



BSquared 

# Target Setting for Pupils with SEND

Presented by: [Dale Pickles, Managing Director, B Squared](#)

# B Squared

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- B Squared products are all about supporting pupils with SEND
- We help schools to show the small steps of progress pupils with SEND make.
- Different frameworks for different ages and ability - EYFS, Primary and an Autism profiling tool
- Reduces teacher workload - identifies next steps, shows progress and supports meaningful communication
- Our products are used by around 15,000 schools
- We have over 25 years experience around showing progress for pupils with SEND
- We talk to hundreds of schools every year about their difficulties around assessment, data and showing progress for pupils with SEND and help them to solve these problems.



# Dale Pickles

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- Managing Director of B Squared
- Worked in SEND for over 20 years
- Supports schools around assessment, data and showing progress for pupils with SEND
- Host of the award winning SENDcast - podcast for Special Needs
- Host of the SEND Briefings and training courses on our Training for Education CPD website



The SENDcast was the winner in the Publication of the Year category in the 2022 nasen awards

# Target Setting for Pupils with SEN

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This webinar is about termly or end of year targets for pupils with SEND, ones typically around the amount of progress and how these are then used as judgement.

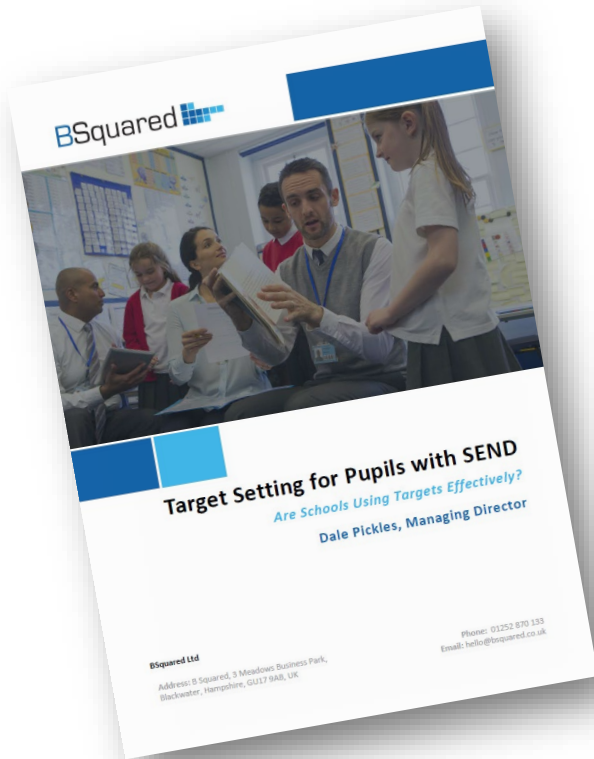
This webinar is not about setting next steps, differentiation etc. My recent webinar “Assessing Progress for Pupils Working Out of Year Group” focuses on assessing small steps of progress and identifying next steps for pupils working below ARE.

This webinar is also not about B Squared products, if you want to find out more about our products, please book a FREE online meeting and we will take you through how our assessment software can support your school.



# Target Setting for Pupils with SEN

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I have written a document looking at various aspects of target setting. I will go through various parts within this webinar, but the document is available for further reading and to refer back to. Like this webinar, the document covers things schools should stop doing and what they should start doing.

You can download the document by clicking on the link below this webinar.

Join in the chat as I go through this webinar, I will try to respond as we go through.



# 3 Webinars Around Data

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This is the first of three webinars around data. During these webinars I will help you all be less scared of data and help you use your data to improve your school. The final webinar is a tour through our new Analytics platform and how it helps schools use data correctly.

Part 1

**Target Setting for Pupils with SEND**

Part 2

**Analysing Data**

Part 3

**B Squared Analytics Platform**



# This is the way we have always done it

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The most dangerous phrase in education is

***“This is the way we have always done it”***

If you ever hear this it means they don't know why they are doing something. They can't give you a better reason why it is done, because there isn't one.

You only hear this phrase when you are asking about something that serves no purpose.



# This is the way we have always done it

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Why do people say “This is the way we have always done it”? There are generally 3 reasons you are still doing something that doesn’t have any real benefit:

1. **Comfort** - When people are comfortable with a process, why change? Following an existing process is more certain/safe/secure than trying something new.
2. **Control** - Being in charge of a process or the only person who knows how to do it gives them control and power. If there is a new process, they may lose that control/power.
3. **Competence** - Do people understand the reasons for a process? Was the process created by someone else? Are they repeating it long after it stopped being needed? Does changing the process require new skills or greater understanding?





# This is the way we have always done it

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When you hear “This is the way we have always done it”, you need to jump straight into an APDR cycle (APDR is everywhere, its like the force).

**Assess** what you are currently doing - What are the benefits? What are the drawbacks? What was the process trying to achieve? Could it be simplified? Do you need to replace it or can you just stop doing it?

If you need to, **plan** something new – Focus on what you are trying to achieve and create a way to support achieving this goal. Focus on creating a process with the fewest drawbacks, you don’t want something that is too complex or takes too much time.

Get started on the new process (**do**), but as you go **review** how well each stage goes and refine the process as you go and at the end **review** and **assess** how well the new process achieves the goal you set out to achieve.



# This is the way we have always done it

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## The Snowball Effect

*“a process that starts from an initial state of small significance and builds upon itself”*

Have your processes been snowballing? They start off simple, but then more gets added on. They pick up momentum, get out of control and is then hard to stop. Have you even noticed there is a snowball?

You have to break the cycle. You have to ask questions..

Do we need to do this? Is there a better way? Is there a simpler way?



# What are targets for?

**Targets help improve provision**

**Targets help improve pupil outcomes**



## What are targets NOT for?

Targets are not about  
accountability

Targets are not about  
teacher performance or  
pupil performance



# Who are Targets Monitoring?

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## Senior Leaders!!

(not pupils, not teachers)

If a pupil in a school does not reach a target, it is a reflection of the provision and the leadership, not pupil performance. The target was either wrong or the provision wasn't supporting the pupil to achieve. The 4 areas Ofsted use for their inspections are quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management. If pupils aren't achieving, you might feel that the quality of education or behaviour and attitudes is the reason. These two areas are directly influenced by the senior leaders and the support they provide to staff.



# Bad Targets

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I see a lot of bad target setting going on in schools. The most common answers I get when I ask why they are doing it are “this is the way we have always done it”, “I am being pressured into doing it” or simply “we have to”

The first answer is obvious, you need to change what you are doing. The second is basically the same, but it is the person above you has the “this is the way we have always done it” mentality. You need to push back and ask why and ask what is the benefit to the pupils. The third is simply you feel you cannot ask why you are doing it (or they won't listen)

If you are in charge of target setting, look at your process and identify if what you are doing has a benefit to the pupils. What is the reason for the targets and what do they link to in terms of the whole school picture.

# Bad Targets

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The bad targets I see in schools for pupils with SEND are:

- Targets created by a formula/computer system
- Targets based on performance of other pupils
- Numerical progress/attainment targets for every pupil in English and Maths

**There is no need to set annual targets  
for English and Maths**

Lots of schools are doing this, please stop



# Bad Targets

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## What is wrong with numerical progress/attainment targets?

These targets are the most common used for analysis, yet are the least useful. These targets are typically set, managed and monitored by senior leaders over the course of a year. In the majority of schools, the process does not support the school to achieve the targets as not everyone is involved in trying to achieve the targets.

## What is wrong with targets based on the performance of other pupils?

This has been a very common way for schools to set targets. It works well for non-SEND pupils. For pupils with SEND it does not work. There are no reliable data sets for pupils with SEND, the variation of need and attainment is too great. Schools can build their own datasets over time, but is your curriculum and teaching static over 10 years? The data set will not be reliable.





# Bad Targets

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## What is wrong with setting targets for English and Maths every year for pupils with SEND?

Schools have often chosen the quicker, simpler ways to set targets, yet these have not provided any benefit to the school or pupils. Tools like CASPA and the old Progression Guidance gave schools a simple way to set targets, but the school's own pupils didn't perform well in the way they used the data sets. A computer system or any system using data based on other pupils should not be used to set targets for pupils with SEND based.

As a company we have been asked to do this many times; schools have asked us to allow them to set targets using a data set from our schools or national data. We have always refused. It doesn't work, it sets schools up to feel like they have failed.



# Do You Need to Set Targets to Monitor Progress?

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Lots of schools set targets for English and Maths for all of their pupil so that you can monitor progress. **You don't need targets to do this**

You can compare pupil progress to the previous year. You can look at your data for different cohorts to identify patterns. **The target doesn't add anything.** It adds additional complexity and pressure to achieve the target.

If progress is dropping in a particular area, make it a focus in your school improvement plan, plan changes and set success criteria. This will be a relevant target for the following year. You won't need to set this as a target for pupils.



# Campbells Law

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*"I have recently been reading 'The Tyranny of Metrics' by Jerry Muller. And while I don't agree with every line of argument, he delivers a powerful critique of a dependence on data at all costs— and especially in public services such as schools and medicine. He warns throughout about the dangers of neglecting human judgement. What I found most interesting was his discussion of Campbell's Law as it applies to education. For those of you who don't already know it, **Campbell's Law is the idea that 'the more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor.'**"*

Amanda Spielman, the Ofsted Chief Inspector, Bryanston Education Summit back in 2018

If leaders set targets for pupil progress or attainment, and there is any form of pressure from the leaders to achieve the target, then the data will not be accurate. The data is likely to show that the targets have been achieved or as close as possible to being achieved, even if they haven't.

Special schools used to chase progress and inflate attainment because they were pressured into it by local authorities, this became a viscous circle of higher attainment with higher expectations and pupils ended up with highly inaccurate attainment and progress levels, inflated by previous schools or previous teachers.



# Should All Pupils Achieve the target?

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## NO!

You tell your pupils that part of learning is failing, about being in the learning pit, overcoming challenges. It is the same for all of us. Sometimes we fail, but generally we succeed. I personally like the quote “I haven’t failed, I have just found another way that won’t work”. If we tell our pupil’s it is ok to fail and that we can learn from failure, why do schools always like to achieve all their targets?

Setting a realistic, but aspirational target that is shared with pupils is likely to improve outcomes. The pupil and staff must feel it could be achieved. The progress should be celebrated, it doesn’t really matter if they meet the target, it is the progress that is important.

The question is, do you really need to set targets at an individual pupil level?



# Should Targets be Adjusted?

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A target is something you are aiming for, a destination to reach by a certain time. When you review the target and progress towards the target, the target should not change. You might already know you cannot meet the target and a likely end point could be added, but the original target should remain.

If you adjust the target, then you meet your target. If you don't adjust your target, then you fail to meet your target. What is the difference? The main difference is what comes next. If you don't meet those targets, you will review the targets and the provision at the end of year. You will discuss what went wrong. Hopefully you will realise the targets were unrealistic, this should lead to setting more realistic targets next year.

**Don't make the same mistake every year!**



# Should Targets be Adjusted?

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Meeting targets boosts morale, not meeting targets is demoralising. Setting unachievable targets reduces staff morale. Bringing those targets down doesn't suddenly boost morale as they are now achievable, it highlights that they were set wrong in the first place. It also highlights those teachers probably had no involvement in the target setting process.

Setting targets that can be achieved will boost staff morale as they can achieve what they set out to achieve.

**However, not chasing targets is probably the biggest morale boost, especially those targets with no real meaning.**



# What Does Not Meeting a Target Mean?

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The answer is anything and nothing, but typically, nothing. There are many reasons a pupil might not reach a target. You need to start with the process of setting the target. How was it set? Who was involved? Was it realistic? Often a pupil not achieving a target simply highlights how badly the target was set.

Achieving or not achieving a target reflects many things and you cannot infer a judgement from this binary decision. This is especially the case if you set a school wide target, without any allowance for individual pupil's needs.

**Do not use a progress towards a target as judgement of pupil performance. They are not the same thing.**



# Should Expectations be Increased Each Year?

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**Firstly, stop setting annual targets!** Secondly, this is a very simple answer. IF you have changed your provision by improving quality of teaching, increasing support across the four broad areas of need, listened to feedback and implemented changes, then you can reasonably increase your expectations. But why is the target on the progress of the pupils and not the success of your implementation of changes?

If you have not made any changes, then you cannot reasonably increase your expectations. If you have not made any changes, why is it a target?

Don't be that person who thinks to improve outcomes you just need to set higher expectations. This will never, ever work. It just lowers morale and increases stress. Improving the provision is the key to improving outcomes.





# Cause vs Effect

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Let's say I want to improve progress in Maths next year in my school. Evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for their pupils.

(Education Endowment Foundation)

I might implement a new approach, I might visit other schools, I will plan out training and support for all staff and I will go on learning walks, carry out observations etc.

The effect of all of this will hopefully be an increase in progress in Maths next year.

What should my target be? What is my success criteria?



# Cause vs Effect

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Based on the evidence, to increase pupil outcomes (effect), we need to improve teaching (cause). This has a long-term effect that supports all pupils.

If I target pupil progress, I am targeting the effect of the improvements we are trying to achieve. I might want to see an increased rate of progress compared to the previous year. If I we have planned our training and support throughout the year, are we likely to see an increase in the rate of progress that year? Not likely. Will I see an increase in the rate of progress in the following years? Very likely.

If I target how successfully we have implemented the changes, I am targeting the cause. I should be able to see progress throughout the year in the quality of teaching, my learning walks and my observations.



# Ofsted Annual Report 2021-2022

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*“Schools that have done this best often had strong systems in place before the pandemic, aligned with a strong vision and clear intent for their curriculum. These schools helped pupils to catch up by identifying gaps in pupils’ knowledge and skills quickly, using interventions to target them, and avoiding inappropriate narrowing of the curriculum or reduced expectations.”*

*“Even the children who find learning most difficult do not learn in fundamentally different ways from other children. They require more expert, rigorous, evidence-based teaching, as well as an ambitious and well-designed curriculum that emphasises literacy, speech, language and communication.”*

Ofsted talk about expert teaching and ambitious well-designed curriculum. These are the fundamentals for good progress and high expectations. If you start with good foundations in these two areas, the progress your pupils achieve will be good or outstanding. You don’t need to set targets for the amount of progress, target high quality teaching, target your curriculum and target the gaps in pupils’ knowledge/skills. Fundamental to the being able to target the gaps is a good assessment system, with the right level of detail.



# How Should Schools Use Targets?

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Targets help improve provision

Targets help improve pupil outcomes

Whole School Based Targets	Individual Pupil Targets
<p>School Improvement Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality of Education</li><li>• Behaviour and Attitudes</li><li>• Personal Development</li><li>• Leadership and Management</li></ul> <p>(and other areas)</p>	<p>Smart/Scruffy Targets</p> <p>IEPs</p> <p>EHCPs</p>



# How Should Schools Use Targets?

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## School Improvement Plan

In your School Improvement Plan you set out what you want to achieve in the coming year and create your success criteria. These will become your targets. Remember, these targets are about the school, not your pupils, whether or not the school achieves the target is NOT a judgement of the pupils. Write your targets in a way that they can be monitored quickly and easily. Do not set targets that need to be monitored at an individual pupil level. Target the cause, not the effect.

There is no need for any additional whole school targets. No need to target progress in English and Maths for pupils with SEND. The School Improvement Plan sets out the focus for the year, so monitor your progress as a school towards the targets set out in the plan.



# How Should Schools Use Targets?

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## IEPs and EHCPs

IEPs and EHCP targets are based on each individual pupil's needs. To achieve the EHCP outcomes will involve a range of professionals across the Four Broad Areas of Need. Everyone involved with the pupil including parents should be aware of the outcomes and invested in achieving them. These are the most useful targets within a school, the targets are relevant, ambitious and will be trying to remove the barriers to progress.

Schools should be trying to collate the data they are collecting as part of the EHCP process to design and enhance future provision. If you can see across the school that Communication and Interaction is still the biggest barrier for most pupils, what can you change? The information you gather will really help to identify areas to develop within the school.



# Measure What You Value

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If you only share information with parents around English and Maths, your parents will only ask you about English and Maths.

What is important to your pupils and their parents?



# Measure What You Value

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I have seen several schools change their provision to improve the data they are being asked for. The school is prioritising these narrow set of outcomes that are set by someone outside of the school. The pupils and what is important to them are not important, their priority is being accountable to those above.

The pupils and the right outcomes need to come first. The breadth of the curriculum, the opportunities we give them and the support we provide are based on the pupils' needs.

Schools should not be changing their curriculum, the opportunities pupils have and support they offer because they are being pushed to perform in just English and Maths.





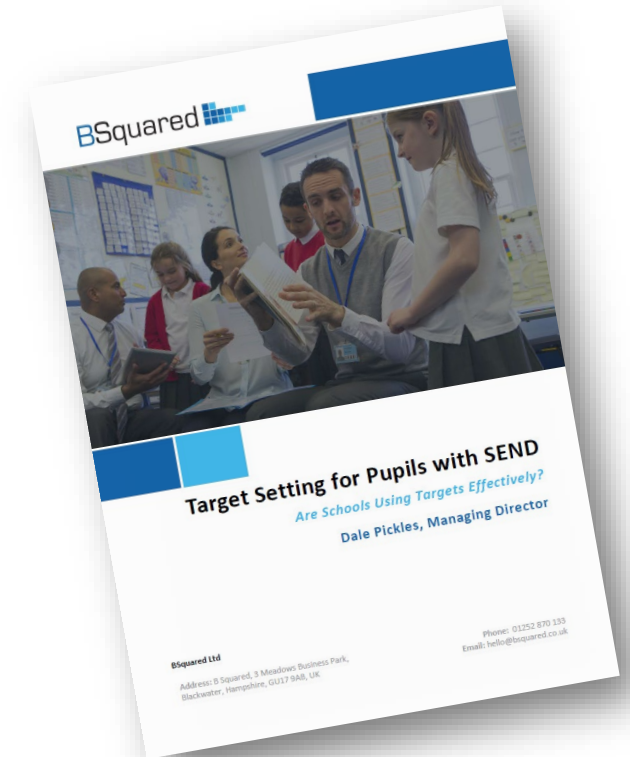
# Review your Approach to Target Setting

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On page 24 of “Target Setting for Pupils with SEND” I have written a section on reviewing your own approach to target setting.

There are 14 questions to ask when looking at your current targets to help you identify if the targets are relevance of each target and the impact of the target.

I am hoping that you can review your targets, reduce the number of targets and improve the targets, making them more relevant and target the provision and not the pupils.



# Improving Knowledge Around SEND



MULTI-AWARD-WINNING PODCAST



EDUCATION RESOURCES  
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WINNER OF THE TEACH  
PRIMARY AWARDS 2021



THE SENDCAST NAMED BEST  
EDUCATIONAL PODCAST 2021

- FREE podcast, listen via the website, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Audible, Amazon Music and any other podcast app
- New episode every week, with over 100 episodes featuring 28 different guests
- Covers a wide range of topics including anxiety, emotions, Autism, school avoidance, masking, ADHD, behaviour, language, SENCO workload, ACC and so much more
- Created to support everyone in schools, parents and more.

[www.thesendcast.com](http://www.thesendcast.com)

Or just search SENDcast in any podcast app



# Improving Knowledge Around SEND

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## FREE SEND Briefings

Our biannual FREE SEND Briefings in March and September help schools keep up to date with changes around SEND.

**Our next briefing is on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023**

You can access this briefing as well as future and past briefings on the Training for Education website



Online CPD platform including the Virtual SEND Conferences. Affordable, effective and easy to access training around SEND

[www.trainingforeducation.com](http://www.trainingforeducation.com)

# Improving Knowledge Around SEND

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## £6,000 SEND Notional Budget

Do you really understand the £6,000 SEND Notional budget? Are you receiving all the money you legally entitled to? Is your LA acting within the law?

Garry Freeman joined us in the autumn term to discuss the £6,000 SEND Notional budget. The 45 minute presentation was followed by a Q&A session that lasted over an hour!

There were lots of schools being misled or denied funding they are legally entitled to. Make sure you understand the law and be confident in holding your LA to account if they aren't

**You can purchase access for your whole school for just £5  
using the code [Feb2023](#)**



Online CPD platform including the Virtual SEND Conferences. Affordable, effective and easy to access training around SEND

[www.trainingforeducation.com](http://www.trainingforeducation.com)

# Q&A – Ask Your Questions

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**If you have any questions and haven't asked already,  
please ask your questions in the chat window.**

Dale Pickles – *email me for more information or if you have any questions*  
[dale@bsquared.co.uk](mailto:dale@bsquared.co.uk)

Book a **FREE** online meeting with me using the button below if you want to discuss target setting and data

Podcast - [www.thesendcast.com](http://www.thesendcast.com)





Dale Pickles – *email me for more information or if you want a copy of my slides*  
[dale@bsquared.co.uk](mailto:dale@bsquared.co.uk)

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