

Case study Ashton Sixth Form College



Embedding Alps and raising student achievement

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Ashton Sixth Form College is located in the borough of Tameside, Greater Manchester. The college hosts over 2300 16-18 year old students following one of three distinct curriculum programmes: an A level programme, a Vocational programme and a Mixed programme, consisting of a blend of both A level and vocational qualifications.

An Alps College

Ashton Sixth Form College has always worked with the Alps system and used it as a cornerstone of practice within the college. Staff are well versed in the system and are adept at using Alps reports at both college and subject level. There has been a renewed focus on the strategic use of Alps which led to significant improvements in both raw results and value added terms. The Principal and Vice Principal: Achievement and Quality lead departmental training sessions each year to reinforce the use of Alps and to introduce the system to any new members of staff. Students are introduced to the Alps system during target setting assemblies within the first ten days of the new academic year, which are then reinforced at subject level through subject specific tutorials.

Moving to Alps Connect

All staff were introduced to Connect at the first full staff meeting of the year. We used the short videos produced by Alps and hosted on YouTube as a starting point to introduce the package as our key monitoring tool for the year. In early September, we invited Alps to the college to train all members of the Senior Leadership Team in the use of Alps Connect. All members of teaching staff, pastoral and curriculum, were provided with a login and password for the system in preparation for whole staff training. As an SLT, we spent an afternoon working through the package to identify how best to use it. The number and timing of formal assessment points and data drops was agreed with our MIS Manager. We agreed to 5 assessment periods across the year which would be uploaded to Alps Connect and linked to our published assessment and monitoring plan.

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Help sheets for curriculum and tutorial staff were produced. These help sheets were trialled on all members of the Teaching and Learning Group in their training session and improved.

A full staff teaching and learning meeting was arranged to support all staff in their use of the product. The basic functionality of Alps Connect was shown to the whole staff. Smaller breakout sessions had been hosted by a member of our Teaching and Learning Group or SLT member. All staff were encouraged to use the help sheet and the support of their lead in the session to work through the Alps Connect programme.

Continuous Support

Since the initial training, follow up sessions with departments have taken place to reinforce the use of Connect across the college. Staff have really taken to Alps Connect and are using the functionality well in curriculum areas.

Pastoral staff are using Alps Connect after formal assessment points to monitor progress and provide intervention and support as required; the information provided in Alps Connect is being used by Senior Tutor Managers regularly to track progress at tutor group level. Senior leaders are meeting after assessment points with Heads of Department to interrogate the data. We use Connect in our monitoring meetings with Heads of Department, post mock, to track progress in individual classes and at departmental level.

The Future

Alps Connect has been very well received by staff at the college. The ease of use, clear layout and strong functionality have further developed the use of progress monitoring data at Ashton Sixth Form College. We intend to use Alps Connect to help us develop meaningful and realistic improvement targets for departments across the college. Our refocus on Alps helped us to reduce the number of 'blue' subjects from 19 to 6. Alps Connect will help us to improve again and aim for 'no blue Alps' which is our target for this year.

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