

## Managing Data Effectively: Questions, Purposes, Sources, Roles and Timing

### Using data to improve teaching and learning

The data that an information-rich school has about its pupil population encourages headteachers, class teachers, subject leaders, assessment leaders, inclusion leaders and governors to reflect on their working practices in the school, for example:

- The quality and range of their teaching and their pupils' learning;
- The structure and organisation of the curriculum;
- The framework and content of schemes of work;
- The short and long-term learning needs of all pupils;
- The teaching of groups of pupils; gender issues ethnicity etc. G&T;
- The encouragement of high expectations and independent learning.

A school's data may indicate, for instance, that a significant minority of the pupils are unlikely to achieve real success in an academic curriculum. Therefore, the school may need to change the overall structure of its provision.

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### Questions schools should be asking of their data

Data management is an essential part of the school improvement process, raising important questions regarding effectiveness.

Schools should use data analysis as a means of identifying areas for improvement. The analysis and evaluation of pupil performance data will only impact on standards if accompanied by changes in practice, particularly in teaching and learning. The analysis and evaluation of pupil performance data allow schools to ask two important benchmarking questions:

- **How good are we?**
- **How good can we be?**

To contribute to raising standards, data management, analysis and evaluation have to be viewed as an integral part of the school improvement process. Schools seeking continuous improvement regularly review and change what they are doing. Schools recognise that, if they continue to do what they have always done, their pupils will continue to achieve at the levels they have always done.

### Schools should interpret their data with care

Information gathered through the analysis of data will raise questions rather than provide answers.

In particular, schools should be aware that:

- The size of the cohort needs to be taken into consideration; the results of a small cohort can be affected by the achievement of only one or two pupils. In this way, year-on-year differences may be exaggerated.
- The prior attainment and aptitude of children on entry varies between schools and between year groups. Consequently the value-added analysis of data should be undertaken.
- The pattern of a school's results over the last four years should be reviewed. The trend in results provides a more complete picture of children's achievement than a single year's analysis.
- A school's achievement should be measured by more than simply the data from statutory assessment.
- Published results show outcomes of assessments in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. They do not provide a measure of a child's overall achievement in other subjects or aspects such as personal, social and emotional development.

### What schools should be doing to raise standards

To raise standards, schools must:

#### Stage One – How well are we doing?

- Analyse current performance of pupils and groups.

#### Stage Two – How well should we be doing?

- Compare with national standards and similar schools and pupils.

#### Stage Three – What more can we achieve?

- Set clear and measurable targets.

#### Stage Four – What must we do to make it happen?

- Identify and implement improvement plans.

#### Stage Five – What went well?

What can we do better?

- Take action – review success – start again.

**This process needs to be linked to the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) and school plan**