

## **Pupil Premium Review Ruislip Gardens Primary School**

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017**

### **Purpose**

- To conduct a comprehensive and impartial evaluation of the impact and value for money of the school's Pupil Premium (PP) funding
- To acknowledge strategies, initiatives and approaches that are judged to be having a positive impact and contributing to enabling pupils eligible for PP funding to make strong progress and reach high standards
- To identify those strategies that would appear to be having less impact on enabling this group of pupils to make strong progress and reach high standards
- To suggest some alternative strategies that the school has not yet adopted and ideas regarding how existing initiatives might have a greater impact upon pupil progress
- To make clear and specific recommendations to school leaders aimed at strengthening provision going forward.

### **Review team**

- Mark Hartley, Headteacher, Barnes Primary School (Richmond)
- Sarah Bouette, Headteacher, St Thomas CE Primary School (Kensington and Chelsea)

### **Approach**

- evaluation of teaching and learning through direct lesson observation, with a focus on classes containing a higher number of PP pupils
- evaluation of teaching and learning through conducting pupil workbook scrutinies: English; mathematics and reading journals
- establishing the views of staff and the Chair of Governors
- establishing pupil views through semi-structured, paired pupil interviews.

### **Questions**

- Is pupil premium funding being spent on the right things? Could it be spent better?
- Are the current plans for future PP expenditure at Ruislip Garden Primary School appropriate and are they starting to make a positive difference?
- Have there been improvements in the quality of classroom teaching since the Ofsted inspection in March?
- Does ongoing 'day-to-day' assessment in the classroom result in a good match between the challenges set for pupils and their current attainment?
- How effective is teacher questioning? Have improvements been secured since the inspection?
- How is classroom talk (teachers and pupils) managed? How much does productive pupil talk contribute to pupils achieving successful outcomes?
- Are teachers' assessments accurate?

- How positive is the impact of the work of the PP mentor on the standards achieved and progress made by PP pupils?
- How good is the school's continuing professional development programme? Is it having a positive impact on classroom practice?
- How well are support staff deployed to make a difference to pupils' learning?
- How well do teaching staff assist pupils to make good choices in the books they read independently?
- Is the Pupil Premium Tracker assisting senior leaders to effectively track the progress of PP pupils?

### **Lines of enquiry**

- The impact of members of the school's senior leadership team on raising the standard of teaching
- The impact of members of the school's senior leadership team on supporting teachers to make accurate assessment judgements
- The quality and impact of the school's professional development programme
- The impact of the work of the PP mentor
- The impact of other additional support (such as teaching assistants)
- The school's provision for higher attaining PP pupils
- Accuracy in teacher assessment and assessment being used to inform planning

### **Strengths identified**

- 1) **The leadership of the Acting Headteacher and the Assistant Headteacher at a time of considerable challenge is commendable.** The long-term absence of the Headteacher has been difficult for other senior professionals to manage. It has also reduced the school's leadership capacity during a period when staff morale has been adversely affected by the disappointing school inspection outcome. The detail contained in the Ofsted Action Plan is testament to the thorough work of these two professionals. Strenuous efforts have been made to reconsider the impact of the way pupil premium funding is spent. These school leaders have become more focused on the impact of the initiatives that have been established to promote the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- 2) **The school's Chair of Governors revealed an increasingly clear grasp of the school's current challenges** and how he and the governors can support the management of the school in their role as 'critical friends'. He was pragmatic, realistic and open to new thinking. He would be an ideal person to play the role of link governor for those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding.
- 3) **Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.** Pupils are keen to learn new skills; they show a positive attitude to their studies. Many disadvantaged pupils require additional support and guidance, but despite these challenges their dedication to self-improvement is clear. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson a pupil who was clearly finding a writing task hard remained committed to it and used the guidance of a teaching assistant to complete the task to the best of his ability.
- 4) **In the best lessons observed teachers clearly modelled what pupils were expected to do.** They extended pupils' vocabulary; they deployed teaching

assistants in effective ways so that they had a positive impact on the progress of pupil premium pupils and other lower attaining pupils. Their lessons were conducted at a brisk pace. A purposefulness and an energy were in evidence and pupils were appropriately challenged for the full duration of the lesson.

- 5) **There was some good evidence of extended writing**, particularly in the books of pupils in Year 2, Year 3 and Year 6. In Year 6 for example, a range of sentence structures were in evidence and pupils used some sophisticated vocabulary to express their ideas. In Year 3 there was some evidence of effective descriptive detail being used to enrich the quality of pupils' writing.
- 6) **Positive developments in reading provision and its organization have been secured.** Guided reading was not observed on the day of the review, but a well-structured system appears to be in place. A number of the pupils' reading journals displayed regular entries, with pupils showing good engagement with their frequent personal reading. It appears that there is an increasingly closer monitoring of the reading habits of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding.
- 7) **In a Year 2 class some good evidence of vocabulary development and the use of 'word mats' to support pupils' writing was observed.** Pupils were excited about using synonyms. They relished the opportunity to use words like *livid*, *irate* and *infuriated* in their writing. It is likely that a significant number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds will have a more limited vocabulary than many of their peers. 'Feeding them' new vocabulary, and demonstrating how to use this vocabulary in context, in exemplar sentences will, over time, make a profound difference to their ability to use spoken and written language effectively.
- 8) **Some evidence of paired discussion was observed** (though greater use could be made of this approach). In a Year 4 mathematics lesson this was employed to provide an opportunity for pupils to use reasoning. Paired discussion offers pupils a chance to make sense of what they are learning. It is also an active, participatory experience that allows all pupils to contribute to the learning situation in an active way.
- 9) **Teachers make the time to mark pupils' workbooks and provide feedback to individuals.** In general feedback is regular and constructive. It acknowledges pupils' efforts and points the way forward, with the intention of assisting them to secure improvements. In the interviews that were conducted Year 4 and Year 5 pupils stated that the written feedback comments in their workbooks are helpful. They also know that they are expected to respond to them.
- 10) **Teaching assistants offer close support to pupil premium pupils.** For example, in a Year 5 class the teaching assistant closely supported a group. She worked very hard, explaining how to tackle the problems that had been set. This was also the case in a Year 2 mathematics lesson when a teaching assistant asked pupils to elaborate on how they were feeling about a problem. She did not accept their first answers but asked further, probing questions. It is anticipated that when improvements in the quality of classroom teaching have been secured the impact of the work of teaching assistant will be even greater.

- 11) **Pupil interviews revealed conclusively that pupil premium learners enjoy school and feel a sense of belonging and loyalty to Ruislip Gardens.** Pupils spoke very positively about trips, theme events and the theatre initiatives the school has created. They particularly enjoy the merit band assembly and the school trips, along with taking part in performances, such as Hercules.
- 12) **The school's documentation – for example, the Ofsted action plan - is detailed and comprehensive.** It reveals a clear intention to focus on raising the standards achieved and the progress made by more disadvantaged pupils. It manifests a strong desire to offer the best possible support to this group of learners.

## Key findings

A) The creative thinking, organised approach and substantial work of senior professionals has resulted in the introduction of a large number of initiatives designed to raise the educational standards and learning progress of disadvantaged pupils. **The potential for these strategies to make a positive difference for this group of learners is currently being limited and restricted by the quality of classroom teaching.** Senior leaders may also wish to reconsider the number of initiatives that have been established. At present there are so many it is hard to track and evaluate how much difference they are making to pupil premium pupils (less may be more!).

B) **The standards pupil premium pupils achieve and the progress they make from their initial starting points will improve when the quality of classroom teaching improves.** The impact of the substantial additional provision the school has created – such as after school tuition – will be enhanced if there is greater consistency in the quality of 'first teaching'. In general, teaching assistants take their cue from the classroom teacher, who has overall responsibility for pupil progress and the quality of learning. At the present time the value teaching assistants are adding is being reduced as a result of teaching that requires improvement.

C) **To improve the quality of teaching teachers need support to develop and extend their knowledge and understanding of how children learn.** Compelling research findings (see '*Visible Learning and the Science of How we Learn*', John Hattie and Gregory Yates, Routledge, 2014) outline the importance of learning being broken down into small, manageable chunks. Alongside this learners require clear modelling by the teacher, so that they know exactly what is expected of them. In one lesson on division the 'learning steps' that pupils were asked to take were too large for many. Rather than working with small numbers and employing a practical, 'hands-on' approach (sharing 4 biscuits onto 2 plates; sharing 6 marbles into 3 jars) the teacher expected pupils to listen for too long. Pupils subsequently moved on to sharing larger amounts: 12,16,14 and 30. The language used in the problems that were set was difficult for five year olds to access: *If I have 14 buns and I eat 2 buns each day how many days will my buns last?*

D) **To enable pupils to reach higher standards teachers need to make greater use of both modelling and the sharing of quality examples.** All pupils, including

disadvantaged ones, will benefit from teachers illustrating and exemplifying what they expect pupils to do and the standards they should be aiming for. In an English lesson the teacher showed pupils an example of a short paragraph that included some good expanded noun phrases. Later he used a visualizer to share a further example. A scrutiny of what pupils subsequently wrote revealed that many had drawn on these examples and this had enabled them to write good sentences of their own. In a KS2 mathematics lesson on area the teacher could have made much better use of her interactive whiteboard to provide an explanation of how to find the area of different rectangles. She could also have demonstrated to pupils how to set out their work. Poor pupil layout in their mathematics books created an unnecessary barrier to their learning about this concept. In a KS2 mathematics lesson pupils were working in their books, setting out their work in columns. They were making errors because they did not make use of the squares in their books.

**E) In less successful lessons pupils spend too much time listening and too little time engaged in active, participatory learning.** Introductions are overly long and pupils have to process a large amount of language and try to make sense of it. An alternative approach would be for them to be actively engaged early in the lesson by being asked to do something. Subsequently, they could come back together with their peers to evaluate what they had found out, before progressing to an inter-related learning episode containing further challenge. In addition, valuable learning time is wasted when pupils put their hand up and have to wait for their teacher. In one lesson six pupils had their hands up at one time – some waited for a considerable period before their teacher attended to them. Similarly, in another lesson pupils had their hands up for an extended time frame. They were either waiting to see if they should move on to the next question, or because they were confused. This culture is unnecessary and can easily be avoided by taking simple practical steps that involve pupils being trained about what to do when they are 'stuck', or having further challenges available on their desks when they have completed an initial activity.

**F) Insufficient use is being made of the potential interactive whiteboards have to support the learning of all pupils, including those entitled to pupil premium funding.** Put simply, teachers do not create sufficient slides at the planning stage. In a mathematics lesson two slides were used; in an English lesson three were used; in another writing lesson one was displayed. In all six slides were displayed in the combined observation time of two hours. This valuable teaching resource can prove particularly helpful to pupil premium pupils and those learning English as an additional language, as visual information can be combined with text, making learning more accessible.

**G) The setting of discrete learning objectives each day, taken directly from the National Curriculum statutory requirements, creates a lack of coherence in pupils' learning experience.** It can also result in teachers not providing a sufficiently meaningful context for pupils' learning and the propensity for shallow understanding, rather than deep learning (that is more easily recalled by pupils on a future occasion). For example in one pupil's English book the learning objectives over a one week period were: *to retrieve information from a text; to join clauses with subordinate conjunctions; to accurately punctuate sentence types; to plan and identify features of non-fiction texts and to apply the features of non-fiction writing.*

This series of objectives, one after the other, is likely to be confusing and incoherent for a young child. There does not have to be a different learning objective every single day - more generic and simplified learning objectives will assist pupils. Whilst all teachers need to teach English grammar, this requirement should not dictate the English lesson objectives they set and communicate to learners.

**H) Greater clarity in the teacher's thinking, at the planning stage, is likely to improve the quality of children's learning.** For example, the learning objective (seen in a pupil's book): *to use similes and verbs to describe a character* is too complex for a young child. Similarly, this success criteria for one of the mathematics sessions observed – *to use perimeter to find area* – is misleading and confusing. A 'ladder to success' included numerous success criteria: *joined letters, noun phrases, verbs and adverbs* and *sentence openers*. Unfortunately this impacted negatively on pupils' enthusiasm for the writing activity.

**I) Poor handwriting across the school is proving a barrier to the learning of all pupils, including those entitled to pupil premium funding.** This is currently judged to be a major stumbling block for learners. Whilst senior leaders have made a sensible choice in adopting the Nelson handwriting scheme, very little evidence of handwriting practice was seen in pupils' English workbooks. This may be one factor in the significant discrepancy between the performance of girls (Year 6: 84% working at the national expectation) and boys (Year 6: 58% working at the national expectation). All learners, including pupil premium pupils, are likely to have a less positive outlook to writing (less personal pride) if their handwriting is poor. In one KS2 classroom observation 32% of pupils (9/28) were printing when working on small whiteboards.

**J) Classrooms are frequently cluttered, with full, untidy teachers' desks being mirrored by too many things being on the tables pupils sit at to learn.** The models established by the adults create an environmental culture that pupils tend to follow. The way a learning environment looks can impact positively or negatively on what transpires in that environment. A clean, tidy, well organized classroom, with aesthetically pleasing displays of pupils' work is more likely to raise pupils' expectations and aspirations than a cluttered, poorly kept space.

## **Pupils' views**

(Year 4 and 5 pupils eligible for additional support through pupil premium funding)

Overall pupils were very positive about the school:

- they are proud of their school
- they feel they are expected to work hard and that work is neither too hard, nor too easy
- pupils state that there is a lot of support for them, with at least two adults in each classroom
- teachers use smart boards to show them how to work things out
- pupils use thumbs up/thumbs down to show the teacher if they understand something. They mentioned using their white boards as an 'entry ticket' that allows them to record in their books

- they also explained the marking scheme of pink, yellow and green and said they would get more support if they had a pink mark.
- some commented that there is too much homework: *'it's too heavy and there's not long enough to complete it'*.
- there is guided reading every day and pupils were able to explain the systems that has been set up by teachers.
- pupils enjoy reading, in particular *Alex Rider, Midnight Gang, Cinderella Story* and *Harry Potter*. They explained that they complete written responses related to these books, such as play scripts.

## Recommendations

I) **If tangible evidence exists that a current initiative designed to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is making a significant positive difference that initiative should be maintained.** Anything that has been put in place that is clearly making a difference or, in the case of a newer initiative, appears to be making a difference, should continue and be retained. Similarly, if the school has begun a professional development focus on a specific area of learning (and the consensus is that this has proved valuable to teachers) that 'journey' should continue.

### Improving the quality of teaching

II) **Teaching and learning needs to be prioritized if pupil premium pupils are to make better progress from their relative starting points.** So, senior leaders need to devote as much of their time and focus to this pursuit and resist being pulled away by lower priority matters. In a busy day, with multiple demands, this is a considerable challenge. The priority focus for all schools must be pupil safety and well-being. After that, as much attention as possible needs to be given to improving teaching and learning.

III) **A comprehensive continuing professional development programme, with a focus on effective pedagogy, is required to raise teaching standards.** It is suggested that this is carefully planned so that a shared understanding emerges amongst teachers regarding how to break learning down into smaller chunks. This can be achieved by planning a series of inter-related learning episodes containing learning activities that are progressively and incrementally more challenging. A further focus should be on the centrality of teacher modelling as an essential element of an effective learning process. The importance of pupil talk and how to create high quality talk for learning should also be incorporated into this programme. Finally, the importance of multi-sensory learning, with an emphasis on learning being an active, 'participatory sport', needs to be exemplified.

IV) **The development of greater coaching capacity is required to assist less experienced teachers, and those whose teaching is not yet consistently good, to implement ideas from this professional development programme into their teaching practice.** It is suggested that capacity is extended in two ways. Firstly, by providing high quality external opportunities for stronger teachers so that they become consistently outstanding practitioners who have the knowledge to support

others. Secondly, by introducing an external teaching and learning consultant. This person would be an outstanding teacher, with Specialist Leader of Education accreditation and a successful track record of consultancy work. The author of this report is willing to recommend a highly qualified colleague who meets all of these requirements. Building teaching capacity within the organization is seen as key to raising teaching quality. If this is achieved it will benefit all learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

V) **'Showcasing' professional development sessions illustrating highly effective teaching and learning approaches and strategies are recommended, as these will assist in the creation of a shared understanding of the characteristics of effective teaching.** It is suggested that individual teachers are given a fifteen minutes slot that is subdivided into three sections: explaining the successful learning pupils were engaged in; showing examples of pupil outcomes; pinpointing exactly what it was that resulted in such good outcomes being achieved.

VI) **Once greater teaching expertise has emerged the establishment of a peer observation system would help the cross-fertilization of effective teaching practices.** The greatest gains from a peer observation programme are likely to emerge if four core principles are adhered to. In the first place the lesson being observed must be of a high quality. Secondly, the observer must have a specific focus. If this is not the case there is the likelihood that there will be too much information to process. If at all possible, the observer should be joined by an experienced, capable teacher who plays the role of coach, assisting the observer to appreciate the characteristics of effective practice. Finally, when the observation is followed (as soon as possible) by an opportunity for the teacher leading the lesson to engage in an unrushed discussion with the observer about what has transpired more professional learning ensues. This is a considerable investment of time, but the investment has the potential to pay rich dividends if the circumstances that have been described above exist.

VII) **The large number of teaching assistants at the school require ongoing, high quality continuing professional development.** These are the colleagues whose principal task is to work with the pupils who find learning most difficult. Some teaching assistants have been specifically designated to work with pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium grant. Is there a regular slot in the school week where they can receive input on key aspects of effective practice for lower attaining pupils, such a multi-sensory learning approaches?

VIII) **Ensuring greater accuracy in teachers' assessments of pupil attainment, along with a shared understanding of what constitutes each of the different assessment categories, is key to supporting all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.** 'Trial agreements' are required involving teachers looking at a series of examples of a pupils' work and using the assessment criteria the school has adopted to discuss categorization. Healthy debate – including some disagreement - is an essential part of establishing a norm and reaching a consensus about what constitutes a particular assessment award. Trial agreements are required for both writing and mathematics.

## **Improving the quality of provision**

**IX) Teachers need to create more interactive whiteboard slides, making greater use of this fundamental learning tool.** By creating a larger number teachers will not only provide greater access to learners, they will also structure the direction of their lesson. In many schools the slides teachers create are a form of lesson planning. Improvements to the design of slides would also support learners. Visual information should accompany text to maximize the multi-sensory dimension of the learning experience. Large, bold, colourful lettering should be used so that what is written stands out prominently (memorable learning).

**X) Regular, short handwriting sessions with a specific skills focus should be introduced into the school timetable for all year groups.** Teachers require clear guidance on how to teach handwriting. This should involve clear modelling to pupils (under a visualizer tends to be easier), ensuring that they are watching very carefully. Teacher modelling needs to be of a high quality to set the expectation for learners. Subsequently, pupils should make a few attempts (at least three) at trying to replicate what the teacher has produced. During the time that pupils are writing the teacher's and teaching assistant's role is to provide very precise, pedantic feedback that enables pupils to pay attention to small details. The best time to establish handwriting and presentation expectations is the start of the school year, in September. Senior leaders might also consider having a whole school handwriting competition during the first month of the school year.

**XI) Senior leaders need to establish very clear, non-negotiable, easy-to-follow expectations for the presentation of pupils' work.** At the present time the quality of many pupils' written work is being adversely hampered by limitations in their ability to set out their understanding in an orderly fashion. This is true in both their writing and their mathematics books. A simple system needs to be introduced and teachers need to model expectations to pupils right from the start of the new academic year in September . . . and on an ongoing basis after that.

**XII) Some teachers create supportive scaffolds to assist pupils with their writing. As a result the standard of the writing pupils produce in these classes is higher. All teachers need to be trained in how to plan a high quality preparatory process prior to asking pupils to write.** This could include the use of shared writing; textual deconstruction; drama activities; word mats; the 'chunking approach' and the sharing of quality examples produced by the pupils. Writing is one of the hardest things that teachers ask pupils to do. If there is insufficient scaffolding some pupils will struggle. It is highly likely that pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds, and those who speak English as an additional language, will struggle disproportionately more than other groups of pupils.

**XIII) The Pupil Premium Mentor should work with pupils of mixed attainment. This provides those pupils who are struggling with a partner who can offer support and set an expectation for positive learning behaviour.** If the pupils receiving support from her in small groups are set according to their current ability the lowest set is very likely to be difficult to manage (as she pointed out). This is because all of them find learning hard and feel frustrated. Frustration is often a catalyst for poor behaviour. When one frustrated pupil behaves badly another may

follow. Compelling research (The Sutton Trust, Hattie and Yates) points to effective mixed attainment teaching producing the greatest aggregate pupil outcomes.

**XIV) Lower attaining pupil premium pupils in Year 6, coming towards the end of their primary school education, and vulnerable to not meeting the national performance expectations for their age, should be heard reading every day by a teaching assistant.** This initiative should be given the highest priority. It is suggested that the approach should be: the same person, in the same place, at the same time for five days a week (or four if that's not possible). The teaching assistants offering this programme need to receive professional development from the school's SENCo. They should focus on assisting pupils to read for meaning. Four important pedagogic approaches that they can regularly focus on are:

- asking children to summarise sections of text, thereby encouraging them to focus on the main ideas in a passage and to check their own understanding of these
- getting children to ask questions about what they have read, which again encourages them to attend to the principal ideas and to think about their own comprehension of these
- asking children to clarify potentially problematic sections of text, requiring them to evaluate the current state of their understanding
- prediction: getting them to go beyond what the text actually says to make inferences which they have to justify by reference to what they have read.

**XV) Senior leaders may consider establishing some additional, 'enrichment' provision, delivered by a suitably skilled teacher, before the school days starts, or after it has ended.** For example, disadvantaged Year 6 pupils who are higher attaining in mathematics might be given some additional, challenging activities involving problem solving using proportional reasoning, logic, trial and improvement methodology and basic algebra.

**XVI) Visits to other schools that have an attractive learning environment should be established.** As far as capacity allows the school should be outward looking at this time.

## Quick wins

The following easy to implement strategies have the potential to make an immediate difference

- From September 2017 **introduce 1 cm square pupil workbooks for mathematics.** These will help with both pupil accuracy and pupil presentation. In a maths lesson pupils were asked to create a rectangle with specified dimensions. They were hampered by the fact that the small squares in their workbooks were 0.75 cm squares, not 1 cm squares.
- **Introduce two consistent highlighter pen colours for teachers marking pupils' writing:** one to be used to highlight quality sentences (*this is what I'm looking for*); the other to highlight punctuation errors/omissions and writing that doesn't make sense, or needs improving.
- **Simple 'talk scaffolds' could easily be introduced into classrooms.** These could be displayed around the interactive whiteboard, the main focal point for learners. Their introduction would assist pupils to express themselves better when talking. Examples include: *I think that . . . ; I agree with . . . because . . . ; I*

*disagree with . . . because . . . ; In my view . . . ; As I see it . . . ; For example . . .*  
Teaching pupils to express themselves with precision, clarity and coherence will support them in all forms of learning

**Mark Hartley**  
**5.7.17**