

The majority of this post is a list of questions I wrote for subject leaders considering the progress of their GCSE students (though the questions can easily be adapted for Post-16 or KS3 students).

Leadership requires reflection; and this list of questions – although not exhaustive helps think through exam results and how to improve. That is not to say that as equators we should only focus on our examination results; but examination results are important – our students will carry them with them for the rest of their lives.

Last Year's Exams

- Which teaching groups did better than others? Why?
- Which papers did students do better than others? Why?
- What questions did students do better on than why?
- Why were predictions not accurate?
- What did the examiner's report say?

The Current Cohort

- Coming from Year 10 to Year 11 – which groups have the weakest progress? Why? What is being done to improve that?
- Do all teachers who are teaching Year 11:
 - Have the ability to answer GCSE questions?
 - Have the ability to teach all topics?
 - Know what is required of students for each question time?
 - Are they able to accurately mark?
- Are you address gaps in knowledge for any failures in teaching in Year 11?
- How confident are you about what is going on in every lesson – are teacher 'following the script'?
- How are teachers and the department as whole building relationships?
- When will you finish the syllabus?

- Do students have revision materials?

Planning for the Year Ahead

- What is being done every week between now and the mocks?
- How are assessments being planned for?
 - What is being covered in each assessment?
 - How do you know that teachers are not 'over preparing students'?
 - Are the grade boundaries set at the right level (the Goldilocks Zone)?
 - Is time for feedback in long term plans?
- What intervention is taking place in lessons?
- How are you using extra support in departments? (consultants / trainees / NQTs)

- What is going to happen in interventions that is different than in lessons?
- What are other schools / academies doing that we are not? Look for next level schools!

Future Planning

- What are Year 9 / 10 teachers doing?
- What is being done to upskill teachers that don't teach Year 11?