Key stage 2 English writing standardisation exercise commentary – Pupil B

Pupil B – working towards the expected standard

This collection includes:

A) a narrative extract
B) a survival guide
C) a newspaper article
D) a setting description
E) a letter
F) a diary entry

All the statements for 'working towards the expected standard' are met.

The pupil can write for a range of purposes

Across the collection, the pupil demonstrates the ability to write for a range of purposes by adapting content and form fittingly for each genre. The first 3 pieces originate from a unit of work on Katherine Rundell's adventure novel 'The Explorer'. Related pieces consist of a narrative extract which describes 2 survivors of a plane crash exploring the Amazon rainforest (piece A), a guide for survival in the rainforest (piece B) and a newspaper article focusing on the plane crash which forms the basis of the story (piece C). Each piece is purposefully written and includes aspects of content and presentation which are largely appropriate to form, though lacking detail in places. Piece D, a short narrative which includes a setting description of a spooky house, is a stand-alone piece of writing. It was devised to encourage pupils to write creatively whilst introducing suspense and mystery. The letter from a classroom chair (piece E), based on Drew Daywalt's comical book 'The Day the Crayons Quit', expresses a chair's discontent at being so misused, demonstrating the pupil's ability to adopt a character's fictional voice and associated outrage. Finally, piece F, a diary entry based on learning around WW2, conveys Anne Frank's concern at the absence of her father.

Piece B, the survival guide, adopts a suitable format for an instructional task. After opening with a direct question designed to draw the reader in (*So, you have crashed in the Rainforest?*), headings and subheadings add structure to the piece and walk the reader through a series of simply structured suggested actions to ensure survival. The piece is written fittingly using direct address in the second person, and provides brief instructions through a series of short but focused paragraphs. Under the subheading 'How to build a den', a direct initial instruction (*… try to find a den*) urges the reader into their first task, followed up with a series of further instructions (*improve it… check...*).

There is a logical progression to the directions given, by way of 'find it, improve it, check it'. The use of imperatives provides a directive tone, typical of instructional writing, and the use of infinitive verbs (*to try to find… to improve… to stop*) provides clarity around the sequence of actions. The use of the conditional conjunction 'if' (*If you see bees… If you follow this guide*) demonstrates the writer's attention to the suitability of the instructions as well as an emerging awareness of the potential needs of the reader. Modal verbs support this notion (*You need to … you can try*). Although the purpose of the piece is retained, the brevity and lack of expansion (*then check your stuff around you.*) for each instruction limits the overall effectiveness.

Evidence of Pupil B writing for purpose is further demonstrated in piece C, which uses the third person to report the events of the aeroplane crash that instigates the drama in Rundell's 'The Explorer.' Here, the pupil adopts and sustains the more formal register and reporting style of this genre (*Reportedly… However… is believed to*). This, combined with some simple technical vocabulary (*emergency services… on route… location… young passengers… witnesses*), means the piece, although lacking expansion of detail, remains purposeful and factual.

The report begins with a simple headline (*LOST CHILDREN*) and is predominantly written in the present tense (*The plane is believed to be on fire*…) and the perfect present (*Some witinesses have said…*), which conveys relevant facts seemingly as they emerge or occur, or have done so recently. A fronted adverbial (*In the Amazon Rainforest*) immediately informs the reader of a key fact: the location. The passive constructions maintain the formal reporting tone (*is believed to be… Witenesses have been interviewed… families have already been informed*) and appropriately emphasise the key subjects of the report: the plane and its passengers, the witnesses and the families of the victims.

Brief but correctly punctuated witness quotes add human interest to the piece (*"I heard screaming!"*), demonstrating a growing awareness of the reader and the conventions of this genre of writing. Piece C moves forward towards a logical – albeit brief – conclusion, whereby the reader is directly invited to find further information via the newspaper's website.

The admonishing tone of a wronged classroom chair comes through clearly in a letter to its occupant, 'Amelia', in piece E. The opening adheres to letter-writing conventions (*To Amelia*) and Pupil B quickly launches into the string of reasons for the chair's evident dissatisfaction, using an appropriate direct address in the first person.

Writing in this piece is informal and in line with the purpose. The use of exclamations clearly expresses the intended anger of the 'writer' (*I'm done!... I don't even know why you put marks on me!*). The frequency of modals and negative contractions (*can't… never… shouldn't… don't*) contribute to sustaining the clearly outraged tone of the piece, concluding with a capitalised final statement designed for impact (*YOU'RE DISGUSTING!*).

The anxiety felt by Anne Frank, the protagonist in the diary entry (piece F), is captured alongside an outline of the recent events which have impacted her. Written in the first person, Anne conveys her worry at having to go into hiding, and at the apparent disappearance of her father. She does this by directly stating her concerns (*Today was the worst day... I'm worried because*) and indirectly, by detailing how her emotions have manifested physically (*I felt the butterflies that fluttered in my tummy… I have bitten off all my fingernails… I was shaking with fear*). A rhetorical question further conveys Anne's lack of control of her situation (*Where was I going?*) and helps to explain her resultant worry. Additionally, coordinating and subordinating conjunctions capture the overall sense of fear and trepidation felt by Anne (*and that was even more terrifying… It's been a bit now, and I haven't heard from my Dad… because he was unknown to me now*.).

Although some thoughts are repetitive and a little jumbled in nature – perhaps representative of Anne's confused and anxious state – the objective of expressing strong, personal emotion and conveying events through a diary format is clear and sustained.

In pieces A and D, Pupil B demonstrates the ability to adapt their writing to the narrative form by depicting settings and characters. This is achieved through writing that is brief but convincing. In the narrative focusing on the boys' exploration of the Amazon rainforest (piece A), use of the first-person (*I stepped forward*) immediately immerses the reader into the scene. Past-tense narration captures the pair's movements as they enter unfamiliar surroundings. The scene culminates in an exciting moment of suspense, housed in a short, sharp sentence (*Then there was eyes*.) where a mysterious set of eyes appear, frightening the boys (*I froze, Milo screeched "Max!"*).

The language of storytelling pervades piece A, supported with some effective use of personification and simile (*As I waited… the trees stretched their arms… I froze… as clear as glass*.). Brief dialogue serves to punctuate the action (*"Wait up!"… "Is this the right way?"*) whilst offering a sense of the boys' apprehension. Although a short narrative, through language choices and other constructs, Pupil B succeeds in beginning to create a sense of foreboding and an atmosphere of trepidation and mystery.

The narrative description of a spooky house (piece D) is similarly successful in setting the scene and evoking a mood, demonstrating the pupil's emerging understanding of the mystery/suspense genre. An impactful opening (*The gates screeched*) is followed by a series of sensory details (*crows screamed… owls hooted… I smelt rotten birds and flesh… the stairs creaked.*). This demonstrates Pupil B's ability to build a mental image through careful descriptions which aim to 'hook' the reader and build tension.

Overall, Pupil B demonstrates the ability to engage the reader by adapting their writing to a variety of forms and purposes.

The pupil can use paragraphs to organise ideas

Across the collection, the pupil demonstrates understanding of how paragraphs can organise related ideas and events. The pupil also shows some understanding of other structural devices used to organise texts.

Paragraphing in the survival guide (piece B) structures the piece and supports the reader to carry out different tasks to ensure survival in the rainforest. The title and opening paragraph clearly signal the intent of the piece, and subsequent subheadings indicate the content of each paragraph, although the content does not always fulfil the aim of the subheading chosen – for example, the paragraph entitled 'How to make a fire' only tells the reader the materials that are required to do so, but neglects to expand on how to actually make the fire. Bullet points in this final instruction support the obvious intent to structure and organise the ideas within this piece.

Content within the newspaper report (piece C) is grouped appropriately into 4 main paragraphs, with some additional 'standalone' witness statements. Each paragraph has a purpose, which supports the emergence of overall coherence, although the reliance on simple, often single clause sentences means that the flow feels a little disjointed. The first paragraph begins with an appropriate adverb (*Reportedly*) and briefly summarises the incident, including the date. The second paragraph expands on the introduction, outlining other key information such as what happened (*a plane crash*) and where (*the Amazon Rainforest*). Pupil B then goes on to provide expansion of the incident, grouped into paragraphs which outline key events and information. The piece concludes with a 'call to action' for those readers who wish to find out more (*just click on our website now.*).

Paragraphing in the spooky narrative (piece D) supports a shift of focus from the sensory introduction as the protagonist approaches the house, to their ascent up the stairs and entering the house itself. Each paragraph is brief, but valuable in supporting the chronology of the piece.

The chair's outraged letter (piece E) provides further evidence of Pupil B using paragraphs to organise ideas. The opening clearly portrays the tone of the writer (*I can't do this! I'm done!*) and sets out the purpose of the letter (*I can't handle that you're giving the tables more attention then you give me.)* Reasons to support the writer's frustration follow, and specific causes of the chair's frustrations are cited. The final paragraph focuses on the physical impact caused by 'Amelia', including an abrupt but overtly furious conclusion (*YOU'RE DISGUSTING!*).

Whilst the coherence of the diary entry (piece F) is affected by what feels like a slightly jumbled stream of consciousness, ideas and emotions are outlined within functional paragraphs, helping to give the piece some structure. Each paragraph begins with an indication of the content (*Today was the worst day… Since then,… I haven't seen my dad and…*) and, although repetitious in places, the paragraphs take the reader on a journey which conveys Anne's anxieties clearly and reflects her state of mind.

The pupil can, in narratives, describe settings and characters

The collection includes 2 narrative pieces. Piece A is a narrative extract in which 2 plane crash survivors explore their new surroundings, based on Katherine Rundell's adventure/mystery novel 'The Explorer'. The spooky house setting description (piece D) uses prior learning around language and atmosphere to create mystery and suspense.

A fronted adverbial opens the narrative extract (piece A) (*Looking around…*), setting the scene of 'the unknown' followed by an immediate – if slightly confused – metaphor (*my eyelids were walls*), designed to engage the reader and provide a sense of the unknown. The remote setting is evoked through details of sights and reactions, structured as a series of single clause sentences for impact (*Milo screeched "Wait up!"… Then there was eyes.)* and longer sentences which provide more information, often with some dialogue to support understanding (*We continued and Milo whispered, "Is this the right way?" "Yes I'm sure it is!" I replied a bit unsure*.).

Apt phrases and similes help to paint a picture of the setting (*the sun pierced down*) and an effective metaphor introduces a deliberately unsettling visual representation of this unknown place (*the trees stretched their arms*.). As events unfold, the boys find themselves before a waterfall, effectively described via the simile 'as clear as glass' and giving the reader the sense that a change in setting might also prelude the next intriguing event.

Elements of character are mainly expressed through descriptions of the boys' reactions to their environment. Powerful verb choices permeate the piece, depicting Milo's obvious terror at his new surroundings expressed through his speech and accompanying descriptive verbs (*screeched… whispered*), and the trepidation and subsequent caution exercised by Max in line with events as they unfold *(goosebumps… a bit unsure… peered… tiptoed… sprinted… froze*). A sense of Max's bravery is also hinted at, where his thoughts and words do not align, suggesting he is putting on a brave face to mitigate his friend's worry (*Milo whispered, "Is this the right way?" "Yes I'm sure it is!" I replied a bit unsure.*). This notion is supported by Milo's repeated calls for reassurance in times of obvious concern.

The bravery of the protagonist is a character trait also echoed in the spooky house narrative (piece D). Through the writer's internal monologue (*I wanted to turn around but I made myself carry on… I felt the goosebumps crawl up my arm and tried to ignore them*), the reader witnesses the protagonist's internal struggle and how they push through and overcome their own fears (*I made myself carry on… now was the time to be brave.*). This characterisation is also conveyed through action; namely, entering the house despite fear (*I felt apprenshive but took another step forward into the darkness…*).

A combination of first-person narration and well-chosen fronted adverbials sets the scene and places the reader into the action (*Suddenly,… As soon as I opened the door… Totally overwhelmed,*). Events are experienced by the reader as if in real time, supporting

the mysterious atmosphere. Evocative phrases engage the senses (*the sky was on fire… crows screamed and the owls hooted… I smelt rotten birds and flesh… the stairs creaked*) whilst adding intensity and creating reader immersion. Alongside this, impactful language choices (*screeched… snapped… burned… digging… screamed… slammed*) contribute to the ongoing feeling of unease of this setting and successfully creates a vivid, tense scene that grabs the reader's attention. Use of ellipses concludes the piece, leaving the reader wondering what the writer will face as they enter the house and who they are there to assist.

The pupil can, in non-narrative writing, use simple devices to structure the writing and support the reader (for example, headings, subheadings, bullet points)

Across the collection, Pupil B uses several semantic and graphic devices to structure their non-fiction writing.

A main heading (*How to survive in the rainforest*) supplemented by subheadings provides simple structure for the survival guide (piece B). Each subheading generally indicates content, although this is unsuccessfully handled in paragraph two, where the subheading and the content do not marry effectively. Bullet points in the final paragraph, 'How to make a fire', inform the reader what they will need to perform the task, including a colon to begin the list (*So you will start with:*).

A capitalised headline (*LOST CHILDREN*) provides a conventional opening to the newspaper report (piece C), and adverbial phrases help to guide the reader through the dramatic events (*Reportedly,… In the Amazon… However… if you want more information*). Similar structures have been applied in the diary entry (piece F), as the piece opens with 'Dear Diary' and Anne's anxious day is structured by adverbial phrases to mark each new thought/worry (*Today… Soon as I was told… Since then*).

Finally, a conventional salutation opens piece E, the letter (*To Amelia*). The chair's utter disgust is clearly expressed via the final 2 words of the piece, capitalised to emphasise the emotion of the writer and reinforce the outrage (*and also one thing, YOU'RE DISGUSTING!*).

The pupil can use capital letters, full stops, question marks, commas for lists and apostrophes for contraction mostly correctly

Although there are some minor inaccuracies, evidence across the collection meets the standard, for example:

- **capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences**

- *Milo was stood at a waterfall, the water shone as clear as glass.* (piece A)
- *“Is this the right way?”* (piece A)
- *So, you have crashed in the Rainforest?* (piece B)
- *… make sure they aren’t bad!* (piece B)
- *The children’s families have already been informed by emergency services.* (piece C)
- *“The plane just flew down!”* (piece C)
- *Then the door slammed.* (piece D)
- *Then I feel like you use me like a bin and then I feel like rubbish.* (piece E)
- *I haven’t seen my dad and I’m worried for him.* (piece F)
- *Where was I going?* (piece F)

- **commas for lists**
  - *… get pineapples, bananas and apples but…* (piece B)

- **apostrophes for contraction**
  - *I’m* (piece A)
  - *Aren’t* (piece B)
  - *Couldn’t* (piece D)
  - *I’m… can’t… don’t… you’re… you’ve* (piece E)
  - *isn’t… haven’t… don’t* (piece F)

The pupil can spell correctly most words from the year 3/year 4 spelling list and some words from the year 5/year 6 spelling lists

Spelling of the year 3/year 4 words included in the pupil’s writing is mostly accurate across the collection, and the one year 5/year 6 word used (*equipment* – piece F) is spelled correctly.

Evidence for the correct spelling of the year 3/year 4 words meets the standard, for example:

- *forward… continue[d]… disappear[ed]* (piece A)
- *build… guide* (piece B)
- *believe[d]… accident… heard* (piece C)
- *through* (piece D)

The pupil can write legibly

Handwriting is legible throughout the handwritten pieces in the collection. Letters are mainly appropriate in size and spacing.

Why is the collection not awarded the higher standard?

The pupil has not been awarded the higher standard because not all statements for this standard have been met.

The pupil can write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader (for example, the use of the first person in a diary; direct address in instructions and persuasive writing)

Pupil B is beginning to make suitable language choices and include constructs which elevate some sentences. Additionally, they can adapt their writing to purpose and follow some of the conventions of the different forms of writing included in this collection – for example, the diary and letter written in the first person and the survival guide directed at the reader suggest that Pupil B is beginning to understand reader awareness. However, this is not always sustained, evidenced by the abrupt endings of pieces E and F and the reliance on a limited repertoire of sentence structures and openers that impact cohesion and, ultimately, effectiveness.

Coherence is occasionally interrupted by repetition rather than expansion or development of ideas – for example, in the letter (piece E) and the diary entry (piece F). Some pieces are overly brief. Overall, writing is too simplistic and lacking in detail or expansion to be considered truly effective.

The pupil can, in narratives, describe settings, characters and atmosphere

The descriptive pieces are stronger in the collection and show Pupil B's emerging understanding of how vocabulary choices and grammatical constructs can improve the reader experience and their use in building an atmosphere of suspense – for example, Pupil B's use of fronted adverbials in piece D is successful in setting the scene and building tension. The inclusion of an internal monologue in piece A shows emerging understanding of character development and this is put to good use to express the fear and caution exercised by the protagonist.

However, occasional lapses in cohesion are in evidence – for example, through a confused metaphor in piece A (*my eyelids were walls*) and the repetition of ideas, which is more prevalent in the non-fiction pieces. Effectiveness is slightly impacted by the undeveloped characterisation of Max in piece A. Although Pupil B hints at Max's strength and leadership so that characterisation in this piece clearly meets the 'working towards' statement, there remains ample room for development and expansion to really provide insight into his character and personality. Character development is stronger in the spooky narrative (piece D) via the internal struggles expressed by the writer and their navigation of those struggles (*I wanted to turn around but I made myself carry on. I was*

needed. I couldn't stop… I felt apprenshive but took another step forward into the darkness…).

Pupil B is beginning to evidence understanding of how to build atmosphere into narrative pieces. Pieces A and D include several constructs and lexical choices which set the scene and increase drama and suspense – for example: the goosebumps felt by Max, the outstretched arms of the trees, the mysterious eyes, the gates which 'screeched', the unexpected snap of a fence and the slamming of the door. Simple adverbs and adverbial phrases support this tension (*Suddenly… As soon as I*…) and some short sentences portray the sense of fear and the unknown (*I was needed. I couldn't stop.*).

Whilst the atmosphere is clearly set, the constructs used to do so are imitative and largely unexpanded. Effectiveness and impact could be improved via more unique ideas which are suitably developed and enhanced.

The pupil can integrate dialogue in narratives to convey character and advance the action

The narrative extract (piece A) and the newspaper report (piece C) offer evidence of dialogue and demonstrate Pupil B's developing understanding of its punctuation and function within different forms of writing.

Dialogue in the narrative extract (piece A) demonstrates some character interaction and highlights the dependence of Milo on Max (*"Wait up!... "Is this the right way?"... "Max!"*). It is clear from the dialogue that Max is seen by Milo as the leader and a person of strength, however the dialogue is not sustained and does not sufficiently advance the action of the story.

The pupil can select vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect what the writing requires, doing this mostly appropriately (for example, using contracted forms in dialogues in narrative; using passive verbs to affect how information is presented; using modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility)

Pupil B uses some vocabulary and grammatical structures to suit the forms of writing in this collection – including, for example, some use of the passive voice in the newspaper report (*have been… have said*), modal verbs (*couldn't… can't*) in the spooky narrative and the letter, and colloquial speech in the rainforest narrative (piece A) (*"Wait up!"*). Although limited, a range of simple conjunctions are used (*because… when… however… as*) and the occasional relative clause is also evident. Fronted adverbials, often punctuated with commas, help support cohesion, and vocabulary is appropriate and sometimes chosen for effect. For this statement to be fully met, evidence across the collection needs to be substantive and sustained.

The pupil can use a range of devices to build cohesion (for example, conjunctions, adverbials of time and place, pronouns, synonyms) within and across paragraphs

Pupil B is beginning to utilise devices such as adverbial phrases, pronouns and coordinating and subordinating conjunctions to build cohesion. They also demonstrate some accurate use of tense, particularly in narrative writing, which evidences an emerging understanding of devices which help to build cohesion. However, this evidence is not extensive or always sustained across the collection. Repetition and a lack of control inhibit the success of some pieces, interrupting flow and therefore cohesion, indicating that the pupil has not yet fulfilled this statement.

In the survival guide (piece B), Pupil B has made efforts to structure the piece using headings and subheadings. However, instructions are overly brief and lacking enough detail to be effective in their task. Additionally, the section entitled 'How to make a fire' and the content of the linked paragraph are misaligned, which negatively impacts the cohesion of the piece.

The writer's reliance on simple, often single-clause sentences in piece C means that the piece lacks flow and feels somewhat disjointed overall. The absence of expansion and significant detail limits effectiveness and the jump from an authorial reporting voice to some rather anonymous witness statements limits cohesion.

Across the pieces, cohesion is weakened through repetition of nouns rather than the use of pronouns or synonyms, which impacts the overall success of the writing. This is particularly evident in the pieces written in character – for example, in the letter (piece E) (*I am really sick of your attitude and seriously, I don't like your attitude right now.)* and the diary (piece F) (*I have only just realized that my dad isn't here and he has gone to visit a friend. It's been a bit now, and I haven't heard from my Dad and I'm really scared for my dad*.). The writer's intent is occasionally lost within a stream of consciousness.

The pupil can use verb tenses consistently and correctly throughout their writing

The use of verb tenses is mainly consistent in this collection, including the use of progressive, perfect and passive constructions. Tenses are shifted to suit the purpose of each piece.

The narrative pieces (A and D) are both written consistently in the simple past tense (*Milo screeched… We continued… I froze… the crows screamed… I smelt… the atmosphere changed.*). Typically for instructional writing, the survival guide is written in the present tense (*I'm going to… try to improve it… check if its good*) and future tense (*…you will start with:… If you follow*) with the inclusion of imperatives (*check… make*). Similarly, the letter and the diary entry, which both convey the immediacy of the writers' emotions, are

maintained appropriately in the present (*I can't do this!... I'm worried because*) and present perfect tense (*you never use me with anything nice despite being very helpful to you… I have been thinking constantly.*).

In this collection, whilst it is clear that the pupil is able to use verb tenses appropriately, the brevity of the pieces means that the pupil has not yet provided substantial or sustained evidence to consistently fulfil this statement. There are also occasional errors, such as subject-verb agreement in piece A (*there was eyes*) that indicate a lack of consistency in this skill.

The pupil can use the range of punctuation taught at key stage 2 mostly correctly (for example, inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech)

There is some emerging evidence of the wider range of punctuation taught at key stage 2, and this is sometimes used accurately – for example:

- **commas after fronted adverbials**
  - *Reportedly, there was…* (piece C)
  - *Suddenly, the sky…* (piece D)
  - *As soon as I opened the door, the atmosphere…* (piece D)
  - *Since then, I watched…* (piece F)
- **commas to separate phrases and clauses**
  - *As I waited, goosebumps ran up my body…* (piece A)
  - *As night fell,* (piece A)
  - *As I sprinted, the noises disappeared…* (piece A)
  - *If you see bees, you can try and get their honey …* (piece B)
- **ellipses to suggest mystery and build tension**
  - *into the darkness…* (piece D)
- **colons to introduce direct speech and lists**
  - *So you will start with:* (piece B)
  - *Some witinesses have said: "The…* (piece C)
- **speech punctuation**
  - *Milo whispered, "Is this the right way?" "Yes I'm sure it is!" I replied.* (piece A)
  - *"I heard screaming!"* (piece C)

Across the collection, there is evidence of a range of punctuation being used mostly correctly. At times, errors and omissions weaken the pieces, but these do not prevent each piece from meeting its aim, and meaning is mostly clear throughout.

The pupil can spell correctly most words from the year 5/year 6 spelling list, and use a dictionary to check the spelling of uncommon or more ambitious vocabulary

The pupil has evidenced one word from the year 5/year 6 spelling list in this collection, which is ‘equipment’ (piece E).

The pupil can maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed

Handwriting is predominantly joined and is legible throughout the collection. There are some infrequent lapses in correct joins (‘r’ and ‘v’). However, writing shows some signs of fluency, indicating that the pupil shows evidence of meeting this statement.