# Reducing teacher workload

## Research report

## March 2018

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# Research topic

Our research project focused on investigating if creating a common school-based summative assessment and data management system across a recently formed Multi Academy Trust, the Lighthouse Schools Partnership (LSP), would reduce teacher workload.

At the time the research was completed the LSP consisted of three primary schools, one infant and one secondary school – all of whom participated in the project. Since completion of the research project, another secondary school has joined and further primaries are due to join the LSP.

Data and assessment is an area that many teachers identify as taking up a substantial amount of their time – 56% of respondents to the 2015 DfE Workload Challenge consultation identified this as an area that caused unnecessary workload. A lack of clarity around the purpose of collecting data was identified as the cause of this, alongside the process of collecting the data being seen as inefficient, with duplication seen as a common problem.

Our research project investigated if establishing a school-based summative assessment system with the following would reduce teacher workload:

- Increasing teacher clarity over the key aspects of the curriculum that they need to assess in reading, writing and maths for children in Years 1 – 6;
- Increasing teachers' understanding of what depth looks like in reading, writing and maths in years 1 – 6;
- Using a simple tracking system to both enter and extract data.

## Review Group Recommendations

The Workload Review Group report on eliminating unnecessary workload associated with data management (March 2016) concluded there are common overarching principles that should apply to all data collection in our schools:

1. Be streamlined: eliminate duplication–'collect once, use many times'.
2. Be ruthless: only collect what is needed to support outcomes for children. The amount of data collected should be proportionate to its usefulness. Always ask why the data is needed.
3. Be prepared to stop a data collection activity: do not assume that collection or analysis must continue just because it always has.
4. Be aware of workload issues: consider not only how long it will take, but whether that time could be better spent on other tasks.

Following the Workload Review Group recommendations our project aimed to ensure that:

- Teachers are clear about the purpose of the data collection;
- It is done within an efficient process;
- The data is valid.

By ensuring this we were confident that this would reduce the time teachers spent on summative assessment and data collection.

# Approaches to reducing workload

## What is to be assessed

In order to increase teacher clarity around summative teacher assessment our project aimed to produce a clear and manageable set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for years 1 – 7 in reading, writing and maths, with particular clarity around assessing depth. These would indicate to teachers what their summative assessment should focus on.

Since the removal of levels in 2014, many teachers in Key Stage 1 and 2 have been unclear about which aspects of learning they needed to assess in order to have a secure understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. This is particularly true around assessing children who were working 'at depth'. Uncertainty about this led to summative assessment taking excessive time and not always being reliable. We expected that developing our own KPIs would lead to greater teacher clarity and thus reduce the amount of time summative assessment takes. We also viewed it as a way of further engaging our teachers in the process of curriculum-based assessment.

## Tracking pupil learning

Alongside this our research aimed to reduce teacher workload by establishing an efficient, bespoke tracking system that worked for all staff from class teacher to our Multi Academy Trust (MAT) CEO. This would include an annual data and reporting system. We agreed that it was important that we separate the processes of assessment and the tracking system in order that the assessment process is not dominated or ruled by the tracking system that a school chooses. By adopting a simple bespoke tracking system which was clear to teachers and developing an effective annual assessment calendar, we looked to increase the efficiency of the assessment process and ensure that data would be entered once and used many times. It was important to us that the data teachers entered could be used by them and SLT within their school as well as by the CEO and leadership of our Multi Academy Trust.

The combination of clear KPIs, an effective annual summative assessment model and an easy and efficient tracking system should, we proposed, result in a clear and simple summative assessment system that all teachers understand and can use. This meets key recommendation of the Commission on Assessment without Levels that 'schools ask themselves what uses the assessments are intended to support, what the quality of the

assessment information will be, how much time it would take teachers to record the information, and how frequently it is appropriate to collect and report it (p.7)

An important benefit for our developing Multi Academy Trust, in which St Peter's is a teaching school, is that this process would create a common language and format across schools in our MAT and allow data to be entered once but used several times within and across schools.

This should enhance pupil attainment as summative assessment will allow teachers to identify gaps in learning and for senior leaders and school improvement partners to identify areas of school improvement.

# Research Project

Before starting work on our assessment project school leaders and assessment leads from schools across our MAT identified the key principles that we wanted our summative assessment system to have:

- Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning - it provides evidence to guide teaching and learning;
- Assessment is honest and consistent -  judgements are moderated by experienced professionals to ensure this;
- Assessment is ambitious – it places achievement in context against nationally standardised criteria and expected standards and objectives set high expectations for learners;
- Assessment is appropriate - it should demand no more procedures or records than are practically required to allow pupils, their parents and teachers to plan future learning.

These principles guided the work of our research project and formed the spine of our summative assessment system.

## Phase One: Baseline survey

This phase involved a staff survey of teachers' perceptions of the impact on the removal of levels on teachers' summative assessments. The online survey involved 8 items and was administered in January, 2017 across 5 of the partnership schools. There was a total of 55 responses, with data from each of the schools.

Our initial staff survey showed that, since the removal of levels, teachers were increasingly uncertain about their summative assessments. When using levels for summative assessment they reported a high level of confidence, with around 80 per cent positive responses across all schools, in their understanding of the standards represented by the levels and of the related assessment objectives.  These levels of confidence declined after the removal of levels, particularly in relation to understanding of performance that was above expectations (79 per cent reporting a clear understanding when using levels to assess, dropping to 41 per cent after their removal) and of understanding how progress is measured (86 per cent using levels, dropping to 57 per cent).

| BEFORE the removal of Levels | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree / disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I had a clear understanding of the standards children need to reach in my year group. | 53 | 35 | 9 | 4 | 0 |
| I had a clear understanding of the standards children need to meet at the end of my key stage. | 47 | 38 | 13 | 2 | 0 |
| I understood the assessment objectives for my year group. | 56 | 37 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| I had a clear understanding of what depth/ above expectations looked like in my year group. | 49 | 30 | 19 | 0 | 2 |
| I understood how progress is measured. | 58 | 28 | 11 | 2 | 0 |
| AFTER the removal of Levels | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree / disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| I have a clear understanding of the standards children need to reach in my year group. | 24 | 46 | 11 | 19 | 0 |
| I have a clear understanding of the standards children need to meet at the end of my key stage. | 19 | 41 | 19 | 20 | 2 |
| I understand the assessment objectives for my year group. | 31 | 37 | 21 | 12 | 0 |
| I have a clear understanding of what depth/ above expectations looked like in my year group. | 11 | 30 | 17 | 28 | 13 |
| I understand how progress is measured. | 9 | 48 | 19 | 17 | 7 |

Figure 1: Teacher attitudes to summative assessment before and after the removal of levels (shown in %, 55 responses)

A further survey question asked staff if, since the removal of levels, summative assessment took staff more, less or the same amount of time. There were noticeable variances across the schools, but the results from four of the schools suggested that workload had increased since the removal of levels. In the teaching school where NAHT KPIs had been adopted, three quarters of teachers reported a reduction in time to summatively assess their pupils. However, they also reported that these KPIs were not precise enough to inform their future teaching and that they did not align well with the Key Stage 1 and 2 Teacher Assessment Frameworks released in 2016. These variations underlined the need for a common assessment framework across the partnership.

# Phase Two: Developing Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Given the teachers' lack of confidence and clarity around what was to be assessed and how, the research project sought to develop Key Performance Indicators for each year group for reading, writing and maths. The *Commission on Assessment without Levels* has recommended that:

> A good assessment policy is clear on how the assessment outcomes will be used. The policy should outline when it is necessary to record assessment data and when the purposes of assessment do not require data to be collected. The policy should be careful to avoid any unnecessary addition to teacher workload. (p.26)

The research group agreed, in the light of this, that there was no need for staff to assess against every national curriculum objective. We wanted to identify the key objectives from each year group for staff to use to assess their pupils. This approach was intended to offer more clarity and focus about what teachers needed to assess. We also agreed that we wanted each KPI to have an expected descriptor and also a 'depth' descriptor. The 2014 National Curriculum calls for depth as well as breadth in the primary curriculum but our survey showed that teachers were uncertain about what depth looked like and that this was increasing their workload.

This approach was based on the finding that teachers in all schools were dissatisfied with their assessment systems since the removal of levels. They identified assessing children against individual objectives, assessing if children were 'at depth' and entering their assessments onto their tracking systems as the most time-consuming aspects of the summative assessment system.

## Methodology

Staff from across the five schools in our MAT worked on year group and phase teams between January and March 2017 to identify the KPIs for each subject in years 1,3,4,5 and 7. It was decided to use the Assessment Frameworks for years 2 and 6 as this was a national requirement and we would be increasing teacher workload by introducing other objectives. Class teachers from across all the schools worked collaboratively in year and phase teams to review the Primary National Curriculum and identify the key learning objectives they felt children in their year group must secure to be ready for the next steps in their learning. They then created expected and depth KPIs for these objectives. Subject leaders from across the partnership schools worked together to quality assure these KPIs, ensure progression and coverage of the curriculum and that they aligned with the KS1 and KS2 assessment criteria.

Each KPI has a descriptor for expected and also a depth descriptor as this was an area that staff identified as taking them time.

**Year 1: Maths**

| | Expected Standard | Depth |
|---|---|---|
| **Number and Place Value** | Count to and across 100 forwards and backwards beginning with 0 or 1 or from any given number. | With fluency and accuracy. |
| | Read and write numbers to 100 in numerals. | Count, read and write numbers past 100 in numerals showing understanding of place value |
| | Count in multiples of 2, 5 and 10 | Count backwards in multiples of 2, 5 and 10.<br><br>Begin to link this to multiplication. |
| | Given a number, identify one more or one less. | Apply this in a problem solving context. |
| **Addition and Subtraction** | Represent and use number bonds and related subtraction facts within 20. | Use the inverse relationships to solve missing number problems involving bonds to 20. |
| | Add and subtract 1 digit and 2 digit numbers to 20, including 0. | Can do this mentally where no regrouping is required. |
| | Solve 1 step problems that involve addition and subtraction, using concrete and pictorial representations. | Write number sentences based on given word problems. |
| | Solve grouping and sharing 1 step problems involving multiplication and division using concrete objects, pictorial representations and arrays. | Use mental strategies such as counting in multiples. |
| | Recognise, find and names a half as one of two equal parts of an object, shape or quantity. | Find different ways to show a half of shapes. |
| | Read, write and interpret mathematical statements involving + - and = signs. | Able to do this moving the = sign. |
| **Fractions** | Recognise, find and name a quarter as one of four equal parts of an object, shape or quantity. | Find different ways to show a quarter of shapes |

|  | Expected Standard | Depth |
|---|---|---|
| **Measurements** | Measure and begin to record (using pre-dominantly non-standard units):<br><br>• Lengths and heights<br>• Mass/ weight<br>• Capacity and volume<br>• Times (hours, minutes and seconds) | Read scales in appropriate standard and non-standard units where one division marks one unit |
| | Recognise and know the value of different denominations of coins and notes. | Use different coins to make simple amounts. |
| | Tell the time to the hour and half past the hour. | Understand that 30 minutes is half an hour.<br><br>Begin to use 15 minute intervals and read the time at quarter past and quarter to. |
| **Geometry** | Recognise and name common 2d and 3d shapes e.g. circles, triangles, rectangles (including squares), cuboids (including cubes), pyramids and spheres | Begin to describe their properties using mathematical language. |
| | Describe position, direction and movement, including whole, half, quarter and three quarter turns. | Do this clockwise and anti-clockwise. |

## Year 5: Writing

|  | Expected Standard | Depth |
|---|---|---|
| **Composition** | Sometimes selects vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect the level of formality required. | Selecting vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect the level of formality required mostly accurately. |
| | Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions with increasing confidence e.g. as, while, despite, even though. | Varying the position of the subordinate clause in a sentence.  Use of compound/complex sentences. |
| | Can use a dictionary and thesaurus to check spellings and word meanings. | Independently choose resources e.g. Dictionaries/ thesauruses to check spellings, word meanings in order to edit and improve work. |
| | Evaluate and edit their own and others' writing by proposing changes to vocabulary, grammar and | Extensively edits and re-writes their own writing in order to improve it. |

| | Expected Standard | Depth |
|---|---|---|
| | punctuation to enhance effect and clarify meaning. | |
| | In narrative, creating atmosphere by describing characters and settings and integrating dialogue. | In narrative, creating atmosphere by describing characters and settings; making appropriate vocabulary choices; varying sentence lengths and integrating dialogue. |
| | Making some use of adverbials, pronouns, conjunctions and prepositions within and across sentences and **paragraphs** to show cohesion. | Can make informed choices of adverbials, pronouns, conjunctions and prepositions to build cohesion in writing. |
| Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation | Relative clauses are used such as: who, which, where, when, whose, that or an omitted relative pronoun. | Use of embedded clauses. |
| | Makes use of adverbs, prepositional phrases and noun phrases to add detail and clarity. | Selects adverbs, prepositional phrases and noun phrases to create effect in writing. |
| | Using different verb forms mostly appropriately, including some passive and modal verbs. | Can select verb forms for meaning and effect. |
| | Using inverted commas and commas for clarity. | Use of inverted commas and commas avoids any ambiguity in writing. |
| | Beginning to use punctuation for parenthesis mostly correctly and making some correct use of semi colons, dashes, colons and hyphens. | Often punctuation for parenthesis mostly correctly and making correct use of semi colons, dashes, colons and hyphens. |
| Hand-writing | Handwriting is legible and joined. | Maintaining legibility, fluency and speed in handwriting. |
| Transcription | Apply knowledge of spelling rules and patterns taught in Year 5 when spelling words, including words with silent letters and homophones, with a reasonable degree of accuracy. | Correctly spell agreed Year 5 high frequency / non-negotiable words. |
| | Spells many of the words from the Year 5/6 spelling list. | Spells most words from the Year 5/6 spelling list. |

**Figure 2: Examples of the KPI's developed.**

The impact of the new KPIs appears to be positive. Figure 3 shows that 100% of staff strongly agree or agree that they have a clear understanding of the standards children need to reach in their year group – an increase of 30% since the removal of levels. This is mirrored by all teachers reporting to understand the assessment objectives in their year

group – compared to 68% after the removal of levels. More teachers now understand the expectations for pupils at the end of their key stage. Finally 90% of teachers now understand how progress is measured.

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree/ disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have a clear understanding of the standards children need to reach in my year group. | 57 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I have a clear understanding of the standards children need to meet at the end of my key stage. | 50 | 45 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| I understand the assessment objectives for my year group. | 56 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I understand how progress is measured. | 29 | 62 | 5 | 5 | 0 |

Figure 3: Teacher attitudes to summative assessment using our new summative assessment system (shown in %, 23 responses)

Teacher understanding of summative assessment objectives, standards, expectations and progress is now equal to – or in some cases higher - than when we were using levels. The majority of teachers reported this increase in understanding meant a reduction in the time it was taking them use assess children's learning using the new KPIs. This increased clarity has reduced teacher workload and should also have a positive impact on pupil outcomes through stronger teacher assessment. This survey was completed after one round of summative assessment – as teachers become more familiar with the KPIs we expect to see further reduction in workload.

## Phase 3: Creating a time-effective tracking system.

We were keen to separate the process of assessment from the tracking of assessment. We wanted a system in which the tracking system we created was very much an 'electronic mark book' with the real skill and expertise being in the hands of the teachers who assess their pupils.

Before we began the research project all schools in our MAT were using different tracking systems. This presented several problems for the leadership of our MAT as the language of each system was different and each worked on different principles. Some schools' assessment systems were heavily guided by their tracking system. Staff from all schools identified issues with their tracking system, including it being time consuming to enter assessments and not understanding how to identify gaps in children's learning. Because of the different tracking systems being used there was no shared language of summative assessment which made cross-school moderation difficult.

*The Commission on Assessment without Levels* recommended, in order to help schools evaluate the potential value of external assessment products, that;

schools ask themselves whether the product supports the school's policy on assessment, the extent to which it will support delivery of that policy, whether the assessment approach on which the product is based is credible, and whether the product provides good value. Any product is likely to be just one element of the school's assessment. It should only be adopted if it presents the best way to support delivery of the school's assessment policy. (p.7)

In line with this the research project group created a set of key features of our assessment system before we began to create a tracking system to support them:

**Different types of assessment: we recognise three main forms of assessment and understand they each have a purpose.**
- **Formative assessment** is used by teachers to evaluate pupils' knowledge and understanding on a day to day basis to tailor teaching to meet the needs of pupils.
- **Summative assessment** enables schools to evaluate how much a pupil has learned at the end of a teaching period.
- **Nationally standardised assessments** which the Government uses to hold schools to account.

**KPIs: We do not need to use summative assessment to assess everything that we teach.**
- We believe that all pupils need to have a broad and rich curriculum – we teach all aspects and objectives of the 2014 National Curriculum. However, we know that we do not have to assess every objective as part of our summative assessment.
- We know there are key objectives in each year group that children and our expert teachers have used their knowledge to develop our own sets of Key Performance Indicators(KPIs) for reading, writing and maths for years 1,3,4,5 and 7
- Years 2 and 6 will continue to use the Interim Frameworks until these are replaced.

**Secure Fit: Using our KPIs we assess pupils using a secure fit system.**
- To meet the expected standard at the end of each year, pupils need to have achieved all KPIs.

**Point in Time Assessment: We only assess children against objectives we have taught them.**
- By assessing pupils only against the objectives we have taught them we get an accurate summative assessment of children's current learning. This allows us to track pupil attainment and progress accurately from our first assessment point of the year.

**Depth: We assess for depth alongside coverage.**
- NC2014 asks for depth of knowledge not simply coverage. Our summative assessment asks teachers to assess the depth of pupils' knowledge, not simply coverage.

- Each of our KPIs have a depth description to support teachers to do this. Our tracking system allows us to measure the depth of children's understanding alongside the objectives they have been taught.

**Progress: We check and monitor regularly**
- We use our formative and summative assessment to inform our progress measures. At the end of each summative assessment (3 x year) we assign summative bandings – these are used to check progress for individual, groups and cohorts of pupils.
- We can also measure progress in terms of growing depth of learning for pupils and against KPIs.

**Tests and statutory assessments: We use tests to inform our assessment**
- We use NFER reading and maths tests in the summer term in Y3,4,5 to inform our summative assessment.

**Access: We use a tracking system that is accessible to all.**
- We have chosen a simple yet highly effective tracking system that is accessible to all.
- Teachers can input assessment effectively and quickly on the system and SLT at school and MAT level can extract the data that they need.

## Selecting a tracking system

We worked with James Pembroke, an independent school data and assessment advisor, to evaluate what was needed to create our own tracking system. He advised that there were commercial tracking systems that would offer enough flexibility to support our assessment principals.

We reviewed several commercial tracking systems. We initially completed a desktop analysis of 8 different tracking systems scoring each against our assessment key features to see if they would be able to deliver them. From this we asked four companies to present their tracking systems to school leaders and assessment leads in April 2017. We scored each tracking system against our key assessment features. Several systems did not offer the flexibility that we required, or we were concerned that the data entry process they offered would further increase teacher workload. We identified one, *Insight*, that would do this. Insight is a relatively small company, based in Cornwall, who have developed an adaptable tracking system that schools can use to create their own tracking system based on their assessment principles. It enabled us to:

- Enter our own KPIs for both expected and depth;
- Use a secure fit  model;
- Use point in time assessment to accurately assess children's current attainment;
- Use our shared language of assessment;
- Easily measure progress in terms of prior attainment and also depth;

- Extract data easily and quickly by key groups, class, year group and school;
- Allow data to be entered once and be used several times at class level, school level and MAT level.

## Training with *Insight*

In the summer term 2017 we offered all schools and teachers the opportunity for staff training on the summative assessment system and how to input and extract data from Insight. This involved a half day INSET and three further staff meetings. Schools chose to access this training in different ways: some schools sent all staff to all CPD sessions whilst others sent key members of staff to some sessions.

To support teachers' assessment using this new structure, in its first year of introduction all schools released staff for three half-days in order to moderate with year group colleagues from across the Multi Academy Trust. These sessions were supported by lead moderators and provided an opportunity for staff to use the shared language and structure of the new assessment system, as well as furthering their own understanding of standards. School leaders were given a visit note to identify areas they may want to take in their own school relating to assessment.

Alongside this we created a clear annual summative assessment cycle to ensure clarity for all staff about the timing and type of summative assessment to be carried out. This attempted to ensure an even cycle of assessment over the academic year.

| Time | Aspect | Description and Detail |
|------|--------|------------------------|
| Daily | Formative assessment | Teaching and assessing the entire NC2014 and all objectives within it. High quality, responsive formative assessment used in every lesson, every day and by every member of staff. Teachers can, if they want, record assessment against KPIs on an ad hoc basis as they teach them. |
| 3 x year Mid November Mid February Mid May | Summative Assessment | Teachers assess against KPIs and record using depth measure on Insight: 0: Taught but no understanding/ not achieved/ fully achieved 1: Some evidence but not yet secure 2: Objective secure 3: Working at greater depth |
| 3 x year Mid November Mid February Mid June | Summative Assessment - Bandings (Reported to trustees) | Teachers assign summative banding for reading, writing and maths using **point in time assessment**. If children have met all objectives taught they would therefore be working at expected standard. This means that children are assessed against the actual objectives they have been taught, not based on coverage of objectives.  Summative bandings are: <br>• **SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW**: significantly below expected standard (meeting a low proportion of year group KPIs or below their year group's KPIs) <br>• **BELOW:** below expected standard (not met all KPIs taught or have needed regular support to meet them) <br>• **EXPECTED:** Working at expected standard (have met all KPIs taught) <br>• **EXPECTED SOME DEPTH**: Working at expected with some depth (working at depth for some KPIs) <br>• **DEPTH:** Working at significant depth (working at depth in all KPIs taught or achieving next year groups KPIs) |
| 1 x year Start June | Summative Assessment - NFER Tests | Children in years 3,4, and 5 complete NFER reading and maths tests to get a standardised score. These results are used to inform teacher assessment as well as a stand-alone indication of pupils' attainment. |
| 1 x year | Statutory Assessments | FS, Y1 and Y2 Phonics, KS1 and KS2 TA and SATs. Submitted and used against national benchmarks. |

**Figure 4: Lighthouse Schools Partnership Annual Summative Assessment Process**

After one assessment round using our new tracking system, staff were asked to identify the positive features of the new tracking system. When ranking responses, they identified the clarity of the KPIs and the depth descriptors as one of the most supportive aspects of the system. Ease of use was another positive aspect with the opportunity to moderate with colleagues ranking the same. Teachers identified the ability to use point in time assessment and the ability to use the information to inform future teaching as other advantages. There was some variance between responses from teachers in different schools. These differences could be related the different starting points of each school, the previous system they were using, and the training they has received in using the new tracking system.
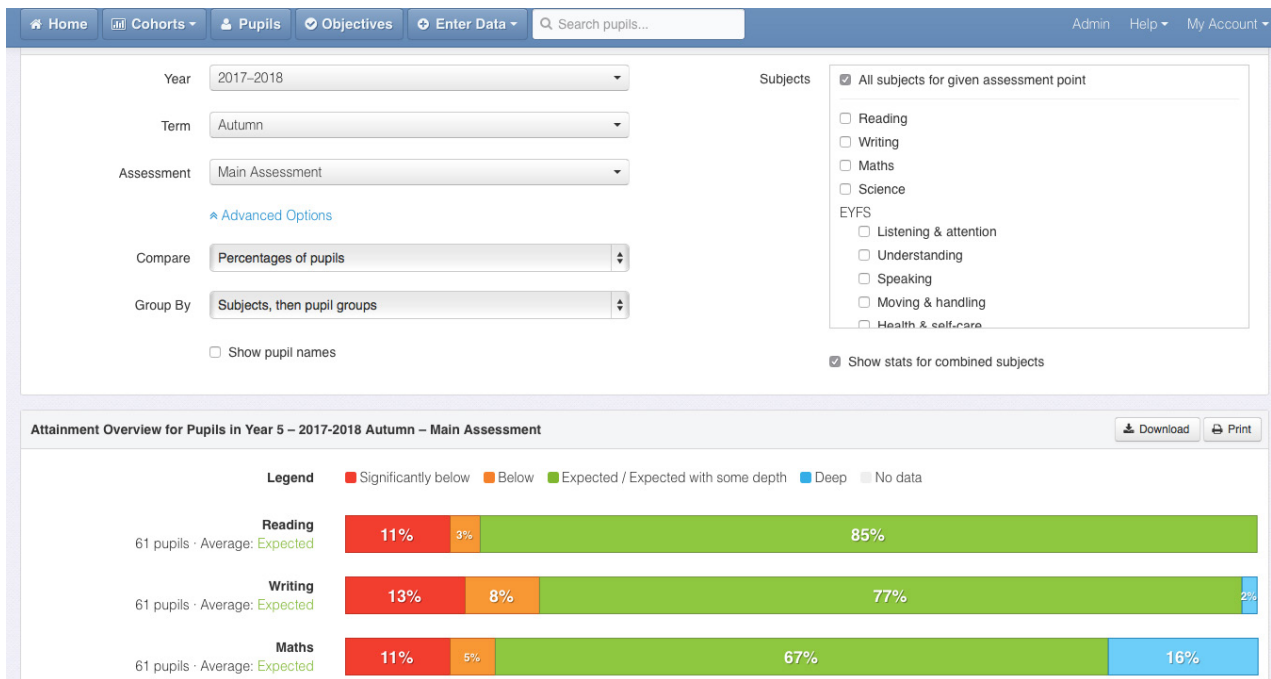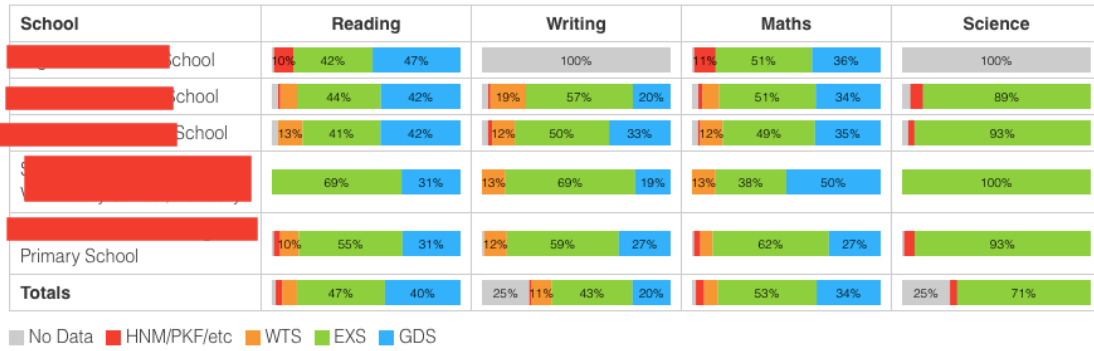
**Figure 5: Example of year group attainment grid from Insight**

School leaders had additional support in using the tracking system in order to extract data. *Insight* offers a limited number of reports to investigate data which met the purposes we had specified. By keeping this simple the tracking system supports senior staff but reduces their workload by limiting the number of graphs and charts they may be tempted to produce. All reports and data extracted came from the information inputted by teachers. There was not need to re-enter or format data.

At MAT level our tracking system allows us to compare school characteristics instantly creates tables showing current attainment for each year group in all our schools. Using this tracking system means that schools are not required to reproduce data for our CEO or trustees.

## 2016-2017 KS1 SATs - Pupils in Year 2

Section ▾

| School | Reading | Writing | Maths | Science |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School | 10% / 42% / 47% | 100% | 11% / 51% / 36% | 100% |
| School | 44% / 42% | 19% / 57% / 20% | 51% / 34% | 89% |
| School | 13% / 41% / 42% | 12% / 50% / 33% | 12% / 49% / 35% | 93% |
| School | 69% / 31% | 13% / 69% / 19% | 13% / 38% / 50% | 100% |
| Primary School | 10% / 55% / 31% | 12% / 59% / 27% | 62% / 27% | 93% |
| **Totals** | 47% / 40% | 25% / 11% / 43% / 20% | 53% / 34% | 25% / 71% |

■ No Data ■ HNM/PKF/etc ■ WTS ■ EXS ■ GDS

## 2016-2017 KS2 SATs - Pupils in Year 6

Section ▾

| School | Reading | Writing | Maths | Science |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School | | | | |
| School | 11% / 17% / 72% | 21% / 59% / 16% | 11% / 14% / 74% | 11% / 82% |
| School | 20% / 78% | 18% / 52% / 27% | 25% / 73% | 15% / 83% |
| | 20% / 80% | 27% / 73% | 27% / 73% | 27% / 73% |
| Primary School | 15% / 83% | 12% / 57% / 27% | 23% / 75% | 95% |
| **Totals** | 17% / 77% | 18% / 57% / 20% | 20% / 74% | 85% |

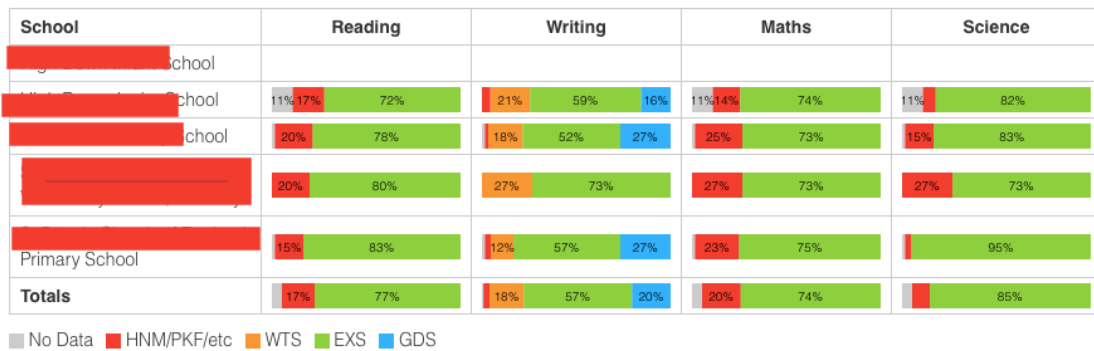■ No Data ■ HNM/PKF/etc ■ WTS ■ EXS ■ GDS

**Figure 6: Example of MAT level data available on Insight.**

# Partnership Culture

As part of the project we discovered that since the removal of levels, schools had gone down very different routes in their summative assessment. Some had bought in tracking and assessment systems that led assessment in their school and, for them, making a change in the assessment process and a new tracking system, was a challenge. We worked as a group to develop a shared set of assessment principles to form our own, bespoke summative assessment system. All school leaders acknowledge the need for a shared assessment system across the MAT to enable cross school comparison and for teachers to be able to work collaboratively.

Another aspect that varied across schools once the assessment system was established was the training that staff received on the introduction of the assessment system and KPIs. Some schools had extensive training over a term whilst others gave more limited training to key members of staff. Feedback from staff who had more extensive CPD seems to be that they have a greater understanding of the system and it has had a greater impact on reducing workload. For staff to fully appreciate and benefit from the summative assessment system they need to full understand the principles behind it along with the key aspects of the system itself. Simply understanding how to input data did not appear to make as big an impact on workload as possible. In future, as we extend the system across our growing MAT, we will ensure that all staff have full training on the summative assessment system.

Staff have responded positively to school leaders' commitment to giving them extensive time over the year to moderate. All staff have received three half day sessions to work with teachers from across the MAT in their year group teams. This has been valuable in increasing teacher understanding of the new assessment system but also in sharing good practice and teaching across all schools.  This has given us a strong model for future cross school work.

The research project also gave staff across Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 the opportunity to work together, particularly on the creation of the KPIs in reading, writing and maths. This also gave KS3 teachers an opportunity to increase their understanding of the primary curriculum and look for opportunities to support academic transition into KS3. While one secondary school was involved in the creation of the KPIs, two more have or are going to join the partnership. We have started to work together to embed the assessment principles across all phases of learning.

The process of bringing all schools together to complete this collaborative research has strengthen the partnership across the MAT. It has allowed teaching staff at all levels to work together and has established a culture of collaboration and sharing expertise. This gives us a robust model on which to base future collaboration and work.

# Conclusion

When asked in January 2018, after the first round of the new summative assessment system, 73% of teachers said that it had reduced their workload.

One respondent remarked "…much clearer and easier to use. It makes more sense to my already busy brain!"

Another reported that the new summative assessment system "…has enabled us to have all of our data (TA, scores, book bands etc.) in one place and therefore there is no need for the additional spreadsheets that many of us kept. It much easier to identify gaps that can be filled through intervention. As a phase leader, it gives me a really clear picture of cohorts and key groups. I can pull up in seconds what used to take up to 30 mins to work out! (e.g. % of children off-track from KS1)"

An upper key stage 2 leader told us, "The new assessment system is a useful tool to analyse key groups and highlight key data in clear, simple and easily accessible formats. The customisable progress matrix and assessment inputs have significantly reduced unnecessary teacher workload in areas that were previously incredibly time-consuming."

We expect to see further reductions in workload as teachers use the system more and become increasingly familiar with it. At the end of this academic year, after a full year of use, we will complete further research to see if we have increased familiarity and thus further reduced workload.

Improving the clarity of teacher understanding of summative assessment KPIs has reduced teacher workload. Having staff contribute to their creation uses the wealth of expertise our teachers have. Ensuring each objective also has a depth descriptor saves staff time by giving them clarity over what they assessing. KPIs need to reflect the curriculum the school is teaching and show progression through the year groups, feeding into the KS1 and 2 assessment frameworks. When using summative assessment, teachers should not be assessing every national curriculum objective – they derive key performance indicators from each year group's curriculum so that every child has achieved the key learning that they need to continue into their next year group.

Our research has led us to ensure we have a clear and proportionate annual assessment cycle based on appropriate principles. It is important that the cycle ensures that any assessment data is entered onto a tracking system just once and that it can be used many times by many different people within a school system.

Our tracking system is seen as an 'electronic mark book' that supports a school's assessment system (rather than creates it). We have chosen a relatively simple and cost-effective system.  It allows us to enter our own KPIs or objectives that reflect the curriculum we teach. It also measures progress in terms of depth and from prior

attainment rather than total curriculum coverage. Point in time assessment adds to the accuracy and reliability of teacher assessment.

The relative simplicity and flexibility of our tracking system has a positive impact on teacher workload. Teachers are positive about it and willing to use it to support their assessment and teaching. We are finding our tracking system allows data to be entered just once but used many times by different people across the MAT. It is flexible enough to extract whatever data staff need (according to their role) but not so complex that it produces a range of unnecessary analysis of data.

For our partnership we have found that a clear summative assessment system, supported by a limited number of KPIs and a flexible, fit for purpose tracking system has reduced teacher workload. This can be further enhanced by ensuring high quality CPD around summative assessment to enable staff to understand the principals around the system and how the tracking system works within this. We have found that teachers are more positive about our tracking system when they have received strong CPD in the assessment system and we will, as our MAT develops, ensure that this is available to all staff. We are encouraging MAT school leaders to prioritise staff CPD in this area to have the maximum impact of reducing teacher workload.