



Allowing teachers to teach at Chaucer Technology College

Products explained

Assessment Manager

Record and track pupil progress. Integrate this information with other elements of SIMS and report to parents by exporting into Microsoft Office® programs.

Behaviour Management

Record and monitor positive and negative behaviour and associated rewards and sanctions.

Document Management Server

Document Management Server is a feature in SIMS core whereby all documents relating to a child, e.g. letters to and from parents, school reports, information from social services, IEPs, can be stored electronically on the child's record.

Lesson Monitor

Record and monitor lesson attendance and punctuality and enter behavioural incidences through the class register.

Profiles

Create text based reports that integrate data from other elements of SIMS and export to Microsoft Office programs for a professional look.

To find out more

To find out more about the products mentioned in this case study, local authority supported schools should contact their support team directly. Schools supported by Capita should contact us on 01234 832100 or visit the SIMS website at www.sims.co.uk

For details of how our NEW School Improvement courses and consultancy can help your teachers to make effective use of the school's MIS in teaching and learning, or to request a brochure, please visit www.sims.co.uk/training or call 0844 893 9000

To find out more about Chaucer Technology College please visit their website at www.chaucer.ac.uk

At Chaucer Technology College, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, solve problems and acquire the skills necessary to learn independently. Over the last two years the school has been developing its use of the SIMS Management Information System (MIS) to support this.

A mixed economy – reporting and electronic registration

Chaucer has used SIMS for a number of years, but very much as an office tool, with no teacher access. Alongside SIMS, alternative systems were used for reporting to parents and lesson registration, which in practice was both cumbersome and problematic.

Ash Reygate, Senior Data Manager explains the move to develop SIMS:

"The other systems we used extracted information from SIMS but with the reporting package, nothing was fed back and the system was unstable. Data was often corrupted and work lost. With the lesson registration product, there was always a delay with it linking to SIMS when there was a SIMS upgrade. Once we started using SIMS for reporting home, we couldn't include lesson attendance or punctuality.

Using one system means we can have all pupil information in one place, with no need to import and export data and support the associated problems this brings. Reports and letters are held within the SIMS Document Management Server that all staff can access."

"It is fundamental for students to understand where they are and what strategies they need to reach their potential and for parents to also understand, so they can support their children. Using the tools within SIMS we are able to support this."

Simon Murphy, Headteacher

Teacher access and reporting home in just six weeks

Once the decision had been made to move to a single system, it took just six weeks from Ash's training, to parents of year 11 students receiving end of year reports from the SIMS Profile reporting system.

Network Manager, Steve Ludlow:

"Giving teachers access was a major achievement for us, as SIMS was still predominantly an office system. We have two networks, with SIMS available on the administration network. As part of our current support contract with RM, they provide a free package to allow SIMS to be accessed over the curriculum network. It took one week to add SIMS to the 450 machines on the curriculum network and make it available in every classroom."



The teacher training:

"We produced a SIMS manual and trained the staff in two sessions starting with logging onto the system. Staff were really positive; this was a big step forward, as many of them had never even seen SIMS before."

Ash Reygate, Senior Data Manager

Saving teachers' time and ensuring consistency

As SIMS Profiles is so flexible and the timescales short, this initial set of reports was not written using the comment banks but with free text. Now that the comment banks have been written, comments are triggered through grades entered by teachers, into Assessment Manager, saving teachers' time and ensuring consistency in reports and across subjects.

Developing interim reports through SIMS

The next big development was to use SIMS Assessment Manager to create informative interim reports, issued to parents twice a year. In total, parents receive two interim grade based reports and one end of year comment based report.

A complete picture

In addition to target and working at grades, parents receive a detailed picture of their child's progress in the following areas and for every subject:

- Attitude
- Behaviour
- Presentation
- Homework

For the end of year comment reports, grades trigger an assigned comment when entered into SIMS Assessment Manager. At Key Stage 3, information is also included on how to improve the working at grades.

Once Chaucer begins using SIMS Lesson Monitor to record lesson attendance, punctuality and behaviour, this information will already be stored in SIMS and can easily be added to pupil reports.

Flightpaths' show progress over time

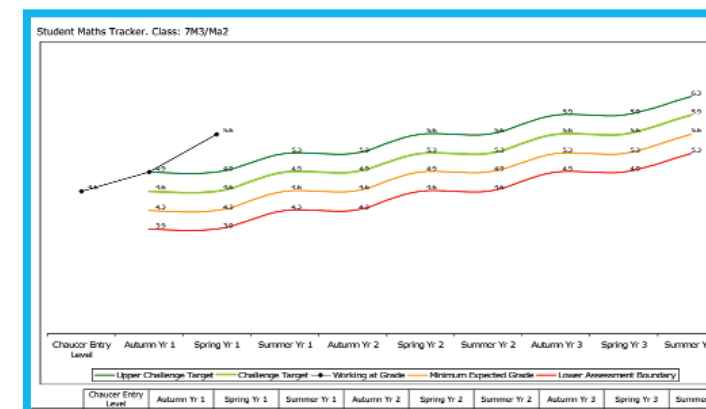
The latest development is, 'subject flightpaths'. Students are given a grade on entry to the school and this and their likely progress for each of their subjects is added to a line graph, known as the flightpath. During the child's school career their progress is plotted along this graph and shared with them and their parents.

Ash explains:

"There is no more work for teachers as they continue to enter their assessments directly into SIMS. Once the data is entered, I then produce the flightpaths using the SIMS tools. The flightpaths and the complete reporting picture make behaviour and progress very visible and allow issues to be picked up quickly and high achievers to be rewarded appropriately."

Simon reiterates:

"We have trialled flightpaths and the feedback from parents has been very positive and is affirmation that this is the right course. We are excited about the future and other possible developments."



"The new system of linking comments with grades supports assessment for learning and reduces teachers' workload."

Gary May, Director of College

Informing parents

Feedback from a Year 7 parent:

"I felt the interim report was, by far, the most informative, clear and concise report I have ever received and gave me a complete understanding of how my child is performing, socially and academically. The flightpath was excellent and gave a more in-depth understanding of how my child is progressing. The colour coding was visually effective and the

layout clear to read. I also feel that the school has a complete and full understanding of my child's progress."

Supporting teachers

Gary May, Director of College, discusses how this system supports his RE teachers:

"It is possible for an RE teacher to teach a total of 500 students for only one lesson a week. The end-of-year workload is really demanding as they have exams to mark and reports to write for all of these students and know the children less well. The new system of linking comments with grades supports assessment for learning and reduces teachers' workload. They are able to have more informed discussions with the students and get to know them better. The students understand where they are and what they need to do to improve."

Teachers can see this affecting their workload in a positive way and they can channel their energy into other areas, such as teaching!"

Final comment from Ash:

"SIMS is absolutely fantastic and logical! Help is always available at the end of the 'phone; using SIMS has made my job much easier."

Chaucer were undergoing an Ofsted at the time of compiling this case study.

What did Ofsted think?

Ofsted acknowledged the commitment of the senior management team to bring change and improvements to Chaucer Technology College and their report complemented the developments in assessment procedures:

"Members of the senior leadership team share a coherent vision for the school's development with evidence of growing consistency in methods and standards of assessment, tracking, setting targets and teaching. Another significant challenge is to raise standards and improve achievement; there is evidence that recent action is beginning to have a positive impact."

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