New Assessment Arrangements: CCEA Analysis Report July 2013

1   Introduction and Remit of Report

CCEA's 'Advice on Proposals for Assessment Arrangements to Support the NI Curriculum' was presented to the Department in May 2012. The Minister's letter to CCEA of 19th June 2012 indicated his acceptance of the advice '…on the understanding that these arrangements will evolve and CCEA will keep them under continuous review and engage fully with teachers, Principals and the Teaching Unions... I would appreciate a comprehensive report from CCEA on how the arrangements are operating … along with a full picture of the issues identified by schools'. He also made it clear that he expected 'CCEA to continue to explore and develop… other approaches to shortening moderation timescales as we move through the initial period of implementation, without in any way diluting the commitment to robust moderation'.

This analysis report has been produced following ongoing consultation and evaluation of the new assessment arrangements (Section 2). It considers the issues identified by schools and deals specifically with the immediate and operational implications for 2013/14 and beyond (Section 3).

However, it also considers broader issues which were raised throughout the evaluations and which will require consideration at policy level (Section 4). These are considered in more detail in the Assessment Discussion Paper (April 2013), which should be read in conjunction with this report.

There is a unique opportunity at this time to consider the evaluation and assessment framework across the system in N Ireland holistically and, by taking account of the educational goals of the system, to consider well-defined functions for each of the elements and make connections between the different elements.

In order to be effective, the different elements of an assessment and evaluation framework (including statutory and non-statutory assessment, the evaluation of effectiveness of schools, the quality of school leadership and teaching) must align with educational objectives of learners and the system as a whole. All of these objectives should be learner centred.

Assigning 'high stakes' to educational assessments can influence behaviours and cause intended and undesirable consequences. This is evident when outcomes are used for accountability purposes. Accountability is critical to the success of a system but reliance on a limited range of indicators should be avoided. It is critical that accountability measures are broad and holistic, based more on educational value that is added by high quality interventions than on unsophisticated absolute measures. In this way some of the risks and unintended consequences of using educational assessments for purposes other than they were designed can be minimised.

2   Findings of CCEA Evaluation Report (July 2013)

CCEA undertook an evaluation of the first year of the new assessment arrangements using the Levels of Progression for Communication and Using Mathematics and the associated moderation arrangements. The evaluation covered the period from September 2012 to June 2013 and included:

- Feedback from principals and teachers' unions on the assessment and moderation process;

- Teachers' evaluation of the assessment and moderation process;
- Primary pupils' evaluation of CCEA assessment tasks; and
- Evaluation of moderator training.

There were a number of concerns raised and reiterated throughout the evaluation of the new assessment arrangements. The main concerns raised were:

- Timescales for the submission of levels and pupil portfolios are problematic;
- Pupils are assessed for end-of-key stage results too early in the academic year;
- The arrangements have created increased workload;
- Robustness of the new moderation system is not yet evident;
- Use of assessment data (levels) by DE and the ETI for target setting / benchmarking is inappropriate; and
- Parents do not understand the new Levels of Progression.

Despite this, schools recognised some benefits with the new assessment arrangements. For example, the process of internal Standardisation and professional dialogue was rated as a useful and beneficial experience by most schools. This was reiterated throughout several phases of the evaluation.

It is worth noting that these assessment arrangements were implemented into an already work-heavy year from the schools' perspective. In the 2012/2013 academic year this included the introduction of the new computer based assessments NILA and NINA in primary schools and training for the Using ICT Levels of Progression. There were additional pressures on timescales and workload due to the late confirmation of the legislative position of the assessment arrangements and the resulting release of detailed information to schools.

The CCEA evaluation report makes the following recommendations which are addressed in this analysis paper:

Policy
- Provide respite for schools by slowing the pace of the implementation.
- Defer the introduction of assessment and/or moderation of Using ICT to allow schools the opportunity to embed the current skills.
- Use schools' standardised scores (from tests such as NFER, PiE or PiM) instead of Levels of Progression for target setting and benchmarking.

Operational
- Timescales should be reviewed for the moderation process, in particular:
  - the date for submitting levels to CCEA (currently the 15th March) should be later in the academic year;
  - the date for submitting requested pupil portfolios should be later in the academic year.
- If possible, visiting moderators should be used for all schools or clusters of schools.
- Primary schools would benefit from more CCEA Assessment Tasks; these should be made available online for September 2013.

Support
- Provide an additional guidance document for all schools containing clear and definitive dates and messages.
- Clear detailed communication, explaining the new Levels of Progression, is required for parents.

3   Analysis of Issues and Proposals for 2013/14

This section primarily focuses on the operational aspects of assessment implementation.   It considers 2013/14 in the first instance but also includes an overview of the longer-term roll out of the assessment arrangements.

Summary of Recommendations: Operational

1. Pace of Change
   - Pace of implementation to be slowed and roll out models to be reconsidered as follows:

     Option 1 (Preferred Option): Skills to be implemented incrementally, one skill at a time, on a rolling programme basis. 2013/14 to be an 'embedding year' without statutory moderation or reporting of numerical levels. Schools will not be required to report or publish outcomes for any skill until they have been moderated in that skill. On this basis, Using ICT is to be introduced in 2013/14 (at the same times as the other two skills), with schools split into three groups, each group focusing on a different skill.

     Option 2: As per Option 1 above, but with external moderation and reporting of outcomes in one skill in 2013/14.

     Option 3: Moderate and report Communication and Using Mathematics as per original plan for 2013/14, but with deferment of Using ICT for at least one year.

2. Reporting Date and Models of Moderation

   - CCEA to consider options for moderation models which permit a reporting date later in the school year, and to survey/consult with schools on the proposed options, prior to implementation in 2014/15. Options currently are:
     1. Random sample of pupil portfolios
     2. School-selected pupil portfolios
     3. School portfolio
     4. Two-stage moderation

3. Workload
   - Workload concerns to be addressed through consideration of the options outlined above re pace of change and moderation models.

4. Guidance and Support
   - CCEA to provide a range of support for Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT in 2013/14, including additional face-to-face support.

5. Expected Levels and Progression
   - CCEA to provide additional advice for schools and parents in relation to expected levels and the use/reporting of Level 5, and to review existing guidance on superscripts to make their use more explicit.
   - CCEA also to conduct a statistical analysis of end-of-key-stage outcomes, including consideration of the correlation between Levels of Progression and standardised tests (for example CBA, PiE, PiM, NRIT etc), with a view to providing guidance on expected levels and on progression.

> 6. Parents
> - CCEA to liaise with DE to further develop the communications strategy for pupils, parents, schools, stakeholders and the public.

3.1 Pace of Change

Summary of Issues

Respondents indicated that the pace of change and implementation timetable as envisaged by the legislation was too fast and needed to slow down. In general terms, they felt that they were being inundated by a range of initiatives from the Department and were concerned about the impact on teachers on the ground. Some cited the impact of industrial action on the development and implementation of assessment; others reported that it was difficult to shift mind-sets from knowledge to skills.

Respondents felt that schools require more than one year to plan, embed and become familiar with the new levels and with the requirements of tasks, moderation and so on. They also expressed the view that one skill should be introduced at a time and over an adequate time period to allow for its effective implementation.

In terms of the planned introduction of Using ICT in 2013/14, respondents favoured a delay for the following reasons.

- Time is required to continue to embed the existing skills of Communication and Using Mathematics.
- Teachers themselves do not feel confident about their knowledge and skills in teaching and assessing Using ICT. This confidence needs to be instilled and developed before Using ICT can be taken forward.
- There is a lack of suitable and reliable hardware and software provision in schools and there is inequality of access to this provision.
- There are concerns about the timescales for the C2K transformation programme in 2013/14 and its potential impact on provision, e.g. availability of software, reduced number of devices.

However, there were a number of schools that felt they were in a position to take Using ICT forward next year but they recognised that not all schools were in that position. Those that were ready expressed concern at potentially losing the gains they had already made.

Implementation Options

The following options consider ways in which the pace of implementation may be slowed to allow schools time to embed the skills and their assessment fully in learning and teaching and to build confidence in their application of the standards when making judgements.

One main consideration underpinning these options is the extent to which any flexibility can be created in legislative requirements for schools to report outcomes, for example to CCEA and to parents.

Options 1 and 2 are dependent on acceptance that schools will not report outcomes (to CCEA, DE, parents) until they have been moderated and verified in that skill, and therefore that datasets will be incomplete until 2015/16 at the earliest. This has implications for legislative requirements. However, given the considerable concerns expressed by principals about the uses to which end-of-key-stage data are put and their lack of confidence in existing data (see 4.1 below), this may be preferable to providing datasets which contain data which has not yet been verified through the moderation and which therefore are likely to contain unreliable information (as per position this past year, 2012/13).

Option 1 (Preferred Option)

Amend the implementation timescale in order to enable schools' introduction of one Cross-Curricular Skill at a time on a phased basis, i.e. to focus on one skill in 2013/14 with roll out of one further skill per year thereafter, with schools split into three groups, each group focusing on a different skill. Further to this, designate 2013/14 as an 'embedding year' in which schools would be required to engage in, and provide confirmation of, a process of familiarisation, planning, internal standardisation, professional discussion and development, and classroom assessment using levels of progression in their designated skill. There would, however, be no requirement to participate in formal end-of-key-stage external moderation or to report outcomes.

In this model, the implementation of each skill would be on a two-year cumulative basis, with statutory moderation and subsequent reporting to parents in the following year, during which schools would also be engaged in the implementation process for the second skill, and so on. Schools would **not** be required to report or publish outcomes for any skill until they had been moderated in that skill.

This model is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Option 1 Rollout Moderation of Teacher Assessment of Levels of Progression for Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT

School Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	*2017/18 – 'Maintenance' Mode Rolling Programme*
Group 1	Embedding: UM	Embedding: Comm Moderation: UM Reporting: UM	Embedding: UICT Moderation: Comm Reporting: UM, Comm	Moderation: UICT Reporting: UM, Comm, UICT	*Moderation: UM Reporting: 3 CCS*
Group 2	Embedding: Comm	Embedding: UICT Moderation: Comm Reporting: Comm	Embedding: UM Moderation: UICT Reporting: Comm, UICT	Moderation: UM Reporting: UM, Comm, UICT	*Moderation: Comm Reporting: 3 CCS*
Group 3	Embedding: UICT	Embedding: UM Moderation: UICT Reporting: UICT	Embedding: Comm Moderation: UM Reporting: UICT, UM	Moderation: Comm Reporting: UM, Comm, UICT	*Moderation: UICT Reporting: 3 CCS*

Option 2

This is as per Option 1 above, but with external moderation and reporting of outcomes in 2013/14 (i.e. incremental moderation and reporting of one skill at a time, but without the embedding year for the first skill).

School Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	*2016/17 – 'Maintenance' Mode Rolling Programme*
Group 1	Moderation: UM Reporting: UM Embedding: Comm	Moderation: Comm Reporting: UM, Comm Embedding: UICT	Moderation: UICT Reporting: UM, Comm, UICT	*Moderation: UM Reporting: 3 CCS*
Group 2	Moderation: Comm Reporting: Comm Embedding: UICT	Moderation: UICT Reporting: Comm, UICT Embedding: UM	Reporting: UM, Comm, UICT Moderation: UM	*Moderation: Comm Reporting: 3 CCS*
Group 3	Moderation: UICT Reporting: UICT Embedding: UM	Moderation: UM Reporting: UICT, UM Embedding: Comm	Moderation: Comm Reporting: UM, Comm, UICT	*Moderation: UICT Reporting: 3 CCS*

Option 3

Maintain the status quo (i.e. as per original plan for 2013/14), but with deferment of Using ICT for at least one year.

Schools would assess and report on both Communication and Using Mathematics in 2013/14 and be moderated in one of these skills. Statutory Using ICT would be introduced in 2015/16 (Option 3a), and there could also be provision made for an 'opt in' in the previous year (Option 3b). Schools would report on all three skills from 2015/16 onwards.

Either schools would continue to focus on the same skill as 2012/13 (which would permit for further embedding of this skill) **or** they would swap to focus on the other skill in 2013/14.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	*2016/17*
Option 3a	All schools moderated in either Communication (50%) or Using Mathematics (50%)	All schools moderated in other skill (Communication 50%, Using Mathematics 50%)	All schools moderated in Using ICT (100%)	*Start of 'maintenance mode' rolling programme*
Option 3b	All schools moderated in either Communication (50%) or Using Mathematics (50%)	All schools moderated in other skill (Communication 50%, Using Mathematics 50%) Optional moderation of Using ICT	Remaining schools moderated in Using ICT	*Start of 'maintenance mode' rolling programme*

Table 4: Risk/Benefit Analysis of Implementation Models

The benefits, risks and disadvantages of each option are set out below.

	Benefits	Risks/Disadvantages

Option 1	**Schools**
	• Responds directly to schools' and unions' request to slow pace of implementation and to focus on one skill at a time.
	• Provides the best opportunities to communicate requirements to schools in timely manner for assessment and moderation process to occur.
	• More likely to gain buy-in from schools and teachers' unions than Option 2 and 3.
	• Incremental roll out allows a steady cumulative approach to the implementation of **all three** skills as they are included in the rolling cycle at the same time – this maintains the momentum that has been achieved e.g. by the ICT Accreditation Scheme.
	• Addresses school workload concerns – schools focus on embedding one skill at a time.
	• Provides 4-year plan for schools to work towards and integrate into School Development Plans.
	Allows time for:
	  ▪ Capacity building
	  ▪ Increased confidence in assessment process and outcomes
	  ▪ Embedding use of all tools (incl. tasks)
	  ▪ Development/amendment of Internal Standardisation systems in schools
	  ▪ Completion of C2k transformation
	  ▪ Data analysis of outcomes (comparability with standardised tests etc)
	  ▪ Clarification of messages, including reiteration of purposes and benefits of assessment using Levels of Progression
		Schools
		• Schools will not be able to meet existing legislative requirements re target setting, prospectus and reporting.
		• Loss of momentum, e.g. some schools (perhaps a significant number) could fail to engage with the embedding process and the year could then, in effect, be largely wasted, unless clear expectations for engagement are outlined.
		• Will require clear articulation of assessment and reporting requirements for other skills which are not the primary focus.
		• Incremental approach means that in Year 2 of cycle there is an overlap of assessing skill 2 and moderating skill 1 etc.
		• Risk of inconsistency in schools' implementation of skills
		
		System
		• No verified data in 2013/14 and only partial verified data available in 2014/15 and 2015/16.
		
		CCEA
		• Possible CCEA staffing capacity issues to provide skills implementation support function to schools unless moderators are used.

- ▪ Task approval
- ▪ Increased IM task bank and support
- ▪ Further refinement of CCEA operational aspects of moderation
- Opportunity to refocus assessment on its primary purpose – learning and teaching in the classroom.
- Provides time and opportunity for the teachers for revisiting the acquisition and development of the skill to make sure that pupils are progressing (reinforcing the formative purpose of using the LoPs for planning).
- Permits embedding of cross-curricularity.
- Gives all three cross-curricular skills equal importance and allows them to fall into the rolling programme in line with each other.

System
- Verified system data from 2014/15 - any data in system (reported to parents etc) will have been externally verified prior to release – increased confidence in its accuracy.
- Permits comparability exercises (statistical analysis of outcomes, comparison with standardised tests) to be carried out in 2013/14 to inform expectations and support consistency of data.
- Potential to build agreement re a strategic approach (with other ALBs)

CCEA
- Opportunity to consult with schools on models of moderation.
- More time and CCEA capacity for more targeted/bespoke schools' support in the absence of a requirement for large-scale support/training for moderation.
- Permits capacity building for, and use of, moderators in supportive function.

Option 2	**Schools** • Responds to schools' request for incremental roll out and focus on one skill at a time. • Addresses some of school workload concerns – focus on one skill at a time. • If a school's repeat focus is on the skill in which it was moderated last year (2012/13), this allows schools to continue and consolidate one of the skills they have been working on in 2012/13 and to build on the learning and moderation feedback from 2012/13. • Where schools do not repeat the focus on the same skill, this allows some (already well engaged) schools to consolidate two skills and for these there will be a record of partially verified data from both those skills. **System /CCEA** • Verified system data from 2013/14 - any data in system (reported to parents etc) will have been externally verified prior to release – increased confidence in its accuracy.	**Schools** • Schools will not be able to meet existing legislative requirements re target setting, prospectus and reporting. • Incremental approach means that in Year 2 of cycle there is an overlap of assessing skill 2 and moderating skill 1 etc; could create a perception of no change in workload compared to 2012/13 as schools are required to be moderated in one and embed the second skill in the same year. • Does not respond to schools' request to delay introduction of Using ICT. **System** • Gaps in school and pupil level data for 2013/14 and 2014/15. **CCEA** • Going live with untrialled model of moderation without consultation. • Pressure to communicate requirements to schools in timely manner (at the beginning of the school year) for moderation process to occur. • Limited capacity to provide both moderation training and skills implementation support function to schools. • Limited time to make operational adjustments (e.g. adjustments to administrative and IS systems)
Option 3	**Schools** • Keeps momentum going. • Responds to school requests to delay implementation of Using ICT in 2013/14. • If a school's repeat focus is on the skill in which it was moderated last year (12/13), this allows schools to continue and consolidate	**Schools** • Does not address school and union concerns re pace of implementation. • Does not address school workload considerations. Depending on model of moderation, administrative demands of external moderation may be reduced but schools still have to assess,

one of the skills they have been working on in 2012/13 and to build on the learning and moderation feedback from 2012/13. • Where schools do not repeat the focus on the same skill, this allows some (already well engaged) schools to consolidate two skills and for these there will be a record of verified data from both those skills. **System /CCEA** • Data available in Communication and Using Mathematics from 2013/14 – no gaps in data. • Allows C2K transformation to be completed before introduction of Using ICT.	standardise and report on two skills in 2013/14. • Loss of momentum for Using ICT embedding, which can be perceived as reduced significance of Using ICT. **System** • Schools will report unverified outcomes for the skill in which they have not been moderated in 2013/14 – data will be flawed and potentially unusable. • Does not present all three cross-curricular skills as of equal importance and does not allow them to fall into the rolling programme in line with each other. • No data on Using ICT until 2016. **CCEA** • Going live with untrialled model of moderation without consultation. • Pressure to communicate requirements to schools in timely manner for moderation process to occur. • Limited capacity to provide training and support function to schools. • Limited time to make operational adjustments (e.g. adjustments to administrative and IS systems). • Capacity challenges if all schools are moderated in Using ICT in one year.

Recommendations

Preferred Implementation Model

Option 1 is the preferred option as it addresses most closely the recommendations of schools and unions, is the most manageable for schools and for CCEA, and has the greatest potential to bring long-term benefits in terms of the embedding of the skills in the classroom, building of school confidence in the assessment process and the production of verified data for school and system use.

In 2013/14 schools would still be expected to assess and report qualitatively on all three cross-curricular skills and in all year groups, as provided for in current reporting legislation. In addition, they would be expected to have a particular focus on their allocated skill through:
- professional development;
- embedding the acquisition and development of the skill at a whole school level;
- planning for, and coordination of, ongoing and formal assessment opportunities;
- familiarisation with assessment tasks – task approval, effective use of tasks, 'trying out' tasks with their pupils in the classroom, assessing pupils' performance;
- assessment of the skill – classroom activities integrated with learning and teaching.

There would also be a clear expectation that schools would focus on understanding levels and standards through internal standardisation and engagement with opportunities for external standardisation (e.g. CCEA support visit; use of exemplification material; agreement trials etc), and that they would have evidence of this participation.

This model also allows CCEA to use the external workforce of moderators to provide school support; this will also help to build capacity within these teams and in schools.

As noted earlier, Options 1 and 2 are dependent on acceptance that schools will not report outcomes (to CCEA, DE, parents) until they have been moderated and verified in that skill, and therefore that datasets will be incomplete until 2015/16 at the earliest. This has implications for legislative requirements. However, given the considerable concerns expressed by principals about the uses to which end-of-key-stage data are put and their lack of confidence in existing data (see 4.1 below), this may be preferable to providing datasets which contain data which has not yet been verified through the moderation and which therefore are likely to contain unreliable information (as per position this past year, 2012/13).

Using ICT

While many schools reported that they were not ready for the implementation of Using ICT as a third skill in 2013/14 and needed more time, resource and support, a significant number have engaged successfully with voluntary ICT accreditation schemes in recent years and were concerned about a loss of momentum if the introduction of Using ICT is delayed.

The preferred proposal is that Using ICT should be introduced in 2013/14 alongside the other two skills.   It is accepted that schools have concerns about readiness and resource.   However, implementation on this basis would have the following advantages, subject to C2K transformation being completed in 2013/14:

- If there was phased implementation with no statutory moderation and reporting in 2013/14, then this would help mitigate the risk in terms of transformation etc.

- A significant number of schools (e.g. 600+ at Primary) have participated successfully in voluntary accreditation schemes and therefore are likely to be in a position of readiness.
- For these schools, the momentum gained would not be lost (as would be the case if Using ICT were deferred for a number of years).

Option 1 or 2 would permit the introduction of Using ICT in this manner.

If Option 3 were to be adopted, then the introduction of Using ICT should be deferred for at least a year in order to address schools' concerns as outlined in 3.1 above.

3.2   Reporting Date and Models of Moderation

Summary of Issues

The 15 March return date of outcomes to CCEA, required by the current model of moderation, was widely seen as a major issue and pressure for schools, resulting in levels being reported which were not 'end of key stage' but were actually two thirds of the way through the key stage. Many schools said they either reported too low a level (because it was too early in the school year to report) or they predicted where a child would be by end of June (which was not what was required). Respondents also reported that the turnaround times for moderation, e.g. collation of portfolios, review of outcomes, were too tight.   Schools' preferred reporting date was the end of May; however, a number of Post primary respondents pointed out that this time of year was already pressured due to examination commitments.

In relation to the moderation process itself, schools reported that they needed more clarity about the evidence required for portfolios. For example that the inclusion of only one CCEA task at Primary was restrictive, that moderator feedback was limited at times and that more support was required when reviewing outcomes based on moderation feedback.

Some suggestions made by schools included: to use the Primary ICT Accreditation model of moderation; that schools could choose which pupil portfolios to send; that they could include more CCEA tasks in portfolios; and to consider the use of visiting moderators with school clusters earlier in the year.

Options

Any changes to the date for reporting of outcomes to CCEA will necessitate the introduction of an amended (or different) moderation model. Four options have been identified by moderation leads; the options under consideration include the following:

1. **Random sample of pupil portfolios**. This is similar to the process used in 2012/13. Schools send lists of pupil names to CCEA in advance, from which CCEA identifies a random selection of pupils. Schools send portfolios for these pupils to CCEA for moderation at the same time as submitting pupil outcomes (mid-April).
2. **School-selected pupil portfolios**. This is similar to the Primary ICT Accreditation model. Schools send a number of pupil portfolios which illustrate the standard at each level which they wish to award. These are sent to CCEA for moderation at the same time as submitting pupil outcomes.
3. **School portfolio**. This model is based on the former Primary end-of-key-stage moderation process.   In February/March, schools submit for moderation a school

portfolio of work demonstrating the levels they intend to report. Schools subsequently submit pupil outcomes to CCEA in early May.

4. **Two-stage moderation**. This is based on the Shadow Year proposal and is a variation on Option 3 above. Schools submit a school portfolio of work earlier in the year, followed by a second check carried out later in the year. This may be random and/or focused on schools which have not demonstrated that they are on standard and/or focused on Level 5 at Key Stage 2.

Opportunities for the use of visiting moderation will also be considered.

Recommendations

There are implications for each of these models. For example, moderation which occurs later in the school year (for example May) will permit the later reporting of outcomes but may not be administratively feasible for post-primary schools and CCEA. Models which rely on school selection of evidence promote internal standardisation and are likely to involve less teacher workload. However, they will not be seen as robust in their scrutiny of schools' award of outcomes unless further checks are put in place.

These options are currently being evaluated and scoped within CCEA in terms of feasibility, manageability and robustness. An initial assessment is provided in Appendix 1: 'Options for Changing Timescales for Assessment/Moderation of Using Mathematics/Communication in 2013/14'.

Based on this initial analysis, Option 4 may present the most acceptable balance between manageability and robustness. However, it should be noted that these are initial proposals and will require further, more detailed consideration before firm recommendations can be made. If moderation is deferred in 2013/14 as proposed in Pace of Change Option 1 above, this will provide an opportunity to survey/consult with schools on the proposed options, prior to implementation in 2014/15. Otherwise, it will necessary **either** to survey schools in the autumn term and confirm arrangements in Spring 2014 (which does not leave adequate time for schools to respond to moderation requirements) **or** to go live with a new or revised moderation system which has not be surveyed or tested.

3.3   Workload

Summary of Issues

Respondents to evaluations reported that workload surrounding the assessment arrangements remained an issue and that they felt rushed and under pressure. The main issues related to the timescales for assessment and moderation, particularly the early submission date for outcomes. However, teachers also reported increased workload in relation to the time taken to develop tasks/ assessment activities and the collation of evidence for external moderation. While there was little identified in terms of specific details such as sample size or the number of pieces in a portfolio, there was a general sense that there were too many changes and that too much assessment was going on within schools – to the detriment of learning and teaching and teacher welfare.

It should be recognised that there were significant additional pressures on timescales and workload in 2012/13 due to the late confirmation of the legislative position of the assessment arrangements and the resulting release of detailed information to schools.

Recommendations

It is proposed that workload issues will be best addressed through consideration of the options presented in 3.1: 'Pace of Change' and 3.2: 'Reporting Date and Models of Moderation' as outlined above. In particular, the pressures associated with the introduction of new arrangements could be eased if a slower pace of implementation was adopted, with a focus on in-school embedding of each skill in the first year of its introduction.

Depending on the moderation model selected, moderation may involve fewer samples of work and/or school selection of samples and/or moderation earlier in the school year, thus leading to decreased administration. Workload considerations will be included in any consultation on moderation options moving forward.

Clear communication of assessment requirements in a timely manner and provision of guidance to schools will also address these issues (see 3.4: 'Guidance and Support' below).

3.4   Guidance and Support

Summary of Issues

Respondents valued face-to-face training and opportunities for professional collaboration. They felt that the full assessment process should be supported by greater face-to-face contact and training by CCEA and through greater use of moderators to offer advice to school on the ground during the internal standardisation process from September to May each year.

Primary respondents felt that post-primary schools do not always take account of primary learning and that therefore a flow of information and processes was needed across key stages. They valued cross-phase engagement and proposed more standardisation opportunities for clusters of schools and for cross-phase collaboration.

Respondents reported that assessment tasks are useful as a classroom tool to support the Cross-Curricular Skills, that they required a wider range of assessment tasks (particularly for Irish Medium) and, at Key Stage 3, that they would like the opportunity and facility to share tasks between schools. They also required more training and guidance on the use of tasks, including their administration and strategies for good practice.

In addition, teachers felt that there were mixed messages within the system and requested additional explicit and consistent guidance for all schools, containing a 'checklist' of clear and definitive dates and messages.

Recommendations

CCEA has a range of support planned for 2013/14 – for Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT. This currently includes:

Primary
- Updated supplementary guidance
- Using Mathematics agreement trials
- Exemplification Database (copyright permitting)

- Pre-moderation training in Using Mathematics or Communication
- Increased CCEA Assessment Tasks bank (70+ Using Mathematics and 50+ Communication tasks)
- Increased exemplification – including portfolios
- Initial Teacher Training
- Greater choice of Irish Medium tasks
- Face-to-face Standards Guidance/Supportive Visit

Post primary
- Updated supplementary guidance
- Task writing workshops, improved task approval system
- Exemplification Database (copyright permitting)
- Talking and Listening CD Roms
- Agreement Trials for Using Mathematics/Communication/Using ICT
- Face-to-face Standards Guidance/Supportive Visits
- Initial Teacher Training
- Publication of additional STEM exemplar tasks
- Coordinator Portfolio Clinics
- Using ICT taster sessions
- Co-ordinator Planning Tool
- Tracking assessment data for statutory assessment of Using ICT

Additional face-to-face support will be possible if the phased implementation proposal is accepted and moderation is not offered in 2013/14 (see 3.1 Option 1 above).

3.5   Expected Levels and Progression

Summary of Issues

Schools felt that there was a need for greater clarity from DE and CCEA on expectations around levels, particularly the number and percentage of Level 5s at Key Stage 2, and that there were mixed messages and variations in the percentage of Level 5 awarded by schools. It was felt that, in some cases, the reporting of such high percentages was not realistic and did not permit schools to demonstrate added value. Some principals suggested that there should be no award of Level 5 at Key Stage 2, or that its award should be restricted to exceptional performance. Principals also expressed the view that schools reporting excessively high percentages of Level 5 should be scrutinised and challenged. Others suggested that expectations should be informed by an analysis of the correlation between end-of-key-stage outcomes and standardised tests.

Respondents also reported that the Levels of Progression were too wide to demonstrate progression year-on-year. Some proposed the use of a ten level scale, with each level illustrating the standard for each year of teaching.

Recommendations

CCEA will provide additional advice for schools and parents in relation to expected levels and the use of Level 5. Guidance will include clear articulation of progression within a level, e.g. 'What is the minimum competence before a pupil can achieve a level?'. In order to inform guidance on expected levels, CCEA will also a carry out a statistical analysis of end-of-key-stage outcomes, including

consideration of the correlation between Levels of Progression and standardised tests (for example CBA, PiE, PiM, NRIT etc).

Consideration could be given to the current reporting legislation to remove the requirement for schools to report percentages 'at Level 5' and to report instead 'at or above the expected level'.

CCEA will also review existing guidance on superscripts and make their use more explicit in relation to internal standardisation, summative judgements and reporting. This may, where appropriate, include exemplification of the range within a level (level description re typical performance, individual piece, pupil portfolio) and provision for superscripts in reporting to CCEA and/or on moderation cover sheets.

In the longer term, CCEA will consider the potential to carry out research on expected levels within year groups (other than 4, 7 and 10) with a view to providing guidance on expected progression and consider the risks and benefits of the current level framework in comparison with a year-specific 1-10 scale.

3.6   Parents

Summary of Issues

Respondents reported that parents do not understand levels, that they rarely ask about them and that teachers struggle to explain them. Parents are more interested in scores, marks or percentages because they understand a numeric score and can compare scores against siblings or other pupils.

Recommendations

CCEA will liaise with DE to further develop the communications strategy for pupils, parents, schools, stakeholders and the public and to rearticulate the principles of assessment and the rationale for the arrangements in relation to Cross-Curricular Skills and the Levels of Progression.

4 Broader Considerations

Summary of Recommendations: Broader Considerations

End-of-Key-Stage Assessment
CCEA and DE to rearticulate the primary purpose of the assessment arrangements (cross-curricular skills and Levels of Progression) to focus on their use as a shared framework for learning, teaching and progression on a whole school basis, building confidence through professional debate, internal standardisation and inter-school engagement.

Policy
DE to consider initiating a policy review, including 'joined up' consideration of legislation already under review (i.e. computer-based assessment, reporting, target-setting, prospectus).

System Accountability
DE to consider the use and analysis of a range of available information (both quantitative and qualitative and potentially including end-of-key stage outcomes, anonymised standardised assessments data, qualifications data, sampling etc) to inform initiatives.

Consideration to be given to using an objective measure of pupil performance which would be distinct from, but complementary to, assessment in schools (for example through international comparative studies or through 'matrix light sampling').

School Accountability
DE to consider an accountability framework focused on governance and school self-evaluation and on how schools use analysis of a range of data, including examination results, end-of-key-stage outcomes and standardised tests, to identify areas for attention, to effect improvement and to gauge the effectiveness of interventions.

CCEA and DE to consider mechanisms to address gaps, for example:
- measures of deprivation and other contextual data in the development of any value-added measure;
- suitable baseline measurement and longitudinal data;
- qualitative indicators to provide a more holistic view of the achievements of individual young people and schools;
- additional measures of performance to guard against the potential risk of perverse performance incentives.

4.1 Reporting Outcomes, Department and ETI Expectations and Use of Data

Principals stated that they experienced pressure (from ETI, parents etc) in wanting to demonstrate a good and improving performance year on year. They expressed concerns that outcomes are used for a range of purposes for which they were not designed, including viability audits, area-based planning and funding, and that this can create competition between schools and thus distortion of outcomes.

There were concerns about the possible use of this year's assessment data, particularly given that the new arrangements were so new, that not all schools had participated in moderation, that there were no checks on variations in the award of levels and that industrial action had impacted on the

completeness of the data. They felt that the 2012/13 data should not be used for target setting and benchmarking and requested a more robust input from CCEA, for example in carrying out a comparison of moderated and unmoderated outcomes data, or in challenging schools with a high percentage of pupils at particular levels.

Some reported a tension between primary schools, who want to show that standards are improving and will therefore report increasing levels achieved, compared with post-primary schools who feel that the levels subsequently reported to them are inaccurate and that they are therefore unable to illustrate added value through end-of-key-stage outcomes alone.

Some principals suggested that a test sat at each Key Stage would remove the subjectivity inherent in the current system; however, others commented that this would replicate the English system which had numerous flaws.

4.2   Contextualising the Data and Value Added Measures

Principals reported that they were happy to be held accountable for the effectiveness of their school, but that accountability should be pupil-centred and focused on individual progression.

School principals regularly mentioned the need to see a school in context and that end-of-key-stage data on its own, and year-on-year comparisons of this data, gave no indication of the issues with which a school had to deal, such as level of deprivation, SEN, EAL, Newcomers, ability, rural isolation etc. There was a concern that outcomes (e.g. % of Level 5) are being used as the indicator of a 'good school'; some reported a perception that ETI are only interested in key stage outcomes and increasing the percentage of Level 5, while others felt that they were able to contextualise their outcomes for ETI, but not when those outcomes are published openly to parents and the media.

It was felt that the pressures of benchmarking data and quartiles can lead to an unrepresentative inflation of results and that FSME banding is too blunt and does not compare like-with-like as it does not take account of other contextual factors. Schools felt that providing a much richer degree of information, which took account of contextual factors such as SEN, EAL and which included value-added measures, would help the reader, parent, Department and ETI judge the school's performance more reasonably.

Schools also pointed to the range of data already available in schools, such as standardised tests data, which could provide a rich source of information but which was not used by the Department.

4.3   Use of Standardised Tests

Many school principals said that they relied upon other diagnostic/summative assessments such as NRIT, PiE and PiM (although some others were used). They felt that these tools were excellent, were reliable, demonstrated value added, identified progression for each child, were valued by schools and asked for by ETI. Consequently, they questioned the need for the new assessment arrangements and data, given that 'no-one relied upon it or valued it or used it'. They said that post-primary schools do not rely on end-of-key-stage data but ask for standardised tests data and that many test the child on entry to post-primary school so that they have a benchmark from which to work.

4.4   Rationale and Fitness-for Purpose

Principals questioned the value and fitness-for-purpose of teacher assessed levels as a system check. They cited the perception of levels as an externally imposed measure and felt that the pressure to enhance results meant that the arrangements were not robust and were open to manipulation, particularly given the subjective nature of teacher assessment. They felt that the robustness of the arrangements in 2012/13 was impacted by lack of confidence and consensus between schools and that the moderation process had the same issues as the previous system which had been open to abuse. Schools questioned the value of the arrangements since the results were not reliable, post-primary schools do not use primary levels data and parents do not understand levels.

Some respondents also questioned the use of Levels of Progression at school and pupil level, stating that they were too broad to indicate pupil progress. Others commented that Levels of Progression documents were useful as a tool for teaching and learning. They felt that a holistic view of the pupil was required and that levels outcomes should be used by schools for internal purposes only.

4.5   Broader Considerations: Recommendations

As outlined in CCEA's *Assessment Discussion Paper* (April 2013), the issue demonstrates the tension between two key policies; that of an assessment system based on teacher assessment and that of accountability. Teacher assessment as an integral part of learning and teaching is highly valuable. However, there can be a conflict when this teacher judgement is used to summarise pupil performance and the performance data are then used for accountability purposes.

So, to alleviate this tension, consideration might be given either to changing the measure (teacher assessment using levels of progression at the end of key stages) or reviewing the accountability context within which that measure is considered.

It is true that a process based on teacher assessment may be open to bias and subjectivity and to the manipulation (conscious or unconscious) of outcomes. Other assessment practices (such as use of standardised tests, external examinations) can be perceived as more objective, reliable sources of information about the performance of pupils. However, any use of assessment outcomes for high stakes purposes will exert pressure on those involved and thereby influence their work. Therefore, as identified in *Assessment in Schools: Fit for Purpose?*[1], any decision on the use of assessment data for accountability purposes has to keep two key questions in mind.

1 What is the data attempting to measure?
2 What will be the consequences of publishing the data for accountability purposes?

Assigning 'high stakes' to educational assessments can influence behaviours and cause intended and undesirable consequences. This is evident when outcomes are used for accountability purposes. Accountability is critical to the success of a system but reliance on a limited range of indicators should be avoided. It is critical that accountability measures are broad and holistic, based more on educational value that is added by high quality interventions than on unsophisticated absolute measures.

'High stakes uses of evaluation and assessment results might lead to distortions in the education process as a result of school agents concentrating on the measure to hold them accountable. For

---

[1] *Assessment in Schools: Fit for Purpose?* Teaching and Learning Research Programme, 2009

instance, excessive focus on teaching students the specific skills that are tested, narrowing the curriculum, training students to ensure specific types of questions, adopting rote learning styles of instruction, allocating more resources to those subjects that are tested, focussing more on students near the proficiency cut score'[2].

A more sophisticated approach to the use of data is required if these unintended consequences are to be avoided, through using and analysing a range of available information (both quantitative and qualitative) to inform initiatives rather than over-reliance on any one measure.

It may be that this principle is already well accepted and established at a policy level. However, schools' perception is that the focus (of CCEA, The Department, ETI etc) is on a narrow range of measures such as end-of-key-stage levels and GCSE grades A* to C. It may be because this information is easily and widely available and is common to all schools.   It may be because legislation (reporting, target-setting, prospectus, end-of-key-stage) and published system targets (*Count, Read: Succeed*) are focused on this data.

Whatever the case, a more explicit message is required to link the use of assessment data with the excellent work that is being done in building school and system expertise in the effective use of such data.

This may be seen in the recent (February 2013) NIAO Report to the Northern Ireland Assembly on Improving Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Schools. The report highlights progress against targets in end-of-key-stage and GCSE outcomes. It considers other evidence from international comparative studies. However, and crucially, it also looks at other factors such as the gap between lowest and highest achieving, the effect of social deprivation (particularly the difference in impact between controlled and maintained sectors) and outcomes for boys. It also considers the positive impact of good classroom practice, effective school leadership, diagnosing and addressing individual learning needs, the role of families, and the sharing of data and its use by schools.

CCEA considers that reviewing the accountability context is the preferred way forward, not by reducing the accountability requirements, but by reframing and refocusing them.

System Level Accountability

At system level, the use and analysis of a range of available information (both quantitative and qualitative) could be used to inform initiatives.

Consideration should be given to using an objective measure of pupil performance which would be distinct from, but complementary to, assessment in schools. This could be through the continued use of international comparative studies such as PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS, or through 'matrix light sampling'. The potential of sampling has been outlined in previous CCEA advice, such as that of January 2003 and May 2012.

Analysis of a range of data could also be used to explore identified themes such as gender, social deprivation and trends over time at a system level and thus lead to more targeted support. Available data currently includes, or could include in the future:
- International comparative studies;
- Standardised assessments (depending on policy decisions re computer-based assessment);

---

[2] Synergies for Better Learning. An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment. OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, April 2013

- Levels data;
- Qualifications data.

While there are obvious sensitivities around the use of 'diagnostic' assessments at system level, this information has the potential to be used for its intended purpose of informing actions and interventions at a system level as well as for pupils and schools. If used in an anonymous way, valuable insights can be gained without impacting on behaviours such as teaching to the test.

School Accountability

Accountability should be focused on governance and school self-evaluation, on how schools use analysis of a range of data, including examination results, end-of-key-stage outcomes and standardised tests, to identify areas for attention, to effect improvement and to gauge the effectiveness of interventions.

Consideration should be given to addressing gaps such as those identified in the PWC *Final Report on School and Pupil Performance Data* (November 2008), for example:

- A suitable baseline measurement and longitudinal data;
- qualitative indicators to provide a more holistic view of the achievements of individual young people and schools;
- additional measures of performance to guard against the potential risk of perverse performance incentives; and
- measures of deprivation and other contextual data in the development of any value-added measure.

Review of Policy

There are a number of policy reviews already underway or recently completed:

- CCEA review of the operation of end-of-key-stage assessment arrangements.
- DE policy review of computer-based assessments.
- DE consultation exercise re revising existing legislation for reporting, target setting and school prospectus.
- Review of GCSE and GCE qualifications.

This is therefore an ideal opportunity to link the findings of these reviews together by initiating a policy review, including 'joined up' consideration of legislation already under review (i.e. computer-based assessment, reporting, target-setting, prospectus).

End-of-Key-Stage Assessment and Levels of Progression

In the meantime, schools should continue to use the new levels of progression, with the focus on their use as a shared framework for learning, teaching and progression on a whole school basis, rather than a mechanism for formal comparison between schools. Confidence can be built through professional debate, internal standardisation and inter-school engagement. External moderation should be seen as supportive rather than punitive.

The Department has already recognised the need for flexibility and support over the coming years, that it will take time for any new system to bed down and that outcomes will fluctuate in initial years. It has not set system targets for KS1-3 for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 years. However, schools still have concerns about the publishing of data in this context – in annual reports to parents, in school prospectuses, in benchmarking data – and the potential impact of the conclusions that may be drawn by those who do not have a full understanding of their context and of the limitations of the data. Therefore, consideration should be given to what flexibility can be provided within the system in the short term (in terms of schools' statutory obligations) to allow these new practices to embed and for debate to take place.

4.6   Options for Changing Timescales for Assessment/Moderation in 2013/14

Option 1: CCEA-selected random sample of pupil portfolios

Extend the deadline for reporting outcomes by 4 weeks (may be more or less depending on date of Easter)

Under this option, schools submit a list of end of key stage pupils' names (**not levels**) to CCEA. CCEA then applies an algorithm to this list to obtain a random selection of pupils whose portfolios must be submitted for moderation (Mid March).

The requested portfolios are then collected four weeks later at the same time as the levels are being submitted (Mid April).

In addition, where this algorithm fails to sample all of the levels being awarded within the school, the school must submit additional pupil portfolios to cover this 'shortfall'.

What schools would have to do

- Schools would be allocated one skill.
- Schools submit a list of pupils' names to CCEA.
- Schools submit pupil portfolios based on CCEA's request and may include 'extra' portfolios by choice for any levels not covered in CCEA sample list.
- Make adjustments based on CCEA moderation feedback.

Positives for the System and CCEA

- The moderation is in-year and after reporting of outcomes to CCEA.
- School judgements of summative pupil outcomes are sampled.
- CCEA chooses a partial sample – element of robustness.

Positives for Schools

- It gives schools an element of choice and flexibility.
- The level is assigned to pupils later in the year.

Negatives for the System and CCEA

- This could result in an unmanageable number of portfolios for CCEA to moderate.
- Less confidence in the system if sample is not representative.
- Easter in 2014 is mid-April. If portfolios are collected after Easter there would not be enough time to complete the moderation/feedback process and then allow 'adjustment' time for schools to review feedback and re- submit levels before reporting.
- If CCEA requests additional portfolios to cover all levels there could potentially be more samples required than the current 17. This could add considerably (and unquantifiably) to the moderation workload, unless sample size is reduced.
- CCEA IS software systems will require further development (for example, to algorithm; to provide access to centres for CCEA's online moderation system).
- If schools send additional portfolios, additional processing time will be required to allow CCEA to add additional candidates.
- Identification of levels not covered by the sample list could only be checked after the levels are received. This will probably be too late to take any corrective action.
- Most processing of levels and moderation will be mainly in May and June. This would have a major impact on CCEA resources.

Negatives for Schools

- If the sample size remains the same, the unions' issue over workload is still not resolved; CCEA may still be asking for large numbers of pupil portfolios and schools will have to have evidence available for all pupils.
- This is an especially busy time of the year for post-primary teachers with GCSE and GCE classes.

Option 2: School-selected pupil portfolios
Extend the deadline for reporting outcomes by 4 weeks (may be more or less depending on date of Easter). Under this option, schools would choose the pupil portfolios to be submitted with the proviso that they must submit a specified number of portfolios at all of the levels to be reported. These submissions would come to CCEA in mid to late April at the same time as the pupil levels were being submitted. Once the school reports its levels/submits its portfolios, a comparative check is carried out by CCEA to ensure that the each level claimed is supported by pupil portfolios at the same level.
What schools would have to do
• Schools would be allocated one skill. • Schools choose which portfolios to submit.
Positives for the System and CCEA
• The moderation is in-year and after reporting of outcomes to CCEA. • School judgements of summative pupil outcomes are sampled.
Positives for Schools
• It gives schools an element of choice and flexibility. • The level is assigned to pupils later in the year. • Helps to address union issue over workload – school can select evidence for moderation. • Schools can draw on internal standardisation re selection of evidence. • Empowers teachers.
Negatives for the System and CCEA
• Reduced robustness, less confidence in the system as samples are school selected. • Easter in 2014 is mid-April. If portfolios are collected after Easter there would not be enough time to complete the moderation/feedback process and then allow 'adjustment' time for schools to review feedback and re- submit levels before reporting. • CCEA's IS software systems will require further development (for example, to provide access to centres for CCEA's online moderation system, to provide more manual input by moderators). There is potential for errors by moderators. • Most processing of levels and moderation will mainly be in May and June. This would have a major impact on CCEA resources. • Identification of levels not covered by the sample list could only be checked after the levels come in. If schools do not send their levels on the due date this may be too late to take any corrective action. May not be possible to allow schools to report in June.
Negatives for Schools
• Schools still have to collate pupil portfolios for sample selected to send to CCEA. • This is an especially busy time of the year for post-primary teachers with GCSE and GCE classes.

Option 3: School portfolio

Under this option, school portfolios (agreed by all staff through internal standardisation) are submitted to CCEA.
CCEA moderates these portfolios to gauge the accuracy of schools' understanding of the standards represented within the Levels of Progression.
Feedback is provided to schools and where adjustments to perceptions of the standards are required, schools must act accordingly.
Where a high degree of adjustment is required, the school must re-submit evidence in the following year to show that the standards are now applied correctly.

What schools would have to do

- Schools would be allocated one skill.
- Schools submit a school portfolio of work demonstrating the levels they intend to report (Feb/March).
- Schools submit levels (Early May).
- Report levels to parents by end of June.

Positives for the System and CCEA

- This model verifies teacher judgement.
- The moderation is in-year.
- Most processing would be February, March and April which is better operationally for CCEA.
- Quantity of material to be moderated is more manageable than other options.

Positives for Schools

- Increased manageability – can use internal standardisation materials.
- Levels are assigned to pupils later in the year.
- This model verifies teacher judgement.
- Schools can report verified levels in year.
- There is more focus on consistency of standards and internal standardisation - empowers teachers.

Negatives for the System and CCEA

- Reduced robustness, less confidence in the system.
- No check of application of levels and schools' award of outcomes.
- Online system would require development to allow for manual keying of submission and outcomes.
- Manual completion at moderation injects risk of error to the process.

Negatives for Schools

- Risk that this model will not command schools' confidence.
- Does not address schools' concerns about lack of challenge function for those schools reporting high outcomes.
- There may still be a feeling that this adds to workload.

Option 4: The two stage model (Preferred option based on initial analysis)

Stage 1: Schools submit school portfolios to exemplify their understanding of the standards represented in the Levels of Progression (as early in the year as possible).
These portfolios are moderated and feedback is provided.
After schools have reviewed and acted upon this feedback, the levels for all end-of-key-stage pupils are submitted to CCEA.

Stage 2: A second-stage check is carried out on schools whose standards were not confirmed at Stage 1. This is intended to check that the feedback provided at Stage 1 has been acted upon.
In addition, a check is carried out on a sample of schools whose standards were confirmed at Stage 1. This check may be random or targeted (for example, focusing on schools reporting an unusually high number of level 5). This is to ensure that the application of the standards within the school is appropriate.

What schools would have to do

- Schools would be allocated one skill.
- Schools submit a school portfolio of work demonstrating the levels they intend to report (Feb/March)
- Schools submit levels (Early May)
- Following a comparison of levels claimed and levels confirmed schools may be asked participate in second stage checks (for example, selection of pupil portfolios chosen by CCEA).

Positives for the System and CCEA

- This model verifies teacher judgement.
- Most processing would be February, March and April which is better operationally for CCEA.
- The follow up stage allows a check on the application of the standards and schools' award of outcomes.

Positives for Schools

- It gives schools a lot of choice and flexibility.
- The level is assigned to pupils later in the year following verification from CCEA.
- There is more focus on consistency of standards and internal standardisation.
- A school portfolio is more manageable for teachers.
- Gives professionalism back to schools.
- Second stage check may address schools' concerns about challenge function for those schools reporting high outcomes.

Negatives for the System and CCEA

- If schools are asked for the second stage check it may increase workload considerably, depending on the nature of the check.
- Schools which are escalated to stage two may be reporting unverified levels at the end of June.
- Increased CCEA workload with technically two moderation periods.
- If schools asked to submit levels early in May some may not actually send them until late May/early June. There may not be enough time to complete the comparison and inform the centre of decision before they have to report to parents.
- By first requiring school portfolios and then having a different system of follow up, CCEA is employing two different moderation models. Time would be required for their development.

• Most processing of levels and moderation will be mainly in May and June. This would have a major impact on CCEA resources.
• Moderation of the Stage 2 material may have to extend beyond the end of the school year, meaning that schools involved in Stage 2 would not be able to report levels by 30 June.
• Legislation would be required to facilitate this.

Negatives for Schools

• Possible increased workload.
• Moderation of the Stage 2 material would have to extend beyond the end of the school year, meaning that schools involved in Stage 2 would not be able to report verified levels by 30 June.
• Post-primary schools may not able to access levels for a significant number of new pupils until later in their first year (Year 8).