

Good practice in setting targets for whole school achievements

Catherine Kirk St Giles School, Nottinghamshire

Aim

To establish meaningful whole school targets for all pupils, which relate to and are reflected in Individual Education Plans and pupil set targets.

Dimensions of this study

This is a whole school study, as a school we wish to improve our target setting and to link whole school targets, annual review targets, IEP's and targets set by individual students for themselves. Each department will work as a team to set whole phase targets. Each individual student will be baselined as appropriate to their learning difficulties. Where possible students will contribute to their own targets. The work will be evaluated at the end of the academic year.

Target Setting in Special Schools

Reports of East Midlands DFES Regional Project Best Practice Research

Good practice in setting targets for whole school achievement

Catherine Kirk
Head Teacher - St Giles School

Aim

To establish meaningful whole school targets for all pupils, which relate to and are reflected in Individual Education Plans and pupil set targets.

Dimensions of this study

This is a whole school study, as a school we wish to improve our target setting and to link whole school targets, annual review targets, IEP's and targets set by individual students for themselves. Each department will work as a team to set whole phase targets. Each individual student will be baselined as appropriate to their learning difficulties. Where possible students will contribute to their own targets. The work will be evaluated at the end of the academic year.

Summary of findings

The development of whole school targets has proved difficult. We have tried a variety of ways in which to group pupils. Our pupils fit generally into the three categories PMLD, SLD and MLD. One way of possible target setting was to divide pupils into these three categories and set targets for each group irrespective of age group. This we rejected for the following reasons. Younger pupils may make faster progress against targets within the "P" level scales than older

pupils. Some pupils will progress in terms of experience and their development against levels will be to broaden across a level rather than to progress from one level to the next. Some targets are appropriate for only one age group. As pupils at Post 16 follow a separate curriculum their targets will be measured against different criteria. Some targets for PSDI will be age appropriate targets. We therefore agreed that targets should be set by age group.

Each Team therefore worked together to set targets for their phase. Targets, which had been set in the academic year 1999-2000, had been evaluated. Evaluation showed that we had set very different targets within each phase group. The Primary team had set targets based on Key stage groups. Targets had been set in Reading, Communication, Number, Communication/Personal and Social Development and Personal Development. Each target had written success criteria.

Targets were related to all pupils within a Key stage. Some targets had percentages stated and some used words like "most" and "all". The success criteria were mainly based on established school recording and assessment sheets.

The Secondary Team targets were more general and reflected targets included in the school development plan. Some targets referred to both Key Stage Three and Four and some only to one Key Stage. No success criteria were stated with the targets. There were no targets directly related to pupil progress.

Post 16 targets were set in Communication, Application of Number and Personal and Social Development. Each target contained percentages and gave a cohort ratio. The success criteria for each target were stated and involved teacher assessment and recording.

All teams had been aware of the need to set SMART targets; however it became clear to us during our initial evaluation that we had only teacher assessment or rhetoric on which to base our evidence of attainment. We were aware that some other measure of progress was necessary to compliment teacher assessment.

It was therefore agreed that our targets for the academic year 2000-2001 would be based upon the EQUALS Access Curriculum baseline and recording. The baseline information would be forwarded to EQUALS who would record our data and provide comparative figures assessed alongside similar schools. EQUALS also undertook to provide a comparison of the Access Curriculum levels and the revised "P" scales. For pupils who were assessed as working at level one or above of the National Curriculum teacher assessment would be complimented by the use of Nationally recognised data. We believe that the use of objective tests supports our teacher assessment and helps us to clearly demonstrate that pupils have made progress.

Our first attempts at target setting had produced a format for targets setting which had been adopted by the Primary and Post 16 teams. Evaluation of this form showed that we needed space on which a review of the progress against each target could be recorded.

Our targets for this year are all based on a common format. For each target a key issue must be clearly stated. Issues cover Number, Communication and Personal and Social Development. We found that setting targets over Key Stage groups was not very useful. The needs of our pupils is so diverse that a more accurate and appropriate target can be set by year groups or Key Stage dividing these pupils into cohorts by assessed levels still keeping within phases.

The use of percentages is not helpful in a school where one or two pupils may make up a full year group. It is necessary therefore to give cohort numbers with percentages.

Success in reaching targets can be severely effected by the addition or withdrawal of one or two pupils in a year group or key stage. The timing of the national target setting requirements is not helpful to us. The January start to the cycle means that some of the cohort may not be available at the end of the cycle due to transition. Targets are set for the academic year and must be

reviewed whilst pupils are in the current groupings. This became particularly apparent in terms of groups where pupils were leaving the school and where the review of targets was taking place during the Autumn term.

During our development of target setting we have found the Annual review presents an ideal opportunity to begin linking all targets together. Where possible teachers discuss the Annual Review with pupils and this gives a basis for yearly targets, which pupils have contributed to. These targets are recorded in IEP's and may also appear in Records of Achievement. Targets are also known to parents. The discussion with pupils regarding their progress prior to the Annual Review meeting has also empowered our students they are prepared to make comments and to plan their own targets. They are therefore able to make a greater contribution to their meetings. This is not appropriate to all pupils and a further development will be to work on advocacy for PMLD pupils.

We have gone some way towards the joining up of all aspects of target setting. There is still work to do on identifying exactly how all parts fit together. It is possible to follow some targets set through the whole recording process.

We have become more skilled at setting targets with pupils. There is an expectation amongst pupils that they will evaluate their own work. The majority of this work remains within the Secondary and Post 16 groups. It is clear that setting targets for personal development enables pupils to recognise their own progress and provides a tool for them to express this improvement.

Characteristics of the school

St Giles School is an all age (3-19) Area Special School situated in Bassetlaw, which is the most northerly district of Nottinghamshire. The school caters for pupils with a wide range of need, including profound multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. In addition to this many pupils have a sensory or behaviour difficulty.

LEA pupil audit figures for 2000-2001 provide the following information in terms of pupil need across the school. (LEA figures are actually given A to E rather than by category) However they roughly translate as follows. PMLD 14.6% SLD 47.6% PD 2.45% MLD 20.7% Behaviour Difficulties 14.6%. 21.6% of the whole school population is within the Autistic spectrum. Significantly 56.25% of these pupils are at Nursery and Key Stage 1.

The school is organised into teams, Primary, Secondary, Post 16 and Outreach, each of which has a team leader. The Primary school consists of four classes, Nursery/Reception, Key Stage 1/2 and two Key Stage 2 groups. Pupils are grouped according to their age. Most subjects are taught in class groups by the class teacher the exception to this is PE where pupils are taught in ability groups. Music and Technology are taught by specialist teachers.

The Secondary school consists of four classes two at Key Stage 3 and two at Key Stage 4. Pupils are organised into mixed ability classes across a Key Stage, these classes are base classes for pupils. Pupils are then placed in ability groups for most subjects. At Key stage 3 the two classes break into three ability groups and are taught by subject teachers for many of their lessons. At Key stage 4 pupils work in ability groups and class groups and some areas of the curriculum are shared with Post 16. Post 16 work mainly in ability groups though based in one class. The number of classes and groups vary according to pupil numbers and the range of ability within each Key Stage.

The average class size is 9, each class has a class teacher and a Learning Support Assistant, most classes have a Care Assistant and some classes have additional support from a Learning Support Assistant or teacher according to need. Additional support is provided by specialist teachers of Music, Technology and French.

The school has an Outreach Team of six teachers who work mainly with pupils with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools. We support 58 primary schools and 8 secondary schools across the whole district of Bassetlaw.

The school has a Staff Management Team of seven made up of Team Leaders, Senior Nursery Nurse, Deputy Head Teacher and Head Teacher. There is a staffing compliment of 17.5 FTE teachers, 15 FTE LSA's and 6 Care Assistants. Every teacher has a curriculum responsibility and is responsible for their subject across the school, supported by a subject team.

The school has a very wide catchment area serving the whole of Bassetlaw; in addition to this we have pupils from three other Local Education Authorities. Five of our pupils are on dual placement with mainstream schools.

The school has ten classrooms, a food technology room, a technology room, a sensory room, a library and a hall. In addition to this we have a hydrotherapy pool and an outreach base. The school has a large playing field, which includes a sensory trail and a discrete interactive sensory garden.

Background to the Study

All schools are required to set and publish targets for their pupils. These targets should be challenging and should represent improvement year on year. For special schools the targets required were largely inappropriate to the needs of the school. It was easy to set targets of 0 in all areas for each statutory requirement. The targets were however meaningless within the school context and at the very least insensitive to the needs of the pupils and their parents. As a school we felt we should attempt to set whole school targets which were meaningful and by which we could demonstrate whole school progress.

Our first thought was that the Individual Education plans, which all pupils have, would provide whole school targets. However it was clear from the advice given by QCA and DFEE that this was not acceptable, nor appropriate. Our IEP's are curriculum based having one or two targets recorded for each subject for each individual. This type of IEP is useful in terms of representing the pupils personal targets, as many pupils select targets, which fall within a particular curriculum area. A link between the pupils targets and the teacher targets can be clearly seen. In November 1999 we made our first real attempts at whole school target setting. Would our targets be across ability groups for pupils 3-19 years or would they be based on Key Stage groups? After much discussion and many attempts we set our first targets. As statutory targets were based on end of Key Stage 2 and 4 results our targets were broken into Primary, Secondary and Post 16 targets. We were aware of the need to produce SMART targets however this proved harder than we expected. Our evaluation at the end of the first year showed progress in line with most targets, it was clear to us however that there was still a lot of work to do in terms of setting challenging targets, which could be measured against standards other than those based on teacher assessment.

The school was committed to the Equals curriculum, our staff having been part of the original teachers who had set up the early programmes of study and later the schemes of work. We had also worked on the "Moving On" curriculum; these schemes would therefore form the basis of our baselining and target setting for many of our pupils. We had joined the Equals baseline and benchmarking exercise and this would continue. The "P" levels had been published in their original form; these would also be used however we were aware of their limitations.

We had worked within our teams – particularly at Secondary level to encourage pupils to set their own targets and to evaluate their work. We wanted to find a way to link this work, ROA's, pupils IEP's and whole school targets together.

The Research Questions

Could meaningful whole school targets be set for Primary, Secondary and Post 16 pupils, which reflect the wide range of special needs across the school?

How could we demonstrate that such targets were challenging and that progress against targets had been made?

Is it possible to provide a clear link between target setting for individuals and whole school targets?

The Study

All pupils in school were baselined in order that we had a picture of exactly where every child was in terms of Communication, Number and Personal and Social Development. Whole school targets would be set in each of these subjects.

Baseline assessment would provide hard data where by progress could be demonstrated – moving away from the more subjective type of teacher assessment.

The previous years targets would be examined, achievement recorded and the process evaluated.

New targets would be set which reflected the range of pupil needs across phases.

Ongoing work related to pupils setting their own targets would be evaluated and this work would be reflected in IEP's, ROA's and whole school targets.

Examples of target setting

Whole School Targets

Primary

1999-2000

Key Issue – *Reading*. Target - *KS2 pupils who are emergent readers to read at least 10 words on sight*. Success Criteria - *Identify those pupils who are emergent readers and record individually the words they read consistently*.

Key Issue – *Number*. Target. *At least 25% of KS2 pupils to reach Level 8 of Number*. Success Criteria – *Recorded individually on Access Curriculum*.

2000-2001

Key Issue – *Literacy*. Target – *50% KS2 pupils to recognise some familiar words in simple text or in the environment*. Success Criteria – *Small steps NC. Level 1 in pupils files*.

Key Issue – *Numeracy*. Target – *All pupils to participate with support if necessary in counting rhymes*. Success Criteria – *Access Level 4*

Secondary

1999 – 2000

Adapt Literacy and Numeracy hour to the needs of Key Stage Three pupils.

Increase the number of subjects assessed through the Certificate of Achievement for Key Stage Four pupils.

2000 – 2001

Key issue – Use of ICT in Maths. Target – Pupils currently working at NC1 or above to be able to programme a desk top roamer/screen turtle. Success Criteria – Pupils able to make a square or rectangular shape using appropriate programming.

Key Issue – Reading. Target – 70% of pupils at level 8 of the Access Curriculum to reach NC level 1. Success Criteria – Baseline Assessment to show progress. Assessment using SAT materials to confirm level 1.

Post 16

1999-2000

Key Issue – Communication. Target – 66% of students working at level 5 and 6 will be able to select/name tactile symbol from choice of two. Cohort Ratio 2/3. Success Criteria - as recorded in "Moving On" curriculum level 5/6.

Key Issue – Number. Target – 50% of students working at level 4 and 5 will make comparisons and note differences regarding simple measure. Cohort ratio 2/4. Success criteria – as recorded in "Moving On" level 4/5.

2000 – 2001

Key Issue – PSD. Target – 66% of students working towards level 7 will identify 4 differences between self and others. Cohort ratio 2/3. Success Criteria – as recorded in "Moving On" level 7.

Key Issue – Communication. Target – 100% of students working towards level 9 will identify 6 different purposes to writing. Cohort ratio 2/2. Success Criteria – as recorded in "Moving On level 9.

Pupils Setting Their own Targets

SLD pupil Year 12. Targets were set on 12.9.00 and Reviewed on 15.12.00. The Targets set were as follows. 1. "Get better at using a saw." 2. "Spell more words on my own". 3. "Getting better at adding tens and units". The pupil's evaluation was I have reached all my targets.

SLD pupil Year 10. Target for measuring liquids. Summer term 2001. "To be able to measure properly in litres and mls. Keep a record of work."

MLD pupil Year 11. Targets for work experience. " Plan and prepare myself for the tasks I may have to do. Carry out my tasks as if I was an adult but with respect for authority. Talk to children on their level and get them interested in the story. Use some Makaton learn some more."

Implementation

Baseline assessment was undertaken for every pupil in school. Because of the wide range of need in the school a variety of tests were used. For pupils working at or below level 1 of the National Curriculum the Equals Baseline assessment was used, "P" level equivalents were also given.

All baseline data relating to the Equals Access Curriculum has been passed to equals for benchmarking against other schools.

Pupils operating above this level were assessed on a variety of nationally acknowledged tests including, Individual Reading Analysis NFER, New Reading Analysis NFER, British Picture Vocabulary Scale, Staffordshire Maths Assessment, Standard Assessment Tests and Teacher Assessment. The use of Standardised tests where possible provides the school with hard data, which can be used to identify progress against targets

Where ever possible throughout school pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and to set targets for improvement. At the end of each curriculum unit or lesson as appropriate pupils have completed a simple form which helps them to evaluate how much they have learned, how they could have improved their performance and to set targets for improvement.

A variety of forms, which will assist pupils with a variety of learning difficulties to evaluate their work and set targets, have been developed. These forms have been trialed across ability levels and phases. They have been revised and evaluated a pack of resource material has been produced.

Pupils are recording their own evaluations of their work and target setting is a regular feature of schoolwork. ROA's are maintained and a summative document is issued at the end of each year.

IEP's have been set for each pupil in every curriculum area; these have been evaluated and revised on a termly basis.

Teams have met on a regular basis to examine progress towards whole school targets – based on IEP reviews.

Targets set in Annual Reviews are clearly linked to IEP's and whole school targets.

Annual Review targets have been checked against Statement targets.

Whole school targets are reflected in Performance Management targets and reflected in the School Development Plan.

Outcomes

We have developed an understanding of how whole school targets can be used to influence the work of individual pupils and of how individual targets can be linked to whole school targets.

Our understanding of whole school target setting has developed. Our current targets are smarter and more closely related to targets set at Annual Review.

The evaluation process which has been team based has clarified the target setting process and has pulled our teams more closely together in terms of working towards the targets. A standard format for whole school targets has been established.

We have developed a series of simple forms, which aid the individual target setting process. This process has increased our pupils skill in evaluating their own work. These forms are paired with forms on which teacher evaluations of a pupils work can be fed back to pupils.

We have increased the range of ways in which pupils can evaluate their work. Advocacy for pupils with PMLD has increased these pupils ability to record their reaction to lessons they have experienced.

We have significantly improved our assessment procedures in terms of baseline assessment for each child. We have hard data for our pupils, which support our teacher assessments. Internal moderation processes are well underway. We are seeking to establish moderation for "P" levels with other special schools.

At Post 16 difficulty has been experienced in finding a suitable nationally recognised scheme for recording achievement. The "Moving On" curriculum has not proved as objective in its assessment as we had hoped. We will continue to work on standardising recording and moderating the same both within school and hopefully with other schools. We have researched what is currently available for post "Moving On." We are gathering material including "P" level information and PIVATS. We are looking at information from WJEC relating to Lifeskills, Keyskills and Workskills as suggested progression from Certificate of Achievement.

The Key Strands of this approach

- All whole school targets must be set using the same format.
- Targets must be set both by age and ability level
- A moderation process should support teacher Assessment and objective testing where appropriate.
- Whole school targets should be reflected in individual planning.
- A team approach to target setting provides challenge and support.

Further Reading

Equals Access Curriculum.

Baseline Assessment and Curriculum Target Setting

Moving On.

PO Box 107
North Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE30 2YG.

Tim Kent and Brahm Norwich, Target Setting for Individuals and Schools: How Can It Work With SEN

DFEE Circular 11/98: Target Setting in Schools (July 1998)

QCA. DfEE Standards and Effectiveness Unit. Supporting the Target Setting Process (revised March 2001) : Guidance for effective target setting for pupils with SEN.

QCA Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils With Learning Difficulties. (March 2001)