

Going from Good to Outstanding using the 4Matrix system

The Schools White Paper '*The Importance of Teaching*' places a new emphasis upon teaching in schools. It comes against a background study from the OECD which reports that "*the UK education system has one of the highest levels of variation in student outcomes within the OECD*" and that at secondary level the differences between the best and the least-best teaching is twelve times the differences between the average performance of schools. Put simply, the fuss made about league tables pales into insignificance against the differences that pupils experience across their subjects and classes within a school.



The consistency of provision within secondary schools is therefore a significant test of a school's quality assurance systems and its leadership. Schools likely to be judged as Outstanding will be those that ensure there are effective systems in place for monitoring and supporting good teaching. The National College, in their 2005 project on *Within School Variation* described the climate of *trust, openness and collegiality* that schools need to establish before teachers feel comfortable about looking at differences in the impact of teaching as an opportunity to learn from the best. Leaving a school to attend a CPD course is not always necessary when in every school there are outstanding teachers who would be able to demonstrate how they get the best from the students that they teach.

Putting an effective performance data system in place is the first step in setting up a data-confident, self-evaluating school. These are the schools that will take the lead during an inspection in demonstrating how they are supporting good teaching, and how this is impacting on the achievements of learners. Quality assurance is one of those fundamentals that should never be left to an outside organisation. It is a story that schools should tell for themselves.

4Matrix is a networked computer application that will analyse data held in a school's *Management Information System* and provide a series of tools for diagnosis, hypothesis, forecasting and reporting the comparative performance of different groups of learners. It is the most effective system available for supporting teacher research into pupil achievement.

Importantly, 4Matrix will provide essential evidence about current standards at key stage 4. This is the main reason why inspectors need to visit a school. Schools that use 4Matrix will be able to show inspectors evidence of current standards, and what teachers have discovered about the *local contextual circumstances* that influence learning quality. These schools will be able to provide good justification for their intervention plans, as well as provide evidence of their success in implementing them.

4Matrix has been shown to be effective in developing the quality assurance role of subject leaders, particularly in relation to reducing within-school variation. It does this by supporting an *action-research* approach to school improvement. 4Matrix enables subject leaders to report on what a department has learnt from investigating differences in pupil progress, and how the subject area is contributing to providing evidence of the consistency of school provision.

A growing number of schools are approaching school inspections with greater confidence with the support of 4Matrix as a whole-school performance analysis system. In a recent example, Aston Academy went from Satisfactory to Outstanding with the headteacher attributing this to the successful way that staff at all levels were using the 4Matrix system.

4Matrix sets a new standard for the management of school performance data. It is an essential, affordable, high productivity professional performance system for school leaders and data professionals.

