



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Beyond Levels: summary of evidence of outcomes and impact

Research Report

September 2014

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Summary of school comments regarding outcomes and impact of research study

	OUTCOMES	IMPACT INDICATORS
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have all become aware of the demands of the new national curriculum (NC) We have engaged in professional dialogue regarding year on year standards We have been able to question the meaning of standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools will be able to highlight the progress made by students It will be possible to review whether this progress is in line with high expectations It will be possible to see where progress fits along the NC timeline
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of research within the school has increased significantly – all of the members of the key stage 3 (KS) research group have become better informed and better placed to lead change within their departments The links with one of our partner schools has increased – particularly with the special educational needs (SEN) departments Planning at a department level has been embedded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As from September 2014 most departments will use marking grids As from September 2014 all teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) will use Bloom’s questioning cards. By June 2015 ‘progression objectives’ will be written by all departments for trial in September 2015 and full introduction in 2016 if deemed to be the right approach. We have established a curriculum change forum which will meet three times next academic year. These meetings will be to discuss the differing approaches taken by schools to curriculum change cross-phase. A key part of this will be to discuss assessment models. Partner schools will present their assessment models as a way of stimulating debate. The forum will have a generic element but we intend to split into phase specific

	OUTCOMES	IMPACT INDICATORS
		meetings.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We managed to achieve consensus on principles but not methods Overwhelmingly, schools will move to a mastery model, though some have chosen to call it a competency model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Though slim, the findings so far suggest that pupils welcome the clarity of trajectory offered by mastery statements and the fine grained evaluation offered by the inch pebble statements
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working collaboratively and sharing ideas through a research focused group has been an extremely positive experience for all of the participants SOLO Taxonomy is worthy of further exploration as a formative assessment tool Providing a forum for professional discussion across schools is worth developing further 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We intend to set up a SOLO Taxonomy group so that schools can continue to share and develop formative assessment practice collaboratively Involvement in the project has led some participants to explore, develop and refine their practice in relation to recording, tracking and reporting pupils' attainment Sharing ideas has been positive and will lead to greater trust and honesty across the partnership
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have become more aware of parental perception on children's assessment As a school by being able to research how assessment is planned for in different establishments and contexts has increased our awareness. The professional dialogue from the research has significantly reduced workload on our staff due to the use of information technology to support this area of work 	<p>As a result of this project we will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> holding a number of awareness meetings to ensure that parents, as one of our key stakeholders, have a wider understanding of which assessments are used within school and how these support their child using information technology more effectively to ensure assessment is more stretching, achievable and targeted for pupils <p>We aim to disseminate the research and have already approached a number</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As researchers we are now more aware of how to address the new 'assessment without levels' from September 2014. Undertaking the research project has developed our pedagogy and practice 	<p>of schools to continue this journey together so that the new curriculum and its assessment is more appropriate and effective for the children in our care</p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration of primary, secondary and higher educational establishments – all working towards the same goals Practical assessment materials that can be implemented into schools for September as a starting point (in times of uncertain change) CPD of all staff involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools involved will be using the materials for assessment and meeting regularly for moderation and professional dialogue Further materials will be developed and schools involved will hopefully expand. We will look to publish and disseminate these further afield Research to continue (and lead teacher working towards MPhil/PhD)
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-phase working has provided significant opportunities for colleagues to work together, to share their experience, explore and challenge misconceptions and myths and to establish a strong cross-phase assessment group. This professional dialogue continues to support wider professional development. In one case, a secondary teacher volunteered to team teach with a primary school colleague on an area of numeracy More detailed understanding of cross-school/phase assessment has been generated by sharing different approaches to assessment. There have also been clear benefits of primary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of this project, all schools will continue to evaluate and revise their approaches to assessment in relation to changes to the curriculum. In particular working down from KS4 to KS3 into KS2 As a result of this project schools will ensure the profile of pupil self-assessment and clear targets are maintained as schools revise and adapt their assessment practices. This will ensure that systems are concise, informative and workable and meet the needs of pupils, parents, teachers and school leaders Appropriate points of contact have been established across school/phases which will be invaluable for the wider work of the

	OUTCOMES	IMPACT INDICATORS
	<p>feeder schools working closely with their feeder secondary schools. For example, discussions concerning approaches to the teaching of maths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment group is very keen to remain working together offering further professional support as we explore the challenges of the new NC and the implications of this on assessment 	<p>alliance and through its work towards the 'big six' and further opportunities to engage in research and development in order to refine and improve the quality of teaching and learning</p>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have formed good professional dialogue across phases and schools, which have been very positive. Whilst at first appearing impossible, creating a set of objectives which go across primary and secondary is achievable if the dialogue continues and we receive good support from secondary partners We have developed innovative approaches to assessment which have enabled us to completely rethink how assessment can be approached in primary schools – and the potential for schools. Schools are hubs of professional expertise and can lead on the highest quality projects We have become clearer in terms of the approaches to assessment for next year and gained strength by working collaboratively. The schools have developed an approach together and are now disseminating this outstanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding - generating funding from sales of the software, assessment objectives and support packages, in order to reinvest in research and assessment practice. Impact in schools – the impact of the assessment ladders, software and support on schools teaching, learning, progress and reporting Professional development - having invested time and money in to individuals to create the assessment objectives, leaders will now have a much clearer understanding of their subjects moving forwards with the new national curriculum and will continue to develop effective assessment practice having had the time and support to immerse themselves in the new approaches

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	<p>practice. Developing it collaboratively has enabled us to draw from each other's strengths and ensure our approaches are rigorous and sustainable</p>	
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As teachers involved in the project we have become more confident in implementing changes to the teaching of reading, within the SEN context. Participation has impacted on our own learning and classroom teaching. We would like to continue with research and consider undertaking further accredited study in the future. We have seen the value and impact of carrying out research with support from a higher educational institute (HEI) and the need to be robust and rigorous in our methodology and evaluations. The joint working with each other and support from HEI has been invaluable. <p>"Being involved in this research project has helped me to rapidly develop my own subject knowledge and ensured I am aware of up to date practice. I have been able to share my learning with the staff at my school, and this has had a direct and positive impact on teaching and learning. Our own school data for the subject area also shows impact as there is improved pupil progress in reading. The research is also beginning to have a wider impact as I have opportunities to share the findings outside of my own school. I am now very keen to extend some</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research project has enabled a whole school focus to be implemented on the teaching of reading linked to the new curriculum. Observations indicate that staff have an improved shared understanding of what is trying to be achieved. The senior leadership team are totally committed to supporting the project next year. The reading resource will be implemented fully across both schools. The research group will continue with two members becoming research champions in their own schools. <p>"Personally the work has been very satisfying to bring the staff together"</p> <p>"The progress document has been really useful to refer to as it has initiated ideas and serves as reference for progression... it has made it much clearer to know where you are going in terms of next steps for pupils"</p> <p>"The data is showing evidence of significant improvements not just in reading but also in writing."</p> <p>"Planning is now consistent across key stages"</p> <p>"There seems to also be an impact on writing"</p>

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	<p>areas of the project as there is definitely a need for further research in this area”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers across both schools report increased confidence in collecting and evidencing examples of pupil progress and pupils work files confirm this information • Data shows that this year pupils are on track to meet or exceed targets in reading and many were set stretch targets midway through the year 	<p>“Opened eyes to using books in a different sort of way”</p> <p>“The whole project has been fun and enjoyable to work on, not a chore at all”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New assessments will be implemented in reading across both schools and shared with other schools and sectors in educations • New reading resources being available that are relevant to the needs of learners
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More professional dialogue about what true assessment is and looks like • Discussion about what assessment should be and how it can be used – not replacing like for like • How planning for assessment opportunities can help improve the front end process of planning for learning – support work with developing a new primary curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to look at wider span of assessment rather than replacing a system of identifying children as snap shots with another system which does the same – true assessment is about learning and next steps not benchmarking against hypothetical standard • CPD for staff around assessment, planning for assessment opportunities and their use needed
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have become much more aware of the need to work collaboratively on national changes or initiatives in order to achieve mutual understanding for moderation and transition. • Professional dialogue around current issues is of paramount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a cluster, we have a better understanding of the definitions of effective assessment, both formative and summative and are clear on the need to devise a system to impact learning rather than to become a paper filling exercise. • We have now appointed an

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	<p>importance in order to have a deep understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to work harder at engaging a wider range of stakeholders/phases in order for this to have further impact 	<p>assessment specialist leader of education to coordinate the work moving forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary schools have become engaged and wish to share their thinking around current and proposed models for 14-15.
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have all become better at timetabling in opportunities for pupil conferencing and feedback • Assessment in maths has become more varied from a greater range of sources • Professional dialogue has become more reflective when using educational theory and has improved opportunities for sharing resource and networking across school alliances 	<p>To be agreed within the network of member schools – autumn 2014</p>
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have become aware of the need to change from a culture of level descriptors that dictated what the pupil should learn. Change runs deeper than a simple replacement of levels into an opportunity for a fundamental shift in the purpose and ambition within KS3 • Departments have been empowered to develop a simplified; skills based idea that can be used for formative assessment on a day to day basis. • A professional dialogue across a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be in a stronger position with regard to life after levels • Have revised schemes of work to take account of the new PoS • Be empowered to take the necessary steps for curriculum redesign that would not have happened without this change at the national level.

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	number of schools has developed	
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More effective sharing of best and emerging practice eg one school ran an introductory overview to SOLO. More effective use of existing online resources such as the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Maths website¹ • Collaborative links between schools have been developed and maintained • We all now know that no-one has the answer, but a range of possible and equally valid alternatives are being trialled, in schools across the Midlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant number of primary and secondary schools within the borough are aiming to introduce SOLO Taxonomy into their planning, teaching and assessment from September 2014, with CPD support from both teaching schools and the local authority • The process of an action research project is better understood by most members of the group, including the importance of the cyclic process of plan / do / review. The risk element of the project (eg some of our efforts did not bear useful fruit) has made some member of the group more resilient and confident to experiment with new ideas. Learning to manage failure has led some teachers to consider whether we are as a profession too risk averse in our pedagogies • Primary and secondary teachers have recognised the benefit of cross phase CPD wherever the focus is a pedagogical one. This was evident in a cross phase SOLO workshop
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has consolidated an emerging system leadership approach to school development planning. This is evidenced in the development of joint school development plans emerging from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a common school development strand across the partnership • Have a common assessment framework across the partnership

¹ <https://www.ncetm.org.uk/>

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	<p>the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has enabled partner schools to focus on strategic learning orientated practices that are child focused rather than comparative performance practices that have disparate drivers • The project has enabled staff from across the alliance to share practice beyond the initial scope of the enquiry thus developing a relationship between schools at a time of flux in the wider educational context 	<p>and region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have common learning to learn protocols across the partnership and region
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for professional dialogue - planning and evaluation • Enhanced knowledge and understanding of assessment methodologies • Opportunities to become 'influencers' in the profession • Child-led assessment for learning • Staff have a much better understanding of revised Bloom's Taxonomy compared with the original version • Staff are able to use Bloom's planning grids effectively • Staff can articulate why planning using Bloom's leads to improved learning for the children • Planning across the curriculum is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced understanding of the use of questioning and the language of Bloom's Taxonomy as well as professional development in designing assessment materials • Development of appropriate summative assessment materials in line with our current methodologies in all other forms of assessment • Engaging children in the language of revised Bloom's Taxonomy • Use of Bloom's Taxonomy in planning to support differentiation for both lower and high ability students • Our planning pro forma will include Bloom's verbs • Staff to use Bloom's grid when planning a new unit of work

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	focussing on putting thinking skills as a key part of the process of learning and not putting the emphasis on content and facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson observations to include a focus on higher order thinking for MA children • Our school hopes to develop a curriculum which meets the needs of our speech and language needs pupils and puts thinking and learning skills at the heart of the planning with the aim of developing independent resilient learners
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have all become far more aware of research and how the process can be as valuable as the findings themselves • As a group, we would love the opportunity to embark on further research as we believe we would be in a better situation now as we have learnt so much along the way • Our findings have confirmed our belief in the benefits of dedicated feedback time, and with young pupils the importance and value of oral feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable for specified dedicated oral feedback time to pupils for at least maths and English • Enable staff in the early years foundation stage to use tablets as a means of recording and evidencing pupil progress. Investigate software to enable this to be structured and embedded with all staff • As an alliance to continue our research work to improve our own pedagogy and to be at the forefront of educational thinking
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional dialogue across phases and schools • Collaborative planning for ease of a simple yet effective system of recording attainment and achievement for pupils, teachers and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate data collection
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of 18 case studies of current assessment practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of fitness for purpose of assessment methodology across

	OUTCOMES	IMPACT INDICATORS
	across all subjects taught at KS3	differing subject domains
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of mathematics assessment and pedagogy in one specific year group across several primary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand of new NC needs to be recognised • Shared moderation of what has been learnt and understood rather than 'best fit to a level' • Pupil progress meetings between teachers and school leaders need clarity about next steps for teaching



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