



CASE STUDY REPORT

Tracking pupil progress: Effective provision in a primary school

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This study was originally published in 2010 as part of the 'What Works Well' initiative, part of the National Strategies for Education in England.

Abstract

Background: The purpose of the study was to improve pupil learning and attainment by introducing a system of assessment and target-setting, and providing CPD to staff on assessment and subject knowledge.

Aims: The main aim was to improve pupil learning and attainment towards national expectations through the use of assessment and target setting.

Methods: The participants in this case study are the headteacher, senior leadership team, teachers, local authority staff, and the National Strategies. Methods used included introducing a system for assessment and target-setting, CPD focusing on Assessment Focuses, monitoring and evaluation, and the Venn diagram process for professional dialogue in Pupil Progress Meetings.

Findings: The main findings are that the introduction of a system for assessment and target-setting, combined with CPD and support from the local authority and National Strategies, has resulted in improved pupil learning and attainment that exceeds national expectations.

Implications: The findings suggest that setting high expectations, tracking pupil progress, and providing CPD can lead to improved pupil learning and attainment. This has implications for school organisation, leadership, and teaching.

This abstract was generated by Camtree using a large language model (LLM) and added to the original report in 2023.

Keywords: Primary education; Assessment and target setting

Introduction

What were your reasons for doing this type of development work?

Following an inspection in 2007, the school needed to 'Improve pupils' achievement, particularly in English and mathematics, through the better use of tracking and assessment to set more challenging work.' (Ofsted, September 2007). The school was judged inadequate and placed into 'Special Measures'. "Tracking of pupils' progress lacks rigour because assessment information is not accurate" (Ofsted, September 2007). Standards and Achievement had been significantly low for a number of years and Teaching and Learning were graded inadequate.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Headteacher
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- Teacher

Description

What specific curriculum area, subject or aspect did you intend to have impact on?

- Assessment and target setting

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

Woodcot Primary is smaller than average; most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with statements of SEN is about average. Of these pupils, the majority have either profound and multiple learning difficulties or moderate learning difficulties. The recently-appointed headteacher and her newly-appointed deputy introduced a system for assessment and target-setting as part of a whole-school response to entering special measures in September 2007. Their focus was on raising the expectations of staff, pupils and parents. Previously, teachers lacked evidence for monitoring and tracking and had little to inform their planning. Every member of the current teaching staff was appointed after September 2007. (The school came out of special measures in July 2009.)

What were your success criteria?

Improvement in pupil learning resulting in rising attainment towards national expectations

What information or data did you use to measure progress towards your success criteria?

- Observation outcomes
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Pupils' work
- Test results

Describe the CPD approaches you used

The deputy headteacher was involved in the pilot of an early version of APP. In 2008-9 the school used the system of APP with different resources to establish the principles. It needed a lot of staff development; over these two school years all teachers have been out for APP training.

During the In-house training, CPD focused on Assessment Focuses (AFs) and subject knowledge. AFs are broad, so the question was posed: if there were narrower focuses, what would they be? The APP section of the National Strategies website was used for CPD materials: examples were downloaded and staff asked to make a judgement

and moderate. Then background information and the official level were given. All staff were involved in both KS; teachers need an overview of progress across the age range of the school.

Who provided you with support?

- Local authority staff

How were you supported?

ISP support from LA and National Strategies.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

Pupil learning has improved and attainment and achievement has risen to and beyond national expectations.

Pupils are more aware of their own learning and what they need to do to make progress.

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

The setting of high expectations and working to these goes a long way to school improvement.

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

Pupils know what they need to do to improve and can talk knowledgeably about their targets...pupils speak very positively about the way targets and marking help them in their learning...

Ofsted, July 2009

Assessments are thorough, frequent and accurate. These are used well to vary work and to meet pupils' different ability levels and learning styles.

Ofsted, July 2009

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- CVA data
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Observation outcomes
- Pupils' work

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Between 2007 and 2009 results improved dramatically. At level 4+ results in English rose by 12ppts to 80% and in mathematics the increase was 54ppts to 100%. At level 5 big increases have been seen in mathematics and science which now stand at 73% and 80% respectively.

2009 KS2 tests:

- English L4+ 80% L5 13%
- Mathematics L4+ 100% L5 73%
- Science L4+ 100% L5 80%
- CVA: 102.1 (2007: 98.7)

- in 2007 only 44% of children achieved the combined L4+ in English and Mathematics, short of the 55% floor target. In 2009, 80% achieved the combined L4+ in English and Mathematics.

In KS1 attainment is at least in line with national averages (RAISE Online)(This is a small primary school with a small Y6 cohort.)

Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

Our mantra is "to put the child at the heart of everything we do."

Deputy headteacher

Assessments are thorough, frequent and accurate...there are very effective systems... to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress.

Ofsted, July 2009

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning
- Improvements in curriculum documentation

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Monitoring and evaluation; OFSTED.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

The assessment and progress tracking has had a great impact on school organisation and leadership. It has helped to distribute leadership more evenly - teachers are more responsible and accountable and key stage leaders have a real focus for monitoring and evaluation. Strong performance management linked to challenging target setting, robust monitoring and evaluation through triangulation, and, pupil progress meetings is key in school improvement. It is important to interpret your school's data so that you can unpick what it is really telling you about your school and groups of learners.

There are very effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and the quality of lessons. The leadership team has high expectations of the pupils and staff and there is a clear and purposeful drive for further improvement.

Ofsted, July 2009.

Teachers are leaders and have to lead the learning in their classrooms...

Deputy Headteacher

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

Monitoring and evaluation.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

The Venn diagram process facilitates a professional dialogue in PPMs, ensuring teachers really think about individual children's needs and how they address them through their teaching.

What key resources would people who want to learn from your experience need access to?

- Assessing Pupils' Progress
- Tracking system

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

The most useful session was the introductory session with Darren Ellsum (National Strategies) and the senior leadership team. He introduced the Venn diagram process and, working with each key stage, modelled a pupil progress meeting with a teacher, in role as HT. After the modelling session, the subsequent discussion focused on the professional dialogue that is possible with this Venn diagram method.

If another individual or school was attempting to replicate this work, where would they start and what would the essential elements be?

The starting point would be to have a robust system for assessing and tracking pupil progress, based on APP principles and Target Tracker or similar system. Other essential elements are the Venn diagram process whereby teachers plot the pupils on to the Venn diagram, discussing the reasoning in Pupil Progress Meetings.

Supplementary Materials

This report is accompanied in the library by the following supplementary material:

- Example of a Venn diagram
- Photo of an Observation Wall
- Venn diagram - blank

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About 'What Works Well'

This case study was originally published as part of the 'What Works Well' section of the National Strategies for Education in England. The National Strategies were professional programmes aiming for improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in schools in England. 'What Works Well' involved teaching practitioners from all phases and areas of education sharing accounts of real developments which had improved learning and teaching, and made a difference to pupil progress. 'What Works Well' case studies were designed to support practice transfer and include sufficient detail and resources to enable others to implement the effective practice described. They were reviewed by experts prior to publication as 'User Generated Content' (UGC) under a licence which encouraged reuse and derivative works, but which precluded commercial use.

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