Setting and achieving aspirational targets with Alps

by Graham Jons
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Charters School is a "Good rated" secondary school academy based in leafy Sunningdale, Berkshire, near Ascot. Covering ages 11 to 19, we have 1730 students on roll with a Published Admission Number of 270 in Year 7. Current Year 10 has an extra form (300 students) and we have 353 students in our Sixth form. Our catchment area spans 2 local authorities – Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Bracknell Forest.

The school's core values of **Unity Respect Excellence** unpin everything we do.

- Unity: Commit, Connect, Communicate. We support each other to become the best we can.
- Respect: Yourself, Your School, Your Community. We show respect to others and the environment. We listen, cooperate and learn.
- Excellence: Make. It. Matter. We work to the best of our ability at all times. Don't miss out – every second counts.

Alps at Charters

Charters use of Alps started with the adoption of Alps exam reports in 2009. Having used Alps at my previous school, I was glad to see it actively used to support 16 – 19 KS5 cohort when I joined in 2018. A Level targets are set using Alps Minimum Expected Grades (MEGs) based off KS4 GCSE Average Point Scores (APS).

The academic year starts by us collecting statement of results from any new joiners in Year 12 and calculating their GCSE Average Point Scores. Together with known GCSE APS for the students who continued from Year 11, the data is loaded into Alps Connect to generate MEGs. The MEGs are labelled as "Suggested" targets and shared with Heads of Department, who then use "What-if" to modify their targets to those that will achieve an outcome of Alps grade 3 or better for their subjects.

Alps **Helping students aim higher**

Training on Alps Connect is given to any new Heads of Department. Once the changes have been made, the updated Personalised Targets are loaded into Alps as the Year 12 target gradepoint. Department Improvement Plans are written by Heads of Department and updated after each assessment point. The status of their 6th Form provision is assessed using the Alps Grade.Estimated grade data from 3 assessment points and 2 sets of internal exams is loaded into Alps Connect throughout the academic year. The subject Alps grades from these are added to Department Improvement Plans and Heads of Department present their subjects at Academic Board meetings after each assessment point, giving a holistic view of the current performance of the 6th Form cohort.

> **Comparison against previous assessments and targets show subject leaders if internal assessed grades are on track and if declining, where targeted interventions may be needed.**

Drill-down into focus groups such as Gender, Disadvantaged, English as an Additional Language, SEND and Prior Attainment Band is simple and straightforward. Comparison against previous assessments and targets show subject leaders if internal assessed grades are on track and if declining, where targeted interventions may be needed. We are excited about the new KS5 Performance Measures section released in March 2023 and will be looking at it in more detail after Easter.

GCSE

Similarly to Year 12, Year 10 student data and teaching data is loaded at the start of the academic year. Prior Attainment uses KS2 Scaled Scores, where we have them, and CAT4D test scores where we don't. Students joining Charters in Year 7 without KS2 data sit a CAT4D test and we have this data for future Key Stage 4 Year groups, who did not sit KS2 SATS during the pandemic. Year Group 11 cohort data is refreshed.

KS4 Suggested Subject Targets for Year 10 are set using benchmarks from FFTAspire and loaded into a Y10 Targets gradepoint in Alps Connect. Subject leaders use 'What-If' to review and modified targets are loaded as Personalised Targets. Estimated grades from 2 assessment points & 2 sets of internal exams is loaded for Years 10 and 11. Subject Leaders use Subject Analysis and compare performance against 3 other gradepoints.

Senior Leaders and Trustees

Senior Leaders use Strategic Analysis reports to provide a holistic view of an exam level (A Level, BTEC or KS4) and extracts are used in the Trustee Curriculum Committee meetings. Alps Connect is a great fit into our assessment analysis toolset and it is straightforward to get the data needed out of our school MIS.

No Fuss on Results Day

Come A Level and GCSE results days, we temporarily remove Head of Department access so we can Add Exam grades on Embargo Day and provide Strategic and Subject Analysis to the Headteacher and nominated Assessment Leaders. Once the GCE embargo date has passed, Subject Leader access is reinstated. Any grade changes from reviews of marking are made in Alps Connect, so it always holds the most up to date grades and this is of great help with the Department of Education School and College Checking Exercise. At A Level, subjects are targeted to achieve an Alps Grade 3 or higher. Post-exam analysis requires subject leaders to answer how well they performed against that target.

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In summary

Alps has been embedded in Charters School assessment toolkit since its arrival. As features have been added, the school has adopted them.

Alps Connect now provides our subject and senior leaders with an essential aid to set targets, monitor how well subjects are performing in internal assessments and understand the performance of key subgroups, such as gender, SEND and disadvantaged. On exam results days, a strategic report with our T score lets us see if we have met the widely important goal of Alps Grade 3 or higher.

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