

Birmingham education establishments top the class for their approach to assessment

Centre of Excellence status awarded to three Birmingham based educational institutions

Three Birmingham based educational institutions have been awarded Centre of Excellence status for their innovative approach to assessment and dedication to pupil development. The award, introduced by EDI, has been presented to Cheswick Green Primary School in Shirley, Solihull, Prince Albert Junior and Infant School in Aston, Birmingham and LACES PRU, a Looked After Children Education Service in Harborne, Birmingham. Recognising and rewarding the establishments for their continued focus on student progress, development and attainment, the award also highlights the importance of assessment across the school curriculum.

Cheswick Green Primary School has 200 pupils on roll from the ages of 3-11. Its performance in national league tables has improved significantly over the past three years and is now consistently above both the national and the local authority average. Recognising that today's children are often more inspired by technology than by paper, especially when it comes to assessment, Cheswick Green Primary School uses Goal, an online interactive assessment service to measure a wide range of pupil knowledge and skill capabilities. Through using the Goal online service alongside traditional assessments, the school has succeeded in reducing marking and preparation time for its teachers as well as finding a way to engage pupils with tests. Using the interactive online environment, the school encourages its pupils to think more about the test questions and to actively investigate the concepts behind them, facilitating a deeper learning and understanding.

Carol Mason, Head Teacher at Cheswick Green Primary School commented: "We are committed to providing our pupils with an education that goes beyond the classroom and we are delighted that EDI has awarded us Centre of Excellence status. Our focus on online assessment through Goal has helped us ensure that we can track every single child's progress and encourage all pupils to perform to the best of their ability."

Also awarded Centre of Excellence status by EDI, LACES PRU has reported huge success in using Goal online assessment for help with engaging and motivating its pupils. As a 'Looked After Children Education Service' with two separate teaching centres within the city of Birmingham, LACES caters for pupils of all ages, helping them re-enter the education system. Many of the pupils are transitioning between schools or have been out of education for a while, often suffering from low self esteem and a disruptive home situation. The positive way in which LACES has helped its pupils overcome their fear of assessment and to build their confidence has made it a perfect Centre of Excellence nomination.

Julie Duffy, Curriculum Coordinator at LACES commented: "Being awarded Centre of Excellence status means a great deal to us. Our pupils are often daunted and intimidated by traditional paper based tests

but not one child has refused to take the assessment online. By assessing online through Goal, we are able to give personalised feedback to our pupils and help them understand their own level, encouraging them to re-engage with their learning which is fundamental if they are to return successfully to school.”

The third school to receive the Centre of Excellence Award from EDI is Prince Albert Junior and Infant School, a large school with 681 pupils on role. Located in Albert Road, Aston, the school is in a very deprived area of Birmingham. Winner of 2 Becta ICT Excellence Awards 2007, the school was recently praised by government agency Becta for its ‘strong focus on raising attainment and supporting pupils’ work and their life chances through ICT’. Using Goal to deliver online assessment is one of the many ways in which the school uses ICT to help motivate its pupils and to encourage them to reach their full potential. Through Goal and other ICT systems, the school has demonstrated real improvement in tracking and assessing pupil progress, a key element to its increasingly successful performance in the national SAT exams.

Miss H J Pugh, Head Teacher at Prince Albert Junior and Infant School commented: “Our school has gone from strength to strength in the past few years and we are thrilled to be nominated as a Centre of Excellence by EDI. Our results have shown a significant improvement in pupil attainment across all areas of the curriculum this year and our use of ICT within assessment has contributed to this success.”

Nigel Snook, Chief Executive of EDI, commented: “We are delighted to present these three Birmingham educational establishments with our Centre of Excellence Award. We cannot commend them highly enough for their innovative and creative approach to assessment and we are honoured that they are using Goal services to help them achieve their high standards across the curriculum.”



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