



Facility - Sharpening the focus on pupil performance Radyr Comprehensive School

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Andrew Williams, Deputy Headteacher
Radyr Comprehensive School

Since installing Facility as its management information system Radyr Comprehensive School in Cardiff has noticed a wide range of improvements – all leading to higher pupil achievement.

Behaviour has improved, attendance is higher and reporting and target setting are more effective. “Facility has helped massively in terms of dealing with time consuming mundane tasks, allowing us to focus our attentions on the core business of learning and teaching,” said Deputy Headteacher Andrew Williams.

Reports, targets and achievement

One of the first changes at Radyr was in compiling student reports. Andrew said: “Up until last year, we were hand writing student reports, however, the real issue came in pulling them together. It would take a member of the administrative staff three days to collate a set of reports for a year group – that’s 21 days of administrative time in an academic year. Now we can send them to the printer at the touch of a button.”

The new system also has the advantage of being able to analyse pupils' reports quickly and easily. "In the past this kind of analysis would have taken me a minimum of two days – I used to dread having to do it. But now we are able to identify underachievement instantaneously, allowing us to address the underlying issues straight away. Equally, successful pupils can have their achievements recognised and rewarded."

With pupil data now available online, staff have a wealth of information at their fingertips to inform their future planning. Andrew said: "Facility generates pupils' targets from their prior attainment automatically using the DfES value-added line graphs. As a result, we can immediately evaluate how the school is performing, how a subject is performing and how teaching groups are performing in relation to the national picture. It has given us the momentum to sharpen the focus in terms of pupil performance and further raise standards."

Attendance and Behaviour

Radyr has a good record of attendance but even the best schools can make improvements. Registration is now carried out online and the school has just moved to lesson-by-lesson roll call with the aim of weeding out the few internal truants who miss occasional lessons.

"We can see the benefits of the system already. The pupils are now aware that pastoral staff will know if they miss a specific lesson. It has been particularly helpful to our Heads of Year in identifying at an early stage, those pupils who find attending all lessons a challenge."

In the school's last inspection in 2004, low-level disruption in lessons was identified as a key issue and as a result a new system of stepped sanctions was introduced. Incidents are ranked B1 to B4 and the higher numbers have more serious consequences. If a pupil reaches B4 it means they are removed from lessons and placed in internal exclusion.

With Facility the records of such incidences are easily documented. Staff enter details online and a full picture is immediately available to the pastoral team who then decide what action needs to be taken. Andrew said: "It

has afforded us the opportunity to create character profiles for our more challenging pupils and to analyse the sanctions given to individual pupils, classes and cohorts."

"Under the new inspection framework it is vitally important to be able to comment on the behaviour in a school and have the evidence to back it up. With Facility we now have the resource to do just that."

The new system has helped tighten behaviour across the school but one of the most effective aspects is the immediacy of the information. "It's already having a positive effect on discipline. Pupils are aware that the information is held centrally and that staff have access to it anywhere in the school. They also know that when they misbehave, members of the senior pastoral team will be responding immediately."

Communication

Both staff and parents have benefited from the ease of access to student data. With 1400 students and 90 staff communication could be a challenge but the noticeboard option has proved very popular. "Staff use it to keep colleagues informed, it has helped improve communication and cut down on paper bureaucracy enormously."

But it is with parents that the scheme has been most successful. "Parents like to be kept informed about their child's progress and the system has enabled us to meet parents' expectations of providing up-to-date information promptly. The information is now available at a glance and all we have to do is log in and look."

Radyr is looking forward to a successful future as it implements the changes that Facility has enabled. It is the first school in its LEA to adopt Facility and now acts as a training centre.

Andrew added: "The LEA has been very supportive in our transition to Facility and is keen to see how it develops at Radyr. We are already seeing the benefits that we are getting from Serco, not just in day-to-day school business but also with strategic planning. I know that in the future we shall have a wealth of information that will make us an even better school."

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