# Best Practice Network school improvement library

## Targeted Intervention Programme for Year 11 GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition Pupils

### Middle Leader, Secondary School, North West

Tags: Secondary, GCSE, Nutrition, intervention

### The issue

* Disadvantaged boys failing to make expected progress in Year 11
* Need to reduce attainment gap in line with school improvement targets
* Need to develop pupil skills in independent learning
* Need to improve attendance

Due to the focus on reducing attainment gaps, disadvantaged students are a key focus in the schools major intents and so I have been asked by SLT to ensure that they are the included within the targeted cohort for my school improvement project. I have also been asked to focus on year 11 students.

Having considered the research findings and school improvement plan priorities, I decided that my school improvement task would be based around Year 11, disadvantaged pupils who are failing to make expected progress.

I researched international teaching and pedagogy. I found the educational system in Singapore insightful as they see teachers as a facilitator for learning and I value this. I find that many of my pupils lack the ability to learn independently as they are used to being spoon fed information. I also agree with embracing of technology more within lessons. Pupils have grown up using technology and involving it in their learning will increase engagement and participation. I will therefore try and incorporate technology into the school improvement project.

### The solution

* Analysis of pupil data
* Conducted pupil voice survey
* Identify target cohort for intervention
* Purchase of revision guides
* Development of revision strategy to be shared with colleagues
* Use of video to share revision best practice
* Development of a revision calendar
* Regular use of learner analytics to monitor progress of pupils in the target cohort
* Revised scheme of work
* Worked in a team, across the school and with external partners to develop resources, plan sessions and manage the project

Fundamental to modelling excellence in the leadership of teaching and learning is the scrutiny of current teaching and learning practice and pupil experience. Pupils must be at the heart of all decisions that I make. To ensure that everything I implement as part of my school improvement project has a positive impact on pupil progress and attainment, I carried out pupil voice questionnaires with Year 11 pupils. The outcomes showed that there are some areas for development, with only 50% of students identifying that these areas are ‘always’ achieved:

* My teacher provides revision resources/strategies which have been helpful in guiding my preparations for exams or assessments.
* My teacher explains things clearly and helps me to understand what the examiner or moderator is looking for.

It is clear that revision and expectations of the exam assessment need to be addressed with students. As a result of this, revision and exam preparation should form part of the focus for the school improvement project.

SISRA analytics were used to analyse prediction data for the Year 11 Food cohort. The data highlights a significant gap (23.7%) in predicted attainment between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils. Data also suggests that only 50% of disadvantaged pupils will achieve their targets and none are predicted to exceed them. Consequently, the data supports the need to focus the project on this cohort of pupils, with the aim of improving outcomes at GCSE for disadvantaged students.

Data also highlights attendance as a major cause for concern. 8/25 pupils have an attendance less than 95% (5 of these are disadvantaged students) and 5/25 pupils have an attendance less than 75% (3 of these are disadvantaged students). The following table summarises how attendance is affecting the progress/attainment of students:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Attendance Group** | **Average Grade Point** |
| 95-100% | 5.43 |
| 90-95% | 4.4 |
| 85-90% | 5.0 |
| <85% | 4.2 |

The data clearly shows that the lower the student attendance, the fewer levels of progress and lower average grade point achieved, therefore improving student attendance could form part of the school improvement project.

In light of this, I arranged a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher, responsible for attendance to discuss whole school data for key cohorts that I am considering targeting for my school improvement task. The figures show that disadvantaged pupils have on average a 3.98% lower attendance than non-disadvantaged pupils. This pattern is also consistent when analysing Year 11 and SEND pupils.

The table below shows the attendance data:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Disadvantaged**  | **Non-Disadvantaged** | **SEND** | **Non-SEND** |
| Year 11 | 91.09% | 95.42% |  |  |
| Whole School | 91.74% | 95.72% | 91.74% | 94.89% |

The attendance data highlights a whole school area for improvement, particularly important considering the impact that school absence is having on pupil attainment in Food. Consequently, I would like to try and incorporate a strategy into my school improvement task that also supports an improvement in attendance.

Before starting my project I created a project plan of the different aspects that were involved and estimated time scales. This strategy supported the early majority getting involved fully in the project as they were convinced of the change.

SISRA Analytics, pupil voice, attendance data and national statistics were used to analyse the data for pupil attainment and identify areas that are not meeting performance expectations. Considering all the evidence and educational research an intervention project aimed at mainly disadvantaged Year 11 pupils was decided on.

The project was launched with my team during a team meeting in October 2017. During the meeting the potential pupil cohort, implementation of the project and production of resources was discussed and revision guides ordered through CGP.

Once the project cohort was decided a letter was sent out to parents to inform them of their child’s involvement and its potential impact on achievement at GCSE. Parents were emailed or phoned throughout the project to discuss attendance or other issues if they arise.

Due to the structure of the Year 11 scheme of work, the project would be delivered in two parts. The first implemented between October half term 2017 and Christmas and focused on non-exam assessment. Part two would commence in January and be delivered around exam preparation and revision. The project would be delivered before school (8am) for thirty minutes so that it did not clash with core subject revision after school.

Directed time after school on a Thursday would be used to hold team meetings to discuss the project, produce resources and share good practice. An agenda was produced in advance to ensure a productive use of the time. PAD/teaching training days where possible would be used to produce resources for the project.

Monitoring the progress of pupils within the intervention cohort was done mainly through the use of data. I used both E-Portal and SISRA Analytics to record and analyse pupil progress and attainment in assessments, classwork, homework and mock examinations. The cohort of pupils could be revised using the data at several points to assess if further students need to be involved or if improvements were being achieved. Mock examinations in January were used as the first opportunity to reassess the cohort. The final impact of the project took place when GCSE summer examination results were in during August.

If the outcomes of the school improvement task were successful in improving pupil progress and attainment, I would like to roll out the strategy across all subjects in the Design Technology department.

It was important to get my team onboard with the project. An initial meeting was held to introduce the project and justify the need for its implementation with data. I wanted to be clear on the projects objectives and goals and have a vision for its delivery to ensure that the team bought into the idea. As a team we selected the pupils to be involved and reviewed and amended the project plan to include the ideas of others. This proved successful in gaining my teams support and involvement with the project.

A small budget of £135 was allocated to the project. There was insufficient funding to consider additional staffing or staffing outside of school hours. Consequently, the project took place within the hours of the school day and that directed time including Thursday meetings and PAD days were used effectively. There were expenses associated with the project including buying revision guides, photocopying, refreshments and revision packs for pupils. An excel spreadsheet was used to plan and monitor the budget.

My risk register identified the major risks associated with my project and include:

Strategic Risk – as the project is focused on a cohort of underachieving pupils any changes to grade boundaries could affect the overall project success. Changes are determined by the exam boards, but I would support pupils in preparation for their GCSE exams to ensure they achieved their maximum potential.

Financial Risk – use of grant funding for disadvantaged pupils to purchase revision guides (included in the budget). The use of disadvantaged pupil grant funding to purchase revision guides may not be available in future, so I bulk purchased resources whilst it was available and set up a loaning system with pupils so that resources were returned after exams. This would allow me to reuse resources with future cohorts and ensure the long term success of the project.

Operational Risk - disruption caused by snow would reduce the time to make a positive impact. To mitigate the risk I used Show my Homework to share any intervention work with pupils if they were not able to be in school due to adverse weather.

Knowledge Management Risk - changes in staffing were a high probability, medium impact risk as one of the key staff involved was due on maternity leave. I developed a coaching strategy with any new members of the team, used meetings to promote the sharing of effective practice and the use of peer observations to share experiences and develop confidence.

As the individual who has developed the school improvement project, I am the innovator. I encouraged early adopters by involving them in sharing revision strategies and helping to identify the intervention cohort, getting some colleagues immediately on board help to kick-start the project.

I considered factors that might influence colleague’s approaches for change and actions to support them. Staff understood that by engaging with the project it would help them to secure progress for their pupils, as revision is extremely important in preparation for exams. Time was an influential factor in preventing colleagues adopting the change. Resources were produced to support the implementation of revision strategies and these were made available to the team on the shared folder, saving them time and ensuring that are available immediately to implement.

Some staff lacked an understanding of the revision strategies and found it difficult or envisage how they could be used. Video clips of revision strategies used in various ways were filmed using IRIS, to provide a visual tool to see they could be implemented. This boosted confidence in how they are delivered to students.

For those colleagues who were not willing to change, I had intended to pair them with members of staff who had supported the change as part of a coaching activity. This would have allowed them to see how effective the strategies can be when implemented by seeing it first-hand. Thankfully, I did not have any late majority or laggards in my team.

Following reflections of current practice and analysis of data, I devised and shared the school improvement task with my team at the start of autumn 2017. I ensured that the system and processes were in place and that my team were aware of these systems.

During the initial meeting with my team we identified the intervention cohort. A group of twelve pupils were compiled as the cohort to take part and consisted of the following pupils:

8 disadvantaged pupils

2 male pupils

2 further pupils with attendance less than 90%

2 SEND pupils

The extra sessions of coursework support, revision and examination techniques were explained to the pupils and they were told that their attendance to sessions would be closely monitored.

The project was implemented from October half term 2017 until June 2018, at 8am, for thirty minutes on a weekly basis. The idea of delivering the project before school was as a strategy to support an improvement in attendance and prevent interference with core subject revision sessions. I communicated with parents throughout the project using letters, phone calls and emails as the Sutton Trust Education Endowment Foundation (Summary of cost and impact estimates) shows that parental engagement is an effective form of intervention.

Due to the Food GCSE’s assessment requirements, the project was delivered in two sections to ensure that pupils were being supported in all aspects of the qualification.

The first term focussed on support for pupils completing the NEA, worth 50% of the overall GCSE. Pupils had access to ICT equipment, a quiet study area and support from textbooks, recipe books and resources in the classroom to complete tasks.

The second term aimed to prepare pupils for the summer examinations by focusing on examination technique, revision and revision strategies. I devised a revision timetable that was shared with my team and to ensure the specification was fully covered. Topics were then divided and delegated to team members to produce resources for the revision packs that pupils took home.

E-portal and SISRA Analytics were used to record and track the progress of the intervention cohort throughout the project. Data on progress was recorded not only from the intervention sessions but also with the assessments completed as classwork, homework and as mock exams.

Using this method, those pupils not making expected progress in assessments were flagged and successes highlighted, enabling effective tracking of pupil progress throughout the spring and summer term.

After term one, the January mock exams provided an ideal opportunity to assess pupils and consider potential adjustments to the project before starting the exam preparation aspect of the intervention. Three further pupils were added to the original cohort due to underachievement in the mock exams.

The success of the school improvement task was assessed in August 2018, after the publication of GCSE results. Once the data had been uploaded to SISRA Analytics I was able to assess the impact of the project.

Throughout the project I have utilised a range of leadership styles, initially adopting a balance of an authoritative and democratic style to achieve a sense of ownership within the team.

An authoritative style was used to outline the project vision and to provide evidence to justify the project, important in getting the team onboard. There is an element of risk with this leadership style in that colleagues feel they are being delegated tasks and therefore lack engagement. I encouraged team leadership by involving them in the selection of intervention cohort and to share ideas on how the project structured/delivery (democratic).

My role as a teaching and learning champion in school provided an opportunity to gain experience and develop the skills required in a coaching style of leadership. I have been involved in working with other members of staff across school in a coaching capacity to support them in improving teaching performance. This involved observing colleagues, identifying improvements and working collaboratively to develop strategies to implement. To improve my coaching skills I attended training sessions with a senior member of staff.

I utilised a coaching leadership style when a member of the team left to go on maternity leave and I was able to coach effectively the replacement staff member, allowing her to experiment and grow in the role.

The staff change was critical time and a coaching leadership style posed a risk by encouraging experimentation. However, I saw personal strengths in the replacement that I knew would benefit the project and felt that by providing inspiration and encouragement through coaching it would allow her develop and quickly make positive contributions to the project.

The three main groups that I needed to communicate with were colleagues, parents and pupils.

When communicating with my team via email it was important the information was clear and concise as staff are busy and do not have the time to read through long winded emails. Jargon was used where appropriate to maintain a level of professionalism and set expectations. Verbal communication was more effective at times to communicate with my team and allowed me to seek feedback on their understanding or to summarise what others have told. Most verbal communication took place to introduce the project, in meetings or during the intervention itself.

Communicating with pupils was mainly through verbal conversations. Selecting the correct language was essential in ensuring that pupils understood what. They are a complex audience, made up on different genders, abilities and nationalities. Consequently, there is a great likelihood of misunderstanding. Effective strategies used included; seeking feedback by asking them to summarise, using clear headings and sharp summaries in written text, including images with text and ensuring a quiet environment during communication to reduce distractions.

I communicated with parents via face-to-face meetings during parent’s evenings, informed them about the intervention opportunity by letter, emailed parents to update them on pupil attendance and made phone calls to discuss issues with pupils. There is a risk during phone conversations that parents do not understand, I therefore made sure there was minimal background noise, avoided educational jargon and sought feedback to check parents had understood. I felt phone calls were important to allow a conversation to take place and establishes a sense of trust through my readiness to listen.

I have been working to inspire people outside of my team by volunteering as a T&L champion. In December I delivered a CPD workshop on differentiation to inspire colleagues and improve teaching and learning at whole school level. Throughout the year, I then worked closely with colleagues from across school in a trio to develop and trail new differentiation strategies and these were presented to all colleagues during a Teach Meet in July. I used this opportunity to devise GCSE resources differentiated to challenge and to support pupils during the project.

I also worked with others to produce revision resources when I hosted a regional collaborative session with twenty five other Food teachers. Working in small groups we produced and shared revision resources on different specification topics. This relationship has continued beyond the project and we meet regularly to support each other on the delivery of our subject, produce resources and discuss key issues and resolutions.

During February PAD I collaborated with other departments in school to share and devise new revision strategies including a roll the dice revision game, revision clock, Quizlet resources and SAM Learning activities. This supported the delivery of engaging revision techniques during the project and these have also been shared with colleagues within the borough.

Furthermore, I have been working in partnership with colleagues to arrange GCSE examination entries and review cohort attendance data.

A project budget of £135 was allocated. All intervention sessions with pupils took place during the school working hours and therefore additional funding for staffing was not required. For the intervention only, my team allocated 14 hours of time to the project over the October – June period. School training days were also used and directed time on a Thursday evening to develop resources and hold team meetings.

The budget was used to purchase twenty sets of CGP revision guides (£90), allowing pupils to continue their revision at home. A loaning system was set up to ensure book are returned to school after exams to be reused with future cohorts. The £90 was therefore a start up cost that would not be required every year, however additional work books may need to be purchased. A total cost of £8.00 was spent on refreshments and biscuits for the intervention sessions to ensure a productive learning environment and £30 was spent on photocopying, £4.50 on laminating and production of the revision pack resources. The total spending on the project therefore came to £132.50, showing my ability to accurately manage the budget.

The main curriculum strength of my team is the development of pupil’s practical skills. Practical tasks are progressive in challenge as pupils move through school and prepare pupils comprehensively for the complex skills required at GCSE. Pupils are confident, independent and safe during practical tasks due to the strength in delivery by my team.

The written examination, now contributing to 50% of the GCSE requires pupils to learn about many topics that were not included on the previous specification. There is insufficient time at GCSE alone to teach thoroughly the new specification and so topics must be introduced at KS3. Unfortunately, a weakness of the curriculum is that many of the new topics are not included in the Year 7-9 schemes of work. The first GCSE cohort has therefore not had the opportunity to learn about these topics in lower school – hence the focus for this project to improve pupil preparation for the written exam. Current KS3 scheme of work have now been revised to prepare pupils with a greater level of baseline knowledge for GCSE.

Assessing the performance of my team highlights high expectations and managing behaviour effectively as two clear strengths (teaching standards 1 and 7). All individuals were consistent in promoting clear rules and routines, have high expectations and establish a stimulating environment for pupils.

Three team members are not subject specifically trained and there have been many subject changes recently. I have therefore identified good subject and curriculum knowledge as an area for professional development. Subject knowledge audit should be completed individually to identify the spread of knowledge in the department, an important step in planning the development of individuals and identifying existing areas of expertise. I would encourage peer observations across school to develop teaching styles and subject knowledge e.g. food miles in Geography and diet and health in Science. I would also encourage my team to continue reading subject material and attempt exam papers. External CPD subject knowledge enhancement courses could be considered if I felt that it would be beneficial. Improving subject specific knowledge should be included as a target in next year’s performance management appraisal

### Impact

Data from GCSE results highlights a positive impact between the school improvement task and pupil attainment. As a result of the project, the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils achieving their target grade was reduced by 7% from 23.7% to 16.7%. Before the project no disadvantaged pupils were predicted to exceed their target; however, 16.7% of disadvantaged pupils went on to achieve this (+10.8% gap). The results also highlighted a positive impact that the project had on other key focus cohorts; boys and SEN. 100% of boys and SEN pupils achieved on or above their target grade.

The total cost of the project was £128. The project had a considerable benefit on my development as a leader and leadership behaviours and made me realise that it is vital to delegate and hold others to account to ensure projects success.

Utilising the skills demonstrated by individual team members, I have been able to relate to all and this, in turn, goes toward inspiring them to progress, resulting in a positive, proactive and successful relationship. My team have developed and with their development I have become far more self-aware of my own limitations and why a collaborative and team ownership is the best way of leading an initiative.

Directed time on a Thursday evening and whole school PAD days were used to collaborate as a team and produce resources. The production of revision material was not only beneficial to pupil’s progress but also helped strengthen the subject knowledge of team members. Use of PAD days prevented additional staffing costs and allowed collaboration with colleagues in school and across the borough.

The improvement in pupil progress discussed above makes it clear that the project organised was a low cost but high impact.