

3 TARGET-SETTING

3.1 Information provided to schools to support the target-setting process

The target-setting process is supported by the LEA in the following ways

- ◆ target ranges are suggested for each school;
- ◆ an individual school performance profile for each key stage is provided;
- ◆ value-added analyses between key stages are provided;
- ◆ specific training for headteachers, senior managers and governing bodies.

For each statutory target individual schools are provided with a **suggested range** within which they should set their target, based on information held on the pupil level database, assessment information provided by DfES and historical school performance data.

A **school profile** provides each school with information concerning its academic performance at each relevant key stage. It compares the performance of each school relative to similar schools; identifies differential performance between subjects and sexes, and shows any historical trends, so that the school can locate its present relative position and determine where it needs to be, and so set relevant targets. It is also intended for use by the LEA to help identify areas of concern. The profile is intended to provide an overview of a school's performance, as well as providing information that helps the school to identify areas that could be improved. As more information becomes available, the profile will change to reflect this.

The profiles provided at key stages 1, 2 and 3 include a set of performance indicators based on the performance of similar schools nationally. The performance indicators show performance at the expected level, performance at higher levels and the average level of performance. Schools and the LEA can use the data to identify areas of concern within the core subjects. Schools may use the data to set differentiated targets for the core subjects. Charts showing the historical performance of the school in the end of key stage SATs are also provided, enabling trends to be identified. These charts also show national trends for comparison purposes. Comparisons between the performance of girls and boys at each key

stage are included. These identify absolute differences in performance based on gender for the core subjects. The gender differences are shown for the same measure as are included in the overall performance indicators. Devon and national (where available) figures are provided to allow schools to identify areas where they differ significantly, and to determine whether gender differences within the school need particular attention. Where possible, value-added information is provided to show how well each school is progressing between key stages compared to other Devon schools, and, if possible, compared to progress made nationally.

At KS4, some of the data supplied in the profile are similar to those supplied at other key stages. Additionally, information is supplied comparing the performance of individual subjects in the form of subject residuals. This is provided both historically, to show trends over time, and split by gender to identify possible performance differences between the sexes. The progress between KS3 and KS4 for all Devon schools is shown graphically, with the individual school's position identified. Schools can thus determine any overall under-performance and may use the subject and gender-based information to identify particular areas of concern.

At post-16, value-added charts of students' A level performance are supplied. Wherever possible these are split by gender. At present, only the nationally available comparative information is supplied for GNVQ performance.

Other information is also provided to schools. For example **NFER CATs** are analysed centrally to provide schools with information on the ability of their cohort, together with differences in ability between individual school cohorts. **Analyses of baseline assessment information** are provided to those schools using the Devon Baseline Scheme. **Pupil-based value-added data** is supplied to schools on request and extensive use is made of the historical data held by the LEA to complete school records.

Schools and governing bodies are offered an ongoing **training programme** aimed at supporting schools in the interpretation and use of data. In particular, the interpretation of statistics is explained, areas of weakness are identified, ways of setting challenging targets are explored, good practice is identified and the possible uses of individual targets are discussed. The primary aims of the training are to provide schools with the skills to recognise and understand areas of under-achievement, as well as providing them with knowledge, which can influence improved attainment for all pupils.

The LEA collects performance data at individual pupil level. This is essential to provide a pupil progress profile from baseline assessment to post-16 examinations. The database helps schools better identify individual under-performance, as well as providing a sound base for determining value-added performance of schools. The information in the database will make possible comparisons of the performance of different groups of pupils - for example, minority ethnic groups, looked-after children, Traveller children and children with special educational needs.

3.2 **The processes used to set targets**

The target-setting process followed in 2001/2002 will be reviewed but is likely to form the basis of subsequent target-setting rounds. That process was:

- ◆ schools received an individual school data set comprising pupil-level data; a target range for that school and a proforma on which to supply the school's target.
- ◆ the process used to produce the target ranges was as follows: for KS2 targets, KS1 individual pupil results were obtained from the PULSE (pupil-level) database, together with the name of the pupil's school. Two methods were used to produce a minimum and maximum expectation for each of the KS2 targets: in the first method pupils were ranked in terms of their KS1 results. The ranked pupil list for English and Maths was divided at the point which was necessary to meet the Devon 2003 target. The "expected" pupil results were then used to calculate the percentage of pupils required to achieve each level on a school-by-school basis. In the second method the progress made by pupils

between 1997 (KS1) and 2001 (KS2) was calculated at school level (since Devon does not have individual pupil results prior to 1998). Schools without KS1 cohorts were given an average progress rate. Individual pupils' expected KS2 results were calculated from their school's average progress between 1997 and 2001. This average progress was increased by a "challenge" element which is required in order for Devon's 2003 target to be met. Individual pupil expectations were then aggregated to produce each school's expectation, as in the first method. The results of these two methods produced a minimum and maximum expectation for each of the KS2 targets. In some cases the two methods produced very similar results and the range was small; in other cases there was a larger range. A comparable process was used to produce suggested targets at KS3 and KS4. For pupils where an end-of-KS level/grade target does not apply, targets are set using P scales.

- ◆ Schools are asked to notify the LEA of their preferred targets within a month of receiving the individual school data set. In the majority of cases it is expected that the target preferred by the school will fall within the target range suggested by the LEA. In that event an agreement letter is sent by the LEA, and Governors proceed to set their formal targets.
- ◆ Any school inclined, instead, to set a target outside the target range and notifying the LEA of that intention was asked to discuss the proposed target and the reasons behind it with the designated LEA officer - or with the Secondary Adviser in the case of a secondary school. Such schools are asked to provide pupil-specific evidence supporting that conclusion when notifying the LEA of their proposed targets. If, after considering the school's pupil-specific evidence, the LEA considered that the school's proposed target was inappropriate, the LEA would formally ask the headteacher and governing body to reconsider their proposed target. In the event that no further evidence was adduced, or that any further evidence was not regarded as conclusive by the LEA, then by a specified date (which in 2002 fell some seven weeks after the date for schools to submit targets), the LEA would formally notify the head and governing body that the LEA did not regard the school's proposed target as appropriate, and that, if the Governors proceeded to adopt that target, the LEA would notify the DfES of its conclusion that the school's formal target was inappropriate.