**Background and aims of the study**

Since September 2014, schools in England have had to create their own assessment systems to capture the ongoing progress of pupils throughout the year. The old measurement scale of Level descriptors had been used in all schools since 1988 and was not replaced by a national framework (DfE 2015). There is very little research data detailing how schools are implementing Assessment without Levels (AwL), and so this study attempts to provide an insight into this aspect within maintained primary schools in Oxford through semi-structured Skype interviews with head teachers and face-to-face interviews with class teachers conducted in 2017. The research questions for this DPhil are:

1) How are primary schools assessing pupil progress without using level descriptors and do teachers perceive that these systems are effective for classroom assessment?

2) Why have these schools enacted AwL in that way?

You have been invited because I am seeking to gain information and insight from staff about the process of interpretation and enactment of AwL in primary schools in Oxford for my DPhil at the University of Oxford. If you do agree to participate, you may withdraw yourself and your data from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without penalty, by advising the researchers of this decision. If you are happy to take part in the study, you will be asked to answer interview questions. This should take approximately 20 minutes. The transcript of the interview will then be sent to you to check accuracy. There may be a follow-up interview if anything interesting emerges or should something require clarification.

Personal and research data will be stored confidentially using password protected files. The researcher and supervisors will have access to personal and research data. The research will be published as part of a student thesis both online and print; and could also be included in some journal articles. The University of Oxford is committed to the dissemination of its research for the benefit of society and the economy and, in support of this commitment, has established an online archive of research materials. This archive includes digital copies of student theses successfully submitted as part of a University of Oxford postgraduate degree programme. Holding the archive online gives easy access for researchers to the full text of freely available theses, thereby increasing the likely impact and use of that research. If you agree to participate in this study, the research will be written up as a thesis. On successful submission of the thesis, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives, to facilitate its use in future research. The thesis will be published open access. This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | *Please initial each box* |
| 1 | I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. |  |
| 2 | I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences or academic penalty. |  |
| 3 | I understand that research data collected during the study may be looked at by designated individuals from the University of Oxford where it is relevant to my taking part in this study. I give permission for these individuals to access my data. |  |
| 4 | I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. |  |
| 5 | I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project. |  |
| 6 | I understand how this research will be written up and published. |  |
| 7 | I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint. |  |
| 8 | I consent to being audio recorded |  |
| 9 | I understand how audio recordings will be used in research outputs |  |
| 10 | I give permission to be quoted directly in the research publication against my name |  |
| 12 | I agree to take part in the above study. |  |
|  | I agree for my personal data to be kept in a secure database for the purpose of contacting me about future studies. |  |

Name of Participant Date Signature

Name of person taking consent Date Signature

**Interview Questions**

1. Which AwL system did you decide upon and why?
2. Were there any specific learning theories that guided your decision?
3. Which tracking software are you using if any?
4. If you do not mind telling me, how much has the AwL tracking package cost and was that a factor in your decision?
5. Please describe the process you went through to reach that decision?
6. Who was involved in the interpretation and decision-making process?

* Which teachers?
* Which governors?
* Officers from the Trust or Local Authority?
* Parents and Children?

1. At which points in the process did these actors feature and how did they contribute?
2. How did teachers react when you first introduced the new AwL tracking system?
3. How do they find it now (in your opinion)?
4. Having used the AwL system for some time, does it clearly track the progress for all pupils in all subjects?
5. Have you had any feedback from parents or children about the AwL system?
6. What would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of the system?