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## **Teacher assessments in primary schools not consistent enough**

Teachers' assessment of pupils' work at key stage 2 (KS2) are not consistent or accurate enough between different schools, according to Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales.

In a report published today, *'Evaluation of the arrangements to assure the consistency of teacher assessment in the core subjects at key stage 2 and key stage 3'*, inspectors have highlighted concerns about the robustness and reliability of teacher assessments, especially at KS2 where there is no national system in place to verify the accuracy and consistency of teacher assessment as there is currently at KS3. The more robust systems that are in place at KS3 are resulting in greater accuracy and reliability of teacher assessments than at KS2.

Teacher assessments at the end of KS2 (7-11 year-olds) and KS3 (11-14 year-olds) to determine the standard of pupils' attainment have been in place since the abolition of Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) in 2005. As part of their report, inspectors evaluated teacher assessments by looking at a range of evidence from a cross section of 60 primary and secondary schools across Wales, in addition to analysis of inspection reports over a two year period and feedback from professionals, such as the deputy chief external verifier and staff in the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.

Ann Keane, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, said, *"School inspections consistently show that about a quarter of the schools inspected each year have shortcomings in some aspects of assessment. This is a significant*

*challenge for schools especially in the primary sector where there are less robust systems in place than in secondary schools for assuring the accuracy of teacher assessments.”*

The findings from the report show that overall, primary and secondary school teachers are becoming more confident about determining what level a pupil has achieved in the core subjects of English, Welsh, mathematics and science. Yet, different perceptions about these levels still exist.

Estyn recommends that the Welsh Assembly Government works more closely with local authorities to help schools embed processes to ensure more accuracy and consistency in teacher assessment. In particular, schools need to make full use of the time made available to them for assessment activities, ensure that teachers within each school meet to moderate pupils' work and that secondary schools and their related primary schools apply a common understanding of standards. Also, Estyn is encouraging local authorities, as part of their role in implementing the school effectiveness framework, to actively work with schools to effectively address these issues.

Estyn believes that these measures will ensure that teachers have a common standard across all schools and use the relevant outcomes from moderation and standardisation meetings to improve the consistency of teacher assessment, especially at KS2.

**-ENDS-**

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## **Notes to Editors:**

### **About the report**

- Estyn's report 'Evaluation of the arrangements to assure the consistency of teacher assessment in the core subjects at key stage 2 and key stage 3' was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government and is available in full at <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/ThematicReports.asp>
- The report draws on evidence from primary and secondary inspection reports September 2006 – July 2008, discussions with headteachers and teachers, a questionnaire representing schools from 20 of the local authorities in Wales and a range of KS3 evidence.

### **About Estyn**

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Our vision is to be recognised through the expertise of our staff as an authoritative voice on learning in Wales.

We are independent from, but funded by the Welsh Assembly Government (under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998).

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