



St Illtyd's Catholic High School
Assessment, Recording and Reporting
A Whole School Policy
December 2020

Contents

Page 4	The Purpose of Assessment Data Protection Act 2018
Page 5	A - Assessment Arrangements Standardisation and Moderation of Teacher Assessment
Page 6	Standardisation and Moderation of Teacher Assessment Learner Profiles
Page 8	Target Setting Key Stage Two to Three
Page 9	Key Stage Three
Page 10	Key Stage Four
Page 11	B - Recording C - Reporting
Page 12	Inclusion
Page 13	Key Grades Used in Reports
Page 14	Key Grades Used in Reports – continued
Page 15	Procedure for Completing Reports 2019/2020
Page 16	Procedure for Completing Reports 2019/2020 - continued
Page 17	Reports Process at a Glance

Page 18	Roles and Responsibilities
Page 19	Roles and Responsibilities – continued
Page 20	Roles and Responsibilities – continued
Page 21	Report Writing Guidelines
Page 22	General Guidance for Writing Reports
Page 23-29	Guidance on Style and Format: A-Z Troublesome Words
Page 30	Checklist for Quality Assurance of Reports
Page 31	Examples of Reports: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly with Commentary
Page 32	Examples of Reports: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly with Commentary – continued
Page 33	References and Further Reading

The Purpose of Assessment

Whilst assessment can take different forms, the prime reason for all assessment information should be to help learners improve their learning.

The information that assessment generates should provide a shared language for discussing progress and improvement. It should be dependable and purposeful. Useful assessment information needs to be valid, reliable, manageable and meaningful for teachers, learners and other audiences.

Schools' assessment systems should accommodate and make use of information in different forms, recognising that different audiences will have different information needs. Effective assessment systems make good use of both qualitative information (teacher and learner commentary) and quantitative information (such as level outcomes, and other numerical data derived from assessments).

Assessment within a school, and across primary/secondary clusters and families of schools, should be designed to provide coherent information. All concerned need to agree a common understanding so that they can interpret and use information consistently across subjects and year groups.

Assessment **for** learning must dovetail with assessment **of** learning, and with information for strategic leadership and effective whole school management. This is key to school improvement and the service schools provide to learners. A careful balance needs to be struck. An over-emphasis on one focus of assessment, to the detriment of the other, will inevitably be counterproductive.

Forms of Assessment Information

Various audiences have an interest in and need for assessment information:

- Learners
- Parents / carers
- Teachers
- Teaching assistants (and other professionals involved in the learning process)
- School managers and governors
- Local authorities
- Welsh Assembly Government.

Assessment of learning, with formal recording, is needed for strategic planning, leadership, and accountability purposes as well as for individual learners and their parents/carers. It should provide evidence of individual, whole class, cohort and school levels. Such summary information includes numerical or encoded data to show relative performance and change over time.

End of key stage teacher assessment should draw on all current, valid evidence. At the end of key stage two, this covers the core subjects of English, Welsh, Welsh second language, mathematics and science. At the end of key stage three, this covers the core and non-core subjects. At the end of key stage four this covers the core subjects (including R.S.) and the option subjects taken by each pupil.

Data Protection

When keeping records, schools should consider the implications of the Data Protection Act 2018. Please refer to the school's data protection policy.

A. - Assessment Arrangements

A.1 - General:

Tracking of pupil progress is completed four times throughout the academic year for all pupils. The arrangements within each department should be placed to maximise the benefit for the learner and inform the tracking accordingly.

All pupils in Y10 and Y11 are set an end of year target using the FFT data available. Pupils in KS3 are set an end of key stage target based on end of KS2 levels in English, maths and science.

All pupils receive one interim report and a written summative report each academic year. The dates are provided in the assessment calendar and are strategically placed to maximise the benefit for the learners. At each reporting point staff enter the data into SIMS, the school's online reporting management system.

A.2 - Standardisation and Moderation of Teacher Assessment

Standardisation is the process whereby teachers establish and maintain a shared understanding of national curriculum standards, using samples of their pupils' work to generate a reference set of exemplars (portfolios).

Members of staff who teach a number of subjects should take part in the standardisation process for each of the subjects that they teach.

Standardisation of assessment is necessary to ensure that:

- National standards are met and judgements are accurate
- Consistent criteria are used to determine report grades and to allocate students to groups or to justify movement between them
- Students are given consistent views on their standards of attainment
- Progression is achieved

Moderation involves teachers selecting individual pupils' work in order to apply a shared understanding of national curriculum standards. The outcomes of the internal moderation process should be applied prior to finalising all pupils' end of key stage attainment levels (all core/non-core subjects).

Standardisation should take place before a formal assessment and moderation then takes place after the assessment. Both processes are important if teachers are to agree the meaning of levels and departments need to ensure that all teachers agree about the standards defined by levels. A portfolio of material exemplifying the different levels is required as good practice. Liaison with our feeder primary schools concerning levels is also important. To ensure this departments should:

- Whenever possible, involve all teachers in the preparing of schemes of work, as this will aid the development of a department's view and understanding of levels
- Have an agreed mark scheme for assessments

- Ensure that all are familiar with the National Curriculum assessment documentation
- Hold standardisation meetings and disseminate the results of these to teachers in the department
- Maintain concise documentary evidence of systems and procedures and their application and annually review these procedures to ensure that the arrangements and procedures reflect best practice.

Department portfolios of work will be a valuable source of reference for all teachers and should be established to contain:

- Work discussed at standardisation meetings
- Evidence that standardisation has taken place
- Evidence that will eventually be possible to use in cross-phase liaison
- Work from all attainment targets to show a representation of each level
- Evidence in appropriate formats other than written, e.g. digital recordings

It is vital that subject areas achieve consistent standards and interpretation of the assessment criteria. This is achieved through the use of subject portfolios together with rigorous standardisation and moderation of pupils' work. Subject leaders are expected to ensure that consistent standards are maintained through ongoing work with existing staff and the induction of new staff.

Learner Profiles are 'best fit' exemplars of pupils' work that characteristically represent the different levels of attainment in each subject area. They can be used by teachers as an 'off the shelf' example of a pupil working at a 'best fit' level. All departments should develop learner profiles as good practice to help assist in the overall judgement making process as well as aiding in the modelling of work and standards to learners.

It is vital that departments achieve consistent standards and interpretation of the assessment criteria. This is achieved through the use of subject portfolios together with rigorous standardisation and moderation of pupils' work. Subject leaders are expected to ensure that consistent standards are maintained through ongoing work with existing staff and the induction of new staff.

The standardisation and moderation of work described above is also largely applicable at Key stage four. The generation of examples of work at different grades is encouraged as good practice as a means of modelling standards, an effective AfL approach, as well as creating a common awareness and understanding of standards amongst all subject deliverers.

A.3 – Target Setting

Target setting is the setting of specific targets designed to raise educational standards and then taking the necessary action so that those targets can be realised. It provides a means of monitoring each pupil's progress and to raise pupil's expectations of themselves and hence their attainment.

At St Illtyd's a TARGET = PREDICTION + CHALLENGE

The individual pupil is the sole basis for target setting. The process is as follows:

- Centrally set targets are generated for pupils in Y10 and Y11. These targets stem from the FFT D estimate and class teachers are not permitted to reduce these targets. However, where an individual pupil is performing above this FFT estimate, targets can be negotiated upwards, following discussions between subject leader and subsequently the line manager. All targets that are negotiated up have to be inputted by the data manager into SIMS.
- Centrally set targets are also set for pupils at the end of key stage three. These targets stem from the FFT D estimate in English, maths and science. Class teachers are not permitted to reduce these targets. However, where an individual pupil is performing above the FFT estimate, targets can be negotiated upwards, following discussions between subject leader and the line manager. All targets that are negotiated up have to be inputted by the data manager into SIMS.
- Subject leaders are required, as part of the line management process, to set targets for classes of pupils e.g. the number of potential A*-C in a GCSE class.

All of these processes will inform the school targets.

A.4 - Key Stage 2 to 3

Specific details of these arrangements are detailed in the transition plan and in each departmental policy.

Core subjects liaise with the partner schools to identify two learner profiles from each school by year six and year nine learners. Each department must set aside time for an internal standardisation exercise and the subject leader must complete and oversee moderation and select a sample as outlined by the key stage two-three transition coordinator.

A further moderation exercise is completed by the transition team made up of staff nominated by each school/subject. The purpose of the team is to reach consensus for each level in the three–six range. Any variation must be reported back to the department and a further standardisation exercise completed.

A.4 - Key Stage 3 Assessment

The aim is for a 'best-fit' judgement that:

- is based on knowledge of how the pupil performs across a range of contexts and over a period of time
- takes into account the different strengths and areas for development of that pupil's performance
- is checked against adjacent level descriptions to ensure that the level awarded is the closest match to the pupil's performance in each attainment target

In order to arrive at a best-fit judgment of a pupil's performance in each attainment target/subject, teachers' judgments should be based on a range of work drawn from:

- practical and oral work
- written work completed in class
- homework
- school-based assessments.

Teacher assessment should be based on existing evidence of attainment and not on the basis of any projections of pupils' future performance.

Each subject area will identify and complete key pieces of work during the course of the year that will be subject to detailed summative assessment processes. These pieces of work must cover the skills set out in each of the programmes of study for the subject, be kept in a progress file and be used for at least one standardisation exercise within the department per year. The subject leader must complete and oversee moderation during the academic year and provide feedback to the department.

At key stage four further differentiation of the GCSE grades awarded are achieved by using fine grading, for example, C1, C2, C3.

A.5 - Key Stage 4

Final assessment arrangements in each subject are determined by the examination board. However, each department must have arrangements to monitor progress regularly and in line with the expectations of the exam board.

In year ten and eleven, final predictions are tracked regularly to identify underachievement and target intensive intervention. All sources of assessment (including exams, coursework and controlled tasks) and professional opinion should be used to arrive at this grade.

A.6 – Assessment for Learning

Strategies for assessment for learning are set out as part of the school's lesson framework.

B - Recording

Elaborate arrangements for recording assessments and retaining evidence are neither required by the National Curriculum, nor necessary to satisfy Estyn inspections.

Records of pupil progress are kept in a variety of ways:

- Teachers' mark books
- Departmental records
- Copies of reports

Each subject area decides, in addition to the common assessments/results:

- Which information is kept
- How the information will be kept
- How the information will be used.

All subject areas keep cumulative records of pupil progress through the curriculum. These records:

- Illustrate progress through the levels and grades
- Become the basis of information passed on to other schools or colleges
- Be used in discussion with pupils and parents
- Be used to help plan future work.

C - Reporting

One full report is issued to parents annually. This indicates:

- Progress in all subjects studied, which draws attention to strengths and particular achievements together with any weaknesses and specific targets for improvement
- General progress which is an overview of academic progress, behaviour, contribution to school life and any special achievements
- Attendance including unauthorised absence
- Details of arrangements to discuss the report with teachers.

The end of Key Stage 3 reports include:

- National Curriculum results, where relevant

In addition to the full report, parents also receive one interim report which includes an end of year target, current attainment and attitude grade. This acts as an early warning system for underachievement and identifies causes for concern.

C.1 – Inclusion

Parents of EAL pupils may well need the report to be translated. In this event, the link EAL member of staff should perform this duty. The report may be translated by prior arrangement with the school and the county service be employed to carry out this service. This may result in a delay in the summative report being issued but every effort would be made to ensure the information is ready for key contact events.

St Illtyd's Catholic High School



Assessment Reporting – Key Grades used in Reports

Attitude Statements	Key
A	Excellent- These pupils complete all class work and homework to the best of their ability. They work with maximum effort the majority of the time and are able to work independently. They are keen to extend themselves with more challenge and/or regularly attend revision sessions to secure their understanding. They concentrate on the work at all times and very rarely become distracted.
B	Good- These pupils complete all classwork and homework set and this is done to a good standard. They want to do well and achieve but usually fall short of 'going the extra mile'. These pupils can become distracted now and again and might need to be reminded to stay on task.
C	Adequate- These pupils will complete the work set but with the minimum of effort and work might be poorly presented. They might often need to be reminded to stay on task. Homework is usually completed but not always on time or to a good standard. The pupil might be distracted at times and sometimes disturb others.
D	Unsatisfactory- These pupils rarely complete the work set and will usually need to be coaxed into working by the teacher. Any work completed is not done independently and often lacks effort and is poorly presented. The pupil is easily distracted and regularly distracts others. Homework is usually not completed, can be handed in late or lacking any real form of consolidation. These factors are seriously affecting the progress of these pupils.

KS4 Progress Grades example	Key
C1	Student will definitely achieve a C grade at the end of the course. Secure.
C2	Student is likely to achieve a C grade at the end of the course. Fairly secure but not 100%.
C3	Student is as likely to achieve a C grade as a D grade. Not secure.

Procedure for the Completion of Reports 2019-2020

The success of the reporting system relies on us all adhering to the deadlines set and producing a quality document in the very first instance. It is vital that you read this document carefully and raise any issues with IP as early as possible.

NB: The deadlines issued by the subject leader for individuals within their department must be adhered to so that subject leaders have time to check completion and quality assure the reports for all of the department by the departmental deadline published on the school calendar.

Subject Teachers:

- Reports should be informative and meaningful
- If comment banks are being used the subject teacher must ensure that completed reports are appropriately proof read before saving so that the completed report comment is well structured
- There must be a personal comment, which is pertinent to that pupil.
- Comments should be longer than a few simple sentences and be positively phrased
- Comment should include details of the next steps required for the individual pupil, written into a paragraph linked to improving performance and quality of work
- If a pupil's current attainment is higher than their end of year target then the end of year target, in consultation with the subject leader, needs to be negotiated up

Every effort to ensure correct completion of each report is much appreciated to avoid passing the problem to subject leaders, form tutors, PL and SLT. Part-time staff must also complete their reports by the deadlines given.

Form Tutors:

Form tutors are expected to complete their form tutor comments online for the pupils in their form by the same date as the published departmental deadline on the school calendar.

Form tutor comments are expected to be positively phrased and could address the pupil's contribution to the school, the year group and the form class. Comments could also be included on extra-curricular involvement, uniform, attitude, punctuality and attitude.

Subject Leaders:

It is the responsibility of the subject leader to ensure that the reports for their department are completed and checked by the departmental deadline published on the school calendar. Subject leaders are expected to organise internal departmental deadlines so that department staff are made fully aware of their individual deadlines.

All individual deadlines set by the subject leader must be adhered to so that subject leaders can complete the relevant checking and quality assurance processes prior to the published departmental deadline.

Adopted by Governing Body: 8th January 2021

To assist in this checking process subject leaders are advised to refer to the reporting checklist included later in this document.

Head of Year

Head of year's will have a week after the departmental and form tutor deadline to complete their checking and quality assurance processes. All departments are paired with a head of year for quality assurance purposes. Subject leaders' are expected to check the reports on screen. It is recommended that head of year take a small sample early on in the process to prevent any major issues.

To assist in this checking process heads of year are advised to refer to the reporting checklist included in the appendix.

Reports Process at a Glance

1. Subject leaders make note of the departmental deadlines published on the school calendar and organise their departmental assessment calendars so that all members of staff within the department are made fully aware of their individual deadlines.



2. Subject teachers complete the reports for their classes by the deadline issued by the subject leader. It is the individual teacher's responsibility to ensure that all subject reports are completed accurately and appropriate quality assurance processes have been applied.

Form tutors complete their reports by the departmental deadline published on the school calendar.



3. As subject teachers complete reports for their classes, subject leaders are expected to check completion and proof read accordingly, ensuring all errors located are addressed online. Subject leader checks are to be completed by the published departmental deadline on the school calendar.



4. Once the reports have been checked by the subject leader and departments have met the departmental deadline published on the school calendar, the reports are checked by the HoY. The HoY has one week in order to complete their quality assurance processes. Any errors identified at this stage are to be recorded and attached to each pupil's report and passed back to the subject leader.

D - Roles and Responsibilities:

LEA:

- Provide high quality comparative information and detailed analyses of GCSE results and other indicators of performance over time.
- Work with the school to provide realistic targets for the future.
- Work with the school to raise standards.

Governors:

- Shape the process of target setting and fulfill their strategic role.
- Ensure the school meets its statutory duties by agreeing the school targets and publishing them in the governors' annual report to parents.
- Support the headteacher and staff in working through a cycle of school improvement which concentrates on pupil performance, i.e. evaluate past results, make comparisons with similar schools, identify strengths and weaknesses, set fresh targets, plan and carry out necessary actions/changes.

Senior Leadership Team:

- Set the strategic direction of ARR.
- Secure the implementation of the national curriculum and its associated statutory assessment arrangements within school.
- Ensure that the school complies fully with the statutory assessment arrangements as described in the annually published booklet and in any subsequent guidance.
- Identify which pupils should be assessed at the end of each key stage and those that should be dis-applied.
- Ensure that all pupils have teacher assessment levels recorded for the attainment targets in all subjects with more than one attainment target.
- Ensure that the overall subject levels for each core and non-core subject, based on teacher assessment of attainment targets, are finalised and recorded.
- Keep abreast of national policy and to inform subject leaders of changes to policy.
- Ensure that the ARR policy is adhered to in each of the subjects that are line managed.
- Review the ARR policy annually and in consultation with subject leaders.
- Ensure the overall quality of the documentation sent out to parents.
- Facilitate INSET and liaison with other schools to ensure consistency and continuity in assessment.
- Use data to set targets in collaboration with each subject leader.
- Support, monitor and evaluate assessment/recording/reporting within the school.

Exams Officer:

- Oversee the arrangements for public examinations.
- Keep up-to-date with local and national developments relating to assessment, disseminate relevant documentation to subject leaders and advise other colleagues when necessary.

Data Manager:

- Work with the SLT to administer the ARR arrangements according to the assessment calendar.
- Maintain the subject marksheets and overview sheets in SIMS.
- Liaise with teaching staff to ensure the correct completion of full reports, interim reports and end of key stage data collection.
- Liaise with school's IT to keep abreast of developments and solve issues that arise.

Subject Leaders:

- Keep abreast of changes to assessment arrangements for the subject and inform the subject teachers of these arrangements.
- Ensure that their staff have access to relevant publications and are fully informed of the arrangements for public examinations and national curriculum teacher assessments.
- Devise and implement an ARR policy for the department that is in line with the school policy.
- Ensure quality reports are completed according the report guidance.
- Analyse data to track performance and discuss findings with the subject area.
- Monitor and evaluate teachers' marking and other assessment/recording/reporting practices within their department.
- Promote consistency in assessment/recording/reporting within their department.
- Ensure deadlines are met for the completion of assessments and the collection of data according to the assessment calendar.
- Use the results of assessment to inform and direct future teaching, curriculum planning and employ appropriate intervention strategies.
- Undertake periodic examination of pupils' written work and provide feedback to teachers.
- Monitor the quality of reports as set out in the reporting procedure.
- Meet with their line manager from the SLT to discuss, amongst other issues, matters relating to assessment/recording/reporting.
- Use data to set targets in collaboration with each subject teacher and the SLT.

Head of Year

- Use data to monitor and track pupil progress and employ appropriate intervention strategies, including letters home to parents.
- Undertake periodic examination of pupils' written work and diaries and liaise closely with the SLT on issues related to assessment, recording and especially reporting.
- Undertake further examination of the content of the pupils' reports and liaise with the form tutor where there is cause for concern or when the content is excellent.
- Undertake examination of the quality of the comments made by staff on the reports.
- Oversee arrangements for internal exams.

Form Tutors

- Regularly check homework diaries and monitor pupils' progress;
- Complete form tutor comments on the reports by the published departmental deadline.
- To ensure that all pupils within their form record their levels in their homework diaries during each form tutor progress fortnight.

- To undertake directed and focused conversations with pupils in their form regarding performance, progress and end of year targets during the form tutor progress fortnight.

Class Teachers

- Implement the departmental ARR policy.
- Create a classroom ethos of high expectations and strong emphasis on achievement.
- Use data to set targets in collaboration with the subject leader and ensure that all pupils are made fully aware of their progress, achievement and end of year target.
- Ensure deadlines are met for the completion of assessments and the collection of data according to the deadlines issued by subject leaders.
- Use the results of assessment to identify individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses, inform future teaching, curriculum planning and employ appropriate intervention strategies.
- Collect and record assessment information for use in arriving at tracking levels/grades and writing report comments.
- Seek advice from the subject leader should queries arise.

Parents

- Monitor the completion of classwork and homework.
- Check and sign the diary each week.
- Complete and return the comment sheet at the end of the full report.
- Attend each scheduled meeting with staff to discuss progress and achievement.

Pupils

- Maintain the diary by recording homework, targets and assessment information.
- Act on the formative comments given by staff in order to improve.
- Actively involved in setting targets and reviewing work.

D – Report Writing Guidelines

The following document is adapted from guidance as outlined in the Estyn publication: Estyn Writing Guide June 2011

Please use this in conjunction with your report writing to enhance the readability of reports for parents and to improve the quality and consistency of written reports across the school

Why we need a writing guide?

Our objective is to produce documents which are clear, accurate and in plain English. It is essential that as wide an audience as possible can read and understand our reports. A clear style of report writing will help to achieve this.

This guidance aims to help writers to achieve a plain and clear style of writing. It will also help to make sure that all of reports follow a similar style and format.

This guidance focuses mainly on those aspects of style, vocabulary and grammar which prove troublesome for writers. Writers will need to use their judgment where there is no specific guidance available in this document. In such cases, they should keep in mind the overall objective of writing, that is, to produce clear, plain documents for an interested reader who is not a specialist in education or training.

Our reports need to be clear and unambiguous so that a wide-ranging audience can understand what we are saying.

- We write to inform parents about standards of achievement and present clear guidance on what a pupil needs to do to make further improvements; we should not assume that our readers are all teachers or educationalists.
- Our reports are public documents and they should provide a model of writing that is polished and clear.

What is the role of this writing guide?

- This writing guide aims to help every writer and editor of reports to improve the quality of written reports.
- It is designed to help writers and editors to achieve consistency of approach across all departments and it sets out an agreed St Illtyd's 'house style'.
- Writers and editors should follow the guidance even where they may have a different personal view about a preferred style from that set out in this guide.

General guidance for reports

Ultimately it is the writer's responsibility to write a good quality and accurate written report. While there are a number of editing points available to us, we can not under estimate the importance of clarity and accuracy at the point of the report being written.

It is imperative that all written reports are proof read and every effort is made by the individual writer to avoid saving and submitting reports containing errors.

Try to look again at any completed report before saving and submitting a final draft. Try to leave written work for a while before returning to look it over.

You will see it with a fresh pair of eyes and you will be far more likely to spot any weaknesses in it.

Additionally:

- Make sure that the sentences in a report follow the most logical sequence.
- Remove any unnecessary repetition and try to avoid using the same words frequently within the same section.
- No sentence or paragraph should contradict another. Similarly, levels or grades awarded for current attainment, effort, homework and behaviour should not be contradicted in the main written part of the report. The balance of strengths and shortcomings in a report section should reflect the grading awarded to the pupil.
- Where a report has many uses of 'but' or 'however', there is a need to check that they have not modified a favourable comment in such a way as to cancel it out.
- Ideally, each paragraph should start with the main point.
- No end of year target should be below either the pupil's current level. If this is the case the end of year target should be adjusted accordingly.
- Do not use 'nick names' or shortened versions of pupil's names within the report.
- Reports should not repeat details of grades awarded that are apparent in the summary sections, but should instead clearly identify what has been achieved by an individual pupil, identification of strengths and success with a clear outline of what needs to be done to continue to improve.
- There should be three targets which should be laid out in a paragraph. Targets need to be specific rather than vague and should clearly identify what action needs to be taken by the pupil to improve.

Guidance on style and format: A-Z

Abbreviations

- Do not use full points in any abbreviations. For example, always write GCSE, not G.C.S.E.
- To turn an abbreviation into an appropriate plural, just add lower case 's' to the abbreviation, as in NVQs and GCSEs. They do not require an apostrophe

Apostrophes

- Apostrophes either show that a letter is missing or they show possession
- There is no apostrophe where the word is simply a plural noun that ends in s, and there is no idea of possession, like *'the pupils worked well'*
- However, an apostrophe is required when there is an idea of possession, like *'Esther's pen'* or *'Jane's book'*. This rule applies in most cases even with a name ending in s, like *'Thomas's essay'*
- The exception is the plural noun which already ends in s, these take only a following apostrophe, like *'the girls' excitement'* or *'both players' injuries'*
- The spelling of possessive its never takes an apostrophe, it would be *'the bull lowered its head'* rather than *'the bull lowered its head'*

Capital Letters

- Use initial capital letters for proper names and titles linked to a specific person or place
- For general titles use lower case, e.g. headteachers / work-based learning
- Use initial capital letters for most titles of qualifications, for example General Certificate of Secondary Education, National Diploma, First Diploma
- Use initial capital letters when using *'HOY'*, but not when using *'head of year'*
- Use initial capital letters when referring to *'Year 10'*
- While days of the week and months have initial capital letters, seasons of the year do not so, *'Monday', 'February', 'summer', 'spring'*
- Use lower case for the titles of subjects, eg mathematics, geography, physical education. (However, remember to use capitals for languages, eg English, French, German, Welsh and if you refer to physical education as PE or Religious Education as RE)
- If in doubt about the use of capitals, use lower case

Commas

- The general rule nowadays is to avoid using too many commas
- However, always use a comma after 'however' when it starts a sentence, and use commas to separate 'however' from the rest of a sentence when used mid-sentence, as in the following examples: *'However, John must understand how to structure his sentences accurately'*
- Always use a comma before 'but' when it links and contrasts two parts of a sentence, for example: *'His standard is good in reading, but he has much work to do to improve upon the technical accuracy of his writing'*
- Use a comma before 'for example' or 'eg'
- Use a comma before any qualifying term or phrase at the start of a sentence, as in *'In general,...'* and *'Overall,...'* and *'As a result,...'* and *'Currently,...'*
- When inserting a subordinate clause into the middle of a sentence, use commas on both sides of the clause, for example: *'John, who works well most of the time, can be too easily distracted at points.'*

-ise and -ize

- We use the –ise form in our reports, as in organise. This extends to nouns as well, so we use ‘organisation’ with no ‘z’

Readability

- This is a feature within Microsoft Word and it can help you to get a feel for how complicated your writing may appear to a reader. It usually comes up when the spelling and grammar check is finished. This is not an exact science, and using a lot of bullet points can confuse Word’s calculations. However, it does help to concentrate the mind on making writing clearer. You can also use the highlighting function to look only at a selected piece of text, so you can avoid any bulleted text if you want to
- To use the readability check, go to Review within Word and click on Spelling and Grammar. You will then need to make sure that the program is set to analyse the readability statistics. You can do this by clicking on Options within the Spelling and Grammar window and making sure there is a tick in the ‘Show readability statistics’ box
- The readability check will give you a number of useful statistics. The two most useful are the Flesch scale of reading ease and the information on passive sentences
- The Flesch scale of reading ease runs from 0 to100. In basic terms, the higher the score, the plainer the writing you have produced. Try to aim for a score of 40-50 at least
- The readability score will also tell you the number and percentage of passive sentences you have used. Aim to use as few as possible

Spaces after punctuation

- Use one space after commas, semi-colons, full stops, colons and question marks

Text alignment

- If working in Word and pasting reports into SIMS do not justify any text. Align all main body text on the left as justification alters the distance in between words and letters and is less easy to read. It also makes it harder to pick up any spacing errors at the editing stage

Times and dates

- Write dates in full in the order of day, month and year, eg 3 September 2001
- Do not use ordinals, such as 3rd, in dates
- Always refer to years in full, eg 2019-2020
- Do not use any abbreviated forms when referring to years so do not write 2007-08

Website addresses

- You do not have to include http:// when referring to website addresses, just use www. Followed by the address
- Words we use in our everyday language within education and training can appear strange to a lay reader. We may not even recognise such words as jargon

Words and phrases to avoid

- Words we use in our everyday language within education and training can appear strange to a lay reader. We may not even recognise such words as jargon
- A good example is a word like ‘differentiation’. Educational professionals know what they mean by the term, but a lay person may struggle to understand its specific meaning
- It may be better to change the sentence to avoid the word or you may have to use a much longer phrase to explain the meaning, for example by writing ‘adapting work to meet the individual needs of the learners’

- The following list is not exhaustive by any means, but it is a list of the kinds of words and phrases that writers should generally avoid:
 - ‘classroom situation’
 - ‘meaningful learning situations’
 - ‘structured learning experiences’
 - ‘meaningful’
 - ‘didactic’
 - ‘traditional’
 - ‘fine motor skills’
 - ‘table top activities’
 - ‘differentiated input’
 - ‘teacher-directed learning’
 - ‘teaching input’
 - ‘There is a need to...’
 - ‘...should be reviewed...’
 - ‘proactive’
 - ‘seemed’, ‘appeared’
 - ‘It is possible...’
 - ‘One might question whether...’
 - ‘multidisciplinary’

Guidance on troublesome words and phrases

This list sets out the agreed form for particular words and phrases that have caused difficulty from time to time. Some words and phrases in this section may not match the preferences of individual writers and editors. Everyone develops their own personal style over the years. However, when you edit or write reports, please use the agreed form.

accordingly

try ‘so’ instead

accustomed to

try using ‘used to’ instead

additional

try using ‘extra’ or ‘more’ instead, but note that we always use ‘additional’ in the phrase ‘additional learning needs’

address (with the meaning of ‘consider’)

try using ‘tackle’, ‘deal with’ or ‘consider’ instead

ahead of

generally avoid this phrase and use ‘before’ instead

alleviate

try using ‘ease’, ‘reduce’ or ‘lessen’ instead

among

not amongst

apparent

try 'clear' or 'plain' instead

ascertain

try using 'find out' instead

autumn, winter, spring, summer term

no capitals

benefited, benefiting

single t

cease

try 'stop' or 'end' instead

commence

try 'start' or 'begin' instead

common sense noun, **commonsense** adjective

complete, completed

better than 'finalise' or 'finalised'

comprise

do not use 'comprise of', try to use 'include' or 'consist of' instead

conducive to learning

try not to use this jargon phrase, consider using 'helps pupils to learn' or something similar

consult

not consult with, and try 'talk to' or 'meet' instead

co-operate, co-operated, co-operative, co-operation

but no hyphen in 'uncooperative'

co-ordinate, co-ordinated, co-ordination, co-ordinator

but no hyphen in 'uncoordinated'

despite the fact that

try to use 'although' or 'despite' instead

determine

try using 'decide' instead

discontinue

try using 'stop' or 'end' instead

eg

no full points and introduce with a comma, but consider using 'such as', 'as in' or even 'for example' instead

equitable

try using 'fair' instead

establish

try using 'set up', 'create' or 'form' instead

et cetera, etc

avoid the use of both of these. Be specific instead

evidence

avoid in phrases like 'There is evidence of...'. There is either enough evidence to make an evaluation or there is not. Just make the evaluation

facilitate

try using 'help' instead

finalise, finalised

avoid, use 'complete'/'completed' or 'finish'/'finished' instead

focus, focused, focusing

single s every time

hitherto

try using 'until now' instead

ie

no full points, and consider using 'namely' instead

impart

try using 'give', 'pass on', 'tell' or 'inform' instead

implement

try using 'carry out' or 'do' instead

in accordance with

try using 'in line with' instead

increment

try using 'step' or 'increase' instead

initiate

try using 'begin' or 'start' instead

in order to

try cutting down to just 'to' instead

ise

not ize at end of word (except **capsize**)

meet

do not write 'meet with', the 'with' is unnecessary

necessitate

try using 'need', 'have to' or 'require' instead

nonetheless

try using 'even so', 'however' or 'yet' instead

notwithstanding

try 'even if', 'despite', 'still', 'yet' or 'but' instead

obtain

try 'get' or 'receive' instead

other than

try 'except' instead

practice noun, **practise** verb

note 'excellent practice case study' and 'sector-leading practice'

prior to

try using 'before' instead

regarding

try using 'about' instead

school subjects

use lower case to refer to school subjects, unless they are languages, as in history, geography, mathematics, but French, Welsh, English (note: modern foreign languages)

seasons

all lower case: spring, summer, autumn, winter

state

try 'say' instead

straightforward**sufficient**

it is nearly always better to use 'enough' instead

summer**supersede**

often better to use a plainer phrase such as 'take the place of'

talk to

not talk with

target, target-setting, targeted, targeting

underused

usually better to say 'not used enough' or something similar

under way

two words; not 'underway'

unnecessary**up-to-date**

note the hyphens

utilise

try 'use' instead

Year

as in Year 11; do not abbreviate to Y11; use Years when referring to more than one, as in 'Years 10 and 11' or write 'Year 10 and Year 11'

E – Checklist for Quality Assurance of Reports:

As previously outlined, ultimately, the responsibility for ensuring that a detailed, accurate and good quality report is produced lies solely with the individual subject teacher.

However, reports are subject to a series of quality assurance processes once the subject teacher has completed the reports. These processes are completed by the subject leader, the head of year and the Assistant Headteacher responsible for ARR before the reports are finally compiled and shared with the pupils and parents.

To further assist in these quality assurance processes and move towards greater consistency of checking, please refer to the checklist below:

- * Ensure that the pupil's name referred to in the main body of the report is spelt as it appears on the system.
- * Ensure that 'nick names' or shortened versions of the pupil's Christian name are not used at any point in the report.
- * Check for issues with 'she' and 'he' or 'hers' and 'his'.
- * Check that capital letters have not been overly used (please refer to report writing guidelines for reference).
- * Extensive pre-ambles of what the course has covered up to that point are unnecessary and should be removed.
- * Repetition of grades awarded and/or exam levels achieved is unnecessary if it is already included in the reporting summary sections and should be removed.
- * End of year targets cannot be lower than current attainment. If a member of staff feels that current attainment has exceeded the end of year target then the target needs to be moved up.
- * Grades awarded for attitude need to be supported by the comments made in the main body of the report.
- * Report comments should not be negatively phrased.
- * Comments should focus on progress and achievement and specific reference should be made to these in the main body of the report.
- * If a comment bank has been used then the comments pasted in must be relevant, linked appropriately and subject specific.
- * There should be three targets that clearly outline how further development and progress can be achieved.
- * Targets are to be laid out in one paragraph. Each target should begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

F – Examples of Reports – The Good, The Bad and The Ugly:

Adopted by Governing Body: 8th January 2021

The Good

Simon has had a very successful year in German. Simon should further develop his bank of vocabulary by reading texts from the wider reading list provided. He should also access the online resources profiled in class to listen and respond to German conversation in different contexts to become more familiar with accent and social context. Simon would benefit from practising writing full responses to past paper questions under timed conditions to become accustomed to the rigours of the exam.

Commentary on 'The Good'

- *Starts positively*
- *Is directed **to** the parents*
- *Identifies areas that would benefit from development and how this development can be achieved*
- *Gives specific targets parents can use to assist the progress of their child*

The Bad

In German this year we have studied past and present tense, verb usage and the topic of 'cities'. Simon has completed all three units and has achieved an overall GCSE grade B. Simon's end of year target is a grade A. He is a lovely boy who works really well in all aspects of German. His accent is good, he is prepared to check through his written work and he can read a variety of texts. To improve you need to complete past papers, read more German texts and keep going the way you are and aim high!

Commentary on 'The Bad'

- *The opening paragraph refers to what has been studied, which is not necessary.*
- *There is also reference to grades which would already be identified at the top of the report and in the summary page of the report for Simon.*
- *He may be a lovely boy, which is not relevant in a subject report about progress and achievement.*
- *The targets are too vague and don't offer any real direction. The targets should not be written as a bullet point list.*
- *The report is written both about and to Simon – it should only be about Simon.*

Simo is always punctual to lessons. She will often put up his hand to answer a question. He listens for most of the lesson. He needs to turn up to lessons more regularly. Absence will get in the way of progress. She can use verbs in sentences. He has completed a good homework project. Simon can sometimes listen. Behaviour is often an issue.

You need to

- attend more lessons,*
- learn the school rules*
- wear the correct school uniform at all times.*

Commentary on 'The Ugly'

- *Use of 'nickname' is inappropriate.*
- *Lack of quality assurance in place with reference to 'she' rather than 'he'.*
- *The series of simple statements one after another seems to indicate poorly structured comment banks usage.*
- *Statements don't seem to have any direct relevance to each other.*
- *Comments specific to the subject area are very limited.*
- *Comment ends with a vague negative comment.*
- *The report is written partially to Simon not about him.*
- *The targets or next steps should not be written in list and these do not refer to any subject specific ways forward.*

H – References and Further Reading

- Statutory assessment arrangements for the school year 2011/12: Key Stage 3 – WAG
- Making the most of assessment 7-15 April 2010 guidance document No:034/2010-WAG
- Making the most of learning: Implementing the revised curriculum – WAG
- Evaluation of the arrangements to assure the consistency of teacher assessment in the core subjects at key stage 2 and key stage 3, 2011 – ESTYN
- Guidance for the inspection of secondary schools 2012 – ESTYN
- Regulations about reporting school and pupil information: concise guidance. September 2011. Department for Education and Skills:
dera.ioe.ac.uk/12468/1/110928conciseguidanceen.pdf
- ‘The Plain English Guide’ (Oxford, 1996) by Martin Cutts provides an excellent introduction to the principles of Plain English
- ‘The Complete Plain Words’ (HMSO, 1954) by Sir Ernest Gowers is still very useful and entertaining
- The Plain English Campaign website is also a useful source of information:
www.plainenglish.co.uk

All WAG documents available from www.wales.gov.uk; ESTYN documents from www.estyn.org.uk