



THE SMART TARGET AUDIT

A target that cannot be measured is not a target.

It is a hope written in professional language.

Most SEND targets written under time pressure are SMART-adjacent rather than genuinely SMART. They use the right vocabulary, gesture toward measurability, and carry a review date somewhere on the page. Held up against each letter individually, the gaps appear fast — and those gaps are exactly what get noticed at review, at tribunal, and at inspection.

A five-minute self-assessment for SENDCos. Pick one live target from a plan you've already written, and hold it up against each question below, honestly. If you can't tick a box without hesitating, that's the part of the target worth rewriting first.

THE TARGET YOU'RE AUDITING

S**SPECIFIC**

A precise, observable thing

☐**Names a particular skill, behaviour, or outcome**

Not a general area like “literacy” — a precise, observable thing the pupil will do.

☐**Names the context it applies to**

“Improve reading” fails. “Read age-appropriate texts aloud one-to-one” passes.

M**MEASURABLE**

A defined way to assess it

☐**States a defined method of assessment**

Not “will show improvement” — a specific score, count, or observed frequency.

☐**States who will assess it, and how**

“8 out of 10 opportunities, observed in guided reading” is measurable. “Seems more confident” is not.

**A****ACHIEVABLE**

Calibrated to this child

☐**Calibrated to the child's current level**

Achievability needs where the child is starting from, not where the curriculum expects them to be.

☐**Has a credible baseline already recorded**

Without knowing where the pupil currently is, you can't credibly judge whether the target is realistic.

R**RELEVANT**

Grounded in assessed need

☐**Addresses a documented, assessed need**

Not a generic strategy applied because it's "usually helpful" for this need type.

☐**Consistent with the evidence base for this need**

A target relying on multi-step verbal instruction for a child with working memory difficulties is not relevant, however well-written.

T**TIME-BOUND**

Real accountability, by a date

☐**Has a specific review date, not a vague marker**

A date by which progress will be assessed against the measurable criteria already defined.

☐**Creates real accountability**

It should be impossible to perpetually defer the question of whether this worked.

YOUR SCORE

Count your ticks: _____ out of 10

Two or more unticked boxes? That target is worth rewriting before its next review — not because it was badly intentioned, but because an unmeasurable target can't tell anyone whether it worked.



TWO EXAMPLES, SIDE BY SIDE

The difference between SMART-adjacent and genuinely SMART is often a single clause.

Here is what that looks like in practice.

NOT SMART

“To improve fine motor skills to support handwriting.”

No baseline. No measurable threshold. No defined assessment method. Sounds professional, says almost nothing.

GENUINELY SMART

“By the 12-week review, [pupil] will form all lowercase letters correctly when copying a short sentence, assessed using the school's handwriting benchmark tool, on three consecutive observed occasions.”

NOT SMART

“Will make progress in phonological awareness.”

Progress measured how? From what baseline? Assessed by whom, using what tool, by when?

GENUINELY SMART

“By the end of term, [pupil] will correctly identify the initial sound in 9 out of 10 CVC words, assessed weekly using the school's phonics tracker.”

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS

Every target OMNIA generates is built against this standard from the ground up — not checked against it afterwards.

If you found yourself wishing this was easier to do consistently across a full caseload, under real time pressure — that's exactly the gap OMNIA was built to close. Grounded in a 175-source evidence base and calibrated to the individual pupil.

[Book a demo to see OMNIA in action →](#)