New breed of MIS technologies key to reducing teacher workload, says leading expert

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Cloud-based systems allow schools to control their data and enhance pupil achievement

26 November 2015 – An influential education expert is urging schools to revaluate the systems they use to collect and analyse data to reduce teacher workload and improve pupil achievement.

David Didau's findings, published in a new white paper commissioned by leading software provider Advanced Learning, underline the need for schools to embrace modern management information solutions (MIS) to improve data management efficiency and generate more reliable and meaningful insights.

Tackling rising workloads is a key Government priority amid concerns about the number of qualified teachers leaving their profession. The Department for Education's (DfE) Workload Challenge survey in October 2014 highlighted common administrative burdens teachers face today, with 56% of respondents citing the recording, inputting and monitoring analysis of data as the main area impacting their productivity.

Teachers are being inundated with requests to gather data, and at the same time are managing increasing volumes of information from multiple sources such as MIS dashboards, the National Pupil Database and academic performance tables. However, many schools are frequently making high-stakes decisions based on insufficient evidence. For the data produced to be deemed useful, schools must consider alternative ways to validate the accuracy and precision of what is being measured to avoid rushing to poor judgements.

The white paper suggests that although learner information is key to helping them to fulfil their potential, leading technology can provide schools with access to better quality and more relevant data without increasing workload.

David Didau explains, "Too many schools have invested in restrictive systems which require constant 'add-ons' and merely add to the workload for overstretched teachers. In contrast, emerging technologies now make it possible for schools to have greater freedom and resist the accountability club to concentrate on what they actually want to know about their pupils.

"The new breed of integrated MIS solutions enable teachers to increase productivity and focus on what is most important – improving pupil achievement. They also provide a bespoke reporting lens to allow them to gain trusted insights through the ability to interpret more reliable and valuable data."

Flexible cloud-based MIS solutions, such as Progresso from Advanced Learning, put schools in control of their own data by providing vital information to the right people, when they need it, eliminating manual processes and duplication of effort. This assists teachers to concentrate on having meaningful discussions with pupils about potential knowledge gaps and identify the skills they need to further their success.

Advanced analytics functionality provide the ability to manipulate and interrogate school information to

uncover unique insights to shape future interventions and planning. Schools can also monitor, track and evaluate the progress of individual pupils at any stage of the academic year, in addition to swiftly spotting issues and proactively working with learners to resolve them.

Greg Ford, Managing Director of Advanced Learning, says, "Teachers are drowning in a sea of erroneous data and the gap between what they know, compared to what they need to know, may be widening. Schools should therefore consider investing in new systems which work for teachers, rather than creating unnecessary work for them to do.

"Progresso helps to significantly reduce teacher workload by ensuring accurate and relevant data is gathered efficiently and is equally easy to interpret. As a result, schools benefit from being alerted to fresh insights and issues they might otherwise miss."

-ENDS-

About David Didau

David Didau is a leading freelance writer, speaker and trainer. His blog, The Learning Spy, is ranked as the second most influential education blog in the UK and has won a number of awards.

In addition to this Didau has authored a number of books including 'The Perfect English Lesson' and 'The Secret of Literacy'. His most recent title, 'What if everything you knew about education was wrong?' explores the idea that much of what happens in schools is based on unexamined assumptions.

Didau is currently employed by Swindon Academy as an internal consultant advising on curriculum design, teaching and literacy.

www.learningspy.co.uk

About Advanced Learning

Advanced Learning provides innovative technology solutions to more than 2,000 educational institutions throughout the UK and across the world. The company is strongly committed to sustained investment in the education market, continuously developing its product portfolio to meet the changing needs of schools and academies. Advanced Learning is also focused on delivering facilities management solutions to the local government and enterprise sectors.

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