Rationale

As outlined in Building the Curriculum 5, the purposes of assessment are

- to support learning that develops the knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities which contribute to the four capacities
- to give assurance to parents, learners themselves, and others, that children and young people are progressing in their learning and developing in line with expectations
- to provide a summary of what learners have achieved, including through qualifications and awards
- to contribute to planning the next stages of learning and to help learners progress to further education, higher education and employment
- to inform future improvements in learning and teaching

Within West Lothian, we have a robust and integrated approach to developing assessment and moderation approaches through our Moving Forward in Learning (MFIL) model, our Raising Attainment strategy, cluster and Quality Improvement Partnership (QIPs) collaborations, Validated Self-evaluation activities, and national representation through our Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSOs).

School Practice

Teachers assess constantly as part of daily learning and teaching. They get to know their learners well, build up a profile of their progress, strengths and needs and involve them in planning what they need to learn next. From time to time, teachers also take stock of their learners’ achievements and progress in order to be able to plan ahead and to record and report on progress. This is vital in ensuring that learners’ progress is on track and that action is being taken to address any problems at the earliest possible point. Taking stock of learners’ achievements and progress is particularly important at transitions.

Assessment involves gathering, reflecting on and evaluating evidence of learning to enable staff to check on progress. Teachers use a range of assessment approaches to assess the different types of achievement across the curriculum. This range allows learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. It is essential that staff use evidence of learning from a broad range of contexts to check how a learner is progressing and that learning is secure. The evidence will be
different depending upon the kind of learning being assessed, the learning activity and learners’ preferences about how to show what they have learned. Evidence comes from day-to-day learning as well as from specific assessment tasks, activities, tests and examinations. Judgements about children and young people’s learning need to be dependable. This means that assessments are valid and reliable. Assessment approaches should be proportionate and fit for purpose: different forms of assessment are appropriate at different stages and in different areas of learning. It is important that an overview is taken across all learners’ assessment experiences to ensure breadth, balance and coherence in approaches. It is also important that arrangements do not place excessive burdens on learners and teachers which divert their time and effort from learning and teaching.

- **Moderation Cycle** – model for integrating planning, learning, teaching and assessment, moderation and reporting
- **Good practice in formative assessment** – learner dialogue, identifying next steps in learning, target setting
- **Collaborative practices** - professional enquiries and moderation
- **Appropriate summative assessment practice** well established – this may include SEAL hinge questions, SWST, POLARR, Language link, PM Benchmark, Writing criterion
- **Learners’ journeys / profiles** – capturing progress for children
- **Teacher assessments formed around experiences and outcomes**

Moderation is the term used to describe approaches for arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations for the broad general education. It involves teachers and other professionals, as appropriate, working together, drawing on guidance and exemplification and building on existing standards and expectations to:

- plan learning, teaching and assessment
- check that assessment tasks and activities provide learners with fair and valid opportunities to meet the standards and expectations
- sample evidence from learners’ work and review teachers’ judgements
- agree strengths in learners’ performances and next steps in learning
- provide feedback on teachers’ judgements to inform improvements in practices

Moderation helps to ensure that there is an appropriate focus on outcomes for learners. Teachers’ participation in moderation activities is a highly effective form of professional development.

- **Assessment and Moderation** seen as an ongoing priority for HTs – item on school improvement plans, and cluster working every session / ‘closing the gap’ – a priority in improvement planning (PEF planning)
- Many clusters have ‘professional learning groups’ within and across levels and/or curriculum areas – time built into WTA to meet and share practice throughout session
National Standardised Assessments (P1, P4, P7 and S3)

National standardised assessments are used to help teachers understand how children are progressing with their learning and to plan next steps.

Every learner in P1, P4, P7 and S3 will undertake national standardised assessments covering aspects of reading, writing and working with numbers over the course of the school year. These assessments will be completed online and will be automatically marked by the online system, giving teachers immediate feedback to help learners’ progress. The system is designed to be responsive to a learner’s answers, meaning that if a learner is struggling with the questions they will get easier and if a learner is doing well the questions will become more challenging.

Additional Standardised Assessment

In West Lothian, S1 pupils will undertake a CAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) assessment, which covers aspects of reading, mathematics and science.

Senior Phase (S4-S6)

In the senior phase, a substantial part of assessment will contribute to young people gaining formal qualifications and awards. Through these, young people will continue to develop the four capacities and the range of skills for learning, life and work. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is the national awarding and accreditation body for Scotland and is responsible for National Qualifications and other qualifications and awards. Other awarding bodies and professional bodies, such as ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards Scheme and City & Guilds, also offer qualifications and awards.

SQA, working with key partners, ensure that standards and expectations for National Qualifications are consistent with the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and that they take account of the breadth, level of challenge and application of learning. SQA provide external quality assurance for National Qualifications to help achieve high quality and consistency in assessment judgements and quality assurance practices within schools, colleges and education authorities. SQA continue to use a range of resources to support assessment practice and also work with schools, colleges and education authorities to ensure that appropriate quality assurance of internal assessment of qualifications is taking place.

Verification is one of the range of quality assurance measures used by SQA to confirm that assessment tasks and activities provide learners with fair and valid opportunities to meet national standards in qualifications.
Tracking and Monitoring Performance

All head teachers are becoming increasingly skilled at interpreting and using the information from teachers’ professional judgement, which includes the range of assessment data gathered, including standardised assessments. The Performance Team provides schools with a high level of quality performance information. Continuous good practice in all West Lothian schools will ensure that there is a high level of professional dialogue within schools through attainment meetings, stage and level planning meetings and departmental meetings to track and monitor the progress of individuals, groups and cohorts of pupils.

The performance information provided to schools allows head teachers to analyse the performance and progress of identified groups of children e.g. by SIMD, pupils with identified additional support needs, the lowest/highest performing 20% and plan appropriate and relevant interventions.

Head teachers share high level school performance information with parents on an annual basis.
### Appendix 1

Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers  
Assessment Coordinator - Charlotte Robertson; c.robertson@westlothian.org.uk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
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