

Case Study: **Greenhead High School**

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The school decided to look for an additional IT system to assist with meeting its objectives in measuring pupil attainment. There were a number of reasons:

Our previous central management system allowed data to be stored centrally and had an ePortal for staff to enter data. However, there was no easy way to get data back out to teachers. Data would have to be exported to Excel and then saved class by class, or distributed to teachers in paper format. The whole process was very time-consuming.

The school did not want to give staff access to the whole system. We enquired as to whether restricted

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access might be possible but support was lacking and we eventually decided that introducing a new system was the better option.

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Pupil Tracking Plus seemed to fulfil our requirements well, but since we had been in a similar position before and had been disappointed, we were a bit wary. We spent some time exploring the demo version and also contacted a school in Manchester to find out what their experiences had been. They had come across very few problems and staff were happy with the system. We decided to go ahead.

The set up process was very straight forward. We filled in a work book, detailing the fields of data we wanted to store and sent this along with the data we were already storing electronically to the team at Pupil Tracking. The system was ready to launch very quickly and with very little fuss.

One of the key features of Pupil Tracking Plus is that the system is internet-based. We had not been looking for this in the

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beginning but it has turned out to be a major benefit. Staff now have instant access to electronic data through their laptops. This has proven to be invaluable when teachers are talking to parents or pupils. Feedback from teachers has been very positive, with staff saying they now have access to data when they want it

rather than relying on paper handouts. It has allowed the school to develop its philosophy on data handling – that is, that data should only ever be typed in once. If it currently exists in electronic format, it can be imported. This has saved a lot of time for all members of staff, who are also able to work from home on grades or reports if they want.

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We have now been running the Pupil Tracking system

for eighteen months and in that time the school has been able to expand its use of attainment data. We use Fischer Family Trust data to set KS3 targets. Using a custom query within Pupil Tracking Plus we have been able to operate a traffic light system, measuring attainment against KS3 targets. This allows early intervention in the case of poor attainment and also praise for those pupils who are meeting or exceeding targets. The immediacy of the data and the use of colours have made the system very easy to use and very powerful. We are now developing a similar process to measure attainment since KS2.

Also, for example, we used only to conduct reading tests along with non-verbal reasoning tests in year 7. The ease of use of Pupil Tracking has allowed the expansion of reading tests to every year, something that was necessary but previously inhibited by administrative load and difficulties with getting the data back out of the central management system.

In addition, we have been able to add valuable detail to data previously stored. For example, we have always stored data on attitude of pupils. In the past this was recorded 3-4 times per year and consisted of code letter representing excellent, good, average, poor etc. Due to the increased flexibility offered by Pupil Tracking we have now been able to break these codes down still further. So instead of a “Poor” grade, for example, we can now be more specific and can refer to poor effort or poor behaviour. This has improved the accuracy of the data we store and therefore is more useful to staff.

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Writing school reports is also easier. We had previously been using a Word template. Production of reports has now been transferred to Pupil Tracking and the automatic collation of reports has saved both time and administration costs.

Working with the team at Pupil Tracking has been easy. Emails are answered within hours, help is always on hand and suggestions are taken on board and implemented quickly wherever possible. System use is monitored automatically and if, rarely, problems have occurred, solutions are suggested almost immediately. All of this has meant that the system developed very quickly to fit our needs.

We still pay for our central management system, used for other pupil and staff records and for timetable, cover, attendance etc, but we no longer use the assessment elements of it. We pay an annual subscription for Pupil Tracking Plus, but the benefits received make it well worth any additional cost.