



CASE STUDY REPORT

School Achievement Review (SAR): A focus on pupil progress

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This study was originally published in 2009 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 develop a system to evaluate pupil progress in primary schools, using data to support self-evaluation and review, and to provide targeted support for underachieving pupils.

Aims: The main aim is to improve school self-evaluation and review processes by focusing on pupil progress rather than end of key stage attainment, and to use data to support this.

Methods: The participants in this development work were headteachers, senior leadership teams, school improvement partners, and regional advisers. The methods used included consultation with schools, a focus on pupil progress rather than end of key stage attainment, a pupil progress spreadsheet, and a report format linked to the self-evaluation form.

Findings: The main findings are that the School Achievement Review has been extended to focus on ongoing pupil progress, with CPD approaches used to support this. A pupil progress spreadsheet and report format have been developed to measure progress towards success criteria.

Implications: The findings suggest that focusing on pupil progress rather than end of key stage attainment can lead to improved school self-evaluation and better targeted support for pupils. This is evidenced by an increase in the number of schools in good or outstanding Ofsted categories.

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Keywords: Primary education; Self evaluation and review

Introduction

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

For many years the local authority has carried out a termly School Achievement Review (SAR) with all primary schools. The focus of these visits has been on end of key stage achievement, target setting, progress to targets, the quality of leadership and management, the quality of teaching and learning, attendance and any other key areas for discussion as appropriate. In the last 3 years, there has been an increasing emphasis on school self evaluation, with schools encouraged to use the School Achievement Review as part of their own self evaluation cycle. Over time it became very clear that the challenge and support provided to schools through the School Achievement Review and beyond could be further developed through extending the focus on achievement beyond the end of key stages into ongoing pupil progress. There was also a need to more appropriately evaluate foundation stage provision, using data to support this.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Head of school improvement
- Headteacher
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- SIP (School Improvement Partner)

Description

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

- Self evaluation and review

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

Aspect of pupil learning: Pupil progress resulting from improved school review. We intended to impact on pupil learning indirectly, through schools' improved evaluation of pupil progress and improved central and in-school targeted support.

What were your success criteria?

- Termly review of pupil progress local authority (LA)/schools.
- Accelerated progress of underachieving pupils to meet 2008 targets Key Stage 2.

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

- Periodic teacher assessment

Describe the CPD approaches you used

In Autumn 2006 a consultation with schools took place on the old style Self Achievement Review (SAR) that had been completed that term, focusing on 2006 national test results, progress to 2007 targets and target setting for 2008. Questions asked of schools were:

- Which aspects of the Autumn Term SAR were useful to you and why?
- Which aspects of the Autumn Term SAR do you feel could be improved and why?
- Within the context of a shared focus on pupil progress across the school, what format and process would you find most useful
- Any other comments and suggestions?

The Spring Term 2007 School Achievement Review

We used the feedback from the questions to support our development of the spring term School Achievement Review (SAR) with a particular focus on:

- Further alignment of each SAR to ensure continuity; a common focus area
- Turning the focus to on-going pupil progress rather than end of Key Stage outcomes
- Further developing the strategies for reviewing targets and interventions
- Ensuring that the process linked even more directly to the self-evaluation form (SEF)
- A clearer link to other key documents such as recent Ofsted outcomes
- A focus on the impact of strategies to support Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes, with a link to pupil progress outcomes
- Beginning to develop systems that would support the Lewisham School Improvement Partners (SIPs) programme commencing September 2007
- Beginning to develop a differentiated model of School Achievement Review which took into account the differing needs of nursery schools and special schools

The SAR format comprised:

- A pupil progress spreadsheet providing an overview of the percentage of children on track for age-related expectations in every cohort from Year 1 – 6 in reading, writing and mathematics for each term. The spreadsheet highlights the age-related expectations for each year group with an expectation of 2 sub-levels progress per year, and building in consolidation time during Key Stage 2. Also included is a front page which provides information on the profile of each cohort showing the percentage of special educational needs (SEN) pupils, looked after children and English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils; once filled in the information from the front page is automatically summarised on the subject spreadsheets. The front page also summarises school targets.
- A report format, linked directly to the SEF Section 3a on learners achievement and standards. The focus of discussion was on the standards of learners current work in relation to age-related expectations and on learners progress relative to their starting points and capabilities, including a consideration of under-achieving groups.

See SAR Pupil Progress spreadsheet and SAR Report document below.

Each school was asked to fill in the spreadsheet with the latest information that they had on pupil achievement and to make brief notes on key findings to support the SAR discussion. Schools were asked to send the completed spreadsheet to their link School Improvement Officer (SIO) in advance of the SAR meeting. If a school had their own version of a whole school pupil progress overview there was no requirement to fill in the local authority version as well.

The spreadsheet did not include Foundation Stage information on pupil progress because of the need to consult more widely on the most appropriate format for this key stage. In addition headteachers of special schools were also working on a more suitable format to meet their particular needs.

At the end of the process another consultation took place with all schools and SIOs on further developments needed; this comprised of another questionnaire plus a meeting to which all head teachers were invited at the beginning of the Summer Term. Key outcomes from that consultation were:

- Linking the SAR directly to the self-evaluation form (SEF) section 3a is useful; as a consequence a significant number of schools planned to build the SAR outcomes directly into their own self-evaluation procedures

- The pupil progress overview spreadsheet is informative and creates better opportunities for a rigorous and challenging discussion, highlighting clearly the impact of the school's work on pupil progress
- Where pupil progress was less effective, the information enabled a challenging discussion on strategies in place including those supporting ECM outcomes, and priorities to address under-achievement
- Some schools would prefer two rather than three points of data collection, to fit their on-going assessment systems. This is an area for further discussion, within the context of using both on-going teacher assessment as well as more formal assessment procedures such as mid-year and end of year tests, to inform the overview of progress
- Not all schools are using the LA spreadsheet; some have their own format for gaining an overview of pupil progress; others do not feel that this is appropriate to their needs

The Summer Term 2007 School Achievement Review

We used this feedback to support our development of the summer term SAR with a particular focus on:

- Reviewing the Local Authority School Category with judgements being made using evidence from the school SEF, recent Ofsted outcomes and the updated pupil progress spreadsheet. Within the SEF sections the main focus areas for discussion are achievement and standards, quality of provision – teaching, leadership and management and ECM outcomes.
- Reviewing progress against the agreed priorities from the spring term SAR.
- In schools not using the LA spreadsheet, a further evaluation of the school processes for assessment and tracking of pupils at an individual, cohort and strategic whole school level.

All schools are asked to send their SEF and the updated pupil progress spreadsheet to their SIO in advance of the SAR meeting.

Relevant National Strategies resources:

What CPD materials, research or expertise have you drawn on?

Every Child Matters

Who provided you with support?

- External agency

How were you supported?

Feedback from Regional Adviser.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

Not measurable yet – impact is with the senior leadership team (SLT) at this stage.

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Periodic teacher assessment

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Observation outcomes

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Not measurable at this stage; evidence of impact will be in the form of pupil progress data.

What has been the impact on teaching?

Impact on teaching is not yet measurable although the increase in numbers of schools in good or outstanding Ofsted categories suggests that the changes that are being made by senior leaders are impacting in the classroom.

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Increased number of schools in outstanding and good category – Ofsted and LA category.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

Leadership and Management:

- School self-evaluation and review processes are focused on pupil progress rather than end of key stage attainment.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

Increased number of schools in outstanding and good category – Ofsted and LA category.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

- The spreadsheet as a model
- The opportunity for schools to provide their own version of the data; no requirement to use local authority (LA) spreadsheet if already had own systems in place

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

SAR Pupil progress spreadsheet and SAR report format (see What page).

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

The consultation process with headteachers through the year.

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

- Consultation with schools
- Move to discussion on pupil progress, not just end of Key Stage attainment.

What further developments are you planning to do (or would you like to see others do)?

- Lewisham is introducing the SIPs programme from September 2007. The review of pupil progress across the school will be a central part of their termly visits and the Lewisham pupil progress spreadsheet will be key to this focus; where schools have their own version of an overview of pupil progress this will be utilised. Where schools are not able to show an overview of the percentage of pupils at age related expectations in every cohort, updated regularly, that will be a key focus in the SIPs discussion with the leadership team.
- A draft spreadsheet for Special Schools incorporating P-scales has been introduced this term and will be further developed during the academic year 2007/8.
- A linked spreadsheet for tracking progress at Foundation Stage and into KS1 is being developed from work completed as part of the Lewisham London Challenge foundation stage project, in consultation with nursery schools and foundation stage co-ordinators and consultants.
- Information from the pupil progress spreadsheets will be collated to further inform LA planning of central and in-school targeted support for specific cohorts or particular subject areas.

Supplementary Materials

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

- SAR Autumn Review Pupil Progress 2007-8 spreadsheet
- SAR Autumn Review SIP agenda and Report

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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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