

This review was commissioned by the Headteacher following on Ofsted Inspection 13-14 June 2018 which indicated that the quality of education for disadvantaged pupils requires improvement in a number of respects:

- leadership and management of the pupil premium.
- ensuring the regular attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- teaching not regarded as being consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make the rates of progress they should.
- pupils' examination results in 2017 were variable ..... especially for disadvantaged pupils with low starting points.
- current disadvantaged pupils' work shows that differences in progress between these pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing ... improvement not consistently evident.
- impact of ... pupil premium funding ... too variable

There is an acute awareness by Headteacher that the quality of provision needs to improve for all pupils at Walton-le-Dale. Disadvantaged pupils contribute a significant proportion (c. 33%) of the school population and there is a strong belief that 'Brilliant Teaching and Learning', 'Exceptional Support', 'Intelligent Governance and Leadership' will inevitably impact on disadvantaged pupils. Hopefully, this review will contribute to the process of school improvement which has been given further impetus following the Ofsted visit.

### **Planning and Preparation**

Visit to Walton le Dale High School on 13 September to meet James Harris (HT) to plan itinerary and request key information.

### **School Visits**

Two days in school (Thursday 27 September and Friday 5 October) speaking, listening and meeting with a variety of staff, governors and students. Opportunities to visit lessons, examine data and documentary evidence, discuss the effectiveness of particular strategies and, most important of all, hold conversations with Pupil Premium/students. Particular, specific questions asked of leaders, teachers, governors, support staff and young people throughout the two days.

### **Report and Recommendations**

Summary of all findings presented in a report to the Headteacher, October 2018, containing a number of recommendations which ought to contribute to disadvantaged students making accelerated progress.

### **Follow-up Visit**

Available Autumn Term 2018, along with opportunities for Walton le Dale High School staff to visit Broughton (Autumn 2018/Spring 2019).

### **Pupil Premium Statement**

The website contains a review of PP expenditure for 2017-2018 (along with Y7 catch up interventions for 2016-2017). There is a 'Vulnerable Students Action Plan 2017-2018' but not such plan for 2018-2019.

There is a mid-year review for the 2017-2018 Autumn Plan, but not review for the entire year 2017-2018.

## Whole School Ethos and Climate for Learning

- The excellent pupil/staff relationships are palpable and a cornerstone of the school. There is a genuine warmth, trust and close bond between adults and young people and this is such an essential ingredient when attempting to focus on improving outcomes and rates of progress for pupil premium/all pupils.
- In almost every classroom/lesson visited, the climate for purposeful teaching and learning was acceptable. Almost all pupils were attentive and teachers were able to teach, free from interruption, allowing for concentration and study. Throughout the visit there were several instances where the level of chatter and off-task conversation was unnecessary. As we know (PP) pupils cannot thrive, excel and answer questions in depth when there is talking and distracting noise/conversations. A proportion of pupils did not appear to have a strong work ethic.
- Every member of staff/Governor I met/interviewed was totally committed and fiercely loyal to Walton-le-Dale. There is a realisation that progress, outcomes and attendance needs to improve, but this can only be achieved by a consistent and sustained effort on behalf of every member of staff.
- Not enough evidence of teachers using academic language nor students using scholarly language. Words matter more than ever now. If pupils at Walton-le-Dale are not provided with and/or use the correct vocabulary, how are they going to meet the academic challenge of the new GCSEs? There needs to be an obsession with helping every student extend their vocabulary.
- Uniform is worn well by the pupils and they almost all look smart of appearance.
- The learning environment in and around a number of areas looks and feels neglected. A number of classrooms contain a considerable amount of clutter and numerous displays of varying degrees of quality. All displays need to be of the highest quality, thereby allowing the teacher to constantly refer to high standards. Classrooms contain a number of old wooden cupboards, filing cabinets and units with plastic trays. Need for a skip and a good 'throw out' session!?
- The definition of numerous interactive whiteboards lacked sharpness in several classrooms. The technology is in place, but it is not sharply focused enough to 'hook' the pupils. In an age of HD televisions .....
- Without exception in/out of the classroom, every pupil I spoke to/encountered was wellmannered, helpful, good humoured and polite. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to them all, as usual, they make you smile at their perceptiveness and candour.

## Recommendations and Further Ways Forward

There is a recognition of the urgent need to improve the academic performance and progress not just of disadvantaged pupils, but all pupils at Walton-le-Dale. This priority is being addressed by the Headteacher, SLT and Governors, evidenced by the various plans. From all the discussions, observations and documentation, it is apparent that a variety of strategies are being implemented. All the research and good practice indicates that there is no one single intervention which produces results and ensures lasting success. Based on my visit and reading all the relevant literature, here are some specific suggestions about the next steps to improve the outcomes/progress for disadvantaged/all students at Walton-le-Dale High School.

### 1. High Quality. 'Brilliant Teaching and Learning', every lesson, every day

There is variability in terms of Teaching and Learning at Walton-le-Dale. A number of teachers/lessons have high expectations and the lessons are intellectually challenging, engaging and enjoyable. The teachers of these lessons inspire children to produce a high standard of work and experience the joy of success. Consistent, persistent High Quality First Teaching has to be the 'default intervention' strategy for disadvantaged/all pupils. If this is as good as it possibly could be, no need for an array of additional approaches.

The 'Brilliant Teaching and Learning 2018-2019' document contains numerous, highly effective strategies. However, it contains 55 (!) prompts for teachers. This makes it difficult for consistency and common messages. Need to remember the teacher who is teaching 22/25 lessons per week.

Changing classroom practice is a 'hearts and minds' issue as well as a CPD issue. As a staff, agree on the two/three/four practices everybody is going to adapt in every lesson without exception.

- visual, numerical/literacy 'hook' at the beginning/middle/end.
- modelling, modelling, modelling.
- mini whiteboards for all.
- fewer, more thoughtful questions along with 'Think-Pair-Share'.
- clarification/use of the 'challenge' activities.
- tier 2/tier 3 words used by staff/pupils.
- DIRT time.

All of these in a climate of **sustained, scholarly study**.

### 2. High expectations of all, from all

Teachers at Walton-le-Dale need to insist on sharper, more detailed responses to verbal questions. Teachers ask too many questions without any reference to 'think time.' If there is one Kagan/Cooperative learning structure you may wish to 'resurrect' it is 'Think-PairShare': Ask fewer, better, questions with 'think time'. This can be combined with some clear guidelines and expectations about oracy.

In terms of exercise books, there is considerable variability in terms of what is expected/accepted. "Your very best work at all times" has to be the mantra and "if it is not good enough, you will do it again." Despite it being early in the new year, some books contained poorly presented work. Did not see too much evidence of extended writing.

In some classrooms 'off task chatter' is permitted. Every teacher needs to insist on total silence when giving instructions/tuition. Equally, when pupils are absorbed in reading/writing every teacher must expect/insist on silence and complete concentration. **A significant number of pupils need to work harder and have a better work ethic.** They need to be put under pressure, along with an insistence on high quality work.

Promote the 'high expectation of all, from all' message for all it is worth! Articulate to teachers and pupils why it is so imperative. Above all, inculcate/indoctrinate/infect (whatever!) in every teacher and every pupil to accept the notion that in every lesson there will be an element of intellectual/physical/creative challenge and 'your brains will hurt!' However, you will not go beyond the rhetoric without some sustained, well-planned and targeted CPD for teachers/TAs.

3. **Re-consider the CPD programme for all staff linked to the number one priority: Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning.**  
**Collectively** reaffirm the characteristics of a 'Brilliant lesson at Walton-le-Dale High School'. Not only does everybody need to hear the 'challenge' message, they need to believe in it too. This is a 'hearts and minds' issue. Every teacher needs to be personally committed to improving the attainment/progress of disadvantaged students. It goes beyond an obligation to Ofsted ... it is the core purpose for every teacher. Allow time in/out of meetings for staff to openly discuss the effectiveness of particular approaches and allow them to contribute to the 'closing the gap' agenda. A participative approach will be fundamental to any future success. The SEND team must be included in all training. They are a highly effective resource who can provide a wealth of experience and strategies. Cooperative planning is essential to this process.
4. **Attendance needs improving for 2018-2019.**  
**Poor attendance of PP students is a key barrier** and requires sustained improvement. Staff are obviously extremely diligent and have a good rapport/relationship with families. Fundamentally the culture/climate needs to change so that students want to attend Waltonle-Dale on time because they do not want to miss a lesson. Talking to students/families about days (as opposed to percentages) is usually much more meaningful because 85% sounds quite high. Short term targets: attend all week (10/10) on a scorecard. If pupil achieves 10/10 for 'n' weeks or comes in the top three (whatever) in mini league, reward them with 'Ultimate Fast Pass' which allows them to skip to the front of any food queue at break/lunch (they love it!) Establish a focus group for PA or 'broken weeks' (whatever) meet them every week for a half term. Make the session supportive, yet competitive, linked to 10/10. Pupils monitor their scores and staff have scores on a visible screen/spreadsheet. Parents involved. At the end of each half term, small prize/certificate/acknowledgement. Repeat x 6 with different groups. Train 'improving attenders' to be coaches for some of the pupils in the next group.
5. In every other school I have supported there is a separate PP action plan. You have chosen to incorporate all the objectives for disadvantaged pupils within the various sections of the SIP. There is no insistence or requirement on the need for a separate document, however, as we all know, Ofsted drool over statistics and data. You need to present a powerful case. **You need easily accessible, compelling evidence.** Each specific action needs to highlight key objectives, milestones, evidence, monitoring arrangements, quantitative/qualitative success criteria, with clear references to show how much funding has been allocated for each particular action. The **co-production and regular use** of such a document will be essential to making a difference/showing you are making a difference. Have a think about useful/relevant quantitative and qualitative measures. This plan needs to be routinely discussed with **other SLT/Progress Coordinators** at relevant meetings. This plan needs to show **IMPACT ... IMPACT ... IMPACT ... IMPACT.**
- Once you have identified the priorities for PP students, **measure and monitor the impact** of all the strategies to show the SLT, Staff, Parents, Ofsted and, above all, students that things are improving.  
**For example,** (Rising) Termly attendance of PP  
(Falling) Exclusion rates of PP  
(Rising) 'Merits' for PP  
(Rising) Attendance at extra-curricular of PP  
(Rising) Number of PP 'Above' 'On Track' following each review  
(Falling) Number of PP 'Below' targets following each review  
(Rising) Grades for Able PP 18-19 compared to 17/18

The next inspection will doubtless focus on disadvantaged pupils so you need to have easily accessible materials which clearly spotlight every minutiae of improvement. (Good example(s) if you wish). The PP section on website needs updating.

## 6. **Introduce/develop 'Memory for Learning' from Year 7 onwards**

Teach staff and students the techniques to improve their memory. Introduce staff to the 'forgetting curve' and how the 'spacing effect' may help. Ensure every subject includes linear testing as part of their assessment schedule. Use it in tutor time for every tutor group, for every subject. Introduce a version of the 'Learn it Challenge' and 'Low Stakes Testing' as opposed to 'Fun Quiz'.

## 7. **Involve students' parents (especially PP) even more with life at Walton-le-Dale.** So called hard-to-reach parents are a source of frustration. Begin with a commonly agreed approach for Walton-le-Dale: issues/solutions.

Technology should never replace face-to-face relationships, but can save considerable time. All the research/experience suggests **texting** has a positive, direct impact. Texting, not just about Parents' Evenings but forthcoming texts/key homeworks in Maths/English. Rather than organise 'revision sessions' for parents, use some of the videos/apps which are available. Technology is not a 'silver bullet' but such a key part of lives of (PP) parents. Inform parents about their son/daughter's progress in particular assignments. All teachers to email home spreadsheets showing their son/daughter's progress.

## 8. Continue to **promote reading** and encourage students to use wider vocabulary. Language is power. Presumably you use Accelerated Reader. **Reading, reading and more reading.** Work with partner primary schools to develop this. PP (students) need a wider, more extensive vocabulary. **Literacy will be the key to unlocking potential and raising standards.**

In particular, promote/support reading with PP students.

Staff and pupils to **routinely use academic language.**

Ensure all staff know the difference between Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary. Expect all teachers and pupils to use standard English and wider vocabulary. Agree on '**Walton Words**' and expect all staff/pupils to use them.

## 9. **Train staff/students** how to access and answer '**high value**' written questions. Every subject now has 8, 10, 12 mark questions. PP (students) struggle to de-code such questions and then provide a coherent, relevant response. Direct an English/Literacy colleague to work with e.g. Technology staff on teaching/modelling/co-constructing extended written answers.

## 10. Why is there a **5 minute afternoon registration with tutors?** One extra movement and one extra contact for teachers? Why not register the afternoon session at the beginning of period 4.

## 11. Introduce a programme for **improving the Learning Environment in conjunction with Governors/Staff/Pupils.** Tackle one area at a time. In particular, agree on what high quality display looks like at Walton-le-Dale. Buy some skips and throw away all the clutter and resources that belong in the last century.

## 12. **Time**

Consider how:

... time for **Heads of Maths/English** to lead highly targeted information sessions every morning. Do they need to be tutors?

... time for **tutors/relevant staff** to meet with Disadvantaged pupils

... time for **Heads of Department** to share 'what is working' with each other

... time for **SLT/teachers to visit other schools** ... time for **PP lead to visit other similar PP schools**

... time for **Progress Coordinators to visit** PP (others) in **lessons**. This is so important and powerful

... time for **SENDCO** to meet with **Heads of Maths and Science** on a regular basis.

13. **Timely review of the current reward system.** There seems to be indifference towards the system. This is such an ideal opportunity for 'Pupil Voice'. There are numerous commercial systems available. Have you considered **ClassCharts**?

14. **Emphasis on meeting individual learning needs**

"As Head of Science, what do I need to do/my team now need to do to enable Lewis/Megan ..."

Need a common, easy system for every Department to record the **in class** intervention strategies to be implemented. Avoid, "attend revision class" - too vague. The responsibility/accountability is with the subject teacher, for every PP youngster.

Remember that 'PP' or 'Disadvantaged Students' consist of 'n' individuals. These may be grouped into able, middle ability, low ability. However, the absolute key is **every teacher knowing the students they teach**. "What can Amy/Ben/Beth **not** do?" "How do I need to amend my teaching accordingly to meet their particular needs?" In essence, break the 'n' PP mass into individuals. As one school AHT remarked recently "it's not about catch-up, it's all about keep up."

Have a look at a piece of software called '**Zegami**'. It is a powerful data visualisation tool which harnesses all data in the form of pupil images. It's great.

15. **Avoid excessive monitoring and QA.** Constantly observing, scrutinising and completing record sheets does not help teachers improve. You know who your strongest/weakest teachers are before the start of any process. Emphasis must be on guiding, supporting, developing 'weaker' teachers. If not possible, use the capability procedures.

16. Consider **improvements to the Learning Environment.** Agree on minimum expectations for every classroom.

- ✓ make all stimuli as attractive as possible.
- ✓ absolutely no clutter or 'tatty sheets' and posters.
- ✓ high quality pupils' work on walls which can contribute to learning.
- ✓ visible, appropriate and 'corporate' presentation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 words.
- ✓ mini whiteboards and boxes of equipment on every desk.
- ✓ 'buddy' pairs of people to look at each other's classroom.
- ✓ allocate time for a good clear out.

In her article 'The Pupil Premium is now working' Sept 10, 2018, one of the key conclusions Becky Allen makes is 'If we care about closing the attainment gap and we accept the relationship between SES and cognitive function, then surely our first port of call should be to create classroom environments and instructional programmes that prioritise the need of those who are most constrained by their cognitive function? In many respects, we are still working out what this means for the classroom, but I'm pretty sure that being laissez-faire about what students can choose to pay attention to in class is likely to widen the attainment gap.

Graham Nuthall was not particularly optimistic about disrupting the cultural rituals of our classroom practice to improve what children are able to learn. He believed these rituals persist across generations because we learn about what it means to be a teacher through our own schooling as a child. We have

deeply embedded values about the kinds of experiences we want our students to have in our classrooms. For him, the cultural values of teachers are the glue that maintains our schooling system as it is, with the consequence that it entrenches the attainment gaps we've always had. **In other words, classroom practice of teachers have got to change, otherwise the 'gap' will never close.**

This is worth sharing with every teacher at Walton-le-Dale. It's as simple and complex as this.

Hope all of this is helpful - it's meant to be!

Chris Morris, October 2018