

Closing the gap project - progress of Year 6 children not working at Age-Related Expectations

Background to the "Closing the gap" project

- After assessments in December 2018, data analysis showed that 18 children out of a 59 strong cohort were working slightly below age-related expectations.
- In the 2016 Statistical Paper, links between poverty and children's cognitive development were drawn based on strong statistical data of 19000 children of Primary school age in the UK. Although this study only followed children's progress until they were 7, this data would not change drastically just because the children are older. As a significant percentage of these 18 pupils formed part of the pupil premium cohort (72%), the decision was made to intervene in their education to swiftly boost their attainment levels pre-SATs.
- I volunteered to run the English Booster intervention as a club after school to ensure high quality first class teaching, without impacting on current lessons.

Relevant research and reading

- Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils - Briefing for school leaders - November 2015. Department for Education.
- *Persistent Poverty and Children's Cognitive Development*—Royal Statistical Society, University of Sheffield, UK, 2016.
- https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4859/1/nlns_booster025100.pdf Department for Education leaflet giving advice to schools to boost attainment., published 1999.

Key project activities

- Wrote a short term action plan to deliver high quality interventions in grammar, spelling and punctuation and reading comprehension in the booster sessions.
- Undertook pupil perception survey to find out what these children thought about reading comprehension and GPS, which found that several children were not interested in the subject matter of the reading comprehension, or found that it contained too many words that they did not understand and could not decode or decipher the meaning of.
- Introduced support programme for 18 targeted pupils, including spelling games and ability to explore unfamiliar words by breaking them down into root words, suffix and prefix exercises, paired learning opportunities, producing my own reading comprehension activities based on texts the children were interested in, and providing the ability to practise grammar and punctuation exercises in short bursts to help maximise impact.
- Introduced assessment for learning programme for targeted pupils, with weekly opportunities for pupils to learn and apply grammatical concepts in a competitive environment (which engages the children successfully).

Impact of the "Closing the gap" project

- Teacher assessment showed that a significant amount of Year 6 children were working at below Age-Related Expectations at the end of December 2018.
- All the pupils made a minimum of 3 steps of progress in English during the time of the booster club, with 3 pupils making 3 points of progress, 12 pupils making 4 points of progress, and 4 pupils making 5 points of progress during this time.
- All pupils in the booster group were working

PP children	Progress made	Non PP children	Progress made
1	+3	1	+3
10	+4	2	+4
2	+5	2	+5

at ARE, or very close to ARE, by the end of the Spring term.

- SLT has agreed to start Booster sessions for children that are not performing at ARE from June 2019 for the current Year 5 cohort to help close the gap sooner for these children.

