



Oxford School
Improvement

The Pupil Premium

Making it work
in your school



Using the Pupil Premium effectively

“
The aim is to help you use your Pupil Premium effectively to raise attainment and narrow the gap.
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The purpose of this report

The aim of this report is to provide practical support to school leadership teams and governors in identifying and deploying the Pupil Premium to raise achievement and narrow the gap between children from low-income and other disadvantaged families and their peers.

At the heart of the Pupil Premium policy is an achievement gap which affects some of the most disadvantaged children in England, children who encompass the full spectrum of needs and backgrounds within the school community.

This report draws upon current research to explore some of the most effective approaches you can take to address the achievement gaps within your school. It also looks at approaches that may not be as effective as previously thought.

To support you in identifying well-matched provision for the wide range of your children's needs, this report focuses in detail on a selection of approaches shown to have impact in primary schools: early intervention, building independence, developing communication skills and parental engagement. It also looks at ways to improve the deployment and capacity of Teaching Assistants (TAs) to maximise impact.

In addition to the research, this report includes success stories from schools that have, in many different ways, managed to make a difference to the lives of some of their lowest attaining pupils.

With an increasing requirement for schools to show how their Pupil Premium is spent and its impact, this report aims to support you in drawing on evidence to choose approaches that are likely to work well for your pupils. Suggestions are also made about how you can track the impact of any intervention or strategy you put in place and how you can meet the reporting requirements.

On every page you will find action points, practical steps to help you get the most out of your Pupil Premium, which you could use with subject leaders, at a staff meeting or professional development day to focus on how your school can use the funding to be an 'engine' for change:

“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter or son of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation.”

Nelson Mandela

PARENTS MATTER

Parents matter – but so do others who look after children too, from foster carers to grandparents. We have used the term parents in this report as a shorthand for all these different carers.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jean Gross CBE

Jean Gross was until recently the government's Communication Champion for children. Previously she headed a charity responsible for the very successful Every Child a Reader and Every Child Counts one-to-one tuition programmes, and was a Senior Director within the National Strategies. Here she led work on overcoming barriers to achievement for disadvantaged children and other vulnerable groups.

Jean has been a teacher, an educational psychologist, head of children's services in a local authority, and a Visiting Fellow at two universities. She has frequently acted in an advisory capacity to government and is the author of numerous articles and best-selling books on children's issues. She was awarded a CBE in the 2011 New Year's honours list, for services to education.

Di Hatchett

Di Hatchett has been involved in primary education for over 40 years, including 12 years as a head teacher of a large urban primary school, a long spell as Senior Director with the National Strategies, and several years as Director of Programmes for the Every Child a Chance Trust where she led the development of the highly successful Every Child Counts programme.

Di's field of expertise is the development of high-quality interventions for children struggling with literacy and/or numeracy. She now works as an independent education consultant and is a founder trustee of National Numeracy, a new charity dedicated to securing more positive public attitudes to mathematics and tackling the issue of lack of numeracy skills for children and adults.

What is the Pupil Premium?

The Pupil Premium is additional funding to help schools close the attainment gap between children from low-income and other disadvantaged families and their peers.

Evidence from national attainment data shows that, despite much hard work by schools and by individual teachers and Teaching Assistants, every year:

- around 30–35,000 children leave primary school reading and writing at the level of a seven-year-old or below
- around 30–35,000 children leave primary school with mathematical skills at the level of a seven-year-old or below
- around 23,000 children leave primary school with reading, writing and mathematical skills at the level of a seven-year-old or below.

Research shows that, of these children, a significant proportion are destined for failure at secondary school, at risk of truancy or exclusion and likely to find themselves without work, effective social networks or success in adult life. Too many will finish up in prison.

Those from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds form the majority group amongst these children.

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Every year around 23,000 children leave primary school with reading, writing and mathematical skills at the level of a seven-year-old or below.
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Who is the pupil premium for?

The Pupil Premium is primarily aimed at Reception to Year 11 pupils who are from low-income families and are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). This category now includes any child that has been registered for FSM in the past 6 years (known as ‘Ever 6 FSM’).

‘Pupils entitled to Free School Meals [are] only half as likely to achieve five good GCSEs as their peers.’

The Schools White Paper¹

The funding also covers children in care aged 4–15 who have been looked after continuously for more than 6 months. A service premium has also been introduced for children whose parents are serving in the armed forces.

In January 2011, there were:

- 1.77 million pupils identified as ‘Ever 6 FSM’
- 45,070 children of service families
- 40,566 children who were looked after.

“I want every child to be able to aim for the stars, and to be supported in reaching them.”

David Laws, Education Minister, 2012

How much is the Pupil Premium?

Nationally, the total Pupil Premium funding is set to increase from £625 million to £1.25 billion in 2012–13. It will rise again in 2014–15 to £2.5 billion. In 2012–13, the Pupil Premium will be allocated as:

- £600 per child eligible for FSM and per child identified as ‘Ever 6 FSM’
- £600 per child who is looked after
- £250 per child of a service family
- up to £50 million to enable FSM, ‘Ever 6 FSM’ or looked after children to participate in the ‘Transition Summer School Programme’ (The ‘Transition Summer School Programme’ funds two-week long summer schools, set

up and run by secondary schools, to help disadvantaged children make the transition to secondary school.)

How will schools know who is eligible?

The Pupil Premium is based on the number of FSM pupils, looked after children and children of service families on a school’s roll during the January school census day. For those children who are Ever 6 FSM, the Department for Education will pass on information to each school about the numbers of pupils eligible for this in February each year. This can be added to the number eligible for FSM to estimate the total number of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium within your school.

How are schools expected to use the Pupil Premium?

Schools are expected to use the funding to **help close attainment gaps** for eligible pupils.

“So money, freedom, rewards. Take it; use it as you see fit. But know that you will be held accountable for what you achieve. Schools cannot just absorb this money and spend it on other things.”

Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister, May 2012

Ofsted’s survey into how schools are using the Pupil Premium found that schools were using the funding to maintain or enhance existing provision:

- over two fifths used it to fund existing or new teaching assistants
- over one quarter used it to fund new or existing teachers
- around a third used it for additional curriculum opportunities

The survey found that schools didn’t often disaggregate the funding from their main budgets and some schools didn’t target the needs of the groups it was intended for.¹⁵



How will schools be held accountable?

However the Pupil Premium is spent, what is clear is that the benefits must be quantifiable. New measures have been included to capture the achievement of Pupil Premium pupils in the performance tables. Schools will also be expected to publish online details of their Pupil Premium allocation and their planned spend for the year ahead. They will also have to publish a statement for the previous year confirming Pupil Premium allocation, spend and the impact this had.

The Ofsted inspection framework will have a particular emphasis on how well gaps are narrowing both within the school and in comparison to national trends with specific reference to children eligible for the Pupil Premium.

“Schools need to know that, in assessing their performance OFSTED will be looking forensically at how well their Pupil Premium pupils do. ... The message should be clear: if a school’s Pupil Premium population is failing, more likely than not the whole school will be judged to be failing.”

Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister, May 2012

How can schools account for FSM children not falling behind?

There may be groups of children eligible for the Pupil Premium who are not falling behind their peers. In which case, consider:

- ensuring that the relevant pupils are clearly identified on the school’s tracking system so that evidence of their performance is clear

- documenting how whole-school initiatives to close attainment gaps will have impacted on these pupils
- evidencing curriculum enrichment activities not directly linked to literacy or numeracy from which these pupils have benefitted thanks to the Pupil Premium
- showing how you have used funding to raise eligible pupil’s aspirations, e.g. through mentoring schemes or visits to universities
- where applicable, demonstrating that relevant pupils are performing well above age-related expectations or are identified as gifted and talented.

CASE STUDY

Since the inception of the Pupil Premium in 2011, one school in Exmouth has identified a separate budget line for the Pupil Premium and ensured that the impact of this identified expenditure is reported to governors.

The senior leadership team closely analyse performance data in order to identify gaps in attainment and to determine the focus areas for additional support to pupils, including those entitled to benefit from the Pupil Premium. For example, in 2011–12, the additional funding enabled the school to provide individualised support for pupils struggling with writing – an area which had already been identified as a whole-school priority.

ACTION POINTS

- 1 Explore ways to encourage eligible parents to register their children for free school meals ahead of the January census – make sure they are aware of the potential for the school to receive additional funding and of the impact this could have.
- 2 Ensure your school system clearly identifies all children eligible for the Pupil Premium ahead of the January census.
- 3 Identify pupils entitled to the Pupil Premium on the school’s tracking system.
- 4 Make sure the funding received through the Pupil Premium is identified within the school budget plan.
- 5 Inform governors of your Pupil Premium allocation, its purpose and your proposed plans for spending.
- 6 Identify how and where you are going to publish information on your Pupil Premium allocation and spend. Make sure parents know where and how to access this.
- 7 Download your own copy of Ofsted’s Pupil Premium report from the Ofsted website. A new report should be available Spring 2013.

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What does the research show?

Characteristics of children eligible for the Pupil Premium

Research helps build a picture of the needs of children eligible for the Pupil Premium, and provides clues about the areas where schools might need to intervene, using funding, to improve pupil outcomes.

When compared to their peers, disadvantaged pupils **on average**:

- have less home support for their learning²
- have weaker language and communication skills³
- are more likely to have significant difficulties in basic literacy and numeracy skills⁴
- experience more frequent behaviour difficulties⁵
- are less likely to believe they can control events that affect them.⁶

'More than one in four young people from poor backgrounds feel that "people like them don't succeed in life".'

7 Key Truths about Social Mobility⁷

Statistically, the gap can be large:

- At school entry, low-income children lag behind high-income children by sixteen months in vocabulary. The gap in language is very much larger than gaps in other cognitive skills.³
- Pupils eligible for FSM are more than twice as likely to achieve below Level 3 in English and in Maths at the end of KS2 as those not eligible for FSM.⁸
- Pupils eligible for FSM are five times more likely to be excluded from primary school (permanently or for a fixed term) than those not eligible.⁹

Research on resilience

Another source of information is research on resilience¹⁰ – the factors that help disadvantaged children buck the trend and succeed in life against the odds. These factors fall into three areas: high attainment at school, strong personal and social skills, and parental support for the child's learning.

Bringing the research to life

The story of Darren brings the findings from research to life. His journey through school is typical of the experience of many disadvantaged children.



CASE STUDY: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT DARREN?

Darren is eight. He doesn't talk a lot and when he does, it is in very short sentences with a limited vocabulary. No-one in his extended family is in work. There are no books in his house. He rarely goes outside the estate where he lives. He started school bright and chirpy, excited about all the activities in class. Soon, however, he began to notice that his friends were starting to read, but he struggled. By the time he was six, his behaviour in class became increasingly troublesome. By the time he was seven, he had reached the conclusion that he was not a learner – that for him, education was to be endured rather than enjoyed, just as it had been for his mum, dad and granddad before him.

“
Pupils eligible for FSM are more than twice as likely to achieve below Level 3 in English and in Maths at the end of KS2 as those not eligible for FSM.

”

The role schools can play

Schools can turn around the lives of children like Darren. Research has shown that academically effective primary schools can enable disadvantaged children to succeed against the odds, 'effectively helping them to catch up, re-establishing and reinforcing a positive perception of school and learning and improved self-efficacy'.¹¹

Implications for using the Pupil Premium

Pulling the threads together, effective use of the Pupil Premium is likely therefore to involve a focus on getting the basics of spoken language, literacy and numeracy right as early as possible, and working with parents to maximise their engagement with their child's education.

It will also focus on developing personal and social skills, especially the sense children have of being in control of their own lives.

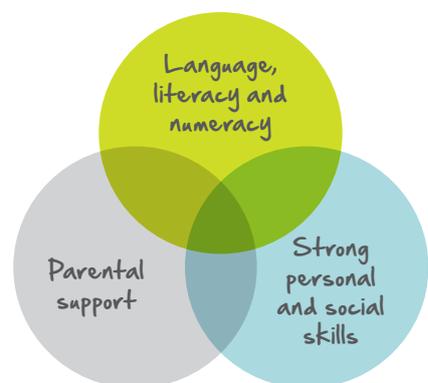


Figure 1: Key factors that increase the likelihood of positive life outcomes



Evidence about what works for schools

A reliable, up-to-date source of information on what works in raising the attainment of disadvantaged children is the government-funded website of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). Here you will find the Sutton Trust-EEF *Teaching and Learning Toolkit* developed by a team of academics from Durham University, summarising the evidence for different approaches.

Approaches that DON'T work

The toolkit concludes that schools are **unlikely** to see good results from investing in:

- › Teaching Assistants (at least as schools currently deploy them)
- › ability grouping
- › reducing primary school class size (except in Reception and Y1 with class size reduced to below 15)
- › performance-related pay for teachers.

Approaches that DO work

The toolkit lists a number of effective approaches, whilst reminding us that context is important and that not every approach listed will work in every school. In order of impact the eight approaches with the most robust evidence and relevance to primary aged pupils are:

1 Effective feedback on learning

Feedback for children and teachers on children's performance relative to learning goals can be very effective in raising attainment if it is about challenging tasks or goals, focuses more on what is *right* than what is *wrong*, and encourages the child rather than threatens their self-esteem.

2 Metacognition and self-regulation

Teaching children strategies to motivate themselves and plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning is a well-proven, high-impact approach that carries little cost other than staff CPD.

3 Peer tutoring

In these approaches learners work in pairs or small groups to provide each other with explicit teaching support. The boost to attainment provided by peer tutoring is apparent for both tutor and tutee (particularly in cross-age tutoring).

4 Early intervention

Research shows that high-quality early years provision, with a strong educational focus and activities which support early reading and number concepts, is beneficial for disadvantaged children.

5 One-to-one tutoring

There is good evidence that providing intensive 1:1 remedial tuition, for short, regular sessions over a set period of time can enable children to catch up with their peers.

6 ICT

Investing in digital technologies to support learning can be effective, particularly if used to supplement teaching, rather than replace more traditional approaches.

7 Phonics

The evidence suggests that phonics can be an important component in supporting the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

8 Parental involvement

Activities that involve parents in supporting their children's learning can be effective, though ensuring that there is an impact on children's attainment is challenging and needs effective monitoring and evaluation.



What else works?

Schools are also often interested in the likely impact on attainment of other common ways of investing their budgets:

- › The evidence on investing in school buildings isn't promising.¹²
- › Extended schools have been found to make a difference through breakfast clubs, after school programmes, multi-agency teams in schools and parenting support. They help create the conditions under which improved teaching and learning approaches can work.¹³
- › Research has found that allocating the best teachers to disadvantaged children can have a huge impact, much greater than the difference made for other pupils.¹⁴

ACTION POINTS

- 1 Gather data on the profile of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium in your school (their speaking and listening levels, literacy and maths achievement, absences or exclusions, their personal and social development, and the level of parental involvement) to help you plan and target interventions.
- 2 Download your own copy of the toolkit from the Education Endowment Foundation website. The EEF has a role in funding research on approaches to raise achievement so look for the latest news on funded projects, which will feed into updates to the toolkit.

Tracking progress and the role of the leadership team

Maximising the impact of the Pupil Premium involves the use of effective assessment and progress tracking procedures.

Regular, systematic, whole-school tracking of pupils' progress is fundamental to raising standards. Schools choose many ways to track pupil progress over time, recording a wide range of data from internal and external test results, SEN, behavioural issues to attendance but it is clear that this alone will not make a difference – it's what schools do with the data that counts.

The intelligent use of tracking data can enable you to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils

and groups, in particular those children underachieving and eligible for the Pupil Premium, and target intervention and support to accelerate their progress.

The data can also enable you to identify gaps in existing provision and explore in detail the reasons for variations in effectiveness of strategies or interventions already in place. Ofsted's Pupil Premium report recommends:

'School leaders, including governing bodies, should evaluate their Pupil Premium spending, avoid spending it on activities that have little impact on achievement for their disadvantaged pupils, and spend it in ways known to be most effective.'

*The Pupil Premium*¹⁵

“
School leaders, including governing bodies, should evaluate their Pupil Premium spending ... and spend it in ways known to be most effective.”

”

Leading the way

In the most successful schools, the drive to raise achievement is underpinned by strong leadership – expressed in terms of high expectations and a determination that no child should be 'left behind'.

'Our conclusion ... is that leadership has very significant effects on the quality of school organisation and on pupil learning. As far as we are aware, there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership.'

*Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*¹⁶

In his extensive work on school leadership Professor John West Burnham outlines the characteristics of effective leadership of teaching and learning as:

- › viewing the leadership of teaching and learning as a moral issue focused on equity, excellence and effectiveness
- › creating a learning community rooted in trust and high-quality personal relationships
- › defining leadership and management roles in the context of closing the gap and sustaining improvement
- › creating a school ethos and culture focused on personal and professional accountability for pupil achievement
- › leaders who see their role as challenging poor performance and being prepared to intervene
- › explicit strategies for teaching and learning based on a common language and research.¹⁷





Closing attainment gaps: the leadership process

The well-known cycle of analysis, action, evaluation and review is key to sustaining school improvement. Within this process, it is the effective use of data which underpins a strategy designed to close attainment gaps (see fig.2). In particular, you might consider the following points:

1 Identify the gaps

- Make regular use of data to identify all children who are at risk of underachievement and specifically focus on the progress of pupils entitled to the Pupil Premium.
- Alongside teacher assessment, use relevant and effective diagnostic and standardised assessment tools to pinpoint areas of difficulty.
- Use RAISE online to compare individuals/groups to national averages as well as their peers. Ofsted will expect you to know how well children are doing compared to national averages.
- Identify specific progress groups defined by prior attainment, FSM eligibility, ethnicity, gender, subject, year group or key stage and outline their common needs, especially in relation to mathematics, literacy, communication and social well-being (all areas which Ofsted will be paying particular attention to).
- As a leadership team, agree priorities for closing gaps and report these to governors.

2 Focus on closing the gaps

- Draw on research about 'what works' in order to inform decisions about providing a school 'toolkit' of well-evidenced strategies and

- interventions which can be drawn on to meet the identified needs when they arise.
- Match strategies and interventions to current learning needs to prevent or close gaps. Consider the particular needs of Pupil Premium pupils and agree what the school will do for each pupil and why it will work.
- Plan to help children 'keep up' as well as to 'catch up', setting specific objectives for pupils entitled to the Pupil Premium, e.g. how and when success will be determined with a clear indication of timescales and sources of evidence.
- Establish who leads and who is/are accountable for the progress of the groups/individuals identified and ensure that struggling learners are supported by well-trained and highly-skilled staff.

3 Evaluate the impact

- Quality assure the delivery of your chosen strategy or intervention.
- Make clear the processes to be used to track progress and closely monitor the effectiveness of the chosen strategy or intervention through regular pupil progress meetings, checking efficacy for the Pupil Premium pupils involved. Consult any available data that enables comparison with other schools or national trends and evaluate success.
- Intervene quickly if any chosen strategy or intervention fails to show impact – analyse the data carefully and put measures into place to improve the effectiveness of the strategy or intervention.
- Ensure parents are informed and involved and use any tools provided by a chosen intervention to support this process.
- Identify and share success – report progress to staff, governors and parents.

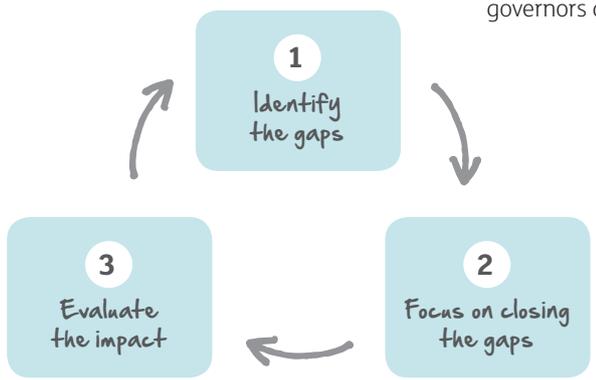


Figure 2: The leadership process

ACTION POINTS

- 1 Evaluate existing data collection processes to ensure information is accurate and the approach is consistent across the whole school, allowing comparisons to be made between groups, classes, year groups and key stages.
- 2 Consider whether any groups are not accounted for in your existing progress tracking and put measures in place to start collecting this data.
- 3 Use your data to evaluate existing provision and check whether perceived impact measures up to quantifiable progress.
- 4 Consider working in partnership with other schools to track pupil progress across schools. Could resources be shared to address issues specific to your catchment area, such as joint CPD?
- 5 Consider how information about strategies to raise achievement is conveyed to staff, pupils and parents.
- 6 Make sure governors are aware of the priorities you have identified for closing achievement gaps.

“
As far as we are aware there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning round its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership.
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Five approaches to the Pupil Premium

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One school-level factor that seemed most clearly to help children succeed against the odds was the additional help they received when struggling academically or with behaviour.
 ”

Early intervention

In terms of the impact on children’s experience in the school system, intervention can make a big difference – making up for a poor start in children’s early years and supporting their ongoing needs.

Research commissioned by the DfE found the one school-level factor that seemed most clearly to help children succeed against the odds was the additional help they received when struggling academically or with behaviour.¹¹

Research also shows the importance of targeting intervention as early as possible. Analysis of progress indicators based on national assessment data clearly highlights the importance of securing key educational outcomes by the age of seven in order for children to stand the best chance of securing success at GCSE (see fig. 3).

In a long term tracking survey of a cohort of children born in 1970, Feinstein and Bynner found that children who were performing well below their peers at the age of five but had caught up by the age of ten, were as successful in later life as if they had never suffered from that earlier ‘gap’.¹⁸

The research also showed that where children initially started out well but lost their high academic score by age ten this eroded the benefit of having it at all, emphasising the need for continuous interventions throughout schooling to ensure children not only catch up but keep up with their peers

Key features of effective interventions

A range of research into ‘what works’ for children with literacy and numeracy difficulties in terms of additional intervention has shown that high-quality approaches can impact significantly on progress.

In general, schools can expect that:

- An intervention delivered by an expert TA to pupils falling into the bottom 6–20% can at least double the normal rate of progress.
- An intervention delivered by a specially trained teacher to pupils falling into the bottom 6% can increase the rate of progress by up to four to five times the normal rate.

Effective approaches to additional intervention support for individuals or small groups of children exhibit the same features associated with high-quality teaching in general:

- The teaching is focused and structured so that pupils know what is to be learned, how it fits with what they know and can do already, and what they are learning/have learned.
- The teaching concentrates on the misconceptions, gaps or weaknesses that pupils have experienced in their learning to date, and builds in additional consolidation.
- Sessions are designed around a structure that emphasises the stages of learning from which pupils will benefit most.
- Pupils are motivated with pace, dialogue, feedback and stimulating activities.
- Pupils’ progress is assessed regularly.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants have high expectations of the effort pupils will need to make and the progress that can and should be achieved.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants create a settled and purposeful atmosphere for learning.

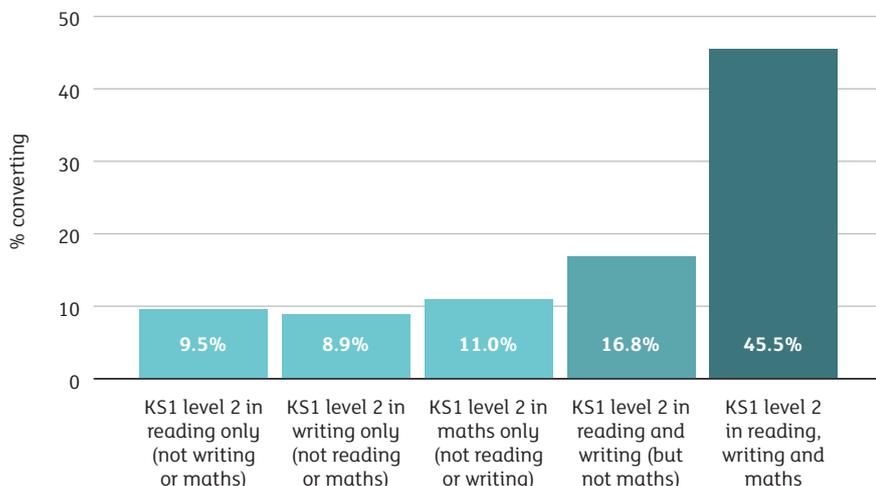


Figure 3: Percentage getting 5 GCSE A–C including English and Maths



Wave 1	Quality First Teaching	Leadership	All children
Wave 2	Small group additional intervention		Just below national expectations
Wave 3	Individual or very small group intervention with a trained and supported TA		Struggling
	Intensive intervention on an individual and/or very small group basis with a trained specialist teacher		Lowest attaining

Figure 4: Provision mapping

Provision mapping

To support the process of planning additional strategies or interventions to close attainment gaps, many schools have found it helpful to adopt 'provision mapping' through the well-known 'layered model' as a tool to support curriculum planning, inclusive teaching and personalised approaches to address diverse needs. In populating the provision map, highlight the specific aspects of provision which include children to whom current Pupil Premium funding is targeted (see fig. 4).

Making sure what works, works in your school

Research has also shown that additional intervention achieves maximum impact when core elements are closely adhered to (fidelity), whilst other aspects are tailored to the individual circumstances of schools (flexibility) (see fig. 5).

Assessing the evidence for quality interventions

In selecting approaches to intervention, consider the following questions:

- Does the guidance clearly indicate the target group?
- Is the intervention time-limited?
- Is there guidance on diagnostic assessment and matching the intervention to learning needs?
- Does the intervention incorporate support with tracking progress?
- Is there a secure data set for the impact of the intervention?

Core aspects requiring fidelity to secure impact	Flexible aspects to be determined by schools
Training for a Teaching Assistant and nominated link/support teacher	Staffing
Allocation of quality space and time	Scheduling of intervention period
Regularity of teaching	Timetabling
Session structure (teaching sequence, timing of components)	Group composition
Use of assessments and progress checking	Choice of standardised test to assess impact
Regular dialogue between class teacher and TA	Allocation of time
Involvement of parents/carers	Strategies for parental engagement
Quality assurance of delivery and impact	Quality assurance processes and measures

Figure 5: Fidelity and flexibility in interventions



ACTION POINTS

- 1 Consider whether your whole-school approach is designed to ensure the highest quality day-to-day teaching for all children. Make sure you are doing all you can to prevent gaps and enable children to keep up before 'gaps' develop.
- 2 Evaluate whether you are identifying children who need additional help from the outset – in Foundation Stage and KS1.
- 3 Is your approach to personal, social and emotional development effective for all children? Do you provide additional small group / individual support for children with the greatest needs in social and emotional development?
- 4 Evaluate the intervention support in literacy and numeracy you have in place, e.g. whether it is informed by research into what works and if there is a robust evidence base of measurable progress.
- 5 Ensure you are observing the non-negotiables of any intervention you have in place, i.e. those elements of guidance designed to ensure that it works to its best effect.
- 6 Make sure those supporting the children with the greatest difficulties in learning are well-trained and their work is quality assured.



Improving the impact of Teaching Assistants

Every year schools spend over two billion pounds on Teaching Assistants, who make up almost a third of the workforce in nursery and primary schools. But how successful is this support?

Ofsted’s survey found that paying for Teaching Assistants is the most common use of the Pupil Premium.¹⁵ Yet a large-scale, five-year piece of research carried out by a team at the University

of London Institute of Education (the ‘DISS’ study) suggests major changes to the way TAs are deployed and trained need to be made if they are to have a positive impact on children’s progress.¹⁹

The research looked at the effect of TA support on the academic progress of thousands of pupils. It found that TAs had positive effects on teachers’ workloads, job satisfaction and stress. Not surprisingly, teachers liked having TA support and they also felt that TAs had a positive impact on pupils’ academic progress.

BUT, when the researchers categorised pupils by the amount of TA support they received, they found that the more support received, the less progress children made. The effects were large – equivalent to a difference of one and a half National Curriculum sublevels’ progress in English per year between children who had most and least support, and one sublevel in maths.

The negative effect on progress was evident even after accounting statistically for factors like prior attainment, SEN, FSM and EAL. It applied to pupils with and without SEN, to English, maths and science, and at all ages.

Deployment					
	Teacher	TA	Interaction by type of SEN	Teacher	TA
1:1	2%	19%	Non-SEN	55%	27%
Group	8%	67%	School Action	24%	32%
Roving classroom	23%	7%	SA+ or statement	21%	41%
Leading whole class	67%	7%	Children with SEN interact more with TAs, less with the teacher		
TAs mainly supporting groups					

Teacher time

When researchers at the Institute of Education looked at the deployment of TAs and teachers, they found that teachers spent relatively little time working with groups or individuals. They spent almost all their time leading the whole class or roving the classroom. TAs, on the other hand, mainly supported groups and individuals, and predominantly those with SEN. Children with SEN spent less time interacting with the teacher than they did with TAs – essentially, the children who find learning the most difficult were spending their time with the least qualified adults (see fig. 6).

Figure 6: Data from *Reassessing the Impact of Teaching Assistants*, Routledge, 2010



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Essentially, the children who find learning the most difficult were spending their time with the least qualified adults.

”

Speaking a different language

The research also showed that TAs and teachers tended to use different types of language. TAs were more likely to prompt pupils rather than give them thinking time. They often supplied answers and were mainly concerned with making sure the task set by the teacher was completed. Teachers, on the other hand, were more focused on what children were learning, used more open-ended questions to promote thinking, and spent more time explaining concepts.

Planning and training

Finally, the researchers explored the context for TAs' work. They found that:

- 75% of teachers had no planning/feedback time with TAs
- 75% had no training to work with/manage TAs
- TAs reported feeling underprepared, needing to tune in to teacher talk to understand the tasks they were expected to support.¹⁹

During the research, one TA said to a child “I don't know what we're doing today. I know we're going to start with a game on the board, so that will be quite nice.” Another TA, on being asked by a researcher what happens to the folders of pupil work when she gives them to teachers, said “...to be honest with you, I could have anything in them folders sometimes ... I've never really known them to look at it, to be truthful ... It is bad, isn't it?”¹⁹

Can TAs make a difference?

The DISS research team are now using their findings to explore ways of increasing the impact of TAs. One immediate way forward for schools may be to draw on other research showing that TAs can make a big difference under certain circumstances.

Evaluation of small-group literacy and maths intervention programmes delivered by well-trained and supported TAs working closely with the class teacher has demonstrated significant impact on children's progress.²⁰

Equally, there is evidence of improvements to behaviour following small group TA-led interventions focused on the social and emotional aspects of learning.²¹

So using the Pupil Premium to fund TAs to deliver time-limited, evidence-based interventions like these (rather than simply unspecified in-class support) is definitely one way to improve the return on investment.

CASE STUDY: ARBOURTHORNE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, SHEFFIELD

Arbourthorne Primary made a conscious decision some years ago to review the deployment of TAs. Staff work collectively to analyse data and make decisions about which individuals will benefit from in-class support and which will benefit from additional, targeted literacy and numeracy intervention programmes delivered by TAs. Data is regularly gathered to evaluate the impact of interventions. Class teachers, after some initial disquiet, soon came on board with the change. “Once teachers saw the impact”, say the school, “they began to ask for more of what is clearly working.” TAs can also see the effects of their work and have become very aware of the difference they are making to children's lives. They value being treated as expert professionals, both through training and regular observation and feedback on their work.

As a result of targeted interventions and high quality in-class support from teachers, TAs and 1:1 tutors, the percentage of children achieving Level 4+ in English and maths combined has risen from 35% in 2009 to 76% in 2012.

ACTION POINTS

- 1 Evaluate the impact of your existing TA provision, to check that it is providing the impact you want.
- 2 Consider using your Pupil Premium to fund TA time and resources for specific intervention programmes and pre-teaching (for example, of key vocabulary) to enable children to engage more successfully in whole-class teaching.
- 3 Fund joint training for TAs and class teachers on intervention programmes, plus release time for teachers and TAs to plan, monitor and evaluate the impact of the intervention together.
- 4 Fund professional development for teachers on working with TAs, e.g. how to manage the support effectively, class observations to monitor the amount of time they spend interacting with lower achieving or disadvantaged children, and whether they have made sure all TAs know what children are meant to be **learning**, rather than just **doing**.
- 5 Fund training for TAs on Assessment for Learning, how to use questioning to support learning, and how to help pupils become independent learners.
- 6 Track the impact of any changes you make on the attainment of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium.
- 7 Look out for next instalment of the DISS research to be published – *Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants: Guidance for school leaders and teachers*.

Building independence and self-efficacy

Developing the social and emotional skills which give young people the resilience, persistence and motivation to deal with the stresses and the rebuffs of everyday life, are key to being able to move up the social ladder'.⁷

Research has shown that many **effective** approaches with disadvantaged children share a common feature – they help make children see themselves as independently able to make a difference to their own lives and those of others. This sense of being in control is sometimes called self-efficacy.

Equally, many less effective approaches with disadvantaged children serve only to reinforce their feelings of helplessness and lack of control. One reason put forward for the lack of impact of TAs, for example, is that the support they provide in-class may make children dependent rather than independent.

"I'm in the bottom table group and we can't do anything by ourselves so we always have to have an adult working with us."

Jake, aged seven

Approaches which build independence and self-efficacy

There are a number of strategies which can build children's sense of control:

Peer tutoring: gives children the chance to make a difference to another child's learning. For example, disadvantaged children in KS1 might teach a puppet something they have just learned, or teach it to a younger brother or sister at home. Children in KS2 might hear younger children read or tutor them with their maths.

Coaching: helps children make plans and stick to them. At Swaythling Primary School funding was used to provide Year 6 pupils (mostly underperforming white boys eligible for FSM) with a period of weekly 1:1 coaching with trained learning mentors. Children identified what they wanted to achieve and were helped to set their own targets and identify their options. They made greater progress in literacy and numeracy than children given interventions directly targeting these core skills.

"What I like about coaching is the way that it helps children stand on their own two feet. It is quite a revelation to them as they learn to break things down into small steps that will eventually allow them to achieve their goals. They take ownership. They are no longer spectators in their own lives."

John Draper, Headteacher²²

Assessment for Learning: ensures that children know where they are in their learning journey, assess and reflect on their own learning (have I achieved the success criteria, how would I teach this to someone else, how would I change this activity for another class/group?) and plan the next steps they need to take in conjunction with their teacher.

Standing back and praising independence: gives children time and confidence to solve problems on their own (see fig. 7).



Figure 7: Praising independence



ACTION POINTS

- 1 Use repeated classroom observations to assess whether teaching is consistently promoting learner independence and self-efficacy, and to track the impact of any new strategies you introduce.
- 2 Consider investing in additional training for staff in areas such as Assessment for Learning or Building Learning Power.
- 3 Identify teachers in your school who successfully teach children to work collaboratively and independently in mixed-ability groups. Have these teachers coach and mentor others.
- 4 Review PSHE teaching and learning to see if it explicitly helps children develop self-efficacy. The SEAL Community website has resources that may be helpful here.
- 5 Consider putting in place a formal peer tutoring scheme in school. You might use your funding to free a member of staff to train peer tutors and monitor and evaluate their work.



Developing speaking and listening skills

Research shows that more than half of children starting school in socially disadvantaged areas of England have delayed language.²³ Disadvantaged pupils may enter school having heard up to **35 million fewer words** than their better-off peers.²⁴

*"I have children coming into our school who don't know their own name – and don't even know that they **have** a name."*

Headteacher, Hull

Good speaking and listening skills are integral to developing as an independent and reflective learner. The new National Curriculum and professional standards for teachers emphasise the importance of developing children's communication skills, as does the Ofsted inspection framework.

Building vocabulary: a school-wide approach

One effective strategy to develop language is a consistent, school-wide approach to teaching vocabulary. For example, teachers could identify 'Goldilocks' words for the topic they are teaching – words that are not too easy and not too hard, but 'just right' (see fig.8).

Teachers then teach the Goldilocks words and regularly review them, helping children build a web of associations for a given word: what it sounds like, what it means, how it fits in a sentence.

Topic: Victorian England		
Too easy: words children use in everyday conversation	Goldilocks words: useful beyond the immediate topic and should be systematically taught and reviewed	Too hard: topic-specific words that just need explaining
toys	petticoat	gruel
children	hoop	workhouse

Figure 8: Goldilocks words

A reason to talk

Role play areas (in KS2 as well as Reception and KS1) provide opportunities to encourage talk. Areas can be set up to look like travel agencies, World War II bomb shelters, Egyptian tombs and so on. Staff then model ways of talking and interacting in these areas, introducing the kinds of language they want children to use. Some schools have also set up podcasting spaces or 'Speakers' Corners' with wooden soap boxes for children to stand on and talk about topics that interest them.

Developing listening skills

Actively teaching children how to be good listeners is another essential strategy. This means much more than sitting still and paying attention. It means listening actively for meaning and asking for clarification if you don't understand. Teachers who have used whole-class listening skills programmes typically rated nearly a third of their class as having severe listening problems, but after a few weeks into the programme this fell to zero.

CASE STUDY: WATERCLIFFE MEADOW PRIMARY, SHEFFIELD

At Watercliffe Meadow Primary, most children enter school 18 months to two years behind in their language development. The school has prioritised CPD for staff focusing on language and also funds extra time each week from a speech and language therapist. All children in the EYFS and Year 1 are assessed and a range of small group interventions are provided. The curriculum is rich with visits and experiential learning to promote talk. The school uses approaches such as Talk for Writing, Philosophy for Children and Quality Circle Time to give children language structures that enable them to have deep conversations and discussions on issues that are important to them. The school café has 'social seating' to promote talk and is open for parents at the start and end of the day and throughout the day for children.

The impact has been noted by Ofsted: 'Achievement has improved substantially ... This is most notable in developing speech and language in KS1, which is having a direct impact on attainment in reading and writing.'

ACTION POINTS

- 1 Review indoor and outdoor learning environments to assess whether they provide enough opportunities for talk.
- 2 Use classroom observations to explore whether listening and collaborative skills are actively taught. Consider funding training in Cambridge University's whole-class Thinking Together programme, proven to raise attainment.
- 3 Consider whether there are children eligible for the Pupil Premium who would benefit from small-group interventions focusing on language development, and fund training in evidence-based approaches such as Talking Partners or Talk Boost. Track the impact on language using the assessment tools built into these resources.



Where to begin?

Schools that are successful in engaging parents always start where parents are, rather than where they would like them to be. This may mean engaging parents in non-threatening activities to start with, before building up slowly to ones that focus on academic learning and the curriculum.

“Parents sometimes have negative experiences of school when they were younger and therefore it makes them afraid of coming in and wary of what we are doing. And sometimes they might think that we are having a go at them when we’re not ...”

Headteacher, Rochdale

Family involvement in school matters much more for children from low-income families than those from better-off families.

In Winsford, Cheshire, an area with high levels of social deprivation, a cluster of schools worked together to improve parental engagement.

The schools ran a project called Talking Boxes, to help children’s language development. They invested in some sturdy wooden boxes and invited parents in to decorate a box with their child. The children then took the box home and put in it things that were special to them. The children then brought the boxes back into school and were given time to talk about their special objects.

“Our parents are very anxious about coming into school. They’d never come in for most things, but decorating a box – that was OK. That was safe.”

Headteacher, Winsford

Create a welcoming environment

Research by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children’s Services has shown the importance of a welcoming environment in schools which have raised standards by improving their engagement with parents.²⁸

For many parents who may not find it easy to come into school, a reception area filled with comfortable chairs, magazines on the coffee table, local radio playing instead of Mozart, toys on the floor for toddlers to play with, information in community languages and bright posters inviting families to join in with a wide range of activities could make a big difference.

Increasing parental engagement

When Professor Sir Michael Rutter was asked what advice he would give to children, he said “I would advise every child to choose their parents wisely”.

Research shows that if parents engage with their child’s education, the attainment of the child will increase by 15% no matter what the social background of the family.²⁵

There is evidence that family involvement in school matters much more for children from low-income families than those from better-off families.²⁶ Even where families live in poverty, children can achieve well if parents are helped to be involved in and committed to their child’s education.

Aspirations matter too. One study found that:

‘Parental aspirations and attitudes to education varied strongly by socio-economic position, with 81% of the richest mothers saying they hoped their nine-year-old would go to university, compared with only 37% of the poorest mothers. Such adverse attitudes to education are one of the single most important factors associated with lower educational attainment at age eleven.’

Poorer children’s educational attainment²⁷

Ofsted

Parental engagement forms an important part of the Ofsted inspection framework. As well as inviting parents to give their views, inspectors must consider whether leadership at all levels (including governance) engages with parents in supporting pupils’ achievement, behaviour and safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.



Send home good news

Sometimes the main contact parents may have with a school is when there is a problem. An effective way of drawing in parents is to build a positive relationship by sending good news home regularly, using praise postcards or text messages about a child's achievements.

Encourage support at home

A good 'home learning environment' is a strong predictor of whether a disadvantaged child will succeed against the odds. There is good evidence that where schools run courses and workshops which help parents develop the home learning environment, such as Family Literacy and Numeracy, Ocean Maths or the FAST (Families and Schools Together) programme, this can have a significant effect on children's achievement.

CASE STUDY: GRAYS INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL, NEWHAVEN

Grays Infant and Nursery School makes good use of IT to involve parents in their children's learning. Every child has their own e-portfolio space on the school's learning platform. The space holds data on the child's attainment, targets, activities and achievements. Staff are given regular time to upload information and photographs – for example, for a child where a target agreed with parents was to 'build confidence in class and group situations', a TA or teacher might upload a photograph of him succeeding in a PE lesson.

To help parents understand and use the system, they were invited into school (with a crèche and doughnuts provided) to go online and see how it worked. They soon concluded that 'It's just like Facebook', and now regularly log on, helped by the school's system of sending every child home once a week with a wireless enabled netbook or 3G-connected netbook if a child has no internet access at home.

School staff monitor whether parents are accessing their child's e-portfolio and follow up with further help and encouragement if needed. One powerful benefit has been enabling distant Dads to keep in touch with their child's learning.

Listen to parents

Another key element of success is transforming meetings with parents. Changing conversations so that they are structured and focus on really listening to parents' point of view (understanding what they see as the key barriers to their child's learning, what they think has worked well in the past, their aspirations for their child and the provision they would like to see in place) can have a significant impact on both parental engagement and pupil progress. Schools taking part in the national Achievement for All programme found that structured conversations improved parental relationships and pupils made outstanding progress.

CASE STUDY: TORRIANO SCHOOL, CAMDEN

As a junior school where parents 'drop and go', Torriano School identified parental engagement as a key issue. Class teachers were trained in Achievement for All structured conversations with parents and held these three times a year for every pupil with SEN. From these conversations came one curricular and one personal 'wider outcomes' target for the child. Linked to these targets, children took part in drumming, sports coaching, canoeing and residential outdoor programmes.

Parents were surveyed to ask them what support they would like from the school. They identified maths, reading, transition and ICT as their priorities, so the school organised workshops for them, for example, on how to use the literacy software that is part of the school's provision.

The results speak for themselves. Despite their SEN, the pupils have made good or outstanding progress in English (four to five average points score gain over a year) and good progress in maths (four points' gain over a year).

ACTION POINTS

- 1 Share information from this report with a focus group of parents, and invite their ideas on how the Pupil Premium could be spent.
- 2 Look at your data on parental involvement, for example attendance at parents' evenings. Are there particular groups who engage less and are there strategies which might help draw them in?
- 3 Plan a programme of home visits to better understand your community context. Then pay a 'visit' to your school as if you were a parent and consider what changes would make it more welcoming.
- 4 Review the intervention programmes you currently use to see whether they include simple 'take-home' activities for children to undertake with family members.
- 5 If you have a school-home support worker, or Parent Support Adviser, review whether their role includes supporting parents to create a good home learning environment as well as focusing on attendance and behaviour.
- 6 Download a copy of *Parental Engagement: Getting the best results* and watch PD films about engaging parents at www.oxfordprimary.co.uk
- 7 Track the impact of any new strategies you introduce by linking measures of parents' participation in workshops and meetings to data on pupil progress.
- 8 Encourage parents to visit www.oxfordowl.co.uk to help support their child with reading and maths.

Tracking effectiveness and reporting impact

Although DfE guidance is clear about schools' freedom to deploy the Pupil Premium, there is also a clear expectation that schools will report the impact on pupil progress and attainment.

Using data right from the start

It is important to ensure that any decision about how to spend the Pupil Premium is based on data collected, analysed and used to identify groups and common needs for your children entitled to the Pupil Premium. This information should be the start of an 'audit trail' that shows the use of the Pupil Premium and its impact so that its effectiveness can be continuously tracked and evaluated.

Preparing for inspection

When evaluating the achievement of pupils, inspectors will consider:

- how well gaps are narrowing between the performance of different groups of pupils in the school and compared to all pupils nationally*
- how well pupils make progress relative to their starting points.

*The definitions for underperforming groups have been strengthened so that there is a consistent framework nationally.



As part of your school's self-evaluation summary, you may wish to include specific focus on the allocation of the Pupil Premium, including:

- a description of the data-led process for determining year and pupil group priorities
- a summary of internal tracking and pupil progress checking procedures
- details of data reported to governors (and to school advisers / improvement partners if applicable)
- information on the progress of particular individuals/groups.

Demonstrating impact

Impact statements can provide a good way of summarising the progress pupils have made and the evidence collected about the effectiveness of your Pupil Premium spend. Depending on the strategies or interventions deployed, you might include:

- % improvement in performance in national/teacher assessments
- increases in reading/number age or standardised test scores as a result of structured interventions
- % improvement in attendance/punctuality
- % reduction in recorded incidents related to behaviour
- % reduction in the numbers of FSM pupils making less than expected progress
- % increase in the number of FSM pupils exceeding expectations
- % increase in pupils completing homework
- % increase in parents participating in school open evenings or equivalent events
- results of pupil/parent questionnaires.

Reporting to parents

The DfE has not specified the form or content for such reports other than that schools will need to publish information online about their Pupil Premium allocation, spend and impact on attainment. You may wish to use these pointers to help structure the report to parents:

School profile: A short pen portrait of your school, including a brief description of the catchment area, numbers on the roll, % in receipt of FSM, % of pupils 'Ever 6 FSM', % who are looked after and % from service families.

The Pupil Premium: A brief explanation of what it is for, an explanation of your freedom to decide how to spend the additional funding, your allocation and plans to spend it.

Meeting the needs of all children: A brief summary of how you routinely plan and provide to meet the needs of all pupils.

ACTION POINTS

- 1 Familiarise yourself with national standards and establish methods of tracking pupils' progress against different groups in school and nationally.
- 2 Consider the initiatives you would showcase in terms of Pupil Premium spend and the impact it's had.
- 3 If the impact of the provisions you have put in place are negative, scrutinise the data carefully to establish the reasons for this and outline a clear plan to counter this going forwards.
- 4 Ensure your report to parents is accessible to all groups and parents have a forum to discuss the information provided.



Helping you achieve the best results

How our resources can help you support the learning and progress of all your Pupil Premium pupils.

YOUR QUESTIONS	LITERACY	MATHS
Have I put in place clear expectations that no child should be 'left behind'?	Oxford School Improvement works with a range of leading experts to offer regional training days covering a range of curriculum issues including: Jean Gross: raising achievement for your lowest attaining children Ruth Miskin: raising whole-school standards in literacy rooted in synthetic phonics Lorraine Peterson: the current SEND context – the changing landscape for schools Gary Wilson: raising boys' achievement Lynn Churchman: building successful futures through achievement in maths	
Are there areas in which my teachers need professional development and support?	Leading experts, including Jean Gross, Di Hatchett, Ruth Miskin, Debbie Hepplewhite, Gary Wilson, Nikki Gamble, Ros Wilson and Sue Palmer , provide a range of free professional development films at www.oxfordprimary.co.uk	Numicon offers sustained NCETM accredited professional development which will cultivate sound subject knowledge and boost confidence in teaching maths. Maths Makes Sense offers a sustained professional development service, which will inspire and build subject knowledge. Leading experts, including Richard Dunne, Lynn Churchman and Tony Wing , provide a range of free professional development films at www.oxfordprimary.co.uk
Am I catching children the moment they fall behind?	Project X CODE is the first reading intervention to embed systematic, synthetic phonics and comprehension within a highly motivational 3D adventure series. The Read Write Inc. One-to-one Phonics Tutoring Kit provides daily assessment and effective tutoring to ensure no child slips through the net and that every child can make effective progress. Read Write Inc. Fresh Start is a phonics-based literacy programme for older children who have not learned to read the first time round.	Assessment is integrated into every activity in Numicon , immediately alerting the teacher to any areas of misunderstanding. For children who have fallen behind, Numicon Closing the Gap and The Numicon Intervention Programme are effective programmes for catch-up and intervention. Maths Makes Sense is built on a dynamic cycle of daily teaching and ongoing assessment, with built-in tools to help monitor the progress of every child and ensure none are left behind.
Am I maximising the impact of my TAs?	Project X CODE training is provided by experts from the Reading Support team at Edge Hill University for teachers or teaching assistants to help close the attainment gap for readers who have fallen behind. For more information go to http://readingsupport.edgehill.ac.uk Ruth Miskin Literacy training provides whole school training for all the staff, including TAs, on all Read Write Inc. programmes.	The Numicon activity groups are supportive, detailed and accessible, so any member of staff can use them effectively to make a difference to children's learning. Maths Makes Sense offers inspirational professional development for teachers and teaching assistants to maximise impact across the school.
Have I chosen resources based on impact data?	Project X CODE is proven to raise children's reading ages – after one term pupils gained an average of 8.7 months on their phonics age and 6.8 months on their sentence reading age. Read Write Inc. raises standards for every child – 7 out of 12 schools in the HMI Ofsted report <i>Reading by six: How the best schools do it</i> , use Read Write Inc. Phonics . Big Writing uses a proven criterion scale which has been tested and refined within many schools, to be a robust and trusted guide.	The Numicon Intervention Programme is proven through research and feedback to have an impact on those children who are struggling with maths. Impact studies and testimonials show Maths Makes Sense raises standards and improves children's confidence and enjoyment of maths.
Are my parents fully involved in helping support their child's progress?	Oxford Owl is a FREE website which helps parents to support their children with reading and maths. It includes over 260 free eBooks, advice and engaging activities. Find out more at www.oxfordowl.co.uk	

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our customer care line on **01536 452610**.

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Please note: The photographs of children in this report are for illustration purposes only. They do not show children from the schools featured.



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