

Teacher's Moderation Toolkit

The toolkit is quickly becoming what many teachers turn to as a reliable and accurate tool to assess writing.

Summary

Developed in consultation with the lead author, Maddy Barnes (Teacher, Literacy Consultant and Blogger) and with The Three Saints Academy Trust and St Helens TSA, the *Teacher's Moderation Toolkit*, ensures accurate teacher assessment of writing and consistency across the school, which is high on the agenda for many primary school teachers. The *Teacher's Moderation Toolkit* provides everything that is needed to equip staff with a range of resources to:

- support their own judgements, by providing high-quality, standardised, termly examples of real children's writing;
- provide staff with examples of writing that they can annotate in phases or clusters, using non-negotiable writing sheets referenced to the national curriculum, which can be checked against annotated examples in the resource book; and
- share exemplars with pupils, to raise expectations, to peer assess a neutral piece of writing and to up-level writing.

Overview

Evidently, the teacher assessment of writing has been through a significant amount of changes in the past decade. Currently, the land seems more settled as 'The Teacher Assessment Framework' has remained the same for this academic year (2018-2019). The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) have published and updated exemplification files for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils - working towards the standard, at the expected standard and at the greater depth standard. However, no exemplification files were published for years 1, 3, 4 and 5. Although the teacher assessment of writing is reported in years 2 and 6, we recognised the need for whole school reliable and accurate measurement for emerging data for writing in all year

groups. Led by Maddy Barnes, a team of English subject leaders, moderators and SLEs worked relentlessly to create termly exemplification files for years 1-6, to support the teacher assessment of writing.

The resource was organised into three books: Book 1 included some EYFS examples (progression across the year rather than termly exemplification) and years 1 and 2; Books 2 and 3 are for years 3 and 4 respectively, and Book 3 is for years 5 and 6 respectively. Writing is included from over twenty schools and many teachers have replicated some of the writing tasks with their own classes, often commenting that they were 'creative and real' activities. There is a wide range of writing activities related to high-quality texts representing both fiction and non-fiction genres.

Ensuring progression from the summer of one year group to the autumn of the next was a key element in the process. Clear guidance included at the beginning of the book explains how teachers can use the exemplification files each term when making their termly judgements, for example in the spring of Year 4, teachers can read the Year 4 exemplification file and decide if children are writing in line with the standard, if they are, they are expected standard for spring in Year 4. If their writing is not as strong, teachers can look to a term below (autumn Year 4) and if this standard matches, the child is working towards Year 4. If the teacher needs to look further back, the child is working below. Teachers use the same process if a child's writing is better than the file - look into the next term and if the standard matches, the child is working at greater depth.

A carefully designed set of criteria matched to the National Curriculum, is included for each year group, for example 'A Year 5 writer.' We were very keen for the resource not to have an expiry date so



referencing the TAF (Teaching Assessment Framework). This means that the resource has longevity and schools have welcomed this, as it will not need to be replaced each time the ever-changing assessment framework changes.

Along with the hard copy of each book, an eBook (of the hard copy) is available free of charge to download. This was seen as a necessity, to ensure the material was used and applied in a variety of ways, giving value for money, and much more than a short-term resource. This toolkit is a CPD tool for all staff. School leaders use the resource in phase meetings and staff meetings; to support new teachers and those who were absent when changes were being applied to the assessment framework. In addition, we have found that clusters of schools would be moderating together. The termly exemplification materials are included with and without annotations. This means that schools can share the non-annotated versions and annotate them together. We have received many testimonials that support the high quality of professional dialogue generated through these discussions. Many schools commented that teachers were frankly honest annotating these files as it removed the personal relationship teachers have when moderating their own pupils' work.

We wanted children to benefit from the toolkit too - teachers sharing the pieces of writing as examples of best practice on the board for children to identify features of a specific genre. The pieces could also be shared as a baseline - for children to suggest how to improve themselves, and to be challenged to write even better versions.