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Management Information Systems (MIS) and pupil tracking: users' guidance

Using MIS to support pupil attainment tracking

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Contents

Introduction	2
Improving assessment practice	3
Using Management Information Systems	
• Using MIS to share information	5
• Resource implications	6
Core tracking processes	7
• Periodic assessment	7
• Analysing progress	8
- Actual versus target	8
- Grouped data	9
- Trends over time	11
- Summary data	11
Target setting	14
• Predicting likely outcomes	14
• Generating targets	14
• Generating 'progress targets'	15
How local authorities (LAs) can help	16

Introduction

Schools are increasingly recognising the benefits of systematically tracking pupils' academic progress throughout their learning to help ensure that they remain on track to reach their potential. Many teachers and managers within schools are developing systems to harness the flow of data and other information generated by regular periodic assessments of attainment. This document explores the main ways in which assessment data can be managed effectively in support of personalised learning and narrowing attainment gaps, and in particular, how school Management Information Systems (MIS) can help.

This paper concentrates on Key Stages 1 to 4. The principles apply to earlier and later years but school and MIS systems would need to reflect the different assessment frameworks in these phases.

A parallel guidance document has been published for use by MIS developers. The National Strategies and the DCSF will work with the developers to help them to understand the expectations placed on schools so that they can ensure that their systems have the functionality necessary to support effective pupil tracking.

This document does not attempt to deal with all the statutory requirements concerning related assessment matters such as making national data returns or constructing the Common Transfer File (CTF). Similarly, managers within school will want to use assessment data as part of their review and quality assurance processes but these are not the focus of this document. However, MIS can help to ensure that core assessment data generated in school can contribute towards all these purposes without the need for repeated data entry.

In preparing this guidance, visits were made to a wide range of schools and local authorities and their cooperation is appreciated. Aspects of some of these schools' practice is exemplified within the text although the school identities have been anonymised.

Improving assessment practice

As part of a commitment to personalised learning, a strong focus on tracking individual pupils' progress can help improve the way teachers tailor their teaching to individual needs. It supports them in making more effective use of resources committed to intervention and in strengthening the central ethos of a school through exemplifying a shared commitment to individual success for all. Through the rapid identification of pupils who are failing to make expected progress and the triggering of appropriate, personalised support, overall levels of achievement can rise and attainment gaps be narrowed.

*Personalised Learning – A Practical Guide*¹ sets out key aspects of personalised learning, including a range of strategies which teachers might employ.

The DCSF Assessment for Learning Strategy, 2008² outlines a three-year strategy for strengthening teacher assessment and ensuring that all schools have in place effective systems to track pupils' progress. Guidance, training and support materials are being provided to help schools achieve this.

An important element of this support is the publication (jointly by QCA and the National Strategies) of the Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP)³ materials. These provide assessment criteria to define National Curriculum levels of attainment for each assessment focus within a subject. A common scale is used through Key Stages 1 to 3. The materials are currently available for reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stages 1-3, and for science and ICT at Key Stage 3. They will be extended to include speaking and listening at Key Stages 1 to 3 and to science at Key Stage 2. Schools are encouraged to use APP to make periodic assessments of attainment (termly in the core subjects) that are focused, consistent and accurate. These assessments will form the heart of the progress tracking data.

1 Personalised Learning- A Practical Guide ref: DCSF -00844-2008

2 The Assessment for Learning Strategy, DCSF, 2008 can be downloaded or copies ordered at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications. Search using ref: DCSF-00341-2008

3 Details of APP guidance and resources are available in the assessment sections of the National Strategies area of the Standards Site (www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk)

Core processes for tracking individual pupil progress

Effective pupil tracking uses regular, periodic assessments of individual pupils' attainments and compares these assessments with anticipated trajectories towards challenging but realistic targets. This means that successes can be recognised and built upon while those pupils experiencing difficulties can be supported to get back and stay on track. The table below outlines the core tracking processes. These inform the shape of the guidance that follows.

Core processes for tracking individual pupil progress:

	MIS linked activities	Related activities
Beginning/end of the key stage	Use record of prior attainment with one or more predictive models to indicate likely future attainments (predictions).	
	Use predictions, with wider knowledge of pupil, to agree challenging but achievable end-of-key-stage targets.	Agree and share targets with pupils and parents/guardians.
	Set termly interim 'progress targets' using notional trajectory from current to end-of-key-stage target attainment level.	
Periodically	Optional: Use MIS to record individual achievement against specific curricular targets.	Maintain regular assessment processes to support learning.
	Make and record termly teacher assessment of current attainment levels (KS1 to 3) or expected outcome levels (KS4).	Secure accuracy of internal assessments through use of APP and moderation processes. Report to parents/guardians.
	Analyse progress using standard tools: gap to target; actual vs predicted trajectory over time.	Identify and analyse underperformance and apply any interventions necessary to ensure that future targets are met.
	Follow up initial findings with bespoke analyses to explore and help explain the unexpected.	
	Revise targets (upwards) if appropriate.	

Using Management Information Systems

Management Information Systems (MIS) can be very powerful in supporting pupil tracking by providing:

- efficient data entry with validation processes – data entered once becomes available for a variety of uses
- a single, central, shared version of the data – avoiding a plethora of different analyses, reports and conclusions in different parts of the school
- a constantly up-to-date version of the data, clearly defined and labelled for future reference – enabling prompt responses to issues identified
- easy access, for all those who need it, to core data and reports – supporting the development of a common, school-wide understanding of the tracking processes, the information revealed by the data and its use to improve learning
- links between attainment and other local pupil information – permitting easy investigation of hypotheses (e.g. the link between progress and attendance)
- links to national attainment and progress data – enabling accurate external comparisons and the use of nationally-derived models of expected progress
- links to school systems for reporting to parents or guardians – automating elements of report construction and facilitating online reporting
- efficient data transfer between schools – current attainment data can be stored automatically in each of the pupils' Common Transfer Files ready for transfer to another school.

Additionally and importantly, MIS can help to exploit the potential of systematic, periodic assessment, by providing:

- built-in analyses leading to predictable reports that are familiar to staff, who use them for consistent and regular tracking – these relate directly to agreed school systems, schedules and language, and, once designed, become readily accessible to all those who need them
- the flexibility to use the data for locally-defined analyses – established core processes can easily be extended, for example to explore reasons for unexpected patterns of progress or to focus more deeply on subjects or groups of pupils of particular current concern.

Using MIS to share information in school

One risk in exploiting the potential of MIS is to produce such a range of analyses and reports that they overwhelm potential users. A key concern for school assessment managers and data managers must be to plan carefully what information is needed by whom, when and for what purpose and to ensure that these decisions are understood by all involved. The MIS should then be set up to meet these needs efficiently. Once basic routines are established, the potential to use the system for more detailed and in-depth analysis can be introduced as new needs and opportunities demand. This applies whether information is to be shared on paper or electronically.

MIS can store reports for future reference. It is important that care is taken over accurate labelling of reports and analyses, using, for example, annotated notes explaining column headings, not only to ensure immediate users understand clearly what is being presented, but also to avoid misunderstandings when they are referenced subsequently. Care over the initial setting up of the system will pay dividends in the long term through building confidence in users.

Resource implications

Data generated by systematic, periodic assessment can be very powerful at all levels within a school. Where the core processes work well, staff quickly find access to up-to-date information invaluable. In these schools, all staff have easy access to computer hardware in their classroom or close to where they work so they can interact with the system efficiently and when necessary. These machines are linked directly to the school MIS, providing direct access to specified parts of it. Some schools have achieved this provision by making use of older equipment which is no longer suitable for running a wide range of modern software but will act adequately as a staff terminal.

Introducing effective pupil tracking systems will require an investment in staff training as well as hardware and software. All teaching and teaching support staff need to understand how effective tracking can contribute to improved learning and the closing of achievement gaps. They need to see how this is reflected in the school's assessment and tracking system and feel confident about interpreting and using the data and information it generates. Technical understanding of the MIS and its assessment functions is necessary but may reside with a small number of experts in the school. The extent to which managers, teachers and other staff work directly with the system will vary but, in general, it will be worth investing in training to increase the pool of expertise over the long term.

'It really took off for us when staff saw themselves as users of performance data – actively chasing it – rather than just providers of it.'

Deputy headteacher, achievement; Midlands secondary school

Core tracking processes

The following pages describe the core processes recommended for efficient use of assessment data to improve the tracking of pupils' academic progress. These are not the only ways in which such data can be used within school. Indeed, one of the significant advantages of using central MIS is that the same data can be used for other purposes, such as: reporting to parents or guardians, working with pupils, preparing records at times of transition and transfer to other schools and making local and national statutory returns.

The processes are grouped into the following sections:

- Periodic assessment
- Analysing progress
- Target setting

Periodic assessment

Periodic assessment – core processes

Core process	Recommended approach	How MIS can help
Record termly assessments of attainment	<p>In Key Stages 1 to 3, teachers use a range of evidence, applying APP assessment criteria to make termly judgements about pupils' current levels of attainment.</p> <p>Use the APP scale of NC levels sub-divided: High, secure, low, or if schools prefer, a,b,c to fit in with existing reporting arrangements.</p> <p>In Key Stage 4, teachers make termly judgements about pupils' likely final assessment level based on recent performance.</p> <p>Use the appropriate assessment grading scales (e.g. GCSE grades) sub-divided: low, secure, high.</p>	<p>A range of data input processes can be supported, including simultaneous input by teachers, where appropriate, for speed and efficiency.</p> <p>MIS can monitor and validate assessment data and automatically issue alerts for missing data.</p> <p>Periodic assessments remain linked to individual pupil records so patterns over time can be tabulated or graphed.</p> <p>Appropriate reports (tables and charts) can quickly be shared among identified groups of staff at different levels.</p> <p>Assessments for individuals across subjects can be compiled automatically for use by tutors, mentors, intervention managers, and so on, to identify uneven performance, for example.</p> <p>Assessments for a cohort or sub-group in one subject can be compiled automatically for use by subject leaders or senior managers to monitor subject effectiveness.</p> <p>Some MIS assessment systems can link to detailed assessment criteria. So, in future, for example, teachers could see and use the detailed APP assessment criteria when making their periodic assessments.</p>

The routine collation of periodic assessments across the school needs to be carefully scheduled to ensure rapid analysis and turn-around so the information can be used while it is accurate and relevant. Common approaches, measures and language are important to allow widespread, shared access to the information.

Delta Secondary School

The English and mathematics departments were part of the Key Stage 3 pilot for Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) and have well-established processes for making and moderating termly assessments of pupils in Years 7 and 8 using APP criteria and resources. Currently, the data generated are used within each department independently. The English intervention leader uses the outcomes to identify pupils likely to benefit from additional support, particularly for reading and writing, and to monitor their progress. The English and mathematics departments are extending their termly assessments using APP to Year 9 and the mathematics department has appointed an intervention leader to coordinate extra support in mathematics.

The school is now keen to extend the model of termly teacher assessments to other departments and make better use of the information across the school. The school's MIS administrator is working with their assessment manager, with support from the LA MIS team, to design subject mark sheets within their MIS assessment module that will standardise the process across all subjects with training for subject leaders. In the near future, tutors, mentors, learning managers and pupils will be able to see termly progress reports across all subjects for each of their pupils.

Analysing progress

Actual versus target

Analysing progress – individual pupils; individual subjects

Core process	Recommended approach	How MIS can help
Comparing actual attainment with 'progress target'	Compare termly assessments with termly 'progress target' to establish whether or not each pupil is working at the expected level.	<p>MIS can make the comparisons automatically and provide tables and charts indicating pupils who are apparently off-track.</p> <p>Analyses can be standardised in school to aid understanding across different users.</p> <p>A common set of data and analyses means that school action in response can be coordinated more effectively than otherwise.</p> <p>Links to wider pupil records (e.g. behaviour or attendance) and access to historical trends mean that factors contributing to underperformance can be investigated quickly.</p> <p>Overview analyses can be constructed automatically for managers, showing progress across the school or cohort, with links to whole-school targets, for example.</p>

The construction of termly 'progress targets' is discussed on page 14 under 'Target Setting'. There are many reasons why pupils' assessed levels of attainment may not match their 'progress target' in any term. It is important that teachers and mentors are able to use their broader knowledge of the situation when deciding whether special steps are necessary to tackle apparent underperformance and, if so, what. It is important that such decisions are not left to automated processes based solely on the data but by sharing common and well-understood data, all those involved can contribute to such decisions meaningfully.

Epsilon Secondary School

Teachers' periodic assessments are entered onto the school's MIS within a defined three-day period at the beginning of a scheduled week towards the end of each term. On the Thursday, the administrator and the school's three learning managers produce and analyse a standard range of progress reports, focusing on those pupils performing below expected levels. On that Thursday evening, the senior learning team, including the SLT, learning managers, subject leaders and intervention coordinators, chaired by the headteacher, agree what actions to take for each of the identified pupils and evaluate the impact of the previous round of interventions. Live access to the MIS reports in the meeting enables further bespoke analyses to be undertaken, if necessary. On the following Monday morning, all staff receive reports detailing the agreed action plan for each identified pupil over the next period.

Grouping data

MIS can provide powerful tools for filtering and organising data sets. Typically, it is useful to focus on groups of pupils in relation to one, or a few, assessed domains or to focus on one, or a few, pupils across a range of assessed domains. For example, focusing on groups of targeted pupils is useful in demonstrating the links between individual and cohort targets, vital in narrowing attainment gaps. The examples below show typical uses but are not exhaustive.

Analysing progress – subjects

Core process	Recommended approach	How MIS can help
Progress of classes or cohorts within a subject	The progress of sub-groups of pupils are compared within a subject.	MIS enables quick collation of individual pupils' records to compare performance of sub-groups of pupils within a subject. Reports of such analyses can quickly and selectively be made available to those who need them.

Example sub-groups: Individual classes within a year; boys; girls; pupils eligible for free school meals; gifted or talented pupils; pupils subject to specified intervention; ethnic groups; looked-after children, and so on

Typical audiences: Subject leaders; intervention coordinator for the subject; Gifted and Talented coordinator for the subject; senior leaders

Typical purposes: Evaluate provision for specific groups; evaluate impact of interventions; review curriculum planning

Iota Primary School

The school has recently initiated a one-to-one mentoring programme for pupils who are working below expected levels in mathematics in Year 3. As well as termly assessments made by the two Year 3 class teachers, the mathematics coaches record their own assessments of mentees' achievements weekly. At the moment, these records use different assessment criteria and do not link electronically. A member of LA MIS support team is working with the school to establish processes within their MIS that will enable each set of records to be stored centrally, linked to individual pupils' files and available both to the teachers and the mentors. Once they are set up, the school intends to use these processes for monitoring reading and extend it to other year groups.

Analysing progress – groups of pupils across subjects

Core process	Recommended approach	How MIS can help
Progress of specific sub-groups generally	The progress of school-defined groups of pupils generally is analysed to monitor the impact of specific initiatives, interventions or topical priorities.	MIS enables easy definitions of locally-defined sub-groups to be set up and for pupils to be allocated to those groups. Attainment data can then be filtered to permit analyses of the selected group(s). Reports of such analyses can quickly and selectively be made available to those who need them.

Example sub-groups: boys; girls; pupils eligible for free school meals; gifted or talented pupils; pupils subject to specified intervention; ethnic groups; looked-after children, and so on

Typical audiences: intervention coordinators; SENCO; school Gifted and Talented coordinator; senior leaders

Typical uses: evaluate provision for specific groups; evaluate impact of interventions; review aspects of organisation

Analysing progress – individual pupils; grouped subjects

Core process	Recommended approach	How MIS can help
Individual progress across subjects	The progress of individual pupils across all their subjects can be studied to look for anomalies or general patterns.	MIS enables quick construction of individual pupil summaries from different subject records. Such report analyses can quickly and selectively be made available to those who need them. These data can contribute to reports to parents/guardians.

Typical audiences: personal tutor or learning mentor; head of year or learning manager; pupil; parents or guardians

Typical uses: to compare progress across subjects for an individual to identify particular areas of success or difficulty; to provide the focus for a one-to-one progress review (tutor–pupil); to identify and celebrate particular successes; to decide whether specific or general interventions to improve progress are required; to evaluate the impact of earlier interventions

Beta Secondary School

Each pupil has been assigned a learning mentor from staff within and associated with the school. They meet with each individual mentee for between 10 and 30 minutes per week to discuss their learning, identify any issues affecting their progress and review the impact of any special support they have been receiving. Learning mentors have access to a range of standard attainment and progress analyses prepared using the school's assessment software, linked to the MIS.

Mentors and mentees can agree comments arising from their meetings and these are attached to the pupil record within MIS for future reference. Mentors also communicate directly with teachers and other staff making use of the facility to attach copies of reports from the assessment module.

Trends over time

Trends

Core process	Recommended approach	How MIS can help
Patterns of attainment over time	A longitudinal perspective on individual pupils' attainment patterns can be powerful in establishing a truer view of progress and in determining the impact of a range of factors on their learning.	Records of each of the analyses described above, together with termly attainment data, can be stored cumulatively within MIS. This enables the straightforward construction of charts illustrating progress over time.

Many different data can be collated to show a picture of performance over time. These can be useful for each of the categories above; for example, illustrating an individual pupil's attainment term-by-term in relation to their 'progress targets' or the progress made term-by-term by pupils receiving one-to-one support for reading in comparison with the rest of the cohort. MIS permit such analyses to be reported using a variety of charts and graphs. Schools are recommended to identify and adopt their preferred format to help all staff become familiar with interpreting the analyses.

Summary data

MIS can facilitate the summarising of pupil and subject-level data for some predetermined analyses and school-determined analyses. These summaries, designed primarily for senior managers, focus less on individual pupils and more on the overall picture of attainment and progress for a year group or whole school. Nonetheless, it is important that it is possible to drill down and identify individual pupils' contributions to them. Predetermined analyses should reflect current national priorities and include, for example, those data relating to national PSA targets. As a minimum, the following will help to provide an overview of likely progress across a school.

Summary: Key Stage 1

Year groups	Analysis and report type
1, 2	Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L2+ in reading Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L2+ in writing Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L2+ in mathematics

Summary: Key Stage 2

Year groups	Analysis and report type
3, 4	Proportions of pupils with end-of-Year-4 target L3+ in reading Proportions of pupils with end-of-Year-4 target L3+ in writing Proportions of pupils with end-of-Year-4 target L3+ in English Proportions of pupils with end-of-Year-4 target L3+ in mathematics Proportions of pupils with end-of-Year-4 target L3+ in English + mathematics Proportions of pupils with end-of-Year-4 target L3+ in science

Year groups	Analysis and report type
5, 6	<p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L4+ in reading</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L4+ in writing</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L4+ in English</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L4+ in mathematics</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L4+ in English + mathematics</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L4+ in science</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L5+ in reading</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L5+ in writing</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L5+ in English</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L5+ in mathematics</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L5+ in English + mathematics</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target L5+ in science</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target indicating two levels of progress over the key stage in English</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target indicating two levels of progress over the key stage in mathematics</p> <p>Proportions of pupils with end-of-key-stage target indicating two levels of progress over the key stage in science</p>

Summary: Secondary

Schools will not be required to set statutory targets for 2010 on Key Stage 3 attainment measures, or for progress between Key Stages 2 and 3 or Key Stages 3 and 4. However if schools want to continue to set themselves whole-school targets to improve outcomes and progression at the end of Key Stage 3 (or Key Stage 4) the MIS system can be used to provide the analysis and reports. These guidance materials will be updated as soon as further information about statutory targets for 2011 is available.

Year groups	Analysis and report type
7, 8, 9, 10, 11	Proportions of pupils whose targets indicate they will achieve 5+ GCSEs (or equivalent) Proportions of pupils whose targets indicate they will achieve 5+ GCSEs (or equivalent) including English but not mathematics Proportions of pupils whose targets indicate they will achieve 5+ GCSEs (or equivalent) including mathematics but not English Proportions of pupils whose targets indicate they will achieve 5+ GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and mathematics

For most of the above groups of statistics, where sets of pupils will overlap, Venn diagrams can provide powerful representations of the data. In all of the above, MIS can make it easy to access the names and attainment records of individual pupils within the defined group.

The reports above focus on targets. These are particularly powerful where schools have effective systems for setting appropriate targets and robust approaches to achieving them. Where schools are regularly updating predictions of future attainment (for the end of the key stage, for example) based on recent progress, this set of reports can be replicated to show proportions of pupils *predicted* to achieve at each level.

It will be helpful for these summary data to be 'cut' by the range of individual pupil characteristics discussed under 'Grouping data' on page 9.

Target setting

This guidance makes an important distinction between *predictions*, based on one or more statistical models linking aspects of a pupil's prior attainment to projected outcomes, and *targets*, which take account of the fuller picture available in school of a pupil's potential as well as the aspirations and commitments of the pupil and those supporting their learning.

Predicting likely outcomes

Predictions – core processes

Core process	Recommended approach	How MIS can help
Predict likely outcomes for each pupil	At the beginning of each key stage, use RAISEonline and one or more of the national progression models to predict likely outcomes, i.e. to indicate 'normal' future attainment based on measures of prior attainment.	MIS can automatically calculate and display one or more predictions of likely attainment using prior attainment measures in each pupil's record. These predictions can be set alongside other pupil data to help to negotiate subject-specific targets for the pupil.

Models predicting future performance based on limited measures of prior attainment are statistically valid for large groups of pupils but need to be treated with caution when they are applied to individual pupils. At best, they provide an initial indication of possible and potential outcomes. As more recent and more detailed evidence about a pupils' work becomes available through the course of their work in school, targets will become increasingly informed by professional judgements based upon all the evidence.

Generating targets

Targets – core processes

Core process	Recommended approach	How MIS can help
Negotiate and record individual subject targets for each pupil.	Near the beginning of each key stage, use predicted likely outcomes, with wider local knowledge of the pupil, to negotiate and agree subject-specific targets for the end of the key stage.	MIS can bring together a range of evidence to support the target-setting process. MIS can control who has permission to modify individual targets and record how and when such modifications are made. MIS can automatically flag predefined anomalies such as a target set below a prediction or a target set at or below a previously attained level. MIS can report for managers on the comparison between accumulated individual targets and global school targets.

A target becomes powerful when the pupil and those working with them share a belief that the target represents a significant but achievable challenge and commit to working to achieve it. MIS can help by providing evidence of how challenging a target is and by providing a means of recording and sharing it formally.

At the beginning of a new school career, targets are likely to be heavily influenced by the sort of predictions based on prior attainment discussed above. As pupils move through a key stage, the pattern of periodic assessments that builds up should be used not only to address the question, 'Is progress in attainment what we expect?', but also, 'Is the target still appropriately challenging?' Again, MIS can offer both presentations of data and automated analyses to suggest where targets appear too low (as well as where additional resources may be needed to meet them).

Generating 'progress targets'

Progress targets – core processes

Core process	Recommended approach	How MIS can help
Establish periodic 'progress targets'	<p>For each subject, use a pupil's prior attainment level and end-of-key stage target level to map out a trajectory of termly 'progress targets'.</p> <p>Use an assumed 'flat line' of progress recognising that this will only approximate to an individual pupils' actual progress.</p>	<p>MIS can be set up to produce termly 'progress targets' for each pupil and each subject automatically and enter them into ongoing record sheets.</p> <p>Any change to the final target can trigger automatic adjustments to the trajectory.</p> <p>MIS can handle targets expressed using words (such as 'low', 'secure', 'high') in a mathematical way to calculate interim targets.</p>

The use of termly 'progress targets' linked to agreed end-of-key-stage targets can help to make distant goals a more meaningful reality. They also permit teachers to link short-term numerical targets to specific curricular targets over the short term, making them more real for pupils on a day-to-day basis.

Alpha Primary School

In Key Stage 2, teachers set targets for reading, writing and mathematics based on pupils' prior attainment and the school's commitment to increase the proportion of pupils making two levels of progress by ten percentage points in three years. In Years 3 and 4, teachers set the targets and share them with the pupils and their parents or guardians, together with descriptions of the necessary skills at each level based on APP assessment criteria. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are given viewing access to the school's MIS assessment module and encouraged to see and discuss their progress plotted on their record. Where progress is good, teachers may invite pupils to consider whether they would like to raise their target. Where the pupil, teacher and family agree, the increased target is recorded along with any special action agreed to meet it.

How local authorities (LAs) can help

LAs provide a variety of support services to schools that contribute to improved pupil tracking. In the best cases, these support services can help transform schools' use of attainment data and lead to direct improvements in learning and standards of attainment. Support in making best use of MIS in this area is most efficiently provided where a large proportion of an LA's schools are using the same MIS or the same assessment management module linked to their MIS. Where this is not the case, the LA can usefully contribute generic advice on the potential of using MIS modules to improve pupil tracking and designing school systems to make best use of them.

Effective support from LAs

This can include:

- offering well-coordinated advice produced jointly by the LA MIS team, LA assessment lead and the wider advisory service who have worked together to establish a common view about effective assessment and tracking
- central training for subject leads and other staff on securing accurate periodic assessments, particularly using APP
- central training for senior and middle managers on interpreting analyses of progress and attainment and in responding to the issues identified
- on-site training for MIS users in school geared specifically towards managing assessment data and pupil tracking and pitched appropriately for all the levels of staff involved in the school
- providing direct support to schools in configuring assessment elements of their MIS, including a range of standard analyses and reports, particularly for small schools
- providing local comparative and contextual data to support whole-school and individual pupil target setting
- supporting schools in evaluating the impact of their pupil tracking processes on improvements to learning and achievement
- facilitating collaborative MIS developments between schools and the active dissemination locally of effective systems and practice
- agreeing local protocols for sharing data between schools
- ensuring SIPs have access to, and are well-versed in using, the sort of tracking data being used in their schools
- supporting inter-agency use of attainment data to support vulnerable pupils.

Audience: Headteachers, learning managers,
assessment managers and subject leaders in
primary and secondary schools

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