

2016 2017

YEARBOOK

Action-based research,
conducted in schools
by our members



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The Prince's Teaching Institute Yearbook

This Yearbook contains summaries of the action-based research projects completed in 2016/17 by headteachers and subject leaders as part of our Schools Leadership Programme and Schools Programme Associate Department Scheme.

The projects:

- focus on teaching and learning
- support collaboration
- encourage staff to develop their specialist subject knowledge
- extend and enthuse pupils within and beyond the curriculum

We hope you will find these of interest and that you may take inspiration from the ideas presented.

The Yearbook also contains the conclusions reached by practitioners at each of our four residential conferences, as well as looking ahead to some of our plans for the 2017/18 academic year.

Full project reports are available to members and can be found in our online Staffroom at www.princes-ti.org.uk/staffroom. Information about the PTI and our upcoming events can be found at www.princes-ti.org.uk.

2016/2017

Highlights from our year

School Leaders

what you tell us.....



Primary Leadership Residential



Leadership Residential

"It has made me open my eyes to the many different options we now have in education to change our practice to meet the needs of our children"

"The unremitting focus on pedagogy and leadership was very refreshing"



Schools Leadership Programme

"The chance to hear about how a very diverse group of schools is grappling with broadly similar issues in developing learning is golden"

"The project has facilitated us to set high impact and inspirational targets, which have an unashamed focus on developing teaching and learning"

"The PTI promotes time and space for creative vision and leadership and drives forward definite outcomes and change for our school. Invaluable!"

Leadership Residential

"Valuable opportunity to reflect and think critically about my school and my leadership"

Primary Leadership Residential"



"The impact of classroom-based research has enriched our partnership working and collaboration with local schools and across our MAT"

"The PTI provides time for excellent professional dialogue with colleagues from around the country, and the understanding that it is ok to take risks and be creative"

Highlights from our year

Pupils, teachers and subject leaders

what you say.....



Schools Programme

Subject Enrichment Residential

"High quality and extremely relevant subject input and guidance. I feel enabled to articulate the value of my subject to not only adults but importantly the students"

"We always strive to improve, and the PTI is an excellent vehicle for driving this forward in a way which is controlled, sustainable and achievable"

"The PTI has supported us thoroughly to develop the curriculum in a more academic direction with enrichment and challenge at its core"



CPD Subject Days

"It has been helpful to share ideas and resources with other teachers from different schools; we wouldn't otherwise have this opportunity"

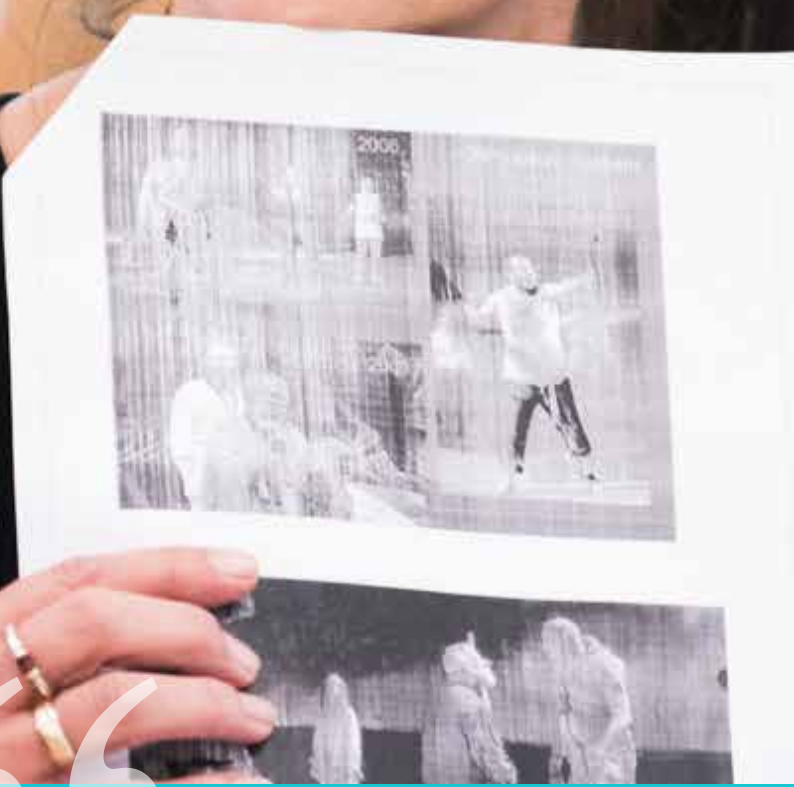
"It was perfect, I am definitely going to use all these ideas in my classes"



The James Sabben-Clare Lecture,
'Why history matters', Simon Schama

"The course has inspired me to reevaluate the way we teach. I realise that my subject offers so much opportunity to broaden pupils' horizons"

Subject Enrichment Residentials



"Our NQTs always came back buzzing with enthusiasm, inspiration and a passion for their subject"

"I have come away with several practical ideas that I can't wait to trial in my classroom"



The voice of the profession

Conclusions reached by teachers and school leaders at each of our four residential conferences this year.

Secondary school leaders

Leadership Residential, January 2017

Defining a successful school ethos:

The way that we assess pupil progress should be rooted in our core values and moral purpose.

Building a school's culture means working with everyone, not just the convenient majority.

Promoting inspirational teaching and learning, 'keep the main thing the main thing':

When the headteacher is the driver of teaching and learning, this demonstrates its centrality.

Think long-term and instil a culture of honest dialogue around the quality of teaching and learning.

Effective school leadership:

Leadership evolves from the classroom upwards; allow teachers to contribute to the school vision and take ownership of their personal development.

Be wary of isolation and becoming too far removed from the pressures on day-to-day teaching staff.

Innovation and collaboration in recruitment and retention:

Look beyond 'traditional' advertising and be more creative in engaging local communities.

Develop personal learning journeys to allow progress and development for every teacher.

Heads of department

Autumn Residential, June 2016

Mathematics and Science

How can we better inspire pupils in Mathematics and Science?

Pupils are inspired in Maths and Science when they can see the practical applications of their subjects in the world beyond school, and can see their own futures as part of this world. They are highly influenced by passionate and inspiring teachers who challenge them to think independently. This residential course has helped teachers to feel empowered to treat students as individuals, keep up-to-date with the latest developments and bring more enriching, practical activities into the classroom.

Seeing challenges as opportunities in the teaching of Maths and Science

Placing equal value on alternative pathways for less academic students, giving time in the curriculum for creativity and mastery, increasing professional development opportunities, defending creative subjects and joining the Chartered College of Teaching were all proposed as ways to improve Maths and Science teaching for all.

Recruiting and retaining high-quality Maths and Science teachers

Despite concerns about inconsistencies in the quality of initial teacher training, delegates were confident that by taking steps to improve conditions for existing teachers they could improve the retention of valuable colleagues. Suggestions for doing so included making quality time to collaborate with colleagues, investing properly in NQTs and giving Science teachers proper technical support.

Heads of department

Art, English, Geography and Music Enrichment Residential
June 2017

Data-driven accountability measures have led to a narrowing of school curricula

Delegates attending the conference felt that the opportunities for them to teach in ways that increase enjoyment of a subject or give students practical experiences had been diminished in the current data-driven climate. This feeling is particularly strong in the Creative Arts subjects, which are impacted by diminishing timetabled lessons or even exclusion from the school curriculum. Pupils themselves link their potential for success in a subject to their enjoyment of it, and find enjoyment through having more practical experiences and opportunities to go deep into a subject.

This narrowing of curricula is impacting on the range of learning opportunities open to pupils, and the development of love of learning, but teachers can work to overcome this

Pupils emphasised that having the time and space to go deep into a subject, guided by passionate teachers, was key in engendering their love of learning. A range of suggestions to help teachers to continue to provide these opportunities emerged from the residential. Delegates emphasised the ways in which this residential had empowered them to look beyond constraints and continue to provide high-quality subject teaching that generates love of learning.

Non-'core' subjects each have a unique value for students' development, and care should be taken that none are side-lined

Pupils often feel that they would like more information when making decisions regarding which subjects to take into further education. Given the choice, they would like more opportunities to broaden their knowledge of their subjects beyond the classroom. Teachers of Art, Geography and Music were emphatic in their belief that failing to give all students access to their subjects was to deprive them of opportunities to enrich their education and expand their minds.

Full Conference reports can be found online at
www.princes-ti.org.uk/about/research-reports

Primary school leaders

Primary Leadership Residential, October 2015

Creating an inspiring learning culture:

In a strong learning culture, pupils have agency and see themselves as learners.

Space needs to be given for teachers to take risks, and pupils need the time and freedom to develop their ideas.

Specialist subject teaching in the primary sector:

Collaborate with other schools – you may not need certain specialists in your school all of the time.

Primary teachers *are* specialists, and this is often forgotten. Every school is likely to have teachers with a range of degree subjects that may not be being utilised to their full potential.

Putting ideas into action:

If we record learning without being certain that it helps learning, we are doing it for the wrong reasons. Instead of always asking children to write, implement a range of memorable, communicative activities which help learning.



A look ahead

CPD Subject Days

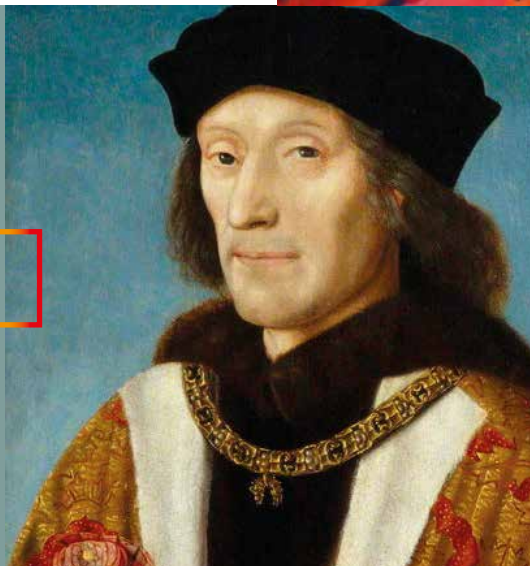
For up-to-date information see
www.princes-ti.org.uk/events



HISTORY

Cementing the
Tudor dynasty: 1485-1547

The First World War
for Key Stage 3



MODERN LANGUAGES

Stretch and challenge
in Spanish, through history,
poetry and art

New German specifications:
building confident communication
through the Golden Twenties
and Cold War



ENGLISH

Making the most
of shorter C19th fiction

The shape of poetry:
challenge and engage students
with the unseen



MUSIC

Breathing life into
GCSE set works



GEOGRAPHY

Changing places:
Making geographical
links at KS3-5



2017/18

Residential courses

Primary Leadership Residential for primary headteachers

Thursday 5th - Friday 6th October 2017

Leadership Residential for secondary headteachers

Monday 29th - Tuesday 30th January 2018

Enrichment Residential for subject leaders

History, Mathematics, Modern Languages and Science

June/July 2018 TBC

New Teacher Subject Days

Specifically designed for new teachers, this course of four Saturdays is delivered by experienced teacher leaders and provides access to a wealth of subject-based resources, and a chance to hear some of the latest academic thinking.

Subjects covered:

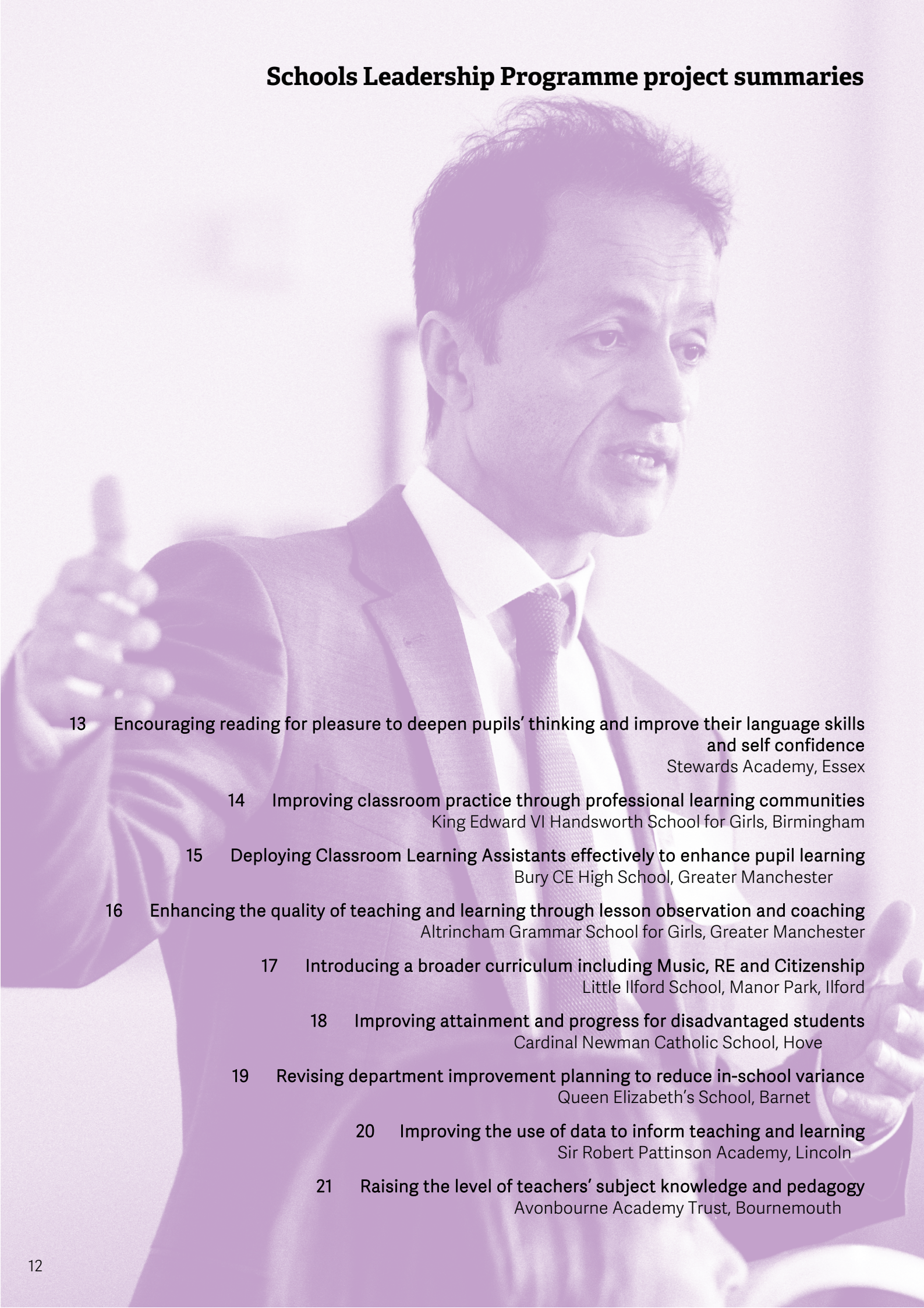
- **Biology**
- **Chemistry**
- **English**
- **French**
- **Geography**
- **History**
- **Mathematics**
- **Physics**
- **Spanish**

Location: Pimlico Academy, London

Courses are recommended for school-based teacher trainees, NQTs, and those in their first few years of teaching.



Schools Leadership Programme project summaries

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- 13 Encouraging reading for pleasure to deepen pupils' thinking and improve their language skills and self confidence**
Stewards Academy, Essex
 - 14 Improving classroom practice through professional learning communities**
King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls, Birmingham
 - 15 Deploying Classroom Learning Assistants effectively to enhance pupil learning**
Bury CE High School, Greater Manchester
 - 16 Enhancing the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observation and coaching**
Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, Greater Manchester
 - 17 Introducing a broader curriculum including Music, RE and Citizenship**
Little Ilford School, Manor Park, Ilford
 - 18 Improving attainment and progress for disadvantaged students**
Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Hove
 - 19 Revising department improvement planning to reduce in-school variance**
Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet
 - 20 Improving the use of data to inform teaching and learning**
Sir Robert Pattinson Academy, Lincoln
 - 21 Raising the level of teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy**
Avonbourne Academy Trust, Bournemouth



Encouraging reading for pleasure to deepen pupils' thinking and improve their language skills and self confidence

Stewards Academy, Essex

An 11-16 mixed comprehensive academy

Aim: To transform attitudes to reading, and encourage teachers to promote and celebrate reading within and beyond the classroom. To raise the profile of reading for enjoyment rather than to pass a test, to deepen thinking and enhance pupil confidence by broadening frames of reference.

Background: Almost half of the pupils enter the academy as weak readers and a number have significant learning difficulties. Many pupils come from low income families where parents do not have higher education qualifications.

Method:

Year 1:

Year 7 pupils were each given a free book, taken to the local library to enroll and explore, and then participated in the Summer Reading Scheme. Reading opportunities were embedded in lessons and introduced to homework tasks. Whole school and year group reading events also took place, including the Renaissance Accelerated Reading Recovery Programme. Termly Reading Weeks, linked to a literary genre or theme, were introduced.

Year 2:

Having established a will to read, the aim was to instill the rigour and resilience necessary for reading more challenging texts. In response to changes to the national curriculum and GCSEs, KS3 schemes of work were rewritten to provide further stretch and greater exposure to a wide range of texts. The second strategy was in separating English lessons from reading lessons. All pupils received one to one discussions about their reading and how to improve further. Reading weeks developed to include performances by pupils, lunchtime readings, competitions, treasure trails and visits from published authors. The library was refurbished, library software updated and over 3000 books purchased.

Year 3:

Pupil roles were created including Literacy Leaders, Pupil Librarians, Quiz Masters and Trusted Readers. Pupils also designed the reading weeks. All aspects of reading were celebrated – regular slots in the school newsletter highlighted reading achievements, a notice board to showcase many “word millionaires,” inter-form competitions and end of year celebration lunches.

Evidence: Pupil voice, library data.

Impact: Pupils are reading more than ever before – on average, the number of books borrowed from the library has increased by 1,500 books per year. Across the school, in all subjects, pupils are invited to participate in a wide range of reading activities, some evolved by pupils themselves. All pupils have a reading book with them as part of their everyday equipment, and importantly seem to be happy to read for pleasure.

Reflections: The success of the project has to be linked to the whole-school commitment to making this initiative high profile and embedded into the culture of learning in the school. The creation of the role of Reading Manager was also central to success of this research. The Accelerated Reading Scheme is intended to support schools in developing the reading skills of pupils underachieving in reading. With the large number of pupils involved it was necessary to have an identified person to manage the huge amount of information, creating and collating useful reports for staff and pupils on a regular basis.

on average, the number of books borrowed from the library has increased by 1,500 books per year

Contact: Clare O'Sullivan, Deputy Headteacher, cosullivan@stewardsacademy.org



Improving classroom practice through professional learning communities

King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls, Birmingham

An 11-18 selective girls' grammar school

Aim: To create a learning community where staff recognise themselves as learners, and to promote effective learning habits for both staff and students. To set up and sustain professional learning communities and explore their impact on teaching and learning.

Background: Student learning had been developed through the Building Learning Power (BLP) approach, which focused on the 'how' of learning and generating discussion around this. The focus of the project became teachers as learners, recognising that CPD should be redesigned to allow for teacher experimentation, coaching and reflection.

Method:

Year 1: A set of Staff Learning Enquiries, then Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were set up. These groups researched aspects of classroom practice within a choice of themes: learning habits, literacy, numeracy, mindsets, visible thinking, routines, meta learning and coaching. Teachers designed their own driving questions within a theme to research (e.g. How can we encourage students to engage more actively with written feedback?). Staff were given dedicated meeting time, opportunities for peer observation and were required to gather evidence from student voice.

Year 2: In response to staff feedback, more individual projects were undertaken to give flexibility and the timing of PLCs were reconsidered. More time was given to sharing outcomes through the VLE, discussions in learning communities and a booklet that was published to share learning and good practice. Staff designed their own driving questions from one of the following themes: Strategic Learning, Flipped Learning, Literacy/Oracy and Assessment for Learning. New staff took part in Building Learning Habits activities rather than PLCs to give them a grounding to build from.

Year 3: In response to emerging priorities, the range of themes was widened beyond classroom learning and included Student Wellbeing and Rewards. Sessions were held for all staff where themes and good practice from the previous set of PLCs were shared.

Evidence: Student voice feedback, appraisal lesson observations, learning walks, staff feedback, Ofsted report (2014) and examination results.

Impact: Analysis showed that members of any PLC the year before were much more likely to show strength in that aspect of practice than the staff as a whole:

2015-16 PLC	Members showing strength	All staff showing strength
Strategic Learning	80%	39%
Assessment for Learning	100%	77%
Flipped Learning	50%	23%

Other evidence of impact came from learning walks, for example, 73% of lessons during the Strategic Learning Walk had elements of strategic learning. Ofsted observed: *"Teachers are encouraged to explore aspects of learning in groups and report back to their colleagues in order to share good practice... This creates an environment where all strive to improve their performance."*

Reflections: We have been pleased that colleagues have taken the idea of PLCs in the spirit it was offered. Their reports show the seriousness with which they have taken the development, and they have grown professionally as a result. It is now a fundamental part of our CPD offer.

Contact: Clare Berry, Deputy Head, cberry@kingedwardvi.bham.sch.uk

Ofsted observed: "This creates an environment where all strive to improve their performance"

Deploying Classroom Learning Assistants effectively to enhance pupil learning

Bury CE High School, Greater Manchester

An 11-16 co-educational voluntary aided comprehensive school



Aim: To develop quality first teaching by ensuring that appropriate training of both teachers and Classroom Learning Assistants (CLAs) is delivered to impact positively on all pupils' progress. To re-establish the culture that the teacher is responsible for all pupil progress within their class, and to see CLAs as a resource that is deployable in any way the teacher feels will enhance the learning of the class and the pupils within it.

Background: Research by both the Sutton Trust and the Institute of Education had shown that the use of Teaching Assistants as a buddy to one or more pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) issues is at best neutral in its impact on pupil progress.

Method:

Year 1:

A training programme was implemented for CLAs covering the school's "excellent lesson" approach, which highlights the importance of basic literacy and numeracy interventions, differentiation strategies and behaviour management approaches. Emphasis was placed on joint planning approaches between teachers and CLAs.

Year 2:

A major restructure of the SEN department was completed, with new CLAs on permanent full-time contracts that provided allotted time for specialist training, e.g. supporting pupils with particular Special Educational Needs or those identified as able, gifted or talented. CLAs became part of the ongoing training provision of the school, taking part in professional activity days/evenings and at teaching and learning forums.

Year 3:

A lesson observation pro-forma was redeveloped to highlight the importance of deploying CLAs effectively. This allowed the quality of support and the quality of teaching and learning to be assessed. Each pro-forma had a focus on quality first teaching and they acted as a cross check on the effectiveness of learning provision.

Evidence: CLA questionnaires, pupil voice, parental survey, exam results.

Impact: Both parents and pupils confirmed that the quality of teaching had improved; teachers and CLAs showed improved understanding of their respective roles and pupils of all abilities were supported by CLAs. The Department for Learning Support review found that, "in all cases, pupils were actively engaged in the tasks that had been set by the classroom teacher. The support offered by the CLAs helped to keep the pupils on task". Examination performance of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) issues improved. In 2016, all pupils in receipt of special needs support or with an educational, health and care (EHC) plan achieved a minimum of 5 GCSE passes, with many gaining a greater number of passes and several achieving 5 A*-C including English and Maths. This performance was the best ever achieved with SEND pupils at the school. The attainment 8 average score for all pupils in England was 49.34, for supported pupils at Bury CE High School it was 46.62 which compared favourably with the national figure. Pupils at Bury CE High School who have EHC plans attained an average of 28.30.

Reflections: It is important to be rigorous in not only delivering but evaluating the project as it progresses. Having the Head as the key lead to work with the SENCo and Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning), enabled the project to have the impetus to be seen through despite challenges.

Contact: Rev C Watson, c.watson@burychurch.bury.sch.uk

Both parents and pupils confirmed that the quality of teaching had improved



Enhancing the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observation and coaching

Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, Greater Manchester

An 11-18 selective state girls' grammar school, the lead school in the Bright Futures Educational Trust.

Aim: To explore the role of lesson observation in improving teaching and learning within the school to achieve 100% of lessons graded as Good to Outstanding. Good practice to be shared across the school, Trust and Teaching School Alliance.

Background: AGGS was designated as a cohort 1 Teaching School in 2011. It is a high achieving school whose staff and students set extremely high expectations for their performance.

Method:

Year 1:

The project focused on developing the role of the coaching teachers and the teaching and learning group. The coaches were identified early in the academic year and time was given to these colleagues to work with those teachers requiring support. The teaching and learning group met once per half term to discuss ideas around sharing practice and collaboration.

Year 2:

The coaching offer was re-launched to encourage involvement of all teachers, not just those perceived to be "failing". The school also invested in the IRIS Connect system to enable teachers to reflect on their own teaching and easily observe others. These were monitored regularly by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning).

Year 3:

Grades were removed from lesson observations to develop the professional dialogue during feedback. This involved a long process of consultation with teaching staff in order to ensure that lesson observations positively supported the development of teaching and learning whilst also providing information for the appraisal process. Many teaching staff, middle leaders, SLEs and senior leaders were also engaged in similar coaching work in Trust and Alliance schools.

Evidence: Lesson observations, exam results, staff feedback.

Impact: By Year 2, 60% of lessons were graded Outstanding and 40% of lessons graded Good.

By Year 3, again the milestone was achieved with the following data recorded:

Term 1: 54.3% of lessons graded Outstanding, 45.7% graded Good

Term 2: 70% of lessons graded Outstanding, 30% graded Good

In Years 2 and 3, 11 colleagues accessed regular formal coaching compared with 3 the previous year. Their evaluation of the impact was very positive. IRIS Connect usage data (September 2016-2017) demonstrated that the system had been accessed by 33 members of the teaching staff for a variety of different purposes.

The main impact on teaching and learning was the maintenance of outstanding student outcomes through outstanding teaching and learning.

Reflections: We have learnt that teachers at our school are passionate about teaching and learning, and that building a process whereby teachers can engage in positive professional dialogue will bring about the greatest change. When aspects of the project were not successful we quickly acknowledged this based on feedback from staff and invested time in other areas.

Contact: Nicola Walker, nwalker@aggs.bfet.uk; Stephanie Gill, admin@aggs.bfet.uk

We have learnt that teachers at our school are passionate about teaching and learning



Introducing a broader curriculum including Music, RE and Citizenship

Little Ilford School, Manor Park, Ilford

An 11-16 mixed comprehensive school

Aim: To introduce a new curriculum that gives a broader offer to students, and ensures that Music (re-introduced), RE and Citizenship are delivered coherently and successfully.

Background: Music had been removed by the previous school leadership and the RE/Citizenship curriculum in Years 10 and 11 needed some development. The school is in a predominantly Muslim area.

Method:

Year 1:

Music — A new Curriculum Team Leader was appointed and the curriculum was devised in the summer term. One student was entered for GCSE and gained a B grade and a carol service involved the Music department. Student assessment levels at data points were initially low, as primary provision was patchy and students had lost any grounding in the subject.

RE/Citizenship — Options for delivery were presented to SLT and provision was planned in winter term. The first Citizenship day was held in the summer term.

Year 2: Music — A GCSE offer was established in all year groups. Participation in extracurricular music continued to rise, with regular performances in assemblies, termly concerts and 250 students receiving instrumental lessons with a further 90 on a waiting list.

RE/Citizenship — A second Citizenship Day – British Values Day – was successfully delivered and reviewed. Curriculum delivery was explored.

Year 3: Music — Participation in extracurricular music continued to rise, with 300 students taking instrumental lessons and 50 on a waiting list. Regular performances and concerts continued. 62 students took Music in Years 9-10 and 70% of students taking GCSE Music were predicted grades A*-C, higher than the target of 65%.

RE/Citizenship — Certification options were pursued to improve buy-in of students and provision developed as a result of the previous year's learning points.

Evidence: Pupil options, exam results, staff and student feedback.

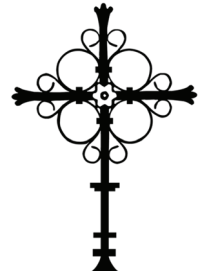
Impact: Music — Recruitment to Music has been strong: 23 students in Year 11, 40 in Year 10 (surpassing the original target of 15) and 22 in Year 9. Effort levels are at least 'Good' for every student. A review conducted into the department showed that despite students having little experience of music, the quality of teaching and learning and the leadership and team effectiveness were good.

RE/Citizenship — Citizenship Days are now established in the school calendar, but although RE is now in the curriculum, a satisfactory course has not been found. Students are studying an unassessed home-grown course in Years 10 and 11.

Reflections: We have learned that the most important issue when introducing (or reintroducing) a subject to a school is to employ the right subject leader, which we have done. The person concerned should be able to create a 'buzz' around the subject. We are pleased with the success of the Citizenship Days, and the opt-out level has been in single figures, which is surprising given that 72% of the intake is Muslim. Our insistence on parents coming in for a meeting about the content of the days when they write to withdraw their child has helped to allay fears.

Contact: Ian Wilson, i.wilson@littleilford.org

Effort levels are at least 'Good' for every student



Improving attainment and progress for disadvantaged students

Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Hove

An 11-19 co-educational voluntary aided comprehensive school

Aim: To reduce the gap in attainment and progress between disadvantaged students and all other students.

Background: CNCS has a 12-form entry and is the 5th largest school in the UK. 18% of pupils are considered disadvantaged students, and sometimes the levels of literacy, numeracy, engagement and aspiration of these students are low compared to their non-disadvantaged peers. RAISEonline and other data indicated a significant gap in attainment and progress for these students, especially Higher Attaining Pupil Premium (HAPP), compared with all other students.

Method: Year 1:

Action research was undertaken into quality teaching and disadvantaged children's attainment and rates of progress, together with general reading around aspirations and social mobility through engagement with projects such as Widening Participation at the University of Sussex and the Sutton Trust. This was supported by more detailed and rigorous interrogation of pupil attainment and progress data using new online tools such as 4-Matrix. This became a key focus of SLT, with a new Assistant Headteacher (Data) and realignment of Deputy Headteacher responsibilities. Work was undertaken with subject and curriculum leaders to analyse departmental data. Areas of strength and best practice were identified. Subject leaders, evaluated individual teachers' class performance and supported and challenged areas of underachievement. Often third and fourth sets had the greatest gaps in attainment.

Year 2:

Subject leaders worked with their teams to ensure schemes of work, assessments and opportunities within the new curricula were well planned, well delivered and aspirational. Teachers prioritised disadvantaged students using "Class at A Glance" sheets and assessed and tracked their attainment and progress carefully, in order to make necessary early interventions. Sixth Form students were used to mentor disadvantaged students in Year 11, and form tutors were becoming more intervention focused. External support from the University of Sussex Widening Participation Scheme and "IntoUniversity" work for disadvantaged students was tapped into by Years 10-11, as well as Years 12-13.

Year 3:

The focus was on further supporting pastoral structures to ensure that SEND and disadvantaged students were attending school, that their pastoral needs were being addressed as well as their academic progress. Action Research projects were developed for staff through the NPQSL and NPQML CPD programmes as well as Challenge Partners' "Challenge the Gap" project.

Evidence: Exam results, RAISEonline data.

Impact: The gap between GCSE results for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students fell from 28% in 2014 and 32% in 2015 to 18% in 2016. RAISEonline data showed that the disadvantaged High Prior Attaining students had the widest gap, which was caused by four students. Progress and attainment in English for disadvantaged students was particularly strong.

Reflections: Disadvantage and the causes of it are stubbornly difficult to 'crack' in a city where disparities are wide and the numbers of students are quite large. Brighton and Hove have extremely wide national disparities and a high degree of social deprivation.

Contact: Dr James Kilmartin, Headteacher, j.kilmartin@cncs.co.uk

Progress and attainment in English for disadvantaged students was particularly strong



Revising department improvement planning to reduce in-school variance

Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet

An 11-18 state maintained selective boys' school

Aim: To ensure that school improvement and the improvement of teaching and learning were the primary focus of senior and middle leaders.

Background: QE Barnet was already a very high achieving boys' grammar school, however there was a need to improve the boys' creativity, confidence and self-motivation. A new school improvement plan was launched in 2012.

Method:

Year 1:

Senior leadership roles were redefined so that they had increased capacity, responsibility and accountability for school improvement. SLT meetings were co-chaired by the assistant heads who each led a quarter of each meeting to ensure equal attention was given to the four themes of the school improvement plan.

A new pro-forma for departmental development planning was introduced which produced plans which had greater focus and were more realistic in terms of what could be achieved. The year heads' forum was reformed into a Pastoral Development Group, which was similarly constituted to the already established Learning Development Group, with a greater range of staff sitting in on the strategy meetings. A new system for robust self-evaluation, supported by externally appointed critical friends, was introduced.

Year 2:

Particular attention was given to the Mathematics department following the appointment of a new Head of Department who, with the assistance of the Assistant Head (Teaching and Learning) and an external consultant needed to shift attitudes in order to initiate dialogue about teaching and learning between colleagues.

Year 3:

An extensive evaluation was undertaken aided by detailed pupil, parent and staff surveys. The middle leaders undertook collectively a whole-school evaluation of learning with a series of learning walks over the course of a week.

Evidence: Pupil, parent and staff surveys, exam results.

Impact: Department plans were more tightly aligned to the whole-school priorities and there was a better sense of collective responsibility for their realisation. Senior and middle leaders focused more of their time on the improvement of teaching and learning. Self-evaluation systems became more rigorous, robust and accurate. Outcomes in public examinations at GCSE and A Level improved (from a very high starting point). Marginal gains were made through improved outcomes in areas such as Languages where results were traditionally less strong.

The realisation of school improvement priorities led to more student-led lessons, which were more academically challenging and enjoyable for the boys.

Reflections: We have learned that in order to get to a different outcome, a different process or method is required. The success of this work relied upon careful scaffolding by senior leaders to guide the work of middle leaders. Teams must not work in isolation.

Contact: Neil Enright, Headmaster, nenright@qebarnet.co.uk

Senior and middle leaders focused more of their time on the improvement of teaching and learning



Improving the use of data to inform teaching and learning

Sir Robert Pattinson Academy, Lincoln

An 11-18 mixed comprehensive school

Aim: To raise standards across the Academy and reduce variation between departments.

Background: After the 2013 Ofsted judgement of 'Requires Improvement', the need to upskill middle and senior leaders, and subsequently teachers, in the use of data to drive improvement in teaching and learning was recognised.

Method: Year 1:

A new policy on reporting, tracking and assessment was produced, growing and sharpening the information which students received to enable them to make improvements. *SISRA* was introduced to allow all leaders to immediately engage with data. Staff were trained in the use of data and academic systems – allowing the data to be turned around into meaningful summary sheets quickly, thus teachers knew their students better.

Year 2:

An investment into ALPS at KS5 allowed further interrogation of data in the Sixth Form. Further development of the class profile and use of data within planning and marking to accelerate progress was undertaken. The school invested in *Classcharts* giving staff quick access to their seating plans and the data in a visual medium.

Year 3:

The use and depth of data currently within KS4 was extended to both KS3 and KS5. A new assessment without levels system of reporting was launched and time was devoted to ensuring that heads of department had the curriculum set up to reflect key performance indicators in each subject area.

CAT and PASS data was successfully used for the second year running, giving insight into student prior performance with new KS2 and their attitudes to school, allowing focused mentoring to take place.

Evidence: Exam results, staff feedback, Ofsted reports.

Impact: The 2016 OFSTED judgement rated the school as 'Good' in all categories and commented that school leaders had worked hard to develop thorough systems for checking how well pupils are doing. More importantly the journey has improved the outcomes and therefore life chances for our young people.

	Progress 8	5A*-C inc. EM	Ebacc	BASICS
Year 1	-0.25	56.9%	26.4%	61.1%
Year 2	-0.15	61.4%	30.5%	65.5%
Year 3	-0.05	68.8%	41%	77%

Staff feedback was very positive about *SISRA*, commenting how helpful the data was in assessing student progress. All leaders are now more adept in challenging each other in the use of data, and teachers are more considered when they make any reporting judgement, knowing the level of scrutiny it will be under.

Reflections: This project has really helped increase the profile and awareness of data and its importance in the successful journey of any school. This has tied in well with changes to reporting in a world without levels in KS3 and our drive to enable all teachers to be confident interrogators of data. There is now an embedded culture of a continual data cycle, which starts and ends with the student.

Contact: Pete Ward, PWARD@srpa.co.uk

*The journey
has improved
the outcomes
and
therefore
life chances
for our
young people*

Raising the level of teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy

Avonbourne Academy Trust, Bournemouth

A secondary modern school in an area of high deprivation



Aim: To encourage teachers to deepen their subject knowledge and thus improve the engagement of students with greater pace and challenge in the classroom. All students to gain a minimum of Level 4 by the end of Year 7.

Background: Historically there was poor attainment at KS2. A lack of ambition in students and poor progress meant students failed to reach their potential. Staff were not developing creative solutions to the problem, resulting in a lack of support for students.

Method:

Year 1:

An audit of staff skills and qualifications was conducted and action taken, e.g. the Head of English initiated partnership work with Winchester University to improve the creative writing skills of his department. Four departments attended PTI workshops and one (English) submitted a project. Teacher recruitment focused on evidence of commitment to subject-based CPD. Year 7 tracking was introduced to give students a better understanding of their progress. The KS3 curriculum was amended to include more opportunities for students to develop their learning skills and cognitive development alongside subject knowledge.

Year 2:

A further four departments began PTI projects. Schemes of work were reviewed to inject pace and rigour. Department meeting agendas focussed on academic and pedagogical research with careful scrutiny of the impact on students' outcomes. A group of staff, identified as expert practitioners, used a coaching strategy to share their research findings and resultant pedagogical approaches with others.

Year 3:

Many staff became engaged in research projects and worked regularly with the universities of Exeter, Southampton and Winchester. Some staff engaged in international research projects. One member of staff began her MA in subject-based research and the findings were communicated to all staff at a whole-staff training event.

Evidence: Student and staff surveys, attendance figures, exam results in core subjects, staff engagement with action research.

Impact: Success was predominately measured through student progress outcomes which continue to be high. After Year 2, The EBACC qualification (all subjects in this were involved in PTI projects) was well above the national average both in participation rates and outcomes (30%).

By the end of Year 3, there were centres of excellence in each faculty. As a result the number of Good and Outstanding lessons increased to 89% and over 80% of staff could deliver CPD in their subject. More students than ever progressed to sixth form with approximate 50% increases year-on-year. The Sixth Form became oversubscribed and results for the Sixth Form increased with 71% achieving grades A*-B.

There is now a culture of pedagogical research amongst staff. They look to their own degree disciplines and to education in general for their research projects. They are actively engaged in whole-school improvement and share best practice on a regular basis through structured and unstructured forums.

Reflections: Educational organisations need to value and exploit the immense amount of intellectual capital within their institutions to enhance the life chances of our students.

Contact: Debbie Godfrey-Phaure , debbie.godfreyphaure@avonbournetrust.org

*Results for
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Fostering enthusiasm and independence in students' approaches to literary texts

Loxford School, Ilford

A large 3-18 coeducational all-through multi-academy trust with the proportion of students eligible for free school meals and who speak English as another language significantly above the national average.

Aim: To develop subject-specialist hubs of teachers; to create engaging and challenging schemes of work at KS3; to improve standards at GCSE, with focus on increasing the numbers achieving A/A* and to raise the profile of English outside the classroom to boost numbers at A Level.

Background: In 2013 16% of students achieved A/A* in GCSE Literature. Schemes of work at KS3, which included *Holes* and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, were not considered to represent a challenging canon of literary study. As a former school of Science and Technology, English was not always valued by students as an academic pathway after GCSE and as such, A-Level intake was relatively small for our Sixth Form cohort at 29 students.

Method: Year 1: Subject hubs connected post-holders with another English department at a trust partner school, initially sharing resources and having discussions over email. A challenging SOW at KS3 began with the development of a heritage poetry unit, and the texts studied by high-ability GCSE students were reviewed, with top sets moving away from studying *Heroes*, which didn't allow more able students to access the highest range of marks. KS4 students were exposed to high-level critical theory, such as Freudian readings of *Lord of the Flies* and Jungian approaches to *Of Mice and Men*. Teachers with specific expertise or passions delivered interesting 'taster' lessons to promote A-Level study.

Year 2: A third trust partner school joined the relationship and the discussions focused more around GCSE reform. KS3 schemes of work began to mirror the challenge and range of skills required at KS4 by raising the level of challenge in the Shakespeare texts offered. Pupil engagement was capitalised on with Shakespeare 400 week, where lessons were collapsed for a magical mystery tour of several Shakespeare plays. In response to GCSE reform, there was a focus on the 19th century, and the remit of challenging texts was broadened to sets 1 and 2. A-Level teachers visited Year 11 classrooms to inspire students to consider the subject at A Level.

Year 3: A fourth school joined the partnership and the KS3 curriculum 'upped its game' to include Romantic Poetry in Year 7 and *Animal Farm* in Year 8. The model of Shakespeare week was used for World Book Day, National Poetry Day and any other excuse to take students off-piste into an interactive literary environment. No longer aiming for A-A* due to GCSE reform, teachers of higher sets enjoyed Marxist readings of *A Christmas Carol* and using the current political climate as a jumping off point for longer writing tasks. A-Level taster sessions were delivered by A Level students, who also acted as English Ambassadors to support and assist in lower year classes.

Evidence: Exam results, A Level uptake, pupil voice.

Impact: By 2016, 27% were achieving A/A* at GCSE, and A Level uptake had almost doubled to 56 students. Useful, purposeful and regular hub meetings have helped each school develop shared strategies to aid in planning and delivery of new specifications, and we are now incredibly proud of our KS3 provision. Proactive responses to literary and cultural events (such as Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize) have produced high-quality work and enthusiastic responses, and raising the profile of English has not only meant higher take-up, but also a change in the types of student who are taking up the subject; they are enthusiastic and independent, are readers and great role models for younger students.

Reflections: We are very proud of the English provision at Loxford, and it is amazing to have a forum to share, review and reflect on the more 'fun' aspects of the job, away from spreadsheets, assessments and the necessary admin. Most importantly, our students have access to a broad and exciting English curriculum.

Contact: Lucy Hyams, Head of English, luchyam@loxford.net

By 2016,
27% were
achieving A/
A* at GCSE,
and A-Level
uptake had
risen

Using strategies beyond the curriculum to increase interest in English at Key Stage 5

King Edward VI Five Ways School, Birmingham

An 11-18 selective grammar school



Aim: To increase uptake of English subjects at KS5 and to enrich the Year 11 experience across and beyond the curriculum by promoting AS-Level English-related subjects, including Film Studies and Media.

Background: Uptake at A Level seemed to be dropping as competition with other subject areas increased. Excellent results suggested that students would accept the challenge of higher-level study and enrichment.

Method:

Year 1:

A cross-curricular WWI battlefields trip with the History department was held for extra study in A Level literature, and a GCSE Plus programme was implemented, with ideas for enrichment at KS4. Alumni helped promote English through their university experiences, which those applying to university found very helpful, and the Sixth Form open evening gained more footfall than the previous year. Numerous theatre visits were also a success.

Year 2:

Enrichment activities and theatre visits continued, with the exception of the battlefields trip, which proved too costly for some students. Debating took off across all key stages and students reached the second round in Debating Matters and the English Speaking Union (ESU) Mace. CPD was delivered around teaching A Level to help new members of the department and fresh texts were planned and resourced at GCSE due to a switch in exam board.

Year 3/4:

A greater number of enrichment and revision workshops were delivered at GCSE, and A-Level students received greater support in preparation for university study. Debating was more successful as students reached the third round of the ESU Debate. A partnership was set up with other local schools to share good practice in KS4 and to support vulnerable groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, or who are on pupil premium.

Evidence: Attendance at enrichment activities, student voice questionnaires and feedback, uptake at AS and A Level, university applicants for English, exam results.

Impact: Although uptake at KS5 has not increased, students are now offered a superb array of enrichment opportunities, including lectures, creative writing days and trips to museums and the theatre. Crossover links and the teaching of Literature with other English-related A Levels has become stronger and GCSE results have improved over the course of the project. There has been better collaboration between staff in terms of planning and resource creation, and recruitment to the department has been strong.

Reflections: Finding the time to record progress that reflects the successes and failures in a systematic way is crucial. Recording intangible outcomes through questionnaires has been effective in recording pupil voice and suggests that their experiences have been rewarding, if challenging.

Students are now offered a superb array of enrichment opportunities

Using the new curriculum to maximise rigour and enjoyment of English at GCSE



Ark Academy, Wembley

A coeducational all-through school, with students from 3-18

Aim: To reflect on how to best plan for changes to the KS4 curriculum and ensure that schemes of learning generate excitement about English for teachers and pupils alike. To improve students' outlook on reading and to redefine what 'rigour' looks like in lesson planning.

Background: A library study had shown that students were reading less than expected.

Method:

Year 1: Year 10 units of work were co-planned with a close eye on ambitious unseen extracts that were interwoven into classwork and weekly mini assessments. The model was shared with other English departments and their reactions were noted. Feedback was gathered from staff and students at the end of each term and the model was moved into KS3.

Year 2: 'Knowledge organisers' were mapped and planned to help learners grasp and justify what they see as pivotal moments, key quotes and characteristics. The NQT and trainee in the department both found that knowing which information to prioritise freed them to have class discussions that moved beyond the basics of the knowledge organiser. All teachers were challenged to share the subject of their degree dissertation as part of a display to inspire A-Level learners before they chose their own specialities for A2.

Year 3: A literary festival was held in collaboration with other departments (largely creative subjects) which raised the profile of reading through a series of events for every key stage. Every teacher demonstrated their subject knowledge to staff and students by leading a seminar on a specialism and a YouTube channel (MissHannaLovesGrammar) that focused on sharing interpretations on poetry and improving technical accuracy was launched. Podcasts on set texts for Years 7-11 were also made and shared.

Evidence: Minutes from department meetings, student and staff feedback.

Impact: The number of students studying A-Level English has increased, staff and outside observers have noticed learners increasingly engaging with higher-order thinking around challenging texts. Staff and student feedback has shown that they have both found the knowledge organisers useful and pupils remain confident in teachers' subject knowledge. Reports from the library have noted students taking out more pre-20th-century texts, and teachers' borrowing indicates engagement with developing their pedagogy and subject knowledge.

The literary festival was well received and there is huge appetite for it to run again in the future. Teachers loved the process of giving seminars and want this integrated into the termly cycle to allow them to explore more of their subject knowledge with others. In particular, poetry has been given a huge amount of attention by students, and two student-led poetry slams are being held across the summer term alongside an offshoot poetry society led by KS5 learners.

Reflections: This project has opened my eyes. Seeing both staff and students flourish, especially with the Literary festival has been an absolute delight.

Perhaps the most challenging element of the process has been galvanising the whole school to support our Literary festival during the week of World Book Day. I want to enhance the profile of these events in future years.

Contact: Amy Hanna, Director of English, a.hanna@arkacademy.org

The number of students studying A-Level English has increased

Encouraging and supporting more students to feel enthused about English

Pimlico Academy, London

An 11-18 coeducational comprehensive school with a high proportion of learners who are bilingual or have English as another language. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is twice the national average.

Aim: To discover why students choose to take English at A Level, to support and encourage those that do and to increase uptake of English at A Level and university. To inspire pupils to become more passionate about their learning and embrace deeper subject knowledge.

Background: This built on another successful PTI project at Pimlico which consisted of founding a lecture series for pupils and staff. It had given pupils a better understanding of what studying English at A Level and university was like, and had increased staff's subject knowledge.

Method:

Year 1:

A trip to an AQA lecture series improved understanding of the exam specifications, which encouraged those who were already motivated to study English. A student voice project aimed to understand Year 12 students' reasons for choosing to study English Literature, and questionnaires revealed that few students in either Literature or Language read much outside of the course.

Year 2:

The first year of the project had shown that it was difficult to make an impact on Key Stage 4 pupils, so the focus shifted to KS3. Top set pupils were surveyed about their GCSE, A Level and university aspirations and the data used to plan future milestones and sessions for KS3 students. The exercise led to GCSE and A-Level pupils visiting KS3 classes for Q&A sessions to dispel misconceptions about the course, and KS3 pupils were offered the chance to experience university-style education with a lecture and seminar.

Year 3:

The number of lectures delivered was increased and extended to cover coursework focus. The impact of these was measured with questionnaires and attendance registers. Extracurricular support was provided through a buddy system to aid retention from Year 12-13 and courses were enriched with wider reading lists.

Evidence: Staff and student surveys, lecture attendance, coursework grades.

Impact: Students were positive about the Q&A sessions. They valued having students talk to them rather than teachers, and they felt more comfortable asking questions that staff members sometimes considered unimportant. The sessions increased their confidence about GCSE English, though most younger students could not fully comprehend most of the content of the Sixth Formers' explanations.

The trips also helped pupils build an idea of what studying English at university would be like, though it was difficult to get whole-school engagement and the majority of uptake was from students already studying English in the Sixth Form.

Reflections: More regular trips to exam board lectures would help pupils currently studying English, and more information for younger pupils before the Q&A sessions would be likely to elicit better questioning.

Contact: Matt Meneghello, English Teacher, meneghello@pimlicoacademy.org

The sessions increased their confidence about GCSE English



Studying great literature to enthuse students and improve the quality of their writing

Stewards Academy, Essex

An 11-16 coeducational comprehensive converter academy, whose pupils join with lower than nationally expected standard of literacy.

Aim: To improve literacy provision with a focus on developing a love of writing. Writing is equally important as reading, but is often not given the same impetus. By investigating the art of quality writing and giving pupils opportunities to explore, barriers to writing confidence can be removed.

Background: Deficits in basic literacy were hindering pupils' access to the KS3 curriculum and making expected progress to achieve externally set targets challenging, and at times unrealistic.

Method: Year 1: An after-school writers' club was established with the idea of producing a book ('Sam & Pam') of publishing quality. Teaching staff from English and other departments attended to support and advise, and students looked closely at what makes a successful, popular story. A plot was agreed and the first two chapters drafted.

Across the school, there was targeted focus on writers' technique, and pupils were given the opportunity to experiment and take risks with literary devices.

Year 2: *Sam & Pam* writers made significant progress with the writing of the book, and the group became increasingly self-aware and self-managing. As the book took shape, pupils invested greater time and debated the characters passionately, having found both the voices of their personas and their own writer's voice. The pupils themselves planned a half-term whole-day workshop to allow them to write uninterrupted.

A 'Writers' Society' was founded that encouraged pupils to enjoy writing through playing creative writing games, and there was particular interest from KS3. Every member of the department received training on creative writing and collaboratively planned lessons. Pupils' confidence was built through encouragement to share their work, either publicly or just reading to a friend. This established a sense of peer respect.

Year 3: With the increasing pressure of their GCSEs, pupils suspended work on *Sam & Pam*. In their mock exams, these particular pupils scored highly on their Transactional and Imaginative Writing questions. The group will reconvene after exams to complete the project. The pupils used teachers as a focus group to evaluate a chapter of the book, and produced a film showing the process of planning, writing and editing.

The department made steady, positive progress in reinforcing the link between great literature and the craft of writing through the reading of whole texts and exploiting extracts of great writing as models.

Evidence: Surveys, interviews, whole-school data.

Impact: Across the key stages, pupils who would normally be disengaged with writing were more focused and willing to use literary devices with greater frequency. There is greater appreciation for the craft of writing and pupils are entering competitions and being published in poetry anthologies.

Reflections: The main challenge has been a lack of quality time due to the demands of exams and the curriculum. However, despite this, and pupils having other commitments that took precedence, such as sporting events and school productions, a core group of pupils maintained the desire and enthusiasm to produce *Sam & Pam*.

Contact: Joe Greenaway, Subject Leader for English, jgreenaway@stewardsacademy.org

Pupils are entering competitions and being published in poetry anthologies

Supporting local primary schools with the new Geography national curriculum

Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Hove

An 11-18 coeducational comprehensive Catholic school

Aim: To support local primary schools in the pre-existing Geography and Global Learning network with the understanding, planning, implementation, teaching and resourcing of the 2014 national curriculum. This scheme received funding from the local authority.

Background: As a Secondary Quality Mark Geographical Centre of Excellence, Cardinal Newman was best placed to continue to lead local network meetings and share best practice.

Method:

Year 1: All Brighton and Hove primary schools were invited to a free Primary Geography Conference. 36 delegates attended, and were encouraged to bring their ideas, strengths and concerns, ensuring they had ownership of the agenda. Many teachers had subject knowledge concerns, as they had not studied Geography beyond secondary school. In many cases there were also resourcing gaps and a lack of awareness of a national Geography subject community.

Feedback was gathered and key areas of work were identified. At a meeting of local primary Geography leaders, the findings were presented and they were assured that a three-year programme would help to phase in the national curriculum and provide guidance, support and mentoring.

Year 2: Further network meetings were held and school-to-school support was encouraged through the establishment of cluster groups, which worked on gathering resources and producing engaging lesson plans around different topics (e.g. African countries, rainforest ecosystems, deserts, local area studies) that could be shared at a further Primary Geography Conference in the summer term. Regular CPD sessions shared best practice with a focus on map work and GIS skills; feedback from teachers was excellent with evidence of high-quality student work displayed.

Year 3: This year was about embedding key ideas and continuing to offer guidance and support. Three twilight sessions were held, but these were more challenging due to the increased focus on English and Mathematics in the primary curriculum, as well as reformed Key Stage 2 assessments and the emerging financial strain on schools. A summary newsletter was created to offer support and point primary schools in the direction of the amazing wealth of available resources.

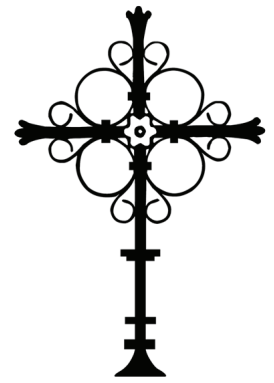
Evidence: Teacher feedback, improved schemes of work.

Impact: The primary schools really valued the small, tight, supportive and subject-focused Geography community that worked through key topics and opportunities such as GIS and fieldwork. They had increased confidence to grapple with subject-specific content, and visits to primary classrooms have shown that exciting, appropriate and challenging Geography is being taught.

Reflections: For Cardinal Newman there were many mutual benefits, including the fact that many of our network primaries were feeder schools that teachers could work with in cross-phase programmes. This gave them a better understanding of the starting points and experiences of our new Year 7 intake, and the opportunity to support primary teachers with the more challenging topics.

We have learnt that collaboration with outside stakeholders is generally easy, and they are often ready, willing and able to give up their time for free. However, communicating with a range of different and busy schools needs persistent energy and drive.

Contact: Maria Larkin, Subject Leader for Geography, m.larkin@cncs.co.uk



Primary schools really valued the small, tight, supportive and subject-focused Geography community



Raising GCSE Geography uptake through an improved Key Stage 3 curriculum

Hinchingsbrook School, Cambridgeshire

An 11-18 coeducational comprehensive school

Aim: To further improve KS3 Geography provision and increase the number of students selecting to study GCSE Geography whilst transitioning from a three-year to two-year KS3.

Background: There were concerns that having one year less at KS3 would lead to a reduction in the range of content, and, as a result, a reduction in the number of students choosing to continue with Geography. Uptake was above the national average (35.5%), at around 50%.

Method:

Year 1:

The first cohort finished the new two-year KS3 curriculum, and students who had completed both the old three-year curriculum (Years 9-10) and the new two-year curriculum (Year 8) were surveyed about their experiences. 88% of Year 8 students said that they enjoyed Geography even more than they had in Year 7 and GCSE uptake remained high at 49%. Each year group was taken off-site for fieldwork.

Year 2:

Units identified by students as weaker were reviewed and updated to boost engagement. Links were made with other secondary schools in the area to gain further knowledge and experience, and feeder primaries were surveyed with the aim of better understanding KS1-2 Geography provision to avoid repetition in KS3. More fieldwork was requested, but, due to school restrictions, additional out-of-school trips were not possible so the focus moved to increasing out-of-classroom in-school activities.

Year 3:

KS3 students were given more control over their learning with the chance to vote for a range of different country study options and more independent learning techniques were implemented to make homework more engaging. A homework clinic run by Sixth Formers was trialled but was not used by students due to support materials being made available online. Further links with feeder primaries involved lesson observations and co-planning a transition unit. Year 6 students requested closer links to the Year 7 curriculum to allow them to 'get ahead', hopefully boosting engagement in Geography before they start at Hinchingsbrook.

Evidence: Student voice surveys, GCSE uptake.

Impact: There was a very positive response to school-based out-of-classroom activities, and KS3 provision is now more engaging, with both students and teachers enjoying lessons more. GCSE uptake has increased slightly from 49% at the start of the project to 53% at the end, however the introduction of pathways to the options process may impact on this.

Links with feeder primaries have been strengthened and will lead to improved transition for Year 6 students. However, attempts to make links with other secondary schools were overshadowed by the new KS4-5 specifications. We hope that once the introduction of these new curriculums has been completed we will be able to focus on KS3 links.

Reflections: The most enlightening element of this project for us has definitely been the student voice surveys. They have highlighted aspects of Geography provision that we had not considered as teachers. It is also an excellent way to gain detailed feedback on new initiatives and units.

Contact: Kate Moyes, Second in Geography, kfm@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk

KS3 provision is now more engaging, with both students and teachers enjoying lessons more



The impact of extracurricular trips and activities on students' passion for History

Altrincham Girls' Grammar School, Trafford

An 11-18 selective girls' school

Aim: To explore the value of extracurricular trips and activities.

Background: The project initially aimed to address a slight fall in the number of students choosing History as an option in KS4-5. However, as it developed, the focus shifted towards choosing good and engaging trips across all key stages to increase students' passion for History beyond the classroom, as something that exists all around and leads to many interesting careers. The shift occurred because it became clear that the journey to enjoying history began in Year 7, rather than due to last minute tactics to engage students before options evening in Year 9.

Method:

Year 1:

As well as the existing programme, which included essay-writing competitions, lecture conferences and a weekly research group, several new trips and activities were introduced. These included setting up a Horrible Histories Club and departmental involvement in the Battle of Waterloo commemoration project, in which a small number of students volunteered to research the life and contribution of a soldier to the battle. All of these students have chosen to take History A Level, indicating that the key to engaging students is to offer the opportunity to be real historians!

Year 2-3:

Activities were expanded to include involvement in the whole-school Shakespeare project with a week-long number of lessons on his life, and the introduction of a very well attended Sixth Form History Club. Year 12 students started to run the Horrible Histories Club, and trips abroad included Berlin and Vienna, with a trip to New York and Washington planned for the future.

Evidence: Key Stage 4-5 recruitment.

Impact: A range of new trips and extracurricular activities was introduced, reviewed and retained over the course of the project, and the commitment to the value and significance of trips and extracurricular activities is now entrenched in the ethos of the department. The number of students opting to study History also increased year-on-year:

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Students choosing History	75	94	103	113

Reflections: There is no doubt that our trips have helped to bring History to life and make the subject more appealing and meaningful for some of our students. It has also increased the confidence of some members of the department in their ability to arrange complex trips abroad and programmes that encourage our students to think as historians. While we believe that the real key to securing sustained engagement in the subject is great teaching and learning, and continuous professional development in that regard, we will continue to explore additional ways of enthusing our students.

The key to engaging students is to offer the opportunity to be real historians!

Contact: Huw Dickson, Head of History, hdickson@aggs.bfet.uk



Establishing IB Global Politics as a post-16 option.

Bexley Grammar School, London

An 11-18 coeducational selective school

Aim: To establish IB Global Politics as a viable post-16 option for students as the school moves from A Level to IB; to extend students' interest in current affairs and develop their skills of 'deeper learning'; to provide opportunities for colleagues to expand their subject expertise and to enhance extracurricular provision with a residential trip to the USA.

Background: The school's intake is not typical for a selective school, with a large number of students from lower socio-economic and ethnic minority backgrounds, who have additional learning needs or have no experience of post-16 education in their families.

Method:

Year 1:

The course was promoted to Year 11 students, with the aim of forming a viable cohort at a time when the school was still delivering the A Level. Interschool links were established with Dartford Grammar School, an IB-only school, which was also establishing the course, and resources were shared. Teachers received IB online training and produced schemes of work for Year 12.

Year 2:

An initial cohort of eight students began the course in September. Schemes of work for the two-year course were produced, along with the necessary resources for the anticipated Year 13 class. Tentative plans were made for an enrichment trip to Washington DC and New York, together with IB History, and six of the eight students decided to participate.

Year 3:

All eight students decided to continue into Year 13 and a new cohort of ten students was achieved in Year 12. The enrichment trip to the USA took place again and 25 students from Year 11 were recruited for the following year. With some external students also joining, this will create two IB Global Politics groups.

Evidence: Recruitment to the course and options for further study, student questionnaires, internal exams.

Impact: A key success has been increasing recruitment onto the course, and five of the original cohort of eight have opted to continue with their Politics studies at undergraduate level. Students highlighted the opportunities for deeper and independent learning as the most enjoyable aspects of the course.

Limited specialism within the department for the delivery of Global Politics has resulted in the sharing of learning ideas and strategies, though with the exception of Dartford Grammar School, the opportunities to collaborate with other schools has been limited, as IB is still very niche with the only professional development offered online.

Reflections: A potential future challenge will be adapting the course to meet the needs of larger groups of students. Only having two colleagues involved in the initiative resulted in considerable amounts of time being devoted to the project's management over the three years. Opportunities to include a greater number of colleagues could have enabled us to be more creative and extensive in our problem-solving.

Contact: Rob Goodall, Head of History and Politics, goodall_r@bexleygs.co.uk

Students highlighted the opportunities for deeper and independent learning are the most enjoyable aspects



Using primary sources to lead enquiry-based learning

Gordon's School, Surrey

An 11-18 coeducational academy trust

Aim: To connect the study of events with the study of the individual and to reward academic excellence through The General Gordon Research Prize.

Background: The school was founded in memory of General Gordon. Using artefacts and memorabilia at the school, Year 8 pupils were asked to consider how he should be remembered. Year 9 pupils conducted investigations around Old Boys of the school and their experiences of both the Home Front and the Front Line during WWI.

Method:

Year 1: The initial focus was on local history, and a curator from a local museum (the Army Medical Services Museum) was invited into school to help pupils with their investigations into General Gordon. The General Gordon Research Prize was awarded for the best enquiry and this continued over the course of the project.

Year 2: The project was refined to focus on using primary sources and pupil-centred investigation. Year 9 pupils each took the name of an Old Boy and had to research both his life at Gordon's and his war record. Pupils needed a lot of help and a scaffolding approach was adapted to enable all pupils to produce a worthwhile piece.

Year 3: The Year 9 project was run again and on a Battlefields Trip pupils visited the gravesides of some of those Old Boys studied. This encouraged the pupils to consider the role of history in memorial. For instance, the pupils attended a service at the Menin Gate, on which there are the names of two Old Boys.

Evidence: Enquiries produced, uptake at GCSE.

Impact: The impact of this project can be seen across three areas:

The quality of work — The most able students have been stretched through this valuable opportunity for open-ended study. They have had to consider challenging questions of significance, memorial and using records to conduct their own research.

The profile of the subject across the school — The project has helped pupils decide to study History at GCSE, and numbers have remained high despite the introduction of new subjects as options at the school.

Reward — The General Gordon's Research Prize has been awarded for the past three years, and is now embedded in the routine of the department. It provides recognition for academic achievement in Year 8, an often overlooked phase in a student's school career. Each of the previous winners has elected to continue with History at GCSE.

Reflections: Research is not an easy concept to teach, and pupils familiar with 'project work' can be reluctant to take risks and produce their own work. It will take time, but I feel that a positive start has been made. We found that local museums were delighted to help, and that local historians had done much of the research for us! As ever, a balance needs to be struck between giving too little and too much to pupils. Fortunately the school has good records of their Old Boys, and so the teacher could tailor how much information was given to the pupil.

Contact: Jacqueline Pierce, Assistant Head Curriculum, jpierce@gordons.surrey.sch.uk; James Dunn, Former Head of History, james.dunn@epsomcollege.org.uk

The project has helped pupils decide to study History at GCSE, and numbers have remained high



Does collaborative teaching improve historical understanding?

King Edward VI Five Ways School, Birmingham

An 11-18 coeducational selective grammar school

Aim: To enhance Key Stage 3 students' understanding of the First World War and improve their historical skills through the sharing of national histories with other students, schools and countries.

Background: A link to a school in France offered the opportunity to work collaboratively with students from another country. The topic of the First World War was deemed easily accessible for both sets of students.

Method:

Year 1: The project was launched with an initial group of Year 7 and 8 students, who successfully exchanged and evaluated their work on the First World War with the partner school in France. The department also visited battlefield sites. Students evaluated the project through questionnaires highlighting how the project had deepened and enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the First World War, and staff carried out reflections on the impact of the project on their teaching and learning.

Year 2: Students continued to communicate with pupils from the partner school, and they swapped and evaluated their diary entries. Students evaluated the project and completed two assessments throughout the year to track their progress. A staff member delivered an 'Outstanding' lesson to a Year 8 group on the First World War, with special attention paid to knowledge and understanding.

Year 3: An online platform was created where students could access and share information about the First World War with students from France. Students completed two assessed pieces of work on the First World War and a member of the department delivered a CPD session based on the project.

Evidence: Work created by students at Five Ways and the partner school, assessments on the First World War, student questionnaires.

Impact: The assessment scores of students who took part in the project improved during the course of the two years they were involved, and lesson observations showed improvements in staff knowledge and expertise too. Delivering CPD to colleagues helped to broaden that understanding.

An unintended but positive consequence was increased uptake of History at GCSE, as the project formed an integral part of the Year 8 curriculum around the time that students were considering their options. The project also formed part of the evidence that enabled the school to be awarded the British Council International Award.

Reflections: The idea of collaborative teaching and learning clearly has merits and is of value to our students. However, a project of this scope and magnitude with such a subjective question title posed a number of issues. While there is hard evidence to suggest that students' knowledge and understanding of the First World War did indeed improve from being part of the project, how much of this was down to the collaborative nature of the project is hard to determine.

The exchange of student work was successful, and questionnaires demonstrated improvements in knowledge and understanding of the First World War. However, there were logistical issues with sharing work, such as the limitations of various platforms and issues with translation.

Contact: Jamie Jones, Subject Leader of History, jjones@kefw.org

An
unintended
but positive
consequence
was
increased
uptake of
History at
GCSE



Do exam-style homework booklets improve attainment in History at Key Stage 3?

Stewards Academy, Essex

An 11-16 coeducational comprehensive school with a higher than average level of pupil premium and SEN pupils

Aim: To narrow the gender gap in attainment and achieve 75% of students gaining A*-C grade at GCSE. To create homework booklets to develop analysis and evaluation skills.

Background: This project was chosen in response to the new Progress 8 measures and to weaknesses highlighted in internal school data. The gender gap was 19% at the start of the project and analytical skills were a barrier to success for many pupils.

Method:

Year 1:

Homework booklets were created for each unit using past paper GCSE questions that increased in difficulty throughout. The booklets were designed to provide practice, opportunities for development, personalised feedback and motivation through demonstrating progress. They were also intended as a useful revision resource. It quickly became clear that pupils' main area for improvement was source-based questions, which teachers were then able to focus on. Pupil surveys showed that 88% of Year 10 pupils thought that the booklet had aided their learning. 75% of pupils gained an A*-C grade, with 77% of mid-ability boys gaining a grade of C or above.

Year 2:

The homework booklets were assessed by the department and it was found that, while the most able excelled with them, middle-ability students did not see such a big improvement. As a consequence, differentiated homework booklets were created with a greater focus on literacy and an intervention programme focused on giving extra support to a target group. A trip took students to the Imperial War Museum. 72% of students gained an A*-C grade overall, and boys slightly out-performed girls with their progress score standing at 0.44 (0.42 for girls).

Year 3:

The impact of the homework booklets was assessed, and boys slightly outperformed girls. The Imperial War Museum trip was extended to 100 pupils and it served to improve Year 9 students' knowledge of the Cold War. An honours programme received very positive feedback, with pupils confident about exam requirements and pleased with mock results. Predictions based on mock exams show progress at 0.5.

Evidence: Pupil surveys, attainment (generally, and of boys), pupils' knowledge of exam requirements.

Impact: Staff responded well to the homework booklets and appreciated that homework was centralised. They were able to give detailed feedback in homework booklets, leading to better performance in the source-based paper. Attainment improved across the board, in particular that of boys and high achievers. The number of pupils opting for GCSE History increased, and their knowledge of exam requirements improved. Interventions for middle-ability boys aided them in organising their revision.

Reflections: Knowledge of how to apply the mark scheme is key to providing accurate and relevant feedback. If staff are willing to become examiners, it makes the process much more successful.

Contact: Jamie King, Subject Leader for History, jking@stewardsacademy.org

Attainment improved across the board, in particular that of boys and high achievers



A cross-curricular approach to the Great War to improve understanding and attainment

Ulverston Victoria High School, Cumbria

An 11-18 coeducational comprehensive school

Aim: To extend and deepen understanding of the Great War, of the History staff, staff from other departments and students, with particular focus on local connections.

Method:

Year 1: A cross-curricular working party was set up with teachers in other departments and they worked on a number of projects, primarily on ex-pupils and staff at the school. Displays were created and assemblies presented to all year groups, focusing around a day of 'Wear Red for Remembrance'. The publicity generated by various activities led to a number of families coming forward with more information on former pupils and staff who fought in the war, and pupils continued to research their lives. A successful trip to the battlefields took place and had extremely positive feedback from students and parents.

Year 2: Cross-curricular links and projects continued to be built on, with more departments becoming involved. The Wear Red for Remembrance Day was held again with a particular focus on a former pupil, and the Remembrance Day service involved large numbers of pupils, staff and members of the local community, raising awareness of those who fought in WWI. A photograph was discovered of the school's 1909-1910 football team, and a display was made from a canvas print and a reproduction retro football shirt. 6,000 poppies were planted in the school grounds to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the Great War. A student-voice questionnaire was completed by Year 9 pupils, showing extremely positive results.

Year 3: All knowledge and research was embedded into KS3 schemes of work, and research into ancestors of existing pupils has been developed. One pupil was able to research the history of two ancestors and then find their memorials while on the battlefields trip. The member of staff who went on the trip, and the accompanying English staff, have fed into CPD for the whole department, and two pupils from the school entered the national Conscription writing competition and came second and third respectively.

Evidence: Questionnaires, feedback from pupils, parents and wider community, uptake at GCSE.

Impact: As more staff and pupils have become involved, with some able to talk about their own experiences, the project has had a real impact on the school. Uptake has increased beyond Year 9 and the charity that ran the Conscription competition gave powerful feedback:

"I cannot begin to tell you how impressed I am... really moving you can feel the pain in the words. What it says to me is that their teacher has really explained what conscription meant and how tough it was to be in the trenches for months on end. We have no idea what our forefathers went through and we should never forget that they really did make the ultimate sacrifice. Thank you so much for sending them to me I have really enjoyed reading them."

Reflections: Personally I have learnt that there is so much more to the Great War than I realised, and that getting pupils to learn about the experiences of others who attended the school is incredibly motivating for them. There is also a massive wealth of experience in the local community that can be tapped into.

Contact: Sue Lomas, Head of Humanities, slo@uvhs.uk

Getting pupils to learn about the experiences of others who attended the school is incredibly motivating for them



Incorporating literacy skills in History lessons to strengthen understanding and performance

Ysgol Rhiwabon, Wrexham

A small 11-18 coeducational comprehensive school

Aim: To focus explicitly on literacy skills in KS3 lessons and schemes of work to improve KS3 results, increase uptake at GCSE and improve literacy, particularly amongst boys.

Background: History was a popular non-core option at GCSE, and this project stemmed from a belief that if the historical and literacy skills are in place by Year 9, this sets a solid foundation for those opting for the subject at GCSE.

Method:

Year 1:

Staff understanding of the literacy skills taught in History was increased through the Literacy and Numeracy Framework in Wales. In all Year 7 schemes of learning, the strand of literacy being addressed in each lesson was identified, making it explicit to staff and students which literacy skills were being developed. This enabled staff to see their roles as teachers of wider essential skills. A selection of students were surveyed, showing that they found the literacy focus both in lessons and classrooms displays useful, and their enjoyment of the subject remained high. One commented: *"I like the literacy displays because when I am stuck they give me ideas about getting started again"*.

Year 2:

Year 8 schemes of work were the focus for improving both literacy and historical skills. Literacy 'rich tasks' allowed progress to be measured on explanation and descriptive writing pieces. Pupil voice questionnaires were completed by students in Years 7 and 8, showing that they valued the literacy support in lessons and were now used to improving their own work and had gained confidence in correcting/editing their work in response to literacy marking codes.

Year 3:

The focus moved to Year 9 and each lesson was given a literacy focus. Students were issued with hint sheets showing them what to include and how to write in the style needed for each assessment. New resources and techniques were used to develop literacy and confidence, such as peer marking and SMART marking, with pupil-friendly versions of success criteria. Gifted and talented pupils worked on a detailed research project to produce plaques to accompany a WWI exhibit at Llangollen Museum.

Evidence: Book scrutiny by SLT, lesson observations, subject take-up, assessment results.

Impact: The love of History at Ysgol Rhiwabon has not been as strong in the past five years as it is now, and this is evident in the feedback given by students at the end of each lesson and the uptake at GCSE. By measuring the success of the Year 9 group who have been affected by all these changes, we can see that the focus on literacy skills has had a significant impact. They achieved a record high of 97% Level 5+ in History, and History has become the most popular non-core GCSE, with 57% of the year group opting for the subject. Teachers have maintained a passion for the subject and a love of teaching, which is reflected in the positive feedback from students.

Reflections: Our department is constantly looking at ways to improve literacy skills. Teachers are now competent in teaching extended writing, and our next focus is to strengthen our teaching of oracy to ensure students are adept at discussing a topic with peers.

Contact: Vanessa Wright-Davies, wrightv1@hwbmil.net

History has become the most popular non-core GCSE



Improving independent learning skills and historical argument

Wade Deacon High School, Cheshire

An 11-16 coeducational comprehensive school

Aim: To encourage students' independent learning skills, in particular how to formulate an historical argument.

Background: With an increasing cohort of students in Years 10-11, attainment needed to be significantly improved. The department believed this could be achieved by allowing students to take greater ownership of their learning and helping them become more independent and resilient learners.

Method:

Year 1: While students struggled to form constructive arguments in History this was not the case in English. Exploration with the Leader of Learning for English revealed that students were given time in lessons to formulate written responses to questions, as well as a specific formula to follow. Some of these techniques were borrowed and adapted to suit the skills required for History. KS3 schemes of work shifted in focus towards enquiry questions that required higher-order thinking skills like analysis and evaluation, and while this was initially challenging for students, there was rapid improvement throughout the year.

Year 2: Collaborative planning sessions were used to investigate new course material and assessments. Increased book audits have led to improvements in the quality and frequency of marking. Increased focus was given to students to reflect further on their work and their learning. Staff training was delivered around the new GCSE specification, and significant changes made to the KS3 curriculum to reflect the changes.

Year 3: The whole History team worked to deliver new Foundation Assessments and leaders worked to monitor and quality assure the teaching, learning and assessment within the Foundation curriculum. Targeted intervention was provided for Foundation pupils where needed. Examination techniques from the new History GCSE were disseminated down into Foundation lessons to enable all students to develop mastery of these skills and have success at GCSE. Book looks proved marking in History to be regular and effective, with praise and target setting clearly taking place.

Evidence: Exam results and attainment as measured within the department, student questionnaires.

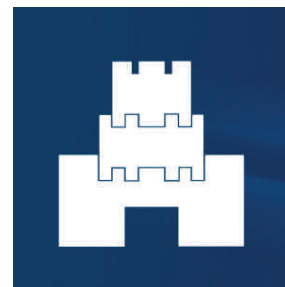
Impact: The key outcome was a significant improvement in attainment. Students had greater ownership of their learning and became both more resilient and more engaged with the subject. They also developed a deeper sense of responsibility and understanding of the past.

	2014	2015	2016
Attainment	44% A*-C	72% A*-C	82% A*-C

Reflections: The greatest challenges were developing a new mindset amongst both staff and students – stepping away from spoon feeding them and encouraging them to research areas on their own, and teaching them that it is ok to be 'wrong' and have alternative opinions. Staff were also sometimes taken beyond their comfort zones.

Contact: Paul Hinds, Head of History, p.hinds@wadedeacon.co.uk

Students had greater ownership of their learning and became both more resilient and more engaged



Effective approaches for teachers to develop connections within the Mathematics classroom

Launceston College, Cornwall

An 11-18 co-educational comprehensive school, part of the Launceston Multi-Academy Trust

Aim: To develop a collaborative departmental approach to making connections between different areas of the Mathematics curriculum in order to deepen students' understanding.

Background: The Mathematics faculty was graded Good in the 2014 review. However, with more demanding curriculum changes imminent, it was felt greater collaboration could increase the percentage of Outstanding lessons and improve students' conceptual understanding.

Method: Year 1: An extensive literature review was carried out and 'making connections' was established as an essential part of successfully understanding concepts. The Collaborative Connected Classroom (CCC) model was developed which exemplified the different aspects which would be evident in a classroom where there was effective teaching for deeper understanding. Another literature review explored methods of effective CPD so that the CCC model could be effectively shared and implemented by staff.

Year 2: The research findings were disseminated among staff and followed up by several CPD sessions where a range of tasks were shared to exemplify the theory, giving practical examples for use in the classroom.

Year 3: Colleagues were encouraged to explore aspects of the CCC model, both in terms of using resources and tasks that had been shared with them, and then to carry out their own mini action research projects on a specific area of the curriculum using the ideas from the CCC model to underpin this development. Teachers gave presentations of their research results to the faculty. A teacher development model was constructed that considered teachers moving through phases: awareness, guided exploration, independent exploration, independent development and finally the transformation phase.

Evidence: Learning walks, faculty review, book scrutiny, staff interviews.

Impact: The first strategy from the CCC model that had the biggest impact on teachers was the use of similarities and differences; three teachers transformed their everyday practice, using the strategy regularly and reporting on the success learners were having as they engaged in deeper conceptual discussions. The second strategy which had widespread use from KS3 to KS5 was the use of multiple representations with 139 counts of evidence of it being referred to or used in some form. The final area where practice was changed for several teachers was the development of teaching fraction procedures using visual images to help learners discover the procedures themselves. In-depth action research followed for three teachers in this area of study.

Faculty review at the beginning of the study graded 12% of lessons as Outstanding, at the end of the study 26% of lessons were graded as Outstanding.

Reflections: Building trust and relationships is essential for colleagues to work together to develop their own practice without fear of them making mistakes which would be perceived to impact negatively on the performance management cycle. Sustained CPD is necessary to engage teachers fully in the change process.

Teachers valued the subject-specific CPD and the fact that it was 'in house' meant that teachers could see it working within their own context. The full study, when published (March 2018), will be available linked to the researchers ORCID which can be found at <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2454-0215>.

Contact: Nicola Trubridge Mathematics AST, stfnjt@launcestoncollege.org.uk

Teachers transformed their everyday practice, using the strategy regularly



Raising achievement in Mathematics through high standards of teaching and learning and effective tracking of student progress from KS3-5

South Wirral High School, Merseyside

An 11-18 mixed non-selective comprehensive

Aim: To use existing staff experience to provide consistently high standards of teaching and learning.

Background: Pupils enter the school with attainment that is below national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national average. The Maths department is comprised of nine teachers with a combined teaching experience of over 150 years, all with different teaching styles.

Method:

Year 1: A new system of assessment called Attitude to Class Learning (ATCL) and Attitude to Home Learning (ATHL) was introduced with appropriate training for staff. At the end of each assessment period, students were asked to assess themselves against the six areas of the Attitude to Learning headings, thus providing them with a better understanding of their learning journey. The six areas were: Understanding my role in other students' learning; Engaging with teachers, students and resources; Dealing with difficulty; Taking responsibility for my own learning; Practising to improve and Acting upon feedback. As a result the department was using the same way to measure effort and students knew exactly where to find the advice on how to progress.

Year 2: The number of assessments was reduced from six to three per year to allow enough time for students to act upon advice between assessment points and to make the teacher workload manageable. For KS4 the Mathematics department devised an Individual Knowledge Profile which focused more on progress and attainment. The idea was that each student received a green/amber/red indicator for the sub-topics addressed in tests according to their results.

Year 3: At KS3 the new Mastery Statement Assessment System was used instead of national curriculum levels. The department collaborated to create resources which were used by everyone to ensure consistency; these prioritised 11 key areas in KS3 Mathematics teaching. "White Rose Hub" materials were also used to promote students' fluency in all skills.

Evidence: Student questionnaires, results.

Impact: With many changes during the three years it was difficult to attribute success to any particular initiative. However, for three consecutive years, despite pupils entering KS3 below national average, the school achieved KS4 Grades A*-C at or above the national average (2014 - 69% vs 62%, 2015 - 63% vs 63%, 2016 - 72% vs 61%).

In contrast, the numbers of students who continued to KS5 was inconsistent over the three years. Factors other than the quality of teaching and learning needed to be considered, e.g. A-Level Mathematics is often taken by academic students who would like to complement it with Physics and Computing, which South Wirral unfortunately does not offer. Likewise, certain Science and Maths combinations were not possible due to timetabling constraints.

Reflections: The extra rigour and application skills required of the new specification GCSE will have an impact in the future. We have already responded to the anticipated difficulties, so it will be interesting to see the effect the KS3 Mastery approach will have on achievement once the new specification GCSE has been fully established in four to five years' time.

Contact: Paul Tam, pta@southwirral.wirral.sch.uk

The school achieved KS4 Grades A-C at or above the national average (2014-2016)*



Improving pupils' mastery of Mathematics to increase confidence and improve progress

Stewards Academy, Essex

An 11-16 mixed comprehensive

Aim: To improve the quality of pupils' knowledge and understanding, as well as their level of resilience when tackling challenging problems in order to prepare them for the challenges of the new Mathematics curriculum.

Background: The school intake has a higher than average level of pupil premium and SEN pupils. Many pupils join the Academy in Year 7 with poor mathematical skills and little knowledge of basic tables. GCSE results for Mathematics had greatly improved but had stagnated in recent years and a target of 65% A*-C was challenging for pupils and staff.

Method:

Year 1:

The focus was on pupils mastering their tables to be more confident when problem solving. Pupils were tested on a weekly basis during class time and results recorded to show progress made. A tables 'focus of the week' in every classroom ensured all pupils were encouraged to revise independently using websites and resources provided. The 'mistake of the day' boards in classrooms encouraged more pupils to ask and answer questions in class.

Year 2:

The focus was on the impact mathematical knowledge and higher levels of confidence would have on the resilience pupils showed when problem solving. The introduction of Maths mastery was key for the development of problem-solving skills for pupils and pedagogy for teachers.

Year 3:

Maths mastery was embedded into the curriculum and began showing a huge impact on pupil progress and teaching and learning. A Maths mastery lead teacher was employed who ran weekly sessions in which teachers had the opportunity to develop their pedagogy and plan lessons together. Progress was monitored every half term with pre and post testing in place for Years 7-10.

Evidence: Pupil interviews, learning walks.

Impact: The pupils felt comfortable making mistakes and were therefore more resilient when tackling problems. The introduction of Maths mastery had a huge impact on assessment and monitoring. Staff used an online programme called 'gradebook' to track the progress of individual classes and vulnerable groups. This evidence was successfully used to demonstrate progress over time and was clear in lesson observations. There was a huge improvement in questioning from staff in lessons. Regular sharing good practice meetings led by the Maths mastery lead ensured staff were continuously developing their teaching and discovering new strategies to help develop pupil understanding.

Reflections: I have learned the importance of continuous departmental CPD in order to improve pedagogy. My staff have made huge developments towards their own personal targets and supported each other well as a team through the challenges of the new curriculum. Pupils' progress has been well monitored and as a result I have, as subject leader, a clear understanding of where any intervention needs to be applied. Pupil independence and levels of resilience have improved hugely and a curriculum for all has been evident.

Contact: Leanne Mc Devitt, Subject Leader, lmdevitt@stewardsacademy.org

Staff were continuously developing their teaching and discovering new strategies



Investigating approaches to teaching grammatical structures effectively

Altrincham Girls' Grammar School, Trafford

An 11-18 girls' selective school, part of the Bright Futures Multi-Academy Trust

Aim: To consider fresh and innovative approaches to grammar teaching and ways of incorporating translation exercises into Language lessons and homework.

Background: The new KS3 curriculum was more demanding and required translation skills and successful manipulation of grammar. There were several areas in which students had difficulties, e.g. direct and indirect objects, gender agreements and conjugation of correct verb forms. The languages covered were French, German and Spanish.

Method:

Year 1: Surveys indicated that students found translation challenging, but virtually all saw the benefits of translation as a useful and authentic activity. Most teachers had not used translation in Year 7 before, but all were convinced that it was a useful tool with which to enhance grammatical accuracy. The outcome was a range of lively and creative resources, including exercises based on tongue twisters, proverbs and sayings, idioms, signs, advertisements and songs, with video clip extracts.

Year 2: A new toolkit gave priority to authentic materials such as stories and poems with the use of songs. Student feedback from Year 7 suggested that fun activities were vital in engaging students in translation work. Short translation tasks proved an excellent means of differentiation and a useful extension task, especially when setting targets in line with the departmental marking policy. The report was disseminated at the BFET trust training day, where some of the materials, especially in French, were shared with colleagues from other schools.

Year 3: There were several new members of the department this year, so the project aims were shared and strategies for embedding grammar and translation practice were discussed. Staff worked hard in all three languages, creating resources which were shared centrally for all to use. In line with the demands of the new GCSE specification a new assessment scheme was introduced across Years 7 to 9, with termly assessments in translation from English to TL (target language), TL to English and a free writing component.

Evidence: Staff and student questionnaires, exam results.

Impact: Translation and transcription tasks were included in the end of Year 7 exam for the first time at the end of the first year of the project. Analysis suggested that the average marks in all three languages were unchanged even though the overall examination was judged to be significantly more demanding, suggesting that pupils dealt with translation and dictation with comparative ease. Data from Year 7 examinations: average mark in 2014 French 83.2%, Spanish 87.1%, German 81.6%. In 2015 (with transcription and translation tasks added): French 83.6%, Spanish 87.4%, German 81.4%.

Pupils developed a range of strategies to tackle translation tasks, such as using the context, looking for grammatical pointers and looking for cognates. The teaching of grammar had become embedded into every lesson and pupils responded well to this; they were able to talk with confidence about grammar using the correct terminology (e.g. subject, auxiliary verb, past participle), both in conversation with the teacher and with each other.

Reflections: I have benefitted personally from the chance to work collaboratively with members of the department and it is very encouraging to read that pupils and staff have such a wealth of strategies to tackle translation and grammar in the classroom.

Contact: Angela Stokes, Head of MFL, astokes@aggs.bfet.uk

Teaching of
grammar
became
embedded into
every lesson
and pupils
responded
well

Using MFL teaching to improve literacy

Sir John Thursby Community College, Burnley, Lancashire

An 11-16 coeducational comprehensive school

Aim: To explore the extent to which working in collaboration with the Student Support department can aid the progress of students who started KS3 with NC Level 4 in English.

Background: Starting points from KS2 are low, with over half not meeting expected levels in English, and many pupils are SEND or have identified needs. Growing numbers of KS3 students were being withdrawn from MFL lessons to attend literacy catch-up sessions, and the lack of joined-up planning meant that they were missing out on core learning.

Method:

Year 1 — Investigating:

Working with primary-trained literacy specialist teachers, strategies were identified for developing literacy skills in level-4 learners. A core team of the best MFL staff were attached to bottom sets in Year 7 and team taught lessons to trial ideas. French classes benefitted from an SEN specialist teaching one discreet lesson of literacy skills in MFL lessons each week. Links were developed between MFL staff and the SEN and English departments and the Teaching Assistants to encourage positive attitudes to MFL learning.

Year 2 — Trialing:

Schemes of work which highlighted core learning were developed, so that attending support sessions did not slow progress. A core group of students were tracked for progress and interviewed every half term to track the effects on motivation. One of the MFL department was assigned to teach KS3 English, and shared this experience with the department to further the understanding of developing literacy skills.

Year 3 — Embedding and disseminating:

Knowledge gained from the previous years was embedded to enhance the KS3 curriculum and resources created to support literacy development through MFL. Other staff in the department were trained on supporting level 4 learners as well as to encourage the trialing of strategies in other curriculum areas.

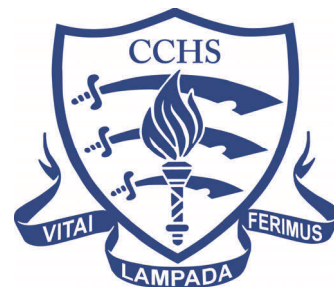
Evidence: Student tracking and interviews, take up of Languages at GCSE, staff feedback.

Impact: Progress for students in terms of their reading and writing assessments proved very positive in the first year with 100% of students making expected or better progress by the end of the year. The attitudinal surveys showed positivity rose on all indicators. Improved relationships with Student Support staff meant that staff felt more in control of students being removed and there were some good examples of where collaboration, such as the literacy lessons, were helping students to make the link between MFL and literacy. By the second year take up of Languages improved greatly, with 100% of the German cohort opting to study an MFL subject at GCSE. Feedback from the CPD sessions for other departments was very positive, with many staff reporting that they would try similar things with their low-level learners and some being inspired to start their own class-based research.

Reflections: The project has been a great learning experience for us as a team. We have learnt that prioritising lower ability learners at KS3 is a worthwhile exercise, and we have all enhanced our understanding of how we can best meet the needs of level 4 learners. We have improved our understanding of how our subject fits into the wider curriculum for learners and adapted our rationale for teaching languages to lower-ability learners. A key success for us was the opportunity to share our findings with other departments through CPD sessions. This helped us to establish further links that we can build on in the future with other departments.

Contact: Lindsay Tibbs, Head of Department, l.tibbs@sirjohnthursby.lancs.sch.uk

*Attitudinal
surveys
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on all
indicators*



Investigating links between language learning and other subjects

Chelmsford County High School for Girls

An 11-18 selective girls' school

Aim: To investigate the extent to which CLIL (context and language integrated learning) can be used effectively to make links between the learning of languages and other aspects of the school curriculum and enrichment activities.

Background: Students study French and German in Year 7 and add Latin in Year 8. At least one language is compulsory in KS4 with over half the year group choosing to continue with at least one language in KS5.

Method:

Year 1:

An audit of all staff was carried out to find their skills, interest and links to languages and culture. From this, potential areas for cooperation were analysed. Some lessons already in place were: a Year 7 History lesson using plays in French about Eleanor of Aquitaine and a Year 8 Geography lessons linking with the trip to Germany. A cookery lesson was trialled in French and videoed.

Year 2:

An enrichment activity of making board games was introduced, linking with an internationalism project in Year 7. This project combined languages with Technology and Art and Design as well as incorporating questions on the geography, history, politics and cultural/social aspects of the country. Languages staff delivered lessons on topics from Art, History and Geography which linked to overseas visits. French impressionism was used to promote spontaneous speaking in Year 9 French classes. Year 9 also had lessons on the Armistice on 11th November to link with Year 9 History. Year 9 German classes completed work on the Berlin Wall and life in East Germany to link with work on the Cold War.

Year 3:

The initiatives above were embedded in schemes of work. A twilight session was offered to other schools on the subject of integrating cultural and creative activities in Modern Languages lessons. A presentation will be made to the CCHSG staff in the future. A survey was planned for after the visits to Normandy and Rhineland in June to assess the success of the integration of the subjects as mentioned above.

Evidence: Student and staff surveys.

Impact: The opportunities for CLIL in the school were fairly limited for a variety of reasons, including lack of confidence by teachers to use their languages to deliver their subjects. There was also pressure for all subjects to complete their own courses and a feeling that CLIL might slow down progress. The key successes were the embedded languages lessons linked to a variety of subjects, the involvement of Art, Geography and History teachers in the Year 7 and 8 trips, the Year 7 internationalism activity and the lessons taught by History and Geography teachers.

Reflections: We will continue to use the lessons already developed and to seek ways of integrating subjects into our Languages teaching. We would like to develop a Year 9 trip to combine Science/Technology with a visit to Futuroscope, and will investigate ways of linking a Year 9/10 trip to other subject areas.

Contact: Melanie Gulliver, Head of Modern Foreign Languages, mgulliver@cchs.essex.sch.uk

The key successes were the embedded languages lessons linked to a variety of subjects



Increasing enjoyment and uptake through extracurricular provision

Gordon's School, Surrey

An 11-18 coeducational academy trust

Aim: To use wider extracurricular provision to inspire pupils from all backgrounds to embrace deep subject knowledge and become passionate about their learning, to raise the profile of Languages, improve exam results and increase take-up at Key Stage 5 and beyond.

Background: Historically, Gordon's had very small numbers of students taking languages at A Level, and there were few extracurricular activities or trips abroad.

Method:

Year 1:

A baseline questionnaire asked staff and students about their enjoyment of the subject and extracurricular provision, and what they would like to see as extra provision. Although 79% of students said they enjoyed Languages lessons, this was not reflected in KS5 uptake. Extracurricular activities were run, including a Languages day at Wellington College and trips for all three languages. Feedback was very encouraging and lessons were learned to ensure future trips gave students the best possible experiences.

Year 2:

Uptake at AS and A Level improved and was at an all-time high in French. Student surveys showed that the number of students enjoying their Languages lessons had increased to 84%. Participation in extracurricular activities rose, with another successful trip to Wellington and successful French and German exchanges. Students also learned Mandarin after school, and a trip to Shanghai gave them an insight into a completely different language and culture.

Year 3:

Spanish A Level uptake increased significantly and French numbers remained high. Results were also high, and the implementation of NVQ level 1 and 2 helped to increase motivation for lower-ability students in KS4. The French department engaged and challenged students with short story learning packs, the film *Intouchables* and a topic on the French Resistance. The number of students enjoying Languages rose to 90%, and trips and extracurricular activities continued to prove popular and increase enthusiasm for all.

Evidence: Student surveys, exam results, uptake level.

Impact: Verbal feedback and lesson observations attest to the success of making lessons more enjoyable with a focus on culture as well as the language itself. Trips across all three languages have been successful and well attended, and uptake at KS5 has improved significantly for French and Spanish, while remaining steady in German.

Reflections: There were some constraints on the project. Some staff were uncomfortable with asking students to assess their enjoyment of their lessons, and having Languages split into three separate departments has made consistency a challenge.

However, it is clear that the increased provision of extracurricular activities has had a positive impact, both in results and subsequent uptake and also in student enjoyment. All three Language departments are flourishing. Whilst this was, to an extent, to be expected, the impact on KS5 student numbers has been particularly profound.

Lesson observations attest to the success of making lessons more enjoyable with a focus on culture

Contact: Megan Cottam, Head of French, mcottam@gordons.surrey.sch.uk



Using authentic literary resources to improve engagement with MFL at KS3

The Gryphon School, Dorset

An 11-18 Church of England mixed school with academy status

Aim: To explore the extent to which the use of authentic resources in lessons can improve motivation, attainment and uptake of MFL.

Background: The start of this project coincided with the changes made to the KS3 national curriculum and came at a time when proposed changes to the GCSE exams were being released. One of the major changes was the emphasis placed on students' ability to identify key messages in authentic texts.

Method:

Year 1:

Following research, a specific set of Year 7 lessons which included the use of authentic resources was created and all Year 7 French teachers were trained to deliver them. One project was based on *Petit poisson blanc*. Students then created their own books based on this.

Year 2:

Following departmental discussion which generated more ideas, schemes of work (SOW) which included authentic texts were also written for Years 8 and 9. The texts no longer focused solely on literature but also included websites, poems, plays, tour guides, historical texts, magazines, etc. Reading assessments included sections with authentic texts and Year 7 Spanish teachers also experimented with a project similar to *Petit poisson blanc*.

Year 3:

Authentic texts were extended to include listening, e.g. songs, films, adverts and announcements. Spanish and German SOW and assessments changed to mirror the changes made in French. Plans were made to purchase authentic resources for the library and also have them on offer in classrooms for students to borrow.

Evidence: Departmental review, take up of MFL, student voice.

Impact: Teachers became more confident in including authentic resources in class and it is now part of everyday practice. The team are no longer worried that students won't be able to cope with the difficulty and have embraced the project. Students are more resilient when faced with reading texts and are able to work more independently. There has been an improvement in their reading results, and Year 9, who have benefitted from three years of this initiative, saw a 32% increase in students achieving the internal measure of Level 9.7 and above. Pupils' vocabulary has increased and they are able to use words seen in the authentic texts in their own writing which was an unexpected surprise.

There was also an increase in the number of students opting for GCSE languages. All members of the department contributed to SOW and therefore all benefited from each other's interests and expertise.

Reflections: It has been very rewarding and motivating to work on this project to such an extent that we have achieved more over the three years than we initially set out to do. These were changes that needed to be made and the PTI project gave a clear direction to work from. At the heart of this, was student motivation, enjoyment and improvement in attainment. I believe that this has been achieved through this project to the benefit of our students; they are engaged with their learning and uptake at GCSE has increased.

Contact: Hollie Belcher, Head of MFL, holliealisc22@hotmail.com

Students are more resilient when faced with reading texts and are able to work more independently



Using foreign language film to extend and inspire

The Henrietta Barnett School, London

An 11-18 selective girls' school

Aim: To inspire all staff to develop and use film resources in lessons to replace aspects of schemes of work and make lessons more enjoyable and rewarding for teachers and students.

Background: More authentic cultural depth in lessons had been a school and department priority from 2010/11. The MFL department focused on teaching grammar points and language, as well as consolidating past work and stimulating discussion in Years 7-11 without the textbook or more traditional methods.

Method: Having been inspired by the British Film Institute (BFI) French film DVD resource 'ciné-minis', the department became involved in the MFL film teaching project with the BFI, which was funded by the Lord Mayor of London. HBS then produced their own film resources and the project expanded across French, German and Spanish in KS3 and 4.

*It increased
their sense of
a real, living
culture and
society*

Year 1:

- Provision expanded across the three languages
- Head of Department delivered PTI New Teacher Subject Days workshops (Autumn 2014) and PTI CPD in March 2015 on use of French film and shorts
- Embedded and expanded Year 8 sequence of lessons using a second short film
- KS3 students were taken to BFI cinema days in each MFL where possible

Year 2:

- Continued to build a larger set of resources on cinema shorts/extracts from French film, particularly in Years 9-11
- Devised a resource booklet for a Spanish short film as a project with the BFI
- Expanded German film use to Year 8 and/or KS4 lesson sequences

Year 3:

- Deeper analysis and authenticity: students gained wide appreciation of film techniques far beyond their normal year group level using the language of film grammar and analysis and imaginative exercises such as dictation, script extract analysis (for the new GCSE) and translation, to inspire and motivate
- Community links: an independently organised CPD session for other local schools was held at Henrietta Barnett, with cross-school resource sharing

Evidence: Staff and student feedback, lesson observation by the BFI and Institute of Education.

Impact: Students now watch films differently and in an analytical way. They are able to write about cinematographic techniques in the target language at a more Sixth Form level. Students use film to learn grammar and extend their opinion base to vocabulary far beyond their year group. Students thoroughly enjoyed lessons using film resources and the range of (short) films used all proved popular. It increased their sense of a real, living culture and society, as well as giving them access to some classic films such as *Les 400 Coups*. A number were inspired to consider MFL at A Level. Staff enjoyed developing and using these resources. Staff who attended our CPD day all left feeling their subject knowledge had been improved and were very positive about film use and our resources presented to them in the three languages.

Reflections: As Head of Department, it has been great seeing members of my changing department be enthused, lead, create and share resources and take active roles to ensure quality outcomes were achieved. For the most important stakeholders in the whole project, our students, it has created a real buzz: a sense of enjoyment and authenticity in the lessons where film is used, discussed, written about, where displays are produced and scenes are even acted out.

Contact: Paul Haywood, Head of Department, phaywood@hbschool.org.uk



Investigating the extent to which Modern Languages teaching strategies can be employed in other subjects

Lancaster Royal Grammar School, Lancashire

An 11-18 state grammar and boarding school for boys

Aim: To share good practice with colleagues in the school and in other institutions.

Background: Following a senior team inspection in November 2013, the Modern Languages department had been commended for good practice and were then asked to share their knowledge and skills with the rest of the staff.

Method:

Year 1: A list of successful activities was drawn up and three voluntary twilight training sessions were held for staff. The first session was on starters, the second session was on collaborative learning and the third and final session was on plenaries. These were well received by attendees.

Year 2: The training sessions ran again as part of the school's official CPD programme which generated higher attendance from colleagues. Links with the University of Cumbria were made and the sessions were delivered to their PGCE students.

Year 3: Another session was delivered to the University of Cumbria Modern Languages PGCE students in May with a view to delivering the session to the rest of the PGCE cohort in late June. This session had to be condensed to 1 hour and 15 minutes and meant delivering a version of the starter and plenary sessions together. Again, the feedback from the delegates was very positive. The data collated shows that, for new teachers, the sessions were a great way to inject lots of new ideas into their Teachers' Toolkit whereas for colleagues in school, many commented that the sessions had served as a great 'refresher' of ideas not used in a while as well as offering some fresh ideas to use with their students.

Evidence: Participants' feedback questionnaires.

Impact: The success of the sessions came very much from the feedback offered by participants which was overwhelmingly positive, particularly regarding the standing of the MFL department across the school. The sessions have now been seen by at least one member of staff in each of the departments across the school, and certain activities seem to have a universal appeal in the questionnaires, such as anagrams, beat the teacher and sequencing. The Headmaster commented:

"This project was effective in raising and maintaining the positive profile of MFL in the school by showcasing some of the areas of excellent practice to all staff. It raised the perception of the MFL department as an innovative and collaborative department. It was also good to model the value of engagement with outside organisations such as the PTI, and this has supported other departments who wish to do the same."

Reflections: The project has been invaluable to me in terms of increasing my confidence and encouraging me to progress further in my career, particularly by coaching other teachers by sharing good practice. It has also helped me to develop my skills in collating and interpreting data as well as writing reports and findings for the benefit of colleagues and SLT. Taking charge of this project more than two thirds of the way through the process was a challenge but one that I feel has helped me to further develop in terms of my own CPD.

The challenges have been trying to get our 'foot in the door' as it were, in terms of delivering the sessions at other schools and teacher training institutions. Schools are busy places and it isn't always possible to arrange dates and times to fit in with everyone.

Contact: Jemma Marshall, Head of Spanish, jmarshall@lrgs.org.uk

"This project was effective in raising and maintaining the positive profile of MFL in the school"

Routinely spontaneous: Increasing students' target language use and grammatical accuracy

Bexley Grammar School, London

An 11-18 coeducational selective grammar school



Aim: To increase students' confidence and ability in written and spoken assessments, particularly in preparation for the new GCSE, by teaching spontaneous target language and grammatical accuracy. To encourage staff to be more imaginative and ambitious in lessons.

Background: The new GCSE required a different approach to language teaching, which encourages students to rely less on teacher corrections and more on teaching students how to spontaneously manipulate language. While the department was strong in teaching students to communicate only in the target language (TL), this was inconsistent amongst less experienced teachers. Bexley offers seven languages, and all students are required to take two to GCSE.

Method: Year 1: Increased consistency in TL teaching was seen as a critical first step; training was given to new and inexperienced teachers, and peer observations allowed for sharing of good practice around TL teaching. Ideas were also shared with other schools through a strategic learning network led by Bexley Grammar. New internal assessments had a greater focus on spontaneous writing and speaking production.

Year 2: Internal assessments were further brought into line with the new GCSE, with a focus on grammatical accuracy and translation. After a disparity was noticed between French and German results, it was made a priority to have greater sharing of practice between languages, with the aim of increasing pupils' confidence and giving them sufficient structures, not just the vocabulary to communicate. A teacher attended CPD on exploiting literary texts and then led training within the department.

Year 3: More leadership positions were created for MFL students to promote more independent linguists and develop internationalism in the school. Practice was developed through new technologies and methodologies such as Google Drive and Google Classroom, which were used to set listening tasks and chase homework.

Evidence: Student interviews, lesson observations.

Impact: Internal assessment results showed improvements in students' spontaneous speaking and a closing of the disparity between the French and German cohorts. GCSE results showed a trend towards increased attainment and uptake at KS5 increased from 107 in 2014 to 170 in 2015 and 160 in 2016. The number of students applying for MFL study at university increased from 8 in 2014 to 12 in 2015 and 24 in 2016.

Lesson observations showed that teachers were experimenting with a broader range of creative ideas that reflected on deeper cultural and linguistic issues to stretch students beyond the requirements of the GCSE syllabus and prepare them for IB. Across the three years, the quality of teaching and student attainment improved, and observers highlighted staff and pupil use of TL as a strength of the department. The profile of the department has been raised through various activities, and students were eager and enthusiastic to take on added responsibility through the new leadership positions in MFL.

Reflections: We have learned that having the same teacher for all five (or seven) years has an even bigger impact than anticipated, and that consistency of employing the strategies in lessons, both by an individual teacher and between teachers, is vital. There are still many unknowns surrounding the grading of the new GCSE, but regardless of exams, this project has certainly helped us to promote the crucial attitudes and skills students need to become more independent and inspired language learners.

Contact: Lucy Meyer, Head of MFL, meyer_l@bexleygs.co.uk

the quality of teaching and student attainment improved, and observers highlighted staff and pupil use of TL as a strength



Improving MFL teaching and learning by developing consistent feedback, home learning and positive attitudes to learning

South Wirral High School, Merseyside

An 11-18 mixed non-selective foundation school

Aim: To improve teaching and learning through activities both in and outside the classroom to continue to raise achievement in Modern Languages.

Background: Students enter the school with attainment that is well below the national average and the proportion of disadvantaged students is above the national average. Effective feedback had been identified as an area for development from the school's Ofsted inspection in 2013.

Method: Feedback: Existing feedback strategies were evaluated. Following research, different methods were trialled. In the second year of the project, codes for feedback were refined for each year group to reflect particular areas of language (topics, tenses) as well as specific skills (resilience in higher listening and reading). In year three, work scrutiny and staff evaluations indicated the value of grounding feedback in the reality of Mastery Statements or GCSE criteria.

Home learning: Following school INSET on "Takeaway" Home Learning, projects were redesigned to offer students greater choice and flexibility in task and presentation. Listening and reading tasks were developed to include songs, adverts and TV clips. In year three, each class had a lesson in an ICT room to sign up to their group on Duolingo.

Attitude to Learning: This encompassed six separate key areas for helping students develop responsibility, resilience and other important learning habits. The Modern Languages department produced subject-specific descriptions for use in day-to-day teaching and at assessment points. In year two, the monthly projects for Key Stage 3 focused on cultural awareness and research skills. Twitter accounts were introduced but were not well supported by the students. Using Tweets in the classroom proved to be more effective in engaging pupils. In the third year of the project, the new demands of the GCSE specification required the students to 'deal with difficulty' and 'practise to improve'.

Evidence: Student voice, MFL staff evaluations, work scrutiny, parental feedback.

Impact: Feedback — There was greater consistency between MFL colleagues in the quality of feedback given, as well as a wider range of strategies being used. Students felt more involved in identifying and improving their strengths and areas for development.

Home learning — Monthly cultural projects had several advantages; students enjoyed the choice of activity and parents could see the tasks set on the school's VLE. However, it was apparent that students' home learning needed to prioritise clearly the specific skills needed for success in MFL. Successes included the promotion of Duolingo and Memrise to enhance students' independent learning.

Attitudes to learning — These were effectively embedded into the MFL teaching and assessment procedures.

Reflections: As a department, we are able to be analytical and self-critical. When reviewing this project, we agreed that having three separate strands made the project too broad. Our progress as regards effective feedback has been significant and continues to develop.

The challenges have been trying to get our 'foot in the door' as it were, in terms of delivering the sessions at other schools and teacher training institutions. Schools are busy places and it isn't always possible to arrange dates and times to fit in with everyone.

Contact: Helen Kelly, Head of MFL, hsk@southwirral.wirral.sch.uk

Students felt more involved in identifying and improving their strengths and areas for development



Promoting the study of Languages and increasing uptake beyond Key Stage 3

Stewards Academy, Essex

An 11-16 coeducational comprehensive converter academy that serves the lowest socioeconomic area of the town.

Aim: To promote languages across the academy in order to stress their links with the real world and the career and employment benefits of studying them.

Background: There was a desire to increase students' interest in the subject and improve the uptake of Languages at KS4. Many students come from backgrounds where few people go on to higher education, and did not understand either the beauty of learning about other cultures or the financial benefits that learning a language could have for them.

Method: Year 1: Links were formed with the PSHCE department to introduce lessons on languages and work opportunities, and in a Year 8 assembly the BBC journalist and linguist Emma Jane Kirby gave an inspiring talk about why languages had been so important for her.

Year 2: European Day of Languages was celebrated across the school with tutorial materials and competitions, and trips to Paris were organised for Year 9 and 10 French students. The advantages of studying languages were promoted in assemblies and lessons, and small-group conversation sessions were introduced in French and Spanish. An annual French and Spanish day conference, which included the cooking of authentic food, was started and a fortnightly booster class was held for all Year 11 French students.

Year 3: An aspirational visit to Cambridge University was arranged and a presentation given at school by a current Cambridge undergraduate. This popular session engaged pupils and it went on far behind the allotted time. It increased pupils' interest in continuing the study of a language after GCSE, as they could see how many opportunities it would open up for them. Years 9 and 10 visited French and Spanish restaurants and Year 8 students were linked with pen friends. All students in Year 7-8 now studied a language, whereas previously at least 20 had been withdrawn for SEN. This went very well, and will be continued in future years.

Evidence: Uptake at KS4, quality of writing, pupil voice, trips and conferences.

Impact: Pupils now perceive MFL with more optimism and the department has noticed an increase in interest in foreign languages and cultures. Pupils got a lot out of the Paris trips, increasing their confidence and feeling that their language skills had improved. They used the target language with pleasure and enthusiasm every time an opportunity was presented to them.

French and Spanish results are improving, especially the A*-A grades. Writing, especially, has improved, though there is still more work to do in terms of speaking and listening. The number of pupils opting for EBacc subjects has increased steadily from 52 in 2014/15 to 110 in 2017/18, and Year 11 leavers have chosen to attend Sixth Forms that give them opportunities to study languages further through the IBacc and to complete work experience in another country. Former Stewards pupils have gained sufficient confidence to go on to apply for Summer Schools in Europe and degrees with language or linguistics components.

Reflections: The power of getting other members of staff involved in the promotion of languages cannot be overestimated. History, Science, Geography and Art teachers were hooked and wanted to plan the next visit, not to mention they all spoke French at every opportunity.

As a middle leader, I have personally learned that it is essential not to give up, and to always look for opportunities to raise pupils' interest and aspirations.

Contact: Pauline Gilmé, Subject Leader for MFL, pgilme@stewardsacademy.org

French and Spanish results are improving, especially the A-A grades*



Using external competitions to develop higher order Science skills

Bexley Grammar School, London

An 11-18 coeducational grammar school with academy status

Aim: To use external KS5 competitions to develop higher-order skills and raise the subject profile.

Background: The participation of BGS students in the Biology, Chemistry and Physics Olympiad competitions began on a small scale prior to this project as part of a wider initiative to increase enrichment for Key Stage 5 Sciences.

Method:

Year 1: The focus was to raise awareness of the competitions before and after their completion and to put in place activities for Year 11-12 that would start a 'culture of participation'. Events were promoted via posters, online messages, lesson discussions and school newsletters. Year 12 Biology students were made aware of various competitions offered by external companies such as the Science Essay Challenge (Royal College of Science Union), Women in Physiology Poster Competition (Physiology Society) and the British Ecological Society Photo Competition. 11 students participated in the pilot for the intermediate Biology competition. To include Year 11s in the 'culture of participation' challenge, questions were displayed around the school with prizes for the most completed.

Year 2: More competitions were added to the repertoire, e.g. practical Chemistry challenges at Greenwich University and Queen Mary, and for Biology 'The Ode to Physiology' writing competition. Time was allocated after school for staff to work with Year 13 students in preparation for the Olympiads, which covered concepts beyond the A Level and IB syllabuses. Where topics had been covered in one syllabus but not the other, the students taught each other. The competition 'Darwinner takes it all' was organised by Year 12 students for teams of Year 10s during the school's enrichment week in June.

Year 3: Where possible the participation results from Year 12 competitions were used as a basis for selecting participants for Year 13 Olympiads. Chemistry made particularly good use of Google Classroom to post resources, discuss ideas and example questions.

Evidence: Student feedback, participation and competition results.

Impact: Promotion of competitions made these feel less elitist and student surveys did show a small increase in awareness. All of the subjects now have a Year 12 competition that students can participate in and the Year 10 summer competition was well received by students. However, it could not be concluded that attainment in these competitions had increased. The limited participation numbers and variation in student aptitude each year created a barrier for assessing this fairly. A balance was needed between preparing the students for competitions and teaching them concepts out of context, although they really enjoyed new topics.

The Biology students participating said they preferred a general overview so that they knew what the general concepts related to, and could make some educated guesses rather than having to revise complex and additional material. The students involved were also those belonging to other groups – medicine and veterinary preparation groups (e.g. BMAT test prep) and had positions of responsibility (such as prefects). This led to a strain on their time and commitment to a series of preparation events was not feasible.

Reflections: Overall the competitions are much more embedded and valued and we will continue with our work on promotion, preparation and generating a culture of participation and celebration. It was naive, however, to think that we would be able to increase participation or attainment significantly.

Contact: Claire Earl, Lead Teacher of Biology, earl_c@bexleygs.co.uk

We will continue to work on promotion, preparation and generating a culture of participation

Addressing misconceptions in Science at KS2 to aid progress

Holland Park School, London

An 11-18 coeducational comprehensive academy

Aim: To achieve greater rates of progress in Years 7 and 8 through the introduction of a research-led curriculum that addresses the misconceptions students bring with them to Science.

Background: The project was focused primarily on the Physics curriculum but was extended to include elements of Biology and Chemistry. The tangible outcome was to be new schemes of work that addressed student misconceptions fully and a better technique for gathering student views about Science.

Method: Year 1: Working with Christchurch Canterbury University, a new Physics scheme of work, which the university had developed to address student misconceptions at Key Stage 3, was implemented. The new scheme was trialed with half of Years 7 and 8, whilst the other half continued with a much more traditional curriculum.

Year 2: The project grew to incorporate new Biology and Chemistry schemes of work; colleagues in Holland Park Science department researched existing literature about misconceptions in these two subjects and then wrote new schemes that attempt to address those misconceptions. These were trialed, with control groups following the old scheme. End-of-year tests contained high-demand questions in which students were asked to apply principles they had covered in lessons to highly novel situations.

Year 3: By the end of the third year complete schemes of work for Chemistry, Biology and Physics had been completed which were utterly different in their pedagogy from anything that had previously been taught at the school. The new schemes were shared with other local schools together with a sense of Holland Park's experiences in teaching them.

Evidence: Test scores, attitudinal student surveys, staff surveys.

Impact: At the end of the first year the mean test score for the 'control' group was 78.4% and for the group who had completed the new scheme it was 76.5%. There was very little difference, and where there was it suggested the new schemes of work had harmed performance. However, the types of questions each group had been able to answer varied considerably. Those students who had been given traditional teaching had covered more Physics and so answered more of the paper whilst those who had completed the new scheme were able to answer higher-demand questions more effectively. A better test focusing on independence and ability was devised and over Year 2 and Year 3 the test scores of students taking the new schemes steadily improved; the mean score jumped from 84.5 to 93.4 between those two years.

The staff surveys over each of the three years found almost all staff (70-90%) reported that the schemes were 'harder to teach' and that there was more potential for lessons to 'go wrong' but that, by the end of year three, 100% of staff strongly agreed that they could see the benefit of the schemes. When asked to compare the old and new schemes, students preferred the new schemes of work (86.4% over the three years) but they did comment that they felt there was too little teacher guidance at times (40% strongly agreed).

Reflections: The most obvious, tangible and useful outcome of the entire project has been a revamped and better planned curriculum for students in the first two years of their secondary Science education. Beyond that we have learnt a great deal about our preferences for different pedagogical approaches and have been forced to leave our 'comfort zones' to try something quite new.

Contact: Daniel Seed, Deputy Head teacher, daniel.seed@hollandparkschool.co.uk

100% of staff strongly agreed that they could see the benefit of the schemes



Investigating the impact of GCSE Astronomy on GCSE Triple Science and further study

Isambard Community School (becoming Abbey Park)

An 11-16 coeducational comprehensive school

Aim: To assess the impact of how the study of GCSE Astronomy motivates students to fulfil their potential in Triple Science.

Background: In preparation an Astronomy course was set up, an exam board chosen and the course publicised to students and parents. CPD on the GCSE was undertaken at Liverpool University, including remote telescopes on the island of La Palma.

Method:

Year 1: The Astronomy GCSE course was taught (in one year), and remote logins for the Telescope in La Palma were set up for students. Access to uninsurable moon rock and asteroid samples was organised and pictures taken of the moon at particular phases so students could calculate the depth of craters based upon the shadows they cast into the basin. An Astronomy day was organised for all students on the day of the near total eclipse.

Year 2: It was not possible to offer Astronomy GCSE due to limited staffing and curriculum time available. CPD on the new Science GCSE was run for non-specialists internally by lead practitioners and by external providers.

Year 3: Analysis of former students of Triple Science and Astronomy GCSE was conducted.

Evidence: Student and staff surveys, exam results.

Impact: 12% of students who took Triple Science alone achieved A* vs 42% of students taking both GCSEs. This trend continued with 47% of students taking Triple only attaining A*-A whilst 75% of those taking Triple and Astronomy did. To counter the issue of potentially more able students taking Astronomy skewing the data FFT (Fischer Family Trust) Aspire data was studied; students who took both GCSEs were achieving an average of over a third of a grade higher than their FFTd whereas students taking Triple alone were underperforming to just under a half a GCSE grade compared to their FFTd.

Feedback from Astronomy students (at the end of their GCSE prior to results) was overwhelmingly positive; students rated Astronomy as higher than Science, with the exception of real life links, enhanced career prospects and the (demanding) coursework required. Survey data collected from former students now at sixth forms or colleges showed that a larger proportion of Astronomy students had taken more STEM based subjects at A Level or equivalent than their Triple Science counterparts. A larger proportion of Astronomy students were planning on taking post-graduate qualifications and/or STEM based careers.

Feedback from the new Science GCSE training was particularly good especially amongst the NQTs and the non-specialists.

Reflections: Combining Astronomy with Science, in particular Triple Science, benefits the students' results greatly. Running this entirely by myself with a full timetable was extremely challenging but allowed me to grow as a practitioner. There was convincing evidence that taking Astronomy pushes students to take STEM based subjects at A Level and beyond.

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Using strategies to stretch, challenge and engage pupils and improve uptake of Triple Science

Kingsford Community School, East London

An 11-16 coeducational school with International School and Confucius Classroom status

Aim: To provide Key Stage 3 students with a wide range of extracurricular opportunities to engage them with Science and increase Triple Science uptake.

Background: A smaller after-school club programme existed already, and around 8% of the year group opted to study Triple Science at GCSE.

Method:

Year 1: The after-school club programme was developed to target a broader range of interests and clubs were advertised better to students and parents. A range of teachers and external agencies was used to keep the activities engaging, and support from the SEN/EMA department helped make them accessible to all. Activities included the 'Five on Friday' club, a weekly five-minute whizz-bang demo which attracted large groups and used a variety of resources to stay aligned with current events.

Year 2: A weekly Aquaphonics club was extended and incorporated into the KS3 scheme of work (food webs) and KS4 scheme of work (nitrogen cycle). The original Year 10 members of the Aquaphonics club helped to develop a new Year 7-8 Eco-Club that conducted mini research projects and trips to ecological sites. Other pupils developed their own projects and investigations and entered competitions, winning second place at the University of Westminster Science Conference and a runner-up prize at the 'Big Bang Near Me' event. Their activities generated debate across Triple Science classes and resources were uploaded onto the department's VLE for subsequent year groups to use.

Triple Science students were used as ambassadors during KS2 open events, Year 8 options evenings and during Science and Engineering week, when they ran a full-scale animal dissection, career speed dating and a cross-curricular tower-building competition.

Year 3: The Triple Science Ambassador programme was made a fixture for each new cohort, and the Science VLE was revamped to improve its usability and the quality and range of resources available. This was linked to a new Science News and Affairs board, which was promoted during lessons. Other activities included research projects and debates for KS3 students, to develop their independent learning and presentation skills, and the incorporation of six Global Awareness days (e.g. Earth Day) into schemes of work, to put Science into real-life context.

Evidence: Attendance at enrichment activities, uptake of Triple Science at GCSE.

Impact: Triple Science uptake at GCSE has gone from strength to strength, with 8% of current Year 11, 16% of Year 10, 20% of Year 9 and an anticipated 35% of Year 8 taking it. The quality of candidates and outcomes is also improving, and to be a Triple Scientist now means engaging in the Science department on a wider level than just in lessons; supporting events, organising activities for younger students and liaising with members of the school community. Pupils are now learning and achieving qualifications beyond the curriculum, and consequently pupil engagement has significantly increased.

Reflections: Moving forward, KCS will continue to ensure a range of high-quality extracurricular opportunities is provided to all students, and to make use of pupil voice to evaluate these programmes. We also aim to further stretch and challenge pupils through A Level taster sessions, and make better use of social media as an engagement tool.

Triple Science uptake at GCSE has gone from strength to strength



Assessing the effect of Marine Studies on further education choices

Ivybridge Community College, Devon

An 11-18 coeducational comprehensive school

Aim: The initial aims were about improving the skills and future aspirations of the individuals involved, but during the work the Marine Biological Association (MBA) in Plymouth received funding for 'Citizen Science' style projects and so the nature of the project evolved.

Background: The College has a general philosophy to extend higher ability students in whatever manner possible. Additional enrichment and extra-curricular activities are a very strong thread that runs right through the College. Driven by interested staff within the Science department, the aim was to broaden the horizons of some of our more enthusiastic scientists.

Method:

Year 1:

Students embarked on shore surveys and 'Marine Biologist for a Day' sessions with the MBA to learn general skills and to consider the work of scientists. Year 9 and Year 12 students were chosen to help inform progress and choices from GCSE to A Level and A Level to degree respectively. Initially attitudes to the studies were measured in terms of retention and ongoing commitment to the project. Seven staff received training on the MBA NVQ Aquarist course.

Year 2:

A 'Citizen Science' aspect of the project naturally emerged and the Year 9 participants were retained into Year 10, whilst a new group of Year 12 were selected. The MBA started to work with the group to consider how the community might be involved in studies and data collection. The students studied other wildlife applications for smart phones, and thought about how they might produce a seashore survey programme. Outcomes of this work were: a 'Seashore Code' video teaching people how to explore rock pools safely and without causing harm or damage to the environment, and a consultation with a local app developer. Students shared the outcomes of the project with the community at two local science fairs.

Years 3 & 4:

More of the work was focused on methods for surveying particular species on the shore and how this would be implemented into a digital survey app. It was decided to focus on crabs, however finding specific funding for the app slowed progress.

Evidence: Student questionnaires, subject choices.

Impact: 80% of those involved at GCSE went on to study science-related subjects at A Level. In addition to this 40% of the students involved through to A Level, or those who were involved in Year 12, went on to study science disciplines at degree level. There was some indication that students from the project had better outcomes than others, around 70% of them doing better than a comparison. The best outcomes came from the original group coming back to work with new students in Year 12. In the first year the school received a schools' project award at the local Big Bang Fair.

Reflections: We have had to be flexible in terms of our focus, as the MBA shifts its focus and work to meet requirements and stipulations of the agencies from whom it receives its funding. My personal view is that, in this case, the benefits outweigh the barriers, and it is worth being open minded in terms of your outcomes, and patient in terms of the results.

Contact: Nick Kerswell, Science Teacher, nkerswell@ivybridge.devon.sch.uk

80% of those involved at GCSE went on to study science-related subjects at A Level

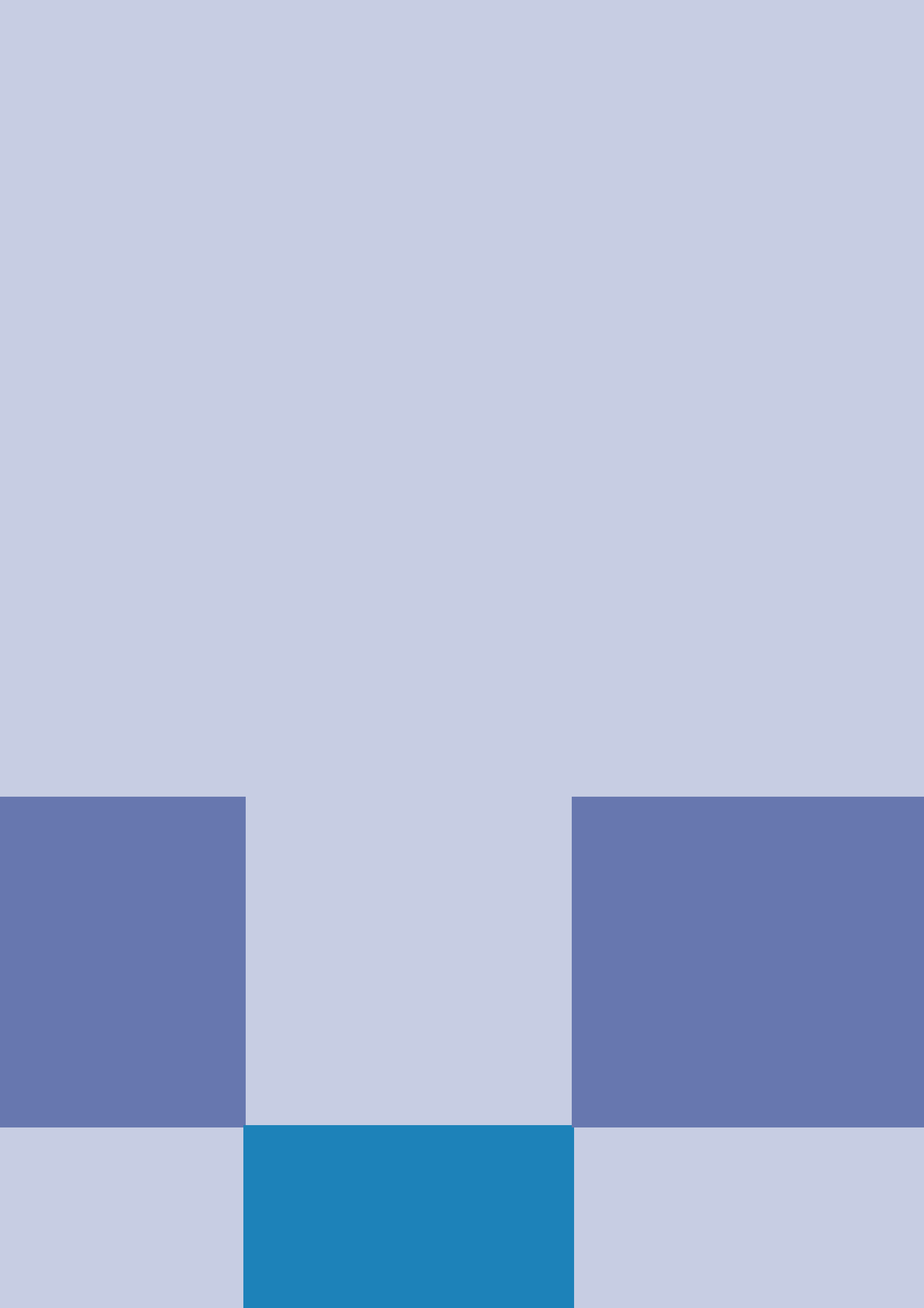
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