



Congleton High School Key Stage 3 Pupil Premium visit

Wednesday 11th November 2015

Context of the visit

Representatives from Malbank (Janine Edwards) and Congleton High School (Jim Barlow) have been working with the Local Authority as part of a focus group to look at the use and impact of Pupil Premium Funding in Key Stage 3 to drive further improvement across Cheshire East. Part of this project was to formalise sharing of best practice through carrying out school to school reviews.

As part of this, I spent the morning of the 11th November at Congleton High School, where I met with a number of staff, Pupil Premium students and completed a learning walk where I had the opportunity to speak to Pupil Premium students about their progress and look in their exercise books.

Progress of Pupil Premium students in KS3

The school has a robust system in place to track the progress of all pupils in KS3. The data for Pupil Premium students is rigorously reviewed, shared with key staff within the school and interventions are put into place by the pastoral team and teaching staff to further support progress.

The progress data is used to identify any areas for development and these are then incorporated into the school's action planning. There is a specific raising achievement plan which focuses on these, which is regularly evaluated and changes made in line with the specific needs of the Pupil Premium students.

Homework has been an area of focus and Pupil Premium students have been given additional support to facilitate the completion of homework across the curriculum. Students have access to computers and iPads at lunchtimes, break times and after school.

The school has given staff specific responsibilities to monitor the progress of Pupil Premium students in Key stage 3. In the last academic year this particularly focused on English and Maths, where the staff analysed subject specific data and used this to inform planning, differentiation within the curriculum area and any necessary level of additional intervention.

The impact of the interventions is positive and shown to have an increasingly positive impact over time. For example, by the end of last year the gap between PP students and non PP students in Year 7 making 1 full level of progress in Maths and English was less than 20%. In Year 8 there is no gap between PP and Non PP students making 2 Levels of progress in English from their starting points. In Year 9 the Gap between PP and Non PP students making 2 levels of progress in Maths from their starting point is less than 10% and the gap between PP and Non PP students achieving a Level 5 in both English and Maths is 10%. The gap was nearly 25% at the start of Year 9, demonstrating effective intervention had been used to close the gap. The gap between PP and non PP students achieving a Level 7 in both English and Maths had decreased over the 4 Assessment points to 10%.

After Assessment Point 1 this term, there is only a 2% gap between Year 9 PP and non PP students on track to make 2 levels of progress in English by the end of the year and 13% of PP students are on track to make 3 Levels of progress compared to 10% of non PP students. In Maths there is a 10% gap between PP and Non PP students who are on track to make 2 Levels of progress by the end of the year.

English and Maths Focus

A number of KS3 English and Maths lessons were visited. In all of the lessons visited the pupils were engaged, on task and the purpose of the lesson was clear to all students so that progress could be made. Seating plans were provided which allowed me to easily identify those students who were entitled to Pupil Premium. The seating plans were consistent across the English and Maths teams and showed that staff had a clear awareness of this special interest group. These seating plans could be further developed to indicate the pupils target and their current working level.

Venn diagrams are used effectively to identify pupils in special interest groups. This information is used to inform planning and personalise learning.

The pupils expressed that they enjoyed the lessons and felt that they were making good progress. The English books had stickers on the front of the books which clearly showed the pupils targets and the pupils were able to refer to these and explain what they needed to do in order to improve and make progress towards their targets.

A year 7 pilot has been in place, where Accelerated Reader has been trialled with a group of Pupil Premium students. This pilot has had a positive impact on the reading ages of those on the programme and this is being rolled out to promote literacy further.

In Maths lessons, pupils were working independently and felt that they were being challenged. More able Pupil Premium students are provided with extension material and are given access to Maths clips online to support work completed in lessons. Exercise books showed that the pupils were receiving feedback which allowed them to reflect on their progress.

A maths mentoring scheme is in place to further support the progress of Pupil Premium students in Maths. Sixth Form students work with students in KS3 to address any area of concern. The impact of these sessions is reflected in the progress made over time, outlined above. The school has also successfully secured some additional funding to implement at Sixth Form Tutoring programme for PP students.

The English and Maths team's quality assure the provision within their departments rigorously. Work completed by Pupil Premium students is reviewed within curriculum areas on a regular basis with a programme of scrutiny devised to monitor the work of named pupils over time. Blue Sky is in use to support the work in these curriculum areas.

The whole child

There is an unapologetic focus on the whole child. There is a strong belief that pupils should enjoy coming to school and that this will have a positive impact on progress and attainment. Pupil Premium funding is used to help these students participate in opportunities that will help them to have a positive view of school and help to motivate them.

This starts at Primary school, where more able Pupil Premium Year 6 students are invited to participate in Master classes at Congleton High School to challenge and stretch and to help prepare students for the transition process ahead of them.

Upon joining CHS, Pupil Premium students are assigned a mentor who will introduce pupils to Extracurricular activities, homework support etc. The mentors help to remove any barriers to attendance and to progress. This is a new initiative which is being piloted. The success of this initiative is being monitored and the impact will be reviewed.

An Assistant Principal is responsible for monitoring the uptake of extra-curricular activities and the uptake by Pupil Premium students is a key focus. Where Pupil Premium students are not participating, this is identified, discussed with the pupil and again any barriers are removed. The impact of this work is evident with 100% of pupil premium students participating in many of the year groups.

Pupil Premium students are able to make use of the free mini bus service which the school runs to transport pupils home after participating in Extra-Curricular activities or learning opportunities which are offered to support progress.

Summary

Many thanks for inviting me to visit the School, I have valued the opportunity to share good practice. It was clear from the time that I spent at the school that the well-being and progress of Pupil Premium students is a priority of the school community and that leaders share a good understanding of how best to support their pupils.

Janine Edwards – Assistant Head at Malbank School and Sixth Form College.