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# Guide for Inspectors to Diocesan inspection house style

**Introduction**

This guidance is intended to help those writing and editing for the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton to present written information in a clear and consistent style so that readers can readily understand the content. This guide draws very heavily upon the house style that Ofsted has developed (‘Guide to Ofsted’s house style’, 2010). In following the guidance we will help maintain the corporate identity and consistency that support the authority and effectiveness of diocesan publications and correspondence.

**Part A. House style**

**Abbreviations**

1. Avoid using abbreviations whenever possible, especially in documents intended for an external audience. If the abbreviated expression occurs only a few times at intervals, it is best to write it out in full each time. Exceptions to this are GCSE and A level, which never need to be written in full.
2. Do not use the abbreviations ‘eg’, ‘ie’ or ‘etc’. Always spell out in full: ‘for example’, ‘that is’, ‘and so on’. If you write the phrase ‘for example’, there is no need for ‘and so on’ since it is clear from your use of ‘for example…’ that you do not intend to list all possible instances.
3. If a phrase that can be abbreviated appears many times, especially if the occurrences are close together, you may need to use an abbreviation to avoid annoying repetition. In this case, spell out the words in full the first time the expression is used and put the abbreviation in brackets after it: for example ‘the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Christian Education Centre (DABCEC)’. (Make sure that the phrase will actually need to be abbreviated later before including the abbreviation here.) The glossary includes some details of particular abbreviations.
4. Do not use full stops in abbreviations.

**Bullets and lists**

1. Use circle bullets. Try to avoid using sub-bullets, but if they are necessary, indicate each one with a dash. All bullets and sub-bullets should be spaced out to increase accessibility.
2. The Plain English Campaign recommends different ways to present a sequence of bullet points, depending on its structure. Each point may consist of one or more complete sentences, or the points together may make up one continuous sentence introduced by a stem. You should not mix the two kinds in one sequence.
3. If the bullet points consist of full sentences, they should begin with a capital letter and end in a full stop.
4. If the bullet points have a stem and are not full sentences, they should have no punctuation apart from a colon after the stem and a full stop after the final bullet. Each bullet point must start with the same kind of word or phrase (noun or verb), and follow logically from the stem. The three points in the example below start with verbs.
5. If a list in the running text of a document contains a number of complex items, use a lead-in line followed by a colon, with a semicolon to follow each point. Do not use semicolons in a list comprising bullet points.
6. Where lists do not need to be numbered, use bullet points. This implies that there is no priority or other meaning in the order of appearance.

**Capital letters**

1. Our style is to minimise the use of capital letters. In general, capital initials should be used only for proper nouns: the names of individual people, places, organisations or languages. They should not be used for common nouns except where these begin a sentence or heading. They should not be used for the subject (curriculum area) religious education. The following paragraphs give specific examples of when capital letters should be used and when they should not.
2. Do not use capital letters in blocks of text, either in headings or paragraphs. CAPITALS SHOUT AT THE READER. They are also harder to read than lower-case letters, which is why they are rarely used for road signs. Do not use blocks of capital letters in the subject line of letters; use sentence case instead, that is, only the first word and any proper nouns begin with a capital letter.
3. Use sentence case in titles, headings and subheadings: for example ‘The Catholic Life of the School’ should be ‘The Catholic life of the school’. This applies to all documents, including letters.
4. Use capital initials for certain titles and ranks when they refer to one specific person. For example: the Archbishop; the Pope. The Principal (of a specific institution) should also have a capital initial to avoid confusion with any other meaning of the word, but headteacher is lower case. Job titles take lower case when used in a generic sense, or where there are more than one. For example: ‘the principals of all the colleges’; ‘the meeting of heads of department’; and additional inspectors.
5. Use capital initials for Key Stage 1, Level 1 of the National Curriculum, but lower-case letters when ‘key stage’ and ‘level’ are used generically. For example: ‘Standards in religious education were high in Key Stage 1, but low in other key stages’ or ‘Level 2 and Level 4 are the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.’ Capital initials should also be used for the names of school years: for example Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2. ‘Nursery’ should take a capital initial when it refers to the Nursery Year in a school. ‘Level’ is lower case in references to post-16 qualifications.
6. The title of an initiative, policy or programme should be capitalised: for example ‘the Curriculum Directory’. Also use an organisation’s website to check the spacing between words of programmes or initiatives. Fair trade is lower case when used generically, but the correct form for the accrediting organisation is Fairtrade, which should be used when referring to products or services it has approved.
7. Do not use capital initials in the titles of publications; use sentence case instead. Exceptions to this are the titles of newspapers and periodicals, for example The Universe and The Tablet

**Organisations, denominations**

1. Use capital initials for the names of organisations, ministries and departments: for example West Sussex / Surrey County Council.
2. Use a lower-case initial for ‘church’ except when it is part of a title, such as the Roman Catholic Church. Use capital initials for ‘Buddhism’, ‘Catholic’, ‘Christianity’, ‘Judaism’, ‘Islam’, ‘Muslim’, ‘Protestant’ and so on.

**Days and dates**

1. The correct order is day, month, year, for example: Monday 8 September 2006. Do not use ‘-th’,‘-rd’, ‘-st’. Days and dates should not be abbreviated except in figures, tables and other graphical material where economy of space is important. If they are abbreviated, they should be shortened to three letters.
2. An academic year is expressed using a forward slash: ‘in the academic year 2012/13’.

**Font size and type**

1. The body text in all documents should be 12pt **Gills San MT.**
2. Text should be left-aligned, that is, with a ragged right-hand margin. This is because text is easier to read when the spaces between the words are regular.
3. The following heading levels should be used:

**Heading 1** (16pt bold Gills San MT): use for chapter headings.

**Heading2** (14pt bold Gills San MT): use for main section headings with in chapters.

**Heading 3** (12pt bold Gills San MT): use for sub-headings within main sections.

1. Do not use underlining for headings.

**Inclusive language**

1. If writing about adults, refer to ‘men’ and ‘women’. Use ‘male’ and ‘female’ only where the age range referred to includes adults, young people and children.
2. Use the terms ‘disabled person’ and ‘disabled people’ rather than ‘person with a disability’ and ‘people with disabilities’. The social model of disability explains that impairment does not have to lead to disability. Disability occurs when people are excluded, because of their impairment, from something that other people in society take for granted, such as the opportunity to attend an event or take part in an activity, to be kept informed or make use of a service, to live independently or earn a living, or just to make choices for themselves.
3. Use of the term ‘minority ethnic’ is preferable to ‘black and minority ethnic’ as a collective term for ethnic groups that are minorities in Britain. When referring to black people or groups, it is appropriate to use ‘Black’, with an initial capital, as this form has become a signifier of social, cultural and political identity.
4. ‘Black’ and ‘White’ should both have initial capitals when they form part of a specific census category, such as ‘Black Caribbean’ or ‘Any other White background’. These categories may appear in questionnaires and survey results.
5. Refer to ‘older people’, not ‘old people’ or ‘the elderly’.
6. Referring to ‘vulnerable young people’ or ‘hard-to-reach groups’ may give the impression that these are innate characteristics. At the first mention, it is better to refer instead to ‘young people whose circumstances have made them vulnerable’ or ‘groups whose circumstances have made them hard to reach’.

**Italics**

1. Use italics for:

* titles of diocesan and other Church publications, for example: *Religious Education Curriculum Directory, the ‘Red Book’*
* titles of published books, except for the Bible, and books of the Bible, which are roman (plain type, not italicised) without quotation marks;
* titles of chapters, articles, short stories and unpublished theses are roman in quotation marks
* titles of newspapers and periodicals, but article titles are roman and in quotation marks; inconsistency is often caused by ‘The’ – as a rule, print the definite article in lower case, for example the *Daily Express*, unless the definite article is part of the title, for example *The Tablet* and *The Universe*
* titles of plays and films, radio and television programmes, CDs and DVDs
* titles of major musical works such as operas and ballets

**Money**

1. Use numerals for monetary values, for example ‘£8’ not ‘eight pounds’ and ‘£8,000’ not ‘£8 thousand’, but use numerals and words combined to express very large round numbers, for example ‘£27 million’. Do not use ‘k’ or ‘K’ for thousands. Do not mix units. For round figures, miss out the empty decimal places, for example use £1, not £1.00. For sums under £1, do not use pound signs, for example, 55p, not £0.55. However, where sums of money above and below £1 appear together, treat them all in the same way (£7.70, £2.65 and £0.53).

**Numbers**

1. Write numbers from one to nine in words and use numerals for 10 and above.

Exceptions are:

* mathematical/statistical data, including percentages
* money
* Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2
* Year 1, Year 2
* Level 1,Level 2
* sets 1, 2, 3

1. Try not to use a number to start a sentence. When this is unavoidable, write the number as a word rather than as a numeral. If the figure is a percentage, write out ‘per cent’ rather than using the‘%’ sign.
2. Express decimals in numbers and fractions in words, for example: 0.75; three quarters. Do not hyphenate fractions unless used adjectivally, for example: ‘two thirds’; ‘a two-thirds majority’.
3. Use only numbers in tables, charts and graphs.
4. Use numbers before abbreviations: for example, ‘5kg’, ‘6%’; remember that abbreviated units of measurement have no full stops and do not take ‘s’ in the plural. There should be no space between the number and the unit of measurement.
5. Use the ‘%’ sign (it is short and easily visible), unless a sentence begins with a percentage, when ‘per cent’ should be written out to match the number (for instance, ‘Ten per cent...).Percentages are proportions, not exact numbers.
6. Avoid mixing numbers, fractions and decimals and percentages in the same sentence or paragraph.
7. Use first, second, third (not firstly, secondly, thirdly). Use 20th century, 21st century, avoiding superscripts as in 20th and 21st.

**Plain English**

1. Use plain English in all written communications. The Plain English Campaign describes it as text that is ‘written with the reader in mind and with the right tone of voice, that is clear and concise’. Using it involves following a few simple principles to ensure that your writing is easier to read and understand. This section offers some basic guidance; for more detailed information see the Plain English Campaign website: [www.plainenglishcampaign.co.uk](http://www.plainenglishcampaign.co.uk).
2. Try to use short sentences whenever possible, as long sentences which express several different ideas can be confusing for the reader. It is usually easy to break these up into shorter sentences. A good principle to follow is to express one main idea per sentence, with one other related point if necessary. This does not mean that all sentences should be the same length: good writing will contain a mixture of short sentences and well-punctuated longer ones. The Plain English Campaign recommends that the average sentence length should be 15 to 20 words.
3. Avoid jargon in written communications. If you need to use technical or specialist language, ensure that you explain the meaning clearly. Jargon can be useful shorthand in discussions between professionals, but it is not usually appropriate for publications aimed at a wider audience. All material published should be understandable to non-specialist readers.
4. Avoid using a long word if there is a shorter one that expresses the same meaning. Long words can sound pompous and may not be understood by all of your readers. The Plain English Campaign website includes an A–Z of alternative words which may be helpful: [www.plainenglishcampaign.co.uk](http://www.plainenglishcampaign.co.uk).

**Quotations**

1. Use single quotation marks, except for quotations within quotations, where double quotation marks should be used. When quoted material is more than two lines, indent the text to display it more effectively.
2. If the quoted material is a single word or phrase, put the punctuation outside the closing quotation mark. For example:

Planning was underpinned by a strong commitment to the principle that ‘every child matters’.

1. If the quoted material is a complete sentence or question, punctuation should fall outside the closing quotation mark. For example:

Pupils highlighted the lack of rigorous question by stating: ‘Jesus is the answer to most questions in our lessons’.

1. When quoting direct speech, use a comma to introduce or follow a short sentence or phrase and a colon to introduce a longer quotation. For example:

‘Standards in religious education have improved,’ he said, ‘but more work needs to be done’.

The Diocesan Director of Education said: ‘It is important to celebrate the very good work going on in schools across the Diocese and I am delighted that today’s report shows that the efforts of headteachers, teachers and governors are being recognised by Education Service, who are very satisfied overall with schools’ progress’.

**Time**

1. The 12-hour system, with am and pm, is more easily understood than the 24-hour system. For example, normally use 9.30am and 3.20pm instead of 09.30 and 15.20. Say ‘from 8am to 12 noon’ rather than ‘from 08.00 to 12.00’. However, lengthy timetables presented as tables may look more precise in the 24-hour form.

**Part B. Punctuation**

1. Aim for simplicity. Avoid cluttering the text with unnecessary punctuation.

**Apostrophes**

1. Use to indicate possession (the pupil’s book, schools’ plans, parents’ meeting). Possessive pronouns (its, his, hers, ours, yours, theirs) do not take apostrophes.
2. Note the difference between ‘its’ and ‘it’s’. The former is a possessive pronoun and does not take an apostrophe. The latter is the contraction of the words ‘it is’ or ‘it has’ and does take an apostrophe. For example:

‘The school has completed its self-evaluation form.’(possessive pronoun)

‘It’s been one year since the school’s last inspection.’ (contraction of ‘it has’)

1. If a plural noun ends in ‘s’, indicate possession by placing the apostrophe after the ‘s’, for example: ‘the pupils’ work’. If you are not sure where to place the apostrophe, ask yourself, ‘Who is doing the owning or using?’ and put the apostrophe immediately after the owner, for example

‘The children’s books’ (The children own the books.)

‘The ladies’ cloakroom’ (The ladies use the cloakroom.)

‘The women’s singles tournament’ (The tournament is played by the women.)

1. For names that end with ‘s’, such as Charles, James, Thomas, the advice still applies:

‘Thomas’ GCSE results’ (The GCSE results belong to Thomas.)

1. Apostrophes are used in descriptions of terms of duration, depending on whether the time is singular or plural (for example, one day’s time, in three years’ time; four months’ experience).
2. Do not use apostrophes to indicate plurals (1980s not 1980’s).

**Colons**

1. Never follow a colon with a dash.
2. Use a colon to separate a clause that introduces a list, quotation or summary.
3. Use a colon also when the second half of the sentence explains the first half, as if it were standing for the words ‘in the following way’. For example:

‘This publication aims to help all staff: it sets out guidance and provides advice on tricky areas of writing.’

1. Colons introduce lists, the items of which may be separated by commas or semi colons in a paragraph. Choose the latter if the items of the list are complex. For example:

‘Under the new inspection arrangements, introduced in January 2012, inspectors report on two strands: classroom religious education; and the Catholic life of the school.’

**Commas**

1. Use commas at both ends of an embedded clause if the clause could be removed leaving the sentence complete. For example: ‘The monthly newsletter, issued in July, set out the timetable for all staff.’ In contrast, without the commas, ‘The monthly newsletter issued in July sets out the timetable for all staff,’ suggests that the monthly newsletter for the other months does not contain it.
2. Use commas before and after connectives (such as ‘however’, ‘therefore’, ‘consequently’, ‘moreover’) when they are embedded in a sentence, and after connectives where the connective starts a sentence, for example: ‘The college, therefore, saw its enrolments fall’ or ‘As a result, the report will be withdrawn.’
3. Only use a comma before ‘and’ in a list if the meaning would be unclear without it. For example: ‘The learners studied catering, key skills, and information and communication technology’ (where ‘information and communication technology’ is one item in the list).

**Full stops**

1. Use one space after a full stop.
2. Full stops are unnecessary in abbreviations (DfE) and contractions (St, Rev, Fr, Mgr, Mr, Dr), and after initials in names.

**Hyphens**

1. Use hyphens for compound adjectives which precede a noun: for example ‘long-standing agreement’, ‘part-time teacher’, ‘up-to-date records’. This includes adverbs not ending in ‘ly’, such as ‘well’, ‘ill’, ‘better’, ‘worse’, ‘little’, ‘much’, ‘new’ and ‘old’, and the words they modify, which should be hyphenated when they precede a noun. For example: ‘well-qualified teacher’, ‘little-used method’. This is to avoid any ambiguity of meaning arising from the fact that some of these adverbs can also be adjectives. The hyphen makes clear that the word is an adverb that modifies the following word and not a separate adjective describing the noun. These compounds do not usually need a hyphen if they follow the noun, for example: ‘an agreement of long standing’; ‘the teacher works part time’; ‘the records are up to date’, ‘the teacher is well qualified’, ‘the method is little used’. However, the hyphen may be retained if it is needed to make clear the connection between the parts of the compound: for instance, not only ‘a child-friendly policy’ but ‘a policy that is child-friendly’.
2. Hyphenate compound nouns that have been derived from phrasal verbs, for example: ‘take-up’, ‘cut-off’, ‘catch-up’.
3. If a word has a prefix, use a hyphen to avoid confusion or mispronunciation. For example: ‘re-engage; ‘pre-existing’; ‘non-negotiable’. Also use a hyphen where a word that has a prefix could be confused with a word that does not, for example: ‘re-form’; ‘re-creation’.
4. Use a hyphen where a prefix is followed by a proper name, a numeral or a date, for example: ‘pre-inspection’; ‘mid-August’; ‘post-16’.
5. Use hyphens when referring to children’s ages, for example: ‘four-year-old children’. This helps to avoid ambiguity, since ‘four year old children’ can mean either ‘four year-old children’ or ‘four-year-old children’.
6. Never hyphenate adverbs that end ‘-ly’, for example: ‘newly qualified teacher’; ‘appropriately trained staff’; ‘easily accessible settings’. The ‘-ly’ form itself signals that this is an adverb modifying the word following it.
7. Do not hyphenate fractions unless used adjectivally, for example write ‘two thirds of the sample’, but ‘a two-thirds majority’.
8. For guidance on the hyphenation of particular words, refer to the Glossary. If the word you are looking for is not there, consult the Oxford English Dictionary.

**Quotation marks**

1. Use single quotation marks (‘xxx’) to mark the beginning and end of reported speech. Use double quotation marks (“xxx”) when a quotation appears within a quotation. For example:   
     
   ‘He suggested that the “loyalty factor” might have influenced responses to the questionnaire.’

**Semicolons**

1. Semicolons are used to connect clauses that could stand as sentences on their own, but are so closely related that they convey their sense better combined into one sentence.

‘Staff conveyed to pupils that they were offering a fresh start; they had high expectations for them, set them challenging tasks and anticipated what support they would need.’

1. They are also used for breaking up lists of complex items after a colon in a paragraph (but not in a bulleted list), in order to make it clear where the items divide. For example:

‘Inspectors judge religious education against four criteria: content; achievement; teaching; leadership and management.’

**Part C. Style and syntax (miscellaneous points)**

**Adjectives**

1. Make sure that adjectives are matched to the correct noun, for example ‘an organic box of vegetables’ should be ‘a box of organic vegetables’.

**‘-ise’ v ‘ize’ spellings**

1. Use the ‘-ise’ ending for words like ‘realise’ and ‘organise’.

**‘Me’, ‘myself’ and ‘I’**

1. Use ‘I’ if you are doing the action of the verb (for example, the speaking in ‘I spoke to him’); use ‘me’ if the action of the verb is being done to you (‘he spoke to me’). Confusion sometimes arises when there is more than one person doing the action (‘Claire and I spoke to him’), or having the action done to them (He spoke to Claire and me’).If you are unsure which is correct, try removing the extra person from the sentence: ‘He spoke to I’ is obviously wrong.
2. Do not use ‘myself’ as a substitute for ‘I’ or ‘me’.

**Position of ‘only’**

1. Beware of ambiguity, for example: ‘Resources only issued on Fridays.’ This could mean: ‘Only resources are issued on Fridays’, or ‘Resources are issued, not checked in, on Fridays’, or ‘Resources are issued on Fridays only’.

**Singular or plural verb**

1. Consistently treat group (corporate) nouns (for example, ‘Diocese’; ‘Church’; ‘team’; ‘division’, ‘family’, ‘playgroup’)as singular. ‘Staff’ is an exception, for example: ‘The staff were pleased when the inspector gave positive feedback.’ If a plural sense is desired, redraft the sentence, for example: ‘several members of the governors were...’
2. Use a singular verb (‘is’, not ‘are’) for the following: ‘none of them is…’; ‘neither of them is…’.
3. Use a plural verb (‘are’, not ‘is’) for the following: ‘leadership and management are…’; ‘data are…’; ‘criteria are…’.
4. Avoid using a singular verb in sentences such as ‘A majority of pupils are happy at school.’ If the word ‘pupils’ is omitted and the sense of the sentence still suggests that the subject is plural, it is preferable to use a plural verb.
5. The same applies to sentences where expressions of quantity such as ‘a proportion’, ‘a percentage’, ‘a number’, ‘one in three’, ‘half’ or ‘one third’ are used in a similar context. For instance: ‘A small proportion of settings are inadequate.’

**Split infinitives**

1. These are best avoided if you can do so without making the sentence sound awkward.

**‘That’, ‘which’ and ‘who’**

1. ‘That’ is used for a defining clause; ‘which’ and ‘who’ can be used for both defining and non-defining clauses. Defining clauses have no punctuation, but non-defining clauses must be between commas or introduced by a comma. For example:

‘The training sessions which were repetitive and unchallenging were poorly attended.’

‘The training sessions, which were repetitive and unchallenging, were poorly attended.’

The punctuation changes the meaning of the sentence: in the first sentence ‘repetitive and unchallenging’ defines which particular sessions were poorly attended; it suggests that there were other sessions which were not poorly attended. Here ‘that’ could be used instead of ‘which’. In the second sentence the ‘which’ clause between the commas simply adds extra information about the poorly attended sessions (that they were repetitive and unchallenging). In this case ‘that’ could not be substituted for ‘which’.

Similarly, ‘the deputy headteacher who is responsible for assessment’ is counterposed to any other deputy headteachers who do not have this responsibility. On the other hand, in ‘the deputy headteacher, who is responsible for assessment,’ the clause between the commas merely tells you something about the deputy headteacher.

**Part D. Glossary**

This Glossary aims to cover the terms most commonly used in writing for diocesan inspections, and those that most often cause difficulty. It is not intended to be comprehensive. Although some are listed, please avoid using abbreviations wherever possible. There is more guidance about abbreviations in paragraphs 1 to 4.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A** | |
| & | only use an ampersand if it is part of a formal title, for example City & Guilds |
| academy | lower-case initial unless part of title |
| age ranges such as 14–19 and16–19 | use dashes rather than hyphens do not mix dashes and words:  write 14–19-year-olds, but ‘from14 to 19’ (not ‘from 14–19’) and ‘between 14 and 19’ (not ‘between 14–19’) |
| A level | does not need to be written in full lower-case l  hyphenate when used as an adjective, for example: A-level results |
| among | not amongst |
| AS level | does not need to be written in full lower-case l  hyphenate when used as an adjective, for example: AS-level results |
| A\* to C | not A\*–C |
| assembly | lower-case initial |
| autumn | lower-case initial |
| **B** | |
| Baptism | capital initial as in ‘the Sacrament of Baptism’ |
| baptised | lower-case initial as in ‘the number of baptised pupils’ |
| Black (referring to people) | capital initial |
| benefited | not benefitted |
| **C** | |
| Catechism | capital initial |
| Catholic | capital initial |
| Chair of Governing Body | capital initials |
| Church/church | capital initial when referring to the community of believers  lower-case initial when referring to a Christian place of worship |
| children | use only for the Early Years Foundation Stage |
| Christian | capital initial |
| classroom religious education | lower-case initial  **not curriculum** religious education |
| comprise | not ‘comprise of’, ‘The report comprises three parts’ is correct |
| cooperate | one word, no hyphen |
| coordinate | one word, no hyphen |
| coordinator | one word, no hyphen |
| cross-curricular | Hyphen |
| **D** | |
| dates | 22 March 2006, not 22nd March 2006;  2–3 April, not 2nd and 3rd April. |
| deanery | lower-case initial |
| deputy headteacher | not deputy or deputy head  capital initials if a specific individual is referred to |
| diocese | not capital  unless referring specially to our Diocese |
| diocesan | not capital |
| disabled person/people | not person/people with a disability/disabilities  not ‘the disabled’ |
| **E** | |
| early years | lower-case initials when used generally |
| Early Years Foundation | capital initials  do not abbreviate |
| email | no hyphen |
| English as an additional language | not ‘as a second language’ or any other variation; describes speakers of English,  refer to ‘pupils who speak an additional language’ not ‘pupils with an additional language’ |
| examination board | use the current term ‘awarding body’ lower-case initials |
| extra-curricular | Hyphen |
| **F** | |
| fair trade  Fairtrade | when used generically  when referring to the accrediting organisation or products it approves |
| feedback  feed back | noun  verb |
| focused | not focussed |
| Foundation Stage | capital initials(now Early Years Foundation Stage) |
| fulfil | not fulfil |
| **G** | |
| General Certificate of Secondary Education  GCSE | initial capitals for key words  does not need to be written in full |
| governing body | takes a singular verb |
| **H** | |
| headteacher | one word  do not use ‘head’, ‘headmistress’ or ‘headmaster’ |
| **I** | |
| impact | avoid using as a verb – not ‘inspection impacts [or ‘impacts on’] the quality of childcare’, but ‘inspection affects the quality…’ or ‘has an impact on the quality… |
| individual education plan | do not abbreviate |
| INSET | avoid – use in-service training, staff development or professional development instead |
| internet | lower-case initial |
| interactive | one word |
| intranet | lower-case initial |
| -ise v –ize | -ise |
| **J** | |
| judgement/judgment | Judgement |
| **K** | |
| Key Stage 1, 2, 3, 4 | capital initials, but ‘other key stages’ or ‘at all key stages’ do not abbreviate to KS1, KS2 except in figures and tables where  space is important |
| **L** | |
| learners | do not use |
| Levels of Attainment in Religious Education | capitals only when referring to the published materials |
| Level/level | capital initial when referring to Levels of Attainment in Religious Education, for example Level 4  levels in post-16 courses at colleges and schools do not need capital initials |
| local authority | no longer local education authority  lower-case initials  do not abbreviate  takes a singular verb |
| looked after children | no hyphen  do not abbreviate  use this generic term rather than ‘children in care’, as not all looked after children are in the care of the local authority |
| lunchtime | one word |
| **M** | |
| Mass | not mass |
| minority ethnic | not ethnic minority (as adjective) |
| moderation | lower-case initial  as in ‘deanery moderation’ all lower-case initals |
| multicultural | one word |
| **N** | |
| national average | lower-case initials |
| nextstep | nextstep one word  all lower case unless it starts a sentence |
| number | number write numbers from one to nine as words  write numbers 10 and above as figures  avoid beginning a sentence with a number; if this cannot be avoided write the number in words |
| Nursery/nursery | capital initial when referring to the Nursery Year within a school  lower-case initial when used generically, |
| **O** | |
| off-task; on-task | avoid if possible |
| Ofsted | not OFSTED |
| online | one word |
| outperform | one word |
| **P** | |
| part time | two words when used as a noun  hyphenate when used as an adjective, for example ‘part-time students’ |
| per cent | use %, except with a number that is written as a word because it starts a sentence |
| personal, social and health education  PSHE | write in full where possible and in any case the first time it appears  lower-case initials when written in full |
| P scale; P scale data | capital P, no hyphen  used to record attainment for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities working below Level1 |
| points score | ‘points’ is plural |
| post-16 | hyphen  no capital |
| practice | practise when used as a verb |
| principal/principle | often confused  ‘principal’ means ‘chief’ or ‘most important’ and is also used for the head of a college  the meanings of ‘principle’ include ‘moral rule’ and ‘basis for belief or action’, as in ‘The principle that pupils’ individual targets should be challenging yet achievable was widely accepted.’ |
| Program | spelling – when referring to computer software |
| programmes of study | lower-case initials |
| pupils | not acceptable in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but use for Years 1–6 and when referring to both primary and secondary schools |
| pupils’ progress | not ‘pupil progress’ |
| **R** | |
| Reception Year | capital initials |
| the Sacrament of Reconciliation | capital initials |
| reinspection | one word |
| Religious Education Curriculum Directory | capital initials  when quoted in report in *italics*  not Curriculum Directory  do not abbreviate |
| role play | no hyphen |
| rosary | lower-case initial |
| **S** | |
| Sacrament/sacraments | lower-case initial when used to refer to the teaching on the sacraments  capital initial when referring to the celebration of a particular sacrament |
| SATs | do not use, even if the school does–  consider ‘national tests’ or ‘end-of-key-stage tests’ instead |
| school development/improvement plan | do not abbreviate |
| self-assessment | Hyphen |
| self-evaluation | Hyphen |
| sentence case | only the first word and proper nouns begin with a capital use for titles and headings in all documents, including the subject line in letters |
| sixth form | no hyphen |
| skilful | not skilfull |
| Special educational needs and/or disabilities | do not abbreviate  use in all contexts except further education and post-16 learning and skills, where you should refer instead to ‘learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities’ |
| spring | lower-case initial |
| statement of special educational needs | lower-case initials  do not abbreviate to SEN |
| students | use for Years 7 to 13 |
| sub-committees | sub-committees on governing bodies are usually committees, and the prefix should not be used, even if the school uses it |
| summer | lower-case initial |
| **T** | |
| teacher assessments | this is the term for statutorily required assessments such as those at Key Stage 1 use teachers’ assessments elsewhere |
| team-building | Hyphen |
| teamwork | one word |
| timescale | one word |
| timetable | one word |
| trainees | used for people undertaking initial teacher training courses |
| **U** | |
| underachieve | one word |
| under-fives; under-eights | hyphen  do not write under-5s; under-8s |
| units  (previously modules) | lower-case initial |
| **V** | |
| value-added | consider ‘added value’ |
| vice-chair | hyphen  lower-case initials |
| videoconference | one word |
| **W** | |
| Web/web | capital initial when referring to the World Wide Web (proper noun)  lower case when used generally, for example in ‘web page’ |
| website | one word |
| well-being | Hyphen |
| while | not whilst |
| White (referring to people) | capital initial only when part of a specific census category such as ‘White British’ |
| whole-school | hyphenate when used as adjective, for example ‘whole-school issues’ but not otherwise: ‘The whole school was involved.’ |
| working party | lower-case initials |
| worship | lower-case initial |
| **Y** | |
| Year 1, Year 2… | capital initials  do not abbreviate to Y1, Y2… |
| young people | use for people from age 14 |

**A guide to proportions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Proportion** | **Description** |
| 97-100% | Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all |
| 80-96% | Very large majority, most |
| 65-79% | Large majority |
| 51-64% | Majority |
| 35-49% | Minority |
| 20-34% | Small minority |
| 4-19% | Very small minority, few |
| 0-3% | Almost none/very few |