ICES bulletin: 63

23 May 2013

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1. School Census summer 2013

Gary Connell – Schools Data Unit - Characteristics

The census date for the School Census summer 2013 was Thursday 16 May 2013 with the deadline for approved submissions being Wednesday 12 June 2013.

Instructions and user guides for completing the census are available on the [School Census 2013](#) web page. For census updates and reminders, please see the [School Census 2013 news page](#), which you should check regularly while completing your school's return.

2. Summer Schools Programme for disadvantaged pupils

Sarah Ballinger - Disadvantage and Pupil Performance Division

Schools taking part in the Department's [Summer Schools Programme](#) for disadvantaged pupils may contact the local authority to get Unique Pupil Numbers for their 2013 Year 7 group. This will enable them to identify their eligible summer school pupils quickly and easily using the summer school pupil identification tool available through Key to Success. The most recent list of schools taking part, and information about accessing the Key to Success website, is available on the [Summer Schools Programme](#) webpage.

Schools have until 31 May 2013 to sign up.

3. Important New Guidance on Obtaining Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs)

Jennifer Powles - Senior Account Manager, Learning Records Service

In the [ICES Bulletin 62](#) we provided guidance about including the necessary postcode information within the CTF file to ensure that ULNs can be successfully retrieved by schools.

The postcode is required in order to retrieve a ULN. A CTF file sent to the s2s system will validate without the postcode field, but it will not return a ULN without a postcode included within the CTF file submitted. So please be aware of this anomaly.

For clarity, CTF files are only uploaded to the s2s system, not to the Learning Records Service (LRS) system. Once a CTF is uploaded to the S2S system, s2s securely sends the data to the LRS system for processing. Once the data is processed and ULNs have

been issued, the LRS system securely sends this information back to the s2s system. The ULNs are then retrieved from the s2s system by the school.

Further information on this is detailed in the [November CTF12 supporting documentation](#).

ULN Data Quality

It is important for schools to ensure high quality and correctness of data when requesting and/or managing ULNs. Examples that can cause problems include where address details are out of date and also the use of short names (or nick names) rather than legal names.

Good ULN data management starts with the school that issues the ULN to the student in Year 9. This data will follow the pupil throughout their learning journey into FE and HE. It is therefore important for schools to ensure correctness of ULN data to make processing of this information easier in future when the pupil moves on to FE or HE.

ULN News – The Wider Picture

The ULN in Exams

The LRS is encouraging exams officers to use the ULN when registering candidates for all exams and awards. This will benefit the individual and the sector, as accurate and up-to-date achievement data can be captured in the [Personal Learning Record](#).

The Personal Learning Record – Achievement Uploads by Awarding Organisations

All awarding bodies are now required to upload funded achievements to the Personal Learning Record (PLR). From 30th April all publically funded vocational achievements are being uploaded to the PLR by awarding bodies. General qualifications will also be uploaded to the PLR by awarding bodies from this summer onwards.

The ULN in Higher Education

The Higher Education sector has agreed to move forward with plans to adopt the ULN across the HE Sector. This has arisen from work carried out by the [Regulatory Partnership Group](#). One of the key objectives of this group has been to redesign the UK's higher education (HE) data and information landscape with an aim to enhance the arrangements for the collection, sharing and dissemination of data and information throughout the HE system. The conclusion made by the group after recent work has been to move forward with planning the roll out of the ULN across the HE sector. A project board is now being set up to take this forward. Specific plans and timescales will be published by the Board in the near future.

It's vital to share ULNs with pupils and awarding organisations

When you have obtained ULNs for your Year 9 and above pupils, it is very important to let them and their awarding organisation know their ULN for exams. Unlike the UPN, the ULN has been designed for the sharing of the pupils' achievement data within the Personal Learning Record (PLR) and to enable more efficient exam administration.

Having a PLR pre-populated with verified achievements will benefit each pupil as they move through their lifelong educational journey by speeding up HE and FE application and admissions process, as well as making it possible for individuals to demonstrate qualifications to a potential employer.

Please ensure each pupil is shown a copy of the standard schools Privacy Notice which explains how their data will be shared.

Further information and assistance is available as follows:

- For queries relating to s2s and the associated CTF file email: s2s.mailbox@education.gsi.gov.uk.

- For queries relating to management of ULN exceptions and LRS registration: Telephone: 0845 602 2589. Email: LRSsupport@learningrecordsservice.org.uk.

4. Information Management & Learning Services Framework

Michael Beasley – Schools ICT Support Unit

The schools based DfE framework allowing the purchase of MIS and Learning Platforms (VLEs) has seen the number of contracts increasing recently with over £10m of business now placed for products from the supplier's portfolios. More details and guidance on this Framework can be found on the Department's website.

ICT Services Framework

The present Framework continues to go from strength to strength with over £100m of business placed so far. This Framework is now the default framework for the EFAs Free Schools programme. For more details and guidance on the ICT Services Framework can be found on the Department's website.

The DfE has initiated plans for a follow on Framework to this and will be communicating more details shortly. If you would like to become involved in setting the requirements for this new Framework then please contact the team via email at schools.ictsupport@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Microsoft MoU

Under the terms of the replacement agreement signed with Microsoft in January 2013, there are a range of new benefits available for schools who wish to acquire or renew Microsoft software licences. As well as overall improved pricing, a variety of concessions have been agreed that will help schools to significantly reduce their licencing costs.

Please take time to review the new [beneficial terms](#).

Internet-based "Cloud" services

The Department is taking forward a project designed to agree suitable terms and conditions specifically for schools considering the movement of some or all services to an Internet-based solution. This will be aimed at addressing service levels as well as a host of requirements such as data ownership and location, data privacy and access, and responsibility for data security amongst others.

The Department would be pleased to receive comment or input from interested parties with a particular interest in the potential for remotely hosted services. Please address any comments to our central mailbox at schools.ictsupport@education.gsi.gov.uk.

5. Website updates

The following are now available on the Department's website:

- the latest schedule of meetings of the [Star Chamber Scrutiny Board](#);
- the latest schedule of meetings with [suppliers of school and LA management information systems (MIS)](#);
- the May version of the [data collection schedule](#);
- the latest version of the [common basic data set](#), updated on 17 May;
- recently completed [requests for change (RFC) forms updating the common basic data set](#);
- updated guidance notes (version 1.2) for the [Children Looked After return 2012 to 2013](#);
- the guide for completing the [Early Years Foundation Stage Profile return for 2013](#);
- [news pages](#) for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile return 2013;
- Information about the [changes to the School Census and PRU Census for spring and summer 2014](#);
- the specification for the [Alternative Provision Census 2014](#);
- the specification for the [Early Years Census 2014](#);