

Narrowing the gap for disadvantaged pupils in English through effective school leadership and teacher development

Overview

The project was to work from Early Years Foundation Stage through to KS4 to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students in English. This was done by working across three strands: school leadership, classroom teaching and teaching assistants. The programme used an evidence-supported approach, both in terms of how to develop and shift teacher practice and learning and in terms of effective practice within English teaching. It focused on 10 schools across two Local Authority areas and was a partnership between a Teaching School Alliance and a Multi-Academy Trust.

Good practice to share with others interested in running school improvement projects to ensure projects deliver the intended outcome.

- Evidence and research based CPD linked directly to teaching and learning.
- Dedicated Project Leader able to: monitor schools throughout the duration of the project, ensure understanding, solve problems, adapt strategies and ensure all project strands were being implemented.
- Project communication must be with Headteacher/SLT link as well as designated school project leads, to ensure whole school approach to the project.
- Leadership and middle leader support through SLE/LLE time given to each school as part of the project was invaluable. This ensured the school environment was conducive to good implementation and expert coaching and mentoring offering peer to peer collaboration was in place.
- Schools were given the autonomy to choose their own focus e.g. the specific problem they wanted to solve, using evidence and CPD, this ensured their focus fitted their school context.

What the project may do differently in the future

- Project must be launched through a formal launch event which targets Headteachers and key staff of all schools involved. This is the start of the implementation process, which is planned in stages, not just a series of one-off events. This launch should also ensure the main outcomes of the Project are shared in explicit, up front training.
- Key elements, dates and expectations of being involved in the Project

should be shared explicitly in the initial stages. The creation of a Project Handbook was extremely useful for this.

- It may be more pertinent to allow schools to select their own parental engagement tool (e.g. Tapestry, Marvellous Me, Seesaw etc.) as this approach may increase take up of the subscription in schools/with parents, rather than the project selecting one parental engagement tool for all schools.

Sustainability measures taken by projects to ensure improvement are sustained beyond the funding period.

- The Headteacher from each school attended a launch event which involved input based around the EEF's School's guide to implementation.
- All schools created an implementation action plan to continue beyond the end date of the project.
- Project actions were included in school development plans, to ensure sustainability at school level, beyond the project end date.
- Where possible licenses provided by the Project (e.g. Seesaw) were purchased for a longer time period than that of the Project, to allow for sustainability beyond the Project end date.
- The Project Leader met with Headteacher and Project lead in each school to discuss sustainability of Project work, beyond end date of project.
- Peer to Peer support, across the schools involved was actively encouraged, to ensure networks were created and continued after the end date of the project.
- Feedback and evaluation summaries given to CPD provider (Teaching school) to ensure that CPD programmes can be adapted for future participants.
- Post Project booklet created to share evaluation, impact and outcomes with other relevant organisations.