

'Grove Hill' Secondary School

was too narrowly focussed. Their initial work quickly revealed that the school needed to make more fundamental cultural and technical changes across the range of its data processes. The questions raised included:

- how robust is our data?
- should more robust and regular assessment apply across the school?
- who owns the sense of progress for the pupils?
- are targets really challenging?
- do subject leaders and other staff really know which pupils are below trajectory?

The school used the momentum gained from the first stage of this EM activity and adapted the following stages to a more fundamental review of its tracking and target setting. The success of that change of direction is reported in later stages of this case study.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

Staff and pupils at Grove Hill are convinced that the activities sponsored by the EM are having and will continue to have a positive impact on pupil engagement and attainment.

- Yr7 (now Yr8) pupils spoke with enormous enthusiasm about the science curriculum, its grip on their attention and their continuing interest.
- Staff from the Science Department described how EM funding had created an opportunity fundamentally to change the science curriculum and its demonstrable impact as target pupils began to deploy skills not yet common in Yr10 and Yr11 at Grove Hill.
- Senior leaders confirmed that EM activity has been a catalyst in transforming the collection, analysis and use of performance data across the school. Targeting and addressing underachievement are significantly improved and this is being reflected in pupil attainment.

First activity: Teaching and Learning in science - The focus on Yr7 for the first activity means that there will be no end of Key Stage data in the near future to confirm the initial progress being reported by the Science Department. Staff report progress on all three objectives set for this activity.

- Engagement – pupils speak openly about their enjoyment of lessons while staff describe not only the pupils' enjoyment but also their own pleasure in the new approach and pupils' reaction.
- Personal learning – the use of personal learning logs was slow to start and it became evident that use of the logs needed modelling. Pupils are now using them successfully and taking increased responsibility for their own learning.

'Grove Hill' Secondary School

- Solid foundation of skills – the development of skills in scientific enquiry has been a key outcome of this activity, with evidence of Yr7 band B pupils producing investigation work equivalent to that of most Yr10 pupils.

Second activity: tracking and intervention - The tracking and intervention activity is widely regarded by the senior leadership of the school as having had an important effect on the use of pupil performance data across the school:

“Our tracking was not as good as it should have been. We do have a lot of disadvantaged children in Grove Hill and the EM activity helped us to highlight the gap and brought it to the fore more quickly than we would otherwise have managed.” (Headteacher)

Early work on tracking in the EM activity focussed on a group of girls in Yr8. The project leader's initial audit led her to brief the leadership team and the School Standards Adviser that there were wider issues about data tracking across the school:

“...in the sense that we were very data rich but did not understand what the data was telling us and what we should do about pupils not making progress.” (Project Leader)

A more root and branch review was needed and that would have to be followed by the implementation of an agreed approach across the school. The activity developed beyond its original design to accommodate the newly identified needs.

Vignettes

Pupils from Yr8 at Grove Hill now talk with enthusiasm about their experience of science in Yr7 and their continuing interest in the subject. In a Yr7 survey science was reportedly their favourite subject. The following comments from Yr8 pupils are illustrative:

“In primary school we would just work out of science text books. Maybe there was a week or two with some things on a table in the corner. In secondary you can make your own investigation, your own question, your own experiment.”

“The parents' evening was great. The prizes were to spend a day at the [adjacent] University [Medical School] being a doctor. It helped that our parents met our friends' parents there.”

“It has really helped us with Yr8 because it gets harder as the year goes on.”

Staff also speak positively about the role the EM project has played in their own professional development and in their enjoyment of their work:

“It was important that it was a professional development opportunity. I was able to use this as my project for Leadership Pathways qualification. It fitted in really well. It has helped me to move into assistant headship.” (Project Leader)

'Grove Hill' Secondary School

"Skills are transferring; a big benefit is self-assessment and peer-assessment because we've been doing it, taking it out of the teachers' hands. The girls can do self-assessment and peer assessment, and have a vocabulary to do it. It's not just "that's very neat; it's lovely" but "you might have tried..." (Science Teacher)

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Rooting the work in the school's development - Senior leaders, activity leaders and other staff at Grove Hill are convinced that the EM project has been successful at the school because they were able to develop activities which built on their identified needs.

"It worked for us because it fitted in with what we were doing; it was not a bolt on from somewhere outside. It allowed us to develop, challenged us to see if we could succeed on our terms. If we had failed, it was a project, a trial, we would not have been happy but we would still have learned something useful." (Headteacher)

Funding - Though consistently described as small or marginal, funding was equally consistently identified as an important facilitating factor:

"The story here is that a relatively small amount of money allowed us to do some key things which had a disproportionate consequence. The Saturday mornings we spent together in a decent environment rather than half a dozen evening half hours... we could really get into what we needed to do... brainstorming, training, setting objectives..." (Science Teacher)

The Headteacher and her leadership team committed most of the grant to creating time for the staff involved and to acknowledging their additional responsibilities with an additional payment.

External links - The role of the School Standards Adviser was significantly helpful:

"We had a great adviser, very good at advising and helping us on to the right path; good at asking questions and not directing. 'Have you looked at it from this angle?' 'Have you thought about this?' When I told her we could not carry on with the narrow focus of tracking Yr8 she said 'That's OK if that's what you've learned and need to do.' She also forced us to question ourselves, she would use the paper work to force us to delve deeper in. It was a very honest, supportive culture; we never worried what she might report about us. And now we have a system that owes a lot to the challenge from the adviser." (Project Leader)

National connections gave the EM project what the Headteacher described as a 'helpful aura'. The Project Leader describes them as *"horizon stretching."*

'Grove Hill' Secondary School

Sustainability

The metaphor used in conversations at Grove Hill is that the EM activities were the equivalent of push-starting a car: once done, with careful driving, it need not be done again.

"Sustainability? We used the EM resources and the aura to get started and things will run now – the buzz and the interest at the science parents' evening were terrific. The staff and children there will make more and more progress. The tracking system is just gathering momentum, and our 2009 results already show what we could do if we focus sharply." (Headteacher)

"There is a massive legacy. Actually, in science it is a ripple effect because the new approach is not just being introduced year by year from the youngest; it is already influencing teaching and learning in Yr10 and Yr11. The change in performance monitoring is profound: we have shaken up our data tracking and accountability right down to classroom level, how we collect data, how we use it and what we then do. We are using the data, not just collecting information, we use it to change what we do in and around classrooms". (Project Leader)

'Meadow Road' Secondary School

Meadow Road

(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Meadow Road School is a small comprehensive school located in an ex-mining community in the Midlands in an area of low parental engagement and low aspirations. There are pockets of second and third generation unemployment and 20 % of the school's pupils claim FSM. Many more are eligible but do not claim their entitlement. Almost all (99%) of pupils are white British and the proportion of pupils with SEN is above average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is also above average. Pupils enter the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy. However the school has the highest Contextual Value Added score (CVA) in the county, and has seen rapidly improving GCSE results in the last 5 years.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	41%	47%	46%
2008	46%	48%	48%
2009	42%	51%	50%
2010	47%	55%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

The School started its EM activities in September 2009 and agreed to take part in the project on the basis that they could incorporate it into projects they were already running. The school wanted to raise aspirations and agreed on the following EM objectives:

- to identify and target a small group of Yr11 pupils who are eligible for FSM and have other risks of vulnerability
- to provide more personalised learning opportunities to reduce underachievement
- to provide enrichment activities both within and outside the school day
- to identify staff who will work closely with the selected pupils on a programme of assertive mentoring
- to improve access to out of school activities by improving transport arrangements.

Ten pupils in Yr11 – seven boys and three girls – were identified to take part. They had FSM entitlement and a 50% chance of gaining five A*-C grades at GCSE. Staff were aware that singling out these pupils could be a risk:

"...putting a beacon on their heads and saying this is an FSM group... one of the biggest issues is the fear of embarrassment from some pupils." (Middle Leader).

'Meadow Road' Secondary School

However, all Yr11 pupils had mentors, alleviating fears that pupils would feel they were being specifically targeted. The school opted to introduce two EM activities.

First proposed activity: Positive mentoring - The school had run a 'positive mentoring' project for some years. Every Yr11 pupil is allocated a personal mentor as an entitlement. The mentor supports them in completing GCSE coursework. Subject teachers and pupils complete a booklet which is used as a basis for discussion about their progress, what additional work they need to do, and what they might need in order to do it. For EM pupils Senior Leaders were used as mentors, with the majority having the same person.

Second Proposed Activity: Skillforce - This provided pupils with opportunities voluntarily to complete a number of vocational qualifications in addition to GCSEs, either after school or during half term breaks. EM pupils had priority in accessing these additional courses and were encouraged to take up their entitlement. Options included:

- ASDAN¹² level 1 qualifications – the equivalent of two GCSE grade B passes. These included work on developing learning skills, working with others and problem solving
- computer literacy courses such as CLAIT (Certificate for IT users) which is a benchmark qualification for IT competence
- adult literacy and numeracy levels 1 and 2. These are GCSE level qualifications, with online tests, giving immediate results for pupils.

All EM pupils were also encouraged to attend extracurricular coursework and subject enhancement sessions provided by the school as well as a 'mock' results day. Success criteria for the EM were that all pupils:

- attain 5 A*-C grades including, where possible, maths and English at GCSE
- attend the curriculum enrichment and enhancement activities for which they had entitlement.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

All ten pupils in the EM group achieved five A*-C grades and, for seven of them, these included English and maths. All pupils completed various activities that were built in to the project for them. Four attended and passed the ASDAN course and attained GCSE equivalent qualifications. Staff who had been involved in the interventions were positive about its effects on some pupils. One teacher was particularly enthusiastic about the impact Skillforce had:

¹² ASDAN is an awarding organisation that designs and awards qualifications from Entry level to HE level.

'Meadow Road' Secondary School

"... we had a pupil who was a reluctant learner all the way through and we were worried about him because he had the potential to get his five A-Cs but he was getting nowhere near that and a lot of that was down to his relationships with staff, his lack of motivation, him not seeing the point in what we were doing. But he did the Skillforce and he passed it and he got his two qualifications early and that turned him round. When he'd got his two qualifications in the bag, he then did go on to get his five A*-Cs, including English and maths, and we were over the moon with him. And it wasn't just down to the raw scores; it was down to a complete change in his approach to school. He was suddenly a much more pleasant young man. He realised we had given him something extra, he realised he could get the qualifications we said he could get and he just went on from there." (Middle Leader)*

A Senior Leader was also impressed with the impact of a combination of positive mentoring and Skillforce:

"The change I've seen in G... growing in confidence, a self belief, and she's also developed a more positive approach towards school and she believes in the importance of education a lot more than she did. A couple of years ago G could have gone, dropped out of school. I would directly identify the mentoring and Skillforce as impacting on that... she's already been to see me about a referral to Connexions and she's thinking about a career in a caring industry... Her aspirations have lifted."

Mentors who took part in a focus group about the EM agreed that they were pleased with outcomes for the pupils, although they were not convinced that the EM had made a significant difference to what they were already doing.

Vignettes

Learning Mentors - For staff involved in the mentoring process it was a positive one: *"I had a Yr11 form and I only mentored two of the form, although you mentor the whole of your form group anyway... I had two completely different pupils. I had one with a ten A* or A target and she was a little bit like, put off by the fact her targets were so high because she was a good kid in school and worked really hard but didn't think she was going to meet all of her targets in all of her subjects... The other pupil was completely different with C/D targets and wasn't really a worker, preferred knocking around with mates, did no homework or did very little, but the last six months of Yr11 he completely turned around."*

Pupils spoke positively of their experiences with Learning Mentors.

"If you've got any problems you can just go to them for help, like catch up on coursework, and they'll tell you what you need to do."

"The mentoring gives you more skills one on one so it gets you used to interviews. Cos you're working one on one with your mentor you get more used to it, you can talk more, there's no-one there to say you've done that wrong. I'm more confident talking to adults I suppose but I've always been confident."

'Meadow Road' Secondary School

They also enjoyed Skillforce:

"It's very good. We got set tasks. Some of it's paper work, some of it is making posters, some of it's making things, like we had to make a car and make it move. It were good [sic]. You can have a laugh with your mates and still do work at the same time."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Relevance - The main facilitating factor for the EM in this school was that they were already involved in the activities before the project started:

"We didn't find it massively time consuming, which was our major fear... for us though pupils on FSM have been crucial for years. They have been getting over 100 on CVA which is what a lot of schools would give their back teeth for. What we are seeing is that there is still a gap between FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils and so we were working on this anyway, but this maybe gave us a good cohort of pupils to really focus on." (Headteacher)

External links - Senior leaders commented that while the EM had no direct impact on what they were doing *'It was useful looking at what other schools were doing at the EM Conferences.'*

Other parts of the project were seen as less useful:

"In terms of the EM it never really worked the way it was supposed to. We were partnered with another school and given a partner school and we were asked to be part of it because there were thought to be issues with attainment gaps in some of our vulnerable groups, but in terms of the data on RAISE online it wasn't a real issue. We went along with that because the mentoring was part of what we were doing anyway." (Senior Leader)

Project requirements - The school also found the timing of the Final Report unhelpful as it was supposed to be completed before the cohort's GCSE results were received. Because of this the Final Report was not completed at all.

Crucially the school still is unsure why it was identified for the project.

Sustainability

The EM was incorporated into existing school practice, and was seen initially as not 'adding anything.' However, the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher acknowledged that the project helped to sharpen the focus on particular cohorts of pupils:

"If there is a legacy it's that we pay more attention to pupils on FSM and make sure they form a fair proportion of any strategy." (Headteacher)

APPENDIX B: Secondary School Case Studies

'Meadow Road' Secondary School

"I think there's a wider legacy, it's highlighted vulnerable pupils as well. I think every child who has a vulnerability is within the FSM category anyway." (Deputy Headteacher)

The long-term impact therefore has been to embed a further 'filter' for progress checking within the system:

"It was really a way I suppose of the school starting to have that sub checklist of FSM [pupils]. We check every child anyway but it narrows it down a bit more that we do that extra check for the 20% [making sure] that we've done everything we can for them." (Deputy Headteacher)

"We would expect all our tutors to identify which pupils in their class are entitled to FSM." (Deputy Headteacher)

"We've got more than average on FSM which creates a large vulnerable group for the school that is so easily identifiable that we can work with them fairly quickly and relatively easily... It's given us all a heads up, and focused us onto different groups." (Leader of the Closing the Gap initiative)

The school policy is one of entitlement to positive mentoring and additional vocational options where appropriate, and the school sees these as a successful way for its pupils to continue to make progress.

'Palgrave' Secondary School

Palgrave

(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Palgrave is an 11–18 High School and Business and Enterprise College for girls located in the North West of the country. The school is larger than average with just under 1500 pupils on roll, 263 of whom are in the 6th form. Over 40% of pupils are eligible for FSM and 85.9% come from diverse minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for FSM is very high and 64.7% speak a language other than English as their first language. The school has a slightly higher than average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need and a lower than average 'stable' population.

	5 GCSEs at A*-C inc Eng & maths		
Year	School	LA	National
2007	41%	32%	46%
2008	41%	37%	48%
2009	43%	39%	50%
2010	53%	46%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

Palgrave's new Headteacher introduced EM Activities in September 2009 with the aim of encouraging networking with other schools and addressing the attainment gap at KS4 between pupils entitled to FSM and others. The aim was to reduce the gap from 20% to 10%. The school was also concerned about under attainment by white British pupils, in particular those in receipt of FSM. Specifically the school wanted to improve the engagement and attainment of a group of Yr8 pupils on FSM who were underperforming or at risk of underperforming and to improve the quality of teaching in the school (an issue highlighted by Ofsted):

"The new Headteacher wanted to focus on teaching and learning and wanted to interest us in what was happening in other schools and how this might influence our practice, so it came at a time when we were looking at what might be useful to bring things on... I had the responsibility for teaching and learning and, following an Ofsted inspection which gave us satisfactory, this was one of the things that we decided to do." (Deputy Headteacher)

Proposed activity: Learning to Lead – This focussed on the development of a listening campaign, which aimed to:

- develop an ethos in which an understanding of the pupil experience of learning leads to improvement in teaching and learning
- develop the profile of pupils as leaders of learning

'Palgrave' Secondary School

- improve the engagement and attainment of pupils on FSM in Yr8 who were currently underperforming
- increase the number of outstanding lessons taught by staff.

"We decided to focus on a small group of Yr8 pupils and we would involve them in lesson observation with the idea of getting them involved as Leaders in Learning, setting them up as a little leadership team in school, people who were trained, people who could support teachers in their reflection on their own teaching and learning... I decided to start with a little team in Yr8 who I selected because they were on FSM and some of them were underperforming in one or more subjects, some of them were not but I wanted to have a mixed group." (Senior Leader)

Success criteria were:

- the EM cohort will be on target in English, maths and science at half-termly reviews i.e. they will be on course to make two sublevels of progress by the end of the year
- the EM cohort will achieve attitude to learning grades A or B each half term in all subjects
- attendance will be improved and no members of the target cohort will be in the priority attendance group and there will be a significant positive impact upon the number of late arrivals and total time lost (determined on an individual basis)
- perception surveys will show pupils have improved views of school and learning
- there will be an increase in the number of lessons achieving outstanding for Learning and Progress, taught within faculties where pupils have observed and worked with staff.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

A cohort of six pupils was identified, including three girls of white British heritage, two of Pakistani heritage and one of mixed heritage. They were introduced to the EM (as Learning to Lead) and asked if they wished to participate (with parental consent). There were workshops on 'What makes a good lesson?' and 'How do you know if you are making progress in a lesson?'

Following the training sessions the group adapted a lesson observation sheet devised by a local EM school and adapted it to one which was more focused on learning and progress. The Deputy Headteacher was concerned that the process should be non-threatening to staff who were already under a lot of pressure. It was to be formative and to allow for reflection. However, pupils wanted to include things on the observation form that could be perceived as threatening to staff, such as behaviour management:

'Palgrave' Secondary School

"They said that if teachers weren't following the behaviour system properly then it could affect their learning. They wanted to see that if there was an incident it was dealt with. And they wanted to see if pupils were doing well [if] they were praised... [so then] you can explain to a colleague, well this is how we arrived at it rather than it being something that I decided."

The pupils were very enthusiastic. One designed a badge logo which was made up by the D&T department for 'Leaders in Learning' to wear. Following training on how to observe and give feedback appropriately, pupils met the Advanced Skills Teacher who had agreed to have her lesson observed. The AST talked about how it feels to be observed, making the pupils aware of the sensitivity of the process:

"They then observed her and really enjoyed the lesson... one of the comments they made is that they felt she didn't use praise enough and they also felt that she didn't deal quickly enough with some chatter... it was interesting because I recently observed her as part of performance management and I thought that she didn't praise pupils enough and we had a bit of a laugh about it."

A Leader in Learning said *'The teacher that we had was one of my teachers and she's brought what we said into our lessons... it feels like I've improved things, made it better.'*

The plan was for this AST to work through the pupil observation process with someone else in the department and that this would then spread to other departments. However, this was not followed up owing to time constraints and other priorities. As a consequence the Deputy Headteacher felt that while there had been *"some impact on pupils"* such as improved behaviour and attendance, because the project did not continue, *"the impact dispersed."*

Pupil vignettes

The pupils involved did not entirely agree:

"Before, in Yr8, I didn't take any responsibility but with the Learn to Lead they told me you have lots of responsibilities yourself, it's not just the teachers' responsibility and stuff like that."

"It changed my point of view about teachers and it actually changed my behaviour in class. I also used to be not very nice in class but when I saw what the teacher has to do I sorted myself out and I'm better now."

"It was about telling teachers about what we think about them."

"We changed the questionnaire. We got straight to the point about what the teachers were doing."

"We had a lot of responsibility to go in there. It felt quite good."

'Palgrave' Secondary School

"We can help change the way teachers teach."

"In lessons, you can understand how teachers feel when they get really annoyed with the pupils. You can understand how they feel when you're in their position."

"It feels really good because we can help anyone out, we can help anyone in learning, that's what Miss said to us when we started – pupils and teachers."

"Before it started we didn't know each other. We made friends, so I know her and her friends, and her and her friends."

The Deputy Headteacher was surprised to hear what pupils had said about the positive impacts of the project on their attitudes and behaviour.

The pupils also acknowledged that they were unhappy about the project not continuing:

"We wondered why it didn't continue cos [sic] it was helping people. We had the badges, and we had people coming up to us and asking if we could tell the teachers this, or could they do that, and other pupils were asking us about the lessons as well."

"I was annoyed that it wasn't back on again... I asked if we were going to put it back on."

"When we were doing it my attendance was OK, when we stopped it went down."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Relevance - The key, overall facilitator of the EM was that, to some extent, it fitted in with the school's planned focus on teaching and learning.

External links - The school did not attend EM Conferences or work with its designated partner schools but it did enter an informal collaboration with another school involved in the EM and this had an impact on how the EM plan was conceptualised:

"We'd been given the names of a couple of partner schools but in the end we started to work with [Local High School] a little bit because they'd been in the phase before and they'd done something similar... they sent their resources to me which included a training power point and an observation schedule."

They also found communication with the link at the DCSF very useful in providing a focus to the work and looking at desired impacts.

'Palgrave' Secondary School

Competing demands - Time was a major problem and, owing to other pressures which the school was facing, the EM dropped down the priority list. It was "*...not a high priority as [there was] loads to do – time ran out and it wasn't followed up... In the end certain other things took priority and we didn't give as much attention to it as we'd have liked to.*"

Sustainability

The school's current improvement plans have a strong focus on teaching and learning. The Deputy Headteacher now has the continuation of the EM as part of her performance management targets for the year and says it has been a good pilot for the current Learning to Lead project. The AST whose lesson was observed by pupils is now working with her on Teaching and Learning. They are developing a team of lead teachers as part of the 'Improving Teachers' course whose role is to coach teachers, helping them move from being 'satisfactory' to 'good.' Pupil Learning to Lead teams will work within each faculty and may be involved in a longitudinal study of changes in teaching and learning run by a researcher at a local university:

"The Head and I were talking yesterday about the importance of getting re-started because we want pupil leaders who are able to comment on learning and how it changes as a process so that kind of fits in with it."

'Prestworth' Secondary School

Prestworth

(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Prestworth Community College is a specialist 11-18 Performing Arts and Media School located in a small, rural village in the South East of the country. The community the school serves is largely white-British with a small percentage of pupils from ethnic minorities. There is a low rate of pupil mobility, an SEN rate of 2.2% (4% including SA+) and 12% of pupils are entitled to FSM. The college has recently been placed in Special Measures and from September 2010 the school has worked as part of a federation with another secondary school in the area.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	31%	50%	46%
2008	25%	54%	48%
2009	30%	56%	50%
2010	36%	59%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

First Proposed Activity: To track pupil progress and intervene promptly if they fall off trajectory - Prestworth was already developing a tracking and monitoring system. However, to help identify the EM cohort, the monitoring system and database were improved. The college wanted to further develop its tracking and monitoring system, improving the use of assessment data, not just with staff but also with pupils. The college decided to employ an inclusion worker and focus on 20 level 4/5 borderline Yr9 pupils. The inclusion worker was to work with pupils on setting small, sequential, achievable targets and would also work with staff and pupils to help develop a greater understanding of current achievement and set targets. Success criteria for this activity were:

- improving pupils' progress towards end of KS targets
- improving attendance (the college identified a link between underachievement and non-attendance)
- developing and implementing the intervention.

Second proposed activity: To develop a culture of achievement and 'belonging' in school - A group of Yr11 pupils was identified as having low aspirations, as did their parents. The college wanted to improve their engagement and develop more self-belief with a view to expanding this across the college as a whole. A number of intervention strategies were designed by the college and developed as the project grew. These included one to one mentoring in specific subjects, booster sessions, and the development of the college's Saturday morning curriculum. Pupils were assigned a mentor who met them on a regular basis to discuss progress and encourage them. All these activities were aimed at improving

'Prestworth' Secondary School

access to the curriculum and encouraging pupils to overcome their difficulties and improve attainment. Success criteria for this activity were:

- establishing a specific data set
- accelerating pupil performance towards end of KS targets
- improving attendance and motivation
- spreading good practice arising from these activities across the college.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

First activity: Monitoring, tracking and intervention - Difficulties with the second activity (see below) shifted the focus of EM work onto the monitoring, tracking and intervention programme. One of the Deputy Heads explained that this activity was built into his regular remit. The monitoring database was developed and a colour coding system used to identify where pupils are currently and at different times of the year. This allows for easy identification of those pupils who are underachieving or at risk of possible underachievement. Just as importantly, it highlights those pupils who are attaining at a higher than expected level. This data system was being developed before the EM began, but EM work helped the school to focus on a different cohort of pupils.

In the current Yr11 12 of the 24 pupils were coloured blue (unlikely to achieve five A-Cs) on the tracking system:

"Last year and the year before, looking at FSM, there would have been more blue because this level of intervention was not going on. So last year while we did not get that many through it brought out the idea of putting early intervention into place. All this data is there now for Yr7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, so all underperforming pupils are identified." (Deputy Headteacher)

In the first year of the project, there was no visible significant impact on results but:

"If we had not been involved in the project the gap would have been bigger, so although the figures in the raw sense indicated there was no impact I think there was a positive impact." (Acting Principal)

The Director of Learning explained that, as a result of the EM, staff now have "...the EM kids highlighted. You do know these pupils and although you try and get round to all of the pupils you absolutely make sure you do get to them." There was a general feeling that the activities have benefited pupils as they have a better understanding of where they are with their achievements and are better informed about how to move forwards. As the activities have developed the college is seeing an improvement in most pupils' attainment. The Deputy Headteacher said that, given the data, *"the current Yr11 should do better than last year and their improvement throughout the year has been quite impressive."* This was due not just to the amount of intervention but to its improved quality and diversity:

'Prestworth' Secondary School

"80% of pupils who have shown progression from Assessment Period 1 to Assessment Period 4, have been involved in some sort of intervention, one-to-one, tutoring, re-setting." (Director of Learning)

The Deputy Headteacher also referred to improved motivation, particularly noticeable before a science exam:

"Last year you just know when they are turning up to the exams they were not engaged in the process. Whereas I have just been down to the exam this morning and the pupils are all gathered around with the Head of Science just trying to get the last few snippets. That was not happening last year. There is a much better atmosphere."

Before work with the EM started the Director of Learning said he used to have a record of pupils' names and Fisher Family Trust grades which he described as *"using a sledge hammer with a very little walnut."* With the development of the new tracking system and the sharing of information and practice across the college, use of data is far more open, detailed and robust.

Through engagement in their work and giving the pupils ownership of it, attendance rates have improved and confidence levels amongst the pupils have also risen:

"The key thing from all of this was that it has made us look, focus and work on small groups of [previously unnoticed] pupils... who are disadvantaged and I think linking with that by monitoring those groups it can have an impact. If there are any issues we can actually make an impact." (Acting Principal)

Second activity: Inclusion for Yr9 - Shortly after the inclusion worker's appointment, she had to take time away from college and remained absent for most of the year. This absence had an impact on the success of this activity. Some progress was made and the inclusion worker met pupils and monitored their attendance and behaviour data. However, this was not sustained owing to the long-term absence.

The overarching feedback from the college about their experience of the EM is positive.

Vignettes

Current Yr11 pupils were asked about their experiences of EM activities. The group had been involved in one or more of the interventions. They talked freely, passionately and enthusiastically about all of the interventions, the teachers and the college:

"I had one-to-one mentoring in English but I stopped after a while because I got more confident in what I was doing and got better grades... before that I was crap, the grades I got were not good and so my tutor, who is a PE teacher, helped me out... I

APPENDIX B: Secondary School Case Studies

'Prestworth' Secondary School

was getting a grade D in English and now am a high C, because I did a mock a month ago and my grade improved."

"One of our teachers offered us that he would come in at half term and that we come in and do some maths exams."

"Some of us didn't do a unit two exam because they were away or had to re-sit so the classes were reset so you were just working on that stuff and we knew what we needed."

"I did some coursework and it was at D and E and they were two GCSEs I needed for college. So my tutor worked with me for a few weeks and I re-did some work and got them up to a C and a B and that was thanks to the work, with my tutor pushing me too"

"I got the one to one tuition because I was failing and it was just a push in the right direction."

Throughout these conversations, pupils spoke of some of the teachers and the expectations that they have of the pupils:

"They are pushing us more and try and engage you in lessons more to make you do well."

"I did this essay and it was really rubbish, so I had to do it again and my tutor knew. So he kept pushing me and asking me how it was and making sure I did bring it in."

"In maths there is a whole new, I don't know how to say it, they want you to be there and it gives you that encouragement."

"I think it's been good having them on our back pushing us to do better. If they can help me do it and do well, I will do it."

However, the pupils also knew that being in Special Measures put the teachers under more pressure to make them pass their exams.

There were other comments about how pre-exam time is spent:

"We have an English exam next Tuesday and before it we have a breakfast club for us to come into."

When asked about the changes and experiences as a whole pupils said:

"It makes us feel that they want us."

"It makes us feel like we are worth it and they care."

'Prestworth' Secondary School

Looking to the future, pupils explained that the Connexions team had worked with them and organised work experience. Some pupils were interviewed at the local college but the tutors and mentors had also discussed this with them:

"My tutor is my sports teacher and he knows I want a career in sports so he gives me all kinds of tips and advice on where to look and what to do which is great."

"I have always been confident about what I want to be, but now I feel more confident in the grades I'm going to get to help me."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Staff Buy in - The Acting Principal highlighted staff buy-in as one of the most important factors in implementing the EM:

"It was a relatively big change of philosophy with staff... the way we are going to track these and the way we are going to intervene on a personal level... it was not part of the college ethos as such before and that kind of buy in took six months of the project to sell across all staff."

A small core of staff supported the project and, once impact began to be seen, others became interested. Although money was spent on the Inclusion Worker for one project the main resource required to support the development of the project was time. Looking at the use of data and monitoring the Deputy Headteacher concluded *"Staff as a whole, through subject leaders, are engaged in it and that came through from the EM. People were engaged and could see there was a possibility for impact."*

Parental engagement - One of the largest obstacles that the college has faced was the engagement and limited aspiration of parents. The college has developed a rewards system for pupils who attend revision sessions which require pupils to have a card signed and commented on by parents/guardians.

External links and influences - Because the college is in Special Measures, Ofsted comes in on a termly basis. Constant inspections create tension for senior leaders. However, the Director of Learning said that, for a classroom teacher, work developed through the EM did not create such tension. The college had been to visit a partner school and the visit fostered some enthusiasm and work around the activities but the partnership did not develop further.

Work with a National Challenge Adviser in the first year of the project was disrupted when the Adviser was changed. Although the new Adviser focused on groups of pupils, the approach was slightly different. The EM has not been driven or assisted by the LA or the National Challenge Adviser. The LA has identified that FSM is an important issue but has not produced any strategies to support Headteachers or schools in meeting the challenge.

'Prestworth' Secondary School

Sustainability

The legacy of being an EM school is clearly to be seen at Prestworth and the activities developed are now built into everyday life at the college:

"The EM stimulus and the work that has come out of that have probably had the biggest impact on the school in the last two to three years. To get to the point we are at, and need to move to, we had to have done this work and if we had not done this through the stimulus of the EM we would have been behind." (Director of Learning)

Regarding the future of the activities and the continued use of the EM philosophy, the Deputy Headteacher explained that the college recognised the need to keep looking at this group:

"It's the idea of not having to let pupils underperform... helped us focus on this group as an area where pupils underperform but don't need to underperform... but they are and it's an issue we have to address."

After two years the college feels it is starting to see clearer outcomes from the project. However, they are at a point now where a thorough analysis is again needed:

"...bringing it all together and tying it together coherently is one of our biggest challenges now. My perception is there is an awful lot goes on and I wonder whether we are potentially overloading the kids with the amount of different supports and interventions. We are conscious of that and looking at how we can map all that so we use it most efficiently and also how do we measure what has had impact." (Acting Principal)

The Director of Learning praised the EM project for giving the college a focus and highlighting areas of the college that needed development:

"The EM project started a process that has now mushroomed into this whole college wide process and formalised it. It has made it much better."

The Acting Principal suggests that sustainability of EM activities depends on being able to work out what are the best interventions to run again and which need development. The college now sets an FSM target which it had not done previously and the activities related to the EM around monitoring and tracking have been built into School Development Plans. Although raising expectations of pupils took time, staff do now expect more of them and that has a visible effect on the pupils. However, the college sees that the next major barrier to its work as the expectations of and engagement with parents:

"We now have relatively high expectations but the parents don't expect them to do well and the pupils don't think they will do that well. It was a never ending cycle but with the current Yr10 I think it's broken and they are going to do better." (Deputy Headteacher)

APPENDIX B: Secondary School Case Studies

'Prestworth' Secondary School

Federation may have an impact on some EM work. The two colleges will align the way information is shared with parents. It is also expected that the Federation will develop a keener sense of expectation amongst pupils. The Deputy Headteacher was confident that, as long as he remained in post, the tracking system would also remain because it works.

In the early stages of the EM the college questioned the fact that it was "*playing catch up*" with Yr11 pupils and therefore needed to start to look at interventions in earlier years. Consequently the college is developing its 'Opening Minds' curriculum. This identifies children entering the school with low levels of achievement, engagement and confidence and is a good example of how two projects can work together on resolving academic and personal issues to help those from difficult backgrounds.

'Westleake' Secondary School

expected to gain Ds at GCSE in maths and English. Involvement in the EM was an opportunity to pilot ideas on how to address these issues.

"We had some wobbles because what we were doing was very ambitious... We took a big gamble in that it was whole school, Yr8 and 11 focuses had to impact across the whole school. They were driven to see if we could embed some of the practice very quickly across the whole school." (Deputy Headteacher)

No additional funds were available externally but some money was found from within the school budget to finance additional activities and resources. The Headteacher described this as 'quite liberating' as he felt it gave the school more flexibility in the activities it could choose.

First proposed activity: Single gender maths - The school aimed to *track pupil progress and intervene promptly where it fell below trajectory*. The school had identified what they described as "*anxious able*" pupils who were underperforming in maths compared to other subjects. This underachievement was identified during early entry GCSE results at the end of Yr10. The school decided to set up single gender groups for pupils on the C/D GCSE maths borderline. These would use different strategies to improve confidence in maths and to increase the number of grade Cs achieved in each group at GCSE. The school used existing strategies, such as teacher learning walks and planning and progression sheets, to support the choice of activity and possible trial strategies. The girls' class was taught by the Head of maths, supported by a female Deputy Headteacher. Action research was used within the classes to identify effective strategies with the objective of improving the standard of planning and progress. Although the focus was on anxious, able Yr11 girls in maths the intention was to develop strategies to implement learning from the EM quickly across the Maths Department and, where applicable, the whole school. Success criteria for this project were twofold:

- to improve the planning of lessons with emphasis on pupil progress and consistent outcomes (measured through learning walks, planning reviews and lesson observations)
- to increase pass rates in post early entry C/D borderline, single sex groups in maths.

Second Proposed Activity: Belonging – This activity focussed on *developing a culture of achievement and 'belonging' in the school*. This was combined with broadening pupils' horizons and the offer of a more relevant curriculum. The school used a complex analytical process to decide which pupils to work with. They were D candidates for both English and maths in Yr8. Within that group a smaller group was selected to be involved in the 'Belonging' project. They had a mixture of 'complex characteristics' including low reading age, FSM, a high level of behavioural referrals, low effort scores and some EAL and SEN needs. All these pupils were boys. Humanities and arts teachers trialled strategies, using action research, to interest and engage the boys in learning. They did so knowing that the group was by no

'Westleake' Secondary School

means homogenous. There were regular meetings to discuss what worked and what did not. A joint humanities and arts curriculum was developed using the Hillsborough disaster as a focus that allowed issues such as racism and cultural and religious differences to be addressed within a 'football' framework.

The second part of the project involved extracurricular work based on outdoor activity at a centre for sailing and water based activities. This was to facilitate wider engagement with the school and to help develop positive relationships with teachers, as well as building pupils' leadership and co-operation skills. The success criteria were for pupils to:

- achieve an improved effort score across their subjects
- accelerate progress in targeted subjects
- reduce the number of behaviour referrals during the project
- increase/maintain attendance levels.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

First activity: Single gender maths – This contributed to the school's greatly improved achievement of five A*-C grades, including English and maths at GCSE - from 36% in 2009 to 54% in 2010. There was also a notable improvement in effort grades for targeted girls: average effort grades rose from 1.89 to 1.07 (1 being the highest grade). The corresponding boys' class also had significantly improved results and effort grades.

Second activity: Belonging - Pupils in the Yr8 project produced fewer behaviour referrals than before as well as improving their attendance and reducing the number of recorded 'lates.' Staff and pupils reported changed attitudes towards learning, particularly co-operative learning and willingness to engage in lessons. However, because of the nature of the project its long-term impact is yet to be seen. A crucial part of the EM was staff development and the impact has been far reaching:

"It's not just about maths, it's about how we're delivering, where we're going with it. Things that more experienced teachers do more naturally because they've got the knowledge of that subject. We're now encouraging NQTs to talk about the mathematical journey. It's not just a group of 32 pupils, it's a group that are starting here and going there and this is what we're doing along the way."

The Head of Maths was not sure if this strategy was a panacea but enough questions had been raised to justify continuing to look at gender groupings and report findings to the whole school. The whole process has not just been about positively affecting a few selected pupils; it's about a whole new approach to teaching.

"The biggest thing we've learnt is that you have to unpick each child and their maths individually and then once you have recognised their barriers, their gaps, their subject knowledge, their problems, be it with confidence, pace, with drive, you need

'Westleake' Secondary School

to then find the right way of driving it back up again, be it with subject knowledge, confidence, support.” (Head of Maths)

Vignettes

The Yr8 cohort:

“Because we we’re going to Stoneleigh, we had something to look forward to in coming to school and it made you want to achieve more in class. Our effort levels are up in most of our subjects.”

“My parents feel proud because all my levels and attendance have gone up.”

“I’m trying harder in lessons and I’ve given up bad habits. My parents are proud. My mum had taken everything from me because I was behaving badly. Now I’ve got them back.”

“My levels have gone up. I’ve been coming earlier to lessons and all and I’ve been getting higher levels.”

“My listening skills and my behaviour are better. In the past I didn’t listen a lot and my behaviour was being a bit rude. But now it’s all changed. It’s like I know education’s dead important and I should be really listening. So I’ve changed a lot. Education’s important for my future.”

Key facilitators and inhibitors

External links - Regular contact with, and support from a link person at the DCSF was a major factor in facilitating the projects:

“She brought us expertise and was very supportive in a reflexive and quite thorough way and we got some good dialogue there... we needed someone to bounce ideas off in terms of good practice which has now been rolled out to other [local] schools.”

The ability to share best practice was mentioned by all of the staff involved:

“We had access to some incredible research based information and we could use that to influence what we were doing.”

Flexibility - This was useful, as activities could be chosen which fitted in with the School Development Plan:

“In some senses we used the EM as a Trojan horse... it gave it formality, a name I guess to some stuff that we wanted to try that was actually going to be quite challenging for the staff. Because we were leading with Yr8 and 11 it gave us a chance to be reflective and get used to some of the things.” (Headteacher)

'Westleake' Secondary School

Inspiration - The staff interviewed all said how the project made them refocus on pupils and reflect on the teaching and learning process. Trying out new ideas was a theme which was mentioned by all the staff interviewed. Furthermore, EM activities, alongside other initiatives they were involved with became embedded in the school and changed teachers' attitudes.

Both the EM projects were implemented by experienced members of staff (the Head of Maths and an Assistant Headteacher) which gave the projects status. Currently, senior management are not sure if success can be replicated using less experienced staff. As a training school, Westleake has a large number of NQTs. On one hand this brings enthusiasm to the school but, on the other, it presents challenges, not just for the management but also for the NQTs themselves.

Sustainability

Staff involved in both EM activities are hopeful that this work will continue:

"We've also got the current Yr10, we moved them in Yr9 just after they did their SATs, and we've set the whole year by gender including the high ability groups which has been really interesting because now we've done it for two half terms, the initial feedback is inconclusive. The pupil voice was mixed. The response was good in the groups where the teacher was enjoying it, and not so good in the groups where the teacher clearly didn't like the fact that they'd got this class which was more difficult than the other one, which is not unexpected, but made me realise we've got to focus on identities, we've got to get a group how we want it." (Head of Maths)

Staff have been given specific EM responsibilities and time both for teacher development and training and for the identified pupil cohorts:

"We have someone with EM time on their timetable to work with the two groups now, and we've employed another member of staff who's been through the process to train other staff on effective relationships, developing classroom practice, particularly with difficult classes. We've not just done a project; we've done something that can be sustained. There's been a significant improvement... we've rolled it out and it's being sustained, and we've improved the quality of teacher learning but also the pupils' results." (Assistant Headteacher)

The main concern about the sustainability of the work is financial:

"In an age where funding is scarce and there's no flexibility in funding in schools, the DfE needs to think about how it's going to allow schools to develop... with either flexibility in school budgets or small amounts of funding tagged to the [EM] project." (Headteacher)

‘Worthingdon’ Secondary School

Worthingdon

(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents’ confidentiality)

Worthingdon School is located in the South East of the country and serves a culturally diverse community. It is a larger than average school of 1200 pupils aged 11-18. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds with over half fluent in English but not as their first language. The population is relatively mobile and the number of pupils identified with SEN or stated is 36%, double the national average. 165 pupils were entered for GCSEs in 2009 of whom 55.2% had SEN. The school has nearly twice as many boys as it does girls.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	36%	46%	46%
2008	32%	46%	48%
2009	38%	51%	50%
2010	37%	53%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

In previous years the LA has worked hard to reduce the underachievement of pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Its advisers quickly saw a possible relationship between the EM and the work it was doing to improve outcomes for white-British FSM pupils. Although there is not an overall significant FSM achievement gap across the LA, there is a substantial gap affecting white-British FSM pupils:

“[The LA] recognises that this is a key cohort to be working with and it recognised [Worthingdon] as having, percentage wise, the largest number of those within its secondary schools. So we were an obvious partner school to link with... so doing things together [LA, EM and School] came together at the same time.” (Deputy Headteacher)

Worthingdon already had a white-British FSM action plan. It also had funding and had created a post at the school to lead on this front. The appointee, Mr. J., viewed the EM as an opportunity to align current practices to develop this work further. He became the EM Coordinator. Two projects were developed with white-British FSM pupils.

First proposed activity: Aspire - The first project involved EM Activity 2 ‘*To develop a listening campaign which responds to pupils’ and parents’ perception.*’ The school created the ‘Aspire project’ to raise the aspirations of a target group of Yr7 and 8 pupils and encourage stronger parent/school relationships. Through consultation with heads of years, six pupils were selected whose parents were seen as ‘hard to reach.’ The key objectives were to engage parents with pupils’ work and encourage them to have high expectations and aspirations for their children. The school also wanted to increase contact with these parents and reduce the barriers between them and the school:

A number of small projects were designed which would be part school and part home developed. The mini projects included a family employment tree which would

'Worthingdon' Secondary School

encourage conversation about aspirations and future careers. A second project involved making a bird table with the help of the resistant materials department. This encouraged fathers to work with their child on a joint product. The third and fourth projects were around photography and literacy.

Second Proposed Activity: Mentor - This was based on EM Activity 12 *'To support pupils at important moments in their lives, especially transition points.'* Ten FSM pupils in the new Yr7 were selected and matched with ten similar pupils going into Yr10. The Yr10 pupils were thought to have leadership potential and were to be mentors to the Yr7s who were at risk of not making a successful transition. The school hoped for two-way benefits as the Yr10 mentors were predominantly borderline C/D pupils. Increased responsibility could enhance their commitment to school, improve their attendance and raise their aspirations. Five Yr10 boys and five Yr10 girls attended three mentor training sessions, orchestrated through the LA:

"We set up a weekly mentoring session lasting for 45 minutes, they were able to come out of lessons which motivated them a little bit... at the start it was about developing the relationships and then in December there was a mid-term interview with myself and the trainer from the LA to evaluate the relationship and work." (EM Coordinator)

Both the Mentor and Aspire groups benefited from an outward-bound school trip which drew on additional funding secured for the white-British FSM group.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

First activity: Aspire - The outcomes from the Aspire group were varied. As the course continued the numbers of parents attending the sessions started to drop and by the time the third project began only one parent came. That parent had turned up to every session and gave very positive feedback:

"Both dads came to the bird table project and that really was when the penny dropped. I had a brilliant conversation with one of the dads about the impact it had... for the parents that did come the kids are now getting praise at home. When they have done something well in school they are getting recognition at home. It has made them value achievement more in the classroom... one of the boys has not been great with his behaviour and this has not made him perfect but, by dangling that carrot he is going to grab it because he gets the 'big ups' from his teachers and at home and he will take that." (EM Coordinator)

One of the success criteria was to encourage parents to attend parents' evenings and one of the pupils' parents who did attend actually engaged with the teachers. This was seen to be a result of the Aspire work. The school supported the group with additional administrative assistance. Staff in the office telephoned parents to remind them to attend. However, despite saying they would come, often they did not. Mr. J. pointed out that many of the parents had multiple issues at home to deal with and this limited the impact the course could have. Although the outcomes from Aspire have not been as great as the school had hoped the research and understanding gained about trying to contact, work with and engage hard to reach parents has benefited the school.

'Worthingdon' Secondary School

Second activity: Mentor - Interviews held in December highlighted that one of the mentoring partnerships needed to be reorganised as the mentor had not taken the role on as expected. Other issues around matching personalities were exposed which focused attention on the personal attributes of some of the pupils. Some of the relationships that developed were particularly strong and this became evident during the outward-bound weekend in the Lake District. The support Yr10s offered to the Yr7s during mountain climbing activities was particularly noteworthy:

"...this young man hangs off the coat tails of his mentor... it has had a massive impact on him. The Yr10 says if he sees bullying going on he is prepared to check his behaviour, not associate with that and the Yr7 has explained that when he came to Worthingdon he didn't really go and try and meet people but after developing the relationship he was much more confident to go and build relationships with people in his year he didn't know." (EM Coordinator)

The activity ran for 25 sessions in total, and data showed that the majority of pupils were underachieving at the start of the year but made progress. Several pupils hit the targets they were set at the start of the year. However, this was not solely down to EM work as other interventions are part of the school make up. Other successes included the Yr7 pupils' involvement in extra-curricular activities suggested by Yr10 mentors. The Yr10s' self-esteem grew as a result of the support they were able to give their partners in becoming more actively involved in school life. Attendance rates for Yr10 mentors were excellent and very few sessions were missed over the whole course of the activity.

The school does not view the EM as something that has changed practice dramatically or inspired it to focus on the issue. Some of the projects were designed and partially implemented prior to the EM. However, the EM has brought an additional focus to the school. Where, previously, the focus may have been on behaviour, the EM has added more rigour and access to expertise and support, as well as encouragement to think about the legacy of impact.

Vignettes

The pupils who were involved with the Aspire group explained that, despite some initial worries about their parents coming into school, they enjoyed their experiences and feel that they gained from being included.

"I felt good when I was working with my Dad on the bird table, we haven't done anything like that before."

"...it was strange at first to have my Dad brought into school because we wanted to do something and I wasn't in trouble. That was strange at first but once we got going it seemed OK."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

External support - The support and opportunities linked to the EM were highlighted as a particular strength. They enabled the school and its EM leaders to observe different

'Worthingdon' Secondary School

practice and gain a greater understanding of the issues and techniques available. The support of the LA was also seen as vital:

"I would say the LA has had a crucial role in helping set this up and that is so they can take it back to other schools." (Senior Leader)

Rigour - The EM increased the school's focus on the selected pupils, on the practices and projects they wished to develop and on the monitoring and tracking of pupils and parents as the project unfolded.

Flexibility - Worthingdon was able to build work it had already begun on the key issues into its EM work. All those involved with it praised this approach. Because the school was able to identify needs and its own key issues, its activities could be tailored to meet its own requirements.

Continuity - The EM Coordinator was already involved in very similar work, so the EM enhanced the opportunities he had to promote it.

Status - The Coordinator said that the nature of the EM and DCSF support gave him greater credibility and leverage in discussion with fellow members of staff, in implementing the project and also in influencing policy and practice at senior leadership level. He was not a member of senior management but the Deputy Headteacher sees no difficulty in delegating work like this to a credible member of staff.

Staff buy in - Many staff understood the communities that pupils came from and were sympathetic to the project. They also appreciated that there will always be challenges. However, the Coordinator's time for this work was limited by the fact that he is a full time teacher and form tutor.

Finding the right language - The Coordinator encountered challenges in explaining the project to parents. Even using evidence and statistics about underachievement of FSM pupils led to some parents becoming quite defensive – *"even though this happened to these children why would it happen to ours?"*

"...how difficult an area it is to talk about. We run a black pupils' achievement project and there is no problem calling it that. But white, working-class, FSM, that whole description and language around that area is still unresolved, there are still real issues about how you tackle that with parents." (Deputy Headteacher)

Sustainability

The school's data indicates that FSM 'drop off' in Yr11 is a significant factor in FSM pupils' underachievement so the temptation is to focus attention on Yr11 pupils. However, the school feels that investment in a longer term solution will be more beneficial than trying to score 'quick wins' with GCSE pupils each year:

"...by tackling it lower down we are doing work to try and prevent the disengagement and underachievement and that still has to be a part of what we are doing... normally if they get

'Worthingdon' Secondary School

to Yr11, if we haven't lost them and they have got through they work on through." (Deputy Headteacher)

The school knows that, because it was able to develop a project to suit its needs, the EM activities have more sustainability. However, this alone will not keep the focus going:

"...in the end funding is important. The LA's original piece of work had funding attached to it and that meant that we could appoint Mr. J., that's been a key role because, to be frank, if I was still the lead role we wouldn't be where we are now because there is simply no way I would have had the time and energy to put into it... credibility comes into it as this is a national, government-led thing." (Deputy Headteacher)

The Coordinator felt that the EM was all part of his developing role within the school and with the white-British FSM pupils. The process developed this year through EM activities will be built on in future. The legacy has to continue because the demographics of the school will not change.

"The EM was a [finite] project... but the projects Mr. J. leads on are not finite. That's a piece of work that, as long as we get white-British FSM kids – which will be for ever – that is something we will have to continually work on." (Deputy Headteacher)

The work from the EM has been added to the school's improvement plan under the headings of redefining inclusion and raising aspirations and achievement. However, the LA is piloting the Achievement for All programme and there is a fear that the focus on smaller scale projects can be lost by schools. As well as the competitive market within schools for different initiatives and interventions the LA highlights the financial constraints of the project which may affect its sustainability. But they insist *"the key drivers are narrowing the gap and making sure that all our groups of pupils are achieving and that really would be the main way of sustaining this."*

There are currently only three white-British FSM pupils in Worthingdon's sixth form. This gives the school a further purpose and drive towards working with these pupils.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank Lawrence Wo for his contributions and Jenny Buckland, John Screeton and Michele Weatherburn at the Department for Education for their on-going support. The authors would also like to acknowledge the support and insights provided by Charlotte Carter-Wall and members of the project steering group.

Contacts:

Professor Christopher Chapman chris.chapman@manchester.ac.uk

Professor Denis Mongon denis.mongon@manchester.ac.uk

School of Education, University of Manchester, UK M13 9PU

Ref: DFE-RR133

ISBN: 978-1-84775-944-3

© Department for Education

June 2011