Radcliffe-Riverside: Getting things in Perspective

In March 2006, Riverside High School in Bury was inspected and given a Notice to Improve. In March 2010, the school underwent another Ofsted inspection and received a judgement of “Good with Outstanding features”, quite a turnaround in only a few years. In that time, many things had changed to make the school more effective, but one of the key elements according to Ian Bott, Associate Head teacher at the school, was their implementation of Angel Solutions’ Perspective.

“One of the key things with Perspective was the consistent approach. This meant that staff became aware of the structure of the SEF and they could focus on the important issues. For example, our curriculum staff worked in Perspective to look at attainment knowing that this would be a crucial Ofsted issue. This meant that we were clear on the amount of actual progress students had made and had a strong case to put forward. Pastoral staff were also guided by the structure within Perspective and could link pastoral issues and academic progress. As Perspective focuses on the Ofsted agenda, it makes staff focus on what is important to do and important to prove. The evidence of all of this reflection, along with any supporting files was stored centrally, meaning that we could access it whenever we needed to.”

When Ofsted arrived in March of 2010, the school felt confident that they were prepared for the inspection.

“The SEF was never a concern for us because of Perspective; it was concise and we could prove that it had been contributed to by all middle leaders. We were also able to call up the evidence for our judgements immediately.

“Interestingly, in addition to a ‘1’ for Leadership and Management, Perspective also helped us to get a ‘1’ for Governance. Having providing an ‘in-house’ demonstration, the Governors used the information we had entered within Perspective to get a good understanding of the Self-Evaluation process. The ‘link governors’ then used this information (such as departmental reviews) to help them act as a critical friend to departments.

“Also, because all of the input into Perspective is date stamped, we could prove that Self Evaluation was a constant and ongoing process. Perspective focused the dialogue within the school and meant that we were having the right conversations about the right evidence and the right data.

“Perspective is a great tool for getting to know your school and how things are progressing. Within a very short time of implementing Perspective, we as a leadership team, were able to benchmark each department against the same criteria and more importantly, the departments were aware of the criteria and how they could improve.

“I would recommend Perspective as a tool for School Improvement; it has helped me at Riverside and I believe it could help all schools to improve. I’m more than happy to discuss our use of Perspective with anyone who is thinking of taking it on.”