



Key Stage 2  
Writing Moderation 2026

# Moderators' Handbook

March 2026

## Introduction

This handbook explains how external KS2 writing moderation works in London Borough of Hillingdon. It ensures consistency, transparency and alignment with STA (Standards & Testing Agency) statutory requirements. Teacher Assessment (TA) must be accurate, as it forms part of published accountability data. In line with STA requirements the LA will:

- Undertake moderation visits to 25% of academies/free schools and 25% of all maintained schools
- Inform schools selected for visits on or after Friday 15th May 2026 and complete visits by Friday 26th June 2026
- Select an initial sample of 15% of pupils from across the cohort or, in the case of a single class, a minimum of 5 pupils

The purpose of the moderation visit is to:

- moderate TA judgements through professional dialogue
- check teachers' understanding of the teacher assessment framework
- ensure that the standards are consistently applied
- look at the supporting evidence for a sample of pupils chosen by the moderators, across the range of attainment from across the year, including teachers' knowledge of the pupil

## STA Guidance

[National curriculum assessments: guidance for local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/national-curriculum-assessments-guidance-for-local-authorities)

[TA frameworks at the end of KS2](#)

[Teacher assessment exemplification: KS2 English writing - GOV.UK](#)

[STA](#)

## Key Dates

- Schools notified of moderation visit on or after Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026
- Moderation visits between Monday 1<sup>st</sup> to Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026
- Schools to submit additional evidence for LA review by 17<sup>th</sup> June 2026
- LA to review additional evidence by 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026
- LA to confirm judgements to schools by 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026
- If schools do not accept the confirmed judgement following the LA review of additional evidence, they are still able to exercise their right to appeal
- LA appeals date – Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2026
- Inter LA appeals date – Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026
- Schools are required to submit their teacher assessment data via the NCA Portal by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026

## Overview of the External Moderation Requirements

- External LA moderation is a statutory duty and takes place at least every 4 years. It is a **collaborative** process between the LA external moderator(s) and the school. It confirms that teacher assessment judgements are accurate and consistent with the teacher assessment framework. It gives teachers opportunities to discuss judgements on pupil performance against the requirements of the teacher assessment framework.
- LAs are required to externally moderate at least 25% of maintained and academy schools (who have an agreement to use the LA).
- LAs must tell their schools on or after Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026 if they are going to be moderated. They must give at least 48 hours' notice for an external moderation visit and let the school know who will be attending.
- During the visit LA external moderators will check teachers' understanding of the teacher assessment framework, look at evidence from normal classroom work and check accuracy of judgements.
- STA does not require LAs to ask schools for pupil data in advance. Hillingdon has an optional non statutory pupil data template schools may use if they feel it would support the process. A moderation visit should not require any addition to a teacher's workload.
- The emphasis will be on professional dialogue between the Year 6 teacher(s), as appropriate, and the LA external moderators. There is no need for schools to keep additional records justifying their TA judgements.
- The pupils' work must show that they consistently demonstrate attainment in line with the wording of all the 'pupil can' statements within the standard they have been awarded.
- Teachers and LA external moderators must always refer to the teacher assessment framework when confirming judgements. They may also choose to refer to the non-statutory exemplification materials provided by the STA.
- Schools are accountable for submitting accurate and valid KS2 TA judgements. Regardless of whether schools receive an LA moderation visit. Headteachers must ensure that robust moderation processes (internal and with other schools or stakeholders) are followed, and that the teacher assessment framework is always referred to during that process.
- Moderated schools must submit accurate TA data which reflects any changes made because of an LA moderation visit. If a school submits TA data which is different from that agreed during the LA external moderation visit, the school must contact the LA in advance at [education@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:education@hillington.gov.uk). The school will need to give evidence to justify their changes and reach agreement on final data. There could be a maladministration investigation of the school's TA if the school submits changed data without the LA's consent.

## Evidence Requirements

- Examples of pupils' independent work which provides the clearest evidence of learning. There should be a variety of evidence, for example, pupils' exercise books and other examples of written work in a variety of forms and for a range of purposes and audiences, from year 6; this should include 'rough' work as well as 'finished' examples.
- Teachers should ensure that moderators are clear about the amount of support given to each pupil.
- Moderators will request to see the results of the statutory KS2 tests to understand the teacher assessment.

## LA External Moderators 2026

All LA external moderators are qualified teachers with recent and relevant experience of KS2 English writing assessment. All LA external moderators will/have:

- successfully completed and passed the STA standardisation process for moderation of KS2 writing
- systematically reviewed evidence against the TA frameworks and adhere to STA guidance
- manage a professional discussion with teachers about the evidence presented and how a pupil's work meets the standard
- where appropriate, discuss and explain why a school's TA judgements cannot be validated
- provide accurate written and verbal feedback to the teacher(s) and Headteacher(s)
- maintain professionalism and confidentiality

## Code of Conduct

Moderators are required to uphold the highest professional standards in their work and to ensure that everyone they encounter during the moderation visit is treated fairly and with respect. These standards are assured through this code of conduct.

To ensure that moderation is productive and beneficial, it is important that moderators and schools establish and maintain an appropriate working relationship based on courtesy and professional behaviour.

The LA expects school staff to:

- adhere to part one of the Teachers' Standards and demonstrate that they are accountable for pupil attainment
- adhere to part two of the Teachers' Standards to always ensure personal and professional conduct
- apply their school's own codes of conduct in their dealings with moderators
- enable moderators to conduct their visit in an open and honest way
- enable moderators to evaluate the school objectively against the teacher assessment framework
- provide evidence that will enable the moderators to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their assessment processes
- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the moderators to minimise disruption, anxiety and bureaucracy
- draw any concerns to the attention of the moderators promptly and in an appropriate manner
- understand the need for moderation

Moderators must:

- evaluate objectively, be impartial and moderate TA judgements without fear or favour
- evaluate TA judgements in line with the teacher TA framework and base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence
- have no connection with the school or staff that could undermine their objectivity
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
- endeavour to minimise the stress on those involved in the moderation
- maintain purposeful and productive dialogue and communicate judgements clearly and frankly
- ensure that judgements are fair and reliable
- respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individual staff and pupils and their work
- respond appropriately to reasonable requests
- take prompt and appropriate action on any inaccurate TA judgements
- adhere to part two of the Teachers' Standards to always ensure personal and professional conduct

## Selection of the Sample of Pupils' Work

The STA does not require the LA to ask schools for pupil data in advance of an external moderation visit. However, Hillingdon schools are given the option to voluntarily provide a list of pupils if they felt this would save time during the visit. Schools will be informed of the selected pupils within the sample, by the lead moderator, no earlier than 1 day before their moderation visit.

The lead moderator will select a minimum sample of 15% of pupils from across the cohort or, in the case of a single class, a minimum of 5 pupils. The lead moderator will ensure that they have a good range of pupils and should extend the sample size if it is necessary during the visit.

Example of sample selection:

- 30 pupils: 5 or more
- 40 pupils: 6 or more
- 50 pupils: 8 or more
- 60 pupils: 9 or more
- 70 pupils: 11 or more
- 80 pupils: 12 or more
- 90 pupils: 14 or more
- 120 pupils: 18 or more

## Visit – Steps for Moderators to Undertake

### Before the Visit

Step	Action	Lead	When
1	LA to send the school visit notification letters, attaching the non-statutory optional pupil teaching group list template. The school will respond to confirm they have received the notification the same day. The LA will chase the school if this is not received by the next working day.	Moderation Co-ordinator	On 15 <sup>th</sup> May
2	Moderators should exchange mobile phone numbers and email addresses to enable liaison to make the necessary arrangements to visit schools together.	All Moderators	By 21 <sup>st</sup> May
3	The Lead Moderator will contact the school if the optional pupil teaching group list is not received, to check if they have opted not to submit this information. The Headteacher should be reminded that this is non-statutory, and if this information is not provided then the selection of pupils will take place at the start of the visit.	Lead Moderator	5 working days prior to the visit
4	Lead Moderator will select a random pupil sample and share the selection with the school directly and copy in the Moderation Co-ordinator, (if school has opted to provide this) no earlier than 1 working day before the visit.	Lead Moderator	1 working day prior to visit (no earlier)

### During the Visit

All visits should start at 08.30. The end time will vary depending on the size of the school, pupil sample extension, and length of professional discussion. A rough guideline is that visits should take half a working day and should not finish after normal school hours.

The lead moderator should make introductions, explain the outline of the process, and highlight the appeals process.

**School visit agenda outline (flexible and to be adapted accordingly to the school size):**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
08.30-09.00	Introduce roles and responsibilities of lead and support moderators, LA leads if present, process, appeals reminder, times teachers are required
09.00-10.30	Review evidence with teacher discussion
10.30-10.45	Break
10.45-12.00	Teacher discussion, consider evidence overall, prepare final judgements
12.00-12.30	Feedback, appeals reminder, HT and teacher discussion, record actions on action plan with lead names, visit report sign off, photocopy for school, copy of feedback form for HT

## Decision Making Options

It is essential that the teachers are part of the process and therefore moderators will need to hold professional dialogue with the teachers throughout the process. When all pupils in the sample have been discussed, the lead moderator will confirm agreed judgements with the teachers, using the number and letter options below.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>1A</b>	<p><b>No change to school judgement</b></p> <p><i>Example: moderators agree with all school judgements in the sample.</i></p> <p>Moderators are satisfied that all work seen was completed independently, and if not, then the evidence should clearly indicate the level of support the pupil has received to ensure the standard has been met.</p>
<b>1B</b>	<p><b>Judgement provided on the proviso that the Headteacher internally moderates to ensure the evidence meets standard as detailed in the moderator's action</b></p> <p><i>Example: at the time of the visit, there may be pupils who have not yet demonstrated a small number of the 'pupil can' statements. If the school and moderators agree that these pupils will be able to consistently demonstrate the relevant knowledge or skills after the visit but before the submission date, the LA will accept internal moderation of additional evidence for the pupils to validate their proposed standard.</i></p> <p>This option is to be used if ALL the other school TA judgements were accepted <u>in full</u> by the moderators. This cannot be used if 1 judgement has been changed for 1 pupil.</p> <p>Where moderators are satisfied with ALL the other school judgements, the lead moderator may use their discretion to directly award a judgement that still requires additional evidence that the pupil is likely to achieve by the submission date. The lead moderator will agree a local action with the Headteacher to ensure that they check the new evidence and is satisfied that the pupil has fully met the standard. The moderator will record this action clearly on the visit report. This local agreement leaves the responsibility with the Headteacher to internally moderate to ensure the correct judgement is submitted, therefore the judgement does <u>not</u> require the LA to review additional evidence.</p>
<b>2A</b>	<p><b>Any moderated judgement the LA WOULD consider further with the submission of additional evidence for a LA review</b></p>

	<p><i>Example: at the time of the visit, there may be only one or two pupils who haven't met a small number of 'pupil can' statements. If the school and moderators agree that these pupils will be able to demonstrate relevant knowledge or skills after the visit but before the submission date, the LA will accept additional evidence to review for pupils to validate their proposed standard.</i></p> <p>This option is to be used if the school TA judgements were <u>not</u> fully accepted by the moderators. For example, if one or more pupil judgements were changed. The lead moderator will determine what evidence the LA needs to see based on the moderation visit and other data or information they have access to.</p> <p>Important note for schools following the LA review of evidence. If one or more pupils in the sample are not approved, then it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to review any other proposed changes to pupils outside of the sample, and to make appropriate decisions in line with the decisions made about the LA reviewed pupils.</p> <p>If a judgement requires a <u>submission of additional evidence for LA review</u> the moderators will ask the Headteacher to scan and email this evidence to the LA at <a href="mailto:education@hillingdon.gov.uk">education@hillingdon.gov.uk</a> by 17<sup>th</sup> June 2026. The moderators will record this as a clear action in the visit report. The LA will review this additional evidence with the Lead Moderator on 18<sup>th</sup> June and confirm the reviewed judgement directly to the Headteacher by 19th June.</p> <p>If the Headteacher does not accept the confirmed judgement following the LA review of additional evidence, the Headteacher can still exercise their right to appeal.</p>
<p><b>2B</b></p>	<p><b>Any moderated judgement the LA WOULD <u>NOT</u> consider further evidence</b></p> <p><i>Example: insufficient time for pupil to demonstrate next standard by the data submission deadline of 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026.</i></p> <p>If the 'pupil can' statement has not been taught, then the pupils should not meet the judgement. All pupil can statements must be taught before the moderation window starts on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026. Gaps due to teaching highlight that the school has not followed the teacher assessment framework. Being moderated early in the window does not mean that schools have time to teach small areas, it means that schools may be given more time to re-teach small areas to have consistent evidence to secure judgements.</p> <p>Moderators must ensure that in all cases, schools are aware that they can appeal any decision and refer the Headteachers to the appeals process and dates in this handbook. Please note that for appeals, <u>only evidence seen during the moderation visit can be used for the appeal</u> and the appeal cannot consider any new evidence.</p>
<p><b>2C</b></p>	<p><b>Revisit recommendation - to be referred to the LA Moderation Manager for final decision</b></p> <p><i>Example: many pupils to submit evidence for a LA review; unable to validate judgements due to a systematic lack of evidence; or have concerns.</i></p> <p>Only in <b>very exceptional</b> cases, it may be necessary for a revisit. Such cases will need to be discussed and ratified by the LA Moderation Manager. This may involve referral to the STA's maladministration team.</p>

Moderators should try to resolve any issues at school level as far as possible.
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**Moderators must detail within the visit report the revised judgement and any further recommendations with full reasons.**

If there is insufficient evidence or concern about the accuracy of a judgement, then moderators can request additional evidence and/or expand the sample. In rare cases, the sample may be expanded to include the whole cohort.

Where issues are identified in application of the standards, and moderators make changes to judgements awarded to pupils in the sample, the moderator and teacher will need to have discussed (but not necessarily reviewed in detail) the evidence for any similar pupils in the cohort. Any potential changes to judgements between the moderation visit and the TA data submission must be recorded on the visit report. If this only affects a small number of pupils, each pupil's UPRN could be recorded, but when there is a larger number, the moderator could simply record the number of pupils where a change might be made. This is so that the LA data checks of submitted data against moderation decisions can consider any agreed potential changes.

The Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA) states that Headteachers have a duty to ensure that the requirements in the ARA are implemented in their school and teachers and other staff are compliant. Headteachers must ensure TA judgements are an accurate assessment of pupils' attainment and submit accurate TA data.

The Teacher Assessment Guidance states that after the external moderation visit, LAs must have a process to analyse submitted TA data to check that it matches external moderation decisions; and have a defined data validation process, using local intelligence to investigate any unexpected pattern of attainment for any school. Any unusual data submission not in line with the moderation note of visit will be followed up by the LA. The lead moderator has the final decision. If the school is not satisfied they should use the appeals process.

**End of Visit**

The lead moderator should:

- provide formal feedback to the Headteacher or a representative of the senior leadership team
- explain the 'LA review of additional evidence' process for how the LA will carry out any agreed review of pupil evidence
- provide the school with a completed LA record of the visit, using the visit report, which includes:
  - the agreed validated judgements for all moderated pupils
  - any revised judgements if the moderators judged that there was insufficient evidence for the standard awarded, or if the moderators considered the pupil to be working at a higher standard
  - any decisions that the school intends to appeal
  - any concerns that require further action by the school or LA (such as a re-visit)

If the school and the moderators agree that a pupil has the potential to meet the proposed standard before the data submission deadline, the visit report should also include the next steps:

- if school TA judgements were accepted in full by the LA, the additional evidence must have been internally moderated by the school and submitted by the TA submission date, or
- if school TA judgements were not accepted in full by the LA, the additional evidence must be submitted to the LA for review prior to the TA submission date

At the end of the external moderation visit schools must:

- ensure that the Headteacher or representative is available to meet with the lead moderator to receive formal feedback and to sign the visit report

- ensure that any changes to TA judgements because of an external moderation visit are accurately reflected in their submitted TA data

The visit report must be signed by the Headteacher (or representative) and the lead moderator.

### **After the Visit**

Moderators should scan and email the completed Visit Report to the LA at [education@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:education@hillingdon.gov.uk) within 48 hours of the visit.

All other visit documentation must be submitted to the LA within 5 working days of the visit. This should also be scanned and emailed to [education@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:education@hillingdon.gov.uk).

The visit report will be used to:

- ensure that all pupil evidence provided for re-moderation is reviewed by the LA and that only the LA can confirm the final TA judgement for that pupil
- analyse submitted TA data to check that it matches external moderation decisions, including school internal re-moderation of pupils
- be part of the data validation process, using local intelligence to investigate any unexpected pattern of attainment for any school
- escalate any concerns about the integrity of the assessment to STA's maladministration team, including any appeals information

## **LA Contact Details**

Jo Head, Moderation Consultant - [headconsultants1@gmail.com](mailto:headconsultants1@gmail.com)

Natalie Anwar, Moderation Consultant - [natalielouiseanwar@gmail.com](mailto:natalielouiseanwar@gmail.com)

Nicki O'Flanagan, LA Moderation Coordinator - [education@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:education@hillingdon.gov.uk)

Richard Woodfin, LA Moderation Manager - [education@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:education@hillingdon.gov.uk)

## Hillingdon Moderation Appeals Process

### Introduction

Schools are moderated during June using current STA guidance with approved STA moderators. The lead moderator will discuss the school's judgements on whether the sample of work selected meets the required teacher assessment standards for the end of KS2.

Professional discussion overall will enable moderators and teachers to come to a consensus. However, if there are any disagreements regarding whether a pupil's work meets the required standard and / or concerns pertaining to the assessment process during the visit, this appeals process should be used to explore options.

### LA Guidance

- Schools must be aware of the LA's appeals process before the moderation visit.
- LA external moderators must refer to the LA's appeals process during the moderation visit.
- Schools must have evidence to support any appeal before the appeal is processed.
- The appeal can only be based on evidence shown to the lead moderator during the LA moderation visit.

### Dates

- 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 - LA appeals via MS Teams
- 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026 - Inter LA appeals via MS Teams

### Stage 1 – Submit Appeal

The Headteacher or senior representative notifies the LA by email to [education@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:education@hillingdon.gov.uk) of the school's intention to appeal, within 1 working day of the LA moderation visit. This notification should include the following:

- Appeal overview
- Pupil name and reason, giving as much detail as possible
- Scanned evidence of pupil work shown to the lead moderator during the LA moderation visit
- Names of school representatives attending the appeal (usually Headteacher or deputy and relevant Year 6 teacher)

The LA Moderation Coordinator will confirm appeal time within 1 working day (by email) confirming Stage 2 - LA Appeals Panel.

### Stage 2 - LA Appeals Panel

- The panel will consist of the LA Moderation Manager, the Moderation Coordinator (note taker) and one STA approved LA moderator who is independent of the school's moderation visit (with no conflicts of interest with the school).
- The LA moderator will review the visit notes and appeals documentation submitted in advance of the session. The original visit moderators will not provide any additional feedback and will not be involved in the appeals process. The appeal can only be based on evidence shown to the LA lead moderator during the LA moderation visit.
- The school representatives will present their case and have a professional discussion with the panel.
- The school representatives will be informed verbally and in writing of the panel's decision along with any recommendations.
- If the school representatives are not satisfied with the panel's decision, they will need to request escalation to Stage 3 - Inter LA Appeals Panel. The LA will process this request. The school representatives are not invited to be part of Stage 3.

### **Stage 3 - Inter LA Appeals Panel**

- The Moderation Coordinator will request that the Inter LA Appeals Panel, led by the LA's moderation partners (Camden Council, Ealing Council, Hammersmith & Fulham Council and Slough Borough Council), review the appeal within 1 working day.
- The appeal can only be based on evidence shown and documents produced at the LA Appeals Panel.
- The school will be informed in writing of the Inter LA Appeals Panel's agreed decision along with any recommendations, by midday of the data submission deadline. If necessary, the judgement/s agreed by the Inter LA Appeals Panel will be substituted for the school.
- The school will be given feedback, next steps, and will receive a further moderation visit the following year (if a significant number of pupils have been involved).

### **Stage 4 - Post Moderation Assurance**

A post moderation check will then be made to see that the data submitted by the school correlates with the final decision/s confirmed via this appeals process.

### **Further information please contact the LA:**

Nicki O'Flanagan, Moderation Coordinator at [education@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:education@hillingdon.gov.uk)

## Hillingdon KS2 Moderation LA Appeals Panel Report

### Session outline:

- Welcome and introductions
- Refer to STA guidance
- School to present its case
- Appeals panel to reflect
- Decision

Date	
Panel	
Name of school	
School representatives	
Name (s) of pupils	
Nature of appeal	
Evidence presented	
Feedback and decision	
Panels Final Decision	
Actions	

Approval by Appeals Panel:

Name..... Sign.....

Name..... Sign.....

Name..... Sign.....

Approval by Headteacher:

Name..... Sign.....

**If not agreed, move to Stage 3 - Inter LA Appeals Panel part of the process**