



How we use Alps at Lumen Christi College

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School Context

Lumen Christi College is a Catholic co-educational grammar school of 850 students situated in the Bishop Street area of Derry. The school puts strong emphasis on the pastoral care of students and staff and has a reputation for being a high-achieving academic college. The College is among the highest-performing schools in Northern Ireland in terms of public examination outcomes and is consistently oversubscribed.

History

In September 2006, Lumen Christi College was designated a Science Specialism school, which was followed in October 2006 by a baseline ETI Specialist School inspection where the question was asked, "How do you propose to show that you have added value to the students at A level?" In November 2006 we hosted Kevin Conway, founder of Alps, and the Leadership Team was most impressed by his passion and enthusiasm and in particular his dedication to maximising the potential of all students.

After that meeting, we were convinced of the potential of Alps as a school improvement tool and that we had found our value-added performance indicator. The simplicity and effectiveness of Alps was very appealing, as was the match between the philosophy of Alps and our school ethos in terms of maximising the potential of each individual student.

We use Alps in the following 5 ways:

1. Target setting and monitoring progress at whole school level, departmental level and individual student level
2. Reviewing performance at whole school level, departmental level and individual student level
3. Measuring value added performance
4. Sharing Good Practice
5. Gender Analysis

Target Setting & Monitoring Progress

Each August, the Head of Sixth form and the Vice Principal use GCSE scores to set targets in terms of Minimum Expected Grades for each student so that these are ready for the Year 13 Induction. Form teachers and subject teachers discuss targets with the students as part of their induction process. Baseline targets are recorded on progress trackers by subject teachers and are used by Heads of Department and the Leadership Team to set departmental and whole school targets.

Progress and performance of individual students are reviewed on a continuous basis by subject teachers, heads of department, form teachers and pastoral leaders. Any identified underachievement triggers academic and/or pastoral interventions as appropriate.

Review meetings between subject teachers, form teachers and students take place at the beginning of November, end of January and mid-March.





Reviewing Performance

The great advantage of Alps reports is that they are available to us within a few days of the publication of A level/AS results and they are ready for the return of staff at the end of August.

Subject Review

The AS & A Level subject and teaching group reports are scrutinised by departmental teams and discussions centre around performance of each individual student and are linked to future improvements in teaching and learning.

The reports also form a significant focus of the review of outcomes meeting between the College Principal & Heads of Department. The outcomes of all of these discussions are used by Heads of Department to inform departmental action plans.



Whole School Level Review

The following are used by the Leadership Team and Governors to monitor value-added performance over the previous 4 years.

- Provider A level indicator – comparing the expected grades with actual grades
- Red teaching % of students taught in red subjects
- Blue teaching % students taught in blue subjects
- Single Year T score
- Three Year T score

These indicators are important to us as they exhibit the value added to our students' outcomes.

Sharing Good Practice

Within and between departments, strengths are identified and examples of good practice highlighted. Opportunities are created for the dissemination of good practice within departments via departmental meetings and between departments via the Head of Department Forum and whole school "sharing good practice" INSET sessions.

We have worked hard to build a culture in which, if one department is consistently in the red and thus achieving highly, the staff work collaboratively to see what aspects of their practice are having an impact and present these examples of good practice to others.

Gender Analysis

As a co-educational school, Lumen Christi College uses the Alps gender analysis performance reports to demonstrate value added to both boys and girls at whole school and at departmental level.

Conclusion

We have been using Alps for just over a decade and it has assisted the Leadership Team in building a culture of continuous improvement, with an emphasis on team effort. It has taken time to embed the philosophy of Alps. We needed to be very patient in relation to the time it took to emphasise Alps as a mechanism to strive for continual improvement for all students, and as a tool to help all teachers set realistic, challenging and achievable targets for our students.

We are at the end of the telephone Monday to Friday
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IS 621807