

Association of Teachers and Lecturers

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General secretary Dr Mary Bousted B.A. (Hons) M.A. PhD



Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London
SW1P 3BT

10 March 2016

Dear Nicky,

I am writing to you with regards to the key stage 2 teacher assessment of writing this year, specifically the "expected standard".

The clarification document issued by the Standards and Testing Agency on Tuesday 8 March contains the following statement: "In the new system the threshold of the expected standard for KS2 is broadly equivalent to the previous 4b".

As you are no doubt aware, the content of the "expected standard" for writing as outlined in the "Interim teacher assessment frameworks at the end of key stage 2" does not fully align with the old 4b standard. In fact some statements, for example the use of punctuation (e.g. semi-colons) and some sentence structures, would be found in the old level 5 descriptors.

As you have committed to trust the judgement of teachers, we have advised our members to take you at your word and to use the old 4b level as their benchmark for the "expected standard" this year.

I would like to advise you that ATL will robustly defend any teacher who faces negative consequences for following your guidance.

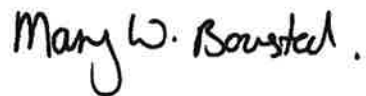
We remain concerned, however, that a number of local authorities have issued guidance to school leaders that directly contradicts the clarifications and statements made by yourself, minister and the Standards and Testing Agency, particularly around the deadline for assessments to be submitted.

We recognise of course some local authorities have earlier deadlines due to moderation, however, I urge you to ensure that local authorities are suitably supported and advised during the assessment period, as my members should not be subject to contradictory and confused advice while trying to deliver the important work of teaching and learning.

This year's chaotic arrangements for teacher assessment cannot happen next year. I am meeting with the Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb later this week when I will repeat my request to be involved in the early planning stages.

I would still, however, very much like to meet with you to discuss how and when ATL can start working with you on next year's arrangements so that together we can ensure the best process and outcomes for teachers, pupils and parents.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary W. Boustead." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Mary Boustead
General Secretary