



CASE STUDY REPORT

Supporting vulnerable young people to access learning through the Success Plus Centre

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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 develop preventative support for young people in order to allow them to succeed in class and reduce the number of students removed from lessons.

Aims: The main aim of this development work is to provide preventative support to young people in order to allow them to succeed in class and reduce the number of students regularly removed from lessons.

Methods: The participants in this case study are staff at Little Heath School, the Regional Adviser for Behaviour and Attendance, support staff, pupils, teachers, and external agencies. Methods used include providing small group/individual alternative to mainstream classes, counselling, one to one teaching, themed small group work, CPD approaches, drawing on research and expertise, and support from external agencies and senior management.

Findings: The main findings of this case study are that providing preventative support to young people, such as counselling, one-to-one teaching, and themed small group work, has been successful in reducing the number of students removed from class and developing their learning skills.

Implications: The findings suggest that providing preventative support to young people, such as counselling, one-to-one teaching, and themed small group work, can help them develop learning skills and reduce disruption to other students. CPD and resources are essential for successful implementation.

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

Keywords: Secondary education; Behaviour and attendance; Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

Introduction

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

The school recognised the need to replace an isolation room with more preventative support to young people in order to allow them to succeed in class and to reduce the number of students regularly removed from lessons. This was part of the school's implementation of the social, emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) across the school.

This case study was compiled by staff at Little Heath School and the Regional Adviser for Behaviour and Attendance.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Support staff
- Pupil
- Teacher

Description

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

- Behaviour and attendance
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

Provision of small group/individual alternative to mainstream classes supported by counselling, one to one teaching and themed small group work to meet individual needs to enable students to access learning skills. The aim was to develop learning skills to enable vulnerable students to succeed in class.

Reduced disruption to learning of other students.

What were your success criteria?

- Successful reintegration of students back into classes
- Students and teachers feel supported where students have difficulty accessing learning
- Reduction in numbers of students repeatedly removed from class
- Students can demonstrate the transference of skills into subject lessons

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

- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes
- Pupil consultation data

Describe the CPD approaches you used

The Success Plus Centre Leader has trained as a counsellor, and also taken courses in child mental health. This level of expertise has been crucial to the range and success of programmes offered.

The rationale of Success Plus is shared with all staff and reinforced at the beginning of every school year. Referral procedures are also made clear to staff.

The Success Plus Centre Leader, who is a HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant), has clear expectations and protocols for all teaching staff who are timetabled to support in Success Plus. Her vision and management of the Centre has been an important factor in its development.

The staff of 4 in the Success Plus Centre have received the most additional training, however INSET has been provided for all staff at the school.

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

- Courses as above; the Success Plus Centre Leader has built a high level of professional expertise and qualifications.
- Staff have been trained in running social skills groups.
- The Success Plus Centre Leader trained in running parenting groups.
- A range of published resources have been bought and are adapted to meet the needs of selected students. The Centre avoids use of 'off the shelf' models and programmes to ensure that support is tailored to need.
- Support from the Psychology service has been offered.

Who provided you with support?

- External agency
- Senior management

How were you supported?

The commitment of SLT has been pivotal in the work of the Centre. Working alongside the Learning Development Unit leader, the Success Plus Centre Leader has autonomy in developing programmes, instigating routines and protocols within the Centre, and budget management. This approach has contributed to the status afforded the Centre and the Centre Leader.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

Data on referrals is used to track removals from class, and demonstrates that the majority of students do not continue to require additional support; the number of students repeatedly removed from class has fallen significantly.

Plans are underway to develop regular meetings to track pupil progress. These will bring together key people to consider effectiveness of support and future need. It is planned that a traffic light system of severity of concern will be employed - red = very concerned, amber = concern remains, green = improving. This pattern can then be tracked.

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

Students are able to learn to communicate more effectively both within and outside the Success Plus Centre. The Centre recognises that appropriate and effective communication is a key skill in the classroom.

As well as learning communication skills, for some students the opportunity to engage in structured talk and communication with Centre staff is a key factor in their progress.

Students are able to manage and take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Data comparison of cohorts

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Numbers of students re-referred back to the Centre is low. There have been sixty two referrals to Success Plus for a 2 week support programme directly from class, and 91 have undertaken group work programmes. Of these, seven have been back once more and one student has been referred three times (but from different subjects).
- Numbers of students unwilling to engage is low.
- Parent participation in parenting groups is good.
- Feedback from students is positive. On average Success Plus takes in about eight students a day and, whilst a formal evaluation has not taken place, anecdotally it can be seen that they benefit from the support offered.

What has been the impact on teaching?

- Success Plus Centre Leader has provided training for staff on positive approaches to students in their lessons.
- All staff have received INSET to introduce SEAL. From September 2008 all Year 7 Schemes of Work will identify specific SEAL learning objectives and opportunities.
- Through the Year 7 tutorial programme, students are aware of the SEAL skills and have had opportunities to practise using these.
- Year 10 student mentors of Year 7 have learnt about how to use SEAL skills with their mentees.

Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

A small group of staff was recently asked to identify impact and their individual replies all referred to the fact that each and every child matters at the school.

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Teacher perceptions

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

- teachers feel supported with vulnerable students
- student evaluations of Year 7 tutorial programme show that they are aware of the SEAL skills and also that they recognise that Success Plus is a resource that will help them if they have difficulty learning
- in 2008-9 the school hopes to develop a tracking system to monitor SEAL skill development. A SEAL development funding bid has been successful to support this development.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

- Success Plus is integral to the ethos of the school.
- It was an important shift for the school to remove its isolation room and replace it with a resource that focused on learning and a positive approach to problem solving.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

Listening to the student voice has become central to our work. Unusually, the school has appointed a Student Voice Coordinator who has enthusiastically engaged the students in a variety of learning conversations with departments.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

- identifying the right people to lead the initiative
- support from SLT
- an appropriate space (not the same one that was used previously).

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

The Centre for Child Mental Health in Islington, London has some very valuable courses that helped us to understand the causes of challenging behaviour and how to approach young people.

Intermediate certificate in counselling skills is invaluable for talking to young people and modelling the behaviour you want to teach.

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

- Staff need to be appropriately skilled. It is vital to the whole ethos of the area. Ideally, staff should have qualifications coupled with a willingness to learn and be flexible.
- Success Plus would not be successful if it did not have the support of the senior leadership team.
- Obvious starting points would be a decent sized room and resources for work from all subjects and key stages as well as full time staff to allow for continuity in the working day.

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

Re-integration of students into lessons in a more informed manner. To review the material supplied for students to do, i.e. to maintain continuity of learning. Continue to develop a greater variety of ways to offer more personalised support; we must be creative, inventive and always remember that we are dealing with individuals. Of course, we must continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategies employed in order to inform future progress.

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