



CASE STUDY REPORT

Taking stock of the Improving Schools Programme (ISP)

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This study was originally published in 2009 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 assess the impact of support from LA professionals on pupil learning and to ensure continuity in provision on a termly basis.

Aims: The main aim of this development work is to improve the quality of teaching and learning, raise attainment and achievement, and enable the school to reach its end of KS2 targets.

Methods: The participants included the Head of School Improvement, Headteacher, National Strategies consultant, Senior Leadership Team, LA professionals, core subject leaders, and teachers. Methods used include CVA data, data comparison of cohorts, learning walks/study visits, logs/interviews, observation outcomes, periodic teacher assessment, pupil consultation data, and test results to measure progress towards success criteria.

Findings: The main findings of the case study are that the use of CPD approaches, resources, and support from LA professionals has improved the quality of teaching, raised attainment and achievement for pupils below age-related expectations, and improved school organisation and leadership.

Implications: The findings of this case study suggest that improved school self-evaluation, organization, and accountability from all stakeholders can lead to improved teaching, school organization, and leadership, resulting in higher pupil learning.

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

Keywords: Primary education; Assessment and target setting; Leadership; Communication, language and literacy; Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy; English - reading; English - speaking and listening; English - writing; Mathematics; Speaking

Introduction

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

To ensure continuity in provision on a termly basis and assess impact of support from LA professionals.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Head of school improvement
- Headteacher
- National Strategies consultant
- Senior leadership team (SLT)

Description

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

- Assessment and target setting
- Leadership
- Communication, language and literacy
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- English - reading
- English - speaking and listening
- English - writing
- Mathematics
- Speaking

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

Raising attainment and achievement for pupils below age-related expectations in English and Mathematics

What were your success criteria?

School leadership and LA team have a clear view of progress relating to pupils just below age-related expectations to ensure that the school reaches its end of KS2 targets.

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

- CVA data
- Data comparison of cohorts
- Learning walks / study visits
- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Pupil consultation data
- Test results

Describe the CPD approaches you used

Building capacity within the SLT to monitor and evaluate standards within the school as modelled by LA professionals. This ensures the sustainability of ISP when amount of LA support in the programme diminishes.

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

This day draws on the professional expertise of LA consultants and advisers.

This supports core subject leaders attending the intensive Subject Leaders in Primary School course to develop their skills.

Who provided you with support?

- Other

How were you supported?

We, the LA, were the agency supplying the support.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

Lesson observations, work scrutiny, pupil interviews together with scrutiny of data provide SLT with a clear picture of strengths and areas for development within the school enabling them to plan strategically.

This has improved the quality of teaching through enhancing class teachers' understanding of the next steps in learning.

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

Quote from LA:

"Stocktake days are a good opportunity for LA advisers and consultants to work closely with senior staff and teachers in school to bring about required improvements and thus raise standards." Geraldine Louch SEA

Quote from HT:

"The stock take day enables us to have a cohesive, whole school approach to evaluating our progress and planning the strategies to ensure further improvement." Lynne Wilson-Leary

Quote from teacher:

"Since our school joined the ISP programme in January 2007 we have raised standards and improved teaching and learning effectively through the cycle of audit, target setting, action and review. As the ISP co-coordinator I can now effectively oversee and manage the school improvement strategies alongside ISP consultants, teachers and support staff." Andre Rall, ISP coordinator

Quote from pupil:

"The targets help me because I have something to aim for. They are easy to read and understand." Megan, Yr 4

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- CVA data
- Data comparison of cohorts
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Learning walks / study visits
- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes
- Pupil consultation data

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Overall Evaluation

- Improving % good lessons, no inadequate teaching. Guided reading in place.
- Consistent, improving planning and standards across the school, use of key questions
- Clear expectations and good opportunities for writing
- Environment improving, nearly all have key vocabulary to support targets
- Pupils very clear about how to use targets to progress
- Many positive actions from RAP – impact seen during the day.

What has been the impact on teaching?

Strengths Identified

- Engagement of pupils shown through, quantity, quality and presentation of work
- Improved planning as seen in teachers planning files
- Improved quality of teaching - 100% satisfactory with 70% good
- ISP co-ordinator - able to use information gained to plan further improvements.

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Teachers are using the renewed Frameworks successfully to plan the learning journey. Planning is annotated and used creatively to support pupils' work in the classroom.

Lessons observed indicate teachers have a better understanding of links between planning and assessment.

Pupils' work indicates that marking and feedback is now an important part of the learning.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

The HT and SLT lead the strategic development of the school effectively using data and information gained through the rigorous monitoring programme to plan and drive further school improvement.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

Improved planning at whole school level to ensure breadth and coverage of the curriculum. The rigorous use of data both at SLT level and at classroom level has enabled the school community to gain a clear picture of standards and achievement in the school.

The systematic cycle of monitoring and evaluation underpins the work of this school.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

The improved school self-evaluation together with improved organisation and accountability from all stakeholders.

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

Key pro-formas common to all participants:

- Clear agenda for the day showing each participants role - sent in advance to the HT
- Joint planning / work scrutiny - comprising a list of key questions to address all aspects of pupil progress
- Pupil interview meetings overview
- ISP environment checklist.

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

ISP Professional Development Meetings (PDMs) - use of Learning Objectives and Success Criteria, Questioning, Modelling and Demonstrating, Using the Learning Environment.

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

- HT meets with adviser / consultant(s) to discuss format & pro-formas. All personnel to familiarise themselves with requirements.
- Clear timetable.
- Agreed expectations.
- List of teachers to be observed - teachers informed.
- Groups of pupils for interviews selected and organised.
- Pupils' work ready.

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

Stock-take days to become embedded as part of the school self-evaluation cycle.

Supplementary Materials

This report is accompanied in the library by the following supplementary material:

- Agenda for Stock-take day
- Environment checklist
- Planning and work scrutiny - Literacy
- Planning and work scrutiny - Mathematics
- Pupil Interview notes

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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. They 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.

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