



CS019/08/19



LIMAVADY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Using Alps to develop a school improvement strategy

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Context

Limavady Grammar School is a co-educational non-denominational grammar school located in the North West of Northern Ireland. It was founded in 1924 and for the greater part of its existence it has been integrated in nature. It is located in a predominantly rural catchment area. The Sixth Form currently has over 200 students.

Using Alps has been part of a whole school improvement strategy to use data effectively with the aim of bringing about an improvement in outcomes. Our journey with Alps started in 2017 with a focus on how to raise outcomes and measure progress at A level, whilst setting realistic and challenging aspirational targets.

How is Alps used?

The use of Alps is integral to learning and teaching and assessment in Sixth Form.

The student

Induction days take place annually in August to accommodate target-setting discussions between students and a subject specialist. Within the parameters of these tailored discussions, targets are explored, then recorded based on Alps predictions. These targets are then used, throughout the academic year, to raise aspirations and expectations, serving the purpose of representing the minimum grade that we expect our students to attain. Subsequently, student progress against their specific Alps targets is reviewed at key assessment dates, and intervention steps taken as necessary. Recognising a need for the development of our students as a whole person, this intervention may be pastoral or academic. In order to best meet the needs of our students, scheduled intervention meetings take place with parents/carers present, communicating appropriate support and understanding across every strand of student contact. Academically, throughout the course of each term, students are made aware of their standing in relation to their individual targets. They are then supported in finding and implementing strategies to either maintain or improve their progress. Such support and guidance, provided to the pupils, enables them to reach their potential and remove any potential barriers to success.

Together, this creates an environment which allows our pupils to perform to the best of their abilities.

The subject teacher and department

After each assessment stage, results are analysed at a departmental and subject teacher level with gender analysis forming part of these fundamentally important pupil progress discussions. Connect Interactive is used to monitor the progress made within subjects and compare this against broader targets. Returning to the effectiveness of communication and collaborative team work, the sharing of good practice and early and effective intervention strategies, both departmentally and across the wider school, is central to the work that our teachers do within and across subject areas.

Whole School

Alps analysis is used at whole school level to measure individual and whole school progress. It enables the school to identify Red and Blue teaching. Analysis of student performance by expected grade is used to evaluate learning and teaching to see if it is meeting the needs of all our learners of differing ability levels. After each assessment stage, progress is compared to whole school targets and students are targeted for improvement. High expectations in regards to results create a culture of achievement for students and staff alike.

Outcomes

Alps have formed an important part of the school improvement journey. Alongside a focus on learning and teaching, gender differences, and pastoral support, the improvements in outcomes (both on an individual and whole school level) have been impressive. The Quality Indicator for A level outcome has improved from grade 5 (2017) to grade 4 (2018) and then to grade 2 (2019). The school has been placed in the top 20% nationally with a 3 year T score of 3.3. These improvements have resulted in a 10.5% increase in pupils achieving 3A* to C grades and the school is now placed well above the NI Grammar average.

In summary

The use of Alps has provided a common improvement language for Sixth Form: teacher workload in terms of data analysis has been significantly reduced; and the presentation of data in the

Alps reports is easy to understand. The interactive nature of Connect enables us to effectively monitor the progress of each of our students at A Level, and also provides personalised targets for students, teachers and departments which reflect individual learner ability.



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IS 621807