

To: Principals of all Primary and Post-Primary
Schools

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
Bangor
BT19 7PR

24 August 2016

Dear Sir / Madam,

END OF KEY STAGE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2016/17

CCEA will soon be issuing to schools the statutory documentation for Assessment Arrangements for 2016/17. The documentation provides the detailed information on the arrangements; explains the various components and timing of the arrangements; and indicates the action schools need to take.

As you are aware, the arrangements for assessment against and reporting of Levels of Progression (LoP) in Communication and Using Mathematics came into effect from the 2012/13 school year. LoPs for Using ICT have been available for use for the same time, but formal arrangements will come into place so that the moderation of Using ICT becomes statutory from September 2016 and the levels reported in Using ICT are to be sent to CCEA by the end of the year. Schools should continue to report outcomes in all three skills to parents.

This also means that the three-year rolling programme of moderation will be implemented in full, so that if you are to be moderated in, for instance, Communication this year, it will be three years before you are moderated in the same skill again. CCEA's role in moderation is to support schools' own standardisation and understanding of Levels of Progression (within and between schools).

Since their introduction, a number of the Teaching Unions have instructed members not to participate in the Key Stage Assessment Arrangements, specifically, instructing members not to forward assessment data to CCEA.

As we begin a new academic year, I thought it was worthwhile highlighting the considerable agreement and progress reached to date with the Northern Ireland Teaching Council (NITC) on the policy of end-of-Key-Stage assessment. These include recognition and agreement that:

- teachers' professional judgement should be a vital component of assessment arrangements;
- there are considerable benefits in agreeing the application of standards to assist teachers in using the Levels of Progression in the classroom with confidence;
- the Department will no longer hold school-level assessment data. We have taken steps to ensure that CCEA will send to the Department data at pupil level, with the school identifier removed. This will enable the Department to produce system-level information only;
- DE and all of its Arms-Length Bodies as well as ETI have given assurances they will not use key-stage assessment data in isolation to draw conclusions about school performance;
- individual pupil portfolios are no longer a feature of moderation.

Two unions, INTO and UTU, have agreed that members in schools engaged in the first tranche of the Shared Education Programme can provide assessment data; the Department is expecting this arrangement to continue into future tranches of the Shared Education Programme.

These arrangements more clearly provide a framework for professional dialogue around standards: within schools, between departments, and between schools, including across phases.

Over the past number of months, CCEA has also been running a series of practitioner-led working groups to look at the particular challenges associated with assessing cross-curricular skills and which build on the excellent work of

those schools who have been involved to date. As a result of that work, CCEA has compiled a range of support and training tailored to primary and post-primary sectors. For example, for post-primary schools, CCEA has compiled information on practical approaches to cross-curricular assessment as articulated by participating schools. These approaches illustrate the benefits the schools have derived and how challenges have been overcome as a result of using these arrangements and will be shared with schools shortly.

CCEA will continue to consult teachers on the training and professional development needs in assessment over the coming year and I hope that you and your school will welcome the opportunity to play a full and positive part in this work.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and 'H'.

DAVID HUGHES

Director, Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards