

Case Study

ALS changes direction at John Ruskin College



Context

John Ruskin College is the first vocational Sixth Form College in the country. It prides itself on being a small distinct high quality local College.

The College has travelled a huge distance over the past few years, which has culminated in the success of the recent Ofsted inspection (May 2011), with the inspectors recognising that “Teaching and Learning are good”, “Care, Guidance and Support are good” and “Quality of Provision is good”.

Additional Learning Support for those who need it has been identified in the Ofsted report as being “timely and effective in helping students to achieve their qualifications”.

Concerns on Managing ALS Provisions at John Ruskin College

In the light of both financial constraints and the introduction of special measures from the previous inspection (March 2010) meant that staffing roles had to be reviewed.

In order for the ALS administrative functions to continue in an effective manner, the College had to find a way of getting more out of fewer resources.

Helene Greenidge, the Learning Services Manager, talks about life before and after the introduction of Midas' ALS solutions:

The following solutions were implemented as follows:

(1) Fixing the Administrative Concerns

The College took the decision to maximise the use of the ‘SpirALS’ module for central ALS management and administration, and in addition, to pioneer the ‘TEAM’ module to replace the intervention recording systems used by the Learning Support staff.

Helene Greenidge comments:

“I know exactly what’s happening with support on a daily basis, and where we need to improve. It was not possible to do this at all with the old systems, and it’s particularly important as we are now not able to sustain a dedicated ALS Administrator. At our last audit, I sat and reviewed everything in “SpirALS” and ‘TEAM’ with the Auditors. I wanted to make sure that all the data the auditors needed was there and immediately

accessible. It takes two seconds to run a report! Not only is it quick, it's extremely accurate".

(2) Transforming ALS Management from Reactive to Proactive

The introduction of the 'SpirALS' module now allows the College to take action around new student intake and involve key people at a much earlier stage in the process.

Helene Greenidge comments:

"Pre-entry data in 'SpirALS' has encouraged much more early intervention and prompted increased communication with prospective students, parents and carers to ascertain support needs in advance. Our pre-entry data file for 2011-12 indicates an increased intake of students with hearing impairment. To enable these students to access learning, we can now plan for more hearing loops and the associated support. The evidential data provided by 'SpirALS' anticipates requests for prior knowledge of support and emphasises the effectiveness of early implementation".

(3) Improving Learning Support Effectiveness

The implementation of the 'TEAM' module for learning support has had a very significant impact:

Helene Greenidge comments:

"I have shared with my Support staff, the benefits of using 'TEAM' to record student data during support time and I have asked them to add notes and details onto the system outside support contact time. There was some resistance at first, but, it is now becoming firmly embedded by all my staff. As a result of these new procedures being carried out, I am now able to check attendance for every student each day.

Furthermore, as part of the College's quality assurance process, it is possible to review remotely, the sessions' logs. Introducing 'TEAM' highlighted that our key issue was with the quality of in class support, which indicated a need for increased staff training. In particular, training took place with regards to equipping staff to set ALS SMART targets. I couldn't now imagine functioning as a department without 'TEAM'. I personally really like working with 'TEAM' and so do my ALS staff.

Going Forward

Finally, Helene Greenidge talks about the overall impact of Midas solutions on ALS Management at John Ruskin College and what it means for their evolving approach to learning support provision:

"We have been able to identify the impact of in-class support in comparison to 1:1 support outside the classroom. Our conclusions are that the latter brings far better results so we are planning to restructure our delivery of support to concentrate on better quality 1:1 out of class, and we will be allocating the hours strategically with regards to in-class support. In the recent Ofsted report, we achieved "good" for Care, Guidance and Support which is evidence that we are on our way to becoming outstanding in this area of the provision.

End of Case Study