EvaluateMySchool

How Oxfordshire's SEND team is using EMS to drive school improvement

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Introduction

Oxfordshire County Council is harnessing the power of EvaluateMySchool (EMS) to support over 65% of its schools with high-quality SEND self-evaluation. Led by Jane Elvidge, the local authority's SEND team has used the platform to bring consistency, clarity, and a more strategic focus to self-evaluation and planning across a large and diverse county.

Addressing the Challenge

With over 270 mainstream schools—both maintained schools and academies—Oxfordshire's SEND team needed a more streamlined and intelligent way to support self-evaluation across its education settings. Previously, many schools completed SEND audits using cumbersome Excel spreadsheets. This process made it difficult and labour intensive for the local authority to analyse trends, identify common areas for development, or target support effectively.

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The Solution

The local authority opted to roll out EMS's SEND self-evaluation framework on an opt-in basis. Over time, the platform has replaced traditional audit tools, enabling schools to self-evaluate against a robust and evidence-based framework. This not only saves time but also allows schools to generate meaningful actions and improvement plans directly from their self-evaluations.

For Jane's team, the real impact lies in the centralised data and analysis features. As she explained, "We've been able to set up dashboards so we can start seeing trends across schools. It's a work in progress due to the volume, but it's already helping us understand strengths and areas for development across the county."

Parallel Use in Early Years

Alongside the rollout for schools, Oxfordshire's Early Years SEND team has adapted EMS to support nurseries and early years settings. This followed a similar shift away from Excel-based audits, and has provided the team with deeper insights and more efficient targeting of support.

While the teams rolled out the tool on slightly different timelines, there has been strong collaboration—particularly where schools include nurseries, enabling integrated improvement planning.

Take-up and Reach

So far, around 178 schools— approximately 65% of all mainstream schools in Oxfordshire—have signed up. This figure does not include schools within multi-academy trusts that already use EMS independently. One such example is the Whitehorse Federation, whose schools span multiple counties but also engage with the EMS platform.

In fact, interest from other trusts has grown, with word-of-mouth within schools prompting further uptake. "One school leader fed back so positively," Jane said, "that their whole trust is now looking to sign up."

Impact

- **Increased engagement:** EMS has helped drive meaningful self-evaluation at scale whilst reducing the administrative burden.
- **Better targeting:** The council now has improved visibility over the strengths and development needs across settings, enabling them to target support more strategically.
- **Cross-team alignment:** The ability for both the SEND and Early Years teams to work from a shared framework has created a more coherent approach to SEND across age phases.

Next Steps

The team continues to expand its use of EMS dashboards, with plans to deepen data analysis and link school evaluations more closely to local authority support offers.

As more schools and trusts engage with the platform, Oxfordshire's model offers a compelling example of how EMS can underpin a local area's wider SEND strategy.
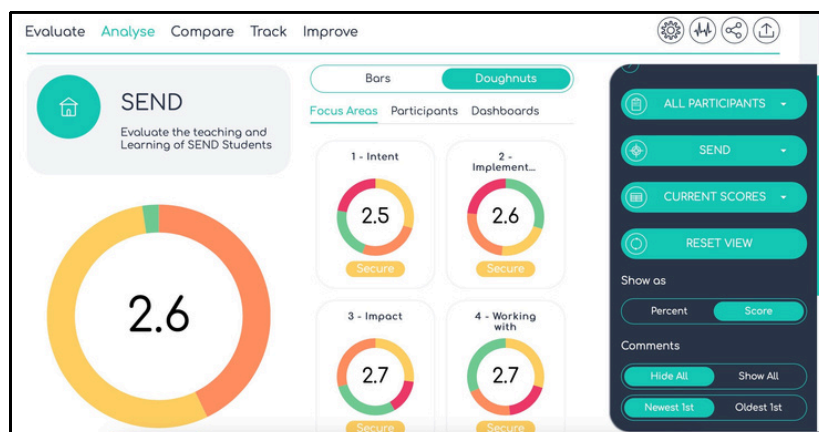
Example data from the EMS platform