

Data in MATs & Academies: Five steps to drive self-evaluation and improvement

KEY POINTS



- Who is your data for and why is it needed?
- What impact will it have on learning and workload?
- How reliable and comparable is it?
- Can you use it to make accurate judgements?
- How easy is it to spot where you need to intervene?
- Follow our FIVE key steps

MATs and academies save and crunch enormous amounts of data. Used effectively, it can provide vital clues about how to improve educational performance, business performance, staff performance and a whole host of other areas.

However, in many MATs, data is locked away in a number of different repositories. In order to be useful, it needs to be able to be compared and processed into accurate information:

- To make better, more informed decisions
- To predict future outcomes, e.g. academic attainment
- To improve the educational experience

As leaders and managers in UK Education, you know that if your organisation's data could be pulled together more intelligently, you and your teams could use it to help make even better management decisions and deliver an even better educational experience.

Data – understanding the issues

Many MATs and academies struggle with the ability to turn all their data into truly useful information. They often encounter one or more of these problems:

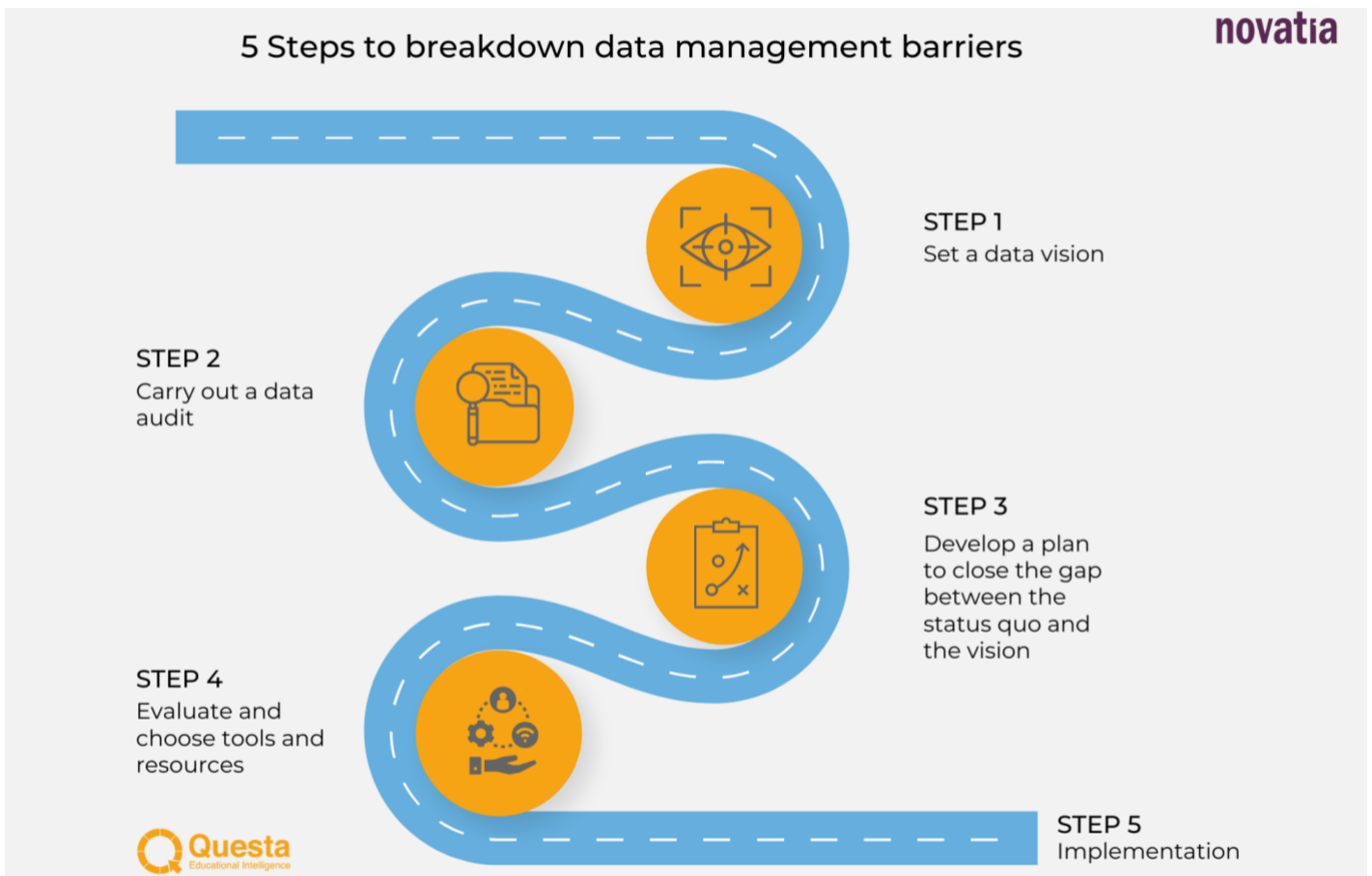
- Different Management Information Systems in one Trust
- Difficulty collating multiple Data Sources into one database
- Variable Data quality
- Too big a time lag from recording to reporting the data
- Data Management can be costly in terms of resource and time

Data – how leaders in Education want to use it

As an effective senior school leader, you want to use your data to make informed decisions. As an Education provider, you will need:

- To reduce the overhead on time taken for multiple entry, collation, analysis and presentation

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- A painless way to pull together and analyse all the data, in depth, from multiple sources
- The ability to easily present data visually to different audiences.

This is entirely possible to achieve and without a huge price tag.

Data – the steps academies and MATs can take to make it work for them

There are **FIVE key steps** which, when taken sequentially, can really make data work for MATs and their academies:

1. Set a Data Vision

A data vision is where MAT leaders determine how you want to use the data i.e. the decisions that need to be made to improve the MAT performance. Once this picture is clear, it is, only then, possible to ascertain what information will need to be collected to make these decisions as well as what system(s) will meet their needs.

2. Data Audit

A data audit explores the whole Data Management process. It examines the data journey from capture, collection, storage, analysing to presentation of the data. It will identify the gap between where you are now and where you would like your data to be, in order to fulfil the data vision.

Ensure the correct data is being captured Data can provide the MAT with the information to support school improvement and staff development. Just knowing in an instant how many pupils against the pupil admission numbers (PAN) are at each school, can support planning. Other areas such as attendance can be early indicators that interventions need to be applied. Pupil attainment is obviously a key indicator but by adding in areas such as staff or pupil absence, curriculum plan and behaviours, soon data starts to build the picture to support improvement.

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Through the data audit, leaders should ask themselves:

- What does our data currently tell us about our schools?
- Are we collecting the right data to give us that picture of our schools?
- Is that data accurate?
- How is it being collected and stored in each school?
- Can we compare ourselves with similar schools and MATs?
- Are we able to say why we are in this position?
- Are we happy to be where we are?
- Can our current systems and processes help give the insight we need to make informed decisions?

3. Develop an Actionable Plan to close the gap

You know what your data needs are and what your current situation is. It is now possible to develop an action plan to close the gap. We often recommend that an action plan includes how to create a culture of good data collection and usage to reduce errors, duplication and poor trust of the data.

4. Decide which tools/resource you need to implement your plan

The Data Audit will have examined the current software and ICT tools already in use in each school. The audit will have identified if these can be used to close the gap. It is often worth investing in ICT consultants specialising in Education as they have a raft of experience and can advise on the best tools.

As ICT specialists in Education, we have seen many MATs and schools struggle with their Data Management and how it can have a detrimental impact on their performance through struggling to make informed decisions. As a result, we developed Questa, which is Data Warehouse and an Educational Intelligence solution for MATs and Schools.

Questa provides detailed analysis to enable informed decision making, driving improvements in performance. It draws from multiple data sources to provide a single view seamlessly layered from learner, to teacher, to group, to school, to Trust level. It has easily configured dashboards enabling Trusts and schools to monitor progress against Key Performance Indicators. To find out more, download our [Novatia Service sheet on Questa Data Analytics](#).

5. Implementation

As a MAT leader who has followed this five-step process, you now know what you want to achieve, your data status quo, how to close the gap and what tools and systems you need to be able to compare the data across all your schools and reduce silos.

It is now time to take this knowledge and put it all in place to improve Data Management.

Many MATs and schools will outsource this to an independent ICT Project Manager who is solely focused on delivering the project and has a wealth of experience which can facilitate a smooth implementation phase.

Conclusion

Collected, crunched and analysed properly, MAT and academy data can provide you with timely, relevant and useful information to improve the education experience as well as help raise pupil achievement.

FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to hear more about Questa, our data analytics tool developed specially for MATs and academies, or to book a demo:

Visit www.novatia.com/home-questa call **01962 832 632** or email info@novatia.com