

Closing the Gap

Welcome to the Summer 2017 Newsletter

sharing developments from around the county and updates on national initiatives

Closing the Gap Conference 2017

Thank you to everybody who attended and supported this year's closing the gap conference to make it a really successful day. Materials from the day can be downloaded [here](#). Materials include presentations from: the keynote provided by Marc Rowland (Head of Research School at Rosendale Primary in Lambeth); the Cotswold Edge Teaching Alliance on effective transition; the Ofsted update and resources from the following workshops:

- Closing the Gap: beyond the pupil premium
- 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

CtG Events 2017-18

Traveller Education Network Meeting - 28th September 2017, 9am-12.30pm, for Primary, Secondary & Special School Leaders.

Evaluating the Impact of Pupil Premium Project for Primary, Secondary & Special School Leaders.

Closing the Gap in Phonics – 7th November 2017, 9.15am -3.30pm, for KS1 teachers/literacy leaders.

Closing the Gap Conference - 27th June 2018, 9.15am-3.30pm, for Primary, Secondary & Special School Leaders.

Flyers and booking forms for events/projects can be found [here](#).



Pupil Premium Awards 2017

Schools across the country which have helped improve the life chances of disadvantaged children were celebrated at the 2017 Pupil Premium Awards.

The categories and winners were:

- Early Years: Comet Nursery School & Children's Centre, Hackney (London)
- Primary: Springfield Junior School, Suffolk (East of England)
- Secondary: Sacred Heart RC School, Camberwell (London)
- Pupil Premium Plus: Rose Bridge Academy, Lancashire (North West)
- Special Schools and Alternative Provision Schools: Bristol Gateway, Bristol (South West)

More details can be found at - <http://www.pupilpremiumawards.co.uk>.



Breakfast clubs in high-deprivation schools

The DfE have produced a set of documents following findings of a programme to run breakfast clubs in schools with high levels of deprivation.

Evaluation of Breakfast Clubs in Schools with High Levels of Deprivation: Research Report, March 2017

The research looked at schools with over 35% of their pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM), which had no existing breakfast club. The report includes:

- a process assessment of establishing and sustaining breakfast clubs
- an assessment of the effects of breakfast clubs on reducing the number of children coming to school without breakfast.

Breakfast Clubs Setup and Implementation: Briefing for School Leaders, March 2017

This briefing note was written by ICF Consulting Ltd. It outlines potential benefits of running a breakfast club, and shares lessons learned on how to set up a breakfast club, or reinvigorate a club that has lost its energy, so that pupils get the most out of it.

How do schools set up and sustain successful breakfast clubs?

A one-sided sheet sharing key messages from schools.

All documents can be found [here](#).



Selective Comprehensives 2017

The latest report from the Sutton Trust on admissions to high-attaining non-selective schools for disadvantaged pupils has found:

The top performing 500 comprehensive schools in England, based on GCSE attainment, continue to be highly socially selective, taking just 9.4% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), just over half the rate of the average comprehensive (17.2%).

About half of this gap is due to the location of high attaining schools in catchment areas with lower numbers of disadvantaged pupils, but the rest is due to social selection in admissions occurring even within those neighbourhoods. 85% of schools in the top 500 admit fewer FSM pupils than live in their catchment area, with over a quarter having a gap of five percentage points or more.

Socially selective schools which control their own admissions policies such as converter academies, faith schools and single sex schools are all over-represented in the top 500 schools. Faith schools are among the most socially selective group of top schools, more than three times as selective as non-faith schools, and make up 33.4% of the list. Converter academies admit the lowest rate of disadvantaged pupils of the main school types, and comprise 63% of the top schools, compared to just 40% of all secondaries.

There are indications of improvement in the composition of top schools, with the average 9.4% FSM rate up from 7.6% in 2013. In that year, 57% of the best schools had FSM rates lower than six per cent, but the number below that mark has fallen to 39%.

The best schools measured by the Department for Education's new 'Progress 8' measure have FSM rates much closer to the national average (15.2%), and are less socially selective, with a third of these schools actually admitting more FSM pupils than their catchment area. Converter academies are less prevalent in this group, with more sponsored academies, foundation schools and community schools.

Living in the catchment area of a top comprehensive school is associated with a house price 'premium' of around 20%. A typical house in the catchment area of a top 500 school costs £45,700 more than the average house in the same local authority. The best schools measured using Progress 8 are associated with a much lower premium of 8.3%, or £18,200.

Read the full report [here](#).



Closing the attainment gap in maths: a study of good practice in early years and primary settings (February 2017)

The Fair Education Alliance – which represents over 75 leading business, education and voluntary organisations – sets out the practical steps that schools and government can take to improve maths results among children from the least privileged backgrounds. It is calling for the adoption of a number of policies to drive progress in closing the numeracy attainment gap:

A national maths professional development programme (subject knowledge and pedagogy) for early years settings which includes better support for practitioners in assessing and supporting children’s progress in maths.

Data recording – the FEA's numeracy working group proposes that the current Ofsted inspection framework is changed so it looks for greater evidence of how well settings are supporting children’s early maths development.

Parental engagement - evidence shows the centrality of parent engagement for better outcomes in children’s short and long term learning and development. All early years settings and primary schools should have focused approaches to developing this further.

Transition - continuity in approaches to maths support children’s understanding and further development. There needs to be a focus on continuity in approach and practice from early years to primary school and primary to secondary school and beyond.

Action research/individual research projects - focused teacher/practitioner CPD builds teacher and practitioner skills and confidence in teaching maths. They become confident in performance and attitude. This is further developed through action research in schools and early years settings or teacher/practitioner individual projects.

Read the full report [here](#).