

Self-review Tool 3: The collection and analysis of quantitative data

Collecting evidence can be challenging. In very good schools it is a habitual activity. The big thing you have to do is decide what you focus on and how this will help improve your school's performance. As the school leader, you need to keep the focus of self-review on improving the learning outcomes.

Activity 8: Using data from end-of-year tests

Following your end-of-year tests, study the results data to extract evidence that might help you make some improvements. If the data you need is not readily to hand, then you will know that you need to collect and record it differently next year so that this task is easier next time.

Look at the tests of a particular class by subject and, if one does not already exist, create a matrix so that you can check the performance by counting students who get results in each percentile (10 per cent – see Resource 3). When you have plotted this data, you need to analyse it to turn it into useful information and to guide you about what else you might need to find out. Note down your thoughts in your Learning Diary.

1. Look across the data to see whether there is one subject where student performance significantly differs from their other subjects. Then look at the staff teaching the subject. Are the staff performing well or are improvements needed?
2. Look at the data for individual subjects where there is more than one teacher teaching the same subject. Is there a teacher whose scores are markedly different? Is it maybe because they need support or are performing significantly better?
3. Use the evidence from the data to check out why there are these discrepancies, praising those who should take credit and taking action where there are issues that can be addressed.

Discussion

Were you surprised by the data once it had been collated in this way? Did it give you ideas about what further investigations you might need to make? Be cautious about making immediate conclusions from your data – it may be that there are other explanations that you have not thought of (such as attendance or classroom size) that are impacting on the learning outcomes. You may need to collect further evidence through observation and conversations.

Once you start analysing data like this, you will think of other ways that you can collate and use the data – including tracking individual students or groups of students so you can identify any difficulties they may be having.