



CASE STUDY REPORT

Behaviour and its impact upon educational attainment; a whole school approach

Alison Priest

This study was originally published in 2010 as part of the 'What Works Well' initiative, part of the National Strategies for Education in England.

Abstract

Background: The purpose of the study was to link initiatives within Achievement for All (AfA) to provide a whole school initiative with distributed leadership roles and responsibilities, with the goal of improving parental engagement and pupil outcomes relating to reading.

Aims: The main aim of this development work was to improve parental engagement, reduce the number of negative playground incidents, and help pupils with SEND achieve 3 sub-levels of progress.

Methods: The participants in this case study include assistant headteachers, deputy headteachers, governors, head of school improvement, headteachers, leading teachers, middle leaders, parents, phase leaders, pupils, senior leadership teams, SIPs, teachers, and local authority staff. Methods used included structured conversations, CPD, coaching, provision mapping, Quality First Teaching, and play development worker to increase engagement and reduce negative incidents.

Findings: The main findings of this case study are that dedicated time for the AfA lead, a play development worker, structured conversations with school staff, and CPD sessions on dyslexia and autism have had a positive impact on pupil learning, teaching, and school organisation and leadership.

Implications: The findings suggest that dedicated time for AfA lead, supply staff, and a play development worker are essential elements for successful implementation of the project. Structured conversations, provision mapping, and observation of school life are also important for successful outcomes.

This abstract was generated by Camtree using a large language model (LLM) and added to the original report in 2023.

Keywords: Nursery education; Infant education; Behaviour and attendance; PSHE

Introduction

What were your reasons for doing this type of development work?

The school's Senior Leadership Team recognised a fundamental need to link the initiatives within Achievement for All (AfA) to provide a whole school initiative with distributed leadership roles and responsibilities agreed. As a result of teaching staff and wider school staff discussions, improved parental engagement had been recognised as a priority within the school improvement plan, linked to the improvement of pupil outcomes relating to reading. The governors approved this priority, highlighting the need to collaborate with parents and to focus on the aspect of self regulating behaviour. There were also inconsistencies relating to the SEN register within the school.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Assistant headteacher
- Deputy headteacher
- Governor
- Head of school improvement
- Headteacher
- Leading teacher
- Middle leader
- Parent
- Phase leader
- Pupil
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- SIP (School Improvement Partner)
- Teacher

Description

What specific curriculum area, subject or aspect did you intend to have impact on?

- Behaviour and attendance
- PSHE

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

Our intention was to ensure 3 sub-levels of progress being achieved by pupils with SEND within the first year of the project, allowing them to achieve personal targets and, in some cases, to be removed from the SEN register. Secondly we intended to reduce the number of negative play ground 'incidents' at lunch time in particular.

What were your success criteria?

- 3 levels of progress to be achieved by pupils with SEND within the first year of the project
- Achieve personal targets
- Where possible to be removed from the SEN register
- Reduce number of play ground incidents at lunch time to 'rarely' for those children identified
- Increase activities for engagement at lunchtime
- Increase positive play engagement between Meal Time Supervisors and children

What information or data did you use to measure progress towards your success criteria?

- Learning walks / study visits
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

Describe the CPD approaches you used

Partnership work took place within school. This linked those staff less confident/identified a need to develop, with staff who displayed high level of a specific skill. Here there was opportunity to observe and discuss strategies used between both parties.

We identified behaviour as a reaction to learning difficulty, so we focused CPD on developing Quality First Teaching approaches and understanding of Dyslexia, PSED and the Autism Spectrum.

Dedicated time was given to use of the coaching technique. Training was delivered at the start of the academic year to all staff.

Provision Mapping conversations linked to cross referenced data systems, focused discussion to solution outcomes. It also gave staff opportunity to share expertise or to explore wider resources of support.

What CPD materials, research or expertise have you drawn on?

Staff expertise in house

- autism
- communication systems

IDP - dyslexia and autism

Teachers Television case studies and video diaries

Outside specialist guidance - coaching

Linking with others schools- play development worker

Who provided you with support?

- Attendance lead
- Local authority staff
- School leader
- SIP (School Improvement Partner)
- Support staff

How were you supported?

Sheffield's leading team were of great help answering questions and clearing up 'grey' areas. Richard Green (Assistant Project Officer) especially was always very quick to respond and his direction was clear.

Local Authority lead supported the momentum of the project through regular conversations which generated time to 'think' and plan for the next steps in light of current data.

Head teacher is essential to sound out plans and methodology. Without the backing of the Head teacher, practise would not develop so smoothly or effectively. Giving time to the AfA lead is essential for it to be truly effective. There is a lot of paper work and people to manage.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

The school had a clearer vision of what it wanted for its children in terms of wider outcomes. This vision helped the development of more purposeful data which fed into the structured conversation cycle, thus increasing the effectiveness of the parental meetings.

The vast majority of those on AfA receiving structured conversation achieved their 3 sublevels of progress.

Our SEN register reduced considerably.

We found that the group of children who did not meet targets were mainly the "underachievers" who were therefore not targeted by AfA.

Conversations about learning between staff are more focused and solution based at Quality First level.

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

Learning children are most likely to be the happy children.

Respect for themselves in the first instance, will lead to respect for others.

Set a baseline of behaviour expectation and challenge anything that falls below it. Reward when it rises above.

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

I can see now that he wasn't ready to learn was he.

I didn't realise that his behaviour would affect others so much.

I wasn't confident at school. Talking to you I've become more confident.

I didn't like school but this is great. I'll come and do this again.

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Learning walks / study visits
- Observation outcomes
- Pupils' work

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Evidence came mainly through observation and teacher assessment.

Achieved AFA targets agreed with parents - 74.4% Achieved accelerated progress 3 sublevels - 21%

Teacher assessment is on-going using target cards for maths and literacy. Children have clear success criteria, which is used to guide marking. As children were more settled and displaying higher levels of Teacher Pleasing Qualities, they became more engaged in their own learning discussions, recognising areas to improve.

Improvements were made immediately and then re-marked.

Our play worker was able to focus attention to a wider audience of children, creating a very positive feel to lunchtimes. Children developed PSHE skills and levels of children's behaviour expectations increased. Children

were far more likely to expect others to play by the rules and to politely challenge where not. The taught games were then utilised in playtimes generally. The children being actively and purposefully engaged reduced the necessity for conflict. As children came in from playtimes in a positive frame of mind, sessions started quickly and therefore more learning engagement took place. Happy children ready to learn.

What has been the impact on teaching?

- Much more Quality First focused
- Every child is well known and discussed. The system is inclusive of all, regardless of need. Children cannot be missed
- Teaching has increased child focus and is more practical and hands on in approach
- Learning is seen as a partnership between staff and pupils. Adults are not always presumed to be the experts
- Termly theme with specialist weeks including Pie Corbett, anti-bullying, Arts week and enterprise week
- Planning is based on skill development
- Staff and parent relationships are more relaxed and open

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Planning reviews set their own targets. These were met. Planning showed increased understanding of skills needed and their progression.

Teaching standards were for the vast majority raised from satisfactory to 'good' with this specific year group. The gap between teachers' skills and knowledge reduced to give a more even team.

A move away from subject teaching of Numeracy Hour etc, to continuous provision.

Increase in outdoor learning experiences for the children.

Increased use of cross curricular links freeing up teacher time and increasing purpose of tasks.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

All Y1 teachers were trained as "key teachers" to deliver structured conversations. Initially 1:1 sessions with parents were difficult as previously a parental meeting had been a source of embarrassment because parents had found it hard to accept that there may be an issue with their child's learning. The first wave of conversations changed this perception and parents began to see the power of quality time dedicated to their child's progress.

There was staff concern over the quality of lunch time provision and the perception was that children weren't being stimulated. As a result the same children were causing concern and the incidents of children hurting or being hurt physically and emotionally were relatively high. The Play Leader acted as role model and spent time with children with SEN at lunchtimes to increase their stimulation levels. This model was cascaded to other play leaders.

The school also developed their own provision map at the outset of the project which enabled the school to identify priorities for AfA and group children according to need and severity of SEND. This allowed higher quality targeted interventions.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

- Stronger SLT, with clear roles
- Wider senior leadership team - 2 assistant heads rather than 1
- Wider LT - including middle leaders with increased frequency
- Shared responsibility- 3 working teams which every member of staff is part of to push the SIP forward in a very focused way
- Quality First teaching focusing on what can be done in class as a first port of call
- Specialist TA time for intervention, running vertically through key stage 1 where the need is identified
- Exploring wider providers
- Increased learning conversations lead by SLT

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

- Dedicated time for AfA lead to lead on the project
- Supply staff were regular and fully conversant with methodology and ethos of the school
- Play development worker

For the first year of the project the lead teacher was used as supply cover. This enabled her to see school structures and procedures working within school. It also gave her a better understanding of the working needs of SEND children within this year group.

What key resources would people who want to learn from your experience need access to?

IDP materials for SEN

Visit a school where there is an established play development worker

Small group SEAL resources

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

- Structured conversation with whole school staff
- Dyslexia friendly classroom - IPD
- Communication in the classroom - in house specialism
- Teachers TV behaviour strategies

If another individual or school was attempting to replicate this work, where would they start and what would the essential elements be?

- Play development worker
- Provision mapping conversation at least termly with SENCo - we actually do ours half termly
- Observe all elements of school life for your target group of children first
- What are parents views on why their children are not progressing?
- How do the children feel about school life? Talk to them

What further developments are you planning to do (or would you like to see others do)?

- Extend the use of Structured conversation throughout school, from Nursery up
- Look to define SEN and 'additional' need
- Research based intervention

- 1-1 intervention
- Links with other providers for those 'hard to reach' families

About Camtree

Camtree: the Cambridge Teacher Research Exchange is a global platform for close-to-practice research in education. Based at Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge, Camtree draws on high-quality research from around the world to support educators to reflect on their practice and carry out inquiries to improve learning in their own classrooms and organisations. You can find out more about Camtree and its digital library at www.camtree.org.

About 'What Works Well'

This case study was originally published as part of the 'What Works Well' section of the National Strategies for Education in England. The National Strategies were professional programmes aiming for improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in schools in England. 'What Works Well' involved teaching practitioners from all phases and areas of education sharing accounts of real developments which had improved learning and teaching, and made a difference to pupil progress. 'What Works Well' case studies were designed to support practice transfer and include sufficient detail and resources to enable others to implement the effective practice described. Most were reviewed by experts prior to publication as 'User Generated Content' (UGC) under a licence which encouraged reuse and derivative works, but which precluded commercial use. This report was awaiting final approval when the National Strategies site was archived.

Licence

This edited version of this case study is published by Camtree as a derivative work of the original under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Licence (CC-BY-NC 4.0). The structured abstract that accompanies it was generated by Camtree in 2023 using the OpenAI GPT-3.5-Turbo Large Language Model.