

Alps > 2017 Spring Newsletter



Alps Connect

In September 2017 we are introducing a new interactive service for all schools & colleges > Alps Connect

We think that Alps Connect will revolutionise how you can interact with your Alps data. Connect is available at both KS4 & KS5 and gives schools and colleges online, fully interactive access to their Alps reports and in-year monitoring data. With Connect, it is easy to carry out in-depth analysis at student, subject and overall level.

Visit us online to find out more about Alps Connect at www.alps.education/connect

You can also express your interest through our website to receive a 10% discount on Alps Connect.

We will be contacting schools and colleges in Wales with further details about Alps Connect in the coming weeks.

ALPS WELSH SUITE

In recent years we have seen a significant increase in the number of schools across Wales using Alps reports at KS5. So far this year we have produced over 480 reports for more than 140 schools and colleges in Wales, and have delivered more than 100 Strategic Review training sessions. We have been delighted with the incredibly positive response from our Welsh colleagues to Alps reports and training.

With the ongoing Government reforms, and the divergence between the English and Welsh curriculum models, we will be reviewing our services to ensure we offer the most practical and relevant analysis for our schools and colleges. In Autumn 2017 we will not be re-benchmarking Alps reports for Welsh schools and colleges, but will be looking at this again for 2018.

In England, our reports will include new subject benchmarks, based on the latest English data. As this data includes the new English curriculum, we feel that maintaining the current benchmark in Wales will offer a more useful report for Welsh schools and colleges.

ALPS UPDATES - WALES

One of the strengths of Alps is the consistency that our system offers over time. Schools and colleges order Alps each year because they know that our analysis offers a reliable and valid picture of performance from one year to the next.

In Autumn 2017 our reports for Wales will include:

- A separate benchmark from our reports compared to English schools and colleges
- A new benchmark for the Welsh Baccalaureate (because of the new grading system)

For more detail please visit our website (www.alps-va.co.uk/latest) or call us today on 01484 887600

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KS4 & KS5 Performance Systems



The Student Centred Approach

PLANNING FOR THE YEAR WITH ALPS - by Karen Woolven

One of the most important elements for any successful organisation is forward planning. In educational terms, this means looking towards the next academic cycle – while still striving towards excellence in the current one. Schools and colleges who use Alps find that our system follows this academic cycle closely, with key points in the year when our reports and training are most effective.



May – Book training with Alps for the summer or autumn terms

One of the most effective ways to use your Alps report is to combine it with our high quality Strategic Performance Review training. These sessions are delivered in your centre by an experienced Alps trainer and are based on your own reports. You can book over the phone, by email or online at www.alps-va.co.uk/booktraining

June – Download the latest 2017 versions of the Alps software for KS4 and KS5

Our free ADCS software is available to download in June. Downloading early gives you time to familiarise yourself with the system in advance of Results Day. Always check the website (www.alps-va.co.uk/data) to make sure you have the latest version.

July – Start collating data in preparation for Results Day

At KS4 this means collating your students' KS2 fine scores. For KS5 it could mean ensuring you have the average GCSE scores for those students who did not sit their GCSEs with you. If this is your first year with Alps you can also collate your previous years' historical data in advance of Results Day.

August – Upload your results data to Alps

If you upload your data to Alps as soon as it is available we will aim to deliver your report in time for the start of term in September – we dispatch all Alps reports within 8 working days of receiving your data.

Early September – Review your Alps report

Once you have received your report you should immediately be asking what the outcomes indicate. How will this information be incorporated into assessment/evaluation reports for governors and other stakeholders? If you have booked Alps training this is a perfect time to discuss your performance strategically with one of our consultants.

Early September – Set Minimum Expected Grade targets for your students

Using your students' prior attainment scores, you should be setting aspirational Alps MEGS for all students right from the start of their courses in September.

Mid-September – Order an Alps Monitoring Point Zero (MPZ) report

This is a special monitoring report, ordered for your students starting Year 13 and based on their final results from Year 12. By comparing AS performance (or teacher predictions) against the A level benchmark, you can see how your Alps report will look in the following summer if your students maintain their grades.

October – Resubmit your data to Alps

All Alps reports include one free of charge rerun of your Alps reports. This means that you can benefit from the speed of our analysis in September, while still having a report which reflects any changes following remarks or appeals. This is also a perfect time to order any additional reports, such as Gender or Ethnicity.

October to May – Monitor student progress and submit monitoring data to Alps

Alps Monitoring reports are ordered by schools and colleges throughout the year. They are available at each of your key internal assessment points (e.g. after mock exams). They contain the same level of detail as our end-of-year Provider reports, but are based on your in-year assessment grades.

The above gives a possible timescale but be assured that our reports and training can be requested when they are most convenient for your curriculum model.



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THE PILLARS OF ALPS - by Martin Rostron

For Kevin Conway, the founder of Alps, one of the keys to success was to keep things simple. At Greenhead College, where Kevin was Principal, this simplicity meant encouraging staff and students to work towards a small number of clear and achievable targets. Outstanding Ofsted grades, and exceptional student progress, followed. This simplicity is embedded in Alps. For all the power and sophistication of the Alps reports, our system is most effective when the analysis is used as a starting point for the application of three simple educational ideas. We often refer to these as the 'Pillars of Alps', and they are the foundations on which our highly successful system stands.



Teaching & Learning

One of the most effective tools we offer to support teaching and learning are our 'Minimum Expected Grades'. These are neither predictions nor ceilings, but reasonable aspirations that every student can be challenged to achieve. One of the most effective (and simple) ways to think of these is that every student needs to know two grades – their Alps MEG and their current prediction or 'working at' grade.

Support & Guidance

A key feature of our reports is the powerful Student Performance Overview. This shows, for each student, whether they are performing above, at, or below 'MEG' in each of their subjects. This is available as a separate Excel download or, from Autumn 2017, interactively as part of Alps Connect. It allows you to have detailed teacher/student conversations after each monitoring point – which can be crucial in raising standards.

Leadership

Exceptional teaching & learning and support & guidance are only made possible through exceptional leadership, at every level. Alps supports school leaders in many ways. For Kevin, leadership was about giving staff room to take responsibility and develop, but never taking your eye off the ball. The Monitoring reports (and Connect – Monitoring) that Alps offers fit this perfectly, allowing leaders to keep their eye on performance across the whole school or college, by subject and at student level.

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH ALPS

There is more happening with Alps than ever before. In 2016 we introduced our Key Stage 4 reports to hundreds of schools nationally. From this summer, we will be offering fully interactive reports through Alps Connect. We are also working with increasing numbers of schools at Key Stage 5 – over 1,600 have taken reports this year. We have also delivered over 700 training sessions since September 2016.

This is an exciting time for Alps – and we have a number of ways to help you keep up with all the latest Alps news, developments and educational advice.



Twitter

You can follow Alps on Twitter @alpsva. We tweet about the latest Alps news and blogs, opportunities to attend Alps training and educational advice for our colleagues in schools and colleges nationally.



Website

You can view example reports, watch our help videos, read our briefing papers or case studies and discover the latest Alps news online at www.alps-va.co.uk



Alps Blog

You can read the latest detailed educational advice from Alps on the Alps blog at www.alps-va.co.uk/latest



Email

You can join the Alps mailing list to be sent the latest news about Alps developments, by signing up on our website. You can also get in touch with us by email to info@alps-va.co.uk



Telephone

We welcome the opportunity to speak to colleagues in schools and colleges. We have dedicated educational and data support teams on site, who are available to take your calls from 9-5, Monday to Friday



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MARCH NATIONAL CONFERENCES

In March we delivered our 2017 National Conferences. These were held in London, Leeds and Cardiff.

We were delighted to welcome over 350 delegates to these three cities for a series of days which focussed on the power of Alps to improve life chances for all students.

We were also thrilled with the initial responses to Alps Connect.



Here is just some of what our delegates had to say about the day:

"A good overview of Alps and how it can be used to impact on pupil progress" Cowbridge Comprehensive School

"Excellent presentations and resources – a great introduction to Alps" Ysgol Bro Dinefwr

"Trainers were very knowledgeable and enthusiastic which helped with learning new concepts" Cardiff & Vale College

"Fantastic demonstration of calculations to use with staff" Fitzalan High School

"Practical introduction, powerful system – need to digest and practice what I've learnt" Coleg Sir Gar

"It was a very useful reminder of Alps methodology and how it may be used to improve outcomes for students" Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera

"All sessions practical and helpful" Gowerton School

"This is the third time that I have attended the Alps National Conference. It's great to come knowing that we have put so many strategies in place to help our students. There is always lots that we can take away" Cathays High School

ALPS TRAINING

One of the things that sets Alps apart is our ability to combine a high quality value-added report with equally high quality training. All of our training is delivered by experienced Alps trainers who have first-hand experience of delivering exceptional results with Alps as teachers and senior leaders in some of the most exceptional schools and colleges in the country. Combining your reports with Alps training is the most effective way to ensure you benefit fully from our powerful, student-focused system.

To find out more or to book Alps training today please visit www.alps-va.co.uk/booktraining



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