

Best practice: Intensifying Support Programme Target setting in Coventry

Primary National Strategy

Using curricular targets

John Gulson is a large inner-city primary school with approximately 560 children on roll. It serves a multicultural community, with 93% of children speaking English as an additional language. The school has 35% free school meals and currently 26% of children have special educational needs.

John Gulson began to set curricular targets for Literacy and Numeracy and linked this process to pupil-tracking against national performance to ensure high teacher expectations across the school.

This was the process that the senior management team went through to identify the weaknesses in reading, writing and mathematics across school and then set appropriate focused curricular targets, which were reflected throughout the school in designing the learning (planning), teaching and assessment for learning.

Analysis of QCA tests and book trawls

Analysis of the QCA tests across the school and book trawls indicated specific weaknesses across the whole school in:

Reading

- Inference and deduction
- Interpretation and response
- Commenting on authors' choice of language

Writing

- Knowledge and application of grammatical skills
- Knowledge of different text types

Mathematics

- Children's use of mental strategies
- Using and applying skills to solve real-life problems

Setting whole school curricular targets

Using evidence from the analysis, whole-school curricular targets were then set:

Reading: 'Children need to improve their abilities to have an appropriate personal interpretation and response to a wide range of texts.'

Writing: 'Children need to develop their abilities to use and apply grammatical skills to improve the purpose and organisation of their writing.'

Mental maths: ‘Children need to develop their abilities to choose appropriate mental strategies to solve real-life problems.’

Setting year group targets

Year group curricular targets were then set for each half-term using the NLS target statements for reading and writing and NNS key objectives for mathematics. The selection of the curricular target statements for each term came out of the school curriculum targets above and knowledge of the NLS and NNS objectives to be covered for each term.

The intention was to set curricular targets that were not seen as ‘additional’ to the curriculum. Therefore, the curricular target focus was already part of the existing training for new and existing Primary Strategy consultant leaders participant’s pack (session 8) in conjunction with NCSL and NRT 122 programme of study and scheme of work for that term. However, the emphasis in designing the learning (planning), teaching and assessment for learning needed to change to reflect the curricular targets set for each year group. For example, the NLS objectives for Year 5 Term 1 already emphasises characterization and the use of speech punctuation. Therefore the Year 5 curricular target statements reflect this.

Differentiated year group targets into class targets

For each year group curricular target, a differentiated class curricular target was then written. The intention was to write an age-appropriate curricular target in child-friendly language, e.g. ‘Should be able to ...’. From this age-related curricular target, differentiated curricular targets were then written based on ‘Must be able to ...’ for the less able and a ‘Could be able to ...’ for the more able.

The *must*, *should* and *could* statements were displayed in the classroom along with prompts and displays to support the children in achieving the curricular targets (target ‘getting’) and self-evaluation. The *must*, *should* and *could* targets were inclusive and intended to support all abilities. Gifted and talented children and those with special educational needs were also encouraged to have an inclusive personalised curricular target related to the class target. At John Gulson, the school liaised with other LEA services to support the teachers in relating the class targets to specific individuals, particularly those with English as an additional language and children with learning or behavioural difficulties.

The grouping of pupils, based on teacher assessment and QCA tests, set the **minimum teacher expectations** for all pupils, which was then used to assess, monitor and track pupil progress over the year.

- Less-able pupils to achieve the *must* targets.
- ‘Target groups’ (pupils working just below national age-related expectations) and pupils working at age-related expectations to achieve the *should* targets.

- More-able pupils to achieve the *could* targets.

Monitoring the impact of curricular targets

While it took time to embed curricular targets into the culture of the school, the focus on curricular targets has allowed teachers to plan, teach and assess children's progress in key aspects of learning more effectively. A recent Ofsted inspection commented favourably on the school's pupil tracking systems and the use of curricular targets throughout the school.

The senior management team coordinate support for different groups and individuals more effectively, including drawing upon the support of other LEA services to ensure achievement of all children.

The learning environment has also been transformed within classrooms, with a greater emphasis on 'work in progress' and support for the 'getting' of the curricular targets. The biggest impact, however, has been on the learning culture throughout the school, with all teachers now more actively engaged in regular discussions about pupil progress and attainment. This is done by having half-termly pupil progress meetings to discuss progress against the curricular targets, share good practice and plan future actions.