

Yorkshire Causeway Schools Trust is a group of schools working together as an organisation.

"Where everyone is valued and respected, where we share commitment to education that is ambitious, setting the highest expectations and where integrity is the foundation."

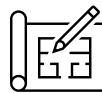
The Trust's key objectives include:

- To raise the standard of educational achievement of all its students

We believe that the Trust should use assessments to gather information in order to make better decisions that enable us to meet this objective. The following principles guide how we decide what data we need to collect and how to ensure that the data is as reliable as it can be.



We are clear about the purpose of any assessments that we use, particularly whether the data is primarily being gathered for accountability or to inform teaching and learning



We are aware of the need for assessments to be carefully planned in order to maximise validity and reliability



The amount of data collected is proportionate to its usefulness



We are cautious about what can be inferred, especially from one data source

Thinking through the purpose of an assessment

- Are you collecting information for accountability or to inform teaching & learning?

Ensure that the primary purpose of assessment is not distorted by using it for multiple purposes ([Commission on Assessment Without Levels final report](#))

- What will be done with the information?

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...consider not just how long it will take, but whether that time could be better spent on other tasks ([Data Management Review Group](#))

Validity

- Has the assessment been designed to measure exactly what you want it to measure?
- Does the assessment genuinely match the taught curriculum?
- Have you thought through what can and cannot be reasonably inferred from the data?

Reliability

- Is there common understanding of how to administer the assessment?
- Are imprecise statements being used that could be interpreted in different ways?
- Could the assessment be blind-marked or moderated?

Rationale

The problems with previous systems:

- Giving the impression that judgements are more reliable than they are, that we can easily measure learning, that progress is linear.
- High stakes distorting the accuracy of teacher assessments.
- Teaching to the test distorting and narrowing the curriculum.
- Attempting to track progress using imprecise statements.
- Basing decisions on unreliable data due to not noting confidence intervals.
- Not considering the workload

Leaders should not have more than two or three attainment data collection points a year, which should be used to inform clear actions. Increasing assessment frequency is not inherently likely to improve outcomes for pupils. (Workload Advisory Group Report 2018)

- Distorting learning decisions with 'expected progress', targets and flightpaths.

Local authorities and multi-academy trusts should not request data on targets and predictions to hold schools to account. Where this is required to enable, for example, providing additional support to schools, this should not be in a different format to the format the school uses, and should not add to the number of data collections. (Workload Advisory Group Report 2018)

- Placing too much emphasis on test scores.

Test scores usually do not provide a direct and complete measure of educational achievement. Rather they are incomplete measures, proxies for the more comprehensive measures that we would ideally use but that are generally unavailable to us. (Daniel Koretz's Measuring Up: What Educational Testing Really Tells Us)

What is progress and how can we track it?

By progress, we mean pupils knowing more and remembering more. Has a child really gained the knowledge to understand the key concepts and ideas? Is this enabling them to develop the skills they need to master? (Sean Harford 2018)

Use of the word 'tracking' in inspection reports is problematic as it can suggest that some form of numerical data is required, when there is no such requirement, even in English and mathematics. Schools will not be marked down because they are not 'tracking' science and foundation subjects in the same ways they may be doing so in English and mathematics. ([Ofsted School Inspection Update July 2018](#) p10)

It is more about deciding: what are the things that really make a difference to learning? What are the fundamentals without which children will be hindered in developing more sophisticated thinking? (Clare Sealey)

- Progress does not need to be numerical

What I want school leaders to discuss with our inspectors is what they expect pupils to know by certain points in their life, and how they know they know it. And crucially, what the school does when it finds out they don't! (Spielman 2017)

- Ofsted has no expectation of whether pupils have made 'expected progress'.

Inspectors should understand from all training and recent updates that there is no national expectation of any particular amount of progress from any starting point. (Ofsted 2017) Documenting whether a student has or has not made 'expected progress' is not necessary or particularly meaningful, since there is huge variation in rates of learning between students with the same baseline attainment. (WAG 2018)

- FFT value-added estimates are not the same as 'expected progress'
- Learning the curriculum should be the progress model. Determining progress, therefore, begins with curriculum design.

Recommendations

- Recognise the limitations of attainment data: accept that learning is a complex process that often cannot be reliably summarised.

What should we stop doing? Anything that has no impact on learning...Anything that averages results of different children together. Anything that simplifies rich but unwieldy, complex data into a neat chart with coloured boxes because it gives the illusion of rigour. (Clare Sealey)

- Maximum value is given to authentic formative assessment expressed in the form most useful to teachers. Leaders go to where the small-scale data is.
- Avoid tracking systems that effectively place children into levels using best-fit descriptors (e.g. emerging, developing, secure) based on how many statements have been met.
- Decide what is the essential pieces of information that will help teachers teach better and design the tracking around these.
- Use light-touch formative assessment throughout the year, being precise about the knowledge and skills that are identified as most significant and worth recording.
- Use occasional tests to identify barriers to learning and to compare attainment against national norms.
- Understand the limitations of teacher assessments – they require excellent training, moderation, standardisation and quality control.

Given the limited circumstances under which teacher judgements of pupil attainment are useful to leaders, the number of pieces of information teachers are expected to compile should be minimised or eliminated. (Workload Advisory Group Report 2018)

- Whenever possible, use detailed information about what students need to know in order to achieve success to inform discussions about attainment and progress rather than imprecise descriptors.
- SLT and teachers need to be cautious about making judgements. Multiple sources of information are more reliable – lesson observations, book scrutinies, pupil talk, tests, etc.

'...aim for a culture of using data constructively for positive, supportive change. Data can be most powerful in its potential for raising questions or stimulating discussion (NFER Making the most of assessment data).

- Only track statistically significant groups. Strong outcomes arise out of good teaching for all children, not by prioritising one group over another based on statistically insignificant data.
- When reporting to parents, be transparent when we are using specific, measurable information and when we are making subjective judgements.
- Not to use quantitative assessment scores as part of teachers' performance management.

Pay progression should never be dependent on quantitative assessment metrics, such as test outcomes...Leaders should not make pay progression for teachers dependent on quantitative assessment metrics, such as test outcomes. (Workload Advisory Group Report 2018)