

**Disadvantaged Pupil Enquiry Visit  
Tapton School, Sheffield**

[www.taptonschool.co.uk](http://www.taptonschool.co.uk)

**Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

**REPORT**

**Tapton**  
SCHOOL

Valuing Everyone, Caring for Each Other, Achieving Excellence



### **Purpose of our Visit**

What can we learn from Tapton School, Sheffield to inform our strategies to improve outcomes for disadvantaged learners in North Yorkshire secondary schools?

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### **Schools participating in the visit**

The visit arose as part of the **3 day NYCC Maximising the Impact of Pupil Premium Training**

<b>Schools Involved</b>
George Pindar School, Scarborough Selby High School Tadcaster Grammar School Thirsk School St Bernard's Catholic High School, Barrow in Furness

The half day visit was led by Katharine Bruce, Lead Adviser Vulnerable Learners, School Improvement Team, North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Service

### **Our interest in Tapton School**

- An 11-18 school with 1,660 students, including a Sixth Form of around 500
- A well developed, evidence based Pupil Premium Strategy including a Teaching for Success CPD programme

#### **Pupil Premium - 2018 outcomes**

- Progress 8 measure was 0.12 for pupil premium students.
- P8 scores for English (0.37) and Maths (0.25) show that pupil premium students at Tapton make significantly more progress than other students nationally
- PP Ebacc score is 0.08 and open basket is -0.09. The open basket score is weaker as a result of our curriculum of high value qualifications

## Visit Programme

Removing Barriers to Learning – how we enable our disadvantaged students to flourish

Visit date: 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019

09.15	<b>Arrival &amp; refreshments</b>
9.30	<b>Learning Walk</b> <i>Accompanied by</i> <i>Dawn Cook - Achievement for All Assistant Headteacher</i> <i>Viv Bates - Director of Science</i>
10.30	<b>Our Context, Vision and Approach to Teaching and Learning</b> <i>Kat Rhodes - Headteacher</i>
11.00	<b>Our Strategy for Tackling Disadvantage</b> <i>Dawn Cook – Achievement for All Assistant Headteacher</i>
11.30	<b>Refreshments</b>
11.50	<b>Student Voice</b> <i>Discussions with groups of students from KS3,4 and 5</i>
12.30	<b>Final Round Up</b>

## Key Findings from the Visit

1. Having had an opportunity to reflect on the enquiry visit, as a school leader what for you have been the most significant learning points you have taken from this visit

### Leadership

- Culture and ethos of the school
- Staff-student professional relationships
- High challenge/high support
- A culture of high expectations needs to be felt at every level of the school if all students, including disadvantaged, are to make progress
- 'High Expectations are the key to everything' – how to challenge a staff mindset that may see 'Pupil Premium students' as a homogenous group rather than individuals and a cohort destined to under-achieve. The need to focus on staff having ambition for vulnerable learners and sharing our aspiration for them with them
- There is no such thing as a 'pupil premium' student
- The importance of keeping up with recent research and not being afraid to try them out – even if it means as a senior leadership team (SLT) you step back from micromanaging everything

and give the power to teaching staff

- The importance of staff CPD – in particular subject specific CPD
- 'Teaching for Success' programme – delivery led by school's SLT
- CPD for staff is vital. This needs to be of high quality, well planned and with a sound rationale. This will then enable teachers to be excellent classroom practitioners, thus enabling all students, including disadvantaged, to make good progress. Pupil premium money should also therefore be used to support staff CPD
- Teacher development makes the biggest difference. The importance of subject specific training and the relentless drive to improve staff's professional development
- The implementation of initiatives is key if they are to be successful. The staff development programme has helped establish teaching practices in the classroom which allow pupils to perform well
- Rigorous tracking and follow up addressing barriers and how to remove these
- Robust evaluation and identification of priorities: 'Oracy' a key focus for 2019-20

### **Teaching and Learning**

- The importance of quality first teaching – not putting things in place purely to stake pupil premium but with pupil premium in mind – such as teaching approaches, mixed attainment setting, and high expectations
- The school has learning at its heart and pupils were engaged in learning in all lessons I visited
- The amount of time spent on tasks by pupils during lessons was far larger than the time spent listening to teachers
- Ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make good progress comes down, at its core, to excellent classroom practice. This is something I knew already, but I think seeing this in practice at Tapton really brought it home that pupil premium money should be used to push forward quality classroom teaching

### **Personal Development/Behaviour**

- The need to focus on equity and not equality. To make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers rather than such a drive towards 'consistency' of behaviour that in itself hinders students who struggle with self-regulation. To find alternatives to isolating students who then miss out on learning time when they may already be under-achieving. . I loved that Tapton does not have an Isolation Room
- Intrinsic motivation of the students
- The school has a relaxed feel in terms of relationships and uniform which reduces the need for confrontation between staff/ students
- Investment in attendance and punctuality officer building relationships with families

**2. What 3 specific strategies stand out for you that you will seek to implement within the context of your own school (consider Leadership / Teaching and Learning / Curriculum/ Personal Development/ Behaviour /Attendance )**

**Leadership**

- 'Hearts and minds' whole staff talk about aspiration and ambition for our vulnerable learners, tackling the spoken idea from some staff that as a school we are never going to 'diminish the difference' and that this cohort are destined to under-achieve. A reminder of our moral compass
- High expectations – high support
- Building capacity within staff as the biggest impact driver
- Develop our Teacher Learner Community programme with departments focusing one research area (metacognition, communication or memory) as a follow on from our last year TLC programme. Ensure that subjects have at least 35 hours of subject specific training. Offer additional training to a member of each faculty who can then facilitate and support further within each faculty/department
- A more subject specific CPD programme
- Structured CPD clearly linked to school priorities

**Curriculum**

- Having discussed the possibility with our Deputy Head, I will seek to establish the role of literacy co-ordinator in school in 2019/20 in order to work towards bridging the vocabulary gap between some students and others
- The aim would also be to build more solidly on the work students do at primary schools and to ensure there is greater continuity in terms of literacy across the curriculum

**Teaching and Learning**

- Working with the Senior Leader responsible for teaching and learning to re-focus our school on its core purpose; ensuring staff are well equipped to be excellent practitioners. This may involve the establishment of teaching and learning communities/working groups
- Developing the role of teaching assistants further to support interventions – e.g. using them in tutor times (as done at Tapton). Focus on KS3 students in these intervention programmes, to prevent gaps from growing as students get older.
- Look at the teaching and learning concept of Why-How-What as a teaching tool and a planning strategy for staff
- Focus on teaching and learning on some of the areas Tapton have covered over the last 12 months and plan to cover next year.
- Reduce the amount of time students are listening to teachers as opposed to completing appropriate tasks
- Use of form tutors more to track attainment- produce a form tutor summary after each tracker

**Personal Development /Behaviour**

- To develop an attachment friendly behaviour/engagement policy and to ask staff to proactively use behaviour strategies and our on call system for students who are struggling to regulate rather than reactively use it (which currently means students are duty managed and spend a half day in isolation – missing crucial hours of learning)
- Reduction in the use of the school bell to allow calmer movement of students at the end of lessons.

### **3. Any other observations from the visit –from the presentations, lessons visited student voice**

#### **Leadership**

- SLT shared values of inclusivity that permeate through the school
- The sense of a child's worth being about more than just grades – a school culture that values the 'whole child' - learner levels: respect, resilience, resourcefulness etc
- The culture of aspiration. One sixth form student spoke about her school helping her to make herself proud and being the best version of herself. Students proud of themselves, their school and motivated to do well. There was no stigma nor sense of a 'Try-Hard'
- The presentations delivered by Kat and Dawn were excellent – really informative but I liked the fact that they both talked honestly about where there have been obstacles to overcome, what didn't go well and how they would look to address this in the future

#### **Teaching and Learning**

- The focus and drive on pedagogy and staff training. The teachers we saw were brilliant, their lessons demonstrated that independent learning was a typical way of learning and that high expectations of all students were evident
- The teaching observed was of a high quality
- The use of seating plans and the changing of these regularly to offer students variety, support and with a heightened focus on knowing the vulnerable learners in the classroom

#### **Personal Development /Behaviour**

- Excellent staff-student relationships
- Many students were very articulate
- The sixth formers we spoke to as part of the student panel were excellent ambassadors for the school
- The younger students were shier, but nonetheless made some valuable contributions
- Students were proud to belong to the school. They felt respected and supported.
- The students we met (particularly the 3 sixth formers, and one year 9 male) clearly demonstrated they appreciate the time that is invested in them as individuals and were a credit to the school
- Behaviour seemed excellent

#### **Context**

- I was surprised to find that the proportion of pupil premium students in each year group who

were white British was so low. The majority of our pupil premium students are white British and this is the group we find hardest to motivate

#### 4. How will this learning inform priorities and actions for your school's pupil premium strategy?

- By firstly thinking about enquiry questions prior to the visit and then reflecting on learning points and strategies from the day has in itself informed priorities and actions. Since the visit actions related to the priorities of high expectation/culture; teacher development; attachment friendly behaviour policy and practice) have been achieved through :
  - Whole staff presentation on the first day back in September focusing on key areas listed: PP Review booked for 24<sup>th</sup> September, Visits to 3 more schools scheduled.
  - Behaviour and Subject specific training calendared for the year.
  - Teacher Learner Community leader group working on delivery of this year's staff training. These actions in themselves will continue to inform and develop the pupil premium strategy
- We will tackle fewer initiatives next year and they will focus on supporting teaching and learning and developing cultural capital, as opposed to students being withdrawn from lessons.
- It will inform pupil premium whole staff CPD and form strands of the pupil premium strategy
- Try and engage current teaching and learning team to relook at the strategy for teaching in the class room, and give staff more ownership of it
- Look at the intervention we offer and ensure it is based on individual need not pupil premium as a group
- Prioritise funding for resources and enrichment activities for pupil premium students
- The strategy will focus heavily on improving teaching and learning, improving literacy across the curriculum and tightening up on interventions at KS3. These were three areas that I think Tapton is strong in

#### 5. Any other comments

- The visit was inspiring and offered many great ideas and strategies. It validated the values that underpin our current PP strategy but also helped sharpen my focus on HOW and WHAT can be my next steps to put in to action, the priorities that will make the most difference and have the most impact
- A huge thank you Kat and her team. They were really inspiration and demonstrates that the school is one people are lucky to work in, and more importantly a school that the staff and students want to be a part of
- A very informative day. It made me think about the Why? (ethics) How? (engagement) and What? (excellence) at our own school
- Students we spoke to were very supportive of their school and the learning culture in their lessons.



## 6. Final quotes from the schools involved

"Tapton optimises a school culture of aspiration and ambition for all, including the most vulnerable students. The young people there are proud of their school and of themselves. High expectations permeate throughout and students can, and do, realise their life chances and dreams." Tadcaster Grammar School

"The student voice panel was very informative. It was amazing to hear that students would not change anything about their school even if they had a magic wand!" George Pindar School

"Kat and her team are a great example of how when you create a driven team and apply quality first teaching students achieve excellent results, and aspire to do themselves proud." Selby High School

"Students are very supportive of their school and the learning culture they experience." St Bernard's Catholic High School

"I am hugely grateful to Dawn, Kat and all of the staff and students we met for their kindness in welcoming us to Tapton School. The day was immensely valuable from the point of view of my own professional learning. It is clear that Tapton is an excellent school, with values that totally correspond to my own. The overwhelming sense I got from the school was that no child is ever left behind, that no stone is left unturned to ensure every student reaches their full potential." Thirsk School

## Dissemination

This enquiry visit will inform the North Yorkshire Raising Achievement of Disadvantaged Pupil Strategy

This report will be located at <http://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/raising-achievement-vulnerable-learners>

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