

Assessment Case Study – Key Dials and Target Tracker at Barrowford Primary School, Nelson



Background

The age range at the school is from EYFS to Year 6 and the roll has been steadily growing in recent years. One of the drivers of the assessment strategy was the effectiveness of 'Orbit', the tracking system used in EYFS, that provides parents with online access to up to date information about children's progress and to share in their successes in learning.

The change process has been influenced by Guy Claxton's *'Building Learning Power'* and Carole Dweck's work on *'Mindset'*.

Other key drivers of change include the need for children to:

- focus on learning rather than on tasks or work
- be active rather than passive learners
- develop a wide range of skills and values in addition to knowledge
- develop a love of learning and hence become committed lifelong learners

The school serves a highly deprived area with a considerable degree of transience. Learners with SEN, including those on the autistic spectrum, are supported to learn in mainstream classes by teachers, TAs and HLTAs.

Curriculum

A creative curriculum was introduced in 2006, replacing a previous one that was very prescriptive with lessons pre-planned and included in the schemes of work.

The school's own 'Rounded and Grounded' strategy underpins all learning and involves developing a wide range of key attributes, grouped into four areas: Having Relationships; Having Insight; Being Robust; Being Practical.

[Click here for Rounded and Grounded model](#) on school website.

The school curriculum has been developed to take account of learners' needs in terms of:

- Rounded and Grounded (R & G) attributes
- content specified in the National Curriculum
- additional subject content identified by the school

A guiding principle in curriculum design is the school's belief that subject learning becomes deeper as a result of developing strong learning power and positive attitudes to learning. Hence the curriculum is fully integrated with all subject teaching taking place simultaneously with the development of R & G attributes.

Assessment Strategy

Two assessment tools are currently used in parallel to record and track learners' progress:

- The 'Key Dials' application is used for the 21 R & G attributes
- 'Target Tracker' is used for statutory National Curriculum subjects

Key Dials: Every student has a personal key dial for 'Rounded and Grounded' and, as assessments are collected over time, the dial shows a profile of progress in terms of a) each of the individual attributes b) the four areas and c) the overall picture. Each attribute is represented on the dial as a 'slice of the pie' and there is an ascending four point scale against which learners' performance is graded: red, amber, green and blue. Thus it is easy both to gain an impression of each learner's progress at a glance and to analyse in more detail to see which attributes need further attention.

Parents are able to contribute valuable evidence of progress themselves relating to activities at home and in the community

Target Tracker: By setting up year on year targets for learners in line with National Curriculum expectation, learners progress can be tracked and appropriate action can be taken to ensure that each individual is challenged either to catch up with age-related expectation or to go further and deepen and extend their learning.

Impact

It is too early in the implementation phase to draw firm conclusions about the effectiveness of the assessment strategy and there are inevitably lessons to be learned that will shape the process going forward.

The experience of using 'Orbit' in EYFS is valuable and the good practice in terms of methodology for recording evidence of each learner's progress and of parental involvement is clearly transferrable to 'Key Dials'.

The school is confident that it will have the desired impact in terms of helping learners take responsibility for their own learning and hence accelerate their progress.

Learners already routinely use the language of learning so the new approach to assessment will support a change that is becoming embedded rather than having to provide leverage to initiate the change.