



Closing the Gap

Welcome to the Autumn 2017 Newsletter

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

Closing the Gap Conference

27th June 2018

The Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester

We are pleased to confirm the following key note presentations for this year's conference:

Parental engagement - Jean Gross (CBE), Oxford University Press

Jean's career in education as a teacher, an educational psychologist, author and an adviser to government is all about children who, one way or another, don't have much going for them in their lives, and need extra support and help. Until 2005, Jean was Senior Director within the government's Primary National Strategy, responsible for its work on overcoming barriers to achievement. More recently Jean was England's Communication Champion for children, and received a CBE in the 2012 New Year's Honours List for services to education.

Her recent report, 'Parental Engagement: How to make a real difference', offers advice and strategies from schools who have successfully engaged parents and raised attainment.

Equality and diversity - Andrew Moffat (MBE), Assistant Headteacher at Parkfield Community in Birmingham

Author of 'No Outsiders in Our School: Teaching the Equality Act in Schools'. Andrew will share his work on creating an ethos where everyone is welcome, regardless of differences.

Effective transition of Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils - Brian Foster, Chair of Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT)

Author of 'Educational Equality for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children in the UK'. Brian will share key messages around supporting GRT pupils to transition effectively from primary to secondary school.

A range of workshops will be available in the afternoon including feedback from Gloucestershire's pilot projects working with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) on 'Improving Literacy in KS1' and 'Evaluating the Impact of Pupil Premium Funding'.

The full programme, and a booking form, will be sent out via Heads Up next term. If you would like to reserve a place then please email kathryn.ursell@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

Inspection Handbooks

Revised handbooks for section 5 and section 8 inspections have been published to reflect amendments to the short inspection process following the summer consultation, the new inspection data summary report (IDSR) and some clarifications. The main amendments related to pupil premium/disadvantaged pupils are within the 'Outcomes for pupils' section, pages 58-59, of the section 5 handbook. Emphasis has been placed on the caution inspectors should exercise when reviewing data for small groups:

Disadvantaged pupils

188. Inspectors will take particular account of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils from their starting points. They will consider the progress made by the end of the key stage compared with that made nationally by other pupils with similar starting points. Inspectors must review carefully what data is meaningful and avoid focusing on the performance of small groups where assessment information is less reliable.

189. For current pupils, inspectors will consider the impact of what a school is doing to reduce any differences in progress and attainment between disadvantaged and other pupils with the same starting points. Where performance information is limited due to small group size, inspectors should gather a wide range of other evidence to ensure the school is providing effectively for disadvantaged pupils, including reviewing pupils' work, and talking to pupils and teachers.

190. Inspectors should talk to leaders about the quality of teaching, behaviour and the design and delivery of the curriculum to examine why there may be underperformance for some pupils. Where there is an identifiable shortfall in progress or attainment of disadvantaged children or in wider evidence, inspectors should consider:

- the adequacy of the core provision and approaches that have an impact on all children
- identified needs of the child, e.g. SEND, and how these are met, and
- any additional provision that may appropriately be made on the basis of family economic or social disadvantage.

Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR)

Disadvantaged pupils are compared to the **national for other pupils AND the national for all pupils**, in line with the section 5 school inspection handbook. Areas to investigate on the front page of the IDSR will also identify where disadvantaged pupil performance in the school is below the national for **disadvantaged pupils**.

Ofsted Strategy 2017-2022

The strategy has a strong focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and commitment to closing the attainment gap through effective use of evidence (page 10):

"Ofsted has a strong focus on outcomes for disadvantaged children. We will continue to report on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the national level and through our survey inspection work. We will also make sure that inspectors are properly trained on identifying what can be inferred from the performance of small sub-groups within a provider. We recognise the importance of making effective use of whole-school, targeted and individual interventions tailored to specific circumstances. The existence of a gap does not always indicate that an intervention at sub-group level is the right approach. Very often, identifying and correcting institutional shortcomings (for example in curriculum, teaching or behaviour management) will, as evidence from organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) shows, improve outcomes, with disproportionate benefits for lower attaining and disadvantaged students. In some cases, improving whole institution provision will be necessary but not sufficient. In such cases, more targeted approaches to supporting disadvantaged groups and individuals will be required."

Literacy and numeracy catch-up strategies, November 2017

This report reviews catch-up strategies and interventions which are intended for low-attaining pupils in literacy or numeracy at the end of key stage 2. The review intends to support teachers to make evidence-informed decisions about how they support low-attaining year 7 pupils in the school setting by summarising the evidence on what does and doesn't work.

The report also includes a summary of broader principles which have helped the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school.

Full report can be downloaded [here](#).

Opportunity Areas programme to drive social mobility

On 9th October Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Education, launched plans to raise education standards and broaden the horizons of young people in areas struggling with social mobility. The full article can be read [here](#).

The Opportunity Area programme is a key part of the Education Secretary's priority of tackling social mobility and improving opportunities for young people across the country. 12 areas, identified as social mobility 'coldspots' – areas with both poor social mobility and schools that face challenges - will receive a share of £72 million to boost opportunities for young people in these communities.

Plans for the first six Opportunity Areas - Blackpool, Derby, North Yorkshire Coast, Norwich, Oldham and West Somerset – can be viewed [here](#). Plans for the remaining six areas - Bradford, Doncaster, Fenland & East Cambridgeshire, Hastings, Ipswich and Stoke-on-Trent - will be published by the end of the year.

Supporting the Children of Armed Forces Personnel

The Royal British Legion has published a new guide entitled, *Supporting Service children in school in England*. The children of serving Armed Forces personnel face some unique challenges as they progress through school and the Legion has pulled together best practice examples from across the country to help improve the experience of these children. The guide can be accessed via their [website](#).

The Armed Forces Covenant outlines the obligations that government and the nation owe to all those who serve, have served, and their families. The Legion has always supported local authorities in their efforts to help the local Armed Forces community, and as part of this work they have this month published a new guide titled, *Supporting Service children in school in England*.

The children of serving Armed Forces personnel face some unique challenges as they progress through school and the Legion have pulled together information and best practice examples from across the country to help improve the experience of these children as much as possible.

If you have any questions about this publication or any of the Legion's work, please don't hesitate to contact Bruce Holborn Bholborn@britishlegion.org.uk.

Promising Projects

'Promising Projects' are those EEF-funded projects which have, when first trialled, demonstrated a positive impact in raising the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people, according to their independent evaluation. Evaluation reports for the following projects can be viewed [here](#) (average impact):

- Graduate Coaching Programme (+5 months)
- Nuffield Early Language Intervention (+4 months)
- Dialogic Teaching (+2 months)
- Thinking, Doing, Talking Science (+3 months)
- Magic Breakfast (+2 months)
- Catch Up Numeracy (+3 months)
- Catch Up Literacy (+2 months)
- Switch-on Reading (+3 months)
- Accelerated Reader (+3 months)
- Texting Parents (+1 month)
- Improving Numeracy & Literacy in KS1 (+3 months)
- Philosophy for Children (+2 months)
- ReflectED Meta-cognition (+4 months)
- Abracadabra (+3 months)
- Using Self-regulation to Improve Writing (+9 months)
- Grammar for Writing (+3 months)

Guidance Reports

Clear & actionable guidance for teachers on a range of high priority issues can be viewed [here](#):

- Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants, November 2016. ***NB new additional support materials available including: TA observation schedule; TA policy update; Teacher-TA agreement template; available to download [here](#).***
- Improving Literacy in Key Stage One, September 2016. ***NB new self-assessment guide available to download [here](#).***
- Improving Literacy in Key Stage Two, April 2017. ***NB self-assessment guide will be made available soon.***
- Improving Mathematics in Key Stages Two & Three, November 2017

Coming soon:

- A School's Guide to Implementation, *February 2018*
- Preparing for Literacy (Early Years), *Spring 2018*
- Metacognition and Self-regulation, *Spring 2018*
- Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools, *Spring 2018*
- Digital Technology, *2018*
- Science, *2018*

20 Gloucestershire schools are currently involved in a project with an EEF Research School on putting the **Improving Literacy in Key Stage One** report into practice. Feedback from the project so far will be included in the Spring edition of the Closing the Gap newsletter.

Research Reports

Review of socio-economic status and science learning in formal educational settings, September 2017

The researchers found that the strongest factor affecting pupils' science scores is how well they understand written texts. According to the report, poor literacy skills can affect how well a pupil is able to understand scientific vocabulary and to prepare scientific reports. This suggests that strategies to boost disadvantaged pupils' reading comprehension could have a positive impact on their achievement in science too. [Read more.](#)

Early Language Development: Needs, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, October 2017

Toddlers need to be using between 50 and 100 words before they start putting words together, a skill that can be a better predictor of later abilities than the number of words used. That was one of the findings from a new review of the evidence on early language development, commissioned by the EEF in partnership with Public Health England, to find out which interventions have the greatest potential for boosting toddlers' language skills and reducing inequalities in outcomes. [Read more.](#)

Toolkits

Early Years Toolkit updated

EEF's [Early Years Toolkit](#) was updated in October 2017. This is an accessible summary of educational research - more than 1,500 individual studies are grouped into 12 important topics, each summarised in terms of the average impact on: (1) attainment, (2) the strength of the supporting evidence, and (3) the cost. The update incorporates a number of new studies and reinforces the importance of high-quality early years provision – for example, in communications and language, numeracy, and self-regulation – especially for young children from the most disadvantaged homes.

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

This report follows on from the [FEA Report Card 2015 \(FEA 2016\)](#) which showed that in some areas children are better served by some schools than others. Although family background has a significant impact on children's achievement in England, the case studies in this report show that with a whole school or setting approach to maths, the link between underachievement and socio-economic disadvantage can be broken.

The schools and early years settings that are getting it right, as shown by these case studies, are delivering a high quality education irrespective of children's social or economic background. This report not only provides teachers and practitioners with examples of best practice which can be applied in classrooms and early years settings, it provides a strategic plan for policy makers on approaches to maths which can be scaled up. Full report can be downloaded [here](#).

Also worth a read is their state of the nation report - [FEA Report Card September 2017](#).



Extra Time: Private tuition and out-of-school study, new international evidence, September 2017

Extra Time shows how private tuition and out-of-school instruction compare internationally. Talented young people from less well-off backgrounds receive substantially less extra help than those from more advantaged backgrounds. Also stark is the inequality in access to parental help with homework. This shows how much more needs to be done to support parental engagement for those from less well-off backgrounds.

“...for students of similar ability, the gaps between disadvantaged and advantaged groups are also stark. So, private tuition is exacerbating existing educational inequalities. If we are to create a level playing field, we must ensure that private tuition doesn't make this inequality worse. A state-funded voucher scheme is the most effective way to deal with the problem. Agencies that don't charge commission or provide some free tuition to disadvantaged students also help. No one wants to limit parents doing their best for their children, or supporting them academically outside of school hours. But, we need to make sure that these advantages are available as widely as possible: to narrow, rather than widen the attainment gap. Otherwise we make it harder still for those who are already at a disadvantage.” Read the full report [here](#).

Life Lessons: Improving essential life skills for young people, October 2017

This report brings together new polling to highlight the recognition among teachers, employers and young people on the importance of life skills. It found that:

- 88% of young people, 94% of employers and 97% of teachers said that life skills are as or more important than academic qualifications.
- There are big socio-economic gaps in access to extra-curricular activities, with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds less likely to take up activities than their better off peers (46% compared to 66%).
- There is a big mismatch between pupil take-up of extra-curricular activities such as debating and volunteering in secondary schools – activities that could help develop the life skills regarded as essential by employers – and what teachers say their school is offering.

Read the full report [here](#).

Engaging parents effectively: Evaluation of the PEN Home Learning Project, November 2017

The Parental Engagement Fund (PEF) supports five projects, all aimed at addressing inequality in children's early attainment by supporting the development of best practice in parental engagement. A team of research experts from the University of Oxford are acting as 'critical friends' providing support throughout the two year project to help each organisation develop their monitoring and evaluation strategies and identify the key elements of successful parental engagement interventions.

As the projects draw to a close, researchers from Oxford University have conducted a study on the Engaging Parents Effectively project, led by Manchester-based Parental Engagement Network. The project provided parents with fun activities and resources to support their child's learning at home. These included finger puppets, tambourines and books. The results found that taking part in the intervention had a significant effect on the child's home learning environment, measured by learning activities the parents reported they do at home with their children. Read the full report [here](#).

EVENTS

Teaching Assistant Conference – 17th January 2018

With schools spending a significant amount on TA employment and research suggesting they are not generally being used in ways that add significantly to pupil outcomes. How do we ensure TAs are motivated, deployed, and trained effectively? This conference will provide an affordable CPD and networking opportunity for your TA's.

Key note speakers from Maximising the Impact of TAs and ICT with Mr P.

Workshops provided by Speech and Language therapist, EAL specialist teacher, Educational Psychologists, Advisory Teaching Service, Nancy Gedge (author of blog 'No Ordinary Boy'), SEN Monitoring Officers.

Date: 17th January 2018, 9.30am-3.00pm

Venue: Cheltenham College Preparatory School

Cost: £40 per delegate (lunch and refreshments provided)

Further Information and booking link can be found at [Gloucester Road Primary](#).

Raising the Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils – 26th January 2018

This conference aims to improve teaching and learning for Black Caribbean pupils in the classroom. It looks in detail at the performance, the barriers to learning and school strategies to raise the achievement of Black Caribbean and disadvantaged pupils.

The conference brings together some of the leading experts and practitioners to engage in panel discussions and to share best practice on what works in narrowing the achievement gap. The conference is a unique opportunity to share the findings of the research reports and to hear from classroom practitioners. Successful practice and strategies will be shared by case study schools, headteachers, teachers and researchers. The conference offers practical tips for teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) to keep up to date in the field of what works in school improvement.

Date: 26th January 2018, 9.00am-3.30pm

Venue: UCL Institute of Education, London

Cost: £240 per delegate (lunch and refreshments provided)

All delegates will receive complimentary copies of two new research reports:

- Black Caribbean Underachievement in Schools in England
- The Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils: Good Practice

For further details please email Dr Feyisa Demie - fdemie@lambeth.gov.uk.