

## Case Study

# The Complete Digital Solution



**Academy Transformation Trust uses GL Assessment's Complete Digital Solution to gain a critical insight into ability, attainment and barriers to learning across its group of academies.**

## Speaking a common language across Academy Transformation Trust

With nine primary, eight secondary and one all-through academy in its family, Academy Transformation Trust spans a large geographical area across the Midlands, East of England and the South East. These academies are predominately based in deprived areas and most come with a history of underachievement. It's a situation The Trust is dedicated to changing.

Lisa Crausby, Principal Improvement Director, says, "We believe our pupils deserve the very best education and that all of our academies can be transformed to become outstanding. To make this happen, we have developed strong achievement and academy improvement strategies.

"When we open an academy with a prior legacy of underachievement, it's vital that we introduce processes and systems that secure better outcomes for our pupils. The first step is benchmarking the starting point of all the pupils and setting ambitious targets. This is where robust and rigorous assessments come in."

### A whole-pupil view

Academy Transformation Trust takes a whole-pupil approach to assessment by using *The Complete Digital Solution* – a package of assessments that provides critical insight into pupils' ability,

attainment and barriers to learning. *The Complete Digital Solution* includes GL Assessment's *Cognitive Abilities Test: Fourth Edition (CAT4)*, *Progress Test Series (PTS)* and the *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)* attitudinal survey, amongst others. Alongside a teacher's own professional judgement, these assessments help provide a holistic view of each pupil.

"Lost learning is a real issue for our pupils. Before their school becomes an academy, we find that many pupils have been at risk of regressing in their learning, rather than making progress. There's a mountain to climb, so it's really important we know what we're dealing with from day one.

"We use *CAT4* when a school becomes an academy as it's an opportunity to standardise the starting point. It highlights how much lost learning has taken place over the previous years, which is a key milestone in how we develop our achievement strategies for each institution going forward."

### Help as needed

*The Complete Digital Solution* is helping The Trust build on achievement strategies already in place across its academy group and to give structure in a world without levels.

"We see these assessments playing a huge part for us in terms of our core infrastructure. In order to ensure support from The Trust is proportionate to need, we have introduced assessment points every half term across all of our academies," says Lisa. "These are looked at centrally, so we can monitor how much ground is being covered.

"This benchmarking by external assessment is important as early on, we discovered different people and different academies had very different understanding of key assessment terminology.

"So we've worked hard to establish a common language and have set up various types of moderation to support the information that is collected.

"*The Complete Digital Solution* is a key part. Now, all of our academies are using the *Progress Test Series* in maths, science and English in primary as well as Years 7, 8 and 9, which will count as an assessment point across The Trust.

"The results provide a snapshot of where each pupil is, gives us a measurement of progress over time and automatically takes care of the moderation and standardisation we require. It promotes the sharing of best practice across The Trust."



### Sharp interventions

For its achievement and improvement strategies to work, it's vital that The Trust is able to rigorously interrogate the information it collects.

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“Under the new regime of life without levels, we needed a system that would avoid any data being too loose or open to interpretation,” says Lisa. “We're now in a position to ask the right questions – perhaps why academy A is showing a big discrepancy between teacher assessment and what the progress tests are telling us – and act on the answers.”

“To have a marker that everyone across the family of academies is doing enables us to have a real understanding, and allows us to spot any anomalies from previous data drops. It has added a layer of rigour to tracking student progress across the group, and gives us vital information on where there are gaps. In turn, this makes us sharper in terms of intervention strategies.”

### Close the circle

This term, the multi-academy trust is introducing *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)*, an attitudinal survey that looks at factors specifically linked to attainment, engagement and wellbeing, across the group.

“We're excited to add a pastoral dimension with *PASS* and discover what different groups across The Trust really think. If there are negative attitudes in any area, we'll carry out appropriate interventions to improve them and then retake *PASS* to check they have worked.”

“The benefit of working with GL Assessment is that they close the circle for us, providing the extra

information that we need to secure what we're trying to achieve.

“It's an added advantage that the *Progress Test Series* results also act as robust evidence for Ofsted, demonstrating that this pupil, this class or this academy has made a certain amount of progress in key subjects from one point to the next.”

“We have received high praise from all of our Ofsted reports and from the Department for Education, so we're already starting to yield the impact we want as a high performing multi-academy trust. Our ethos is forward thinking and cutting-edge, and using *The Complete Digital Solution* supports our aim of ensuring rapid progress for a large number of pupils.”

### Benefits of using the Complete Digital Solution for Academy Transformation Trust

- Provides standardised starting points for pupils when their school becomes an academy and measures any lost learning which may have occurred
- Allows The Trust to take a whole pupil approach to assessment, in conjunction with teacher judgements
- Standardises information from across their family of academies, encouraging all academies to speak the same language and results to be monitored centrally
- Ensures a structured system that builds on the achievement and academy improvement strategies already in place
- Measures progress over time, evidencing impact to Ofsted

