

Using EdTech to enhance the speed and quality of moderation processes across a MAT

Darren Price is Senior Education Advisor at Greenwood Academies Trust. After many years as a successful Principal on the East Coast he fully appreciated the difficulties in making sure that MAT moderation turnaround times were fast enough to allow for meaningful intervention back in school. In 2018-19 he was given Trust-wide responsibility for moderation of 24 primary schools across 5 geographical regions. He inherited a laborious paper-based system that was difficult and time consuming to analyse, and which created work for staff at all levels from the classroom teacher to the Principals and the Senior Education Advisor. As a school Principal, Darren had been in the position of making multiple trawls through the hundreds of pieces of paper in order to find trends and make plans for personalised intervention for pupils. Now, as Senior Education Advisor he decided to make use of the digital platform available to him and developed an online system for moderation and analysis using Microsoft Forms.

So, how does it work? A Microsoft Form is completed by the class teacher for each child. This includes information on the subject being moderated (reading, writing or maths); the name of the moderator and the year group of the pupil. In addition, all group characteristics are recorded (gender, EAL, LAC, Pupil Premium, HAPS, MAPS, LAPS, SEND). The form also asks for the type of evidence that has been used to make the decision as to whether the child is on track, below target or expected to reach greater depth. It also asks teachers to pinpoint what action each child needs to take next.

Once these forms have been completed 4 regional meetings are held at which clusters of Primary schools send, representatives to moderate samples of work. These meetings are positive and productive. The culture that Darren has engendered promotes honesty and openness as the atmosphere is one of high accountability but low blame. The focus is on the children, with the resources of the Trust directed towards improvement strategies and CPD. The moderation meetings are used to share good practice at a regional level. As Darren leads across the Trust, he can be a conduit for this good practice across all 24 GAT Primary schools.

Once the data is validated Darren uses the analysis tool in Forms to collate data, providing Principals with an additional level of quality assurance through his leadership of the cluster meetings. At the end of each meeting Darren produces a report for each school Principal and for the Education Advisor that is attached to each region. These reports are usually in the hands of school Principals within an hour of the moderation meeting ending thus the speed of data analysis is exponentially greater than that achieved through a paper-based system. Darren's expertise





means that he can provide individual school principals and senior regional staff with detailed pedagogical advice on the most appropriate next steps at school level and pick out themes across regions.

The high level of detail in the reports enables Principals to quickly identify whether the last half term's interventions have impacted on those pupils they were intended for. In addition, progress made can be cross referenced against the strategy that was used, and this can be fed back into the academy improvement plan. It also provides a clear plan for intervention strategies over the next half term. Principals are provided with a breakdown of the evidence that was used to reach the decisions on each pupil and whether their teacher's views were supported by the wider moderation team. In this way teacher CPD can also be implemented if necessary. The way the system has been structured means that all parties can spend less time on analysis and more time on the implementation of strategies that will make a difference to children in the classroom.

The use of EdTech to improve moderation processes has been an unqualified success. The next steps for Darren are to encourage staff to use the full range of Microsoft 365 packages in the collection of evidence for moderation e.g. Flipgrid and dictation tools. In addition, he has plans to launch this programme through GAT's Raising Achievement Board by linking it directly to the work the Trust undertakes with the PiXL package.

What can we learn from digital moderation at Greenwood Academies Trust?

- Think carefully about the information a Headteacher needs and ensure the Form is designed to provide this.
 - Tie the multiple-choice questions closely to the various strands and aspects of the curriculum. Then the analysis provided can be used to pinpoint the actions and interventions that are needed at school level.
 - Just make a start, the sooner you begin, the sooner you can have a positive impact on children's outcomes
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