance and support provided for the Key Stage 2 process was good.
- Nonetheless, they also felt there was scope to improve the information, guidance and support they were given. For example, just over half felt the need for more timely information (52%).
- Both headteachers and Year 6 lead teachers felt the moderation process was a slight burden and typically they felt that it was slightly more burdensome than the KS2 writing assessment approach taken in previous years (i.e. externally –marked tests).
- The majority of stakeholders felt the moderation process took the right amount of time to accommodate and administer: Headteachers (89%); Year 6 lead teachers (88%) and moderators (96%) agreed.
- Most schools made sufficient preparations for the moderation, with 97% making an appropriate space available, and 98% preparing a list of initial teacher assessments.
- Nearly half (44%) of moderation managers felt that the standardisation exercise alone did not identify which moderators would be effective and credible as it required potential moderators to assess only one piece of work, rather than a range (as they would be asked to do in the actual moderation process). However, LAs had been advised that the standardisation exercise should be used as one part of their wider recruitment processes, and was never intended to be the only competency check of moderators; it was designed to be used alongside other checks, such as interviews.
- 91% of moderators were *always* able to look at a range of work from Year 6 classes in the school and 94% said that it *always* covered pupils with a range of abilities. In contrast, only 43% of moderators felt that they *always* had a broad enough range of work to evidence teachers' judgments (50% said they usually did).

Methodology

Data was collect through a postal survey of headteachers and Y6 lead teachers; a telephone survey of LA moderation managers and a postal survey of moderators. All the fieldwork took place in June and July 2012.

Every moderation manager in every LA in England (152) was sent a questionnaire. In total responses were received from 73%. On average, LAs each employed 10 moderators and a total of 509 completed questionnaires were received from moderators (an estimated 33%

response rate). 2,138 schools were in the 15% sample of schools surveyed and 41% of headteachers and 41% of Year 6 lead teachers in these schools responded.

Findings

Moderator recruitment and experience

Moderators were recruited by moderation managers using advertising in schools (29%), head hunting people with a specific background (19%) and asking schools to nominate potential moderators (17%).

Most moderation managers (88%) did not have problems recruiting. Of the 22% that did, the most common problems were difficulties with the standardisation exercise (i.e. candidates did not pass as expected), a lack of interest in being a moderator, and teachers having to take time off school to take part in the recruitment activities.

LAs reported that 84% of their moderators were current (67%) or ex-primary school teachers (17%) with LA advisory staff forming the next largest category (14%). Fewer than half a per cent of moderators said they were not qualified teachers and 43% were current Y6 teachers. Over one third (34%) had worked as moderators before.

Overall, 81% of moderators passed the standardisation exercise. Pass rates varied and were lowest for those moderation managers who put forward larger numbers of candidates (67% pass rate for 15+ candidates). Of those who passed the standardisation exercise, only 21% found it 'fairly difficult'. The majority found it 'fairly easy' (65%) or 'very easy' (14%). The majority, (97%) of moderation managers found it 'very easy' or 'fairly easy' to administer.

Quality assurance of moderators

A large proportion of managers (83%) used other methods, besides the standardisation exercise, to assure the quality of their moderators. This included additional training and face to face support and supervision in schools.

In 69% of local authorities, moderators worked in pairs – though it was not always explicitly stated that it was done for quality assurance purposes.

Information, guidance and training

On the whole, moderation managers thought that the information, guidance and support provided was 'very good' or 'fairly good' (87%) but 83% thought there was some scope for improvement. The main issue appeared to be timeliness, with 80% of managers saying information arrived too late.

Moderators were also generally positive, 92% thought the support provided by the DfE was 'very' or 'fairly useful' and 98% agreed that the support provided by the LA was 'very' or 'fairly useful'.

The majority of Year 6 lead teachers felt the information guidance and support provided by the DfE, was 'good' or 'fairly good' (89%). Headteachers were less positive with 68% rating it 'good' or 'fairly good' and nearly a quarter (23%) feeling that it was 'not very good', or 'not at all good'. Better timeliness of information was the most frequent suggestion for improvement.

The majority of moderation managers ran training sessions with their team of moderators (62%), with levelling guidance being the most frequently cited content for these sessions. Moderators received an average of six hours training on how to carry out moderation visits.

More typically, schools received training materials rather than face to face training. Just under a third of managers said they had run training days, workshops or sessions for schools (32%).

The moderation process

On average, local authorities carried out moderation in 25 schools, typically using a team of 10 moderators.

Moderation managers reported the average number of schools visited by each moderator was 2.8. This varied according to size of authority – moderators in large authorities carried out more school visits than those in smaller authorities.

Moderators themselves reported visiting an average of 3.9 schools. On average they moderated 28.9 assessments of pupils' writing.

Most schools followed the guidance documents and prepared for the moderator visit with at least 95% reporting that they ensured there was an appropriate space available; prepared an initial list of teacher assessments; provided access to Year 6 exercise books and other work and made sure Year 6 teachers and senior management were available for discussion. Eighty four per cent of head teachers reported that internally marked writing test results were available for the moderator to look at and 10% had externally marked test results available.

Moderator guidance stated explicitly that portfolios were not required for the moderator visit. Nevertheless, 37% of schools collected portfolios of pupils' work.

Some moderators (28%) reported that schools were not always fully prepared. Amongst these, 33% thought the range of evidence provided for assessments was insufficient.

When asked about the different kinds of evidence available, moderators reported always being able to look at a range of work from all Year 6 classes in the school (91%) and from pupils with a range of abilities (94%). Less widely available was written work in a range of forms for different purposes and audiences (52% said always available) and a broad enough range of work to evidence teachers' judgements (43% said always available). Nearly a quarter of moderators mentioned 'other' evidence they would have liked to have seen and more comprehensive evidence was most commonly stated here.

Moderators carried out pupil selection in different ways in schools, with over half of moderators purposively selecting pupils to cover a range of levels (51%), and over one third selecting borderline cases, and expanding it to include pupils more securely in the middle of a level (36%).

Perceptions of burden and challenge

Head and Year 6 lead teachers were asked to rate how burdensome the moderation process was, compared with assessing KS2 writing in previous years. They scored the moderation process as a moderate burden (mean of 4.4 and 4.6 out of 10 respectively; median 4). However, they also felt that it was more burdensome than the previous approach taken to writing KS2 writing assessments (mean of 4.0 and 3.9 respectively).

Because this is a new process, it is not clear whether this difference is due to a genuine increase in burden or unfamiliarity of the process. But most headteachers, Year 6 lead teachers and moderators felt the process took about the right time to accommodate and administer (89%, 88% and 96% respectively).

A third of moderation managers felt that differences between the KS2 writing assessment moderation process and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and KS1 assessments

had caused them some difficulty (29%). Relationship problems with schools were the most commonly reported problem (for example, because of the short timescale for the moderation process or schools being moderated for both KS2 and KS1).

Costs and time spent on the moderation process

On average, moderation managers spent 88.8 hours on the moderation process. 13.4 hours of this time was spent familiarising themselves with the new process - given that this is the first year that KS2 writing assessments have been externally moderated, much of this time would not be required in future years.

Moderators spent an average of 5.9 hours per school visit (1.3 hours preparation, 3.4 hours in the school, and 1.2 hours reporting back). This is in addition to 6 hours they spent training.

Schools spent an average of 14.1 hours on the moderation process, with 7.4 hours spent on preparation work. The moderation visit itself was relatively undemanding - schools only spent a modest amount of time on this (2.2 hours).

The average cost of the moderation process for LAs was £13,207. Larger authorities spent more than smaller authorities. The biggest expenditures were moderator pay and expenses (average of £5,628). Recruiting and training moderators cost £2,632 on average and supply staff to cover moderator absences £2,749.

The majority of moderation managers felt that moderation process costs would be the same in 2013 (61%). Some 29% thought costs would rise, mainly because they intend to moderate more schools.

Sixty-two per cent of schools incurred monetary expenses as a result of the moderation process, spending an average of £330. This was spent mainly on wages, meals and refreshments for supply staff and meetings with other schools about the process.

Fifty-six per cent of moderators also incurred expenses. These were almost exclusively travel expenses and the average incurred was £93.

Moderation outcomes, reports and appeals

Moderators each assessed 28.9 pupils' work on average. Considering all the teacher assessments they looked at, they judged that 84% of the assessments had been made at the right level, with 10% being judged to be too high, and 5% too low.

The most common reason for changing assessments was that insufficient evidence was provided to support the assessment (55%) - for example, the class work not supporting the level awarded. The second most common reason was incorrect use of levelling criteria by teachers (24%).

In terms of teacher bias, 62% of moderators said they felt that teachers were 'sometimes' or 'usually' influenced by their personal feelings about particular pupils during assessments. Length (54%) and presentation (53%) of written work 'sometimes' or 'usually' influenced teachers in moderators opinions. But they were less likely to think that teachers were 'sometimes' or 'usually' influenced by whether pupils spoke English as an additional language (37%) or their gender (13%).

Where moderators carried out visits in schools where National Curriculum writing tests results were available (67%), a very high proportion (95%) of moderators thought these results and the teacher assessments were 'very' or 'quite strongly' correlated.

Ninety seven per cent of moderators thought teacher judgements across schools were 'very' or 'quite' consistent.

Eighty per cent of moderation managers said that moderators' reports to the local authority were up to the required standard. Only 19% of moderation managers had been contacted by schools that disagreed with moderator decisions. Where this was the case the number of schools was 1.5 on average. In two thirds of instances the managers agreed with the moderators' decisions. Disagreements were usually resolved through undertaking further moderation or reviewing decisions with headteachers.

Perceptions of impact on school practice

Many headteachers (44%) and Year 6 lead teachers (51%) said that the writing moderation process had changed the way they approached teacher assessments in 2011/12 compared with previous years. The most common changes being more/more regular/more thorough internal moderation and the introduction of cross school/cluster moderation.

The majority of headteachers (80%) and Year 6 lead teachers (82%) thought there had been some benefits or positive outcomes as a result of the moderation process. The most commonly reported benefits were increased confidence in teachers' ability to make judgments, the assessments they arrived at and their overall confidence in the process. Two thirds of Year 6 lead teachers also thought they would be more confident in assessing KS2 writing in the future (66%).

At least 97% of headteachers and Year 6 lead teachers were 'very' or 'fairly' confident in their moderator's ability.

Suggested improvements from respondents

All the survey groups made suggestions for improvements – 87% of moderation managers; 52% of moderators and one third of teachers (37% of Heads and 34% of Year 6 leads).

The most common themes from all stakeholders were to revise the timings of the visits (suggestions included providing a longer time frame for the visits; longer notice periods; moving moderation to a quieter time of year) and to ensure the information and guidance was clear and consistent from the outset and provided in one go. Suggestions were also made about improving the guidance and giving more details about the evidence that schools would be required to provide.

Conclusions

Overall, the KS2 moderation process appears to have been a success. There is room for improvement and suggestions have been put forward by moderation managers, moderators, headteachers and Year 6 lead teachers.

Moderation managers suggest that the standardisation exercise more closely mirrors actual practice and should be based on a range of work. This will improve the process for identifying good moderators and make sure that potentially good candidates are not rejected for incorrectly assessing one example of work.

All respondents agreed that timeliness, as well as improvements in the information, guidance and support would be helpful. Moderation managers thought there was room for improvement in the information that they received, more so than headteachers and Year 6.

Moderators would like schools to provide a greater range of work to support teachers' judgements.

Considering this was a new process, the burden on schools does not appear to be too great, with most participants agreeing that the moderation process took about the right time to accommodate and administer.

Many school heads and teachers thought there were positive benefits and that staff were now more confident about writing assessments.

2 Introduction

2.1 Aims and background

In 2011 Lord Bew completed an independent review of testing, assessment and accountability at the end of Key Stage 2.¹ He recommended that writing assessments by teachers in schools should be reported on and used for accountability purposes. He also recommended that there should be external moderation to ensure that teacher judgements were accurate and consistent with national standards. These teacher assessments would replace the national curriculum test for Key Stage 2 (KS2) writing.

In response to the 2011 Bew review of Key Stage 2 (KS2) testing, assessment and accountability, the Government announced it will make moderated teacher assessment of writing at KS2 statutory in 2013, alongside the new, externally marked test of grammar, punctuation and spelling. In 2012, non-statutory interim arrangements for the assessment of KS2 writing were put in place. Pupils' writing was assessed by teachers, informed by a test. Teachers' judgements in a minimum of 15% of schools (per local authority) were subject to external moderation.

The 2012 moderation arrangements were designed to be flexible and minimise burdens on schools and, as far as possible, to reflect the existing processes for Key Stage 1 (KS1) assessments. The 2012 moderation process was overseen by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) and the DfE commissioned NatCen Social Research, through the 'Centre for the Analysis of Youth Transitions' (CAYT) to undertake an evaluation of the process. The aims of this evaluation were to explore the impact of the 2012 moderation cycle on a representative sample of local authorities, moderators and schools to ensure that the process is effective and minimises burdens on schools.

2.2 Method

This section describes the evaluation's approach.

2.2.1 Data collection

This evaluation included:

- A 28 minute telephone survey of moderation managers in local authorities
- A 10 page postal survey of Headteachers
- A 4 page postal survey of Year 6 lead teachers
- A 12 page postal survey of moderators

Local authority moderation managers were sent an advance letter about the study before being invited to take part by telephone. Alongside this advance letter they were also provided with a data sheet giving them warning that the telephone survey would include some questions on costs. It also gave them a format for them to collect the appropriate

¹ Bew (2011) Independent Review of Key Stage 2 Testing, Assessment and Accountability – Final Report. Department for Education.

information in advance if necessary. The fieldwork for the survey took place between w/c 9th July and w/c 30th July 2012.

Headteachers and Year 6 lead teachers were sent an initial questionnaire with an accompanying letter and pre-paid reply envelope in w/c 18th June. They were sent a reminder letter and replacement questionnaire in w/c 2nd July.

A sample of moderators was not readily available for the evaluation and so the research depended on the co-operation of moderation managers despatching postal questionnaires on behalf of the research team. To do this, every local authority moderation manager was asked how many moderators they had employed and they were sent the appropriate number of questionnaires to send out to their team of moderators. The questionnaires were despatched to local authorities in w/c 2nd July and moderation managers were asked to send them on to their team of moderators within 1 week.

The questionnaires covered the following topics:

- Approaches to recruiting and assigning moderators to schools
- The nature and quality of the information, guidance and training provided
- Details and perceptions of how the moderation process worked in practice
- The amount of time and money people spent on the moderation process
- The results of the moderation in terms of assessment accuracy and details of appeals
- Perceptions of how the moderation process influenced school practice
- Suggestions for improvements to the moderation process

2.2.2 Sampling and response

The Department for Education were able to supply the research team with contact details for the moderation manager in every local authority in England. As such every moderation manager was invited to take part in the survey and the final response rate was 73% (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Local authority response		
<i>Source: KS2 survey of local authorities</i>		
Outcome	Response	
	N	%
Issued	152	100
Fully productive	111	73
Partially productive	1	1
Refusal	13	9
Non contact	15	10
Other unproductive	12	8
<i>Base: All issued cases</i>		

Note: The percentages do not total 100 due to rounding

As described above, no sample of moderators was available for the evaluation and so the research was dependent upon the co-operation of moderation managers to despatch postal questionnaires on behalf of the research team. On average local authorities reported that

they had employed 10 moderators. This gave a probable total number of 1,520 moderators employed across the 152 local authorities. A total of 509 completed questionnaires were received back giving an estimated response rate of 33%. These 509 moderators represent 115 local authorities. There was no evidence that moderation managers from local authorities of a particular size or from particular government office regions were more or less likely to have sent on the postal questionnaires to their team of moderators.

A list of schools in the 15% moderation sample was supplied by the Department for Education and was used to send two postal questionnaires to every moderated school. One questionnaire was addressed to the Headteacher and one questionnaire was addressed to the Year 6 lead teacher. In total 41% of Headteachers and 41% of Year 6 lead teachers responded to the survey. A breakdown of response can be found in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 School response				
<i>Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers and Year 6 lead teachers</i>				
Outcome	Headteacher		Year 6 lead teacher	
	N	%	N	%
Issued	2138	100	2138	100
Productive	878	41	875	41
Ineligible	2	+	2	+
Refusal	7	+	10	+
Address incorrect	2	+	2	+
Other unproductive	1249	58	1249	58
<i>Base: All issued cases</i>				

Note: The percentages do not total 100 due to rounding

2.3 Table conventions

- Throughout the report, percentages based on fewer than 50 cases are enclosed in square brackets, and should be interpreted with caution.
- All percentages and means are unweighted, and base population is shown in each table.
- Percentages are rounded up or down to whole numbers and therefore may not always sum to 100.
- Where more than one answer could apply, this is indicated under the table.
- Percentages less than 0.5 (but greater than 0) are shown as '+’.

3 Moderator recruitment and assignment

3.1 Ways of recruiting moderators

Local authorities' most frequent approach to recruiting moderators was by advertising. Examples were using school bulletins, school relevant forums such as the Teaching and Learning Alliance, local authority newsletters to schools, or global emails or letters to schools (35%, see Table 3.1).

This was followed by targeting individuals with a specific background (19%). Examples were head-hunting KS1 moderators, advanced skills teachers, or LA teaching and learning consultants to be KS2 moderators. Some 17% of moderation managers sought nominations from schools to recruit to their moderation team. 16% targeted other known individuals such as moderators from their own existing moderation and assessment teams, or other internal local authority teams.

Table 3.1 Approach to recruiting moderators	
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>	
	%
Advertising in schools – all schools or unspecified	29
Targeting/head-hunting – groups of people with a specific background	19
Headteacher/school nominations – in all schools or unspecified	17
Targeting/head-hunting – known suitable individuals	16
Briefing events/meetings/sessions in schools	9
Headteacher/school nominations – specifically from primary schools	4
Advertising in schools – specifically primary schools	4
Advertising in schools – pre-selected schools	2
Other	8
<i>Base</i>	<i>111</i>

Note 1: 23% of respondents provided answers related to who they recruited rather than how they recruited.

Note 2: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

3.2 Problems with recruiting moderators

Just under a fifth of moderation managers (22%) experienced problems in recruiting moderators. Where this was the case (the figures need to be treated with caution – only 24 managers were routed to this question), 38% said that this had been because of the standardisation exercise (for example, through potentially strong candidates failing the exercise). Twenty-nine per cent reported a lack of interest amongst teachers in becoming involved with the moderation process and 21% experienced difficulties with teachers needing to take time off to complete the recruitment exercises, or found that there was a general shortage of people with the right skills.

Table 3.2 Types of problems with the moderator recruitment	
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>	
	%
Candidates failing the standardisation exercise	[38]
Lack of interest in becoming involved with moderation process	[29]
The need for teachers to take time off school to take part in recruitment activities	[21]
General difficulty finding enough candidates with the right skills	[21]
Short notice period	[17]
Too many potential candidates	[13]
Other	[8]
<i>Base</i>	24

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

3.3 Background and experience of moderators

LA managers reported that just over two-thirds of KS2 moderators were active primary school teachers (67%, see Table 3.3). This was by far the most common background. Under a fifth of the moderators were ex-primary school teachers, closely followed by moderators who held local authority advisory roles. Only a very small minority of moderators were current secondary school teachers, or had other backgrounds.

Table 3.3 Proportions of moderators with different backgrounds	
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>	
	%
Primary teachers who were currently working within schools	67
Ex-primary teachers who were not currently working in schools	17
Local authority advisory staff	14
Secondary school teachers	1
Other backgrounds	1
<i>Base</i>	111

A similar proportion (61%) of moderators confirmed that they were currently teaching in a school. Almost all moderators said they were qualified teachers (with fewer than half a per cent of moderators having some other kind of background). This would be consistent with the LA manager feedback above if most of the 'local authority advisory staff' were also qualified teachers.

Table 3.4 The backgrounds of the moderators

<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderators</i>	
	%
Current teacher - teaches Year 6	43
Current teacher - taught Year 6 in the past	12
Current teacher - never taught Year 6	6
Ex-teacher - taught Year 6 in the past	31
Ex-teacher - never taught Year 6	6
Qualified teacher - current/past teaching history unknown	1
Not a qualified teacher	+
<i>Base</i>	<i>509</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

In terms of moderators' previous experience, 34% had worked as moderators before and 16% had worked as markers for National Curriculum tests.

3.4 The standardisation exercise

3.4.1 Moderators taking and passing the standardisation exercise

The number of individuals who took part in the standardisation exercise varied widely across local authorities ranging from one to 100 individuals sitting the test; the average was 14.

Table 3.5 shows the overall pass rate and also how the pass rate varied with the number of people sitting the test. The pass rates were very similar when small numbers of candidates sat the standardisation exercise (84% where one to seven candidates sat the test, and 88% where eight to 14 candidates sat the test). However, the pass rate was lower in local authorities where a large number of moderators took part in the exercise (only 67% passed when between 15 and 100 candidates sat the test). A possible explanation might be that these figures are linked to the overall approach to recruiting moderators that a local authority had taken.

Table 3.5 Standardisation exercise pass rate by number of individuals who took part

<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>				
	<i>1 – 7 candidates</i>	<i>8 – 14 candidates</i>	<i>15 – 100 candidates</i>	<i>Overall</i>
Pass rate (% of out 100%)	84	88	67	81
<i>Bases (number of local authorities)</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>110</i>

Table 3.6 explores this by comparing the pass rates for local authorities who took different approaches to recruiting moderators. These figures need to be treated with caution because the bases are small. However, the table shows that the pass rates appear to be higher where local authorities targeted specific individuals to be part of their moderation team compared to authorities that took a more open approach to recruitment.

Table 3.6 Standardisation exercise pass rates by LA approach to moderator recruitment

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	<i>Targeted recruitment</i>	<i>Open recruitment</i>	<i>Total</i>
Standardisation exercise pass rates	%	%	%
17 - 60%	[17]	[32]	24
63 - 75%	[7]	[27]	16
78 - 96%	[7]	[18]	12
100%	[68]	[24]	48
<i>Bases</i>	41	34	75

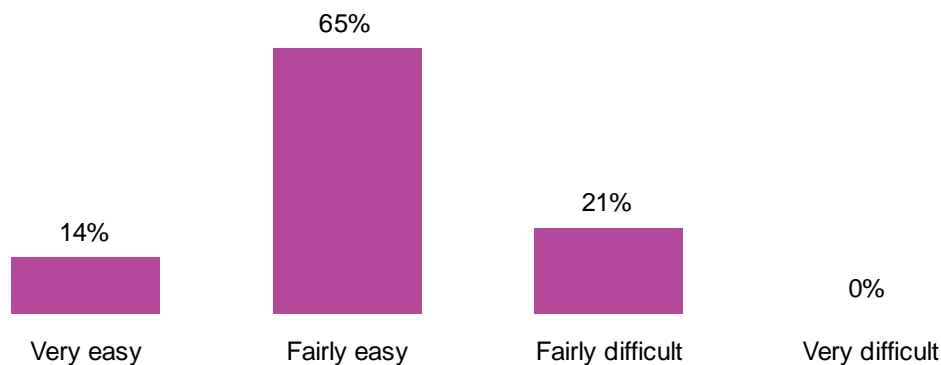
Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding

3.4.2 Ease of completing for moderators

The majority of moderators found the standardisation exercises ‘very’ or ‘fairly easy’ (79%, see Figure 2.1). However it should be noted that this only reflects the views of those who passed the exercise since they ultimately joined the local authority’s moderation team.

Figure 3:1 How easy moderators found the standardisation exercises

Base: Moderators taking standardisation exercise (507)

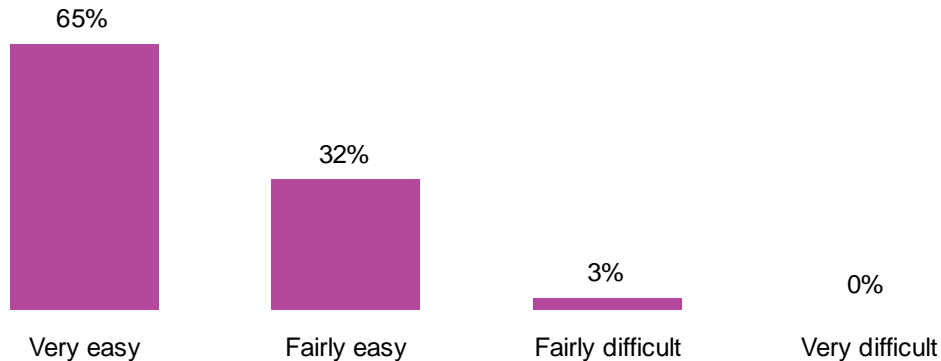


3.4.3 Ease of administration for LA managers

Ninety-seven per cent of LA moderation managers found the standardisation exercises ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to administer (see Figure 2.2). Only a very small minority of moderation managers found the standardisation exercise fairly difficult to administer (3%) with nobody saying they found it very difficult.

Figure 3:2 Ease of administering standardisation exercise

Base: Moderation managers (112)



3.4.4 Achieving their purpose

In Section 2.2 we learned that some moderation managers thought the standardisation exercise was problematic for recruiting moderators. Although moderation managers had little difficulty in administering the exercise, 44% said that the standardisation exercises did not necessarily identify which moderators would be effective and credible.

The most frequently identified reason for this was that the exercise required candidates to assess only one piece of work from a particular pupil rather than a range of work (43%). A number of respondents said that this made it easier to argue the level. Other managers felt that the exercise failed to mirror the actual moderation process in other ways (19%), because, for example, real moderation involves discussion and is not just a test. Linked to these issues were responses about the standardisation exercise being too difficult (11%). Some moderation managers believed this meant that excellent people did not pass because borderline cases and levelling are not an exact science.

Another reason given for why the standardisation exercise did not always identify the most effective and credible moderators was that other important skills such as interpersonal and communication skills, were not assessed through the exercise (36%).

Table 3.7 Reasons why standardisation exercise did not always identify the most effective and credible moderators

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	%
Does not mirror actual process – assesses one piece of a pupil’s work rather than a range	[43]
Only assesses one skill others are important too	[36]
Does not mirror actual process – other ways	[19]
Too difficult	[11]
Not rigorous/comprehensive enough	[6]
There are other ways better to identify candidates	[4]
Other	[15]
<i>Base</i>	47

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

The moderators themselves were more optimistic about the ability of the exercises to identify effective and credible moderators. Eighty-five per cent thought that they represented an appropriate approach. However 45% thought that some improvements could be made to the exercises.

Of the moderators who thought that improvements could be made, over half thought that the standardisation exercises should be based on a range of work rather than one piece per pupil (55%). Twelve per cent thought that borderline cases could be handled better (for example, through only including work that had a clear level or through providing more materials and exemplification of borderlines). Eleven per cent thought that the exercise should ask for sub-levels or that more or better examples on sub-levels should be provided.

Table 3.8 Moderators’ suggestions for improving the standardisation exercise

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	%
Range of work rather than one piece per pupil	55
Better handling of borderline cases	12
Inclusion of sub-levels in assessment and/or example materials	11
Other	27
<i>Base</i>	219

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

3.5 Other quality assurance

We saw in Section 3.4.4 that a substantial proportion of moderation managers were concerned that the standardisation exercises alone do not identify the most effective and credible moderators. It is not surprising therefore that a large majority of managers (83%) used other methods to assure the quality of their team of moderators.

Almost half of all moderation managers (43%) reported that they had provided additional training for their recruits such as running through additional levelling exercises, role plays, sessions to cover aspects of moderation process other than levelling such as managing the process or conflict resolution etc. Thirty-seven per cent provided face-to-face support or supervision in schools, either during the initial period of KS2 moderation, or as a quality assurance mechanism throughout the moderation process. This could take the form of LA consultants shadowing moderations in schools, or LA staff attending school feedback sessions. Other approaches were used by less than one-fifth of managers.

Table 3.9 Processes to quality assure team of moderators	
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>	
	%
Put on additional training	43
LA face-to-face support/supervision in schools	37
Built-in quality assurance or review mechanisms or processes	18
Additional criteria pre-set for candidates	13
Local knowledge	13
Interviewing candidates and/or asked for written applications/ references	10
Moderators working in pairs	9
Other	8
<i>Base</i>	<i>92</i>

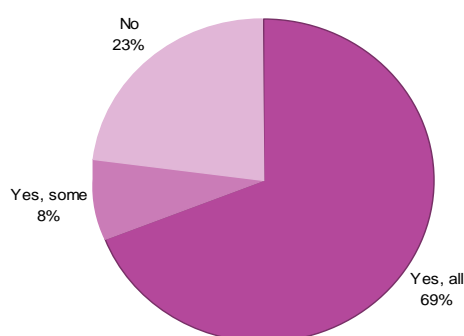
Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

3.6 Moderators working in pairs

Some LA managers regarded moderators working in pairs as an explicit mechanism for quality assurance as shown in Figure 2.3. This was common practice in many local authorities. Sixty-nine per cent took this approach with all their moderation visits and a small proportion (eight per cent) took this approach in some instances.

Figure 3:3 Whether moderators in the local authority worked in pairs

Base: Moderation managers (112)



When looking at paired moderation by the number of primary schools in the local authority there seems to be, overall, a tendency for paired moderation to be more common the fewer primary schools there are in the authority. An explanation might be that local authorities with fewer primary schools to be moderated had a smaller task to complete, overall, and could therefore afford the ‘luxury’ of moderators working in pairs for the KS2 moderation.

Table 3.10 Paired moderation by number of primary schools in LA

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	Number of primary schools in LA		
	1 to 57	58 to 95	96 to 362
Working in pairs			
	%	%	%
Yes, all	87	72	47
Yes, some	8	3	13
No	5	25	40
Base	37	36	38

3.7 Ways of allocating moderators to schools

LA managers typically tried to allocate moderators to schools that they had no previous working relationship with in order to avoid conflicts of interest (50% reported this unprompted [Table 3.11] and 88% reported this when prompted). Others employed pragmatic criteria, for example, 28% considered geography and 17% considered the relative availability of schools and moderators. Twenty-two per cent of managers mentioned local knowledge, which had, for example, enabled the matching of moderators to the context of schools.

Table 3.11 Ways of allocating moderators to schools

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	%
<i>No prior relationship with school/ no conflicts of interest</i>	50
<i>Geographical criteria</i>	28
<i>Driven by local knowledge (e.g. matching moderators to school context)</i>	22
<i>Availability of moderators and schools</i>	17
<i>By level or type of experience of moderators</i>	14
<i>Careful consideration of how to pair moderators</i>	13
<i>To ensure moderators moderated a range of schools (e.g. different types and sizes)</i>	6
<i>By moderators' preferences</i>	6
<i>Prior relationship with school – teachers and LA consultants</i>	1
<i>Other</i>	11
<i>Base</i>	111

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

4 Information, guidance and training

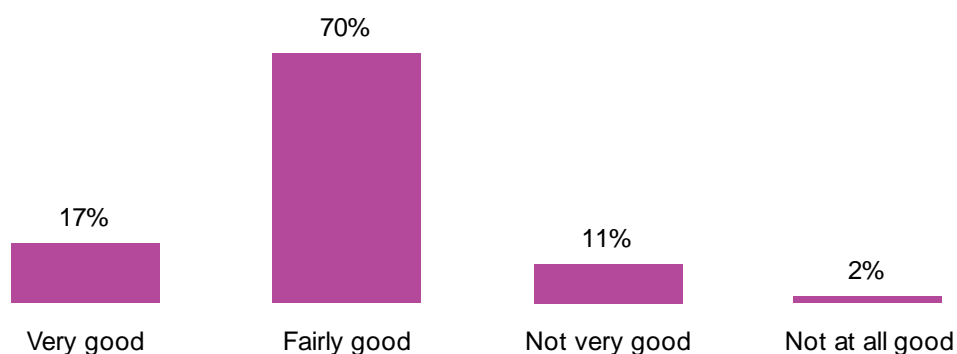
4.1 Quality of information, guidance and support

Moderation managers

The majority (87%) of local authority moderation managers (Figure 4:1) thought the information, guidance and support provided for the KS2 moderation process was good ('very good' or 'fairly good'). A very small minority (2%) of the managers reported issues with the support provided. The suggestions for improvements to the guidance and support (Section 3.2) provide a sense of what the concerns were.

Figure 4:1 Quality of information, guidance and support

Base: Moderation managers (111)



However, timeliness of the information for the KS2 moderation appeared to be a concern for the large majority of managers with 80% saying that it had been provided too late and only 21% saying that it had arrived at about the right time.

Schools

The majority of Headteachers (Table 4.1) felt that the information, guidance, and support they received from DfE (including the Standards and Testing Agency) was 'very' or 'fairly good' (68%). However 23% felt that it was 'not very good' or 'not at all good'.

The information, guidance and support they received from the LA was perceived to be better with 88% of Headteachers reporting that it was 'very good' or 'fairly good' and only 11% reporting that it was 'not very good' or 'not at all good'.

The majority of Year 6 lead teachers were similarly positive about the information, guidance and support that they received. Some 88% said that it was very good or fairly good.

Table 4.1 Quality of the information, guidance and support that Headteachers received

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers and Year 6 leads

	<i>Headteacher</i>			<i>Year 6 lead</i>
	DfE	LA	Other	All
	%	%	%	%
Very good	16	40	7	38
Fairly good	52	48	5	51
Not very good	16	8	+	10
Not at all good	7	3	0	2
Not applicable	8	1	88	N/A
<i>Base</i>	<i>856</i>	<i>859</i>	<i>860</i>	<i>870</i>

Note: The percentages do not total 100 due to rounding

Twelve per cent of schools received information, guidance or support from other sources and these other sources were generally perceived to be 'good' or 'very good'.

The most frequently mentioned other source of information for Headteachers (Table 4.2) was a discussion with moderators, for example, where a teacher at school or in the school cluster was a moderator, or in some cases being a moderator themselves (34%).

Table 4.2 Headteachers' other sources of information

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers

	%
Discussion with a moderator or through being a moderator themselves.	34
Discussion with other colleagues at their school.	15
Website / online / Internet / online forum / online support.	13
Cluster meeting of schools or colleagues from local cluster.	11
Professional associations, bodies, teaching networks, support services, Union	8
Other	28
<i>Base</i>	<i>110</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

Moderators

The majority of moderators (Table 4.3) felt that the information, guidance, and support they received from DfE (including the Standard and Testing Agency) and the LA was 'very' or 'fairly useful' (92% and 98% respectively).

Table 4.3 Quality of the information, guidance and support that moderators received

Source: KS2 survey of moderators

	<i>DfE</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>Other</i>
	%	%	%
Very useful	39	81	9
Fairly useful	53	17	5
Not very useful	6	1	+
Not at all useful	1	0	0
Not applicable	1	1	86
<i>Base</i>	<i>505</i>	<i>503</i>	<i>496</i>

Fourteen per cent of moderators received information, guidance or support from other sources and these other sources were generally perceived to be very or fairly useful.

The most frequent types of ‘other’ sources of information and guidance for moderators (Table 4.4) were colleagues, peers, and other moderators (42%). Thirty-nine per cent had also sought further guidance on levelling - about a quarter said this had been APP standards files (24%).

Table 4.4 Moderators’ other sources of information

Source: KS2 survey of moderators

	%
Peers/colleagues/other teachers/moderators – individual and networks	42
APP (e.g. APP grids, standards files, level descriptors)	24
Information on national standards/level descriptors/ exemplification (unspecified source)	15
Other local authorities	6
On-line (unspecific source)	6
Other	16
<i>Base</i>	<i>62</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

4.2 Improving information, guidance and support

The large majority (83%) of moderation managers thought that there was scope to improve the information, guidance and support that was provided for the moderation process.

Their key suggestions for improvements were to provide more timely information (52%) and information that is clear and consistent on the processes it refers to (39%). For instance, a number of managers would have preferred information that was delivered as one document or at one point in time; information that was definitive and would then not change; and information that clearly laid out the rationale for all requirements.

Table 4.5 LA managers' suggestions for improving information and guidance

<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>	
	%
More timely	52
More clarity and consistency of processes	38
Better exemplification	8
More/better guidance and/or training for moderators	7
More/better guidance to schools/teachers on the evidence they have to provide	7
More synthesised/simplified information and guidance	5
More clarity/guidance on moderator recruitment	5
More/better guidance on appeals/resolving disagreements	4
Improvements to the helpline	4
More/better guidance on responsibilities of the LA	3
Involvement of practitioners in drafting guidance	2
More/better guidance relating to borderline cases/issues/decisions	2
Other	20
<i>Base</i>	92

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

The improvements suggested by Headteachers and Year 6 teachers are shown in Table 4.6 below. These reflect the moderation managers' suggestions with better timeliness of information being the most frequent suggestion (28%).

Table 4.6 Headteachers' and Year 6 teachers' suggestions for improving information and guidance

<i>Source: KS2 survey of schools</i>	
	%
More timely / earlier / more notice	28
Clearer / more / better information about what happens on the day	7
Clearer / more / better information about expectations of teachers	7
Clearer information about pupil selection / pupil sample	7
Clearer information about feedback provided	1
More / better guidance on tools used to assess children	3
More / better guidance for schools on evidence they need to provide	16
Improvements to communications & website	4
Clearer / more / better information in general / unspecified	13
Other	26
<i>Base</i>	1057

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

Understanding KS2 moderation

Overall, there was a high level of understanding about what was required of moderation managers for the KS2 moderation. The percentiles show that the distributions are heavily skewed towards the right (that means the higher values on a scale from one to ten). There is, however, room for improvement (Table 4.7). The aspect of the KS2 moderation about which there was the least certainty was moderator training where moderation managers scored their understanding as 6.6 out of 10 on average.

Table 4.7 Moderation managers' levels of understanding of the KS2 moderation process (scale 1 to 10, 10 is 'fully understood')

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>	<i>Bases</i>
... the approach you needed to take to recruit moderators	8.3	8	9	10	110
... how best to train the moderators	6.6	5	7	9	111
... what guidance you needed to provide to schools about the moderation visit	7.6	7	8	9	111
... what action to take following the moderator's feedback	7.2	6	8	9	119
... how to resolve situations where a school disagreed with the moderator's decisions	7.2	5	8	10	110

Only 17% of moderation managers identified other aspects of the moderation process that they were not clear about.

Headteachers felt that they had a very good understanding of the moderation process before it took place (Table 4.8). The least well understood aspect of the process was how to respond if the moderator disagreed with the school's assessments (mean 7.4; median 8).

Table 4.8 Headteachers' levels of understanding of the KS2 moderation process (scale 1 to 10)

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>	<i>Base</i>
... the type of extent of preparation required for the moderation visit	8.4	8	9	10	868
... what the moderation visit would entail	8.4	8	9	10	868
... how the moderator would select which pupils' assessments to moderate	7.9	7	8	10	864
... the type or extent of evidence that would be required by the moderator	8.3	7	9	10	866
... how Year 6 teachers would be involved during the moderation visit	8.2	7	9	10	868
... what action to take following the moderator's feedback	8.0	7	9	10	863
... how to respond if the moderator disagreed with the school's assessments	7.4	5	8	10	854

Seven per cent of schools said that there were other aspects of the moderation process that they did not understand. However their verbatim answers largely overlapped with elements of the moderation process that were discussed explicitly in Table 4.8 and so are not shown separately here.

4.3 Training and guidance materials provided by the Local Authority

4.3.1 Training or guidance provided to moderators

The majority of managers said that they had run training sessions with their team of moderators (62%). Where moderation managers commented on the content of this training it often involved guidance on levelling. Thirty-seven per cent said this had been the content of the training and 36% said this had been the nature of the guidance that they had provided.

Table 4.9 Type of training and guidance provided to recruited moderators

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	%
Training days, workshops or sessions	62
Content of training: related to making assessments of pupils' work	37
Materials: related to making assessments of pupils' work	36
Materials: other/unspecified	24
Materials: DfE materials or guidance	20
Materials: synthesised materials on moderation process	17
Content of training: organisational process and procedures	15
Materials: LA protocols/LA guidance on moderation visits	11
Materials: templates/ pro-formas	11
Content of training: reporting	8
Content of training: other/unspecified	6
Paired visits/shadowing/practice sessions in schools	5
De-briefing/sharing learning from first visits	4
Content of training: dealing with problems/resolving issues	4
Other	7
<i>Base</i>	<i>111</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

4.3.2 Training or guidance provided to schools

More typically schools were provided with materials rather than face-to-face training (Table 4.10). However just under a third of managers said they had run training days, workshops or sessions for schools (32%).

Table 4.10 Type of training and guidance provided to schools

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	%
Materials: related to making assessments of pupils' work	41
Materials: DfE materials or guidance	37
Materials: on organisational process and procedures	36
Training days, workshops or sessions	32
Materials: other/unspecified	22
Content of training: related to making assessments of pupils' work	11
Materials: templates/pro-formas	11
Access to/provision of individual support	11
Materials: LA protocols/LA guidance on moderation visits	7
Content of training: organisational process and procedures	5
Content of training: other/unspecified	1
Other	9
<i>Base</i>	<i>111</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

4.4 Moderators' perspectives on training

On average the moderators had 6 hours training on how to conduct the moderation visits (Table 4.11). However this varied between different moderators with 25% of moderators having fewer than 3 hours training and 25% spending more than 8.

Table 4.11 Hours moderators spent training for the KS2 moderation

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>	<i>Base</i>
Total number of hours in training	6	3	5	8	483

Tables 3.12 shows how training affected levels of confidence in conducting KS2 moderation, and understanding of KS2 moderation processes. The training moderators received prior to conducting the moderation visit improved their confidence since before the training they rated their confidence as 6.5 out of 10 whereas they rated it as 9.0 out of 10 after the training.

Table 4.12 Moderator confidence before and after training.*Source: KS2 survey of moderators*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>	<i>Base</i>
Before training	6.5	5	7	8	507
After training	9.0	9	9	10	505

Similarly, the training improved moderators' understanding of the moderation process (Table 4.13) - they rated their understanding as 6.6 out of 10 before the training and 9.5 out of 10 after the training.

Table 4.13 Moderator understanding before and after training.*Source: KS2 survey of moderators*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>	<i>Base</i>
Before training	6.6	5	7	8	507
After training	9.5	9	10	10	505

There were no significant differences in how spending more or less time training improved understanding and confidence of moderators.

5 The moderation process

5.1 Overview

On average local authorities carried out an external moderation of Key Stage 2 writing assessments in 25 schools and typically they used a team of ten moderators.

According to the moderation managers, the average number schools that each moderator visited was 2.8 (see Table 5.1). However, this varied according to the size of the local authority. Moderators who worked in large local authorities typically visited more schools than moderators who worked in smaller local authorities (3.5 schools per moderator compared with 2 schools per moderator).

Table 5.1 Number of schools per moderator				
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers and moderators</i>				
	LA			Moderator
	Small LAs (1-67 primary schools)	Large LAs (68-362 primary schools)	All LAs	
Mean	[2.0]	3.5	2.8	3.9
25 th percentile	[1.0]	2.2	1.5	2.0
50 th percentile	[1.6]	3.0	2.5	3.0
75 th percentile	[2.5]	4.4	3.6	5.0
Base	48	62	110	506

Moderators themselves reported that they visited 3.9 schools on average (see Table 5.1). In total they moderated 28.9 assessments of pupil's writing which equates to 8.0 assessments per school (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Number of assessments moderated		
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderators</i>		
	Total per moderator	Total per school
Mean	28.9	8.0
25 th percentile	15.0	5.4
50 th percentile	24.0	7.0
75 th percentile	36.3	9.7
Base	482	479

The moderation visits took place over an average of 23.7 days, over a period from the 23rd of April for the first moderation visit, to the 19th of July for the last moderation visit. However the visits typically took place over a shorter time period in small local authorities compared with larger authorities (17 days compared with 28.9, see Table 5.4). Three local authorities had completed their moderation visits by the end of May. Two of these LAs had started their

moderation visits in May (the 18th and 23rd, respectively). One LA had started moderation visits on the 23rd of April and completed visits on the 31st of May.

Table 5.3 Number of schools per moderator

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

Month of last moderation visit	Month of first moderation visit				
	April	May	June	July	All (month of last visit)
	%	%	%	%	%
May	50	4	0	0	3
June	50	64	66	0	64
July	0	32	35	100	33
<i>Base</i>	2	50	55	1	108

Table 5.4 Duration of the moderation process

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	LA		
	Small LAs	Large LAs	All LAs
Mean	[17.0]	28.9	23.7
25 th percentile	[8.0]	17.5	12.3
50 th percentile	[14.0]	26.0	18.0
75 th percentile	[24.0]	38.5	35.0
<i>Base</i>	47	61	108

5.2 Preparations

Almost all schools made the core preparations that the guidance documents specified. For instance, 97% made sure that an appropriate space was available for the moderators to use during the visit; 98% prepared an initial list of teacher assessments; 99% prepared access to exercise books and other written work; and 95-98% made sure that staff would be available for discussions with the moderator (see Table 5.5).

The moderation guidance documents explicitly stated that schools were not required to construct portfolios of pupils' work. However 37% said that they created portfolios nevertheless. This may reflect school choice. Alternatively it may represent a misunderstanding of what is meant by a portfolio of work.

Table 5.5 What preparations schools made and moderators used

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers

	<i>Prepared</i>	<i>Used</i>
	<i>%</i>	
An appropriate space for the moderator to use during their visit	97	N/A
A list of the initial teacher assessments for Year 6 pupils	98	96
A list of any internally marked writing test results for Year 6 pupils	84	79
A list of any externally marked writing test results for Year 6 pupils	10	9
Access to Year 6 exercise books and other work	99	98
Portfolios of Year 6 pupils' work	37	41
Year 6 teachers' availability for discussion	98	95
Senior Management's availability for discussion	95	88
Other	14	7
<i>Base</i>	<i>875</i>	<i>871</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

Schools were required to administer a writing test, but could choose whether to mark it internally or externally; a nationally representative 10% sample was required to have the test externally marked. The small proportion of externally-marked writing tests available to moderators reflects that fact that only 26% of schools had the tests externally marked, and the national sample was excluded from the schools to be moderated.

The proportions of Headteachers who said that moderators made use of particular preparations are very similar to the proportions of Headteachers that reported that those preparations had been made. It seems that in all instances moderators made use of the preparations that schools had made.

The picture presented by Headteachers is consistent with that of the moderators (see Table 5.7). The core preparations that the guidance documents specified had almost always been made. For instance, 87% of moderators said that all the schools they visited had set aside an appropriate space for the moderation visit. Moreover, moderators typically felt that this space was always or usually quiet and private enough (both 98%, see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 Whether the space available for the moderation was sufficiently quiet and private

Source: KS2 survey of moderators

	<i>Quiet</i>	<i>Private</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Always	77	76
Usually	21	22
Sometimes	2	2
Never	0	+
<i>Base</i>	<i>507</i>	<i>506</i>

The types of preparation that had not been made also reflect the picture presented by Headteachers. Namely 26% of moderators said that schools had only sometimes or never prepared any internally marked writing test results and 69% said that this was the case for externally marked writing test results. As previously discussed, this may reflect the fact that some schools would not have carried out such tests and would therefore not have had any results to provide.

Table 5.7 How often schools had made the necessary preparations for the moderation visit

Source: KS2 survey of moderators

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Base</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
An appropriate space for the moderator to use during their visit	87	12	1	+	506
A list of the initial teacher assessments for Year 6 pupils	80	16	4	+	507
A list of any internally marked writing test results for Year 6 pupils	45	28	21	5	507
A list of any externally marked writing test results for Year 6 pupils	18	12	12	57	453
Access to Year 6 exercise books and other work	81	16	2	0	507
Year 6 teachers' availability for discussion	86	12	2	+	506
Senior Management's availability for discussion	79	16	4	+	506

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

Although most schools had made the appropriate preparations, 28% of moderators felt that there were some other areas in which schools were not fully prepared. For instance one-third of moderators reported that the range of evidence that they were provided with to justify teachers' writing assessments was insufficient (see Table 5.8). Section 5.2.1 covers this issue in more detail.

Table 5.8 Other ways in which schools were unprepared

Source: KS2 survey of moderators

	<i>%</i>
The range of evidence provided for assessments was insufficient	33
School seemed generally unprepared	17
Externally marked test results were not available	16
School lacked knowledge about assessment and/or the moderation process	15
Other	22
<i>Base</i>	<i>144</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

5.2.1 Evidence available during the visits

Table 5.9 shows the extent to which moderators were able to use different kinds of evidence for teachers' writing assessments. The moderators were almost always able to look at a

range of work that covered all Year 6 classes in the school (91%) and that covered pupils with a range of abilities (94%).

However written work in a range of forms for different purposes and audiences was available less consistently. Fifty-two per cent said that this was always available but 37% said that it was usually (but not always) available and ten per cent said that it was only available sometimes. In addition only 43% of moderators felt that they always had a broad enough range of work to evidence teachers' judgements.

The least consistently available evidence was written work from a range of subjects. Thirty per cent of moderators said that this was only available sometimes or was never available.

Table 5.9 Evidence available to moderators

<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderators</i>					
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Base</i>
	%	%	%	%	
Work covering all Year 6 classes in the school	91	8	1	+	509
Work from pupils with a range of abilities	94	6	1	0	509
Work from a range of subjects	34	36	27	3	508
Work in a range of forms for different purposes and audiences	52	37	10	+	508
A broad enough range of work to evidence teachers' judgements	43	50	7	+	509
All other necessary information	73	25	1	+	509

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

Other information that the moderators would have liked to have included: more comprehensive evidence (42%); evidence with more contextual information - for example, the date it was completed or an indication as to whether the case was considered borderline (25%) and information about sub-level assessment (6%, see Table 5.10).

Table 5.10 Other evidence that moderators would have liked to have had

<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderators</i>	
	%
More comprehensive evidence	42
Evidence with more indicators (e.g. a date; an indication of whether the case was borderline)	25
Inclusion of sub-levels	6
Other	34
<i>Base</i>	118

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

5.3 Pupil selection

Moderators selected pupils in different ways. Over half the moderators purposively selected pupils to cover a range of levels (51%). Over one-third started by selecting borderline cases and then expanded to include pupils who were more securely in the middle of a level (36%). Other methods were used by one-fifth of moderators or fewer.

Table 5.11 Methods of pupil selection

Source: KS2 survey of moderators

	%
Pupil ability – levels (e.g. to cover full range of levels)	51
Pupil ability – borderline cases (e.g. started from borderline cases and then expanded)	36
Pupil characteristics (e.g. balancing gender)	19
In discussion with school staff	14
Random selection	13
Selected to cover pupils whose writing covered a range of genres and contexts	12
Pupil selection done by LA	5
Based on contrasting borderline versus secure cases	4
Pupil ability – other aspects (e.g. whether child had made much progress or not)	4
Based on cases where there had been previous discrepancies in assessments	1
Other	8
<i>Base</i>	475

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

5.4 Perceptions of burden and challenges

5.4.1 Burden

Headteachers and Year 6 leads were asked to rate the burden they felt was associated with the moderation process and with the assessment of KS2 writing in previous years. Both felt that the moderation process was only moderately burdensome (mean 4.4 and 4.6 out of 10 for ‘very burdensome’ respectively; median 4).

Table 5.12 Perception of burden due to the moderation process – scale of 1 to 10 with 1 ‘not at all burdensome’ and 10 ‘very burdensome’

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers and Year 6 leads

	<i>Headteachers</i>		<i>Year 6 leads</i>	
	<i>2011/2012</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>2011/2012</i>	<i>Previous</i>
	%	%	%	%
Mean	4.4	4.0	4.6	3.9
25th percentile	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
50th percentile	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
75th percentile	7.0	5.0	7.0	5.0
<i>Base</i>	865	795	869	792

Both Headteachers and Year 6 leads typically felt that the moderation process was more burdensome than the externally-marked Key Stage 2 writing tests used in previous years.

However since this was the first year that the moderation process had been conducted it is difficult to tell whether this difference is due to a genuine increase in burden or an increase in burden due to teachers' unfamiliarity with the process. What is perhaps more telling is that the vast majority of Headteachers, Year 6 lead teachers and moderators felt that the moderation process took about the right amount of time to accommodate and administer (89%, 88% and 96% respectively, see Table 5.13)

Table 5.13 Was the time take to accommodate and administer the moderation process...

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers and Year 6 leads

	<i>Headteacher</i>	<i>Year 6 lead</i>	<i>Moderator</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
... too much	10	10	1
... about right	89	88	96
... too little	2	2	3
<i>Base</i>	<i>868</i>	<i>871</i>	<i>504</i>

Note: The percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Similarly, nine out of ten Headteachers and Year 6 lead teachers thought that Year 6 teachers had the right level of involvement with the moderation process (91% and 90% respectively).

Table 5.14 Perceptions regarding the level of involvement of Year 6 teachers

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers and Year 6 leads

	<i>Headteacher</i>	<i>Year 6 lead</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Too much	5	5
About right	91	90
Too little	4	5
<i>Base</i>	<i>874</i>	<i>870</i>

5.4.2 Challenges

Although the moderation process that was implemented for Key Stage 2 writing assessments was modelled on the system in place for Key Stage 1 assessment, there were a number of important differences. Twenty-nine per cent of moderation managers felt that these differences between the processes caused them some difficulties. The nature of these difficulties is shown in Table 5.15.

Forty-one per cent of moderation managers felt that it caused some problems with their relationship with schools (e.g. because the timescale for the moderation process was short or because some schools were moderated for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2). Twenty-five per cent felt that the practical differences posed them problems in terms of

implementation and a further 25% thought that differences had caused some level of confusion.

Table 5.15 Challenges that arose through differing processes for EYFS and KS1

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	%
Relationship problems with schools	[41]
Practical problems of implementing and carrying out process within the short time frame	[25]
Confusion amongst parties involved	[25]
Managing schools' expectations, preparedness and queries	[9]
Managing the different processes for the different assessments	[9]
Other	[28]
<i>Base</i>	<i>32</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

6 Cost of the moderation process

6.1 Time spent

6.1.1 Time spent on different tasks

Moderation managers

The table below shows the number of hours that local authorities have spent on the different aspects of the KS2 moderation process and overall. On average moderation managers spent 88.8 hours on the moderation process. However, large local authorities typically spent more time than small local authorities (116.6 hours compared with 55.7 hours).

Table 6.1 Hours moderation managers spent on different tasks					
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>					
	<i>Recruitment and standardisation exercises</i>	<i>Drafting guidance and providing support</i>	<i>Dealing with feedback</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Small Las					
Mean	[13.3]	[12.6]	[11.4]	[18.5]	[55.7]
25th percentile	[6.0]	[4.0]	[4.5]	[4.3]	[26.5]
50th percentile	[10.0]	[10.0]	[9.0]	[10.0]	[44.5]
75th percentile	[17.0]	[15.5]	[16.0]	[23.3]	[69.0]
Large Las					
Mean	22.4	21.3	24.0	47.9	116.6
25th percentile	10.0	6.0	6.0	10.0	41.0
50th percentile	15.0	10.0	14.0	20.0	84.0
75th percentile	28.5	22.0	28.0	45.5	152.5
All Las					
Mean	18.3	17.4	18.3	34.4	88.8
25th percentile	8.0	4.0	5.3	5.0	32.5
50th percentile	14.0	10.0	11.0	15.0	62.0
75th percentile	21.0	20.0	20.0	36.5	104.5
Bases					
<i>Base (small LAs)</i>	49	49	49	48	48
<i>Base (large LAs)</i>	58	59	59	57	57
<i>Base (all LAs)</i>	107	108	108	105	105

Overall local authorities spent:

- 18.3 hours on the recruitment of moderators and administration of the standardisation exercises;
- 17.4 hours drafting guidance and supporting schools and moderators;
- 18.3. hours dealing with feedback; and
- 34.4 hours on other tasks (typically general administration and organisation).

Moderators

We saw in Chapter 4 that moderators spent an average of 6 hours training to undertake the moderation visits. Here we look at the time they spent in each school.

On average moderators spent 5.9 hours per moderation visit. This was made up of 1.3 hours preparation, 3.4 hours in the school, and 1.2 hours providing a report.

There were no differences in the time moderators spent in schools or spent on each moderation visit overall between those who worked in pairs or individually.

Table 6.2 Hours moderators spent on different tasks

Source: KS2 survey of moderators

	<i>Preparing for the visits</i>	<i>On the visits</i>	<i>Providing reports</i>	<i>Total</i>
Everyone paired				
Mean	1.2	3.5	1.2	5.8
25th percentile	1.0	3.0	1.0	5.0
50th percentile	1.0	3.0	1.0	5.0
75th percentile	1.0	4.0	1.0	6.0
Some paired				
Mean	[1.3]	[3.7]	[1.3]	[6.3]
25th percentile	[1.0]	[3.0]	[1.0]	[5.0]
50th percentile	[1.0]	[4.0]	[1.0]	[6.0]
75th percentile	[1.8]	[4.0]	[2.0]	[7.0]
None paired				
Mean	1.3	3.3	1.4	6.0
25th percentile	1.0	3.0	1.0	5.0
50th percentile	1.0	3.0	1.0	6.0
75th percentile	1.0	4.0	2.0	6.0
All moderators				
Mean	1.3	3.4	1.2	5.9
25th percentile	1.0	3.0	1.0	5.0
50th percentile	1.0	3.0	1.0	5.0
75th percentile	1.0	4.0	1.0	6.0
Bases				
<i>Base (everyone paired)</i>	291	308	278	271
<i>Base (some paired)</i>	40	39	39	38

<i>Base (none paired)</i>	100	101	99	99
<i>Base (all moderators)</i>	431	448	416	408

In addition to the time that moderators spent moderating each school, they spent an average of 1.3 hours on other tasks associated with the moderation process. The main tasks that moderators spent this extra time on included: time spent on training and quality control for levelling (35%); general administration (27%) and making general preparations for undertaking the moderation process (20%).

Table 6.3 Other tasks moderators spent time on	
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderators</i>	
	%
Training and quality control for levelling	35
General administration	27
Preparing for moderation visits	20
Other communication and dissemination activities	19
Briefing and providing feedback to schools	13
Other	4
<i>Base</i>	<i>150</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

Schools

Schools spent an average of 14.1 hours on the moderation process. This was mainly spent on preparatory work (2.2 hours were spent on preparatory training and 5.2 hours were spent making other preparations for the moderation visit).

While this might seem like a relatively long time to spend on the moderation process – it should be noted that some of these tasks represent general good teacher assessment practice and were not necessarily the result of being selected for a visit. For example, attending meetings with other schools to improve teachers' assessment of writing was not part of the external moderation visit process. Also schools reported that they only spent a modest amount of time with the moderator during the visit (2.2 hours) making this aspect of the process relatively undemanding.

Table 6.4 How many hours were spent on different elements of the moderation visit					
<i>Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers</i>					
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>	<i>Base</i>
At meetings with other schools	2.8	0.0	2.0	4.0	851
Doing preparatory training	2.2	0.0	1.0	3.0	851
Doing any other preparation for the moderation visit	5.2	2.0	3.0	6.0	853
Working with the moderator during their visit	2.2	1.0	2.0	3.0	857
Providing reports to the LA	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	842
Other	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	822

Table 6.4 How many hours were spent on different elements of the moderation visit

Total	14.1	6.0	11.0	18.0	867
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Schools reported that they spent 1.4 hours on other tasks associated with the moderation process. Mainly these were carrying out internal moderation (36%) and collating evidence of teachers' assessments (28%).

Table 6.5 Other tasks schools spent time on

<i>Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers</i>	
	%
Internal moderation	36
Collating, preparing, collecting or organising evidence	28
Levelling and marking	17
General tasks such as admin staff meetings, discussions etc.	14
Tracking, assessments etc	4
Other	14
<i>Base</i>	<i>163</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

6.1.2 Time spent by different local authority staff members

A relatively small proportion of the time that the local authority spent on the moderation process was spent by administrative staff (15.9 hours compared with 46.6 hours spent by other staff members).

Table 6.6 Hours spent by administrative staff or other staff in the local authority

<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>		
	<i>Administrative staff</i>	<i>Other staff</i>
Mean	15.9	46.6
25th percentile	0.0	1.0
50th percentile	6.0	25.0
75th percentile	15.0	60.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>107</i>

Likewise, the majority of time that schools spent on the moderation process was spent by teachers. Year 6 teachers spent an average of 4.9 hours on the moderation process compared with 3.1 hours spent by the Senior Management team, 2.5 hours spent by the Headteacher and 1.1 hours spent by other staff.

Table 6.7 Hours spent by different school staff

<i>Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers</i>	
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Table 6.7 Hours spent by different school staff

	<i>Headteacher</i>	<i>Senior Management team</i>	<i>Year 6 teachers</i>	<i>Other staff</i>
Mean	2.5	3.1	4.9	1.1
25th percentile	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
50th percentile	1.0	2.0	2.0	0.0
75th percentile	3.0	4.0	7.0	1.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>848</i>	<i>844</i>	<i>839</i>	<i>839</i>

6.1.3 Other influences on time spent

Set up time

Given that this was the first year that KS2 writing assessments have been externally moderated, it is important to look carefully at the time people spent on the moderation process because this may well include time taken for people to familiarise themselves with the process – much of this would not be required in future years. Indeed moderation managers felt that took account of 13.4 hours of the time they had spent on the moderation process (this equates to approximately 16% of the total time they had spent on the moderation process).

Overlap with other moderation processes

Likewise, some of the time that moderation managers spent on the KS2 moderation process may have been spent anyway on other moderation processes within the local authority. Moderation managers thought that this applied to a very small amount of time, 1.9 hours on average (which equates to approximately 3% of the total time they had spent on the moderation process).

With regards to schools – 30% had also had a moderation visit for Key Stage 1 teacher assessments. These schools estimated that they had spent an average of 20.3 hours on tasks that covered Key Stage 1 as well as Key Stage 2.

6.2 Money spent

6.2.1 Money spent on different aspects of the process

Moderation managers

The average amount of money that local authorities spent on the moderation process was £13,207. Unsurprisingly, larger local authorities spent more on average (£18,154 compared with £7,570).

Table 6.8 Money moderation managers spent on different tasks

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers

	<i>Recruiting and training moderators</i>	<i>Moderator wages and expenses</i>	<i>Paying for supply staff</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Small Las					
Mean	[1858]	[2336]	[2337]	[1108]	[7570]
25th percentile	[800]	[400]	[0]	[0]	[4900]
50th percentile	[1500]	[2000]	[2000]	[400]	[6500]
75th percentile	[2040]	[3600]	[4000]	[1300]	[10100]
Large Las					
Mean	3278	8351	3093	3171	18154
25th percentile	975	3275	0	100	8750
50th percentile	2000	6338	850	1000	14800
75th percentile	3744	12445	6000	4563	22088
All Las					
Mean	2632	5628	2749	2225	13207
25th percentile	900	1000	0	54	6200
50th percentile	1600	3620	1600	625	10000
75th percentile	3150	7800	5000	2937	16545
Bases					
<i>Base (small LAs)</i>	45	43	45	44	43
<i>Base (large LAs)</i>	54	52	54	52	49
<i>Base (all LAs)</i>	99	95	99	96	92

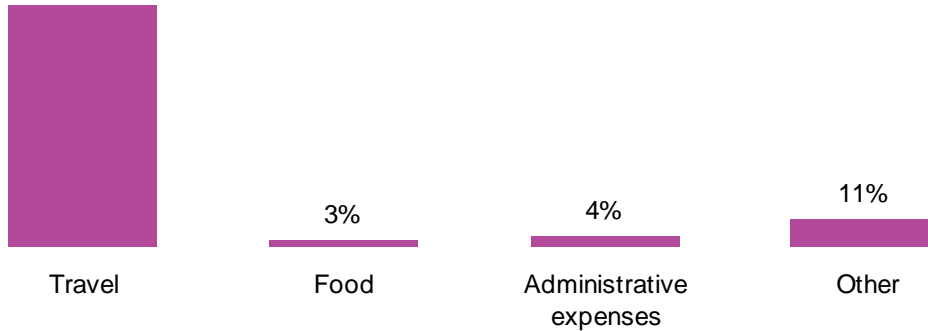
The most expensive category was moderator wages and expenses (£5,628 on average). Recruiting and training moderators typically cost local authorities £2,632 while paying for supply staff to cover moderators' absences typically cost £2,749. Local authorities spent an average of £2,225 on other things – these were mainly administrative expenses (photocopying, print, postage, etc).

Moderators

Fifty-six per cent of moderators said that they incurred expenses while undertaking the moderation visits. These were almost exclusively travel expenses (95%) (see Figure 6:1).

Figure 6:1 Type of expenses incurred by moderators

Base: Moderators incurring expenses (276)
95%

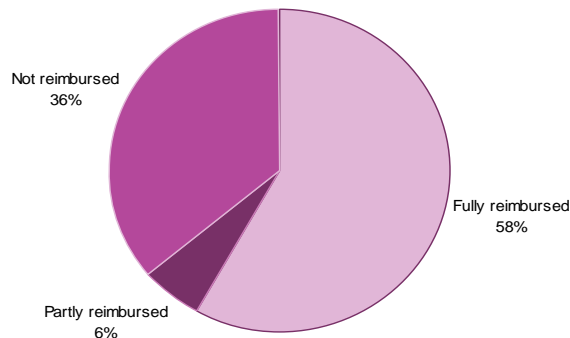


Note: The percentages do not total 100 because respondents could provide more than one answer

Over half of moderators were fully reimbursed for these expenses (58%) and six per cent of moderators were partly reimbursed for their expenses.

Figure 6:2 Whether moderators were reimbursed for their expenses

Base: Moderators incurring expenses (278)



The average cost of these additional expenses was £93. Of this £67 was typically reimbursed and £21 was not reimbursed.

Table 6.9 Money moderators spent through conducting moderation visits

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers

	Costs incurred	Costs not reimbursed	Costs reimbursed
Mean	93	21	67
25th percentile	10	0	0
50th percentile	27	0	8
75th percentile	60	15	38
Base	226	217	229

Schools

Sixty-two per cent of schools also incurred expenses as a result of the moderation process. These were typically wages, meals, and refreshments for supply staff (41%) and the costs of meetings with other schools (27%).

Table 6.10 Types of monetary expenses incurred by schools as a result of the moderation process

<i>Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers</i>	
	%
Wages, meals and refreshments for supply staff	41
Costs of meetings with other schools about the moderation process	27
Meals or refreshments for the moderator	19
Non-salary costs of preparatory staff training	17
Other	4
None	38
<i>Base</i>	<i>849 - 864</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

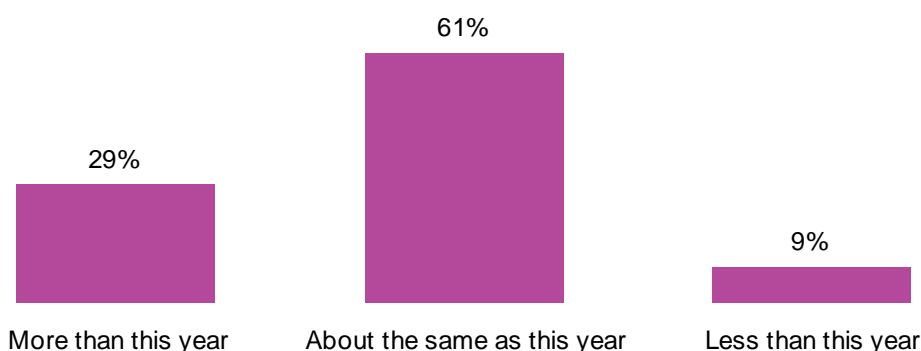
These additional expenses cost schools an average of £330.

6.2.2 Perceptions of future cost

The majority of moderation managers felt that the costs of the moderation process would be the same in 2013 as they had been in 2012 (61%, see Figure 6:3). However, 29% thought that they would rise.

Figure 6:3 Perception of future costs

Base: Moderation managers (106)



Note: The percentages do not total 100 because of rounding

The reasons that moderation managers felt that the costs would differ in 2013 can be seen in Table 6.11. The main reasons that moderation managers felt that costs might rise 2013 were that they intend to moderate more schools (41%) or that they intend to widen their

moderation team (34%). In contrast, the key reason that moderation managers felt that costs might fall was that recruitment and training costs would be lower (10%).

Table 6.11 Reasons for change to costs over time	
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>	
	%
Higher costs	
More schools at next KS2 moderation	[41]
Will be widening moderator team	[34]
Need to inform /engage /train all schools	[15]
Will introduce moderators working in pairs	[10]
Want to improve the process	[7]
Lower costs	
Lower recruitment and training costs	[10]
Less time required for setting up and administration	[7]
Fewer schools will be involved next time	[2]
Other	[12]
<i>Base</i>	<i>41</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

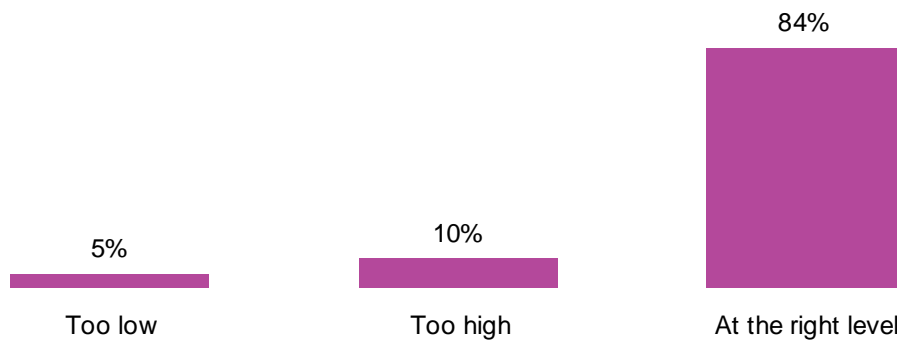
7 Moderation outcomes, reports and appeals

7.1 Changes to teacher assessments

We saw in Chapter 5 that moderators typically reviewed 28.9 pupils' work. Moderators usually concluded that the assessments had been made at the right level (84%). However, ten percent were judged to be too high and five per cent too low.

Figure 7:1 Proportions of judgments judged too low, right, and too high across all KS2 moderation

Base: Moderators (509)



Note: The percentages do not total 100 because of rounding

Table 7.1 shows the reasons that moderators recommended changing the assessments. Fifty-five per cent of moderators cited insufficient evidence as a reason for having recommended a change in the teacher's assessment. For example, they said that class work did not support the level that had been awarded, or that there was a lack of evidence to justify the higher level. A quarter also cited misguided application of levelling criteria by teachers, for example, teachers not having used correct level descriptors; teachers applying criteria in a way they should not be applied such as punctuation; or teachers undervaluing the content of a piece of work (24%).

Table 7.1 Reasons for recommending changes to assessments

Source: KS2 survey of moderators	
	%
Insufficient evidence available to support the teacher's assessment	55
Application of criteria	24
Correcting for teacher tendencies/bias, e.g. over-cautious/positive	10
Borderline cases	10
Correcting for teacher bias in relation to individual pupils	1
Other	7
Base	422

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

7.2 Evidence of teacher bias

Moderators were asked if they felt that teachers' assessments were always objective or whether other factors ever unduly influenced their judgements (Table 7.2).

Teachers' personal feelings about particular pupils were perceived by 62% of moderators' to influence teachers' assessments 'sometimes' or more often. The length of pupils' work was thought to influence teachers' assessments, in the same way, by 54% of moderators; and the presentation of work by 53%.

Moderators less commonly thought that teachers were influenced by whether pupils spoke English as an additional language (37% thought this was the case 'sometimes' or more often) or by a pupil's gender (only 13% thought that teachers were 'sometimes' or more often influenced by this).

Table 7.2 Extent of influence of other factors on teachers' assessments

Source: KS2 survey of moderators

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Base</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
Teachers' personal feelings about pupils	37	58	4	+	498
The length of pupils' written work	46	50	4	0	501
The presentation of pupils' written work	47	48	5	+	501
Pupils speaking English as an additional language	63	35	2	+	488
The pupil's gender	87	12	1	+	502

Note 1: These are row percentages

Note 2: The percentages do not total 100 because of rounding

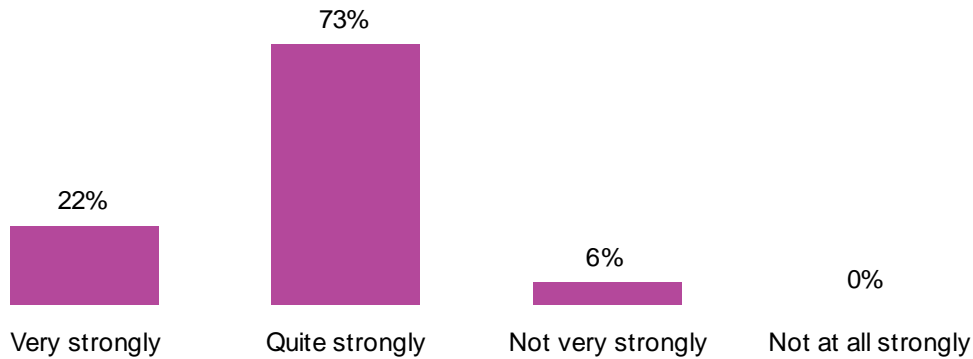
7.3 Availability of National Curriculum writing test results

Sixty seven per cent of moderators conducted visits in schools where National Curriculum writing test results were available.

Where this was the case 95% of moderators thought that the writing test results and teacher assessments were 'very' or 'quite' strongly correlated (Figure 7:2).

Figure 7:2 Correlation of teacher assessments with National Curriculum writing tests

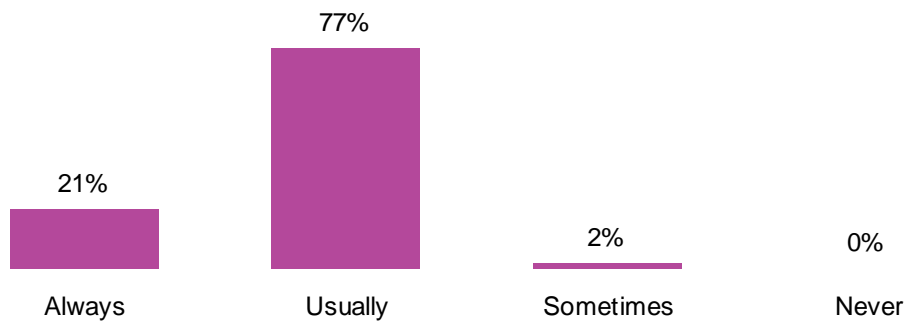
Base: Moderators (324)



Where moderators felt the correlation was strong, they were asked whether they felt that the evidence from pupils' written work justified this correlation and 98% of moderators felt that this was 'always' or 'usually' the case (Figure 7:3).

Figure 7:3 Whether the evidence from pupils' written work justified strong correlations

Base: Moderators (300)

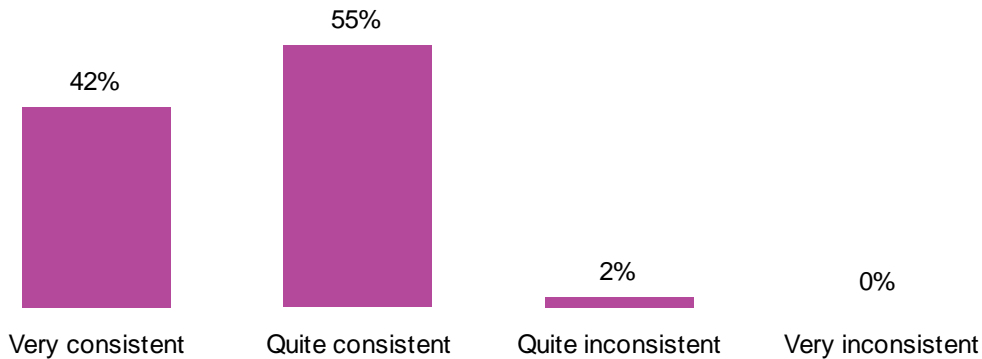


7.4 Consistency of judgements between schools

Moderators thought that the judgements made by teachers across different schools were largely consistent (42% thought they were very consistent and 55% thought they were quite consistent, see Figure 7:4).

Figure 7:4 Whether judgements made by teachers

Base: Moderators (488)

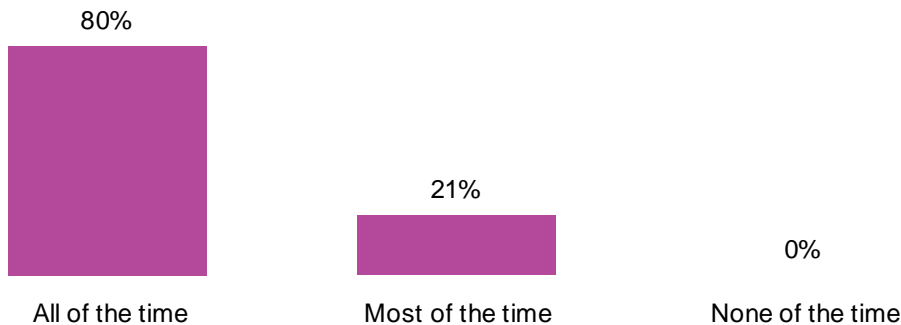


7.5 Quality of moderation reports

Moderators had to provide a report summarising their visit to the local authority moderation manager and to the school. Overall the returned moderation reports were up to the required standard, with 80% of managers saying this was the case all of the time, and a further 21% saying this was the case most of the time.

Figure 7:5 Whether the quality of the moderation reports were up to the required standard ...

Base: Moderation managers (112)



Note: The percentages do not total 100 because of rounding

Although moderation managers were asked about the nature of the problems they encountered with the reports, too few managers reported problems for this information to be reported quantitatively.

7.6 School disagreements

7.6.1 Contact with disagreeing schools

Nineteen per cent of moderation managers (22) were contacted by schools that disagreed with moderation decisions, on average by 1.5 schools. The number of schools contacting LA managers ranged from one to four schools.

7.6.2 Direction of final decision

Moderation managers who had to resolve disagreements reported that in the majority of cases they agreed with the moderator's decision (just under 70%). A further third of managers said that they agreed with both the school and the moderator equally.

Table 7.3 Agreeing with moderators or schools	
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers</i>	
	%
Moderator	[68]
School	[0]
Both equally	[32]
<i>Base</i>	22

The way that managers resolved these disagreements included undertaking further moderation or reviewing the decisions with the headteacher.

8 Perceptions of impact on school practice

The moderation process has the potential to change school practice in assessing pupils' writing. For that reason this chapter explores perceptions of whether the moderation process had any positive or negative affects

8.1 Changes in practice

Forty-four per cent of Headteachers and 51% of Year 6 lead teachers said that they changed the way they approached their teacher assessments in 2011/2012 compared with previous years.

The ways in which they changed their approach can be seen in Table 8.1. The most common change that schools made was to introduce more or more thorough moderation internally or across other local schools. In addition, 18% of Headteachers and 24% of Year 6 leads said that they had collated more evidence of teacher assessments to support their judgements.

Table 8.1 What aspects of the teacher assessments for KS2 writing schools approached differently this year

Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers and Year 6 leads

	<i>Headteacher</i>	<i>Year 6 lead</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Introduced more/ more regular/ more thorough internal moderation	28	27
Introduced cross school moderation/ cluster moderation	21	16
Collated more evidence of teacher assessments	18	24
Undertook more/ more regular/ more thorough teacher assessments	11	12
Undertook additional training	7	10
Developed closer working between teachers and Headteacher	6	2
Improved cross-curricular writing and moderation	5	3
Made more use of SATs materials	5	4
Improved accuracy of assessments and marking	5	5
Made more use of levelling (e.g. used more levels, levelled in more detail)	3	7
Increased pupil involvement in writing assessments	+	2
Other	12	14
<i>Base</i>	<i>325</i>	<i>419</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

8.2 Perceptions of impact

8.2.1 Positive impact

Eighty per cent of Headteachers and 82% of Year 6 lead teachers thought that there were some benefits or positive outcomes as a result of the moderation process.

These benefits and positive impacts can be seen in Table 8.2. The most common benefits that teachers and Headteachers reported were increased confidence in teachers' ability to make judgements, the assessments they arrived at, and their overall confidence in the process. In addition, 13% of Headteachers and 18% of Year 6 leads felt that the moderation process had improved the school's understanding of levelling and the evidence requirements. And 8% of Headteachers and 18% of Year 6 lead teachers said that the process had supported the school's implementation of good practice.

Table 8.2 What benefits or positive impacts occurred as a result of the moderation visit		
<i>Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers and Year 6 leads</i>		
	<i>Headteacher</i>	<i>Year 6 lead</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Gave school confidence in teachers' assessments	33	26
Gave school confidence over teachers' judgements	21	21
Improved schools' understanding of levelling and evidence required	13	18
Increased teachers' confidence	11	9
Supported schools' implementation of good practice	8	18
Provided reassurance that the school was meeting required standards	7	6
Improved schools' understanding of the national standards	5	3
Supported teachers' professional development	2	2
Better handling of borderline cases	1	2
Other	12	7
<i>Base</i>	<i>597</i>	<i>689</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

In Table 8.2 we see that many Headteachers and Year 6 leads spontaneously reported that the moderation process had improved teacher's confidence in assessing writing at Key Stage 2. Year 6 leads were also asked explicitly whether they felt that the moderation process had affected their confidence in assessing Key Stage 2 writing in future. Two-thirds reported that they would be more confident in assessing Key Stage 2 writing in future (66%) and one-third felt that their confidence was unchanged (33%). Only a tiny minority felt less confident than they had before (less than half a per cent, see Table 8.3).

Table 8.3 How the moderation process affected teachers' confidence in making assessments for KS2 in 2013

<i>Source: KS2 survey of Year 6 leads</i>	
	%
Has made them more confident	66
Has made them less confident	+
Has not changed their confidence	33
<i>Base</i>	871
<i>Note: The percentages do not total 100 because of rounding</i>	

8.2.2 Negative impact

Local authority moderation managers were asked whether they thought that the moderation process provided schools with any perverse or undesirable incentives.

Only a small proportion of moderation managers felt that this was the case (12%) but those respondents generally felt that the moderation process gave schools the opportunity to overestimate their judgements.²

8.3 Moderators' abilities

Teachers' confidence in the ability of their moderator was extremely high with 98% of Headteachers and Year 6 lead teachers feeling 'very' or 'fairly' confident in their moderator's ability (see Table 8.4).

Table 8.4 How confident teachers' were in the ability of their moderator

<i>Source: KS2 survey of Headteachers and Year 6 leads</i>		
	Headteacher	Year 6 lead
	%	%
Very confident	72	69
Fairly confident	25	29
Not very confident	2	2
Not at all confident	+	+
<i>Base</i>	876	873

Note: The percentages do not total 100 because of rounding

Feedback

The vast majority of schools said that they received written feedback from their moderator (89%).

² Although the survey also asked about the nature of these perverse incentives – the small number of answers received means that it is not possible to present this data quantitatively.

9 Suggested improvements

The surveys of moderation managers, schools and moderators collected feedback on the 2011/2012 moderation process in order to inform the development of the moderation process prior to the introduction of the 2013 statutory requirements.

As can be seen in Table 8.1 the majority of moderation managers had some suggestions for improvements (87%). This was the case for just over half of moderators (52%) and around one-third of teachers (37% of Headteachers and 34% of Year 6 lead teachers).

Table 8.1 Whether improvements could be made to the process				
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers, schools, and moderators</i>				
	<i>Moderation manager</i>	<i>Headteacher</i>	<i>Year 6 lead</i>	<i>Moderators</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Streamlining	40	15	N/A	13
Improved accuracy and consistency	53	23	N/A	35
Other improvements	53	16	N/A	30
Any	87	37	34	52
None	13	63	66	48
<i>Base</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>871</i>	<i>866</i>	<i>506</i>

Note: The percentages do not total 100 because respondents could give more than one answer

In terms of suggestions for streamlining, the most common themes from all stakeholders were to revise the timings of the visits and to ensure that there was clear information and guidance about all elements of the process.

For timing revisions, the suggestions made included: a longer period of time for the visits to be completed in; giving all parties more notice of the moderation visits; or moving the moderation visits to a quieter time of year.

The main suggestions for improving information and guidance have already been discussed in Section 3.1. These points were, however, reiterated by many respondents towards the end of the survey. They included suggestions to make sure that the information and guidance was clear and consistent from the outset; provided in one go; and more detailed advice about the evidence that schools need to provide.

Table 8.2 Suggestions for streamlining

<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers, Headteachers, and moderators</i>	
	%
Moderation managers	
Revise timings of visits (e.g. allow longer, give more notice, move to a quieter time of year)	[34]
Provide clear information and guidance to LAs from the outset	[20]
Improve process of making assessments (e.g. train teachers/ provide better exemplification)	[20]
Provide information and guidance to LAs early and in one go	[18]
Align KS1 and KS2 processes	[9]
Centralise processes (e.g. administration of standardisation exercises; LA training; templates)	[7]
Encourage group moderation (e.g. group schools together for a single moderation event)	[7]
Other	[30]
Headteachers	
Provide clear information and guidance about evidence required	15
Provide more notice about the sample of children	13
Provide more notice of the moderation visit	12
Provide clear information and guidance about process	8
Reduce the sample of children	6
Encourage schools to build up evidence throughout the year	6
Encourage group moderation (e.g. group schools together for a single moderation event)	5
Other	43
Moderators	
Revise timings of visits (e.g. allow longer, give more notice, move to a quieter time of year)	24
Encourage group moderation (e.g. group schools together for a single moderation event)	23
Provide clear information and guidance to schools	14
Promote paired moderation/ peer moderation	9
Use case studies/ or a proportion of work at each level	3
Other	32
Bases	
<i>Base (moderation managers)</i>	44
<i>Base (schools)</i>	107
<i>Base (moderators)</i>	66
<i>Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given</i>	

Moderation managers' main suggestions for improving the accuracy and consistency of assessments were:

- provide better training on assessment and levelling (24%);
- introduce an embedded, national system for assessment and levelling (24%); and
- improve the standardisation exercise alongside providing better exemplification.

Headteachers thought that it would be useful to encourage cross-school moderation (14%). Moreover, like moderation managers they proposed better training on assessment and levelling (10%) and introducing a consistent, embedded, national system for assessment and levelling (10%).

Table 8.3 Suggestions for improving accuracy and consistency	
<i>Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers, Headteachers, and moderators</i>	
	%
Moderation managers	
Better training on assessment and levelling	24
Introduce an embedded/ national system for assessment and levelling	24
Improve standardisation exercise/ provide better exemplification	22
More/ better sharing of good practice and informal learning	14
Encourage paired moderation/ peer moderation/ cross-authority moderation	9
Improve system/model for assessment and levelling	7
Increase the sample of schools moderated	5
Other	36
Headteachers	
Encourage cross-school moderation	14
Provide clear information and guidance	10
Introduce a consistent/ embedded/ national system for assessment and levelling	10
Better training on assessment and levelling	10
Encourage assessment and moderation throughout the year	8
Provide more notice of the moderation visit	5
Provide better exemplification	5
Revise timings of visits (e.g. allow longer, give more notice, move to a quieter time of year)	1
Other	41
Moderators	
Better training on assessment and levelling	30
Ensure there are comprehensive and clear national standards	16
Encourage paired moderation/ peer moderation/ cross-authority moderation	15
Provide better exemplification (e.g. for borderline cases)	10
Encourage group moderation (e.g. group schools together for a single moderation event)	4
Put more focus on sub-levels	1
Other	31
Bases	
<i>Base (moderation managers)</i>	58
<i>Base (schools)</i>	167
<i>Base (moderators)</i>	172

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

Moderators put forward similar suggestions for improving the accuracy and consistency of assessments. They also thought that it would be useful for schools to have better training on assessment and levelling (30%) and that accuracy and consistency would be enhanced through ensuring that national standards were comprehensive and clear (16%). In addition, 15% of moderators proposed encouraging paired moderation, peer moderation, or cross-authority moderation as a way of improving the accuracy and consistency of assessments.

Many of the other suggestions overlapped with suggestions for streamlining and improving accuracy and consistency (see Table 8.4). The main suggestion from moderation managers was to revise the timings of the visits (45%). And again Headteachers and moderators requested clear information and guidance about the process (18% and 26% respectively).

Table 8.4 Other suggestions for improvement

Source: KS2 survey of moderation managers, Headteachers, and moderators

	%
Moderation managers	
Revise timings of visits (e.g. allow longer, give more notice, move to a quieter time of year)	45
Provide clear and consistent information and guidance	28
Improve standardisation exercise/ provide better exemplification	17
Increase teacher involvement in the process	9
Align KS1 and KS2 processes	9
More/ better sharing of good practice and informal learning	7
Make moderation statutory and introduce accountability	3
Improve funding model	3
Other	17
Headteachers	
Provide clear information and guidance about process	18
Revise timings of visits (e.g. allow longer, give more notice, move to a quieter time of year)	14
Encourage cluster moderation	9
Provide clear information and guidance about evidence required	6
Better training on assessment and levelling	6
Increase teacher involvement in the process	6
Review processes for assessment and levelling	4
Increase the sample of schools moderated	3
Increase funding for releasing teachers	3
Improve process for selecting sample of pupils	3
More/ better sharing of good practice and informal learning	2
Other	33
Moderators	
Provide clear and consistent information and guidance	26
Better training on assessment and levelling	9
Encourage paired moderation	7
Levelling needs to focus on work that pupils complete independently/ unaided	5
Ensure there are comprehensive and clear national standards	4
Provide more training materials	3
There will be natural improvement from experience	1
Other	53
Bases	
<i>Base (moderation managers)</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Base (schools)</i>	<i>112</i>
<i>Base (moderators)</i>	<i>141</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

Year 6 lead teachers were asked about their views for improvements overall (rather than being asked about streamlining, improving accuracy and consistency, and other improvements separately). Their suggestions also reflect the same themes discussed earlier in this chapter. These include revising the timings of visits (24%) and providing clearer information and guidance (15% with reference to general guidance and 12% with reference to the evidence that schools were required to provide).

Table 8.5 Year 6 lead teachers' suggestions for improvement

<i>Source: KS2 survey of Year 6 leads</i>	
	%
Revise timings of visits (e.g. allow longer, give more notice, move to a quieter time of year)	24
Provide clear information and guidance about process	15
Increase teacher involvement in the process	13
Provide clear information and guidance about evidence required	12
Review processes for assessment and levelling	9
Improve process for selecting sample of pupils	8
Better training on assessment and levelling	7
Encourage cluster moderation	4
Increase funding for releasing teachers	3
Increase the sample of schools moderated	2
More/ better sharing of good practice and informal learning	1
Other	16
<i>Base</i>	283

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because more than one answer could be given

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