

Case Study – Leicestershire LEA

A model of moderation across an LEA

Moderating the use of the P-scales across the special schools.

Leicestershire are using money from the PSA (public service agreement) to help teachers to set effective targets for their children. The aim of the PSA is that 86% of pupils across all the special schools will achieve P level / NC level targets set for them in English, maths and science by 2006.

The LEA is using some of the money given to support subject leaders in the county special schools to moderate across the LEA, within the p-scales and national curriculum levels. They have met as English, maths and science subject leaders to look at pupils' work and to come to an agreement as to the level that each piece of work shows. They have agreed an annotation sheet in each subject for work that is moderated to be used across the LEA where possible. These sessions also provide an opportunity to discuss issues relating to the P-scales and their use.

Each special school is building up its own moderation file (portfolio) to show examples of work at a range of levels. Each group of subject leaders has also appointed a 'lead teacher' from that group to visit the subject leaders in the special schools across the LEA and to discuss their moderation files and the issues in that school.

Below are some of the issues that came up over the course of the meetings and some of the agreements that were made between the co-ordinators to aid the moderation process.

- When collecting samples for moderation it was noted that it was important to consider why the samples were being collected and what they would be used for so that the moderation process has a purpose.
- When moderating the groups agreed that, they were focussing on moderating the pieces of work, and not the actual child. Therefore, the levels given should be according to the evidence that could be seen in the samples of work.
- There are particular phrases within some of the p-scales which could be interpreted in different ways e.g. 'derives meaning from text'. It was agreed that looking at further examples as provided in the 'Towards the National Curriculum for English' and 'Towards the National Curriculum for Mathematics' booklets were useful for clarification. (See Material section, DfES/ QCA material for more information on obtaining or downloading these booklets)
- It was recognised that the p-scales were designed for the purpose of summative assessment. The difference between summative and formative assessment is a significant one and needs to be considered when thinking about the range of 'assessment' procedures used within a school (both formal & informal). P levels are not a scheme of work to be taught to.
- A best-fit approach should be taken when using the p-scales. The general guidance is that a child should have achieved approximately 80% of a p level to be placed at that level. This however creates problems when there are only a small number of statements within a particular level.
- The groups discussed the possibility of having a standard annotation sheet for moderation samples. Each group of co-ordinators agreed upon a sheet (which were very similar) to use where possible across schools.
- The groups further discussed the use of a moderation portfolio/ file. These contain samples of work to demonstrate a range of p-levels. The purpose is to allow staff in school to refer to it when judging levels and it is also evidence that the school is carrying out moderation.