Disclaimer

The Department for Education and Skills wishes to make clear that the Department and its agents accept no responsibility for the actual content of any materials suggested as information sources in this document, whether these are in the form of printed publications or on a website.

In these materials icons, logos, software products and websites are used for contextual and practical reasons. Their use should not be interpreted as an endorsement of particular companies or their products.

The websites referred to in these materials existed at the time of going to print. Tutors should check all website references carefully to see if they have changed and substitute other references where appropriate.
Introduction

Targets are an essential part of the process for raising standards. They show what needs to be achieved, provide a clear focus for improvements particularly in teaching and learning, and are an important means of measuring progress.

Target setting is at the heart of school improvement and LEA strategy and line managers have a crucial role to play in ensuring that the process results in improvement in achievement at Key Stage 3.

National targets have provided a powerful stimulus for improvement. The Government has set a series of ambitious targets which aim to improve national standards and also narrow the achievement gap. These targets are realistic, based on the existing achievements of many schools and taking account of the support that is being provided through the National Strategy and other programmes.

The national PSA targets are:

By 2007:

- 85% of 14-year-olds to achieve at least level 5 in English;
- 85% of 14-year-olds to achieve at least level 5 in mathematics;
- 85% of 14-year-olds to achieve at least level 5 in ICT;
- 80% of 14-year-olds to achieve at least level 5 in science;

with this level of performance sustained to 2008.

By 2008:

- in all schools at least 50% of pupils achieve level 5 or above in English, mathematics and science.

This replaces the school floor target to reduce significantly the number of schools where fewer than 60% of 14-year-olds achieve level 5.

The new PSA target for school absence is:

By 2008:

- to reduce the 2002/03 level of school absence by 8% by 2007/08.

This improvement will support progress towards the key stage attainment targets.

Targets are discussed with the DfES at the annual stocktake meeting in the autumn term. The expectation is that schools are active participants in the process and that LEA targets exceed the aggregated schools’ targets.

Part of the role of the LEA is to enable schools to evaluate their performance and to compare themselves with similar schools. LEAs should also use all available data to challenge underperformance wherever it occurs.
Target setting process

Each year the DfES supplies LEAs with guidance on the target setting process.

The Department’s key principles that underpin the process are:

- Targets should be based on prior attainment of individual pupils.
- Targets should be ambitious.
- The school and LEA should set their own targets.

Following the success of the primary arrangements, secondary schools have independent responsibility for target setting for 2006 onwards, with LEA targets being set afterwards.

The ways that LEAs carry out the process of target setting with their schools vary both in the systems and the personnel involved. Strategy managers and line managers need to be familiar with the systems in their own LEA and to participate fully in the target setting process with regard to Key Stage 3.

A key part of the LEA’s role is to help schools realise their potential to raise standards, by encouraging them to compare their performance against that of similar schools, to compare the performance of their different departments and to look at value-added progress from Key Stage 2. In addition, there will be pointers in recent inspections and internal reviews that suggest where there is room for improvement. All schools are now able to set their own targets because we believe they will continue to be ambitious for their own pupils. The role of the LEA is to encourage and support this ambition, in particular to help schools not only to set, but also to achieve their challenging targets.

If an LEA believes a school is showing a lack of ambition in their targets or if there are wide achievement gaps between different groups of pupils, the LEA will want to be assertive in challenging and negotiating with such schools (using value-added and other data as appropriate) and offer additional or targeted support to help them achieve their targets.

If an LEA decides to challenge a school over the target it proposes to set or the assumptions it has made, the reasons should be fully explained both to the school and governing body so that they can be involved in any further discussions. It will then be for the school to take the final decision about the targets set. Governing bodies must report their targets to the LEA (and through them to the DfES) as soon as possible after 31 December and no later than 15 January.

Strategy managers need to:

- be familiar with and have a copy of the latest DfES guidance and requirements;
- liaise with the LEA data team and analyse Key Stage 3 performance data to identify:
  - progress towards targets at LEA and school level;
  - rates of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3;
  - variation between schools;
– variation between subjects across the LEA;
– variation between subjects within schools;
– variation between different groups of pupils;

- contribute to the discussions regarding the suggested targets for schools to ensure that there is a sufficient degree of challenge at Key Stage 3. This will also ensure that all pupils who attain level 4, and an increasing proportion who attain level 3 in Year 6, progress to level 5 in Year 9;
- be familiar with and encourage schools to use the PAT;
- support schools in setting attendance targets and promote target setting in the foundation subjects;
- ensure that line managers are involved in the discussions and are informed of the outcomes for their subjects;
- provide for LAIs, who will attend target setting meetings with headteachers and senior leaders in schools and information on strategies schools need to use to raise pupils’ rates of progress;
- provide senior personnel in the LEA with Key Stage 3 data to prepare for the stocktake meeting;
- attend the stocktake meeting;
- provide information for LEA headteacher meetings relating to Key Stage 3 and attend those meetings;
- keep school strategy managers informed and involved at network meetings;
- ensure that members of their team are familiar with data analysis, including use of PAT, the target setting process and arrange for training if necessary;
- encourage consultants to work with schools to set ambitious, challenging targets.

**Line managers** need to:

- support the strategy manager in analysis of results and provide information on targets;
- support LAI in understanding data within their subject in order to provide a sufficient degree of challenge;
- contribute to the discussions regarding the suggested targets for schools to ensure that there is a sufficient degree of challenge at Key Stage 3 so that all pupils who attain level 4 and an increasing proportion who attain level 3 in Year 6 progress to level 5 in Year 9;
- be familiar with and encourage schools to use the PAT;
- ensure consultants have the necessary data, including pupil level data, to inform their work in schools;
- support consultants in analysing the data;
- use the data to identify causes of variation between and within schools for their own subject;
- identify departments where there are substantial gaps to targets;
- agree with consultants and schools action to be taken to support schools in reaching the targets;
- encourage consultants to work with schools to set ambitious, challenging targets;
- manage the deployment of consultants to best achieve LEA and school targets;
- focus consultant support on those schools that should be achieving more.
## Target setting at Key Stage 3 – Roles of DfES, LEAs and schools

For many LEAs, the actions set out here will look very similar to their existing practice. Others may find this a helpful checklist in preparing for the autumn term. The table includes action to be taken by:

- DfES (including Children and School Improvement Advisers (CSIAs) and Regional Directors (RDs) of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy)
- LEAs (data services, local authority advisers and inspectors (LAI) and Senior Management)
- Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>DfES</th>
<th>LEAs</th>
<th>Secondary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| By end July 2004      | - CSIAs and RDs visit LEAs to gather early evidence of any notable improvements, patterns (gender, subject variation, etc.) and of the impact of intervention with underperforming schools. | - Prepare for LAI school visits in autumn to discuss 2006 Key Stage 3 targets through value-added formulae and expected progress based on 2003 Key Stage 2 data.  
- Look at provisional data from schools and carry out early analyses of progress against school aggregate and LEA targets for 2004 and value-added information for the cohort.  
- Have early discussions with schools where results are significantly below targets. | - Pass Key Stage 2 results, including analysis of scripts, on to receiving secondary schools.  
- At Key Stage 3, complete the intervention audit to identify ‘target’ pupils in each year group to further refine the intervention strategy. Build in provision to identify those pupils now in Year 6 who will need support in Year 7.  
- Analyse results of Year 9 cohort in the light of targets. Analyse scripts to identify aspects of reading, writing, mathematics and science which remain problematic.  
- Report results to parents and governors. |
| August / September 2004 | - Announce provisional Key Stage 3 national and LEA results.  
- Announce results of Year 7 Progress tests. | - Analyse QCA data on schools’ results to evaluate impact of targeted support, particularly in schools designated as ‘underperforming’ and those below thresholds of 50% level 5+ in EN, MA & SC at Key Stage 3. | - Confirm deployment of TAs and additional resources in each year group according to prioritised needs.  
- Review curriculum targets where appropriate and reflect these in planning.  
- Make use of data obtained from Progress and Optional tests. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>DIEs</th>
<th>LEAs</th>
<th>Secondary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September / October / November 2004</td>
<td>■ Issue Standards Fund allocations for 2005–06 &lt;br&gt; ■ Attend stocktake meetings in each LEA to review progress against targets: &lt;br&gt; – discuss LEAs’ response to 2004 results and review plan for underperforming schools;  &lt;br&gt; – consider progress against 2005 targets; &lt;br&gt; – review data for 2005 and consider projections for 2006 and 2007.</td>
<td>■ Review progress towards 2005 targets. Discuss 2006 targets with schools and encourage them to look at projected outcomes for 2007 taking into account pupil performance on Progress and Optional tests. &lt;br&gt; ■ School absence: discuss targets for 2006 with schools and for 2007 and 2008. Ask schools to provide half-termly data on school absences to help monitor the target at a local level more effectively. &lt;br&gt; ■ Use 2003 and 2004 Key Stage 2 results to project 2006 results. Build in the expectation that all pupils who achieved a level 4 in Key Stage 2, together with an increasing proportion of those who achieved level 3, should progress to level 5 or higher.</td>
<td>■ Make appropriate provision for targeted pupils in each year group and monitor progress regularly. &lt;br&gt; ■ Discuss expected Key Stage 3 targets for 2006 with LAI (as appropriate). &lt;br&gt; ■ Look at projected outcomes for 2007 based on prior attainment and progress of current Year 7 cohorts as appropriate. &lt;br&gt; ■ Enhance current arrangements for monitoring absence ready for termly data collection exercise for the DIEs from January 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2004</td>
<td>■ Continue dialogue with LEAs to consider, in the light of school aggregate targets and an assessment of individual schools’ targets, what the LEA can reasonably expect to ‘add’ through use of Standards Fund allocations and deployment of LEA resources and what appropriate LEA targets for 2006 could be.</td>
<td>■ Gather and aggregate school targets. Identify schools which have set insufficiently ambitious targets for 2006 given pupils’ prior attainment. &lt;br&gt; ■ Review deployment of LEA staff and resources and taking all this support into account and determine LEA targets for 2006. &lt;br&gt; ■ Report school and LEA targets for all key stages and LEA school absence target to DIEs by 31 January 2005.</td>
<td>■ Governors formally agree statutory school targets and report these to the LEA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2005</td>
<td>■ Continue dialogue with LEAs to consider, in the light of school aggregate targets and an assessment of individual schools’ targets, what the LEA can reasonably expect to ‘add’ through use of Standards Fund allocations and deployment of LEA resources and what appropriate LEA targets for 2006 could be.</td>
<td>■ Continue to focus provision on Year 9 target children (through Booster classes, Easter schools, etc.), closely monitor progress of identified ‘borderline’ children in Year 8 and maximise progress of target children in earlier year groups. &lt;br&gt; ■ Continue to implement the intervention strategy in each year group and monitor pupils’ progress. &lt;br&gt; ■ Provide the first term’s data on school absence to DIEs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The CEO introduced the target setting process at a headteacher meeting in autumn 2003. The Key Stage 3 SM briefed headteachers and LAI on Strategy expectations in terms of progress during Key Stage 3. Schools and LEA officers agreed in principle that pupils, on average, should advance 1.25 levels during Key Stage 3. The LEA data team supplied data for each school and modelled the process.

Expected rates of progress for Key Stage 2 prior performance levels were agreed and these rates were applied to each pupil in the Year 8 cohort to determine the school target for 2005.

### English and mathematics (expected progress in NC levels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base targets</th>
<th>Aspirational targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 2 level</td>
<td>Expected progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 to 4.2</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 to 5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 and above</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Science (expected progress in NC levels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base targets</th>
<th>Aspirational targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 2 level</td>
<td>Expected progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 3.5</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 to 4.2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 to 5</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 and above</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These rates of progress link directly with Strategy expectations of all Key Stage 2 level 4 pupils and an increasing proportion of Key Stage 2 level 3 pupils progressing to level 5 at Key Stage 3. If this method results in a lower figure than the 2003 actual performance, then the new target is the previous year’s target plus 5% of its value.

LEA targets match school aggregate and show increased challenge on previous years.
Acknowledgements

Thanks to Stoke-on-Trent LEA for agreeing to share its target setting process.

Stoke-on-Trent introduced a revised method of target setting in 2003 (for 2005 targets). The methodology remains valid this year under the new national arrangements.

Further information on target setting is available on the DfES website http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ts