

The purpose of this Blue Paper is to provide attendees with notes on the presentations at the two AST and ET Local Authority Workshops in March 2010.

What follows is not intended to be a full report on the workshops but an overview of what was presented.

It does not substitute for the experience of hearing first hand what was said and discussed.

### How We Do Assessments

**June McNaughton**, the Head of Quality Assurance at the National Assessment Agency for ASTs spoke on this subject and wanted to reassure the audience about the rigour and fairness with which AST assessments are carried out.

#### Timelines

Firstly, June explained the timelines which the agency must follow for AST assessments and the administration processes involved.

- Once the application has been checked and is seen to be complete it will be entered on the online assessment system (OAMS). As the assessment agency we have a fixed number of days from the assessment going on to the website to be being assigned to an assessor, so candidates often hear from an assessor sooner than they expect.
- Following an assessor picking up an assessment he/she must carry out the assessment also in a fixed number of days of it going on to OAMs – 15 days.
- The assessors then have 5 working days to submit the report of the assessment, together with the lesson observations and evidence records, back to the National Assessment Agency.
- The whole process from start to finish must take no more than 50 working days.

#### Quality Assurance

To ensure that the very high standard of assessment is maintained, all reports are quality assured, a proportion of assessments are also monitored by a senior assessor (on-site monitoring) and assessors' lesson observations and evidence records are regularly checked (desk-top monitoring).

#### The Application Form

June explained how the application form provides the first opportunity for an AST assessor to analyse the candidate's evidence against the AST standards. So, what should be included in the application form to help the assessor? June recommends that candidates look carefully at the words that describe the standards and then provide appropriate examples to meet the standards, supported by evidence and impact.

### Professional Attributes (Key standards A1, E2)

The candidate needs to show *willingness* in leadership roles. From the candidate's application, assessors are looking for evidence of a drive to improve, for a teacher who is routinely evaluating and researching. Assessors find evidence of continuous evaluation (such as data showing results *before* and *after* any action by candidate has taken place) very useful, especially if it shows the impact of the action.

**Professional Knowledge and Understanding** (Key standards E3, E4, E5, E6, plus P3, P4 and P6 for main scale teachers).

Does the candidate show up to date expertise?

### Professional Skills (Key standards E8 and E9)

Assessors are looking for at least 2 years evidence of excellent outcomes. If the candidate cannot provide SATs or GSCE outcomes then they need to find other ways of demonstrating excellent outcomes. For example, in PE, primary and music, assessors will be looking for evidence of how the teaching impacts on pupils' progress: again evidence of starting points and impact will be helpful. During the school visit, assessors will look at the pupils' work. For candidates who work in the foundation stage we have specialist assessors who have a special understanding of early years' data that show how pupils have made progress.

(It was suggested from the floor that AST application forms might be read by an experienced AST LA Coordinator before they are sent to the National Assessment Agency to check that they contain the information that assessors are looking for.)

### Sources of Evidence

- Interview with headteacher
- Interview with candidate
- Interviews with colleagues
- Interview with parents / pupils – can be helpful to show examples of progress within groups of pupils and can take the form of letters from pupils or parents showing how the candidate has really made a difference

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### How We Network with ASTs and LAs

**Sarah Bubb**, a senior AST Assessor and National Network Leader for the AST National Networks, has brought new life to the AST platform of the NCSL website and has developed it to include a platform for AST leads in local authorities and things have moved on.

As of 6th April the platform will move to the National College website. Access to the new pages should be faster than the old NCSL platform. Sara has promised to email her present AST and LA contacts with details of how to access the new platform. If you have not registered for access to the pages, this is how you do it:

1. Navigate to [www.nationalcollege.org.uk](http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk)
2. Click '**Sign in**' on the top right hand corner of the screen
3. Then click on '**Activate your membership**'. Fill in the form and choose an easy to remember case sensitive username and password. You will be sent a confirmation email, and can then sign in.

### Personalising your Profile

1. From My College, click on the 'My personal profile' link
2. Click on 'Edit your profile'  
About me: mention that you are an AST  
Profile picture: add a photo by clicking on 'Browse'

The new National College site will have networks designed for different groups:

- ASTs, ETs and LAs
- Prospective ASTs
- Schools in Challenging Circumstances

**The Schools in Challenging Circumstances** network (detailed above) is dedicated to schools that have bought in to the Golden Handcuff arrangement. It is unique because Sara has trained 9 ASTs to respond to questions posed on the site. However, so far there is not a lot of activity so please send out details of the network to your National Challenge and City Challenge schools.

**LA Best Practice Framework:** Presentations were made by John Hopkin from Birmingham and Tonie Greig from Wandsworth who are members of the working party. More details of this initiative will follow later in the year.

### Survey

Sara has undertaken a survey into AST status and received 120 responses. She presented a summary of results including the powerful message that:

62% of ASTs LOVE being an AST  
31% of ASTs LIKE being an AST.

The majority of ASTs feel they are extremely effective in helping other people to develop. However, they do feel that they are overwhelmed. They believe they are effective in their outreach role but undervalued in their own school.

To be more effective, they require time to prepare and develop their resources and sustain changes. They would welcome more careful deployment and feel that deployment in terms of 'fire fighting' is not sustainable. They would like to develop more skills by training with other ASTs – professional development could be achieved through networking and support with other ASTs. They would welcome better communication between staff in school.

### How We Do Assessments cont.

#### Lesson Observations

We require assessors to observe two excellent lessons on the day of assessment for AST status. The candidate also needs to include in their folder examples of outstanding lessons seen by the school, so that we know that their teaching is consistent.

In an outstanding lesson assessors are looking for:

- Evidence that pupils are made to think hard (What does the pupil do as a result of the lesson?)
- Evidence that pupils are stimulated by questioning
- A sense of rapport
- Innovative teaching.
- Evidence that expertise is solid

#### Feedback and Assessment Outcome

The final feedback session should be a three-way discussion. Assessors aim to let the headteacher know the outcome before the final feedback for the candidate takes place.

The next AST and ET Local Authority Workshops will be held on  
6 October and 14 October 2010

The programme and registration details will be sent out in the summer term.

For more information on AST and ET Local Authority Workshops please contact Pam French on 01372 384282.