CASE STUDY REPORT

Non-Routine Admissions: Accelerating Vulnerable Pupils Towards Age-Related Expectation Through AfL

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Abstract

Background: The purpose of the study was to provide a personalised programme for each child entering school via non-routine admission, allowing them to rapidly establish social relationships and overcome barriers, and maximize learning and progress towards age-related expectations.

Aims: The main aim is to provide a personalised package of support to rapidly accelerate pupils entering school via non-routine admission into mainstream provision, allowing them to maximise learning and progress towards age-related expectations.

Methods: The participants include school support staff, senior leadership team, teachers, external agency, middle leader, subject leader, and LA lead officers. They work together to provide personalised support for pupils entering school via non-routine admission. Methods used to impact pupil learning included initial assessment for learning, acceleration into mainstream learning environment, personalised learning plans, and collaboration with external agencies. Support was provided through a team around the child approach, personalisation of context, curriculum, and pedagogy, and high expectations.

Findings: The main findings are that providing a personalised package of support for pupils entering school via non-routine admission can lead to rapid progress and improved engagement in the learning context. This includes initial assessment for learning, acceleration into mainstream learning environment, and support from a team around the child.

Implications: The findings suggest that providing a personalised package of support, including careful choice of teacher, class group and learning set, can help pupils entering school via non-routine admission to rapidly establish social relationships and overcome specific barriers, allowing them to maximise learning and facilitate progress towards age-related expectations.

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

Keywords: Nursery education; Primary education; English - reading; English - speaking and listening; English - writing; Mathematics; PSHE

Introduction

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

The school serves a community affected by significant transience. Up to 33% of the pupil cohort changes each year. Many admissions take place part way through the school year (Non-Routine Admission: NRA) Pupils entering school via NRA remain in school for variable periods of time, often leaving without trace as suddenly as they arrived. A large proportion of NRA pupils arrive completely without educational records, sometimes having been 'missing' from the school system for considerable periods of time - or not having received formal education in their country of origin.

School statistics also show that the overall community is significantly affected by multiple deprivation, with levels currently running at twice the LA average, which itself is the 12th most deprived area nationally. Both the embedded and transient communities are also affected by recently rising levels of pupils with EAL, incorporating a wide range of home languages.

Overall the school is at the forefront of the ECM agenda and is committed to doing the best for each and every pupil. Therefore, no matter how little time pupils may spend in the school, it has been identified as very high priority to provide a personalised programme for each child entering school via non-routine admission.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Support staff
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- Teacher

Description

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

- English - reading
- English - speaking and listening
- English - writing
- Mathematics
- PSHE

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

Focus Aspects: Initial assessment for learning; acceleration into mainstream learning environment; consolidation/development of core/key/basic skills; extension and development of wider skills; acceleration to age-appropriate learning for pupils entering school via non-routine admission, often part way through the year.

Our aim was to rapidly provide a personalised package of support (including careful choice of teacher, class group and learning set) so that each pupil could be accelerated into mainstream provision, 'wrapped around' with the required support. This would allow new children to more rapidly establish social relationships and overcome specific barriers, allowing them to maximise learning and facilitate progress towards age-related expectations wherever possible. We intended to achieve this impact by adapting our well-embedded and highly successful approach for children with SEN to non-routine admissions.

What were your success criteria?

- All pupils arriving via NRA to be rapidly and fully assessed for learning strengths and gaps
- All pupils to have a personalised learning plan, including all necessary support
- All pupils accelerated into mainstream provision, with a fully personalised context and support package
- Class teachers working in full partnership with specialist inclusion team members
- Evidence from tracking that pupils rapidly add value from their baseline assessments
- Over time, pupils making accelerated progress and closing the gap to age-related expectations
- Overall school attainment and achievement measures rising

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
- Pupils' work
- Test results

Describe the CPD approaches you used

SMT or team leaders meet regularly with class teachers and all engaged partners in the school multi-disciplinary team to discuss the progress of individual pupils. Pupils' work is scrutinised, relationships, confidence and behaviour are taken into account, and external factors are considered.

Each pupil's rate of progress in each key area is compared to those of peers, as well as to individualised expectation. Where less than expected progress is identified, the individual achievement & support plan is adjusted as required. Adjustments are also made where, for example, good progress indicates that some elements of support can be progressively decreased and the pupils' independence boosted towards self-sustainable levels.

Who provided you with support?

- External agency
- Middle leader
- Other
- Senior management
- Subject leader

How were you supported?

- School works in liaison with the LA lead officers within Learning & Achievement and Inclusion & Development.
- Financed by the LA to develop the 'Illuminate' Unit to receive and assess non-routine admissions, so as to return them to mainstream provision in schools across the LA with detailed suggestions for appropriate support and teaching. This has significantly boosted the development of expertise.

- LA financial contribution towards employment of EAL inclusion support staff in school's own mainstream team.
- Close work with the LA Pupil Welfare Officer.
- School has maximised contact with parents and community members, often brokering informal links for translation and interpretation. For example, the school newsletter has been translated into different languages in order to maximise contact with EAL families – transient or otherwise.
- Collaboration and sharing of ideas/expertise via Headteacher networks.
- School has used external/commercial translation services.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

- Better engagement in the learning context and curriculum provided
- Higher levels of pupil confidence
- More rapid progress
- Improved progress towards age-related levels of learning

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

- Teamwork, teamwork, teamwork! Hard work!
- Pupils entering school via non-routine admission must become members of the school mainstream population as rapidly as possible
- Must be situated within an overall quality-first provision in the whole school
- Everyone is responsible; everyone is accountable
- Other pupils' willingness to receive and support new admissions is important
- The overall environment must offer good models of learning behaviour and demonstrate good learning outcomes.
- Support must be pupil centred and provide a 'team around the child' approach to overcoming barriers
- Total personalisation of context, curriculum and pedagogy
- High expectations are important
- School leaders need to keep in touch with what is happening in every classroom and group

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

Personalisation of context, curriculum and pedagogy, as well as getting to know the child, leads to accelerated pupil learning.

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
- Pupils' work

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Rates of progress for pupils entering school via non-routine admission have improved. Some children gain 2 years within 6-9 months. Recent longer-stay pupils indicate that around 75% turn a negative value-added (on entry) into a positive value by end of Y6.

What has been the impact on teaching?

- All staff members have realised the absolute importance of teamwork
- Collaborative responsibility/accountability for the progress of all NRA pupils
- Increased confidence in welcoming pupils who enter teaching groups part way through the year; teachers now they will be properly supported
- Increased focus on details that will make the difference to the progress of each NRA pupil – and all pupils
- Better understanding of core or key skills required by each NRA child, especially in language development

The quality of learning and teaching in the school is good or better overall. Provision for NRA pupils now ensures that they can participate fully in mainstream contexts and access the same good quality of learning opportunities as their longer-established peers. Their contexts and curricula are better matched to their needs and they have the personalised support required to make best possible progress. As long as they are on roll at this school, they will make good and accelerating progress, with a good chance of reaching age-appropriate levels of learning – if they stay long enough.

Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

"As a teacher they know how well supported they will be, using the expertise available in school."

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning
- Teacher perceptions

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

- Personalised development plans in NRA children's files
- Class teachers' plans include reference to needs of NRA pupils and focus time to work with them
- Pupil progress meetings involve clearer and more detailed teacher feedback re pupils' strengths and needs
- Observation evidence identifies that NRA pupils are better engaged and more confident in their sets and class groups

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

- Extended team structure is costly but vital
- Drive and leadership from the top is crucial
- The whole school ethos is important, the children come first

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

- Headteacher and Senior Leaders have detailed, first hand knowledge of all pupils and their progress.
- Leadership is focused on learning and on quality first provision in classrooms and all other learning areas
- All staff members are leaders in their own way
- All staff members work together very closely for the good of the children; no 'closed doors'; extensive professional sharing of responsibility and accountability
- The school team values a wide range of professional contributions, all focused on pupil progress - learning mentors, specialist teaching assistants

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

- The teamwork
- Believing in the children and ourselves
- Reminding ourselves of What Works Well (which is): Minimise the barriers ...... Maximise the Resources

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

Any good practice model pertaining to high levels of personalisation for pupils would be useful – perhaps inclusion practice in LAs with developed provision for Gypsy/Roma pupils or other transient population groups.

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

- National Strategy pedagogy and materials
- Working creatively with LA consultants and advisory staff

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

- Initial welcome of NRA pupil and family to the school; initial exposition of what school will do for the child and family and what school will expect from them
- Appointment to gather essential information – child's age, previous educational history, last school etc
- Attempt to gather any contextual information that may help to understand family stress, health issues, reasons for moving etc
- Thorough but sensitive in-school assessment of NRA child's educational development, language and social skills, including 'gap' to age-related expectations, if appropriate
- Informed assessment, where possible, of any temporary depression of skills if the child has been out of education for a significant period and has temporarily forgotten skills that may once have been quite well embedded.
- Personal education and support plan drawn up; support team members identified and appropriate class context chosen
- School senior managers sanction curricular adaptation as required
- Whole-school team works together to support the child's learning
- Pupil progress is carefully monitored and tracked against peers and against individualised expectation/aspiration
- Adjustments are made at frequent intervals, as required

- Ongoing cycle of curriculum, teaching and assessment is established and maintained – including feedback from pupil and, where possible, family
- As soon as possible, support levels are progressively decreased in order to build sustainable independence within a mainstream class

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

- Generate initial guidance for LA schools and share our expertise
- Possibly capture on DVD

Supplementary Materials

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

- Non-routine admissions and new arrivals policy
- Sample 'Illuminate' report on a pupil
- The DCSF Assessment for Learning Strategy

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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. 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.

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