



## Acle Academy

part of The Wensum Trust

Acle Academy, part of the Norfolk-based Wensum Trust of five schools specialising in early years to sixth form, has used STEPS as part of its overall solution to Key Stage 3 assessment following the end of well-established levels.

Jimmy Day, Acting Assistant Headteacher and Data Manager, recalled the key challenges in moving to a post-levels solution. “Firstly, we had to get teachers to move on from the security of levels,” he said. “Then it has been about finding consistency between departments and developing a way of measuring progress that helps with the Progress 8 measure at the end of Year 11. Despite the abolishment of levels, staff, governors, parents and students all seem to want to know what ‘level’ they are working at.”

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The academy sought to overcome these challenges by sharing best practice, attending conferences and data workshops but, most importantly says Jimmy, “using our initiative” in the development of a new system for tracking assessment and pupil progress in Years 7–9. “Two aspects of our system are particularly worthy of focus at this stage,” he said. “The use of mastery statements – we had a lot of issues with buy-in from staff to begin with but seem to be getting there now. The other is assessing against learning objectives – this is working to some degree but it currently takes a lot of time.”

Jimmy was first introduced to STEPS last summer but “as we got wind of it too late and were already setting a system up” the academy has not used it in its entirety. “However, we really liked the baseline assessments,” he said. “We have implemented these into our own system and now have effective baseline assessments for all subjects in years 7–9. This has given us a great starting point from which to work from.”

Acle Academy has now set its sights on further developing, monitoring and evaluating its system. “We would like to make things quicker and more streamlined – that’s our priority,” Jimmy said. “We are happy with the progress we have made to date, and the STEPS baseline assessments have been an important addition.”

*Case study developed: January 2017*