



Closing the Gap

Welcome to the Spring 2017 Newsletter

- sharing developments from around the county and updates on national initiatives

Closing the Gap Conference

27th June 2017, 09:15-15:30

The Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester

The programme and booking form for our annual conference for primary, secondary and special schools is available to download [here](#).

Marc Rowland, Director of Policy and Research at the National Education Trust, will provide the keynote and a copy of his successful book 'An Updated Practical Guide to The Pupil Premium' (December 2015) will be included in the delegate pack.



The programme for the day includes an input from HMI, schools sharing effective practice and a number of workshops:

- Evaluating impact
- Parental engagement in mathematics
- Barriers and strategies: The do's and don'ts
- Talk for Writing Early Years transition project
- Resilience for All

Places are limited so please book asap to avoid disappointment.

Teaching & Learning Toolkit

[EEF-Sutton Trust Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) has been updated to incorporate new evidence. Changes include:

- teachers' performance pay - an increase in the average impact on pupils' attainment from 0 months' additional progress to +1 month;
- outdoor adventure learning - an increase in the average impact on pupils' attainment from +3 months' additional progress to +4 months;
- behaviour interventions – a decrease in the average impact on pupils' attainment from +4 months' additional progress to +3 months;
- reducing class sizes - a reduction in the average cost rating from 'very high' cost to 'high'.

An updated overview of the cost, estimated impact and evidence security rating of the approaches included in the Teaching & Learning Toolkit can be found on the [Pupil Premium Toolkit](#).

School Themes

The 'School Themes' section of EEF's website - [available here](#) - pulls together evidence from the Teaching and Learning Toolkit and published EEF projects focusing on ten high priority issues for schools. They provide greater depth to the evidence on common school challenges by linking together evidence in the Toolkit with key messages emerging from EEF projects and other resources. Taken together, they provide a rich picture of the developing evidence base on how to improve pupil attainment.

Themes covered include: character; developing independence; and parental engagement.

Teaching Assistants

In order to support the best use of teaching assistants, the EEF has partnered with the TES to create a completely [free online course](#). This includes practical examples of how to implement the recommendations, as well as interviews with headteachers who have changed the way they deploy their TAs and step-by-step guidance. The course, hosted on the EEF website, consists of text, video, curated links and downloadable documents.

Low income pupils' progress at secondary school (February 2017)

[New research](#) by the Social Mobility Commission reveals children from poor backgrounds experience a worrying drop off in progress at secondary school

Key findings:

- children on free school meals achieve almost half a GCSE grade less progress in 'Attainment 8' core subjects than better-off pupils;
- 88% of this gap is due to differences between pupils at the same school, meaning that only 12% is due to variations between schools;
- school culture - pupils from low-income families are most likely to make progress in secondary schools that focus on them, both in terms of setting and sharing high expectations for pupils;
- successful schools use data to track pupils' progress and intervene swiftly and flexibly when pupils fall behind;
- high-quality teachers who believe that poor children are capable of making progress are key to ensuring progress;
- the teaching of pupils with SEND needs should be prioritised and specialist provision should be easily and promptly accessed where needed;
- pupils from low-income families are less likely to make progress when they are grouped by ability from an early age.

Recommendations:

- headteachers must ensure that resources are targeted at KS3, and year 7 pupils making the transition from primary school, to the same level or beyond the resources targeted at KS4;
- headteachers should develop a school culture of universally high expectations and promote practices that support those expectations;
- schools should make regular use of data to analyse progress in order to intervene as early as possible when pupils' progress, especially those from low economic backgrounds, stagnates or drops off;
- heads of departments and senior leaders should exercise great caution in using setting and streaming practices that can negatively impact on pupils from low-income backgrounds;
- all staff in schools, particularly school leaders, should prioritise support for pupils with SEND, for example, by providing continuing training which improves teachers' skills and confidence in providing 'quality first' teaching in every classroom;
- all school staff should improve their understanding of teaching approaches that support low prior attainers and pupils from low-income backgrounds;
- senior leaders should reduce exclusion rates, particularly of pupils from low-income families;
- secondary schools should provide early and regular careers guidance that makes clear the links between progress at school and the freedom to choose from a wide range of careers.



National Numeracy
for everyone, for life

Count on Us: Parental Engagement Numeracy Programme

A recent study, carried out by National Numeracy and funded by The Mayor's Fund for London and MAN Group, concludes:

"The volume and statistical significance of the evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, strongly demonstrates that parental engagement leads to increased confidence and improved behaviours in maths and raises standards of attainment. Parents are indeed a significant factor in determining how well children learn maths, and schools should work towards improving the level and quality of parental engagement."

Appendix 4 (p36) of the [study's report](#) gives more detail, but among methods used were:

- Parents' workshops;
- Inviting parents into lessons;
- Maths games/puzzles clubs;
- Guides for parents;
- Drop-in maths surgeries;
- 'Bring a Dad' day;
- Family numeracy classes

There is plenty more information from [National Numeracy](#) on engaging parents, including addressing barriers for parents such as: negative experience of school themselves (or specifically of mathematics), poor English, lack of time, or just not knowing what they can do to best help their child.

All of the resources used by schools in the study are available on National Numeracy's [Family Maths Toolkit website](#). The site has a huge number of resources and ideas for getting parents and carers involved in their children's maths education.

National Numeracy will be sharing the key messages and resources from this study in a workshop at the Closing the Gap Conference on 27th June 2017.



Global gaps report

Bright but poor pupils lag behind their bright but better-off classmates by around two years and eight months in maths, science and reading, according to new Sutton Trust research. The attainment gaps within the most able 10% of pupils are even bigger for girls than they are for boys, standing at about three years in science and reading.

The report, by Dr John Jerrim of the UCL Institute of Education (IoE) and Education Datalab, analyses the 2015 test scores from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) PISA tests to assess how well the UK's schools are doing for the top 10% of pupils. It shows that socio-economic gaps between high achieving pupils are significant throughout much of the developed world.

Read the full report [here](#).

Gaps in Grammar research brief

This research brief addresses the government's argument that grammar schools benefit disadvantaged and highly able students and improve the education system as a whole. The brief starts with a review of grammar school evidence then explores the questions: do grammar schools facilitate social mobility and does the education system as a whole benefit?

Findings include:

- Disadvantaged Indian pupils are four times more likely than disadvantaged white British pupils to attend a grammar school, while disadvantaged Chinese pupils are fifteen times as likely. Disadvantaged black pupils are now more than twice as likely to attend grammars as in 2012, but are still also significantly under-represented.
- High proportions of grammar school pupils come from the independent primary school sector, roughly double the rate you would expect. In fact, a pupil attending a private prep school is ten times more likely to enter a grammar than a pupil on free school meals.

Read the full report [here](#).

Dunalley Primary School

	Year 1					
	2014		2015		2016	
	School	National	School	National	School	National
All Pupils	68	74	72	77	85	81
Boys	54	70	66	73	81	77
Girls	83	78	79	81	92	84
Disadvantaged	29	63	50	66	79	70
Other	81	78	81	80	87	83

The Phonic Screening Check

Closing achievement gaps – not easy! What do you do when you look at your data and see that it doesn't compare favourably to national averages?? Panic??? Probably a natural response but completely unproductive!! Our 2015 data wasn't brilliant – but look at the difference you can make in a year!

How did we do it?

The most important thing we did was maintain our determined growth mindsets and high expectations. We were quick to leave the panic stage and return to our solution focused approaches. We knew we had to think both in and outside the box for answers – given the diversity of our incredible learners we knew that creativity and innovation would be key. Whilst developing our action plan a colleague and I attended a LA phonics closing the gap event. This provided a valuable opportunity for reflection and helped us to develop and refine our thinking.

So, what did we do?

We continued to enhance our quality first teaching. This involved ensuring that all members of staff were fully trained in teaching phonics and were consistently doing so to the highest possible standards. Our rigorous monitoring and regular team meetings enabled us to tweak the content, structure and pace of our phonics lessons. We knew that little changes could make a big difference.

Alongside this we continued to track the progress of our learners and were even quicker to intervene when it was insufficient. Having identified the children who were at risk of not meeting the expected standard, and recognising that QFT might not be enough, we secured the active engagement of their first and most important educators – their parents/carers! We equipped them with the knowledge, understanding, skills and resources to accelerate the progress of their child. Here's how we did it:

The parents/carers of children who were at risk of not meeting the expected standard were contacted at the beginning of the spring term. We explained that they would make it with their support. One-to-one conversations were key to securing parental engagement, we knew that a general letter home would have less impact.



For the six weeks prior to the screening check parents/carers joined their child in school from 3-3.10pm. These daily 10 minute sessions made a massive difference and were probably the factor that had the largest impact on our results. Parents were able to observe teachers teaching phonics, join in, ask questions and take phonics games so that they could practice at home.

Attendance at these 'Fun Phonic' sessions remained high throughout the intervention, families were also committed to practising at home. Everyone was motivated because the progress that the children were making was visible and our determined, growth mindsets were contagious and never wavered. Collective effort and hard work really did lead to success!

Please contact Alison Godfrey at Dunalley Primary School if you'd like further information.



Let Teachers Shine 2017

Let Teachers SHINE is a national competition for teachers with innovative ideas for improving the literacy, numeracy or science attainment of disadvantaged students. Teachers can apply for up to £15,000 to help set up a project in their school. The [Let Teachers SHINE website](#) has more information, including application details. The deadline for entries is midday on **24 April**.

Pupil Premium Awards – EYPP

On 1st March 2017, the Department for Education launched the 2017 Pupil Premium Awards. Since 2013, these awards have recognised the achievement of schools that have done the most to raise the attainment and life chances of disadvantaged pupils through the Pupil Premium funding.

For the first time in the awards' five year history, there is now a new Early Years Pupil Premium category which will recognise the hard work that Early Years providers across the country are doing for their children in receipt of the Early Years.

To enter for a national prize, you will need to submit an application with information about how the Early Years Pupil Premium has been used effectively and could include information and evidence on;

- Supporting the transition from Early Years to school;
- Promoting healthy eating and lifestyles;
- Improving parental engagement;
- Using the Education Endowment Foundation's Early Years Toolkit.

More details can be found at [here](#).