



Emerging Practice

Setting up a new Trio

The Earls High School,
Dudley, West Midlands
new Trio Lead school

Issues and challenges

- Aligning desired outcomes of academic rigour, strong relationships and memorable experiences across the trio

Desired outcomes

- Strategic and targeted transition planning
- Enhanced academic rigour, leadership and relationships

What we did

- Identified and approached two primaries
- Met together in May in advance of the first workshop in June to determine what we wanted to achieve as a Trio
- Used first workshop to determine how we could achieve dual outcomes of academic rigour and memorable experiences – hit the ground running in June
- Summer Term: All Trio students (15 per school) met twice, secondary students led school tours and team building
- Summer project. Primary students to make a “53 things to do this summer” scrapbook, led by secondary students
- Will meet early in the Autumn Term to bring the scrapbooks to life through dance, art, drama etc.
- Going forward – secondary students to get extra support in English and maths – students to teach primary pupils
- Planning strategic trips to achieve both outcomes e.g. German market at Christmas – maths in a real life context
- Already planning for second year – this year’s students to cascade down what a lead learner looks like

“

School to school learning and collaboration enables us to give all children, regardless of background, the opportunity to transcend their starting point and make excellent progress. Challenge the Gap gives us the platform, the passion and the goals to drive forward our work and build strong and sustainable partnerships.”

Nigel Ford,

KS 3 Director, The Earls High School; Assistant Head, Newfield Park Primary School, July 2013

How we did it

With 35 feeder schools, The Earls High School was keen to take a more strategic approach to transition and one where academic rigour was prioritised. Challenge the Gap, with the opportunity to set up a Trio with two local primaries, seemed the next logical step. The Earls decided to focus on two of the primaries it already had strong relationships with, Newfield Park (17% FSM) and Olive Hill Primary (42% FSM), and approached them with “a wonderful opportunity” to join the programme. The focus was to be on school to school learning, particularly in maths, English and leadership development.

The schools met in May before the first workshop to discuss what they wanted to achieve. At this meeting, different desired outcomes became apparent. For The Earls, the focus was academic rigour, whereas Newfield Park and Olive Hill Primary were also keen for their pupils to develop memorable experiences. With this in mind the schools used the first workshop to facilitate how these dual outcomes could be met and how they could run two projects side by side. Having determined early on what they wanted to do, the Trio then diarised in all activities for next year before the summer break. This has not only helped with timetabling, it has also given the programme the visibility and priority needed to succeed. There have already been a number of quick wins including a visible improvement in the confidence levels of the Year 8 students.

What we learnt

- Meeting before the workshop enabled us to use it to address issues rather than just introduce the programme
- Pick your Trio strategically – work with schools you already have relationships with and use it to strengthen them
- Scrutinise the data and determine exactly what is it you all want to get out of the programme before you start
- Knowing what we want the year to look like has enabled us to diarise everything a year in advance – formalising when we are coming together for trips, projects and data
- Planning in advance gives it the visibility and priority needed – prioritise it in your school improvement agenda
- In secondaries timetabling is a major issue – plan in advance and set up cross year groups

To find out more, contact Nigel Ford at nford@earls.dudley.sch.uk

For more information about Challenge Partners and Challenge the Gap go to: www.challengepartners.org



Emerging Practice

Whole school approach

Pickhurst Junior Academy,
Bromley, Trio lead

Issues and challenges

- Number of FSM children doubled to 21% in last 4 years
- Previously FSM children invisible, some provision poor
- Changing infrastructure and school culture

Desired outcomes

- To maximise the life chances and skills of all children particularly FSM ones
- To ensure the most vulnerable children receive the most effective support

What we did

- Relentless drive for excellence for all children
- Constant eye on data
- Whole school activities such as Big Write, Freedom Days, Philosophy for Children
- High profile pastoral and inclusion team
- FSM pupils' progress part of all TA and teacher appraisals
- Restructured all TA posts so the work is done by HLTAs, QTS and Para-professionals
 - Intervention groups for Y3/4 pupils run by QTS
 - New para-professionals flexibly deployed
- Turnaround group extended to Y5 and Y6 pupils run by HLTA and FSW – social and academic interventions
- New teachers' contracts include a bonus related to FSM pupils' accelerated learning

“

Being part of Challenge the Gap crystallised things in my mind. It has inspired me and enabled me to really focus on our priorities – to develop competent learners, not invisible kids and to give everyone a fair crack of the whip.”

Matt Rampton

Headteacher, Pickhurst Junior Academy,
July 2013

How we did it

At Pickhurst maximising all pupils' life chances, particularly those who are vulnerable and/or on FSMs, is the imperative. In the tireless drive to achieve this, nothing is left undone. Expectations for all children are high and Matt has taken the school from Satisfactory in 2007 to Outstanding in 2011; SAT results are excellent.

The impact of Challenge the Gap on children has been phenomenal with dramatic changes in their attitudes, aspirations and attainment.

This has inspired Matt to do better still and has crystallised his thinking round the use of the support given to the most vulnerable learners. This led to the reorganisation of the school's support staff and the introduction of a new para-professional role. From September onwards, work carried out by TAs will be done by a team of HLTAs, QTSs and para-professionals. The team will meet weekly to review priorities and agree deployment. Para-professionals and individual support assistants will be used flexibly, working in multiple settings in a variety of ways.

The repercussions have been considerable with a 50 per cent turnover in teaching staff in one year. This has been used as an opportunity to recruit new teachers committed to Matt's vision. *“The moral imperative is the driving force for me. While this has been the hardest year of my career, I know we have done the right thing”* **Matt Rampton, Headteacher.**

What we learnt

- You need the head to be fully engaged (Matt is the Challenge the Gap leader) so that they will release people, write cheques for cover and be able to implement whole school changes
- Challenge the Gap gives you the surety of working with like-minded colleagues – certain moments were gold dust
- Having teachers and paras together in the team works well. Teachers think about the overall results while the paras bring unique insights about each child
- For us Challenge the Gap exposed the competence of some of the cogs in our machine. Some needed oiling, some replacing. Restructuring our whole support staff has been massive and we are still feeling the fallout
- Put training for staff and CPD at the heart of what you do – our HLTAs also facilitate training for other schools
- Building SLT capacity is key – this is not an add on, it is part of our culture



Emerging Practice

Independent learning

Stanley Grove Primary Academy,
Manchester, Brighter Futures Educational
Trust (BFET), teacher carousel

Issues and challenges

- Very high proportion of pupils with EAL and those entitled (often not claimed) to FSM
- Many pupils not learning independently

Desired outcomes

- Pupils become independent and life-long learners
- An increase in pupils' confidence

What we did

- Introduced coloured cups – red (I'm stuck), amber (I have a question), green (too easy) – across the school
- Pupils have the cups on their desks at all times and use them to assess and show where they are at all times
- Introduced a variant on Guy Claxton's 4Rs with ready, resilient, reflective, resourceful and responsible
- Targeted 15 FSM pupils Y2 and 4 - became lead learners in charge of rolling out the 5Rs to the rest of the school
- Each R was made into a character Ready Rabbit, Resourceful Squirrel etc. – to make it real and fun – with pupils making puppets and posters
- The lead learners worked together at lunchtime to really understand what each R means and looks like
- Lead learners introduce one character a week to other classes and at assembly



The impact has been enormous. Now when a pupil is stuck they change cups to show that they need help or have a question, rather than struggling on. The 5Rs help them understand that they need to be more independent and resourceful. It has changed our learning culture completely and the children are happier and so much more engaged.

Jemma Scott

Teacher and Lead Learner Curriculum and Learning, May 2013

How we did it

With 90 per cent of pupils having English as an additional language and a very high percentage being eligible for free school meals, the school decided to take a two pronged approach – one, the coloured cups, involving all pupils initially and the other, the 5Rs, involving a group of FSM children, who would then roll it out across the school. The cups have made it far easier for pupils to ask for help. As no cup is better than another – being on green is not necessarily a good thing – there is no stigma attached to being stuck or asking for help. Before the cups were introduced children whose work was assessed at the end of a lesson had often made mistakes. As they were not asking questions, these mistakes were not being rectified and they were not moving on.

The 5Rs, which started at Christmas, links well with the cups as pupils understand that they need, for example, to be responsible and resourceful to move themselves forward. The impact of this work has been enormous. Some children have already gone up two sub-levels and overall pupils' well-being has greatly improved. Some pupils who before would never ask for help now independently go to the learning wall to get the resources they need to progress. It is this life-long skill that the school is trying to impart. For the FSM pupils rolling out this work, they are now seen as experts, have a strong positive profile within the school and are actively engaged in helping others. Moving forwards, the Academy would like to extend this work across the Trust.

What we learnt

- Making it fun and using the characters for the 5Rs has really worked
- Give children ownership from the beginning – they have so many better ideas than we do – give them control
- Working with two different year groups has helped us adapt the model for the whole school – it also gave the older children confidence as they were helping the younger ones
- Make sure all staff are on board and engaged in what you are trying to do from the start
- Pre-book dates for when you want to meet up as far in advance as possible otherwise things slip
- Going forward - involve other schools in what our children are doing too continue to increase their confidence



Emerging Practice

Improving literacy and numeracy

Cedar Mount Academy,
Manchester, para-professionals' carousel

Issues and challenges

- Addressing underachievement in literacy and numeracy by white British boys and girls

Desired outcomes

- Improved academic performance, self-esteem and motivation among the target cohort

What we did

- Target cohort - 15 Year 8 underachieving white British boys and girls
- Worked with teachers and CtG lead to create a programme around literacy and numeracy skills
- Pre-summer holiday – cohort given a '50 things to keep engaged' summer pack outlining free activities and providing a disposable camera, sketch book, pens etc.
- September – launched active mentoring plus cohort mentored weekly by Chris so she can closely monitor and impact on progress, while liaising with class teachers – mentoring will continue until Year 11
- Held first 'Today not Tomorrow' (TNT) day for cohort to help them understand how what they achieve at school will impact on their future success
- More TNT days planned including an orienteering day to encourage group work plus other activities such as setting up a literacy book club
- Cohort also observed other lessons to help identify what you need to be an outstanding student

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Before we started, our cohort saw school as somewhere they had to come, something that was done to them. They couldn't see a reason for it. But now, by showing them how step by step their work at school will enable them to build their future on firm foundations, it makes sense and they are far more motivated. ”

Jenny Trelfa and Chris Wyatt

Para-professionals, Cedar Mount Academy,
March 2013

How we did it

The programme targeted FSM students where the achievement gap is the most significant – white British boys and girls. It aims to raise literacy and numeracy rates and to increase self-esteem and motivation by linking hard work at school with future success in life. The Today not Tomorrow day was an amazing success. The first session included ice breakers and getting to know you sessions. The second session looked at how to build a secure future and compared house building with education.

KS2 the foundations, KS3 the walls, KS4 the second floor, with the roof representing college or university – each layer needing to be built on the solid foundations of the last. Feedback was fantastic with the students saying how much they loved it, how much they learned and how motivated they felt.

The day helped them to bond, feel special and now others want to be part of the group. This is a very different feeling from the start of the programme when only a few students engaged with the summer holiday activity, with most not seeing the point of it. It's working well, 80% of the cohort has already gone up two sub levels (in two terms), twice what is expected and motivation levels are improving. Instead of feeling picked on and given extra work, the group are now proud to be involved in the programme.

What we learnt

- Start early so you can hit the ground running in September
- Take time to network with others at Challenge the Gap (CtG) meetings – they are invaluable for idea and information sharing
- Holding one day events was the best approach for us as it was difficult to timetable in regular activities
- It takes time, you need to build the confidence of the group as you go along
- You have to be pro-active if you want to make a difference
- Planning is key – we planned every part of the day in great detail
- Make it fun – it can't be like lessons
- If it is not working you need to be the ones that change the way you engage
- Don't be half hearted – make the time and make it work



Emerging Practice

Raising aspirations

Sedgehill School,
Lewisham, South London,
Trio Lead, teachers' carousel

Issues and challenges

- Students not making sufficient progress
- Issues around literacy and a lack of aspirations

Desired outcomes

- Improve behaviour for learning which will impact on attendance and academic levels at the end of Year 9

What we did

- Identified cohort – consulting Head of Year and screened and rated behaviour for learning activity (to benchmark will be screened again at programme end)
- Launched the Reach project targeting 15, compliant but passive, Year 9 FSM students – the focus on instilling the behaviours needed to learn and literacy
- 1st - launched with staff – presentation with pictures of all the students and information re the programme
- 2nd - launched with parents and students - presentation and food. Students given a Readiness for Learning Pack containing highlighters, notebook, USB key etc. Ran an exercise for parents and students re self- awareness of behaviours needed for learning
- 3rd - student only launch – a trip to the Southbank in Central London including a meal in a restaurant, a trip on the London Eye and £10 to spend in a bookshop
- Reach students observed good Year 10 class
- Aim to do aspirational trip once every half term/term



Our students came back from the launch day buzzing. The thing about our kids is they don't understand why they are getting these things, why they are being made to feel special. But we are only doing what middle class parents normally do with their kids. ”

Gavin Barnett

Deputy Headteacher, Sedgehill School,
February 2013

- Plus launched a Wednesday after-school club for the group to help with homework, mentoring etc.

How we did it

Reach is one of the school values – Readiness, Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Reach. With many FSM students (55%), deciding which ones should be part of the Reach group required a lot of thought. Students were targeted who were compliant but passive, not part of another intervention, had potential but were underachieving.

Although not all parents attended the launch, those who did were very engaged. There was food, a presentation and each student was given a 'Readiness for Learning' pack, paid for by Pupil Premium money. Parents and students took part in behaviours needed for learning exercise. This helped students' focus on the positive things they need to do to progress rather than seeing positive behaviour as a list of shouldn't dos. Students and parents separately assessed their or their child's behaviours. Parents were more aware of when their child needed to apply themselves more, whereas students focused on what they don't do (i.e. don't misbehave) rather than what they need to do to succeed.

The London launch worked really well. Students felt special and by being taken out of their comfort zone – “a trip to central London is like taking them to a foreign country”, teachers had the chance to get to know them individually.

What we learnt

- FSM students often feel that school is something that is done to them and they don't have control over it – it is important to recognise that and then start from a completely different perspective
- Don't ever under-estimate the importance of finding out about what individual students like
- Taking students out of their comfort zone is a good way of getting to know them
- The activities you do don't have to be really expensive – just do things that middle class parents normally do with their kids
- You need to mix in some incentives with the work. For example, while each student was given £10 to buy a book they had to buy one that stretched their reading age
- The students really benefitted from observing another class – they took it very seriously staying behind to ask the teacher and other students questions



Emerging Practice

Pupil insights

Feltham Community College,
London Borough of Hounslow,
Trio Lead, leaders' carousel

Issues and challenges

- Insufficient knowledge / awareness of FSM group – the need to create an identity without stigmatising
- FSM students' learning needs not always being addressed - many FSM kids under the radar so get lost
- Many students whose families don't claim FSM due to stigma face similar issues that need to be addressed

Desired outcomes

- To give an identity without labelling – to drill down into the detail of each student
- To determine where possible if FSM students had the characteristics needed for successful learning and if not how to address this through learning strategies
- To develop a cohort of more confident learners

What we did

- Set up the Double Gold group (named after alumni Mo Farah) – for FSM Year 9 FSM students
- Created interactive staff room display - one side A4 per student; subject teachers rating them from one to five on characteristics such as self-awareness along with attendance data and a photo
- All staff add observations – help build up student profiles
- Information pulled together every half term with a view to creating a permanent sheet for each Double Gold student and used this to inform school meetings



We wanted to get the same level of insight into the learning characteristics of FSM students as we have for other groups e.g. EAL ones, so we could build up our knowledge and understanding and adapt our learning and support strategies accordingly. ”

Mariella Wilson

Assistant Head, Feltham Community College,
December 2012

How we did it

Feltham College's FSM Year 9 Double Gold students come from a variety of backgrounds, ethnicities and academic abilities, some with engaged and some with disengaged parents. To determine how best to help such a diverse group, the college wanted to establish the average characteristics for FSM students. To do this they asked their teachers to rate them from one to five on their self-awareness, self-confidence, motivation, social skills and independent study skills. This added to attendance data, helped staff to build up an individual and group profile. The aim now is to look at pedagogies and learning strategies to help students to develop these skills and then to start working with students from Year 7 onwards. This dovetails neatly with a recognition that the school needs to reconsider how (and what) it teaches to meet the challenges of the fast shifting educational landscape, including the proposed move to the EBC.

For Feltham the biggest challenge is time. As teachers had to come across the site to the staff room and physically update each student's display, the process took 3.5 weeks. By email, it usually it takes five days. This was done to make the teachers more aware of who the Double Gold FSM students were and learn from the insights other teachers offered. Conflicting priorities make progress quite slow, with the next challenges being embedding the learning ASAP and seeing how, given the time constraints, the learning can be rolled out to all FSM students.

What we learnt

- Identify the five key skills FSM students often lack, such as independent study and social skills, and focus on those
- Training is key if you want students, other than the very bright ones, to develop these skills
- Schools need to develop strategies for addressing FSM students' needs similar to those developed for other cohorts e.g. EAL students
- Focus on learning strategies rather than behavioural issues
- Getting teachers to physically contribute to the profiles took time but was worth it as it helped them engage in what each other was doing and get a more rounded view of the students
- The Double Gold group given students a positive sense of belonging/identity
- Things take a long time to put in place – start in the summer term if you can
- Leading from the top with passion helps to engage busy teachers



Emerging Practice

Raising aspirations

Bartley Green Secondary School,
Birmingham, Trio Lead,
para-professionals' carousel

Issues and challenges

- Getting students to value education and understand how their actions now will affect the rest of their lives

Desired outcomes

- Raised aspirations; give students something to aim for
- Students better informed about opportunities, enter Year 10 more focused/ready to learn, better attendance, better results

What we did

- Targeted 15 Year 9 FSM students (plus one) to form the ASPIRE group – created/led by Natalie and Miranda
- Launched course, three sessions, one per term. 1st on aspirations and why they are important, 2nd on role models and 3rd will be on the world of work with each student to research their chosen career
- Questionnaire re aspirations at start/end of course
- Within each session students choose school based targets for the term– things they need to achieve to be on the road to success such as 95% attendance
- Each session also includes creating a visual display in the OWL (Our Way of Learning) Centre
- Each member of ASPIRE has one to one mentoring with Miranda or Natalie – a min twice per half term
- Plus weekly virtual monitoring to measure behaviour, attendance, punctuality – issues discussed in mentoring sessions – plus tracker report if any issues – certificates given to celebrate progress

What we learnt

- The importance of planning the whole year from the beginning so we knew what we wanted to achieve
- Smaller groups didn't work as well. The sessions worked best in a bigger space with all 16 students, so you had more choice about who to pair with who
- In the second term we listed school based targets for the students to choose from rather than them choosing their own – before they were over-ambitious and so disappointed
- These students struggle to sit and listen for long; so mix in creative activities
- The displays work well to engage teachers in what we are doing
- Plan your evaluation up front and what you are going to monitor – we didn't initially think about academic data as it was a pastoral course. Now we need to think about how to track that as well
- Make the group voluntary. This year we just told students they were part of it – reluctant students may not engage

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The aim of the ASPIRE group was to get pupils to think about where they wanted to be in ten years' time, to bring that back to now and then to set themselves targets to help them achieve. ”

Natalie McCann and Miranda Hewitt

Para-professionals, Bartley Green School,
January 2013

How we did it

The aim of the ASPIRE group (Achievement, Success, Perseverance, Inspiration, Results and Excellence) is to get students to think now about where they want to be in the future and what they need to do to succeed. The 16 students chosen are amongst the most challenging in the school, with lower aspirations and ambitions. All had already been in the school's OWL Centre (support unit). The ASPIRE group has regular mentoring, monitoring and there are three half day sessions, one per term, focusing on aspirations, role models and careers.

A visual display in one corner of the OWL Centre is created for each session. The first was hot air balloons. Each student created their own balloon containing their career aspirations and three school based targets. Balloons move up the display when a target is met. The second represents role models. These are depicted by stars and include the qualities needed to succeed. The third, about careers, will be a tree with green leaves for the qualities and skills you need to achieve and brown/red leaves for behaviours you need to shed. While some people are critical of asking 13 year olds to choose their career now, Natalie and Miranda feel it is better for them to select a career path at this point and change their minds, than not be on one at all.

Emerging Practice

Pupil insights

Hayes School,
Bromley, Kent
Trio Lead, leaders' carousel

Issues and challenges

- Combating underachievement; low self-confidence, disruptive behaviour; ineffective independent learning

Desired outcomes

- Improved behaviour, self-confidence and independent learning leading to improved academic results

What we did

- Formed 'Moving Up' group - 16 Year 9 FSM/ vulnerable students. Some in cohort to become Learning Detectives
- 15 out of 16 parents attend group launch before Xmas
- Students split into 3 groups for Learning Detectives' tasks 1) focus on self-confidence, 2) independent learning and 3) behaviour. One teacher to work with each group
- First meeting (Jan/Feb) students asked to identify what good learning behaviour or self-confidence looks like etc.
- Teachers pull answers into a grid for the students to use as check list when they observed other lessons
- Each group observe one Year 7 or 8 lesson and feedback
- Post observation, met with their teacher to go through check-list and to find out what they have learnt from the experience. Individual targets are set based on this
- Targets are communicated to all the student's other teachers – who then feed back to the group teacher
- Next steps – feedback from group teachers, more lesson observations prior to rolling it out next year

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'As a Lead School you need to be clear that your role is not to act as the 'teacher' to the accelerator school as the 'learner'. It is not about Leads teaching Accelerators; it is about us teaching each other. Working together has really helped all schools involved in the project, irrespective of their status or role. ”

Lee Preston

Assistant Head, Hayes School,
May 2013

How we did it

'Moving Up' consists of 16 Year 9 FSM/vulnerable students. Learning Detectives is one intervention targeting this group and the idea behind it is simple. Give students the opportunity to observe good learning behaviours so they can recognise and adopt them. Students are in three groups, each working closely with one of the CtG teachers. Each group discusses what good looks like in their area and from this they create a list of actions and behaviours. The teacher works these into a grid, which is used as a check list for the students when observing lessons. The lessons are picked very carefully, choosing, for example, a class where there are a number of confident speakers. The year group observed are Year 7 or 8, the logic being that if younger students can behave in the desired way, then there is no excuse for the Learning Detectives not to.

The students meet with their teacher at lunchtime. When they first met, one of the concerns the students had was that they would be taken out of lessons and get further behind. The group are treated like adults meeting in the school conference room with lunch being laid on. After the first time, when they were too shy to take the food, they now happily help themselves. The programme is already having a positive impact with improvements in behaviour and academic achievement. Getting parents engaged took time, but was worth it and now before each group meeting parents are emailed reminding them to remind their child to attend.

What we learnt

- Choose experienced teachers – but ones who have time – not department heads as they're too busy
- Ask the students what they don't want you to do to help them so you can understand their concerns
- We built our team then decided on our year group – in hindsight it would have been better the other way around
- Make time to write to and phone all the parents – it's worth the time
- Think carefully about which students to target. Don't make a rod for your own back, choose ones that will appreciate the help
- Think about the dynamics of each group when deciding on the cohort
- Our staff meetings have been a bit ad hoc – it works better to tie them into the normal meeting cycle



Emerging Practice

Pupil conferencing

St Fidelis Catholic Primary,
Kent, Primary Trio Lead

Issues and challenges

- Poor motivation and lack of self-esteem for FSM pupils
- Slow progress across the school with teachers not taking ownership of FSM pupils in their classes
- Time management and maintaining commitment

Desired outcomes

- Improved results and increased pupil confidence, self-esteem and improved behaviour
- Teachers more confident working with FSM pupils

What we did

- Set up Turn Around to raise attainment, run by Claire year 1, by class teachers year 2 and a TA year 3
- Year 1 - Identified and engaged KS2 FSM pupils plus other vulnerable children including those with behavioural problems for the Turn Around group – 18 pupils in all
- Claire met separately with each pupil and then their teacher to determine targets – focused on the overlaps
- From this each pupil had own booklet recognising their strengths/successes and recording individual targets. Teachers and pupils filled these in together
- Claire met with each pupil at the beginning of the term to agree targets and then every two to three weeks to discuss/monitor progress
- Lunchtime club for Turn Around pupils set up to inject some

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You know it's working when a pupil comes up to you and says: "I love Turn Around. My voice is listened to and things have changed because of it."
”

Claire Putnam

Teacher, FSM leader and RE Coordinator,
January 2013

fun into the work e.g. gardening project and organising/running a school disco

- Reward days held two/three times a year with fun

How we did it

Turn Around is a great success. Pupils are performing better and confidence levels have improved. Many children not targeted by Turn Around want to be a part of it due to fun activities run by the lunchtime club – the school disco being a notable example of this. The targets set are wide ranging including self-presentation and attitude to learning, along with subject based targets in English and maths. As well as identifying their own targets, pupils record in their own words what they are going to do each term to achieve their targets. This adds to their sense of ownership, while making them responsible for their own successes or failures. A lack of commitment to the programme does not go unnoticed and children who don't commit are not allowed to participate in the reward days. Being barred once usually does the trick.

Handing over the programme to class teachers did not work as well. While there were some obvious pros having the class teacher as the lead, as the children already have the relationship with them, the lack of time was a major barrier. A TA is now in charge and this is working much better.

What we learnt

- Giving the pupils freedom to decide and record their own targets rather than being told enabled them to be more in charge/accountable
- Self-affirmation - giving the children the chance to focus initially on what they were good at before looking at what they needed to do, worked well
- Managing it is hard – you must always stay on top of the meetings, so ensure the person who leads it has the time to do it effectively and oversee it all
- It wasn't as effective when managed by class teachers who had to fit it around their teaching commitments
- Target no more than 20 children – if there are too many you will not be able to give each child the time they need
- If you miss meetings, pupils think it is no longer your priority and lose faith
- Just giving pupils the time to talk to an adult can make a real difference
- The lunchtime club is a really important part of it as it enables the pupils to celebrate what they are doing

To find out more, contact Claire Putnam at cputnam.303@lgflmail.org

For more information about Challenge Partners and Challenge the Gap go to: www.challengepartners.org



Emerging Practice

Social and cultural capital

Rushey Mead Secondary School,
Leicester, Trio Lead, leaders' carousel

Issues and challenges

- Combatting the lack of social/cultural capital often evident in students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Addressing inequalities in use of, and exposure to, formal language, experiences and expectations
- Tackling social, cultural and financial barriers

Desired outcomes

- Students read more and have a greater exposure to cultural experiences
- Increased confidence and self-esteem

What we did

- Targeted 20 FSM Year 9 students with various activities enhancing social and cultural capital
- Enriching language - through a host of activities plus all 20 students in same English group to give additional focus on speaking/ listening activities
- Students mentored in groups of five, within this challenging academic targets set and monitored
- Use of virtual learning environment to monitor progress over the Summer and Christmas holidays
- Increasing exposure to different experiences - visits to museum, library, radio station, coffee shop, book shop. Each have a list - 15 things to do before I am 15
- Working in the Trio – each school hosts a student conference for FSM students from the other schools

“

Building social and cultural capital is vital in closing the gap; it is not about being patronising to less advantaged students. Research shows that exposure to more formal language and different experiences helps improve educational attainment. By building social and cultural capital you can help address inequality and the way privilege is embedded in society. ”

Rita Hindocha

Deputy Head, Rushey Mead School, Jan 2013

How we did it

Work to build social and cultural capital is planned into all activities. Where possible, these align with pre-existing activities, e.g. Whatever It Takes, a local authority programme promoting reading and the Comenius project, which funds exchanges to EU schools. Together in English, students focus on using formal language and are exposed to classic authors such as Shakespeare. This is backed by group mentoring sessions where students keep a reading log, progress is monitored and they are helped to meet challenging academic targets. This is working and students who before had to be taken physically to the library are now choosing to borrow books.

Language and experience enrichment go hand in hand. Experiences include a trip to places in the City Centre they would not usually go such as the public library, Waterstones and the city museum. The emphasis is on free places where they can go with their families. A great success have been student conferences, where once a term a school in the trio hosts the other two to enable students to experience things outside of their own environment. So enjoyable was the first one hosted at Babbington Community College where students prepared and served a meal for their guests, that Rushey Mead are keen to plan an amazing day in return.

What we learnt

- Just how important addressing inequalities in social and cultural capital is – it underpins so much
- The importance of finding free activities to 1) make the programme possible and 2) make it sustainable for the students
- It works keeping activities local – showing students their own town centre but through different eyes
- When planning - do the things you would do with your own children
- The parents are not a barrier – they are enthusiastic about what we are doing
- Just how much pressure many of the families are under, the impact of this and how to work with it
- Although its hard do build in time for the mentoring – don't let it stop, it is too important
- The need to use social media such as twitter more to encourage communication and engagement

To find out more, contact Rita Hindocha at RHindocha@rusheyriad-sec.leicester.sch.uk

For more information about Challenge Partners and Challenge the Gap go to: www.challengepartners.org



Emerging Practice

Student to student feedback

Babington Community College,
Leicester, teachers' carousel

Issues and challenges

- To get students actively engaged in their learning, to use formal language and see the bigger picture

Desired outcomes

- Effective feedback resulting in improved student knowledge, understanding and confidence
- Empowering students to become more resourceful

What we did

- Introduced The Babington Way for Feedback, 'Wow! How? Now...' in learning sets - a whole school approach to feedback
- Trialled with FSM students and Challenge the Gap team – five teachers/TAs in first term, 15 in the second and whole school by summer term
- Students in learning sets of three work through:
- Stage 1 = **Wow!** and **How?** – group looks at a piece of work and describe in own informal language what's brilliant about it (**Wow!**) and then in formal language based on performance criteria (**How?**)
- Stage 2 - **Now...** developing an action plan about what they need to do next to improve
- Stage 3 - Whole class, teacher led, plenary to discuss the **Wow!** the **How?** Then what to do **Now...** to improve
- Stage 4 - students self-assess against levelled objectives based on academic attainment
- Learning walk every six weeks to assess/tweak process

What we learnt

- We thought giving 30 students the opportunity to all speak could result in behavioural issues – it didn't
- We normally have seating plans, so letting the students pick their own learning sets initially was new for us. They chose their friends as we knew they would but this worked as it helped build their confidence
- If you are worried about engaging others in the idea, trial it with a small team first. When they see that it works they will want to be part of it
- Be flexible in how you adapt the work – it is difficult to start with for students to comment on each other's work
- Having the confidence to stand back and hand over responsibility for feeding back to the students is hard, but essential
- Increases 1-1 attention for students from teachers



One of the hardest things to do as a teacher is to stand back and give the students the responsibility to analyse and feedback on each other's work. The temptation is to jump in and take control. But giving them this responsibility really works and lessons using this approach when formally observed have come out as outstanding.

Sara Fletcher

Vice Principal, Babington Community College,
February 2013

How we did it

Wow! How? Now... is a whole school approach to developing effective feedback. Instead of teachers feeding back, students are responsible for feeding back to each other through a managed process.

The **Wow!** allows them to positively critique each other's work in their own language, with the **How?** applying formal language and educational criteria. For example, "What a 'sick' story" (the **Wow!**) and "It is properly punctuated with a good use of grammar" (the **How?**). Being able to use less formal language initially helps students quickly understand what they need to do better. Giving formal feedback based on performance criteria, helps students understand what's good and why.

The **Now...** sets out the way to achieve it. For example, in one English lesson, students shown a Grade C and a Grade D paper pulled out the differences between the two through **Wow!** and **How?** and then critiqued their own piece of work. The process is flexible, so teachers can adapt it to the needs of their class, use it for a whole or part of a lesson and cater for different ability students. To alleviate some initial concerns, students could feedback in writing rather than verbally and names were taken off randomly handed out papers to avoid potential recrimination.

Next, **Wow! How? Now...** marking stickers are being developed, so written feedback matches verbal.



Emerging Practice

Independent learning

St James's Catholic High School,
Barnet, North London,
Trio Lead, teachers' carousel

Issues and challenges

- Big attainment gap between FSM and other students
- FSM students often displaying poor learning behaviour

Desired outcomes

- For students to develop learning skills and resilience
- For students to act on feedback better

What we did

Learning log

- Group of 16 mixed ability Year 9 FSM students selected - the quiet ones that are often overlooked
- Each fill in a learning log on a daily/weekly basis – each selecting three sentences to complete
- Coaching and training helps them fill it in well
- Learning logs discussed 1-1 weekly/bi-weekly mentoring sessions at lunch/after school. Students reflect/focus on using new learning skills in weaker subjects
- Some are also mentored by Year 11/6th form students

The Pit

- Introduced independent learning technique – The Pit at first for FSM group and then the whole school. Students are given a real challenge and the tools to solve it
- Students have a set time to go into The Pit where they work independently to solve a particular issue. Tools/ ladders are given to help and challenge cards to extend



When we heard about The Pit, it was a real eureka moment for us as we could see how it would help students change their attitude to learning. Too often students panic and then give up. This helps them break down their fears about learning and prove to themselves that they can achieve things.

Christopher Babidge

Assistant Key Stage 4 Co-ordinator, St James's,
February 2013

How we did it

The Learning Log enables students to record their learning habits regularly. Students choose sentences to complete such as 'I improved my work by...' or 'I could have done better if...'. The focus is on learning not attainment, helping to build resilience, self-esteem and developing on going learning skills. Since starting in November some students have gone up one or more sub levels; many are happier and more articulate. To ensure buy-in across the school, three departments are represented in each of the three teaching trios. Next, learning detectives will be introduced with Year 9 students observing Year 10 and 11 classes.

The Pit is a place where students work through an exercise alone or in groups to enhance independent learning, build resilience and develop learning skills. Students are given a task, a visual reminder (a fun picture of The Pit is displayed) and a time limit. They work through the task and leave The Pit when complete. Less able students may be given symbolic ladders such as prompts when they enter while more able are given challenge cards. Teachers make it fun and ham up the scary side but the point is clear – learning can be a scary thing. Once out of The Pit, students have a real sense of achievement, are more able to work independently and are less scared to take on challenges.

What we learnt

- In mixed ability groups tailor what you do with each student; splitting them into sub-groups may work better
- Making the students feel part of something is important but challenging – there needs to be a logic to the group
- Prioritising the work is hard so make sure you tell other staff about what're doing; get them on board/excited
- We used our teacher trios to form links with other departments
- With The Pit, stepping away and getting students to solve problems independently is very powerful although hard as our impulse is to help
- Set time limits for students to be in The Pit - you may struggle but you'll get out and put up a visual reminder for students when they are in The Pit and remove it when they are out
- When introducing The Pit start off with a small degree of risk and build up



Emerging Practice Parental engagement

The Avenue Primary School,
Sutton, Primary Trio Leader

Issues and challenges

- Dealing with a large influx of new children – 90 in two years due to bulge classes
- Proportionately more FSM & EAL pupils in new cohort – reflecting changes in the local community
- Need to engage new parents/reassure existing ones

Desired outcomes

- Improved engagement with hard to reach families
- The best opportunities for all children provided
- FSM children attending at least one after school club
- An innovative approach to using the pupil premium
- A continued narrowing of the achievement gap

What we did

- Wrote to all parents – mentioning FSM and encouraging sign up
- Followed up by phone and with 1 to 1 meetings – explaining pupil premium and how it could help
- Used pupil premium to buy extra family support worker and school nurse time to work with families
- Engaged parents in parent forums and workshops and introduced parent voice throughout school
- Targeted parents who did not attend meetings
- Raised staff awareness of hard to reach families and children with multiple needs

“

Often parents don't sign up for FSMs even if they are entitled, as they see it as stigmatising and this acts as a barrier. However, when talking to parents about how the pupil premium could benefit their child, they relaxed and opened up more.”

Hayley Cameron,
Assistant Headteacher, December 2012

How we did it

Building relationships with traditionally hard to reach parents and participating in an intensive but incredibly worthwhile programme as Challenge the Gap, is time consuming. A lack of time is the biggest barrier you need to overcome. Taking a whole school approach, involving everyone from the senior leadership team to the office and lunchtime staff, has been key to maintaining the focus and finding the time to get things done.

Involving everyone has helped raise the profile of FSM pupils, changing the way the school works with them. Now, for example, instead of having tracking meetings once a term to look at attainment data, the head, the class teacher, the inclusion and the assessment manager meet twice a term to discuss each pupil. The result, a better understanding of all the influencing factors in their lives not just their eligibility for FSM.

Building better relationships with parents and having a far greater understanding of each child's home life and their individual 'barriers to learning' has been very beneficial for this process. So too has been placing a real emphasis on the child's voice, giving them a time to speak and be heard and an opportunity for everyone to focus on what they have and are achieving, as well as what else they need to do. This has also helped increase the understanding among teachers of what works for each pupil. Next steps, continued evaluation and a crystallisation of current activities.

What we learnt

- Take a holistic view of each child – it is not just about the data
- Take the time to listen to children and follow up on every conversation
- Allocate slots in meetings to give the work the focus it needs particularly in your weekly planning meeting
- Be realistic and prioritise
- Delegate - split the work evenly
- Think how you can embed the work – it is not an extra
- Take time to build relationships in the trio – you all have something to offer and something to learn
- Determine exactly what is expected at the outset – get the dates in your diary
- Don't feel swamped, ask for help
- Use your network to help build your confidence
- Break down the barrier between primary and secondary – often you are doing the same thing



Emerging Practice Mentoring

The Compton School,
North London,
Trio Lead, teachers and para-professionals

Issues and challenges

- Lead Learners lack confidence with low aspirations - many fall below the radar

Desired outcomes

- For Lead Learners to feel more confident, to think about their own goals and ambitions, to work harder
- For Lead Learners to take part more in the leadership activities available e.g. become prefects and get involved in extra curricula activities

What we did

- Set up a Lead Learners group targeting all Year 9 FSM students; high achievers join the Brilliant Club
- One to one mentoring for other Lead Learners – all teachers and paraprofessionals involved
- Students complete form outlining self-perceptions, ambitions and academic needs at first meeting
- Targets are jointly chosen, written in their planners and reviewed at their fortnightly mentoring meeting
- After school study group set up to complement this – now re-launched as Lead Learner Club
- The Club involves peer mentoring from ex year 11s
- Lead Learners given opportunities usually had by gifted and talented students e.g. leading assemblies



When we set up the Lead Learners group the students were asking why they were chosen, what's the connection between them? While selection is based on FSM, it is also based on the fact that all the students targeted could achieve more. The students see that, so FSM is not an issue.

Tessa Lambert

Teacher, The Compton School,
January 2013

How we did it

The value placed on mentoring is clear with all teachers and paraprofessionals from the deputy-head down mentoring at least one student. Peer mentoring also takes place with ex-Year 11 students coming back to the school to mentor the Year 9 Lead Learners. Many of the more boisterous ex Year 11 boys are particularly keen to get involved and say they wished they had had the opportunity to talk to an older student when they were in Year 9 making decisions about their future. This works well, particularly with those Lead Learners with behavioural issues. It also motivates students to work harder when they realise, for example, that they need an English GCSE to become a PE teacher. The school wants to keep offering mentoring for these Year 9 students until they are in Year 11, with more students coming on board through a rolling programme. Lack of time is a major issue, but the obvious benefits means it has the priority and profile it needs across the school.

Complementing the one to one work is the just launched Lead Learners Club. The Club replaces the after school study group, which was not very successful mainly due to a lack of clarity around its purpose. With the Lead learners Club the decision has been made to focus on homework not social activities.

What we learnt

- Be clear about what you want things to achieve. The study group didn't work well initially as there was no clear purpose with some thinking the focus should be academic and others social
- Take students learning styles into account – some prefer one to one and not group work so the Lead Learners club may not work for them
- One Lead Learners was a carer so after school activities would not work for them – it is important to understand the whole child when deciding what will work best with them
- Due to the large number of clubs already on offer, finding a time when all Lead Learners can meet has been difficult
- Time needs to be set aside to make this work – it is really hard if it is seen as an extra thing you have to do

To find out more, contact Tessa Lambert at tessa.lambert@thecompton.org.uk

For more information about Challenge Partners and Challenge the Gap go to: www.challengepartners.org



Emerging Practice

Levelling the Field

Hayes School,
Bromley, Kent
Trio Lead, teachers' carousel

Issues and challenges

- Helping FSM students, whose language acquisition to date may have been more functional than discursive, contribute effectively

Desired outcomes

- A level playing field where all can participate
- Improved communication skills for FSM cohort

What we did

- Introduced AT across the school. First at INSET day and then to students
- AT = three-way accountability in discussions: to the learning community, to the knowledge and to rigorous thinking
- Students given a set of phrases to describe their actions when discussing, feeding back etc. in class – e.g. listen – pay attention to statements of others and predict – draw conclusions about what may happen next
- Use across the school has grown organically although now every Year 7 has done AT in English, which will help other teachers to use it going forward
- Next – introduce AT sheets in the student's planners so it is always available; continue the focus for next year

How we did it

Hayes School has a strong focus on the importance of student-led learning in the classroom. However, discussions can be



Accountable Talk (AT) helps to remove the in-class variations between FSM and non FSM students. By giving FSM, and other vulnerable students, tools and phrases to use in discussions, they participate more and are less likely to disengage or become abrasive. Simultaneously, more confident students have to think harder about what they are saying and how it fits, and this slows them down while also helping them to listen more. ”

Sue Alexander

English Teacher and Whole School Literacy Lead, May 2013

dominated by confident students, with FSM and other vulnerable students being left out. To encourage universal participation, to ensure discussion is used to develop ideas, challenge and support and to level the playing field, AT was introduced. The idea is this: if you are going to be good at discussion you need to be accountable to your group in three ways – to the learning community (help each other out/build on each other's ideas); to the knowledge (use of evidence); and to rigorous thinking (use of logic and ability to challenge the process). Students are given a phrase sheet that breaks down these different areas and suggests actions and questions under each. For example, being accountable to the learning community is broken down to listen, summarise, build and mark. Having to refer to the phrase sheet and actively think about what you are saying and why, helps to slow down the more confident speakers while providing tools for the less confident.

AT is not just limited to English lessons. It works well in many classes with some early adopters having created their own adaptations – AT playing cards and AT sheets on the dance studio walls. It's very versatile and can be simplified for lower ability groups and made more complex for top Year 12 sets. The feedback is great and while the programme is not specifically focused on the CIG cohort of Year 9s, they very much benefit from it. While Sue does not teach the Year 9 cohort (in hindsight it would have been good to) she has seen others run with it, including one FSM Year 8 student who now describes himself as "the King of Accountable Talk".

What we learnt

- AT is very flexible – you can adapt it to the audience, the subject, the time and for different ability students
- To encourage take up quickly, get a whole year group using it in English – then it is easier to roll out to other areas as students are familiar with the process and what is expected of them
- Demonstrate the need for AT by asking teachers to debate an issue so that they can see the barriers and needs for themselves
- Where possible try to ensure that those rolling out the programme also teach the cohort – so work out the timetable and then choose the cohort

To find out more, contact Sue Alexander at SCA@hayes.bromley.sch.uk

For more information about Challenge Partners and Challenge the Gap go to: www.challengepartners.org



Emerging Practice Peer Mentoring

Lampton Academy and Teaching School,
Hounslow, London
Lead Trio carousell

Issues and challenges

- FSM pupils not making enough progress in core subjects, others making enough progress are at risk of slipping back

Desired outcomes

- Accelerated or maintained academic achievement

What we did

- Dec 2012 - Identified 12 Year 10 underachieving FSM students. From these smaller cohort selected
- 6th form mentors advertised for and recruited
- Jan 2013 – Mentors trained by Assistant Head on how to be an effective mentor
- Feb 2013 - Cohort and mentors get together to explore what it is like to be a mentor/mentee and to see who wanted to work with who
- Feb/March 2013 – mentoring sessions start
- Sessions supervised, are held in the library at the same time very week – time allocated in tutor period
- Mentees discuss issues that concern them and in some cases are helped with subject specific issues
- Next steps- to expand the programme lower down the school to pick up underachieving earlier

How we did it

Teacher to student mentoring is established and works well at Lampton. However, a shortage of teacher mentors prompted the



We spent a long time selecting the cohort that we thought would benefit most from this intervention. While it is tempting to select those students who are most vulnerable, it is not always the right thing to do. Your ability to match your intervention with your cohort will determine your success. ”

Alex Leggett

Assistant Headteacher, Lampton Academy,
May 2013

school to set up a peer mentoring scheme with older students (6th form) mentoring younger ones. Determining which FSM Year 10 students to mentor took time. A number of senior staff worked together to identify an initial cohort. Then those students who were already being mentored were dismissed as were those students not ready to benefit from peer mentoring yet. From an initial 12, five were selected. The 6th Form Head, who was part of this selection process, then advertised on the Managed Learning Environment for potential mentors. Those who applied had to state why they were interested in mentoring and what skills they had. All the 6th formers recruited were very successful students with good GCSE grades, enabling them to also give subject support if required. The sessions, which ran for a couple of months, have now finished allowing the 6th formers to concentrate on their exams.

The impact to date has been mixed. Progress has varied from subject to subject ranging from excellent to limited. Working with whole GCSE grades does make it hard to track. Anecdotally behaviour has improved and students seem happier. There is some resistance, with one student in particular refusing to be mentored associating it with being stupid. The school wants to roll it out next year and will be approaching the existing peer mentors and potential mentors in the next Year 12. Numbers recruited will determine whether the current Year 10s will continue to be mentored along with a new cohort in the current Year 9.

What we learnt

- A successful mentoring scheme takes a long time to set up, so start early. This is particularly important to enable the 6th formers to make a difference
- Try and use existing materials if you can to save time
- Facilitate meetings - have them at the same time and place rather than expecting mentors to set them up
- An event to get mentors and mentees together worked well
- Support the mentors to help make the sessions purposeful
- Next time we will decide evaluation criteria at the start – benchmark attitudes to see how these changed
- We will also check in with the mentors more to get their views on how the mentee is progressing