

Overview of Development of Assessment Advice and Policy

Date	Document	Overview
April–June 2000	Consultation Proposals for Changes to the Northern Ireland Curriculum Framework	Reported that many Working Groups highlighted literacy and numeracy as the focus for raising attainment in relation to national targets and that they felt that these were important cross-curricular issues. However, the fact that these skills are tested in end of Key Stage assessment only through English and Mathematics created a perception that was at odds with the concept of cross-curricularity and the breadth of application which is encompassed within literacy and numeracy. The Key Stage Working Groups recommended that future consideration should be given to the development of Key Stage assessment based on the model used for the key skills. At Key Stage 3, assessment outcomes could be related to key skills at foundation level through a short external test and portfolio evidence gathered across a range of subjects.
2001	Report of the Consultation on Phase 1 of the Curriculum Review	<p>Primary respondents urged the need for a concurrent review of assessment and, in particular, the Transfer Test. Respondents felt that the proposed framework, while welcome, could not be implemented because of the distorting effect of the Transfer Test, which, together with end of Key Stage Assessment, led to an over concentration on the teaching of Maths and English. The majority of primary respondents indicated that they did not value the outcomes of Key Stage Assessment.</p> <p>There was very strong support from the secondary sector (95%) for a skills-led curriculum. Respondents requested that this be backed up by a skills approach to assessment which prepared young people for a future that requires the demonstration of skills other than those tested in pencil and paper tests. It was felt that current assessment measures and value systems would also need to change to match the proposed programme, otherwise actual provision within the schools would remain as is, reflecting what was being measured/valued through assessment, irrespective of the curriculum.</p>
April 2002	Summary of Proposals for the Revised Primary Curriculum and its Assessment Arrangements	<p>Proposals included an annual report to parents which would require teachers to record a level in the skills areas of: Talking and Listening; Reading; Writing; Numeracy; Critical and Creative Thinking; and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), based on assessments made across the curriculum. It would also contain information about average levels for the class in that year and for year groups across Northern Ireland taken from the previous year's reports.</p> <p>Proposals also included development of performance indicators or lines of development such as those used for English and mathematics. These indicators would record in levels (and superscripts) the attainment of pupils. By the end of each year a teacher should be able to assess with some confidence the overall achievement of each pupil in each skill</p>

		<p>area.</p> <p>Proposals for moderation included computer support by which moderation could be carried out using the electronic records maintained by schools. On a rolling programme of schools and curriculum areas, schools would be asked for sample pupil records that they considered represented assessment processes and standards in the school. Feedback would identify any change of standards required.</p> <p>As an additional quality assurance measure, CCEA also proposed that, at the end of each key stage, a stratified sample of approximately 5% of the school population take a set of short standardised tasks in Literacy and Numeracy. The outcomes would be collated and reported anonymously and the patterns and trends compared with the Northern Ireland outcomes for teacher assessment.</p>
April 2002	A new approach to Curriculum and Assessment 11-16	<p>CCEA proposals included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a single standardised annual report to replace the existing requirements; • the 8-level scale, currently used in Key Stage assessment in both primary and post-primary schools. – with super scripts • teachers to have available a range of high quality assessment tasks, created by CCEA; • teachers also to have access to samples of assessed work; • provision of a computer-based system for storing information about pupils and producing reports; • creation of summary statistics for evaluation and benchmarking purposes, including average year group statistics for the whole of Northern Ireland; • moderation of standards of assessment in Key Stage 3. <p>On a rolling programme of schools and curriculum areas, schools would be asked for sample pupil records that they were happy to represent assessment processes and standards in the school. Feedback on these would identify any change of standards required.</p>
Jan 2003	Advice to Minister of Education on changes to be made to the Northern Ireland Curriculum and its Assessment	<p>Primary</p> <p>The Council recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a statutory standardised annual report be used in Years 3 to 7 to replace the current end of key stage assessment; • the report be based on a review of formative assessments at the end of each year; • the report would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identify attainment in Talking and Listening, Reading, Writing, Numeracy and ICT;

	<p>Arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – comment formatively on competence within the curricular areas; – comment on the development of personal and interpersonal skills, and the ability to manage learning; • a standardised approach to annual reporting should be piloted to ensure its appropriateness and feasibility; • the report be generated electronically using systems developed by CCEA; • schools should have the discretion to customise the report provided that the statutory requirements have been met. <p>The Council also recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderation of assessment in schools be statutory; • CCEA establish a rolling programme of “formative” moderation to support schools in making effective assessments and judgements; • CCEA will explore the possibility of monitoring standards through a sampling approach similar to that operating in Scotland. <p>The moderation process should be based on three key elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment training in which standards would be set as teachers reviewed and assessed exemplar materials and considered the use that can be made of the information generated. Teachers and pupils could use these exemplar materials to establish benchmarks for attainment and targets for future learning would support these tasks. • Provision of good quality exemplar materials by CCEA linked to teaching plans and schemes of work. Use of these materials would not be statutory. • A more supportive, on-going style of moderation which would occur during the school year, based on a rolling programme whereby roughly one third of schools would be moderated every year. It was hoped that when CCEA developed electronic pupil portfolios, this process could be carried out remotely and feedback to teachers could be almost immediate. <p>Post Primary</p> <p>The Council recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the current KS3 assessment arrangements be replaced by a single system of statutory standardised annual reports; • schools should have the discretion to customise the report provided that the statutory requirements had been met; • CCEA put in place ICT systems to generate and incorporate the basic information into the report
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March 2003	Advice to the Minister for Education on Curriculum and Assessment at Key Stage 3	<p>The advice recognised that there are at least four different audiences who benefit from the process of assessment: pupils and their teachers; parents; school managements; and government agencies. It also noted that tension has always existed in trying to satisfy this variety of audiences with a single assessment system.</p> <p>The Council recommended that support for assessment should include additional training and advice for teachers and new forms of computer-based support so that information about the progress of pupils could be accumulated over time through day-to-day assessment in classrooms.</p> <p>It noted that school managements increasingly make use of benchmarking data in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their work. To do so, such information needed to be widely available in a format that was common across schools and, as far as possible, across years. Likewise, government agencies need a common basis for the collection of information from all schools to give a collective picture as to how the entire education service, or parts of it were succeeding.</p> <p>The Council, therefore, identified a need for a commonly accepted set of performance indicators relating to each of the aspects of the curriculum against which pupil attainment can be described. In the context of a curriculum which is</p>

		<p>specified only in terms of minimum entitlement, with the express purpose of giving schools more discretion over curriculum content, it was not possible to set common assessment tasks for all pupils, as to do so would remove that flexibility. It was therefore proposed to provide a bank of useful assessment material from which teachers could draw in a way that reflected the curriculum that their pupils had experienced.</p>
April 2003	Advice re Primary Assessment	<p>CCEA advice included that a statutory standardised annual report should be used in Years 3 to 7 to replace the current end of key stage assessment. The report should be based on a review of formative assessments at the end of each year and should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) identify attainment in Talking and Listening, Reading, Writing, Numeracy and ICT; (b) comment formatively on competence within the curricular areas; (c) comment on the development of personal and interpersonal skills, and the ability to manage learning; <p>Reporting should be in Levels from 1-5, divided into three sub-levels, .e.g. “+” “0” and “-”. Moderation of assessment in schools should be statutory and based on three key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment training in which standards would be set as teachers reviewed and assessed exemplar materials and considered the use that can be made of the information generated. Teachers and pupils could use these exemplar materials to establish benchmarks for attainment and targets for future learning would support these tasks. • Provision of good quality exemplar materials by CCEA linked to teaching plans and schemes of work. Use of these materials would not be statutory. • A more supportive, on-going style of moderation which would occur during the school year, based on a rolling programme whereby roughly one third of schools would be moderated every year. It was hoped that when CCEA developed electronic pupil portfolios, this process could be carried out remotely and feedback to teachers could be almost immediate. <p>It was proposed to establish a rolling programme of “formative” moderation to support schools in making effective assessments and judgements. As CCEA developed electronic pupil portfolios, this process could eventually be carried out remotely and feedback to teachers could be almost immediate.</p> <p>It was also proposed CCEA should explore the possibility of monitoring standards through a sampling approach similar to that operating in Scotland.</p>
July 2003	Letter from the Minister re	<p>The Minister’s response included the following:</p>

	Curriculum and Assessment at Key Stages 3 and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT should be fully integrated into teaching and learning in every subject in every Key Stage. • While the Minister shared CCEA's view of the importance of young people developing skills which were not subject-specific, there were reservations about the outcomes proposed for application of number, communication and ICT as it was felt that these outcomes were too constrained by, and too closely aligned with, the specifications used for the accreditation of Key Skills. • Further advice was required on the proposed form and nature of annual assessment and standardised reporting, including progression, standards and indicators of performance, before any decision could be taken on the future of key stage tests and assessment.
August 2003	Letter from the Minister re Statutory Primary Curriculum and Assessment	<p>The Minister's response included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In particular, the Council should develop its guidance on evaluating children's progress and attainment within each area of learning. • The assessment arrangements should also promote common standards amongst teachers, and common expectations of progression. • They should enable meaningful information to be provided to parents, and allow Government to judge how the system, and schools within it, are doing. • There was a need to link any differentiation in levels to indicators of progression within and across Key Stages. • It was accepted in principle that assessment should be moderated. • It was also accepted that moderation, like assessment, should be formative in nature. • However, the process of training in effective assessment for learning needed to be viewed as a separate process from the process of moderation, as moderation evaluated the standards of assessment. <p>Proposals for a rolling programme of moderation and sampling were accepted.</p>
June 2004	Letter from the Minister of Education RE: Review of Statutory Curriculum	<p>Indicated that the curriculum proposals were now regarded as acceptable and would be the basis of forthcoming Legislation. The Department would be proceeding immediately with the necessary preparatory work on the legislation but it was expected to be September 2006 before the first statutory changes were triggered, with a phased rollout over the subsequent 4 or 5 years.</p> <p>Noted that CCEA had undertaken to do further work on the assessment arrangements, to ensure that they were manageable, including through the appropriate use of ICT. Noted that it was important that the level indicators are clear and well understood and that there also needed to be a high level of consistency, through appropriate moderation and/or the use of common assessment materials.</p>

		The Department also wished to discuss with Council officers the potential for development of suitable 'value added' measures, principally to assist schools in auditing their own provision. It accepted the proposals for annual reporting and asked the Council to continue its developmental and piloting work in this area as a matter of priority.
2006	Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006	Set out the framework for the revised NI Curriculum and provided for the assessment of the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT with reference to levels of progression.
2007	Statutory Rule SR 2007/45	Specified that, at key stages 1, 2 and 3, teachers are required to assess pupil progress in the cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT with reference to the levels of progression.
2007	<i>CCEA Paper: Revised Assessment arrangements: from the Very Early Years to Post 16 and beyond</i>	<i>Advice included consideration of the following:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Early Years Baseline Assessment</i> • <i>Levels of Progression should be referenced to other skills frameworks - mapping exercises and comparability studies to be carried out</i> • <i>Provision of an extensive training INSET programme</i> • <i>Provision of a range of assessment tasks and exemplar materials</i> • <i>Quality assurance: Internal and external moderation procedures, moving to centre accreditation</i> • <i>Separate system check through sampling</i>
Dec 2007	DE Letter	DE requested detailed advice on revised assessment arrangements for formal assessment at each key stage. This advice was to include 'proposals for robust moderation'.
Dec 2008- March 2009	DE Consultation	DE consultation on draft reporting regulations included consultation on the draft Levels of Progression (English and Irish)
June 2009	DE letter to CCEA re consultation responses	In order to provide as complete a set of advice as possible, asked CCEA to take account of its analysis of the responses as part of its present work in comparing levels of progression and levels of attainment, and to provide the Department with its advice on both the comparability issues and the implications of the consultation responses as soon as possible, and by the end of July 2009 at the latest.
June 2009	The Education (Pupil	Specify that, for pupils in the final year of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, achievement in the cross-curricular skills should be assessed and reported using levels of progression

	Reporting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009	
July 2009	CCEA Advice: Assessment, Moderation and System Check	<p>Provided initial advice on the preferred model for moderation: Model for Moderation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools should provide a range of current evidence within moderation portfolios to ensure robustness and consistency in assessment judgements; assessment data reported to CCEA/ESA should be based on judgements validated by the moderation process. all schools should be moderated for Communication and Using Mathematics in the first two years; thereafter, schools should be moderated on a three-year rolling programme. trained teacher moderators, led by a core operational panel, should conduct the moderation process in order to enhance professional development, increase assessment literacy and build capacity within the system; a fully blended training and support programme should be provided and maintained for schools; in the years of implementation (up to 2012), the Department of Education maintains the 5 plus 5 exceptional closure days to enable schools to embed assessment practices and standards within the whole school context; the Department of Education maintain the commitment to funded teacher release for those teachers involved in making statutory assessment judgements. <p>System Check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a sufficiently robust system of moderation is implemented and there can be assurance that teacher assessment is reliable, then a separate system check may not be required. However, if a separate system check mechanism is required, then it is recommended that any such check should be referenced to the Levels of Progression, should involve an anonymous representative sample rather than the entire cohort, and should be as unobtrusive as is practical to avoid distortion of teaching and learning.
Sept 2009	CCEA Advice on Expected Levels	<p>Based on outcomes from the comparability studies and discussion with Literacy and Numeracy advisers, identified a reasonable expectation for most pupils at the end of each key stage as follows:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Key Stage 1: Level 2 Key Stage 2: Level 4 Key Stage 3: Level 5</p> <p>Recommended more detailed research and analysis of the application of standards during implementation of the levels</p>

		of progression. Outcomes of this research would further inform decisions about expectations and target setting.
Sept 2009	CCEA Analysis of Reporting Regulations Consultation Responses : Levels of Progression	Analysed the consultation responses on the draft levels of progression and identified the issues arising, grouped into themes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the content and scope of the levels of progression; • assessment processes; • implementation issues; and • theoretical points.
May 2010	DE Briefing Paper	Following consultation with principals, ETI and the Northern Ireland Teaching Council (NITC), the broad principles of the statutory assessment arrangements (including the levels of progression) were approved by the Minister and presented to the Assembly Education Committee on 19 May 2010. The briefing was supported by a paper which set out plans for bringing legislative effect to the requirements for revised assessment arrangements to support the curriculum. The paper recognised the professionalism of teachers and the place of assessment within the existing teacher competence model. It set out the role of assessment in the broader legislative and policy context.
May 2010	Letter from K Godfrey re Costed Work Programme	Indicated the Minister had agreed the nature of the arrangements. Requested that work on assessment be set within the wider policy context, incorporating a clear focus on the place of assessment in raising standards in literacy and numeracy and in supporting wider school improvement and ensuring that administrative arrangements are delivered through partnership working with C2k. In relation to cross-curricularity at Key Stage 3, specified that arrangements should be workable for schools; focused on helping pupils develop their skills in literacy and numeracy; and led through the English (or, in the case of IM schools, Irish) and Maths departments.
Nov 2010- Dec 2010	CCEA Consultation	Feedback via questionnaire on the broad proposals was obtained from a range of key stakeholders (principals, teachers and representatives from educational organisations) across both the primary and post-primary sectors. Qualitative feedback on the detail of the discussion paper was collected from the primary and post-primary principals' groups, GTCNI and NITC. <p>In general, respondents supported the broad principles of the proposed arrangements for moderation. There were a number of concerns raised. These included: recognition of the various audiences and purposes for assessment and assessment information; the potential for unintended consequences and behaviours resulting from the uses to which assessment information is put, especially in relation to accountability; and the need for an agreed understanding of the purposes of the proposed statutory assessment arrangements on the part of all stakeholders.</p>

March 2011	CCEA Advice: Processes for End of Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 Assessment	<p>Considered the broader contextual considerations and implications for the revised assessment arrangements, as identified through the 2010 consultation</p> <p>Provided advice on moderation processes, including: quality assurance processes; external quality control processes; and trial and pilot of assessment arrangements.</p> <p>Also provided detailed advice about operational aspects, including: making summative judgements; evidence required for making and verifying judgements; use of assessment tasks; and cross-curricularity.</p>
April 2011	DE Letter re Recommendations on Assessment and Moderation Arrangements to support the Revised Curriculum	Considered CCEA's advice and recommendations, taking the opportunity to do so alongside ETI colleagues. Indicated broad contentment with the outlined direction of travel.
May 2011	Count, Read: Succeed	The Department's literacy and numeracy strategy codified the key principles of assessment. These included: the need for assessment to reflect the curriculum; the importance of literacy and numeracy skills; the central role of teachers in the classroom; and the need for accountability and performance measures.
June 2011	Shadow Year Proposals re Recommendations on the Processes for End of Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 Assessment	Presented proposals for approaches and options to be taken forward for trial and evaluation as part of a 'shadow year' for processes in relation to end of key stage assessment.
Feb 2012	CCEA Discussion Paper:	<p>Considered issues facing implementation of the new assessment arrangements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-of-key-stage assessment of the cross-curricular skills; and

	Implementation of Statutory Assessment and Quality Assurance Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer-based assessment. <p>Recognised that, from 2012/13 onwards, schools and the system faced significant challenges in introducing new statutory assessment arrangements, including quality assurance (moderation) procedures for the cross-curricular skills and new computer-based assessments for Literacy and Numeracy. These challenges included school implementation issues and 'readiness', the potential impact of industrial action, timescales and dependencies. It was therefore proposed that the implementation of the new statutory assessment arrangements should be perceived as a phased introduction, similar to ETI's approach to the implementation of the revised NI Curriculum. The first two years particularly should be perceived as 'phased implementation' or 'transition' years. Schools would fulfil their statutory duties but within a context of flexibility and support.</p> <p>Presented options for a phased and staged approach to external moderation of schools' end-of-key-stage outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow Year trial schools were concerned about proposed in-year timescales for moderation and potential workload issues associated with maintaining evidence of pupil performance. • Moderation should include both quality assurance and quality control processes. • Therefore a staged approach to moderation was proposed, to include both quality assurance and quality control processes. • It was also proposed that external moderation be introduced on a phased basis before a rolling cycle introduced from 2014/15 onwards.
March 2012	DE Letter re Implementation of Statutory Assessment and Quality Assurance Arrangements	DE indicated broad contentment with the proposed outline of the "3-Stage" model as a reasonable compromise, but emphasised there could be no compromise on the need for the new arrangements to be robust and, importantly, to be perceived as such.
May 2012	CCEA Advice on Proposals for Assessment Arrangements to Support the NI Curriculum	<p>Advice related to summative assessment at the end of Key Stages, focusing on proposals to verify consistency of standard in teacher assessments within schools and between schools.</p> <p>Based on principle that moderation involves quality assurance and quality control. Quality assurance (internal standardisation) aims for standardisation or consistency of approach and so focuses on the process of assessment in schools. Quality control (external moderation) focuses on ensuring the outcomes are judged in a compatible way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially all schools to be externally moderated.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samples of assessed work to be submitted by schools to CCEA. The sample to be specified by CCEA. • CCEA to moderate the work and provide feedback to schools in advance of outcomes being reported to parents. • Schools whose standards cannot be verified even after review/amendment to be subject to further measures. <p>The advice outlined that the purpose of assessment, how outcomes are used and inferences made from them should all be carefully considered as making inferences about the performance of teachers or institutions based on pupils' outcomes in a narrow domain can increase the risk of unintended consequences and skewed results.</p> <p>Metrics used for accountability purposes should be broad, including qualitative and quantitative elements which are complementary and contribute to a holistic perspective. In the context of providing a range of measures and data to help schools self-evaluate, consideration should be given to the use of a centralised objective assessment, developed for a specified domain (the NI curriculum). This could be used in a sample of schools each year, providing quantitative data which can be used by schools to support target setting and self-improvement.</p>
June 2012	Minister's Letter: Response to CCEA Advice	<p>Recognised the importance that the new arrangements command the confidence of parents, teachers and the wider system from the outset. Stipulated that assessment should be timely, straightforward and fit for purpose, recognising that teachers are best able to assess the progress of their pupils and not divert time away from teaching and learning. Also stated that the assessment of cross-curricular skills will continue to be used as a system measure and for accountability purposes. Therefore, while recognising teachers' professional judgement, recognised that teacher assessment can raise issues in relation to consistency, and therefore confidence, so moderation and feedback would have a key role to play in ensuring this consistency.</p> <p>Recognised the concerns about manageability and timescales. Therefore, CCEA was to ensure that arrangements would evolve and to keep them under continuous review. Accepted that schools need time to for the arrangements to bed in and would require flexibility and support in the initial years.</p>