

Using Alps to raise AS level standards to match 'Outstanding' at A level

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Context

John Kyrle High School is the largest secondary school in Herefordshire with 1370 students, including 300 in the sixth form. The Sixth Form Centre has developed and been a key driver in the school's wider success. The sixth form reached 50% A* - B at A2 in 2004; it has increased this metric year on year and achieved 64% on this measure in 2014. John Kyrle's performance, in Alps terms, is 'outstanding', matching the top 10% nationally. Success with a long-term strategy to raise aspirations has seen increasing numbers of students from all socio-economic backgrounds apply for university. In the last two years 30% of all university places were at Russell Group institutions or Oxbridge. Crucially, post-16 opportunity remains inclusive at JKHS with 5 A*-C the entry requirement. Up to 25% of Y12 join us from out of catchment.

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- The sixth form is outstanding.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding because it is never less than consistently good and often better. Lessons are planned very well to encourage students to work independently. Students' work is assessed regularly and accurately so that they know how to improve; this helps them to learn very well in lessons and over time.

Alps A level report - statistical overview 2014

	2011 [†]	2012 [†]	2013 [†]	2014 [†]
T score - Single year score	2.00	4.00	4.00	2.33
T score - Single year grade	2	4	4	2
RED teaching & learning %	55.7%	36.2%	47.0%	55.5%
RED teaching & learning grade	2	4	3	2
BLUE teaching & learning %	0.0%	15.8%	11.2%	0.3%
BLUE teaching & learning grade	1	4	4	2
Provider A level value added Quality & Breadth score	0.93	0.89	0.75	0.94
Provider A level value added Quality & Breadth grade	3	4	5	3
T score - Three year score				3.44
T score - Three year grade				3
Student performance (A level & BTEC) %	38.8%	38.7%	28.0%	39.5%
Student performance (A level & BTEC) grade	4	4	5	3
Student performance (A level programme only) %	-	-	28.0%	39.5%
Student performance (A level programme only) grade	-	-	4	3

Although we have good retention and success rates, AS level lagged behind A2 and Alps has been central to closing this gap.

Alps as a summative tool

Initially, our Alps report was used alongside school systems to help analyse the performance of individual departments. Commentary on the "thermometer" was required as part of departmental meetings with the Headteacher and SLG in early September and this then helped the sixth form team plan quality assurance monitoring for the year ahead.

.... continued overleaf

The student summary in the A2 report was especially useful during Ofsted inspections and illustrated the success of more able students when matched with their destination information. However, it also showed the good value added of those with lower than average GCSE scores, and enabled us to show inspectors that their destinations also led to high quality futures.

Helping AS level 'step up'

The demise of January modules for both Y12 and Y13 students meant JKHS re-evaluated and restructured its approach to monitoring and intervening in sixth form during the spring term. January mocks replaced the external examinations and staff then provided work aimed at grades based on these results. This information was used to produce the Mid-Year Alps Monitoring Report for both year groups. Our spring quality assurance was reinvigorated by this interim report with key departments visited on learning walks, student focus groups convened and interviewed, and book samples taken from departments and individuals in order to provide focus and raise achievement. The Mid-Year Alps Monitoring Report provided the basis for this process both on a departmental and individual level. Specific students were provided with mentoring focus from the tutor team, and study management packages were created to ensure their time was used fruitfully in the spring before examinations. Those without clear destinations had careers interviews to better connect their courses to their futures.

The result of using Alps formatively with a Mid-Year Alps Monitoring Report has been consolidation above 60% at A2 level in Y13 with the school scoring in the top 10% nationally in Alps value added terms. There has also been significant improvement at AS level from Alps level 7 four years ago to a grade 2 in 2014.

Alps AS level summary

	2011 [†]	2012 [†]	2013 [†]	2014 [*]
T score - single year score	6.67	6.00	3.67	2.33
T score - single year grade	7	6	3	2

Helping students achieve the best they can

We find using Alps both within-year and when reviewing our end of year examination results enables us to focus on the students and departmental areas we need to, and to ultimately help our students achieve the best they can, matching the top levels of performance nationally.

Contact Alps

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