

South West Grid for Learning Trust Merlin Learning Platform

What's new?

more
magic,
less
dust



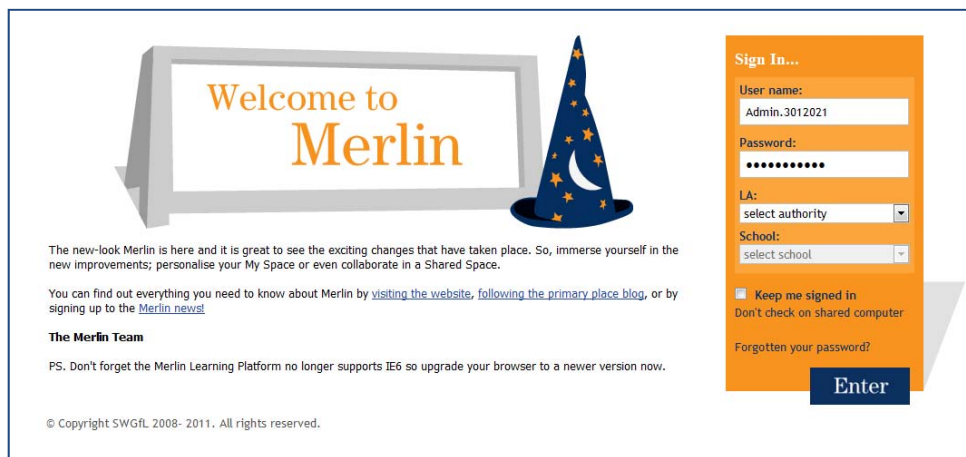
The South West Grid for Learning
is a charitable trust dedicated to
the advancement of education
through information and
communication technologies



The 11.02 release continues the evolution of the Merlin learning platform. There's a host of great new features and updates which include the integration of the Google Translate™ translation service, more new themes, and the ability to reset your own forgotten password. There are updates to the assessment for learning Individual Learning Plans; simplifying the process for managing data. Also included is a service pack release designed to provide software updates, addressing issues identified by you, and by our testing teams.

New Login Pages

As well as the above changes there are two new dedicated login screens for MyFirstPlace and Merlin.



New Merlin Login Page



New MyFirstPlace Login Page

And should you accidentally enter the incorrect login details and receive an error message informing you of this, the error message will disappear as soon as you start retyping your username and password.

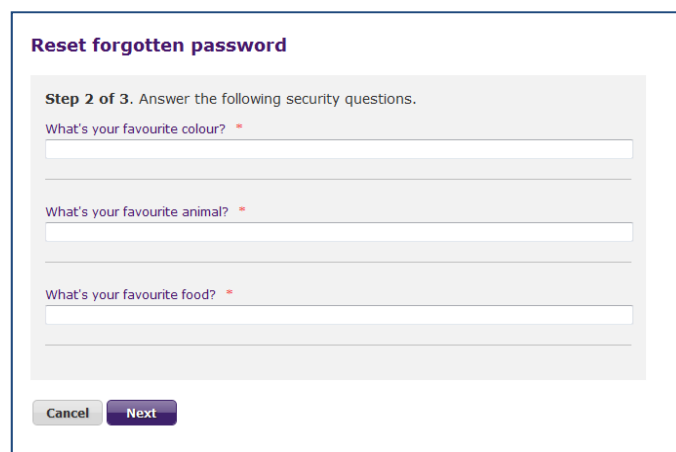
On the Merlin login page you will now also see a regular update of exciting news and information about the Merlin Learning Platform, such as new features in upcoming releases, or details of events and useful resources.

Finally, we will be making the HTML code available for the login page (if you're a bit "techie" you'll like this). This will allow you to embed the login page directly into your own school Website if you want to access the platform directly from this location. The code will be available for both Merlin and MyFirstPlace.

Resetting a forgotten password

Should you find yourself in the frustrating (and possibly embarrassing) position of having forgotten your password for the learning platform you now have the option of resetting it directly from the login page. This removes the need to locate an administrator to reset your password for you, and can have you up and running on the learning platform in no time at all.

The login page has been updated to include a *Forgotten your password?* link, which will take you through a few simple steps to confirm your identity. This includes providing your email address and answering three security questions you have previously recorded responses to.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Reset forgotten password". It is at "Step 2 of 3" and asks the user to answer three security questions. The questions are: "What's your favourite colour?", "What's your favourite animal?", and "What's your favourite food?". Each question has a corresponding text input field. At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Next".

The final step, having provided the correct answers, is to reset your password to a new one. And you're back in the learning platform in a matter of a few easy, but secure, stages. In the event of three failed attempts your account will be locked and an administrator will need to reset your password for you.

You can manage your security question responses through the *My Account* link on the *Home* tab, and you have 10 questions to choose from that have been designed by e-safety experts. Once you've completed these questions you can change them at any time; selecting the *Change Answers* option presents the full list of questions to choose from again, and does not show your previously recorded answers.

My Account

Theme | V-Me | Profile | Notifications | Change Password | Security Questions

If you try to reset your password if you forget it, you will be asked a number of security questions. You will need to provide the same answers as you have entered here.

Question 1
What's your favourite animal?

Select question
What was the name of your first pet?
Where were you born?
What's your favourite sport?
What's your favourite animal?
What's your father's first name?
What's your favourite place?
What was the name or number of your first house?
What was the name of your first school?

black

Question 3
What's your favourite food?

Answer 3
smash

3 answers provided.

OK

If your school's network is configured to access the Internet via static routes, or with proxy server exceptions, you will need to update these to include a new Web space named "amg.merlin.swgfl.org.uk".

Signing In

It's always good to receive confirmation that you've completed an action, and actions you take anywhere on the Web or in a Web application such as the learning platform should provide this, so you're not left wondering whether you need to click a button again, did the link work, etc.

Once you've entered your username and password to log into the learning platform you will now see a 'spinning wheel' and confirmation message to clarify that the system is actively logging you on.

Sign In...

User name:
Admin.3012021

Password:
●●●●●●●●

LA:
select authority

School:
select school

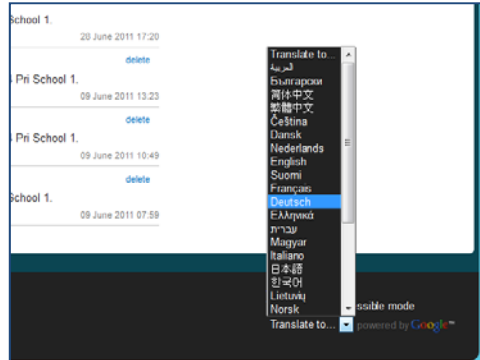
Keep me signed in
Don't check on shared computer

[Forgotten your password?](#)



Dynamic language translation

Located in the footer area of the learning platform you will now find a new feature to dynamically translate the learning platform to the language selected from the many available options. Simply choose a language from the drop-down menu and the page will be translated before your very eyes!



The language you have chosen will be remembered whilst you navigate around the remainder of your session, and even when you log off and log back in again. You can reset it by selecting the *Stop Translating* button when you're ready. It's ideal for users if their primary language is not English, and is a great way of making content more accessible for a wider community.



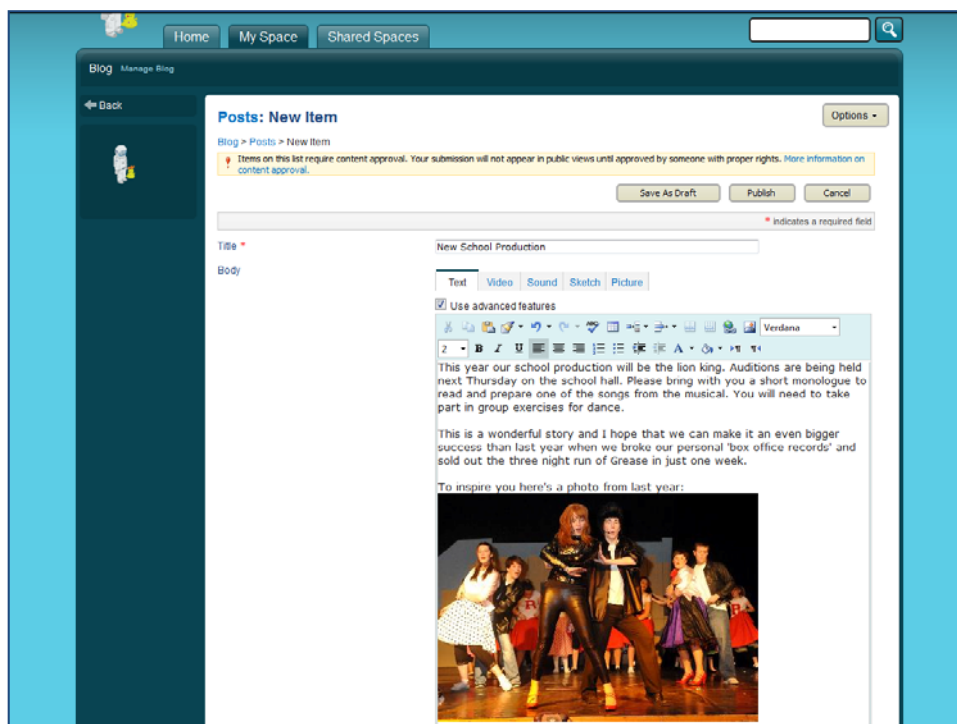
Blog page translated into Arabic

The languages available are:

Arabic	Bulgarian	Chinese (simplified)	Chinese (traditional)	Czech
Danish	Dutch	Finnish	French	Galician
German	Greek	Haitian Creole	Hebrew	Hungarian
Indonesian	Italian	Japanese	Korean	Latvian
Lithuanian	Norwegian	Polish	Portuguese	Romanian
Russian	Slovak	Slovenian	Spanish	Swedish
Thai	Turkish	Ukrainian	Vietnamese	Welsh

Extending Editor Window

In a previous release of the learning platform we introduced a feature to the rich text editor in spaces that expanded the available content window as you added more text, content and images. This allows you to preview the layout of your content before you choose to publish it. In the 11.02 release we have extended this functionality to other rich text editors including blogs and discussions. Therefore as you're creating an item you can be much more confident in your layout before you publish it.



ILP Target Levels

When configuring and viewing ILP progress data you will see that *Milestones* have been replaced with *Target Levels*. As an administrator you will be able to choose between creating default target levels (in the same way that default milestones were created prior to 11.02), or using uploaded MIS data to set individual target levels for each learner and subject. Should you choose to upload your target levels from Capita SIMS.net or Integris G2/S2, the good news is that you will no longer need to set default levels in the ILP and your assessment scales will now be created automatically.

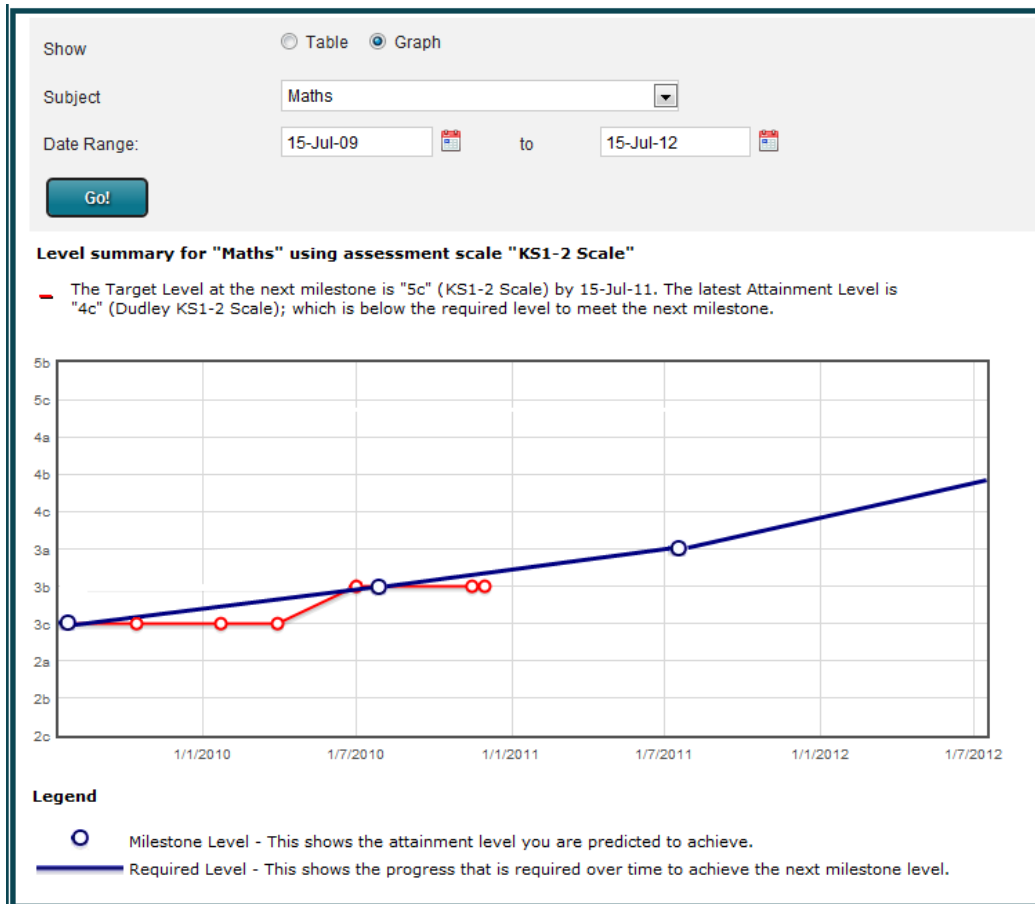
ILP New progress graphs

If you're using the ILP progress graphs you will see a change to them in 11.02. The graphs will now be drawn assuming that the date of each target level is the date that it was set, not the date to be achieved. A horizontal line will be drawn on the graph from this date, and this line will step up (or down) whenever a new target level is set for that learner and subject. The major benefit of this change is that it uses the data as it comes from the MIS, thereby removing the need to configure milestones and map data to them.

It's easier to see than explain, so on the next page you can see the old and new graphs side-by-side:



New Progress Graph for a subject



Old Progress Graph for a subject

The new look progress graphs (and tables) will also include an updated set of icons to show progress against a particular target level:

Current Symbol	Current Description	New Symbol	New Description
-	Below the required level		Working towards the target level
=	On track		Working at the target level
+	Above the required level		Working above the target level

ILP Progress tables

There are a number of updates to the ILP progress table in the student dashboard. A simplified table will no longer display the columns for *Target Date* and *Required Date*, but you will be able to hover over a target level to see the description imported from your MIS; for example *KS3 Maths – end of year targets*. You can use this description to give context to the target, such as *end of year* or *end of key stage*. If you're using default target levels, this will display the target level description instead.

The term *Required Level* will no longer be used in the tables, because each attainment level will be compared with the *Target Level* at the time the attainment was recorded.

In addition to these changes you will now also be able to choose whether or not you wish to show the *Teacher's Comments* column in the table.

FORENAME103 SURNAME103 [Select another student](#) [Overview](#)

Personal Details | SEN Information | Timetable | Attendance | Behaviour | Results | Education Records

Assignments | Markbook | Goals | Targets | **Progress** | Learning Profile

The progress screen shows a student's progress in different subjects. The comparison icon shows how each level compares to the target level (i.e. the level that was expected at that time).

[Export ILP](#)

Show: Table Graph

Subject: All subjects - summary view

Date Range: 15-Jul-09 to 15-Jul-12

[Go!](#)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Subject	Attainment Date	Attainment Level	Target Level	Comparison	Teacher's Comment
	Maths	30-Nov-10	3b	3a		
	Reading	30-Nov-10	4b	3a		
	Science	16-Dec-10	3a	3a		
	Writing	30-Nov-10	3a	3a		

[Enter Progress Data](#) [Delete Selected Entries](#) [Assessment information](#)

New Progress Table

ILP Managing group targets and group attainment

If you're managing targets or attainment at a group level (accessed from the *Groups* link on the *Home* tab as a teacher) you will see that the usernames have been split out to forename and surname rather than display name, and the table can be sorted on all columns to make it easier for you to find the learners that you want to update.

Manage Targets

Overview | Manage Targets | Manage Attainment Levels

Fewer options.

Group Name: 2A (Year 2)

Target type: Learning

Subject: Maths

Target Status: All

Archive Status: Current Archived

Due Date Status: Overdue All

[Go!](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Surname	First Name	Attainment Level	Target Level	Comparison	Target - Status & Due date
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME101	FORENAME101	1c			<input type="checkbox"/> Record how you worked out the result for every sum. 21-Jul-11 New
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME102	FORENAME102	3b	3b		<input type="checkbox"/> Record how you worked out the result for every sum. 21-Jul-11 New
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME103	FORENAME103	3c	3b		<input type="checkbox"/> Record how you worked out the result for every sum. 21-Jul-11 New
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME104	FORENAME104	3a	3c		<input type="checkbox"/> Record how you worked out the result for every sum. 21-Jul-11 New
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME105	FORENAME105	1c			
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME106	FORENAME106	1c			
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME107	FORENAME107	P5/W			
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME108	FORENAME108	P5/W			

New Manage Targets screen for groups

ILP Progress mapping

ILP administrators will now see a simplified management screen for managing imported progress information. This screen displays all of your uploaded progress data, and enables the mapping of data aspects to the following categories:

- Type: a simple choice between *attainment* and *target level*
- Subject

You can also choose which data you want to display to users. Once these mappings are set up and saved, this task will not need to be repeated saving you time in the future.

Manage Imported Progress Data

Use this page to define how you want to use imported progress data: as attainment levels or target levels.

You can choose to display undefined data to users and it will be displayed in an 'Other Assessment Data' table on student process screens, but the data may not be as meaningful.

Include teacher comments in progress data shown to users

Manual Data Release

Currently, you release progress data for all aspects manually as required. Click Release Now to release all progress data updated in your MIS since the last release date.

[Change this](#)

Updated data last received: 13/07/2011 13:39

Data last released: 15/07/2011 09:22

Release Now

Undefined (0) Attainment (130) Target Level (24) All (154)

< 1 2 3 4 5 6 >

Aspect	Type	Subject	<input type="checkbox"/> Display to Users
Ma Su2 TA Y4	Attainment	Maths	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ma Su2 TA Y5	Attainment	Maths	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ma Su2 TA YR	Attainment	Maths	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ma Tar Y1	Target Level	Maths	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ma Tar Y2	Target Level	Maths	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ma Tar Y3	Target Level	Maths	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ma Tar Y4	Target Level	Maths	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ma Tar Y5	Target Level	Maths	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Save Cancel

New progress data management screen

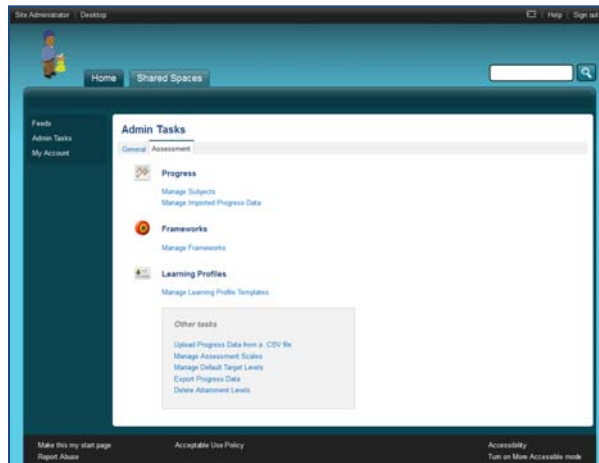
ILP Progress data imports

Progress data once uploaded manually from SIMS.net or Integris G2/S2 will no longer need to be manually imported into the Learning Platform as this process has been fully automated. Administrators now only need to confirm the type and subject and the data will be made available instantly. Should you wish to control the visibility of new progress data a manual release feature has been provided that gives you full control of when to publish data to students and parents. Whether you choose automatic or manual release mode, the new progress data is displayed to users instantly.

Automatic updates refresh every 30mins but the default for existing users of the ILP is a manual import of data. Each manual update will show the date and time of the last upload of data.

ILP Assessment administration page

As an administrator of the learning platform you will now see that the tasks on the *Assessment* administration page have now been grouped into logical categories making it easier for you to find the task you want.



Browser Support

With the 11.02 release we will now be supporting access to the learning platform via a Google Chrome™ browser. This means that our current list of supported browsers is as follows:

- Microsoft® Internet Explorer: versions 7, 8 and 9
- Mozilla Firefox™: latest two versions
- Google Chrome™: latest two versions
- Safari®: latest two versions

Each new version of a browser brings with it faster performance accessing Web pages and Web applications such as the learning platform, we therefore recommend updating to the latest possible browser version.

Please note, the learning platform is not designed to work with Microsoft® Internet Explorer version 6 following the 11.01 release.

Software Updates

With the 11.02 release we have also included a software update that addresses a significant number of software issues that have been identified by you and other users during your experiences with the learning platform. There are also updates to issues that have been identified during post-development testing that (luckily) you may never have known anything about. This is a big step forward with regards to the reliability and stability of the service.

You can find out everything you need to know about Merlin by [visiting the website](#), [following the primary place blog](#), or by signing up to the [Merlin news!](#)

Details of how to use each of the features described can be found by accessing the Help files from within the Merlin Learning Platform: simply click the *Help* link in the top right of the page.

The Merlin team have been hand-picked from schools, and organisations who know what schools need. Since its ambitious beginning, Merlin has undergone exciting transformations. We'd like you to get as excited about it as we are.



To find out more about the magic, details of how to use each of the features described can be found by accessing the Help files from within SWGfL Merlin; simply click the *Help* link in the top right of the page.

If you have any questions regarding the upgrade please contact:
merlin@swgfl.org.uk