

Report of: Corporate Director of People Services

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee	9 th March 2021	All

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SUBJECT: Assessment support for schools 2021

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 Due to the cancellation of national assessments for Early Years and Primary settings and the announcement of a consultation period regarding arrangements for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and A Level assessments, School Improvement have designed alternative support measures for Islington educational settings.
- 1.2 This report sets out what Learning and Schools will provide to support educational settings undertake the most appropriate assessments to support the transition of children and young people.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note assessment arrangements being provided to educational settings

3. Background

- 3.1 All EYFS and Primary assessments were cancelled in 2020. Education settings were still required to complete an annual report to parents/carers. A grades standardisation algorithm was produced by Ofqual, the regulator of qualifications, exams and tests in England. It was designed to combat grade inflation, and was to be used to standardise or moderate the teacher-predicted grades for A Level and GCSE qualifications
- 3.2 On 17 August, Ofqual and the Secretary of State for Education agreed that grades would be reissued using unmoderated teacher predictions. As a result, there was an annual increase by more than 10 percentage points in the number of top grades awarded (from 25.2% to an estimated 37.7%), the biggest increase for at least 20 years.

- 3.3 On 20 August 2020 the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results were released. After the problems arising from the use of the grade algorithm for A Levels, it was decided that GCSE grades awarded to each student would be the higher of the teacher predicted result or algorithm standardised result for each subject they took.
- 3.4 As a result, all assessment data has not been published as it has not been validated and there are no comparative data sets available. Educational settings will be using their internal data to inform teaching and learning and adapting the curriculum to fill attainment gaps as a result of the extended lockdown period. Internal data will also be used to inform priorities for the national catch up programme.

4. Early Years Assessment Arrangements 2021:

- 4.1 **2 year old progress check:** this statutory assessment should be carried out unless a provider is affected by Coronavirus restrictions
- The assessment provides parents with a short summary of their child's progress against the three prime areas of learning and development and is key to identifying emerging needs
 - Providers should remain alert to emerging concerns and refer appropriately; and carry out the progress check as soon as possible once the child has returned to the setting
 - Outcomes from the progress check are not reported to the LA
- 4.2 **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) at age 5 will not be mandatory again this year**
- EYFSP summarises the knowledge, skills and understanding that children have acquired by the end of reception in the six areas of learning and development
 - Highly valued assessment providing crucial information about children's development and supports transition to Year 1
 - Department for Education (DfE) guidance expects schools to use their "best endeavours" to carry out the assessment and provide information to parents and to Year 1 teachers
 - No requirement for the LA to carry out their statutory moderation duties in relation to EYFSP
 - No requirement to submit data to local authorities or to confirm whether they have completed it to the DfE
- 4.3 **Early Years: Moderation and assessment- what we can offer:**
- Moderation in individual schools through Annual Service Package (ASP)
 - Facilitated non-statutory small assessment cluster groups during the summer term
 - Response to specific requests from schools
 - Can still use current national standards to support accurate assessment – Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) handbook and exemplification
 - Focus on equalities through spotlight on specific groups; white UK disadvantage/Caribbean

5. Primary Assessment Arrangements 2021:

5.1 The following assessments, scheduled between April and July 2021, have been cancelled:

- Key Stage 1 teacher assessments
 - Key Stage 2 tests and teacher assessments
 - phonics screening check
 - Y4 multiplication test
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- Schools need to continue using assessment to inform teaching, to enable them to give information to parents on their child's attainment in their statutory annual report and to support transition of Key Stage 2 pupils to secondary school.
 - The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) is responsible for statutory assessments has strongly encouraged schools to use past test papers in their assessment of pupils.

5.2 **Primary: Moderation and assessment- what we can offer:**

- Providing guidance on which assessment papers to use for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- Support schools to administer the phonics check to those pupils who did not reach the expected standard or were absent during the test window due to illness or self-isolation
- Offering a non-statutory moderation event for all primary schools – Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- May/June 2021 – focus on borderline pupils – Working Towards to Expected Standard/Expected/Greater Depth (3 pupils)
- Focus on White UK disadvantage/Caribbean pupils
- Venue – to be confirmed but potentially Laycock PDC – following strict public health guidance – two hour slots

6. Secondary Assessment Arrangements 2021:

- 2021 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams cancelled.
- Exams regulator Ofqual published its proposals for replacing exams this year in mid-January.
- Proposal is for grades to be determined by teachers and, following "quality reassurance"
- Results will be issued by exam boards, who will "remain accountable for the results".
- Assessments to be undertaken during 'late May/early June'
- Grades based on current performance – not what students would've achieved
- Exam boards providing papers for teachers to mark but schools can use own papers under guidance
- 'Menu' of exams so pupils don't know which one they are sitting
- Coursework to be included
- Exams boards to provide support on grading
- School leaders to sign off on grades
- Exam boards to sample evidence
- Grades only changed if they're 'not legitimate'

6.1 **Secondary assessment:**

- Consultation ended 29th January – outcomes and final plan 22nd Feb
- Of 12,600 responses to last year’s consultation on replacing exams, 1,939 were from students.
- More than 94,700 responses to this year’s consultation – the biggest response to a Department for Education (DfE) consultation ever.
- 46,918 are from students.
- Department for Education (DfE) have said that they, exam boards and Ofqual “will ensure all schools and colleges have the guidance and training they need to make these crucial decisions”.

6.2 **Secondary: Moderation and assessment- what we can offer:**

- Ensure that timely support is given to schools once the consultation outcomes are clear
- Provide moderation support in subject leader meetings and with individual departments in English, maths and science – to include a reminder about the unconscious bias work with schools in the first part of 2020
- Make links between schools to compare approaches and to support moderation in smaller subjects
- Make offer to all schools of whole school unconscious bias training where this hasn’t yet happened to support teacher assessment

8. Implications

Financial implications:

- 8.1 The cost of providing resources to monitor performance is met within each service’s core budget.

Legal Implications:

- 8.2 There are no legal duties upon local authorities to set targets or monitor performance. However, these enable us to strive for continuous improvement.

Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030:

- 8.3 There is no environmental impact arising from monitoring performance.

Resident Impact Assessment:

- 8.4 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010).
- 8.5 The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Assessment and moderation arrangements will support educational settings make accurate assessments to support pupil attainment and support the transfer of academic information as part of the transition process.

Signed by:

[Corporate Director and Exec Member]

Date: [add date]

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