



Congleton High School Pupil Premium visit - Tuesday 27th Feb 2018.

Context of the visit:

Congleton High School and Malbank School have a clear focus on improving the outcomes for Pupil Premium students. In their drive to achieve this the schools have paired up to carry out a peer review and to share best practice. Representatives from Congleton (Louise Salt – Assistant Head) and Malbank (Janine Edwards – Assistant Head) have led this project.

As part of this, I spent the day at Congleton High School, where I met with a number of staff (including Curriculum Leaders), reviewed relevant documentation and completed a learning walk with the Head of School where I had the opportunity to speak to Pupil Premium students about their progress, the support they are receiving and to carry out a work scrutiny.

My visit followed a short inspection of the school by Ofsted, where the inspector recommended that leaders needed to review and refine their approach to their use of Pupil Premium funding and recognised that Pupil Premium students are making better progress because of the support that they receive in school.

Use of evidence to inform approach:

The school has a rigorous and robust approach towards tracking pupil progress, at departmental and whole school level. At whole school level the data collected is analysed using SISRA and FFT. SISRA is also used as a tool by Curriculum Leaders. Increasingly effective analysis of the data will allow the Pupil Premium Lead to update the schools strategy statement after each data collection point to ensure positive impact on the progress of this special interest group. This regular review and reflection on the strategies in place will allow leaders across the school to respond promptly to put support into areas of underachievement or to support individuals who are not making expected progress. The Pupil Premium Lead has a clear understanding of the strategies that are in place and has devised a new system to monitor the effectiveness following each data collection point. As this system is embedded the school will be able to continue to refine their approach to using the Pupil Premium funding effectively.

Link meetings are held fortnightly, where Curriculum Leaders are accountable to Senior Leaders and share the progress of Pupil Premium students and the personalised strategies that are used within their Curriculum area. Teaching staff are encouraged to be more accountable for their students and have had relevant training on how best to support Pupil Premium students. In some departments, the teacher records the support/ interventions used to support each student to make progress. This information is then shared and the impact can be evaluated. An area for development would be to spread this good practice across the school.

The school regularly quality assure teaching and learning, part of this is carrying out work scrutinies by collecting in students work and through the use of learning walks. These are carried out by both SLT and Curriculum Leaders. At the point of my visit there had not been a sample that focused solely on Pupil Premium across the school but this was in the strategic plan as a next step. The Curriculum Leader is supported by SLT in this process and together they carry out a learning walk, leading to discussion about areas of strength and areas of development. The next academic year will see the introduction of a new proforma to provide clear structure to this process and PP is clearly represented as a strand to this monitoring and evaluation. The quality of feedback has improved by 10.5% from the same period the previous academic year, with 75% of all practice being good or better. Whilst carrying out the learning walk on the day of my visit I saw that Pupil Premium students were getting regular feedback which the students were able to respond to. When I spoke to these students they appreciated the feedback and recognised that this was helping them to improve and make better progress.

Student voice is a strength of the school and Louise plans to use this to get feedback on the success of the interventions and support strategies that are put into place. This will inform future planning.

The PP lead is held accountable for the strategies put into place to support Pupil Premium students on a regular basis by Governors at both the Student, Welfare and Ethos committee and the Curriculum committee, where termly reports are provided. The Governors are well informed and are able to ensure that spending is having a positive impact. I have suggested that the Governing Body could look at nominating a Governor to be the Pupil Premium champion. Leaders hold staff within the school accountable and this could be developed further using Performance management targets.

Progress of Pupil Premium students in Year 11:

The use of SISRA allows the school to predict the likely P8 score for each Pupil Premium student, although the school are fully aware that this uses last year's algorithm to make this prediction.

66% of the current Year 11 Pupil Premium students had a positive P8 score at data collection point 2. 55% of the Pupil Premium students have improved their P8 score from Assessment point 1, demonstrating that interventions that are in place to support these students are having a positive impact. Leaders are aware of the barriers facing those students who have not made expected progress, such as attendance or Attitude to Learning and targeted strategies have been put into place to help to address these and to help to remove barriers to learning.

The Pupil Premium funding is used for additional Maths and English groups so that lessons have smaller group sizes. I visited a number of Maths lessons and the smaller group sizes meant that I observed excellent teacher/student relationships and students felt confident to ask for help. Teachers were able to give more intensive support to those students who needed it, something that the Pupil Premium students shared that they valued.

In Maths, a HLTA is employed to work with a small number of Pupil Premium students who need further support. This support occurs in Maths lessons, during form time and in Guidance time. Students are selected for Maths intervention according to their progress data. In the first 2 months of Maths intervention there has been an

improvement in pupil attainment, with a 17% increase in students achieving grades 9-4 and a 10% increase in those achieving 9-5.

The school has introduced 'show my homework' this year to improve consistency of this area of learning. This allows leaders to monitor the quality of homework set and allows leaders to have appropriate conversations with Pupil Premium students around their learning at home. The impact of this initiative will be evaluated in time.

Other outcomes:

Attendance is a clear area of focus for school leaders, in particular the attendance of Pupil Premium students. There has been a drive to encourage Year 11 to improve their attendance with a 4 week challenge up to the mock examinations. All of the Year 11 Pupil Premium students had attendance of 95% or better in this period with 68% having 100% attendance. The Pupil Premium attendance improved by 1.3% and the gap between Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium is closing compared to the same time last year (reduced by 0.6% so far). The 4 week challenge will be repeated in the build up to the GCSE exams and could be replicated in other year groups. The work to help to remove this barrier to progress and other social & emotional barriers which have been identified by the school could further be supported through further engagement with families.

This is further supported by a new initiative where the Associate Teachers are used to mentor students. The AT's are currently mentor a group of Year 10 students who have been identified as needing additional support to help them make expected progress. The data is analysed carefully so that staff have a clear understanding of their area of need and students are matched to AT's by specialism – so if a student would benefit from support in Maths they would be teamed up with a Maths AT where possible. The mentors are working with the Year 10 students to help to improve outcomes such as Progress, Attendance and quality of work completed at home, but also helping students with study skills, behaviour and aspirations. The front loading of support will help to remove barriers before they impact on progress.

The Senior Leadership Team demonstrate strong leadership and have a clear vision and passion to improve outcomes for Pupil Premium students at Congleton High School. The Pupil Premium Lead has been undertaking the role this academic year and has a good grasp of the areas for development. Whilst there is a clear plan for the use of Pupil Premium funding, leadership accountability could be further developed with regards to planning the use of the Pupil Premium funding across the school to allow leaders to continue to be proactive and respond to the changing nature of the needs of Pupil Premium students.

I very much enjoyed visiting your school and welcomed the opportunity to see the work that you are doing to support Pupil Premium students. I found the students I met to be happy learners, who were engaged and motivated to achieve. The team of staff that I met on the day had a shared commitment to supporting all learners with an understanding of the need to further support Pupil Premium students to achieve. I would like to thank the team at Congleton High School for inviting me to your school to share best practice.

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