Alps Champions Handbook

Helping students aim higher

CH001/10/19

The Alps Champions programme

Introduction

This is a guide to becoming Alps Champions in your school or college.

The Alps Champions programme will highlight the different aspects of Alps that you should know about if you are to successfully embed an Alps culture across your school/college.

The material is designed to support all Alps schools regardless of how long you have been using Alps for. It doesn't matter what ability you feel you are at or your role within your school/college. At the heart of the programme is Connect Interactive.

If you are a seasoned user, you may find that much of the information printed here is familiar to you, but you may find the odd little piece which might be new.

The links to the website/knowledge base will be updated regularly, and therefore you may find different papers and opinion pieces each time you look.

The programme is written with a Senior Leader role in mind but really it can apply to anyone. You can equally apply many of the principles to running a successful department or faculty area, or a pastoral team. So, if you are a subject leader or a classroom teacher there will be something for you in the resource.

Much of the material brought together here exists already and many of the ideas are not new, but rather than search for material in lots of different places, we at Alps felt that it was timely to provide a comprehensive guide. I have included links to resources to support you in embedding the Alps culture. There is a selection of webinars, PowerPoints for use with your staff, briefing papers giving more detail on topics, checklists and much more. The purpose of this booklet then, is to provide a readable overview and link you through to more detailed papers when appropriate.

In summary, this is an Alps user guide for people who live and breathe Alps in schools and colleges every day.

What is an Alps Champion?

In most successful Alps schools and colleges there is one person, usually but not always a member of the SLT, who is responsible for driving the Alps culture across the year.

Their role varies but may include the development of the Quality Assurance Cycles in terms of assessment and progress. They will be the first to analyse and dissect the latest Alps monitoring input in Connect Interactive. They will reflect on the effectiveness of the cycle across the Academic Year, redesigning and rethinking it where necessary.

This person will prompt colleagues to carry out a detailed analysis of progress being made by students in their subject area/tutor groups after every data drop in line with the Quality Assurance Cycle. They are likely to be the person who meets all subject leaders to discuss implications resulting from the analysis and the next steps.

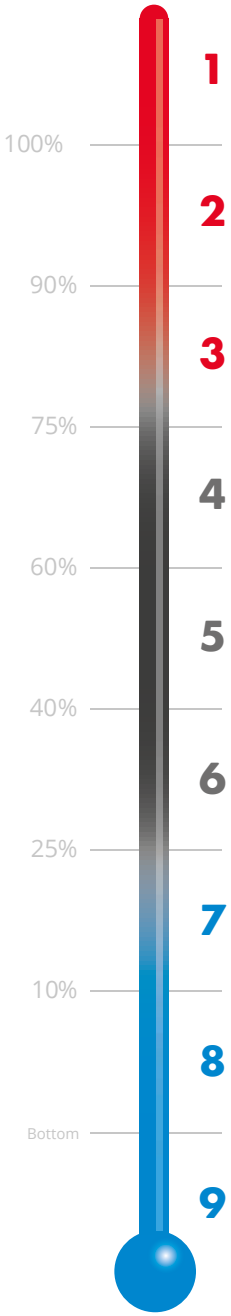
The Alps Champions will oversee the implementation of intervention strategies with students, ensuring that they are making the best progress that they can. They will monitor communication home to parent/carers and ensure that quality conversations are being held in a regular and effective way with the students themselves.

Ask an Alps Champion anything about progress across their school/college and you will get a detailed and accurate response.

The Alps Champion might be supported by others in the school/college whose role it is to empower middle leaders to drive the Alps culture at a department or Year Group level. Hence this programme is named 'Alps Champions' and is designed to support all members of staff who have a role in the Alps process.

Additional resources and support

Throughout the guide, I will refer to places you might want to visit for additional resources/support. In summary, there are two main places – the website (Training Hub and Alps Champions pages), https://alps.education/ and the Knowledge Base which is accessible through your Connect Homepage. You will need a Connect login to access this resource.



The Power of Alps lies in the thermometer

None of us came into teaching because we love data, and there are many of us who are data phobic. The power of the Alps thermometer is that you don't necessarily have to understand the numbers sitting behind it. If you want to, you can read about the methodology – it is all published in our Alps Guide, but the beauty of Alps analysis is that you don't have to.

The great thing about the Alps Thermometer is how easy it is to understand. It provides a visual aid for every indicator in your analysis to show you the progress being made by your students.

With more data phobic staff, you can simply focus on the position of the arrow on the thermometer. If it is in the red zone – great. The conversation can focus on how you work together to keep it there. A blue zone grade instigates a different conversation with the subject leader, but one focused on subject improvement and identifying steps that would lead us up the thermometer rather than using it as an accountability 'stick'.

With Connect Interactive, the conversation can move further with all staff. The 'What If' tool calculates the number of grades required to move up the thermometer, a simple bit of drag and drop that puts the students right in the centre of the conversation rather than it becoming dominated by a series of numbers.

In summary, the thermometer gives you a visual progress aid that clears the data fog for many of our colleagues allowing them to spend more of their time using the analysis to impact on their students.

The Aims of an Alps Champion: What is your intent?

School and college leaders need to know what they are aiming to achieve and why they have made those strategic decisions. They then need to be true to their vision and relentless in pursuing it.

An Alps Champion will be committed to the philosophy that each student matters and that each of them deserves the very best education. They will see Alps, with its ability to challenge each student to at least match the performance of the top 25% of students with similar prior attainment, as the perfect vehicle to embed an aspirational culture throughout their school or college.

In designing the curriculum, there is increased focus on the 'intent' of school leaders when evaluating the 'quality of education'. This is particularly true of the Educational Inspection Framework in England.

It is our view at Alps that 'intent' is about what the school or college is aiming to achieve with each of their students. It is about how they will set about implementing their goals by raising student aspirations, further improving the quality of teaching and learning and monitoring and tracking student progress effectively.

The Alps mission is to support schools & colleges in raising student progress, thus improving the outcomes, destinations and life chances of young people.

Alps helps embed a culture of continuous incremental improvement by all staff and regardless of their Ofsted journey. Outstanding schools and colleges are 'restless' places where everyone believes they can always improve.

The key aim of an Alps Champion is to ensure that there is an aspirational culture embedded in the school or college and that student progress is everyone's key priority.

At the heart of this culture there will be a commonly understood and consistently applied set of core values that define the school or college's vision of education. This culture and those values should underpin all policies and practices and be used to test all important policy decisions.

With such a culture embedded, decisions such as whether you have the right curriculum in place for all your students, whether at KS3, KS4 or Post-16, will be made with their best interests in mind.

The most powerful way to use Alps to drive school improvement is through effective planning. The development of key members of staff who will then live Alps almost every day is another aim of this Alps Champions programme. These people become the drivers of the culture, the ones who think strategically about the planning and execution of student progress.

Embedding an Alps culture takes time. It takes time to take staff with you on the Alps journey – so an Alps Champion must not expect everyone to be on board overnight.

At this point it is pertinent to say that Alps shouldn't be used as a 'stick'. In other words, we shouldn't beat people with it in terms of accountability and Performance Management, otherwise you will lose them, particularly when you have small numbers of students in your classes. Instead Alps should be used as the starting point for a conversation on progress.

Implementing your goals

Firstly, it is essential that your goals as an Alps Champion are clearly identifiable and visible within your school or college Improvement/Development Plan. They should be visible in displays throughout your school or college.

Obviously, you will have other goals and targets, some perhaps driven by how you are 'measured' in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. However, whether these goals are focused on 'progress' or 'outcomes', it is impossible to raise raw results unless students make more progress.

In other words, using Alps to raise student progress will have a beneficial impact on all these other school or college targets.

Secondly, it is crucial that you have a clear operational plan for the year ahead that is shared with all key stakeholders. This plan may cover many areas but must include:

- Setting aspirational minimum expected grades/target-setting with students
- The Quality Assurance Cycle
  - Key assessment dates and which types of grades will be recorded at each
  - How will the recorded data be analysed effectively in order to provide a firm foundation for intervention with impact.
- Training all your stakeholders

We will deal with each of these in turn in Sections 2-4

Evaluating your impact as an Alps Champion

Effectively this comes through the thorough analysis of your examination results, and in the progress that students have made at a strategic, subject and individual level.

In Section 5 we will look at how the subject review process can support you in making an evaluation of your impact as an Alps Champion.

There is merit in assessing your impact through the systems that you implement across the Academic Year, for example your quality assurance systems – have they had the intended impact on student outcomes? Section 3 will expand on this aspect of the Alps Champion role.

You should also reflect on the success of your in-year tracking systems and processes. In Section 6, we will look at how you can use Connect Interactive to monitor student progress across the year and compare this internal data with final outcomes. This will allow you to evaluate how consistent and accurate your teachers are in their predicting of student outcomes and how effective your formal assessments are in generating internal grades.

Section 2: Target setting – Establishing aspirational student target grades

Generation of Minimum Expected Grades

The ethos of driving an Alps culture in schools begins each September by encouraging staff to be aspirational in their student target setting.

A robust target setting policy is key to ensuring that teachers and students know and achieve their potential. Staff in a high-achieving Alps school will understand how to generate personalised target grades in their subject and will ensure that these are both aspirational and realistic for their students. They will have been pro-active in involving students in this process.

Alps enables you to set aspirational Minimum Expected Grades (MEGs) at the 75th percentile nationally. An Alps Champion will ensure that teachers and students regard these as minimum expectations and allows raised 'personalised' challenge targets to be negotiated during courses.

The methodology behind the generation of these MEGs from the national data is covered in Appendix 2, or can be found in the following pages of the Alps Guides:

England: A level pages 82/83, AS pages 90/91, BTEC pages 98/99, KS4 pages 62-65.
Wales: A level pages 8/9, AS pages 22/23, BTEC pages 38/39, KS4 pages 62-65.
Northern Ireland: A level pages 8/9, AS pages 22/23, BTEC pages 38/39.

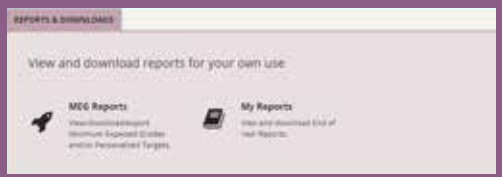
NOTE: you will find all MEG tables in the Guides.

Where does a MEG come from?

- Each of your students are placed in a prior attainment band depending on average GCSE point score
- The national dataset is used to establish the average grades achieved by students in each prior attainment band
- Identification of the school or college whose progress hit the top 25% mark for each band
- The points achieved by this provider is translated to a grade Minimum Expected Grade or MEG

Action Box 1 - MEG Generation

- Import your student cohorts into Connect Data, including prior attainment
- Import your teaching data to automatically generate MEGs
- Access the MEG report via Connect Homepage



Download and iport into your MIS

MEGs as a starting point

The MEG is defined as the average grade that a student needs to achieve across their entries in order to match the progress of the provider at the 75th percentile. If all our students got their MEG in all subjects, then we would be a RED HOT provider – we would have made progress equivalent to the top 25% of schools in the dataset.

However, the MEGs are just the starting point – they should not be a ceiling for target setting at subject level. An Alps Champion's aim should be to establish a growth mindset culture.

The MEG is an average across all subjects. We need to understand how our subject progress relates to this MEG, so that we can guide our students appropriately and ensure that they are competitive in their grade aspirations.

Unique subject thermometers and personalised target setting

A Personalised Target is the subject target set by teaching staff. In order to do this, staff must understand how progress in their subject compares to the MEG.

All subject thermometers are constructed independently so that you can compare the progress you make in each subject against the same subject nationally. Your subject thermometers look different because different subjects make different progress nationally. So, the score that you need to hit the 75th percentile in is different across subjects.

For information on the generation and reading of subject thermometers, see Alps Guides. Note all courses follow the same methodology.

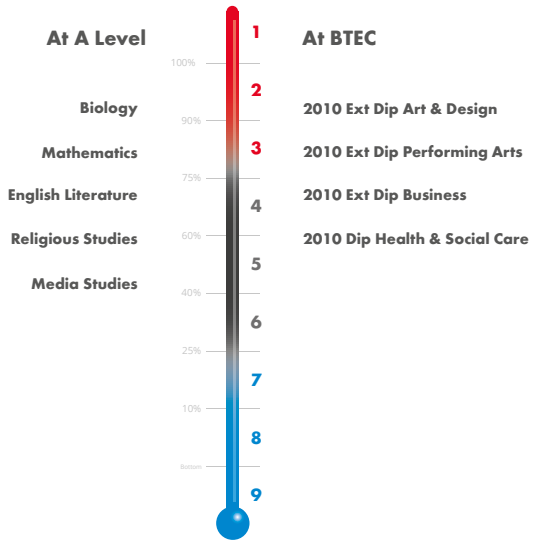
England: pages 10/11.
Wales: pages 10/11.
Northern Ireland: pages 10/11.

The Alps score for your subject thermometers is calculated using a formula which compares expected points with actual points across the student entries. Again, the background methodology is available in the Alps Guide pages below.

England: pages 14/15.
Wales: pages 14/15.
Northern Ireland: pages 14/15.

To summarise the calculation, if all students in a subject gained their MEG, then the Alps score for that subject would be 1.00. What teachers need to understand is where that score of 1.00 plots them on their unique subject thermometers.

Here is a Key Stage 5 example of what an Alps grade of 1.00 means on a subject thermometer.



In media studies, a 1.00 would result in an Alps Grade lower down the thermometer than it would in biology or mathematics.

You see similar patterns in the BTEC courses and at GCSE.

This is because of the different progress made nationally in these subjects. There are many factors which influence progress, but it does mean that subject teachers have to understand their unique thermometer and how to target set relative to the MEG.

This means that when we are setting subject specific targets, we need to be aware of two things:

1. The MEG.
2. The scale on our thermometers.

Setting your Personalised Targets

Are you going to use subject specific personalised targets alongside your MEGs?

All schools and colleges have different policies on target setting, but in those where Alps is most embedded, the Alps Champion will ensure the following happens across September:

1. Staff are trained in how MEGs are generated.
2. Staff understand the unique subject thermometers and use them to set Personalised Subject Targets.
3. These Personalised Targets are aspirational and matching them will result in the subject gaining a RED-HOT Alps grading. When setting Personalised Targets at a subject level, you may want to be realistic with some departments, aspiring for them to get into the black rather than the red.
4. Target are shared and agreed in a dialogue with students.
5. Targets are reviewed across an Academic Year.

Your approach to target setting

Although we do publish MEGs for AS qualifications, we would always advise schools and colleges to use A level MEGs from the start of Year 12, assuming that students are on a two-year course. The A level MEGs are more aspirational and set expectations high from the outset with staff and students.

Split MEGs – there are some prior attainment bands which result in a split MEG. In many high performing schools and colleges, the higher of the two split grades is used, but this is a matter for you to discuss in your individual context.

Some schools and colleges set the actual MEG as the student target. You can see that this may result in some subjects setting lower aspirations for their students and themselves, as other teachers in the same subject nationally are making more progress with their students. In other schools, we see an Alps +1 approach to target setting. This is aspirational of course, but you could argue that for some subjects it may be too aspirational – if everyone in biology achieved Alps+1, the Alps score for that subjects would be 1.20, which would be more than exceptional against the national thermometer for that subject.

There will be students in your groups where you want to use other factors to support your target setting too. I am thinking here of the creative arts where you may have a very talented student with a low prior attainment. Here we would look to the subject teacher to take this into account when setting targets.

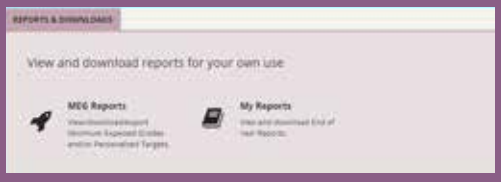
Successful Alps schools and colleges adopt a mixture of all of these factors, working with staff to ensure that the Personalised Targets are tailored to the individual student across their curriculum.

Whatever your policy, teachers and the Alps Champion can use these grades to track and monitor student progress across the academic year/course. Where personalised student targets higher than the 75th percentile are agreed, teachers must be reassured that they won't be measured against these aspirational grades.

There is the option of importing a target setting gradepoint into Connect Interactive to check on the aspirational quality of your targets.

Action Box 2 - Personalised Targets

- Use MEGs to generate Personalised Targets
- Import into Connect Data
- Staff can view the Personalised target on the subject pages and on the Student Performance Overview.



Download into excel or a PDF from the Reports & Downloads, or from subject pages

Key target setting questions

1. Is there a clear policy on how staff will set subject specific personalised targets?
2. Are these aspirational? Are you planning for your school and subject progress indicators to be amongst the top Alps providers?
3. Are students involved in the target setting process – is it a two-way dialogue?
4. Are targets reviewed regularly and amended as necessary?
5. Are staff actively tracking students against these aspirational targets?

Support document: Getting started with Alps - Aspirational target setting checklist

Briefing paper: Setting aspirational targets

Alps PowerPoint Resource: Methodology and target setting

Alps Videos: Aspirational target setting

Staff checklists

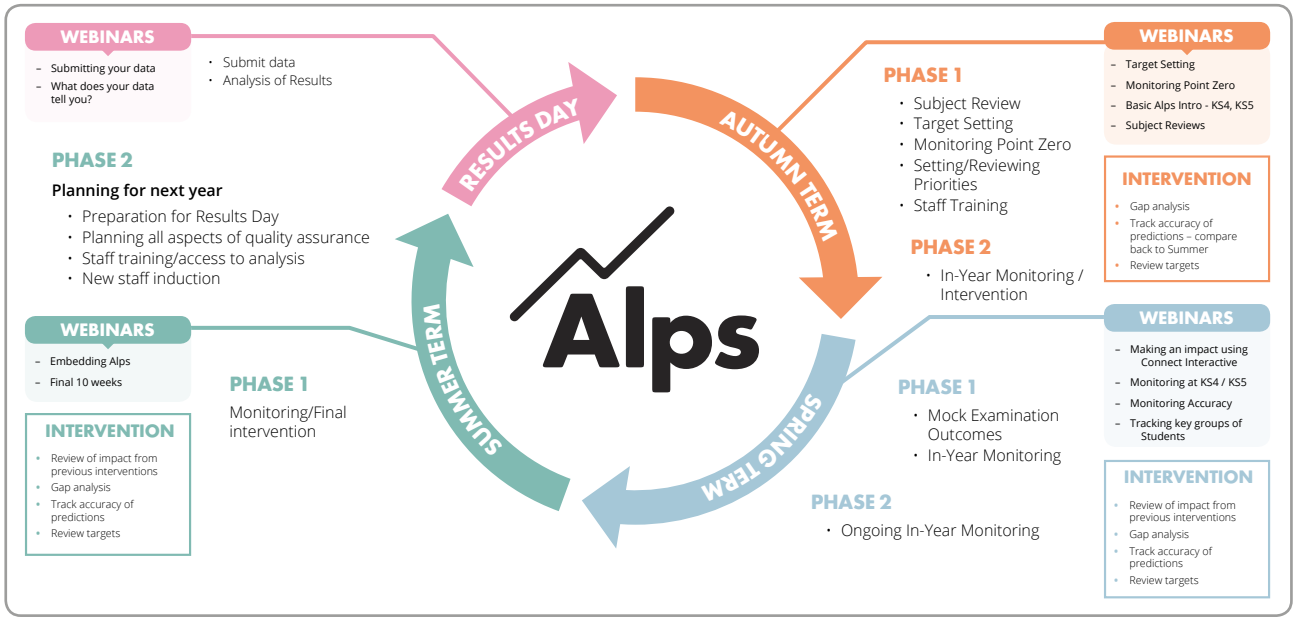
Section 3: The Quality Assurance Cycle

One thing that strikes us as an Education Team at Alps, is that schools and colleges who are using Alps and Connect Interactive to have a real impact on the progress of their students have a strong Alps culture built into all aspects of their Quality Assurance Cycles.

Development plans reference red Alps grades and staff are trained in how to use Alps to get the most out of the analysis. Their Quality Assurance Cycles indicate the type of data to be collected from staff, when grades will be submitted to Connect Interactive and the analysis expected at all levels from the submission.

As an Alps Champion you should start by looking at your Quality Assurance (QA) assessment calendar.

Our Alps Annual Cycle has been designed to show the potential phases of the QA process.



Establishing an effective Assessment Quality Assurance Cycle

In terms of implementing your goals as an Alps Champion it is probably useful to break the academic year into three distinct phases:

Stage 1 – August/September

This is when you ensure the year starts positively and will include:

1. Evaluation of results - see Section 5.
2. Reviewing school or college strategic priorities from the previous academic year and establishing new priorities - see Section 5.
3. Reviewing results at subject level with subject leads and setting any improvement targets as appropriate - see Section 5.
4. As far as possible ensuring all students are following an appropriate curriculum for their needs and abilities.
5. Target setting: both for the school and college and with individual subject leaders and students.
6. Staff training – current staff may benefit from 'refreshment' and new staff may never have used Alps before.
7. Establishing Monitoring Point Zero (MPZ).
   This is your first gradeset of the Academic Year for your key examination Year Groups – i.e. Year 13 and Year 11.

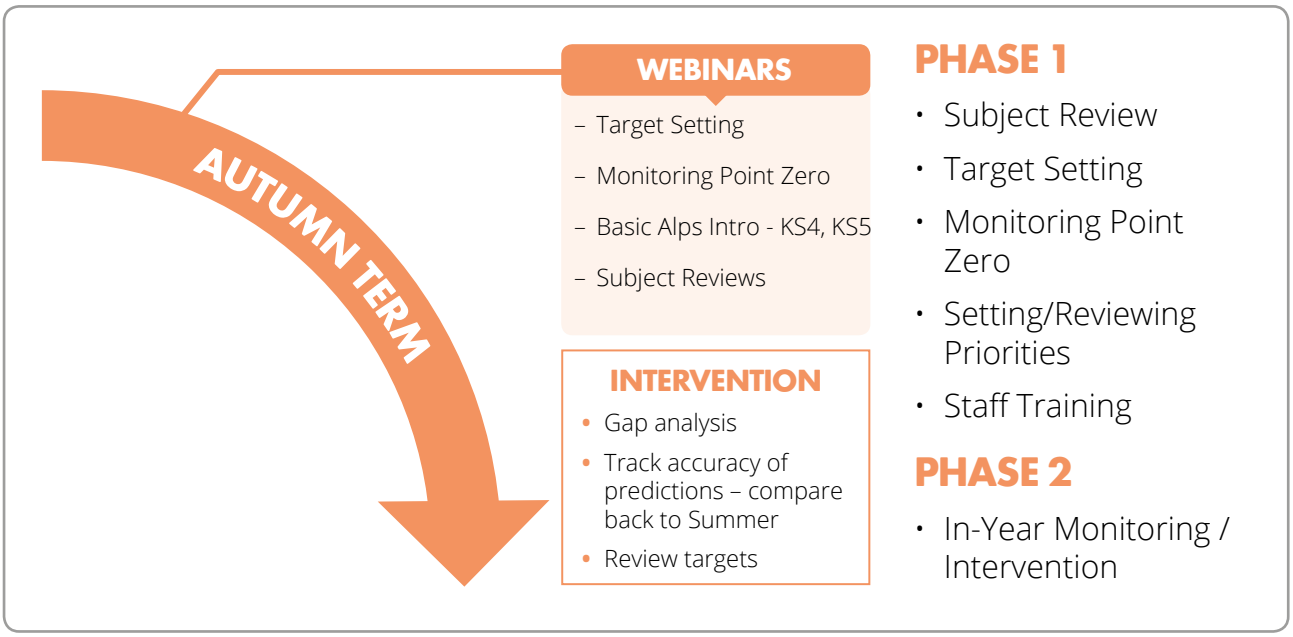
Post-16 - this used to mean analysing the AS grades of the students just starting Year 13 (and not including any discontinued subjects) against the Alps A Level benchmarks to see what your value-added grades will be like in a year's time if nothing changes.

This is still valid in Wales and Northern Ireland and in schools or colleges in England where students are still entered for AS exams.

However, it can be taken to simply mean establishing a baseline for progress at the start of each academic year, whether based on AS outcomes, Year 10 or Year 12 Mock grades, or end of year teacher predicted grades.

It empowers the Alps Champion to hit the ground running in discussions with Year Heads, subject leads or subject teachers.

Support document: Alps cycle
Briefing paper: Embedding Alps/Planning the Year Ahead
Alps PowerPoint Resource: Embedding Alps into your culture
Alps Videos: Embedding Alps
Support document: The Subject Review Checklist
Briefing Paper: Establishing a monitoring point in September – the MPZ
Alps Videos: The MPZ
Staff checklists



Stage 2 – October to June

This is where the hard work begins: the monitoring, tracking, support and intervention, after each year group's data drops and mock examinations.

The nearer the external examinations approach, the sharper the focus on maximising outcomes must become.

Line-management of subjects must be rigorous and effective. Many schools and colleges put the responsibility for line-managing course leaders on a single Senior Leader – the Alps Champion perhaps. Other schools and colleges allocate various subjects to different members of the SLT. Whichever system is used, there must be a consistency of approach.

Ensure that each member of SLT reviews the performance of each course and sets targets with course leaders to be reviewed regularly throughout the year.

This must include value-added progress analysis using Alps/Connect Interactive, with each subject lead focusing on their subject and, where relevant, their teaching sets, the varying performance of student groups and any potentially concerning patterns in predictions.

1. Has the predicted Alps grade risen or fallen dramatically in the current data-drop?
2. Is the predicted Alps grade much higher or lower than what was achieved in the same subject in the previous academic year?
3. Is there sound evidence to support these variations?

We will explore monitoring in Connect Interactive in more detail in Section 7.

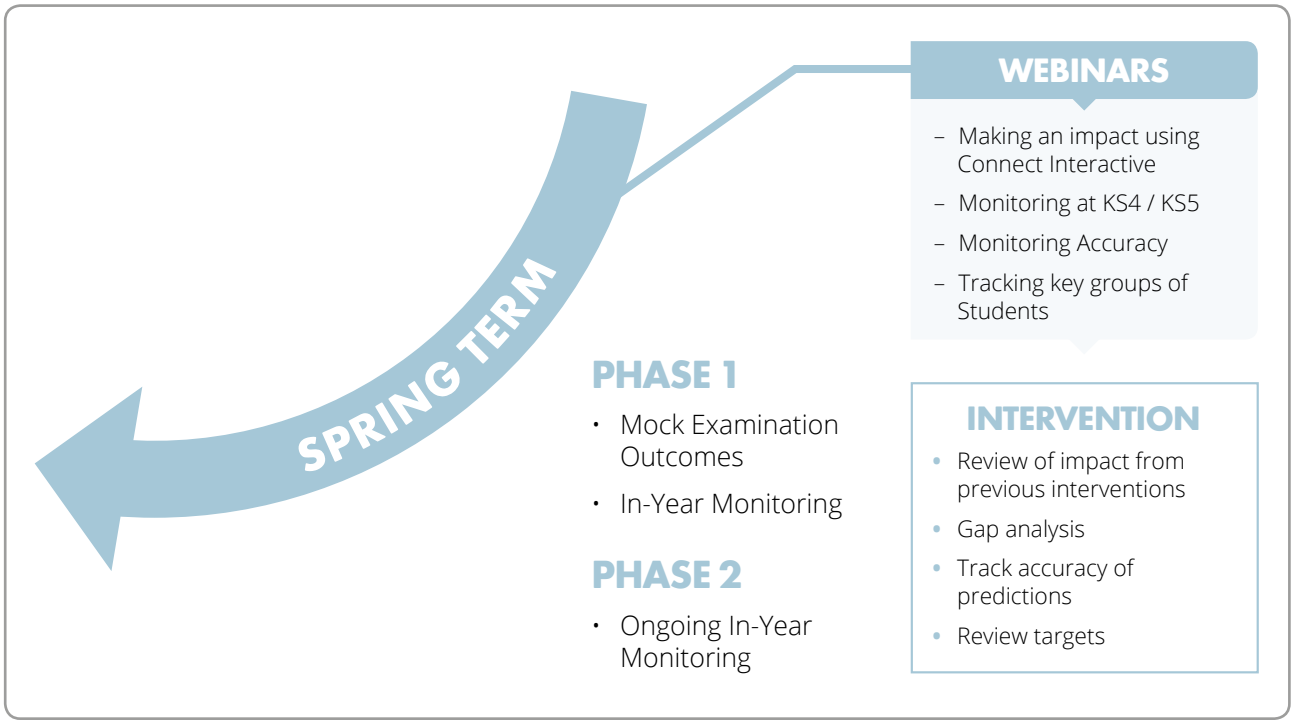
Alps Video: Monitoring in Connect Interactive throughout the year

Alps Video: Impact of Raw Mocks in Connect Interactive

Alps Video: The last 10 weeks – how can Alps help?

Alps Checklist – A Guide to Monitoring in Connect Interactive

Staff checklists



Stage 3 – June/July

This will mainly be focused on planning for the year ahead:

1. Analysis of end of year data for Year 10 and Year 12
2. Setting provisional priorities for the year ahead in the School or College Improvement Plan;
3. Preparation for Results Day(s);
4. Preparing next year's Quality Assurance Cycle and your school or college calendar.
5. Can any training needs that have emerged during the academic year be met during this phase rather than at the start of the new academic year?

Some useful questions when evaluating your current QA cycle as an Alps Champion:

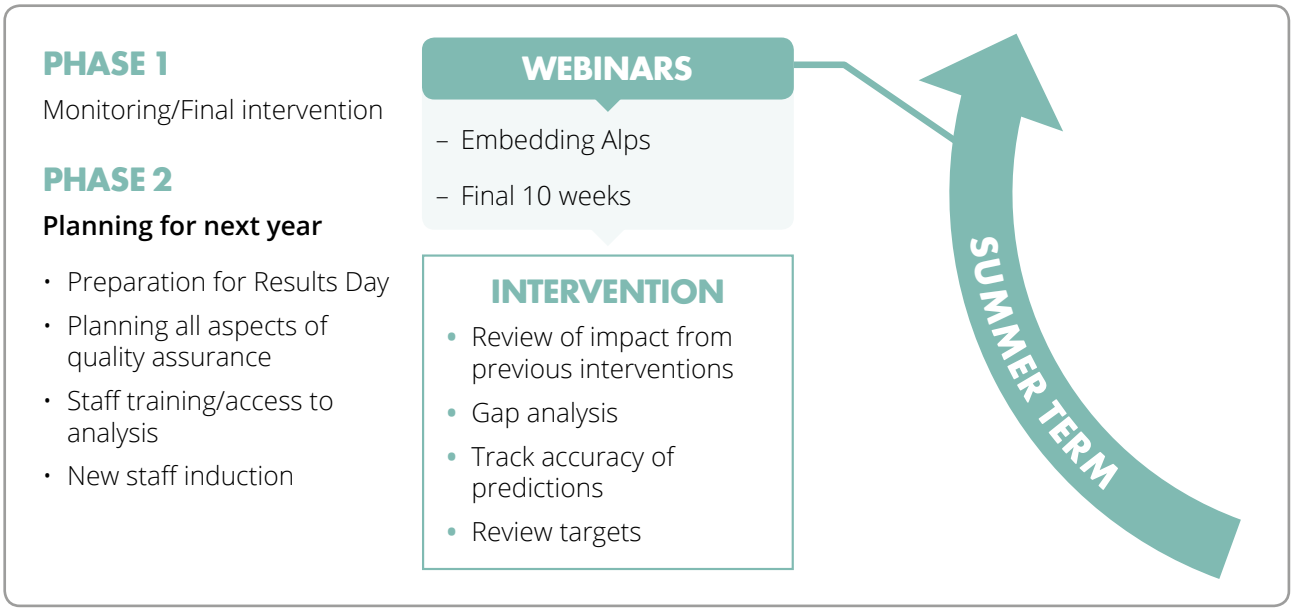
- When are your data drops? When do you collect data?
- What data do you collect in each data drop?
- What do you currently do with the data and what are staff expected to do?
- How does the analysis of each data-drop feed in to SLT and Governor meetings?

We will explore more on types of data drop in Section 6.

Priorities when establishing your meeting structure:

- Ensure that the SLT agenda includes a significant focused item on each Year Group's data after each data-drop is closed and the data has been analysed;
- Ensure that there are calendared meetings with all subject leads following each key data drop.

Briefing paper: Embedding Alps/Planning the Year Ahead
Alps PowerPoint Resource: Embedding Alps into your culture
Alps Videos: Embedding Alps
Staff checklists
Alps Checklist – A Guide to Monitoring in Connect Interactive



Section 4: Training your stakeholders

Training and support for you as an Alps Champion

- The Alps Champions programme and bi-annual conference.
- Staff checklists to help you ask the right questions and ensure that staff are asking themselves the right questions.
- Our Alps Champions website page – much of the content that is referenced throughout this guide can be found on the Alps Champions page.
- Alps Videos and webinars – website Training Hub.
- Training 1:1 either from our Education Team or through a conference.
- The Knowledge Base – lots of useful articles and short videos.
- Talking to us.

For a full range of support – see Section 8.

Training your teachers

- Run an Alps training session at the beginning of each Academic Year. This may need to be repeated as new staff join. You may want to consider training as part of an induction programme for new staff.

  Support available: Alps PowerPoint Resource – Methodology and target setting – this is an editable PowerPoint resource designed for you to use with your staff. It includes a script to support you in the delivery of the training.

- Organise ongoing training in Connect Interactive for your staff – how do you get them all to use Connect Interactive effectively?

  Support available: Connect Interactive workbook

  Alps Videos – Getting started in Connect Interactive and Advanced use of Connect Interactive. Throughout the year we will add more videos to the Training Hub and Alps Champions page of the website.

- Ensure teachers understand how to set their own personalised targets using Alps Minimum Expected Grades.
- Ensure teachers understand the type of data needed at each monitoring point and how their data should be generated/evidenced.
- Ensure that teachers are committed to holding progress discussions with students across the Academic Year.

Additional support

Staff checklists

Training sessions – use Alps videos/PowerPoints or book training session with Alps educational consultant

Knowledge Base – including the support videos

Free 'Why Alps' conferences or our 'Alps Champions' events

Subject to subject support – building your Alps Champions across the school/college

The more people you have working with you on embedding Alps at a subject level as 'Alps Champions' the better.

- Don't neglect your Heads of Year when developing Alps Champions and focus on ensuring tutors also know how to access their tutees data easily in Connect Interactive in order to have effective mentoring meetings with them focused on their progress.
- The training of several Alps Champions within a school or college supports succession planning. This is also true when training Alps Champions at subject level.
- Some schools and colleges use a few subjects to drive the embedding of the Alps culture in the first year of using Alps analysis. This might be a group of strong subject leaders who will use Alps and the analysis to drive improvement at a subject level. In subsequent years, this experienced group of subject leaders can drive the embedding of Alps across the whole school/college.
- If you are using Alps analysis at both Key Stage 4 and 5, you might have two Champions who can work together to embed the culture and train staff together so that there is a consistency of language and approach across all staff.

Training your students

- Celebrate success – ensure students know about students of similar prior attainment who have made outstanding progress similar in the recent past. Publicise the successes of former students - in displays, in assemblies and in publications.
- Share the MEGs and personalised targets with students and ensure teachers and tutors hold regular discussions about progress towards these aspirational targets.
- Ensure students understand why personalised subject targets might vary.
- Build a culture of aspiration so students do believe that they can and will achieve their potential.
- Ensure students understand the importance of in-year monitoring grades and mock examinations.
- Hold regular round-table meetings with representative groups of your students. Ask them to tell you where teaching and their learning/progress is currently outstanding. Encourage a frank and open discussion of teaching and learning issues so that during the year you know, from the students' point of view, where good and outstanding practice is happening and where intervention may be required.

Training your parents and carers

- Introductory sessions providing an overview of the reporting and tracking process that exists in the school/college for their daughter or son's Year Group. These could be early in the Academic Year.
- They can be used to ensure parental 'buy in' to the aspirational culture in the school/college and a basic understanding of Alps.
- Encourage parental involvement and let them know how they can support their daughter or son to succeed in your school or college.
- Provide an overview of all key dates – the more support you get from them in instilling the importance of working hard the better.

Training your data manager

This is vital – if you are to be able to input the data that will give you the most detailed progress picture into Connect Interactive, then you must ensure that you have an effective data submitter. The higher their skill in dealing with Connect Data the more effective you can be.

Ideally, they should understand the ways in which data can be analysed in Connect Interactive too, as this will help them to check submission accuracy and to name and order data drops logically. Some data managers are also able to support in training others.

Connect Data User Guide - available from the Connect Homepage in Resources
Support document: Getting started with Alps - Aspirational target setting checklist
Support document: Digital Guide
Alps Videos: Connect Data Update Overview
Articles and videos on the Knowledge Base

Aspects of Connect Data for you and your data manager to consider

- Managing staff logins – will all staff have access? Should all staff have a login?
- Setting up fine grades for monitoring gradepoints – will you want to track by fine grades?
- Naming gradepoints – ensure that all staff understand what the naming convention is and that it is easy to follow in Connect Interactive.
- Which custom groups will you add to your data?
    - The standard groups are gender, ethnicity and disadvantaged/eFSM
    - You can add additional customised groups that you want to track, for example SEND. There is no limit to the number of additional groups that you can add.
    - Prior attainment categories are available as a filter – High, Middle and Low
- Will you add teacher names/teaching sets to Connect Interactive? Some schools and colleges choose to add sets only and not teachers. Connect Interactive can only show one teacher name and often groups are shared.
- Will you add personalised targets or use MEGs only? Personalised targets are available to view on the subject and teaching set pages. They can also be seen on the Student Performance Overview.

Training your Governors

It is vital for all our Governors to be well versed in the language of Alps and in the basic methodology used.

Effective training for Governors is part of a strong leadership team, and will make progress meetings run smoother, share the culture of ambition and aspiration, and ensure that Alps is truly embedded across all stakeholders in the school or college.

We have developed an Alps webinar for Governors to help them to understand the principles of Alps and how to hold leadership teams to account from Alps gradings. The webinar is available to watch at their convenience and can be found on the training hub of the website.

Alps Videos: Alps Governor Training

"The speed at which the Alps reports are produced means that at the start of the academic year, curriculum leaders are provided with detailed Alps reports which form part of the target setting process in both Year 12 and Year 13."

- Cowbridge comprehensive school

Evaluation of results

This is critical to your ability to move forwards effectively in the year ahead, whether you are pleased about the results or somewhat downhearted.

Obviously, this can be still done effectively using the Alps PDF Reports but is a much richer experience if you are amongst the users of Connect Interactive (see Section 7).

In successful schools and colleges, there is a shared understanding across all staff on the purpose of subject review analysis and the ways in which it will be used. Many colleges will ensure that subject areas have developed action plans in the summer term, and therefore this review of results should be a reflection on whether the priorities remain the same.

Some of the analysis aspects that you may consider as part of subject review are set out below.

- Start by looking at the overall Alps grades for your school or college and whether they show an improving historic trend or not.
- In the Strategic area of Connect Interactive, start applying filters such as gender, ethnicity or disadvantaged so that you are clearly able to see how progress made by different student groups varies across the school.
- You will also want to apply specific custom filters that your Data Manager has made available for analysis through Connect Interactive.
- In the Subject Overview area, review your current curriculum – how well has it served all your students based on current year Results data?
- In the Subject Overview, look for subjects that are red-hot this year, showing improvement or consistent performance historically and those that have slipped into the blue.
- You may want to use the 'What If' tool to see how close to Grade 3 subjects on Grade 4 were and how close to achieving Grade 6 those subjects on Grade 7 were.
- You may also want to apply filters, for example gender or disadvantage, to subjects to understand student group performance at subject level.
- By opening up Teaching Sets on the Subject Overview in Connect Interactive you can see where any teaching sets have varied in terms of each subject's overall VA.
- When analysing teacher sets, consider where to use the 'Ad Hoc' tool to discount the performance of an individual student who may have gained disappointing outcomes in several subjects due to personal issues.
- Switching to the Student area, you can look at Performance Groups, apply filters and identify individual student successes as well as those who made disappointing progress in one or all subjects.
- Were there any shocks? If there were then you need to look back at the quality of predictions. Remember, this should be done in a positive and supportive manner as a platform for improvement, not as a performance review tool.
- In the Monitoring Accuracy area, you are easily able to understand which subjects and teachers predicted most and least accurately during the previous academic year and at which gradepoint their data was most accurate compared to the final outcomes.

Reviewing school or college strategic priorities from the previous academic year and establishing new priorities

All of the analysis that you have put into evaluating this year's outcomes will put you in good stead for these important tasks -

- How have you done this summer in comparison to the school or college priorities that were set a year ago? Where have you had successes and where are you disappointed?
- Can you clearly see where new strategic priorities emerge from your evaluation of this summer's results in your Alps Report or using Connect Interactive?
- Which subjects or student groups appear to be improvement priorities for the year ahead?
- Does your School or College Improvement Plan need tweaking as a consequence of this summer's results?
- Does your SEF (SAR) need updating because of this summer's results?
- Was your Quality Assurance Cycle timely and manageable?

Reviewing results at subject level with subject leads/performance review

- Which subjects require a higher level of support and challenge in the year ahead?
- If a department is significantly under-achieving, agree what is going to be different in the year ahead and when you will be regularly checking on progress.
- Which subject leads and individual teachers need to be congratulated personally?
- Again, it is worth repeating here that Alps shouldn't be used as a 'stick' in terms of accountability and Performance Management. Instead Alps should be used as the starting point for a conversation on progress.

Alps PowerPoint Resource: Getting the most from your PDF Report

Alps Checklist – The Subject Review Checklist

Briefing Paper: A guide to Subject Review in Connect Interactive

Alps Video: The Strategic section of Connect Interactive

Staff checklists

Section 6: In-year Monitoring

One of the more powerful aspects of Connect Interactive is that modelling tools are available throughout the year for your monitoring grades. You can add as many sets of monitoring data as you want to support staff in making the right interventions and to support you in deciding on the distribution of resources.

Note that monitoring is available through Connect Interactive only and not through pdf Reports.

Which data will have the most impact?

Schools and colleges vary significantly in the number of internal assessment points they have in their annual cycles, and by the type of data that is collected at each point.

The most common data types are:

- Predicted grade or most likely grade - the professional judgement as to what each student is realistically likely to achieve at the end of the course.
- Current working at grades – usually a grade based on teacher assessment of student ability to that point in the course. Popular in vocational courses.
- Raw mock examination grades – useful to highlight gaps between assessed performance and a predicted grade.
- Attitude to learning – these are currently not available through Connect Interactive; however, this does not mean that they should be ignored. Export the marksheet to excel and merge.

This is summarised in **Alps Checklist – A Guide to Monitoring in Connect Interactive.**

You can choose to use Fine Grades for any in-year monitoring point. This will need to be set up by your Data Manager.

The Monitoring Accuracy area of Connect Interactive allows you to track progress over several gradepoints. In order to get the most from this area, it is important to build up a trend across data points for a year group.

This might look as follows for a typical Year 13:

- A base line grade at the beginning of Year 13, the Monitoring Point Zero or MPZ – this may be an AS grade or an internal predicted grade generated from the end of Year 12, for example from a mock examination. It will provide a start point from which to base all intervention in the Autumn Term.
- Interim predicted/working at grades as the Autumn Term progresses.
- Mock examinations in January – it can be useful to analyse mock outcomes against teacher predicted outcomes. This can highlight potential gaps in examination skills or knowledge and understanding issues.
- Final predicted outcome grades based on professional judgement around March/April. This will form the basis of the final intervention strategies for the A/AS level revision period, or for the review of BTEC units.

Alps Champions should ensure that they import only the data that allows them to have maximum impact on student progress.

Teaching staff must be clear on:

- The purpose of the data.
- How they will generate the grades and that this is consistent across the school/college.
- How they are expected to use the data to support student progress.

It is difficult to predict likely outcomes for students early in a two or three-year course. Perhaps consider the following set of criteria as a way of assessing progress:

Early November – collection of 3 grades

a. Attitude to learning
b. Vulnerable to fail
c. Two grades below MEG

Reviewing your impact after each in-year data-drop

From each monitoring point, and indeed from examination results, there is much we can learn from our analysis which should then be focused into how we support student learning through lessons.

In many ways this is the same task as those described above in terms of end of year data described in Section 5. The difference is that your retrospective analysis of examination results is not going to change them whereas your in-year analysis of data recorded by teachers during data drops empowers you to work strategically on improving outcomes through targeted support and intervention.

Sample questions that might be used in the analysis of a data drop include:

- Does the monitoring accuracy tool reveal any sudden and unexplained leaps or falls in subject value-added grade?
- Is there a discrepancy between working grades/raw mock grades and predicted outcomes?
- Which students need to be celebrated privately or publicly following each data-drop?
- Which students have emerged as overall school/college priorities for support/intervention after each data-drop?
- Which students have emerged as priorities in individual subjects after each data-drop?
- Is appropriate intervention taking place where underachievement is evident and is this having an impact?
- Ensure you are making an impact through line-management during the year.

See Alps Checklist – A Guide to Monitoring in Connect Interactive

What impact will your analysis have on learning, teaching and progress?

The most important outcome from any data analysis is the impact that it has on student progress.

Connect Interactive is a simple and visually effective platform that allows you to quickly assess the strengths and weaknesses from your data drops. This means that teaching staff can spend more of their time on how to make an impact on student progress, implementing their teaching strategies almost immediately. Some examples might include:

- Look at the Banded by Ability table in the strategic area – do you have any key groups of prior attainers who are making less progress?
    - Literacy – if there was a school/college strategy on the interpretation of examination questions in each lesson, might this help students to access the papers better?
    - Are your highest prior attainers being stretched – could there be a focus on independent learning tasks designed to push them to the top grades? Do they know what answers to these A*, D* or Grade 9 look like or could this be introduced into lessons?
- Do students carry tracking sheets? Are these openly discussed with subject teachers in terms of how they can improve? Is the tutor/Head of Year monitoring this?
- Do students have detailed overviews of specifications or Personalised Learning Checklists, where they understand what they have to master to reach a certain grade?

Analysis of Raw Mock grades

If you have chosen to use examination gradepoints, you may find that the overall trend is either too blue, or too red. Either way, the important thing is to analyse the reasons behind why this might be the case.

1. Blue raw mock grades - it is fundamental to understand why your data is blue if you are going to shift the grades.
    - How have the mocks been constructed? Is there a similar distribution of Assessment Objectives and of different question types that might be found on an external paper or was it too weighted to the challenging question types?
    - Have teachers examined material that has not been taught?
    - Did staff expect too much from Christmas revision? Is the timing right in the year?
    - Were teachers so focused on content that skills were not taught, for example command words, dissecting graphs etc?
    - Have you set the right culture across the school/college that instils the importance of the mocks?
2. Red mock grades – similarly it is important to understand why a subject may be over-predicting. This could be down to the way in which the mock has been constructed or marked.
    - Was the construction of the examination paper fair enough – is there a similar distribution of Assessment Objectives and of different question types that might be found on an external paper or was it too weighted towards the simpler question types?
    - Was each paper marked consistently and were grades awarded in a way that mirrors national grade boundaries?
    - Were they based on examination material from the specification?

"Alps has been a core part of Hackney's post 16 improvement strategy. It is used by all our schools very proactively to set targets for students and subject teams which are both realistic and challenging."

- The Learning Trust Hackney

Briefing Paper: Establishing a monitoring point in September – the MPZ
Alps Videos: The MPZ
Alps Video: Monitoring in Connect Interactive throughout the year
Alps Video: Impact of Raw Mocks in Connect Interactive
Alps Video: The last 10 weeks – how can Alps help?
Alps Checklist – A Guide to Monitoring in Connect Interactive
Briefing Paper: Making an impact using Connect Interactive – tracking your students
Staff checklists

Section 7: Connect Interactive

Connect Interactive is our powerful online platform to analyse your data instantaneously. The tools available allow users to analyse in more depth – at a subject or teaching set level.

Access to Connect Interactive also allows you to analyse your examination outcomes and your in-year tracking grades. You will need to subscribe to Connect Interactive to access your data in the platform.

Your annual subscription to Connect Interactive analysis begins on Results Day. This then opens up the platform for the remainder of the Academic Year. We have structured it in this way as we believe that from the outset of the Academic Year you need a context. This comes from the analysis of the external examination results in Connect Interactive and serves as a reference point for all subsequent monitoring and enables you to make better use of our 'monitoring accuracy' area.

All staff can have access to the web-based system where they can carry out modelling to determine how their Alps grades might be affected by underperformance.

We can also set up a free demonstration video conference with a member of our Education Team if you want a more 1:1 Connect Interactive experience.

Support available

Alps Video: Demo of Connect Interactive

Alps Video: Getting started in Connect Interactive

Alps Video: Advanced use of Connect Interactive

Alps Video: Monitoring in Connect Interactive throughout the year

Briefing Paper: Making an impact using Connect Interactive – tracking your students

Alps Video: Impact of Raw Mocks in Connect Interactive

Alps Video: The last 10 weeks – how can Alps help?

Workbook: The Connect Guide for Subject Teachers

The Knowledge Base – there are many short articles and videos to get the most from the Connect Interactive tools.

The analysis available on Connect Interactive

Like the PDF Report, Connect Interactive allows you to analyse your data on three levels: Strategic, Subject and Student.

You can interact with your analysis and printing/exporting is available to allow you to generate reports to share with school/college staff.

The interactivity will allow you to compare the progress of key groups, for example your disadvantaged students and compare their progress with that of all students. In addition, there are modelling tools which allow you to ask questions of your data, assessing the impact of interventions across subject areas.

Throughout Connect Interactive, you are able to select gradepoint trends to analyse progress. You may want to view your examination trends, or an internal gradepoint trend.

You may want to see a mixture of examination and in-year gradepoints to assess predicting accuracy. For example, a monitoring sandwich is our term for the gradepoint selector that supports you in assessing predicting accuracy – choose two consecutive end of year gradepoints, and then sandwich between them an interim in-year gradepoint for the year group whose results you are showing in the second end-of-year slot.

The Strategic area

This area allows you to re-create analysis similar to that of the PDF Report. You can select a customised report or add specific pages to the analysis. This includes a Governors' Report. However, in Connect Interactive, you can add filters to the pages to identify where you may have progress gaps between groups of students. These groups can be the standard Connect Interactive groups, or customised groups added by your data manager.

Once you have built the report, you can save it, share it with members of your school/college, or export to a PDF and print.

Examples of pages available include:

- Strategic overview - This is the table that will tell you how overall school or college value-added progress measures up.
- Banded by Ability – how students in each of your prior attainment bands has performed against the national dataset. Are there any groups of prior attainers who are making less than expected progress?

Your PDF Report contains 'How to' pages with more details on how you might use them to get the most from your analysis.

The power of strategic pages for end of year results analysis

Your subject review after Results Day will focus on the end of year analysis. It will support you in making judgements on school/college performance and on subject performance and where your priorities lie in the year ahead.

The power of the strategic pages in monitoring points and trends

The beauty of Connect Interactive at this level is that you can re-create a PDF Report, or customised version, for any monitoring point or trend. These are students that are in your school/college right now, and if you don't like what you see then you can intervene to change that. These reports are also powerful for Governing Body meetings when discussing interim progress towards targets.

The Subject area

The table provides an overview of how the progress of students in each subject compare to progress made in that subject nationally. Again, you can choose gradepoint trends and apply filters.

If you apply a filter, don't miss the checkbox that appears in the top left corner – Show all students in one table. This will allow you to view your comparison gaps in a more logical way.

There is another check box in the top left corner of the page – Show all teaching sets. If you have added teaching set data, checking this will show all the teaching sets below the main subject grade. Again, filters can be applied.

There is a lot of information on this page, and therefore it is sensible to prioritise. Which subjects have made improvements, for example, moved from **BLUE** to **BLACK** or **RED**?

You may also have subjects where Alps grades have been **RED** over this 4-year trend. These staff must be skilled in supporting students to make strong progress so could this be more widely shared across the school or college?

In subjects where there are small numbers, you might want to look at a rough amalgamation of the 4-year trend. Have they been **BLUE**, for example, for most of this time?

Finally, you may have subjects where there are larger numbers of entries and whose Alps grades have been in decline, or indeed have never shown satisfactory progress. These subjects must be high on your priority list for intervention, as they are having the greatest impact on your students and their future careers. They will also have the greatest effect on your overall strategic indicators.

Exporting to excel or a PDF is available from this view. Choosing to export will allow you to print all subject pages and teaching sets with one click, saving you a lot of time. You can choose to anonymise your data and remove student names from the subject pages.

Subject Value-Added pages

Clicking on a subject in the overview table takes you in to the subject value-added page. Here you will see an overview of the subject Alps scores, including a comparison table for gender and disadvantage/eFSM.

Further down the page is a table with teacher names and gradings (optional) and teaching sets (optional). Clicking on a teaching set takes you to an identical page for that group. All tools described in this section apply equally to the subject overview and to a teaching set.

Each subject page has a thermometer which visually shows the Alps grading for the primary gradepoint chosen. If you apply a filter to the analysis, you will see that the thermometer plots the groups separately.

You can drag the Alps Grade box on the thermometer to model how many grades are needed to move to a different Alps grade. We call this the 'How Do I?' tool. It is a powerful way of identifying intervention groups for an in-year monitoring gradepoint, or to see how many students might have made a difference to an examination gradepoint.

The Student tab

Clicking into this tab brings up your student grid.

- You can manipulate the grid using the arrow buttons to sort columns, for example, you may want to bring your highest prior attainers to the top of the grid to look at how well these students are being stretched. You can also sort by student and by MEG/Grade.
- The grid displays the MEG, the Personalised Target (optional) and the grade for the primary gradepoint selected.
- If you have the fine grade tool activated, monitoring grades will be displayed as fine grades.
- You can apply filters to this page and add comparison groups. The comparison groups can have multiple layers, for example you may choose to look at the progress of your White British boys against the progress made by all boys and/or all students. Comparison groups will be displayed on the thermometer, giving you a visual guide to the gap in progress. If you want to see the Alps score differences, you should go to the 'Outcomes' tab.

- The 'What If?' tool – in the top left-hand corner of the page there is a ***What If*** checkbox. Checking this box turn on the 'What If?' tool. You will notice that the thermometer now has two grade boxes and the student grid contains a column with thumbs up and down symbols.

  Clicking the thumbs up or down shifts the grade for that student. It allows you to model the intended impact of any intervention. You can also select a grade from the drop-down box between the thumbs.

  As you change grades, you will notice that the right-hand box on the thermometer shifts to show you the impact that the student grade changes are having on the overall Alps grade for the subject or teaching set.

  This tool can be empowering for teachers. They can use it to analyse progress and implement strategies into their learning and teaching very quickly. For example, if I sort my teaching set by my prior attainment, I might note that my grid indicates that students who are targeted to achieve a grade B are falling short. I might ask myself if I have done everything that I can to ensure that I have equipped my students to achieve this grade. Have I supplied students with model B grade answers for example, or developed the examination techniques among my students that are necessary for them to achieve at this level? I can implement this into my lessons very quickly following this analysis.

- You can perform the 'How Do I?' in this view to model how many grades you would require in order to improve your overall Alps grade. If you are concerned that some grades will drop, you can use this tool to model the effect on your Alps grade.

- **Ad-Hoc comparisons** – opening up the Compare – Edit button in the student tab allows you to add an AD-HOC group.

Turning on the Ad-Hoc comparisons will add an additional column of coloured symbols to the left-hand side of the student grid.

By clicking in the coloured box, you can alter the coloured 'groupings' of any of your students. You will see that there are four options: green, yellow, orange and purple. By swapping the colours, you can place students in different temporary groups.

As you place students into the different groups, the thermometer will display the progress grades of each of the coloured groups, allowing you to compare these progress grades with the original overall Alps grade.

Ad-Hoc groupings have several uses.

- You may want to isolate a student or group of students from the main class to see the effect on the progress of the group. For example, if a student has had low attendance rates or personal issues, you may want to exclude the student grade when discussing overall group progress with the teacher or subject leader. This can easily alleviate teacher concerns over the effect one student may be having on their Alps grades.
- In some subject areas, teachers or subject leaders may want to isolate groups of students from similar prior attainment bands, for example, are your highest band of prior attainers in mathematics making excellent progress?

- Exporting and printing – the PDF symbol in the top right of the page allows you to export the subject/teaching set page to PDF. You can choose to view all students in this page or anonymise.

- Clicking on a student name will bring up a student card showing all grades for that student across all subjects.

Outcomes tab

The outcomes tab is for those of you who want to see the formulae behind the thermometer.

- The outcomes set out the expected points and the actual points for the primary gradepoint. You can see the formula and the Alps score and grade for the indicator being analysed.
- The page will always display the original outcome calculation, but importantly it will also calculate Alps scores and grades for any filters, comparison groups or Ad-Hoc groupings that you apply.
- Click the Simplify View checkbox in the top left of the page to see the outcome grade and calculation only.
- If you have applied a 'What If' to the student tab, the outcomes tab will display both sets of calculations.
- With the What If turned on, you can click and drag the student entries between grade boundaries, and the calculation will model the effect. This is useful if you want to model the impact of an intervention that might focus on shifting D grades to a C grade at A Level. Again, the right-hand box on the thermometer will present a visual overview of the changes on Alps grades.

Fine Grades tab

Fine grades must be activated and set up by the data administrator for the school or college. See Section 4 – Training your data manager for more information about the set-up of Connect Data.

You can add your own customised fine grades, and these can vary across Key Stages and qualification types.

There are several sliders on the fine grades tab which allow you to model different scenarios. The percentage and number of students is calculated from the position of the slider.

- Stretch slider – drag the slider to model how many 'stretch' grades might convert to the higher grade.
- Secure slider – some of the students in your 'secure' category may be able to convert to the higher grade, and some may be at risk of dropping a grade. The 3 sliders here work together to allow you to model this effect.
- At risk slider – how many students may drop to the lower grade from the 'at risk' category?

- You can move one slider at a time or amalgamate all possibilities to see the overall effect on your Alps grade.
- The right-hand box of the thermometer will model the impact of any changes.

The monitoring accuracy area

This area of Connect Interactive will support you in assessing how accurate your staff predictions are over time. It does rely on you having historical gradepoints in Connect Interactive – both examination and monitoring.

If you are new to Alps and Connect Interactive, you should consider how to build up your gradepoints in order to get the most from this section.

There are two ways to use the monitoring accuracy area.

Subjects	19.Y13 Jan Raw Mocks ...			19.Y13 MP2. Jan			Difference
	Entries	Score	Grade	Entries	Score	Grade	
A - Art (Fine Art)	7	0.97	7	7	1.09	5	0.11
A - Biology	22	0.74	7	22	0.97	2	0.23
A - Business Studies	16	0.87	8	16	0.99	5	0.13
A - Chemistry	22	0.74	7	22	0.92	3	0.18
A - Computer Science	6	0.87	5	6	0.84	5	-0.03
A - Drama & Theatre Studies	3	0.97	5	3	1.17	2	0.20
A - Economics	30	0.91	7	30	1.07	2	0.16
A - English Literature	9	0.87	7	9	1.07	3	0.20
A - Geography	5	0.79	8	5	0.83	8	0.04
A - Government & Politics	10	1.00	5	10	1.04	3	0.04
A - History	22	0.85	8	22	0.97	5	0.13
A - Mathematics	32	0.88	6	32	0.92	5	0.04
A - Maths (Further)	3	0.99	5	3	1.13	2	0.15
A - Physical Education	6	0.78	7	6	0.94	3	0.17

Trends - Historical

In this view you can compare any two gradepoints, and the table will calculate the difference in the Alps Scores between the two gradepoints for each subject. It is designed to compare a monitoring gradepoint with an examination gradepoint, allowing you to assess how accurate your staff were in predicting student outcomes.

You can select your gradepoints by clicking the blue gradepoint selector box in the Alps Connect bar at the top of the page.

The table allows you to sort by entries – which subjects impact on the most students? It also allows you to sort the gaps in Alps scores between the two gradepoints. You can quickly see where your accuracy of predicting is strong and where there are bigger concerns.

Let's consider a few scenarios:

a. You could compare the latest examination outcomes with the in-year prediction gradepoint for the same cohort immediately before the examinations, in other words, your final predictions before the Summer examination. How accurate were each of your subject areas in their predicted grades?

b. You might choose to compare examination outcomes for last year with the latest monitoring point for your new cohort, perhaps your MPZ? Are there subjects where the predicted outcomes seem high compared to outcomes from last year. Allowing you to ask – is that realistic? Similarly, are there subjects where there is a significant drop? Will this new group of students improve across the year?

c. You could check the difference between a mock examination gradepoint and the resultant predicted grade. If there is a large discrepancy between the two you might ask if students are going to make as much progress as suggested?

Trends – In-year

In this view you can compare multiple gradepoints. The table will show arrow symbols to indicate the change in Alps grade between two consecutive gradepoints.

There is a graph which displays the trend in Alps grade across the gradepoints selected. Hovering over the graph enlarges the view.

This section is designed to compare in-year monitoring grades across an academic year point to identify trends in predicting accuracy. However, you can really use the gradepoint selector to show any 4 gradepoints. You might want to set up a monitoring sandwich as described earlier in this section on page 33. Just to remind you - choose two consecutive end of year gradepoints, and then sandwich between them one or two interim in-year gradepoints for the year group whose results you are showing in the second end-of-year slot.

As with the 'Historical' section, you can select your gradepoints by clicking the blue gradepoint selector box in the Alps Connect bar at the top of the page.

Summary of the in-year area:

- Choose four consecutive in-year gradepoints for a cohort of students.
- The overview table shows you the trend across all subjects, with the largest difference between any two calculated in the final column.
- The graph gives a visual representation of the grade. Hover to enlarge.
- Click into any subject to view the detailed trend line by teaching set.
- If you have an examination gradepoint in your selection, this will appear as a dotted line across the graph rather than a plot point, allowing you to compare the monitoring grade with this examination outcome.
- If you have imported teacher names or teaching sets, on the left of the page you will checkbox options to show the trends for teacher or set on the subject graph. Teaching set lines are added to the graph as different colours to enable you to see how the progress trend of each group compares to the overall.

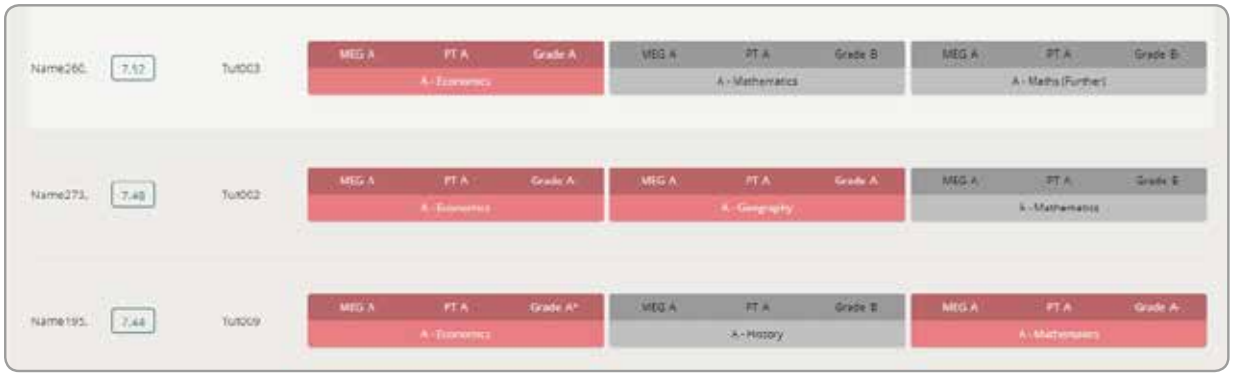
Trends – In-year

The Student Performance Overview shows how each student grade measures up against the MEG.

The order you see in the SPO is the prior attainment order where students are ranked highest to the lowest.

Colouring: The grade cells are colour coded to reflect how the actual grade compares to the Alps Minimum Expected Grade. If the actual grade:

- Meets or exceeds the minimum expected grade the subject is coloured **RED**.
- Achieves the lower of a split target PINK.
- Is one grade lower than the minimum expected grade GREY.
- Is more than one grade below the minimum expected grade **BLUE**.



Each cell contains the MEG, the Personalised Target (optional) and the primary gradepoint grade.

The tools built into this area allow you to perform the following analysis:

- Filtering by tutor group – this allows your tutors/learning mentors to see how well their students are performing across subjects and support the work of the Year Leader and subject staff in monitoring students.
- Comparison groups, including custom groups – you can apply filters and comparisons to isolate different groups of students.
- Performance group – this is a filter which allows you to separate students into different performance categories depending on how much progress they are making across their subjects. The performance groups are defined as:
    - Above target in all subjects – these students deserve praise.
    - On or above target in all subjects – again praise, some may be on the lower of a split grade only.
    - Below target in all subjects – these students will not be a surprise to you. They need support across all subjects which will take a coordinated effort by your Year Leaders and tutors.
    - Below target in 2 or more subjects – these students will also require additional support and guidance if they are to meet expectations.
    - Below target in any subject – these students will require guidance and support from the subject staff.

- Filtering by English and mathematics at GCSE – this is a specific filter for your GCSE cohorts (England only at present). Apply this filter to separate students into the following groups to support you with your intervention in these key subject areas:
    - Met in both – students who are achieving a grade 5+ in English and in mathematics.
    - Below in mathematics only - students who are achieving a grade 5+ in English and are below grade 5 in mathematics.
    - Below in English only - students who are achieving a grade 5+ in mathematics and are below 5 in English.
    - Not met in either - students who are not achieving a grade 5+ in neither English nor mathematics.
    - Note that the English measure is defined as the best grade from English Language and English Literature.

- Isolating a subject – if a teacher wants to isolate all students in their subject, they can click onto the subject cell and drag it to the left. Drop it into the blue area that appears, and this will filter the students in that subject only. A subject teacher can then see how well students in their group are performing across their other subjects.
- Clicking on a student name will bring up a student card showing all grades for that student across all subjects.
- Printing and exporting – there are options for excel and for PDF exports in the top right of the page. Exporting to excel generates a workbook with several tabs:
    - Overall grades on target.
    - A marksheet summary of the SPO.
    - A row per student summary.

You can apply filters before exporting and these will be retained in the files.

"Our work with Alps has had a significant impact on the school, it has helped us consider how we manage data and reduce teachers' workload in analysing data, so that they can get on with the most important thing, providing outstanding personalised teaching and learning."

- Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School

Section 8: Support

Throughout the guide I have referenced a lot of support material available for staff using Alps and Connect Interactive.

There are three main places to find this information: the Alps website, the Knowledge Base and talking to us directly.

The Alps website - alps.education

The website contains a lot of information about Alps and in its implementation, but the support sections are as follows:

1. The Training Hub - you will find most of our support resources on this page. Support here includes:
    a. Webinars

        There are a range of webinars to support you across the Alps cycle, many of which have been referenced in the previous sections.

        Many focus on an aspect of Alps and provide a 30-45 minute in depth demonstration in Connect Interactive. They are available to play at your convenience and could be used as part of your staff training.

        There are webinars for your Data Managers on the submission process and Connect Data.

        We have recorded a webinar for Governors so that they can understand Alps methodology and the headline data that you will present to them.

    b. Conferences

        These are held throughout the year and are run by members of our Education Team who are former Senior Leaders in schools and colleges.

        There are various types of conferences – some are free and are designed as introductory sessions to Alps and Connect Interactive. We call these out 'Why Alps?' conferences.

        Our 'Alps Champions' conferences carry a small cost but are designed to support you in embedding Alps across all staff in the school/college. There will be a slightly different focus at each of the three points in the academic cycle but each one will contain aspects of Alps methodology and of getting the most from Connect Interactive.

    c. Training sessions

        Our Education Team run individual training sessions with schools and colleges. We can run these during the day or as twilights and as videoconferences. Sessions vary from strategic meetings with your SLT/ Head of Sixth to whole day training sessions with all staff. These do come at a cost – prices are available on the website.

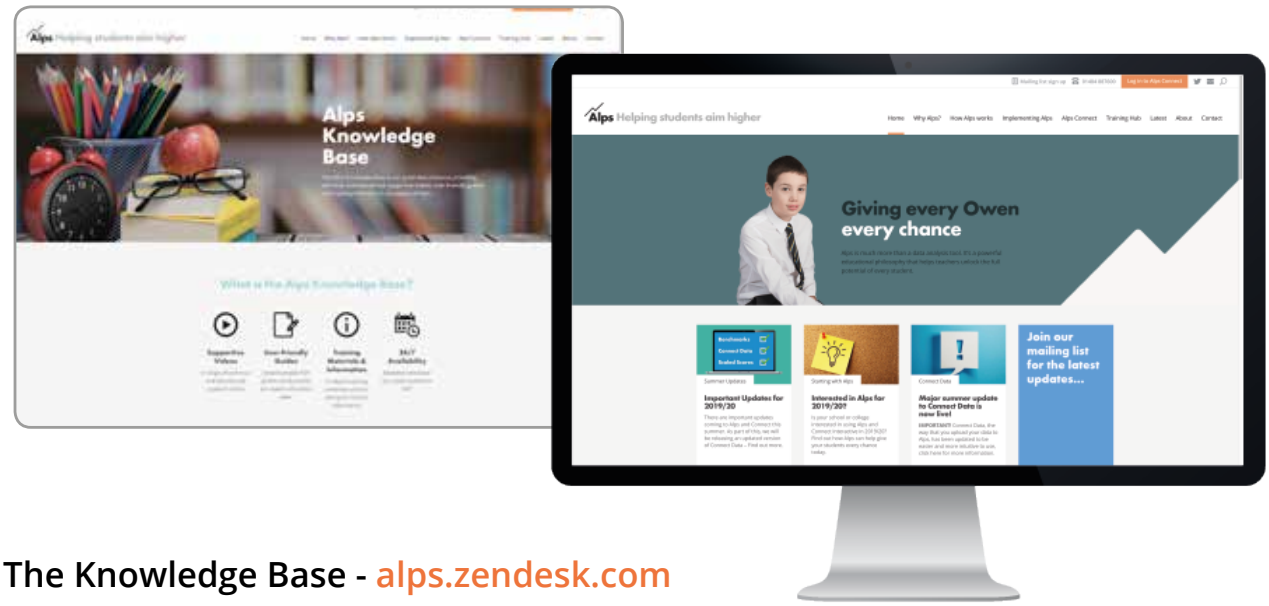
        We can tailor training to your needs, so if you are interested, we suggest you give us a call and talk to us about what would best suit you and your budget.

    d. Support videos

        These are shorter than the webinars and usually focus on one aspect of Connect Data or Connect Interactive.

        We use these to demonstrate new features or to illustrate how to perform a specific type of analysis or data submission task. There are more support videos on the Knowledge Base.

2. The 'Latest' pages have downloadable PDF files of Case Studies, latest briefing papers and opinion pieces written by our Education Team.
    a. Briefing papers are designed to give information on a variety of topics. They
    b. Opinion pieces. They are often written in response to national agenda issues, or new benchmarks, or details of how to carry out a task in Connect Interactive.
3. Implementing Alps – on this page you will find links to simplified versions of the staff checklists. The Alps Cycle is also on this page.



The Knowledge Base - alps.zendesk.com

This is the support section accessible from your Connect Homepage.

You can click on the HELP button on the bottom of your Connect Interactive/Connect Data screen or you can press the 'Knowledge Base' button. Type in some key words or a question and you will find all related articles pop up.

Some of the information you will find on the Knowledge Base:

1. Understanding aspects of Connect Interactive – lots of articles on the functionality of Connect Interactive and how to get the most out of your analysis.
2. Alps Short Videos – many articles contain embedded instruction videos designed to support Connect users in getting the most from their analysis.
3. Understanding methodology
4. Staff checklists – there are 4 staff checklists and they set out a series of questions to support you in your analysis. Each of the checklists is designed for a general role in the school/college, and the questions asked in each are linked. There are checklists are written for:
    a. Senior Leaders
    b. Subject Leaders
    c. Teaching staff
    d. Pastoral Leaders

    Each checklist covers 4 key aspects of the Quality Assurance Cycle – Results Day analysis, Target setting, Monitoring across the year and Quality Assurance review in the Summer term.

Calling us and talk it through

Our expert Alps Teams are here to support you in getting the most from your analysis.

1. Our Education Team – we are all former Senior Leaders in schools and colleges. We can support you in discussing questions related to your analysis.
2. Our Customer Support Team – highly skilled in the manipulation of data and in the submission process, this is our team of experts who are there to support the person responsible for data upload.
3. Our Training Team.

Connect Homepage

There are a number of resources available from your Connect login page. If you have data admin rights, you will also find additional user guides on your Connect Data Homepage.

1. The Alps Guide – contains all methodology and benchmark information for all Alps qualifications. You will find details on how Alps scores are calculated and how they relate to the Alps grades.
2. User Guides – Connect Interactive.
3. User Guides – Connect Data (for those with data admin rights only).

"I have now introduced Alps systems into three schools. The impact has always been significant. The greatest benefits of Alps are the clarity of the information provided, alongside the embedded challenge. This ensures there is consistent clarity not only about student performance, but also where intervention can be most impactful"

- Jumeirah College

Section 9: Collaborative working groups

This section is designed to give a brief overview of the ways in which Alps might support in the facilitation of collaborative working between schools and colleges in groups such as MATs, Local Authorities, Consortia, and Groups of schools.

Currently, MAT and Group analysis is available in pdf format only. We are currently working on the development of a Connect Interactive platform.

MATs and Group Report provide analysis to those working with groups or clusters of schools and colleges. MAT/Group Reports analyse strategic and subject performance of all schools and colleges in the LA or MAT. The reports show the following analysis:

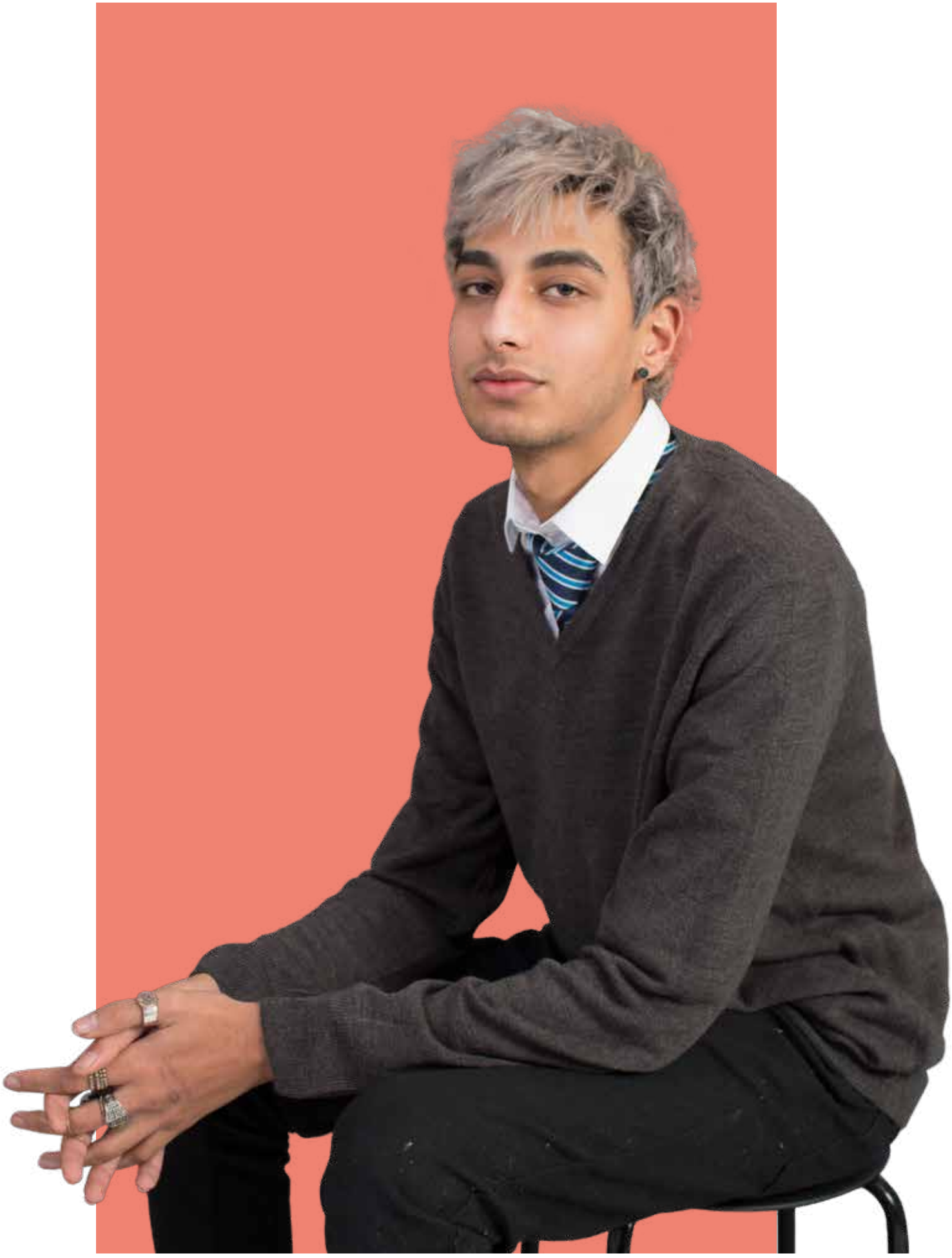
- Amalgamated grades for all strategic and subject indicators across the group.
- A breakdown of subject performance across the group by school/college.
- A summary of the strategic and subject indicators across each school/college.

Consortium Reports are available to schools and colleges who share students across their Sixth Form curriculum. Students can be tagged according to the school or college where they are 'on-roll' and the school/college where they are taught each of their subjects.

Reports are available which detail the strategic and subject indicators by 'on-roll', 'taught at' or across the whole consortium.

Sharing good practice – working in a MAT, Consortia or Local Authority

MAT/Group/Consortia leaders can use their reports to identify areas of good practice across their schools and colleges.



Appendix 1: Alps Gradings

All of the following is available in the Alps Guides and is applicable to all courses at all Key Stages:

England: page 7.

Wales: page 7.

Northern Ireland: page 7.

To start to understand Alps, first we have to recognise that throughout the Alps analysis, be it in Connect Interactive or a PDF Report, there are Alps grades. These are consistent across all indicators in the analysis and follow a colour and grading pattern. Each indicator in your analysis will therefore have an Alps grade and colour.

The indicators give a picture of progress across the school/college. These centre on the 3 areas

1. **Strategic indicators – analysis at a whole school level**

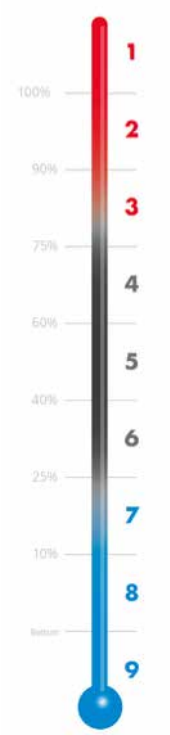
   At a whole school/college level, you will have various indicators which together provide a picture of how the school/college is performing overall.

2. **Subject indicators – analysis of subject and teaching sets**

   At a subject level, each subject and teaching set (optional) is given an Alps grade and colour indicating how they are performing relative to other departments in the same subject in the national dataset.

3. **Student indicators – analysis at an individual student level against their Minimum Expected Grades**

   The student level analysis provides an overview of how each individual student is performing relative to their aspirational expected grade. Teachers can see how their students are performing in their other examination entries.



The Alps colours are **RED**, **BLACK** and **BLUE** which give a simple, visual indication of where your progress is aligned against the 1-9 Alps scale.

The **RED**, **BLACK** and **BLUE** colours come from the Alps thermometer, with **RED HOT** at the top. The thermometer is where the simplicity of the Alps system lies.

All indicators in the analysis have a unique thermometer which plots the progress against the national dataset. The thermometer shown here shows how each grade corresponds to the progress made by other providers.

Progress grades of 1-3 are the highest grades and are **RED HOT**, in other words, your progress for that indicator is equivalent to the provider or department in the top 25%.

Conversely, grades 7-9 are **BLUE** and indicate progress in the lowest 25%.

BLACK grades of 4-6 are broadly in line with the national average.

In terms of setting priorities, your blue indicators should be top of the list, whilst red indicators mark out areas of strong practice.

Matching top 25%+	RED	Alps grades 1 - 3
Matching middle 50%	BLACK	Alps grades 4 - 6
Matching bottom 25%-	BLUE	Alps grades 7 - 9

All Indicators across the analysis have a thermometer, but the scale in each one is unique.

Subject scales have been generated independently – when you look at your subject thermometer, the progress you have made is plotted against progress made nationally in that subject only.

Appendix 2: The Methodolgy

The first question to address is 'How does Alps work?'

The methodology used for all levels of analysis is transparent and published in the Alps Guide which you will find on the Connect Homepage.

The benchmarks are created from the national database – the guide gives more details on numbers of providers and students included.

These benchmarks underpin the target setting process we offer as part of the Alps package.

Targets are aspirational and set against progress made by the top 25% of schools and colleges nationally.

Historically, Alps reports were available in the weeks following Results Day, and contained an analysis of the A level and BTEC outcomes from students.

Reports are now available instantaneously whenever examination data is submitted. This means you can have your analysis on the morning of Results Day – at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

Using the benchmark tables to generate MEGs – Quick guide

For each qualification our Data Team use the national dataset is used to generate an overall benchmark table. The table is then used to establish the Minimum Expected Grades and the subject benchmarks.

What do we use as our input and output scores?

Alps analysis measure the value that we add between start point and end point and compares this to the value-added from all providers nationally.

- The starting point for all post-16 courses is the GCSE prior attainment score – that is the average GCSE score attained by a student across all GCSE entries.
- The starting point for all Key Stage 4 courses is the KS2 Score/Y8 Welsh National test score.
- The output for A/AS and BTEC courses are the UCAS points.
- Additional L3 qualifications are based on Alps output points.
- Key Stage 4 output are the GCSE/vocational output points.

Generating the benchmark table

To start to understand the generation of the MEGs, we first split the prior attainment into bands. Each qualification follows the same methodology.

- Students are divided into a set number of prior attainment bands.
- Of all the providers in the national dataset who had students in each of the prior attainment categories, we need to know the range of average output points that were achieved. We identify the providers who achieved the best value-added outcomes and those with the lowest outcomes for each prior attainment bands.
- We rank the scores from those at the top, marked as 100% on the thermometer to the provider at the bottom of the thermometer. The rest of the scores are ranked accordingly.
- The Alps philosophy is based on matching what the provider at the 75th percentile achieved. If we can match this on average with all of our students in this top band, then we would have made progress equivalent to the top 25% of schools in the dataset.
- We translate this 75th percentile score into a grade which becomes the Minimum Expected Grade – the MEG. It is the start point for our target setting with each band of students.

Description of strategic indicators A Level

- Quality Indicator (QI) – this is the progress made across all examination entries. It contains every grade taken, giving you a clear view of how your subject areas performed.

  The subjects taken by more students will have most impact on this indicator.

  The QI compares your total actual points with the total expected points – if every student matched their MEG in each subject your score would be 1.00.

- Red and Blue teaching - your RED teaching and BLUE teaching scores and grades are based on the percentage of entries in subjects that were graded either 1-3 or 7-9. Your larger subjects have the most impact on both indicators.

  You want your % RED teaching to be as high as possible - a higher percentage of entries in subjects which are overall RED.

  Conversely, you want your % BLUE teaching to be as low as possible, meaning that fewer students have sat examinations in subjects with an overall BLUE outcome.

- Banded by Ability tables - the students in the year group are broken down into prior attainment bands, and progress made across all their subjects is mapped to national benchmarks.

BTEC analysis

- Strategic indicators for the 2010 BTEC suite and the 2016 BTEC suite are shown separately.
- Value Added Provider Score – shows the progress made across all BTEC 2010 courses.

Key Stage 4

- QI8 – the QI8 grade is there to give you an indication about how well progress is taking place in subjects that will contribute to each students' Progress 8 (P8) performance.

  We are not attempting to guess your Progress 8 score. This analysis shows how your Alps QI8 score measures up against the national data and there will be a correlation between your thermometer position for QI8 and your P8 performance.

Appendix 3: The analysis available to Alps users

Alps provides you with the following analysis:

1. **Alps Provider Reports (PDF)** which analyse trends in examination data over a four-year trend. These are available for the following qualification types
    a. **A level** – includes subject pages for EPQ and L3 Core Maths.
    b. **AS level**
    c. **BTEC Level 3***
        i. **BTEC Provider** – BTEC 2010 Sub Dip, Dip and Ext Dip. BTEC 2016 Ext Cert/Intro Dip, Dip and Ext Dip.
        ii. **BTEC 90 Credit** – 2010 90 Credit. 2016 Foundation Dip.
        iii. **BTEC Cert** – 2010 Cert. 2016 Cert.
        ***Includes subject pages for CACHE, WJEC vocational qualifications and UAL qualifications**
    d. **Key Stage 4** – all GCSE courses, level 2 BTEC and level 2 Cambridge National qualifications.

2. **Filter Reports (pdf)** which analyse gaps in examination performance between key groups of students over a four-year period. The analysis mirrors the main PDF report but will show a breakdown for the groups selected. Filter reports are available for the following groups of students:
    a. **Gender** – analyses all indicators separated for male and female students.
    b. **Ethnicity** – analyses indicators for each ethnic group.
    c. **Disadvantaged** – analyses differences between students tagged as disadvantaged or e-FSM, and those non-disadvantaged.
    d. **High Grades** – selects only those students from the top four prior attainment band and analyses their progress across all indicators.
    e. **Teaching Sets** – this is available at Key Stage 4 only and will generate a report which analyses the outcomes for all of your teaching sets if you have added them to Connect Data.

    NOTE: All provider and filter PDF reports are available from the Reports and Downloads section of your Connect Homepage.

3. **Connect Interactive** our online platform allowing staff at all levels in schools and colleges to interact with their progress data – examination and in-year.

    To order Connect Interactive, you must first purchase a PDF report for the relevant Key Stage.

    a. Connect Interactive at Key Stage 5 – available following the purchase of a Key Stage 5 PDF report, A level or BTEC level 3.
    b. Connect Interactive at Key Stage 4 – available following the purchase of a Key Stage 4 PDF report.
    c. Connect Interactive at both Key Stage 4 and 5 – available following the purchase of an A level or BTEC level 3 report AND a Key Stage 4 report.

Additional qualifications available

a. International Baccalaureate (IB) – analysis of IB is available at a subject level in Connect Interactive only. For pricing – see website Price List.

b. Pre-U qualifications – these are available at a subject level in Connect Interactive only. For pricing – see website Price List.

c. UAL, CACHE and WJEC vocational qualifications – available as subject pages in Connect Interactive through the BTEC report.

Appendix 4: GLOSSARY of terms

- MEG – Minimum Expected Grade – the average grade that a student needs to achieve across their entries in order to match the progress of the provider at the 75th percentile.
- Personalised Target – the subject specific target grade set by the subject teacher taking into account the MEG, progress in that subject nationally and the individual circumstances of each student.
- MPZ – the Monitoring Point Zero. This is the first data point of an academic year. It is usually pertinent to Year 13 and Year 11 and represents a base line grade at the beginning of the year. It will be based on an AS grade or an internal predicted grade generated from the end of Year 12/10 and it will provide a start point from which to base all intervention in the Autumn Term.
- RED HOT – a term used by Alps to describe when progress is equivalent to the top 25% of progress in the national dataset. The indicators will be graded as 1-3 and will be red.
- 1.00 – the Alps score achieved if all students match their minimum expected points.
- 0.2 – the difference in Alps score (at A level, AS level and Key Stage 4) equivalent to one grade per entry.
- 0.4 – the difference in Alps score at BTEC level 3 equivalent to a grade per entry.
- Gradepoint – the data drop or monitoring point added to Connect Data and visible to select in Connect Interactive. This could be an examination entry point or a monitoring data point.
- QI – the strategic indicator which analyses the progress made across all examination entries across the school or college. It contains every grade taken by each subject.
- Monitoring sandwich - is our term for the gradepoint selector that supports you in assessing predicting accuracy – choose two consecutive end of year gradepoints, and then sandwich between them an interim in-year gradepoint for the year group whose results you are showing in the second end-of-year slot.
- SPO – Student Performance Overview. The area of Connect Interactive which analyses the performance of each student against their MEGs in each of their subjects.
- Primary gradepoint – the analysis gradepoint in Connect Interactive. This is the gradepoint that is shown in the blue box at the top left of the screen. In the student tab of the subject pages and in the SPO, this is the gradepoint on which the analysis is based.

Notes

Alps Champions use their expert knowledge of Alps to support teachers in making an impact on their students

Contact Alps
Speak to us today about starting your own improvement journey with Alps.

Telephone: **01484 887600**
Email: **info@alps.education**
Web: **www.alps.education**