



Achieving outstanding outcomes across two key stages

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Introducing Alps at KS4

We started using Alps Connect Interactive in 2017. We received a significant amount of support from the Alps team to get us started, both through introductory training and their customer helpline. We were able to upload data from previous years, so we could still compare outcomes over time from our first year of usage.

Many curriculum leaders and some teachers had used Alps already as a tool for analysis at Key Stage 5. Terms and phrases unique to Alps, such as the 'thermometer' or the gradings, were used frequently and understood by those who had any interest in or accountability for A level results. However, we have many more subjects and teachers at KS4 than we do at KS5 and so we found that a number of curriculum leaders and teams were unfamiliar with Alps altogether.

We tackled this through training and support on Alps - this occurred at governor, leadership, curriculum leader and teacher level. We introduced Alps terminology into end of year targets for staff performance management. At Raising Standards and Curriculum leader meetings, we used Alps grades to review predicted outcomes and Connect Interactive to identify students requiring praise and encouragement, or support and intervention. We found Alps to be most useful when it informed conversations; when staff were together, logged in and huddled around a laptop in a meeting discussing the 'what if' on a number of students. How can we get so-and-so from a 6 to a 7? How will this impact our Alps grade? What should this student be getting and how can we support? Why is this class making so much more progress than the others - which variables are having the biggest impact, and how can we replicate the success across the rest of the cohort?

Alps considers the ability of the cohort and student targets, specific to a subject, and works across two key stages. It is also immune to changes to grading, exam specifications and exam boards. Therefore, we could fairly assess the impact of a teacher or curriculum area on a group of students. Throughout the year and at the end, curriculum leaders, leadership and governors were able to review the effectiveness of teachers in a transparent and consistent way - who needed more support and what needed celebration? Where was there good practice and how could we share it? Alps Connect Interactive allowed us to have a clear and universal language to analyse and interrogate predicted and actual grades. At leadership level, the Alps report also provided an analysis of key groups and a teaching and learning grade that would inspire further discussion and action.



Impact

Alps does everything you would expect from a data analysis package - progress and attainment grades, comparisons over time, key groups - but they have the added benefit of giving a progress grade, independent of any changes in education. It is this that makes the data reliable and meaningful - without these two qualities, a piece of data, a score, a grade - it is meaningless, and open to misinterpretation and misuse. Since using Alps at KS4, we have been able to confidently use the data to draw conclusions, offer support, celebrate successes and most importantly, be consistent and effective in our approach.

We are at the end of the telephone Monday to Friday
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