



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**WRITTEN STATEMENT
BY
THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

TITLE **Securing reliability and consistency of Teacher Assessment in Wales: External Verification Programme**

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BY **Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Education and Skills**

Teacher Assessment is currently the key means of measuring learners' progress in Wales up to the end of Key Stage 3. However, whilst research evidence tells us that Wales has all the features of a successful assessment system, despite significant investment, the feedback from the education sector is that confidence in the system needs to be improved.

The Welsh Government consulted on policy proposals to improve confidence, and the consultation period closed on 6 March 2015. The full summary of consultation responses was published 8 May 2015. One of the policy proposals asked whether there should be an external oversight or verification of the teacher assessment process. This would allow an additional layer of rigour, and provide additional feedback to schools on how the assessment process has been applied. This will lead to an increased understanding of teacher assessment. This proposal was broadly supported.

I am therefore pleased to announce that The Partnership, consisting of the four regional education consortia and CDSM Interactive Solutions Ltd have been awarded the contract for carrying out external verification of teacher assessment.

I am confident that the Partnership is best placed to provide an accurate and cost effective programme. They will supply the whole system with information to be used to improve the reliability of teacher assessment, providing additional rigour, intended to lead to greater confidence in the teacher assessment system. Crucially, they will follow up with schools on their findings, ensuring that schools and teachers are given professional learning support in applying teacher assessment. This support is essential to ensure that a key benefit of this programme is improving children's education.

Professor Donaldson's report sets out ambitious recommendations regarding assessment and accountability, which will be subject to much future debate and development. However, in the meantime, the system we currently have must be maintained to provide information on overall performance, progress and to identify support. Teacher assessment is a valuable way of understanding exactly those things, and the key aspect is to make sure that understanding is consistent throughout the country.

In the delivery of this contract, there is the possibility that improved rigour in teacher assessment will lead to an impact on the distribution of National Curriculum Levels awarded. For me, the important point is that teacher assessment is reliable, and gives an honest appraisal of our learners' development and where to deliver professional support.

This will be reflected in the National School Categorisation System. Step two of this process allows consortia to make a judgement based on the school's capacity to improve. More accurate and reliable teacher assessment data will give consortia greater confidence in this capacity, and final categorisation should reflect that.

The verification programme will start in this academic year, using existing moderation materials for mathematics and science subjects, as an introductory period to give us a sense for where we are. We will make the sampling and programme methodology for future years available in due course.