

# Tackling Educational Disadvantage

## What Works in Schools



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# Tackling Educational Disadvantage: What Works in Schools

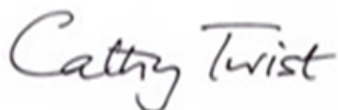
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### Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this research '*Tackling Educational Disadvantage: What Works in Schools.*' The research report presents a rich array of strategies that have been used by case study schools to raise educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils. The methods used by case study school and the key ingredients - providing strong leadership, high quality teaching and learning, effective use of an inclusive curriculum, effective use of data, parental engagement and targeted interventions can be replicated elsewhere. Many valuable lessons can now be learnt from these schools' experiences, both within Lambeth and beyond.

I applaud the work of the case study schools and advocate this approach to all who are interested in tackling the link between poverty and underachievement in schools and close the achievement gap.

I hope you will find this research report useful.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Twist". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Cathy" and the last name "Twist" clearly distinguishable.

**Cathy Twist**  
**Director, Education and Learning**  
**London Borough of Lambeth**

### Executive Summary

The main purpose of this research is to examine the success factors behind raising achievement of disadvantaged pupils in schools. Three overarching research questions guided this research:

- What does the data tell us about closing the achievement gap?
- What are the success factors?
- What are the implications for policy and practice?

The research findings from data analysis, case studies and focus group evidence confirm that attainment at KS2 and GCSE has risen much faster in these schools than nationally and the case study schools are closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The research identified a numbers of factors that are proving successful in closing the gap. These include:

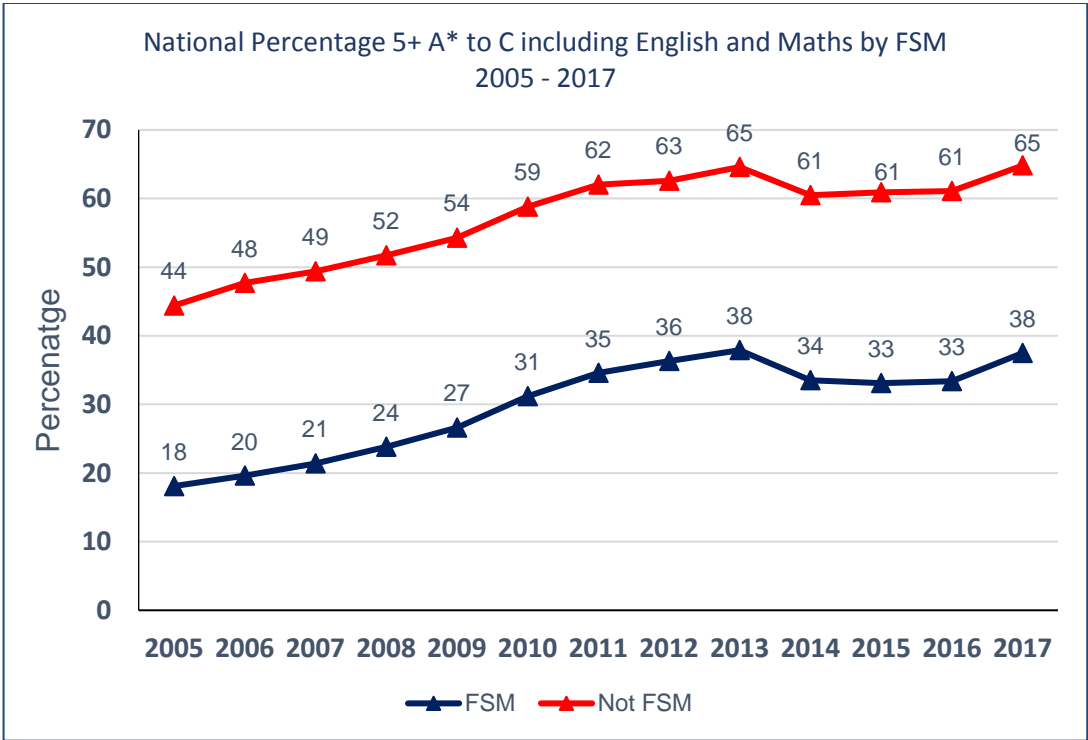
1. Strong school leadership team
2. High quality teaching and learning
3. Effective governing bodies
4. Parental engagement
5. Effective use of data to identify underachieving groups
6. Use of inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils
7. Effective use of pupil voice and feedback
8. Targeted interventions and support through use of:
  - Small group additional teaching
  - One-to-one tuition
  - Use of strongest teachers to teach English and Maths
  - Use of well-trained teaching assistants (TA)
  - Booster class
  - Enrichment programmes e.g. trips to cultural venues
  - Early intervention
  - Mastery learning
  - Phonics
  - EAL support
  - Pastoral care
  - Improving behaviour and attendance

Each of the above success factors were explored in detail in the research report to reveal exactly what schools are doing to ensure they provide the very highest quality of education for all pupils including disadvantaged pupils. The overall conclusion of this study is that the case study schools have closed the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers through the use of a range of strategies including pupil premium funding.

# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Closing the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils who are entitled to free school meals and their peers is one of the biggest challenges faced by policy makers, teachers and school leaders in England. There are long-standing achievement gaps in England associated with socio-economic status (Cassen and Kingdon 2007, DCSF 2009 and Strand 2014). It is unarguable from the research evidence available in this area that poverty is the biggest single indicator of low educational achievement (House of Commons Education Committee 2014, Ofsted 2013, Strand 2014, DCSF 2008 and 2009; Demie and Mclean 2015, 2016). Gorard’s (2000) research also suggests that children start school with different levels of resources and begin to display strong patterning by family origin in their school attainment. This pattern continues at every subsequent age and stage throughout children’s schooling. Of particular concern is that children from poorer homes do worse educationally than their classmates, with 38% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieving 5+A\*-C GCSEs including English and maths, compared to 65% of better-off pupils (DfE 2017). There remains a significant gap between FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils (See Figure 1).

**Figure 1. The achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and non-FSM pupils in England, % 5+A\*-C including English and maths, 2005-2017**



The attainment gap between children eligible and not eligible for free school meals is also apparent at the age of seven (62% and 80% respectively reached the 'expected level' in the national tests in reading, writing and maths average) and at the age of eleven (75% and 89% respectively reached the 'expected level' in the national tests in reading, writing and maths average). It is not just achievement that is affected in general, pupils eligible for free school meals also have lower rates of progress (see DfE, 2014).

A similar large gap was also reported from USA studies. The data showed the achievement gaps between black and white students and between Hispanic and white students in the U.S. have generally closed in recent years although, there are clearly still large disparities between groups. (Berliner 2009). Williams (2003) further argued educational inequality between white students and minority students continues to perpetuate social and economic inequality in USA. International studies also show that the most disadvantaged pupils tend to perform the worst (see Duncan and Magnuson 2005, Behnke et al 2010, Mensah and Kirernan 2010).

A number of recent studies have attempted to better understand the many factors associated with low achievement and the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. The UK and international evidence suggests that disadvantaged pupils face at school a number of problems including poverty across generations, lack of parental engagement and negative attitudes of education. There is now a general consensus that poverty and home/community factors impact the academic achievement of students and contribute to the achievement gap. In the context of the UK currently, one in four children in the UK is growing up in poverty (DWP 2009). For these children, the impact of poverty on their chances of educational and life success is profound. Despite average overall improvements in test scores, large differences in educational achievement according to socio-economic status persist, with family income and status by far the most significant indicator of success in the school system (Mongon and Chapman 2008; Strand 2008). The 'attainment gap' widens at each key stage as children pass through the education system, with pupils eligible for FSM falling behind non-FSM pupils.

Recent studies gave much attention to the difference in performance by gender and ethnic background to identify the factors influencing attainment of disadvantaged pupils (Mongon and Chapman 2008; Strand 2008). These studies reveal gender and ethnic background are an important factor, with girls performing better in all ethnic groups. What is also clear from previous studies are the attainment difference due to socioeconomic factors are much larger. The research also reveals that inequality in education outcomes has grown for some disadvantaged groups including White Working class, Black Caribbean and Pakistani pupils on free school meals (Demie and Mclean 2016). In particular, the White Working class boys who qualify for FSM are the lowest in academic achievement. Indeed, white British pupils from low-income families consistently emerge as the lowest-achieving ethnic group whatever the socio-economic dimension (entitlement to FSM, parental occupation, neighbourhood deprivation, etc.) (Cassen and Kingdon 2007; Strand 2008; Evans 2010). It is important, however, that these findings are



not interpreted as indicating that it is only the attainment of white British pupils from low-income families that is of concern (Evans 2010). Clearly, the link between poverty and learning outcomes is a multiracial phenomenon, with socio-economic attainment gaps much bigger than ethnic group differences (Strand 2008; Demie and Mclean 2017). Thus, the substantial gaps in attainment due to poverty across all ethnic groups are a much wider cause for concern.

In addition to poverty other factors such as lack of parental engagement, negative attitudes towards education, *'limited language, restricted vocabulary; poor attendance; mobility – many moves between schools; poor nutrition; low aspirations and low expectations; narrow range of opportunities outside school; lack of role models, especially male role models; lack of self-confidence and self-esteem; poor social skills; and inadequate support from teachers and teaching assistants.'* (Hutchinson, J. et al p.29-30) are also associated with low attainment and have contributed to the gap. However, the biggest issue for a number of schools has been helping hard to reach parents from disadvantaged communities. This leads to limited support at home for pupils and can be very frustrating for teachers and the school as they want to build strong relationships with all parents. There is now research evidence that shows many parents felt that they didn't have the skills, education or knowledge to support their children with their learning.

There is also a long standing debate about the role of the school in raising achievement in England. Although schools are continually expected to 'raise standards', such evidence would appear to replicate Bernstein's (1970) concerns to some degree, that education cannot compensate for society. Starting from Coleman et al (1966) pioneering research in the USA and Rutter et al (1979) in the UK on the effect of schools to raise standards, researchers have accepted that much of the difference in pupil outcomes is due to school intake characteristics and the family/social background/ neighbourhood where pupils live and the types of schools attended which can have a detrimental impact on their educational achievement and progress (Mortimore and Whitty 1997, Sammons 1999, Gorard 2000).

School effectiveness research has consistently shown that only about 8-15% of the attainment difference between schools is accounted for by what they actually do and the rest is attributed to intake variations including home background (Reynolds et al. 1996, Sammons 1999, Strand 2015). A study by Rasbash et al (2010) also explored the role that schools can play in tackling the general link between educational achievement and family income and noted that academic studies generally had found that about 20 percent of variability in pupils' achievement is attributed to school factors, with around 80 percent attributed to pupil-level factors such as the wider family environment, the neighbourhood where they live and the school attended. Ofsted also pointed out that *'these factors are beyond the school gates and the communities where pupils live can have a detrimental impact on their achievement. Schools can do much to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils but only so much'* (Ofsted 2014:32). ASCL (2014:32) also suggested that *'the problem was not of schools' making...they cannot solve it by themselves.'* They



pointed out that the factors influencing low attainment are beyond the control of individual schools and it is impossible for them to overcome the wider problem of poverty and disadvantage.

Clifton and Cook (2012:5) also argued that *'While many of the factors driving low achievement lie beyond the direct control of schools, it is a mistake to assume that schools cannot be part of a solution.'*

The reasons for underachievement of disadvantaged pupils are indeed complex, but a body of research is beginning to show that schools can make a difference, albeit within certain limits (see Demie and Mclean 2014; Demie and Lewis 2010; Mongon and Chapman 2010; Ofsted 2009; Cassen and Kingdon 2007).

There are now a number of schools serving disadvantaged communities that demonstrate poverty should not be an excuse for low attainment (Demie and Mclean 2014, Demie and Lewis 2010, Mongon and Chapman 2010, Ofsted 2009). These studies show that high quality education can transform lives and compensate for shortcomings in society. Recent national research and data (See Ofsted 2014 and Sutton Trust 2014) has also revealed how the pupil premium<sup>1</sup> is helping to close the gaps through targeted support and interventions. The key challenge then is to find out what strategies schools can use to make a difference to the achievement of groups, such as disadvantaged pupils from low income backgrounds. In recent years, a need for detailed case studies of schools that are successful in raising the achievement of underachieving groups of pupils has become apparent, as a means of increasing our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement. For example, Mongon and Chapman's (2008) study records encouraging signs of improvement in the way schools are addressing the underachievement of disadvantaged pupils. Key findings in this study show that these are schools with strong leadership and strong systems where Headteachers do not accept poverty as a reason for failure.

Ofsted research into what works in outstanding schools also identified similar effective strategies in raising achievement and closing the gaps in schools. They included: *'rigorous monitoring of data, effective use of feedback, planning, support and interventions, ensuring access to high quality teaching, providing a strong and visionary Headteacher and working with parents to increase engagement and raise aspirations.'* (Ofsted 2013:31) In all the case study schools in this report, great emphasis has been placed on the development of a strong, effective leadership team.

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<sup>1</sup> The pupil premium is additional funding given to publically funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers. In 2014/15 financial year, schools received £1320 for each eligible primary-aged pupil and £935 for secondary-aged pupil. This covers 1.83 million pupils in England with ring-fenced targeted funding of £2.5 billion (DfE 2014).

The terminology used to define the qualities of leadership has changed over decades, according to the political climate, as Kathryn Riley and John MacBeath observed: *'The juxtaposition of the two words 'effective' and 'leadership' signified the growing emphasis on school outcome measures and the growing acceptance of leadership as a key constituent in the effective school.'* (Sammons et al, 1995 in John MacBeath 1998 p140)

They went on to observe the generic features of effective leadership:

*'From a policymaker's perspective 'effective leadership' could perhaps be seen as holding the key to resolving many of the problems which appeared to be facing schools, but what are the assumptions behind that notion? Were there some generic and resilient features of effective leadership impervious to changes in time and place? Were there common competencies? Could leadership be constructed from a set of component parts?'*

Riley and MacBeath suggest that the paradigm is one of shared leadership and they argue that the leadership role is way beyond the scope of an individual. Indeed they contest (which is now widely accepted) that it is not possible, nor is it desirable for one person to undertake all the leadership roles within a particular school. A feature of good leadership is the ability to develop the leadership potential of others to motivate and inspire others. It would seem that from Riley and MacBeath's research that 'effective' leadership creates an impetus within the school that encourages and enables people to play an active part. Anne Jones (1987 p10) summarises the 'decentralised' approach to school leadership as follows:

*'Giving other people genuine authority does not mean enfeebling oneself; encouraging others to give creative leadership does not mean abdicating from having ideas of one's own; giving others real responsibility does not mean leaving them to sink or swim; but rather to support them in developing the best possible way of going forward.'* (In Hopkins, Ainscow & West 1994 p155).

One major emphasis in the educational arena in the early 21st century has been the continuing demand for greater accountability to increase student performance. National expectations require schools to ensure that all students achieve mastery of curriculum objectives, and schools focus on implementing those requirements to the best of their ability. As a result, leading instructional efforts in a school has evolved into a primary role for school leaders.

In order to meet the challenges associated with national expectations, leaders must focus on teaching and learning—especially in terms of measurable pupil progress—to a greater degree than ever before. Consequently, today's school leaders concentrate

on building a vision for their schools, sharing leadership with others, and influencing schools to operate as learning communities.

Further, a commitment to participate in the leadership process grows when the Headteacher encourages participation and once others trust the authenticity of the invitation to participate, then motivation and involvement increases, enthusiasm for the job then increases because staff are actively involved in decision-making. By asserting and defending particular values, it is argued, leaders so strongly articulate and endorse their vision that it becomes also the vision of others, and binds leaders and staff together in what then become the non-negotiable core values and beliefs of the organisation. Consequently getting the culture right is seen as a feature of effective educative leadership which then in turn enhances the efficiency of the organisation which in turn impacts on positive outcomes for pupils.

The case study schools in Ofsted research are successful because they understand that it is important to establish clear learning goals and garner school-wide—and even community-wide—commitment to these goals. They have developed a clear vision and goals for learning and invested heavily (both in human and financial terms) in building strong, effective leadership teams. The evidence of outstanding leadership points strongly to the commitment of outstanding Headteachers and governors not simply to distribute leadership but to develop it at all levels among adults and children in the school. All the Headteachers in this study set out clear and high expectations of all and leave no stone unturned in ensuring that every part of the school is moving in the right direction. They have identified the effective leaders and require everyone – whatever their role and whether staff or pupils – to take responsibility for their work, both teaching and learning, and to be accountable for what they do in the school. These outstanding school leaders are people of exceptional character, determination and courage – firm in their values, clear about priorities and with the leadership and interpersonal skills needed to carry people with them.

There is also strong evidence that the key to success in closing achievement gaps is a single minded focus on high quality first teaching (QFT). Most of the case study schools have little or no achievement gap. Their emphasis on the progress of each individual child, together with a preponderance of very high quality teaching can – and does – make a difference. Quality First Teaching was used as a mantra across the country by the National Strategy. The key characteristics of QFT are highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives, pupil engagement and involvement in their learning, high levels of interaction for all pupils, appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining, emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk both individually and in groups, an expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently and regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate pupils.

Ofsted recognises that schools such as these:

*‘prove constantly that disadvantage need not be a barrier to achievement .They put students first, invest in their staff and nurture their communities, they have strong values and high expectations that are applied consistently and they are highly inclusive, having complete regard for the educational progress, personal development and well-being of every student.’ (Ofsted 2009:6)*

Yet a recent report published by Ofsted, *‘Unseen children: access and achievement 20 years on’ (2013)* suggests that although the English education system has undoubtedly improved in the past 20 years, there still remains a large minority of children who do not succeed at school or college and become increasingly less visible as they progress through the system. A disproportionate number of these children are from disadvantaged backgrounds. It argues that

*‘until this issue has been addressed in England, we cannot have a world-class education system’ (Ofsted 2013:4).*

Although a review of the literature shows there is a recent growth in case study research into successful strategies to raise the achievement of disadvantaged children, there is little research carried out to study good practice to close the achievement gaps in schools and to provide what works evidence for teachers and policy makers to use to address educational inequality and to develop strategies to narrow the achievement in areas of challenging circumstances.

# SECTION 2: RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

This research is a qualitative study of schools in an inner London Local Authority (LA), and examines the success factors behind closing the achievement gap of disadvantaged pupils who are entitled to free school meals. It is similar to other studies that have looked at examples of schools who provide an environment in which underachieving groups flourish, but reflects the perspective of the disadvantaged pupils, using detailed case studies to illustrate how policy and practice help to narrow the achievement of disadvantaged pupils with a strong emphasis on what works (Demie and Mclean 2007, 2014; Demie and Lewis 2010; Mongon and Chapman 2008, Ofsted 2009).

Three overarching research questions guided this research:

- What does the data tell us about closing the achievement gap?
- What are the success factors?
- What are the implications for policy and practice?

The case study Local Authority is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse boroughs in Britain. African pupils form the largest ethnic group with 24%, followed by Black Caribbean 17%, White British 15%, White Other 8%, Mixed Race 13% and Portuguese 6%. Overall, 85% of pupils in the Local Authority schools belong to Black and other ethnic minority communities. Across the authority over 150 languages are spoken, reflecting the different cultures, experiences and identities of the members of the community. The latest disadvantage data also shows that 34% of the pupils are also eligible for free school meals.

The methodological approach comprised case studies of selected schools and focus group interviews. The case studies were supported by a qualitative study of the school strategies used to narrow the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Details of the methodological framework are summarised below:

**Focus groups:** Parent, pupil, governor and Headteacher focus groups were carried out to ascertain their views on strategies that worked to close the achievement gap and to identify whether their views mirrored those of the participants in the case study interviews.

**Case studies:** A detailed case study research was carried out to study the strategies used to raise achievement and narrow the gap. A structured questionnaire was used to interview Headteachers, teachers, parents and pupils to gather evidence on what worked in raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The aim was to triangulate the voices of the various stakeholders in their education. Five primary

and two secondary schools were selected for case studies to study strategies to narrow the achievement gap.

The schools were chosen to reflect schools of different types in the Local Authority which have relatively high numbers of pupils on free school meals. The key criteria for the selection of schools were those with a very high proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and good KS2 and GCSE results, or improving schools and Ofsted positive inspection reports.

As part of the research a variety of members of school staff and parents were interviewed in order to get a range of perspectives on the main practices in schools over a two-year period. These included Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers; class teachers; EAL (English as an additional language) teachers and special educational needs co-ordinators; teaching assistants and learning support teachers; family support workers, governors and pupils. Each of the case study schools were visited between April 2018 and March 2019.

Finally, by triangulating case study and focus group data and linking to outcomes, we were able to identify examples of good practice.

### Terminology

For the purpose of this research the term 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils from low income backgrounds who are eligible for free school meals. The merit of free school meals is that it provides a clear and comprehensive means of differentiating between two broad groups of FSM pupils and non FSM pupils.

# SECTION 3: CASE STUDIES OF SCHOOLS

## 3.1 CHRIST CHURCH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL STREATHAM

### 3.1.1 Background

Christ Church CE Primary School is a one form entry primary school situated in a culturally diverse area of South London. 89% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds with 49% having a first language other than English. The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those receiving free school meals are in the highest quintiles nationally. Many pupils are from practising Christian families with a small minority from other faith backgrounds.

Since 2013 Christ Church has been part of a soft federation with St Luke's CE Primary with the existing head taking responsibility for both schools as Executive Headteacher. The school's ethos is expressed as, 'every child is a unique gift from God' and this inclusive statement defines the work and mission of the school where Christian values and high expectations are at the heart of all aspects of school life. This work and ethos is supported by the collective focus on one core value each month as well as each class owning its own value and using it as a cornerstone of their work and attitudes. The Christian values and ethos are deeply embedded. They are made explicit through the school's policies and practices which result in significant achievements and outcomes for all pupils. All stakeholders can recognise and articulate the way in which the ethos underpins the school's work helping to make every child feel valued, safe and special. The result of this is that all pupils, including some of the most vulnerable, are making very good progress from a range of starting points.

The Executive Headteacher expressed the school's ethos as follows:

*"It is about knowing children as individuals and that every child is a unique gift from God. We know their multiple disadvantages but with quality first teaching and excellent leadership at all levels supporting that – what is good for one child will work for all."*

### 3.1.2 A strong, effective leadership team

The highly skilled senior leadership team consists of the Executive Headteacher, Head of School, Assistant Headteacher, early years lead and Year 6 teacher. The Assistant Headteacher plays a key role in developing teaching and learning across the school, but spends every morning teaching maths groups in Years 5 and 6. For the rest of the day her time is spread across Years 2, 3 and 4, providing either release PPA time for class teachers or modelling teaching to less experienced teachers. The Executive Headteacher believes that having the best teacher to support across the school is not only good value for money, but has the additional benefit that she gets to know the pupils very well and has



a good understanding of their needs. The Head of School explains the benefits of this way of working:

*“In a small school everyone knows who is on the SEND register, which children have EAL and those eligible for pupil premium, throughout the school... I think for disadvantaged children this is an advantage because everyone knows about the issues and there is continuity, but this doesn’t mean we can’t be flexible”.... “We do not use supply teachers if possible, as we are concerned about continuity for the children. Everyone knows the calming techniques needed by angry children; we talk in staff meetings about the strategies to be used with individual pupils. It builds up trust and children feel safe. Our children say they do feel safe in surveys.” (Head of school)*

Many academic studies have concluded that successful schools have effective teachers who *‘know every child’s challenges and interests, and look closely at ways of supporting them to achieve their very best’* (Barth, 1999; Florian et al., 2007; Sahlberg, 2009, 2011; Florian and Linklater, 2010; Siraj-Blatchford, 2011; Florian, 2016). These and others argue that closing the attainment gap requires that children who are poor or disadvantaged are not discriminated against; standards and expectations are not lowered for them.

It is the knowledge of individual children, the sensitivity to their particular needs and the careful planning of targeted support and interventions by the senior leadership team, (who have the drive, vision and commitment to continue to move the performance of pupils forward) that gaps in achievement have been closed. Rigorous and extensive monitoring of school development plan priorities results in informed and focused action planning by senior leaders. This in turn leads to effective improvement of teaching and learning for all pupils. Expectations are uncompromising from all senior staff and the impact of this ambition is an exceptional learning environment for all pupils.

The EYFS lead teacher has a pivotal role, not only in identifying additional needs and fostering excellent relationships with parents, but ensuring that disadvantaged pupils receive the best possible learning opportunities. As a lead EYFS practitioner and member of the senior leadership team, she makes an outstanding contribution not only within her school but in sharing expertise in wider settings for the local Cluster of Schools and within LA and diocesan schools. The Executive Headteacher reflects on how the school is able to spot talented teachers from the start and go on to develop their expertise:

*“She (EYFS teacher) came in eleven years ago with QTS ... it’s about spotting talent early and developing it”...“ she is involved in all kinds of networks and leads the EYFS network, attends Lambeth networks, leads KS1 network, gets children from the beginning and puts in a lot of work to push the children hard before Year 1. She and the TA work together very well.” (Executive Head)*

Leaders, including governors, pay close attention to the allocation of pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils gain the support they need to do well at school. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's future leadership needs and the upskilling of staff through high quality CPD opportunities. Insightful prioritisation ensures that drivers for improvement remain focused on the best possible outcomes for all pupils and this includes investing in specific initiatives, such as the current role of the Assistant Headteacher and the provision of additional midday meals supervision. The Executive Headteacher recognises and appreciates governors' contributions:

*"Governors know our intake and our priorities. We produce a pupil premium report every year and they want to ensure the gap is closing and that we are providing value for money. There is a professional dialogue between governors and teachers. They know what the priorities are. We produce a programme for governors to show how the pupil premium money is being spent and the impact." (Executive Head)*

Senior leaders are sensitive to and appreciative of the diverse community in which they work and some have for many years lived in Lambeth. Why is this important? The Head of School responds:

*"I feel an investment in the multi-cultural dynamism of the borough. I have worked here for thirty odd years"... "You are more committed to the children because you were once one of them."*

The leadership try to recruit teachers who live locally for this reason but all new staff are strongly committed to the ethos and values the school promotes. As a small school the challenge is always to be aware of the inevitability of staff moving on and the need for succession planning. The focus on staff development and the sharing of expertise and knowledge ensures that when someone leaves, there is no loss of capacity to sustain the high quality provision for all pupils.

### 3.1.3 Quality first teaching

At Christ Church, lessons are taught with pace and flair. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils to tackle all their work with persistence and independence. Relationships are excellent. Teachers make very clear the purpose of lessons and how pupils can reach the highest possible level. They do this in a highly motivating way that holds pupils' attention, enthuses them and deepens their learning.

We observed excellent lessons in EYFS and a Year 2 maths lesson. The range of stimulating and challenging activities in EYFS ensured that the youngest children were engaged in learning through first hand practical experience. The theme was 'Pirate Adventure' and the 3D displays of a pirate ship and treasure box were complemented by written displays about treasure. Children used magnifying glasses to spot tiny tricky words

such as 'we', 'he', 'they' which were hidden on an illustrated worksheet. Other children were working with a TA using a dice and cubes to subtract single digit numbers from 10. Measuring a range of objects with strips of paper, using the computer, a science experiment involving dissolving coloured ice-cubes with salt and threading gold and silver sprayed pasta pieces to make jewellery, offered the opportunity for children of all abilities to make excellent progress in areas of learning.

An outstanding maths lesson by a teacher in her second year of teaching also exemplified the characteristics of quality first teaching. The pupils were asked to re-cap on what they had learned in yesterday's lesson. A pupil describes in detail that they were tallying numbers and as a number of other pupils added their views, the teacher displayed photos on the whiteboard of the class carrying out the activity from the previous day as a visual reminder. The teacher encouragingly remarks: *'Some of you weren't here yesterday but you will soon catch up'*. She goes on to ask the children how they could present the data differently and a child replies *'you could use a bar chart.'* The pupils are encouraged to talk in small groups about which were the most popular and the least popular objects on different bar graphs. During the feedback on their findings, the word 'interpret' emerges and is added to the working wall as a 'new word'. Regular praise for 'good sitting', 'good looking' provides positive feedback for pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to talk about their work either through the teacher's questioning or with their peers. Additional adult help from a student teacher is provided for 3 girls and 2 boys with additional needs. Differentiated work is provided for a range of ability within the class. The teacher chooses a child with EAL to explain the findings of the group's bar chart, allowing sufficient time for him to think through his explanation. Rewards for positive attitudes and good work are given using DOJOs by teacher and student.

In discussion with the teacher following our observation, she reflected:

*"Before you can think about quality first teaching, it's important you know your children well; you need to know where they struggle, know your learners first, before you can teach"..... "We have personal learning plans for higher attaining pupils as well as those pupil premium pupils. We set them all targets"..... "We work as a team, we have a range of teachers and TAs ... this makes a difference to the progress they make. I ask my TA for advice as she is more experienced than me and they know the learners."*

The school's system of child conferencing enables even very young children to discuss what next steps meant in the teacher's marking and feedback on their work as a teacher explains:

*"It is a very informal discussion about the piece of work they have done. They get the chance to say what they think about it and they can decide on a target which is written on a post-it note and put in their book." (Teacher)*

Teachers provide appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. This results in pupils from those sub groups making at least good progress. There is clear challenge and extension for the more able pupils in the area of analysis, reflection and critical thinking. Work is carefully marked in line with the school's policy and pupils are clear about their next steps for success. Assessment systems are highly effective and strong. Senior leaders know where pupil progress is robust and consistent, as well as identifying areas where further support and training is needed. The Assistant Headteacher explains how her role impacts not only on pupil progress, but also on developing teaching:

*"For new teachers, my support is there to develop quality first teaching. We use a system of 'next step marking' – green for teachers and pupils respond in purple and it lets pupils know 'this is where you are now and this is where you need to be next.' Although we have a supply PPA teacher, she's been with us for five years so she teaches just like us. It's about raising the game all the time to get the best teaching possible. It's about bringing everyone up to a high standard." (Assistant Headteacher)*

Her in-depth knowledge of the children and with her specialist subject knowledge in maths, she can immediately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and plan work appropriately, for example:

*"I know the children and I know the subjects so am able to take as many steps back as necessary. I also know the tests." (Assistant Headteacher)*

### 3.1.4 Effective targeted support and interventions

At Christ Church, standards of attainment are at least in line with national expectations with a significant number of pupils attaining at a higher level. Progress is rapid for all groups of pupils and any small gaps are being closed through very effective targeted support and intervention.

#### **Booster classes led by teachers and TAs**

At the end of Key Stage 2, any child not working at the expected level receives a range of extra help. For example, early morning interventions, in class in a small group with a TA, or 1:1 support tailored to individual needs. Assessments at the end of Year 5 covering Year 6 SATs papers, tailored questions and gap analysis identify pupils in need of further booster classes which take place after school and a summer school led by the Assistant Head and the Year 6 teacher, for Year 5 pupils who need support before going into Year 6.

### Summer schools

*“The first three days of the summer holidays, we provide booster classes for the middle to higher attaining groups in English, maths and reasoning, to get them ready for Year 6. Then the last three days of the summer holidays we take lower attaining pupils and we do some pre-teaching, settle them down and get them ready for the term ahead. We also did an Easter school last year but we think that these children have had enough so we upped booster after school, bringing in support from City Heights.”*

The impact of the summer school booster classes is very positive as the Year 6 teacher reflects:

*“By Year 6 they hit the ground running. I taught these children in Year 3 so I know them. Charlotte had them in Year 4 so there’s lots of communication. The booster groups at the beginning of the year started with just one group but then might change as the year goes on.”*  
(Year 6 teacher)

Every opportunity is taken to fit in an extra bit of support for those pupils who need to deepen their understanding, for example, during assembly TAs take pupils for particular interventions. Again during an assembly, the year teacher or the Assistant Head will take a group to give them very in depth pre-teaching prior to the lesson.

The learning mentor works with children and parents and has very good relationships with both and she describes her role:

*“I support Year 6 in the morning, I have 7 girls. There has been a lot of movement as many families have moved out of the area and we have some children from ‘managed moves’ who have come in. In the afternoon I support children with a range of difficulties, ‘looked after children’ ADHD, bereaved and those that need SEND support. I tend to sit with those children who want to eat with me at lunchtime. After lunch we go to the library and do quiet activities. I work with 20 children throughout the school as well as Year 6.”..... “I think we see progress everyday – one of the boys I was supporting at the beginning didn’t know his 2 x table but he was doing so well in his SATs.”*

### Early interventions

TA support is also carefully targeted to where the needs are greatest, as one explains:

*“I work from Year 1 to Year 6 supporting with intervention groups. If children haven’t mastered a lesson we catch up with them. I also teach phonics in Year 1 and to a few in Year 3, to close the gap in reading. Some children who come in later in the year and have EAL we do intensive phonics with them in order for them to access the curriculum.”*

### Peer tutoring

Peer tutoring is encouraged but pupils are given the option whether or not they wish to be engaged in either providing support or receiving it. The process is that if anyone finishes their work they can help others by re-explaining the task, or how they approached it. Pupils know that they are there to learn and to help others learn. Instilling such a learning culture encourages pupils to take responsibility, not only for their behaviour, but taking on harder learning challenges without fear of failure.

The EEF (2016) found, based on extensive studies, that *‘overall, the introduction of peer tutoring approaches appears to have a positive impact on learning, with an average positive effect of approximately five additional months’ progress.’* Peer tutoring benefits both tutors and tutees, but crucially the EEF stresses that *‘there is some evidence that children from disadvantaged backgrounds and low attaining pupils make the biggest gains.’* There are, however, some detailed examinations that show that teaching children to have the metacognitive and communication skills to be able to effectively assess their peers and to be peer assessed, is an essential baseline for such an intervention (Wall et al., 2009).

### Mastery learning

The Year 6 teacher explains how they approach this:

*“We are always trying to move them on, for example if we have been working on angles, I will put this up on the board with some angles missing... it’s about broadening their understanding.”*

### Reading comprehension strategies

Another member of the team has responsibility for ‘reading partnership’ having completed a 2 day course to develop a ‘Better Reading Partnership’, also teaches phonics early on, as she illustrates below:

*"I teach phonics in Years 1 and 3 to individuals and groups to help them catch up with reading. I also take children from Years 1 and 2 who are reading below their reading age to bring them up, so they can meet targets. We use Oxford Reading Tree, and they have 15 minutes 1:1. They read to me first and then I read to them. So then I ask them questions to check comprehension. I take 4/5 children in the morning and ten children altogether. Because we are reading 3 x per week and parents are asked to read with children, we have an online 'Bug Club' they can download a book at home, we can monitor what is happening, the TA, the class teacher and home. The children have guided reading with the class teachers or TAs every day."*

The impact of this intensive, focused teaching has resulted in a child making a year's progress in reading over ten weeks.

The inclusion team is very well managed and interventions carefully planned, monitored and reviewed to ensure that there is no overlap of provision. In the following case study, three members of the team (two TAs and a Learning Mentor) have contributed to the significant progress Child A has made not only in English and maths but also in his personal and social development and they describe his progress over this academic year:

### 3.1.5 Pupil Voice

*Child A*

*Reading:*

- *He was struggling with Level 4 reading books at the beginning of the year so he was put down to level 3.*
- *This term he has improved and is back on level 4*
- *He is able to answer questions and ask questions about the book, predicts what will happen next.*
- *Can explain the pictures and link it to real life.*

*Phonics:*

- *He was struggling to retain the sounds, but now he is remembering a lot more, plus he uses his sounds to read new words.*
- *Some of the time he is able to read the flash cards instead of sounding and blending words.*



### *Spelling*

- *At the beginning of the year he was getting 2 out of 10 spellings right but now I have given him less words and he is getting more right i.e. 6/8.*

### *Maths*

- *He loves maths but struggles with his times tables. He has done well with 1-6 times tables but finds 7 x hard. We've started practicing 1-5 x 7 which he's done well with and has moved on to learn the rest.*

*He has been rewarded with laptop time. He earns this during the week to motivate his learning. During this time he learns to log on, chooses an educational activity, learns the times the activity will start and finish.*

*Overall progress:*

*He is good at managing his behaviour using various strategies such as a cooling time period.*

*There has been noticeable progress across all subjects. He has more work in his books and he is showing great strengths in maths and his reading level has improved.*

*He is becoming confident and engages more in lessons.*

*He is communicating his feelings more.*

*He was unable to use a knife and fork, but now has good table manners.*

*He can now recall all adults in the school by name; he knows the days of the week, months of the year. He didn't know any of this at the start of the year.*

*He works well now with a range of adults and can express how he is feeling calmly most of the time.*

*He is becoming more spatially aware of his size and strength.*

### **3.1.6 Parental involvement**

The school uses a very effective system of class management called ClassDojo which provides pupils and parents with feedback. Teachers can encourage pupils for any skill or value, whether it's working hard, being kind, helping others and a child can earn points. When a Dojo is earned by a child, their parent receives a message immediately. It also provides feedback directly to parents by sharing photos and videos of wonderful classroom moments. Likewise parents can send teachers photos of what their children

have been doing at home. Some teachers use it for sending spellings home for children to learn with their parents. As far as a behaviour tool is concerned a teacher explains:

*'We use it to award points across the whole school, all the staff, TAs the music teacher also use it.'*

### 3.1.7 Conclusions

There were a number of good practices that were highlighted during the case study research in the school including:

- Strong commitment of staff to the 'Christian family ethos' of the school where every child is known and valued.
- Leaders focus on the needs and progress of all children and are committed to the empowerment of staff and pupils. They are active in training and developing teachers and staff within their federation and within other networks. They readily express how their explicit Christian values have led to sustained improvement and high standards of achievement for every child.
- Parents have a clear understanding of the school's values and ethos.
- Teachers', TA's and learning mentors detailed knowledge of the children means that they can match learning to specific individual needs.
- Wide-ranging early intervention strategies are implemented and their impact monitored at half termly pupil progress meetings.
- A rich and imaginative curriculum both within and beyond the classroom which provides a strong stimulus for learning and which compensates for children's limited experience, language and powers of communication.

### 3.2 GRANTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### 3.2.1 Background

Granton Primary School is an outstanding four-form entry school with 587 pupils on roll. In the early years, nursery children attend either full or part time. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with many nationalities represented in the school. Many pupils who join the school in the Nursery or Reception classes speak English (57.9%) as an additional language. About a quarter of all pupils join the school later than is usual. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities or an EHCP is 1.9% and 11.8% receive SEND support. The proportion of pupils who receive free school meals is 40.7% which is much higher than in most primary schools.

From a low starting point, by the time they leave the school pupils are working at a level which is at or above the national expectation in English and mathematics. Excellent teaching ensures that pupils make rapid progress across all subjects. Disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language achieve at a similar level to other pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.

Granton is a very lively and welcoming school. Pupils love coming to school and have a real enthusiasm for learning. The Headteacher leads a very strong team who share his belief that the pupils deserve an excellent education and are dedicated to providing this.

#### 3.2.2 A strong, effective leadership team

Granton was judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding in all areas' in July 2017, the report describing the leadership as follows:

*"Leaders have created a strong family atmosphere where pupils and staff feel highly valued and share a love of learning. The Headteacher and senior leaders have made sure that the school has continued to improve very strongly. Leadership at all levels in the school is outstanding. The Headteacher and governors have systematically identified and developed leadership qualities in other staff. For example, the phase leaders know their year groups very well and provide highly effective support for teaching and learning. Subject leaders in English and mathematics have very successfully taken on considerable responsibility for raising standards in these subjects." (Ofsted July 2017)*

The school regards itself as an 'extended family', every child and member of staff feels cared for in what is an inspirational community. Through its unique, inclusive, family ethos, Granton pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful and responsible young people with high self-esteem and with the motivation, skills and knowledge to succeed in life.

Very strong distributed leadership is a feature of Granton School and there is clarity about the roles and responsibilities of leaders and the areas they are accountable for. School improvement is a team effort. The Headteacher and senior leaders, (a large group), understand their key roles thoroughly and each is familiar with everybody else's job. The school's systems are so established and consistently applied that staff no longer have to focus on them but can concentrate instead on powerful and innovative teaching. The leadership team draws on individual strengths and expertise to create a common approach that benefits from their collective knowledge.

Regular checks on the quality of teaching by phase and subject leaders help to identify where improvement may be needed and excellent professional training and development assist staff in progressing their skills. The support they receive helps to motivate staff and they work highly effectively in their year and phase teams. Middle leaders' roles are described by the Headteacher as follows:

*"They ensure that not only the staff, but pupils and families are engaged in curriculum delivery. CPD is strong across the school and the Deputy Headteacher and middle leaders provide training for others internally as well as using different providers. In response to the training provided, staff are willing to change and keep an open mind based on theory and empirical evidence. They make themselves available to attend twilight training and have a strong partnership with hubs, e.g. the London Thames Maths Hub run by the Harris Federation and the London Southwest Maths hub in Wandsworth."* (Headteacher)

He continues...

*"Middle leaders are skilled – they know how to apply for grants to fund projects relating to their areas of responsibility. They write termly reports to governors which are evaluative."*

Leaders at all levels evaluate the work of the school accurately and in depth. This helps them to pinpoint areas in need of further improvement; development plans have realistic yet challenging targets. The Headteacher recently introduced a 'mastery' approach to the teaching of maths:

*“The school is accredited by the National Centre of Excellence for the Teaching of Mathematics as a professional development lead. We are aiming to be a lead school in providing high-quality training in teaching mathematics. The accreditation means any school can visit us or we can run training for them. One of our teachers is also to become a maths specialist through the NCETM and will be expected to work and support six schools across London.”*

Providing opportunities for staff to develop their expertise and then share their knowledge and skills not only locally but nationally, stems from the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher who, on behalf of the Lambeth Teaching School Alliance are the official trainers of sixteen senior leaders (from around the south-east) on the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders programme .

With regard to reducing teacher workload, the school has reduced the amount of monitoring it carries out; for example, lesson observation is linked to performance management cycles and leaders are careful to link up observations with an additional purpose. Monitoring of the learning environment and pupils’ work is also carried out regularly by phase leads, who check pupils’ progress and set challenging targets for achievement. Teachers use these aspirational targets to modify how they teach their classes and to identify pupils who need extra support. The Headteacher was part of the Department for Education’s workload review group, commissioned to look at reducing teacher’s workload with regard to data management.

This outstanding school makes a significant investment in pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils by empowering its senior leadership team. Ofsted commented:

*“Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used exceptionally well and they do at least as well as, and often better than, other pupils nationally. They share the same high aspirations as other pupils in the school.” (Ofsted, July 2017)*

### 3.2.3 Effective use of data

Research into *what works in schools* tells us that schools know the gaps well and they have collected and analysed data to identify groups and individual pupils and monitored this over time (Demie 2010; Essex education service, 2015; Demie and Mclean 2016).

In successful schools the consistent use and analysis of school data has promoted effective self-evaluation and high standards of teaching and learning by informing professional discussions with key partners including governors, parents and staff;

identifying pupils' achievement and informing target setting; monitoring the effectiveness of targeted support and interventions; supporting the allocation of staffing and resources and challenging the aspirations of staff, pupils and parents. Staff have developed a good understanding of the range of data available and this understanding has given them the confidence to plan for continuous school improvement. The effective use of school data has contributed towards the school's capacity to improve and key members of staff and governors have a good understanding of how data can be used to evaluate and improve the performance of a school. In addition, the successful schools focused on improving quality first teaching, have identified the main barriers to learning and have put interventions in place when data has identified the groups or individual pupils that are underachieving and need targeted support.

All these are also true at Granton, a case study school, and the school makes use of data to make the gaps visible by identifying groups/pupils in school now. As part of this research we asked teachers and school leaders '***what is the evidence that your school is closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils? What examples are there of good practice in using data in identifying and focusing on the achievement gap?***'

Our findings suggest that one of the core elements of the school's success in closing the achievement gap is its robust focus on tracking and monitoring individual pupil's progress and achievement in the widest sense of the term. The Headteacher raised expectations through challenging everyone to think about the performance of the school, different groups and individuals. The school has a well-developed pupil tracking system known as 'Pupil Asset.' This tracking system records and analyses pupils' summative attainment and progress. It has detailed information on Foundation Stage, Key Stage1, Key Stage 2 and non-statutory assessment data followed by background data such as ethnic background, country of origin, language spoken, level of fluency in English, date of admission, eligibility for free school meals, EAL stage of fluency, SEN stage, mobility rate, years in school, attendance rate, types of support and interventions (see Table 1).

What is more important is that the pupil asset tracking system can easily track pupils' data and map progression and as well their attainment, pupil group activities and interventions including detailed views of progress by subject, period and year. It also provides the ability to easily filter and sort the data in MIS to suit the needs of school.

Table 1. Granton school ML class tracking and monitoring systems

Background: EAL, PP and SEN				Autumn Data			Spring Data		
Child Code	EAL	Pupil Premium	SEN	NC Maths	NC Writing	NC Reading	NC Maths	NC Writing	NC Reading
1.	1 C	YES		2b	2c	2b	2a	2b	2a
2.				2b	2c	2b	2a	2b	2a
3.	1 A	YES		1a	1b	1b	2c	2c	2c
4.	1 A	YES		EAL 2	EAL 2	EAL 2	EAL 3	EAL 3	EAL 3
5.		YES		2b	2b	2b	2a	2a	2a
6.				2b	2c	2b	2a	2b	2a
7.	1 B	YES	SLCN	2c	2c	2c	2b	2b	2b
8.				2c	2c	2c	2b	2b	2b
9.	1 C	YES		2c	2b	2b	2b	2a	2a
10.	1 B	YES		1b	1b	1b	1b	1b	1a
11.	1 A	YES		1b	1b	1a	1a	1a	2c
12.	1 A			1b	1b	1b	1a	1a	1a
13.	1 A	YES	MLD	1c	1c	1c	1b	1b	1b
14.	1 B			2c	2c	2c	2b	2b	2b
15.	1 A	YES	SLCN	1c	P8 Sec	P8 Sec	1b	1c	1c
16.				2b	2b	2b	2a	2a	2a
17.	1 B			1b	1b	1b	2c	2c	2c
18.				2c	1a	2c	2b	2c	2b
19.	1 B			2c	2c	2c	2b	2b	2b
20.				1b	1a	2c	2c	2b	2b
21.	1 C			2c	2c	2c	2b	2b	2b
22.	1 B	YES		2c	1a	1a	2b	2c	2c
23.	1 C			2b	2c	2b	2a	2b	2a
24.			MLD	1a	1b	1b	2c	1b	1b
25.				2b	2b	2b	2a	2a	2a
26.	1 B	YES	SLCN	1a	1a	1a	2c	2c	2c
27.				2c	2c	2b	2b	2b	2a
28.	1 B	YES		2c	2c	2c	2b	2b	2b
29.		YES		2c	2c	2c	2b	2b	2b
30.				2b	2b	2b	2a	2a	2a

Note:

SEN Type: **SLCN**-Speech, Language and Communications Needs **MLD**- Moderate Learning Difficulty

EAL Proficiency: **Stage A** (New to English), **Stage B** (Early Acquisition), **Stage C** (Developing Competence), **Stage D** (Competent), and **Stage E** (Fully fluent in English).



The successful use of data owes much to the Headteacher and the capable leader in assessment and EAL who is responsible for collating and monitoring trends, results and analysis of how the school performed in relation to similar schools and schools nationally. Comparisons are made between subjects and teachers are held accountable for their results and this has helped to sharpen the focus to raise achievement. Teachers are expected to identify and target specific areas of improvement and to identify and monitor progress of individual pupils who were underachieving. The Headteacher and leadership team monitor progress against targets. The school has developed a strong sense of pride in their efforts to improve through effective use of data in teaching and learning. In the words of the Headteacher:

*“all teachers are trained in the use of data and the school uses data well. They understand what data tells them and what adjustments they need to make in their teaching in response to what the assessment information is telling them.”*

More importantly in this school, teachers are also responsible for the collection of all the data. The school regularly assesses all children and as a result they know their data and class well, including issues which require intervention or support.

The school holds in-depth pupil progress review meetings where they look at the data to ensure that any pupils struggling in particular areas of the curriculum are identified and appropriate interventions put in place to help them. The question that was consistently asked in each pupil progress meeting was: **‘what will move the child on with their learning to maximise progress?’** They have to account for what they do for disadvantaged pupils, EAL, all other groups and individual pupils. This forms one of the areas of discussion in the pupil progress meetings and this is also used to formulate intervention groups. All of the teaching staff have an understanding of how well the pupils in the school achieve and how this compares with similar schools and the national average. All teachers are involved in individual and group target setting and in the regular assessment of pupil groups.

From the interview with the Headteacher, teachers and in the classroom observations the following examples of good practice emerged:

*“The school regularly assesses all children and pupil progress review meetings are regularly held to ensure that any pupils struggling in particular areas of the curriculum are identified and appropriate interventions put in place to help them.” (Headteacher, Assessment/ EAL data leader, teachers)*

*“All pupils with EAL are assessed carefully using their stage of English fluency to ensure they receive appropriate support and are making the required progress.” (Assessment/ EAL data leader)*

*“The school looks very early on at the pupils who are underachieving against the FSP, KS1, KS2 results using Pupil Asset data tracking and monitoring systems and this has led to a number of interventions where data analysis highlighted issues to be addressed in the school.”  
(Assessment/ EAL data leader)*

*“We arm everybody in school with data and everyone is aware of individual pupil needs and types of intervention. Teachers are confident in the use of data and assessment information.” (Assessment/ EAL data leader)*

*“The use of data at all levels by teachers, also means that areas of weakness are picked up and can become a priority for early interventions.*

*The most common interventions in the school as a result of looking at the data were changing a teaching approach, providing additional support including one to one, booster groups, tailoring teaching levels or the curriculum, mentoring and target setting.” (Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher)*

The evidence from our research confirms that the use of performance data is a strength of the school and there is a strong focus on learning to ensure that no one is left behind, through detailed monitoring and tracking; those pupils below the expected level or at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and individual needs are targeted. It has also promoted teaching and learning by clearly indicating areas for development, identifying under-performing groups, better use of staff and resources and for closely monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives and strategies.

**3.2.4 The impact of targeted interventions: empirical evidence**

To address the achievement gap in schools, interventions are needed that tackle the critical issue of opportunities to learn. In particular, the opportunities provided to our most disadvantaged students.

Overall pupil premium funding when used to deliver a wide range of intervention strategies to raise attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics, has a huge impact in closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Table 1 and Table 2 show that pupil premium pupils did well between 2015 and 2017. The data confirms that the school has had a huge impact on disadvantaged pupils and reading, writing and maths results have improved for all children including disadvantaged pupils and those with EAL. Both groups also outperformed the national non-pupil premium average in each subject. The school is highly successful in closing any gaps in the attainment and progress of pupils through targeted interventions.

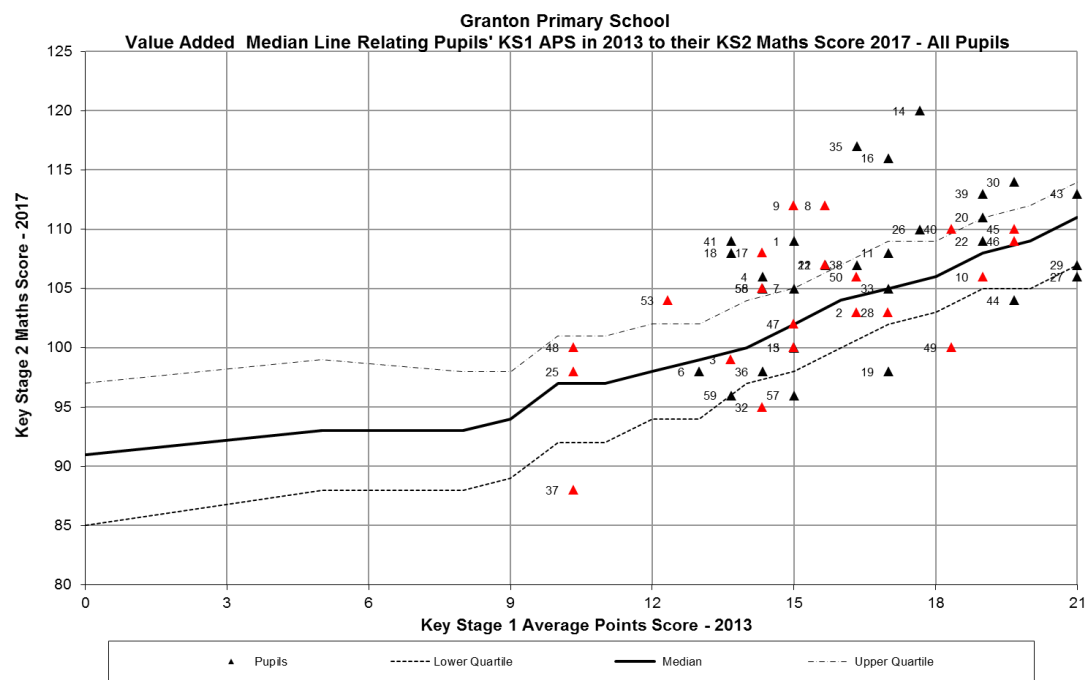
Table 2: Performance by FSM and pupil premium 2015-2017

KS2 FSM	2015				2016				2017			
	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP
Cohort	53	17	35	n/a	59	20	38	n/a	59	25	34	n/a
Reading	96%	100%	94%	6%	75%	75%	74%	1%	59%	60%	59%	1%
Writing	87%	88%	86%	3%	86%	90%	84%	6%	83%	84%	82%	2%
Maths	98%	100%	97%	3%	83%	85%	82%	3%	78%	84%	74%	10%
RWM	87%	88%	88%	0%	69%	70%	68%	2%	54%	52%	56%	-4%

KS2 PP	2015				2016				2017			
	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP
Cohort	53	29	24	n/a	59	29	30	n/a	59	36	23	n/a
Reading	96%	100%	92%	8%	75%	69%	80%	-11%	59%	61%	57%	5%
Writing	87%	86%	88%	-1%	86%	83%	90%	-7%	83%	89%	74%	15%
Maths	98%	100%	96%	4%	83%	76%	90%	-14%	78%	83%	70%	14%
RWM	87%	86%	88%	-2%	69%	59%	80%	-21%	54%	56%	52%	3%

The value-added by the school for pupil premium pupils and other pupils is also very impressive (see Figure 2). KS1 to KS2 value-added data in the graphs below, which compare the relative progress made by pupils in Granton with the progress made nationally by all pupils in England, show that pupils have made very good progress. About 39% of the pupils in the school are in the upper quartile in maths compared to 25% nationally, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. About the same proportion are in the interquartile range as found nationally, while only 14% are in the lower quartile range, those making the least progress, compared to 25% expected nationally. Similar evidence was also recorded between KS1 and KS2 for the school for reading, suggesting excellent progress in all curriculum areas for all groups. This is a school where all pupils make impressive progress between KS1 and KS2.

Figure 2: Value-added: KS1 to KS2- All pupils



The data suggests that the targeted support and interventions for disadvantaged pupils have had a major effect in raising the achievement of pupils in the school. Below, the work done with some pupils illustrates the impact of this individualised support.

**Child A Case Study:** Child A is a disadvantaged pupil with EAL and speaks Spanish at home. She was assessed at a beginner stage when she joined the school. In Year 6 she was further assessed as stage D level of fluency suggesting that she needed some additional support to develop more academic English. The school targeted her language development in maths, English and science and provided additional support through interventions, booster classes, one to one tuition, in-class intervention and support from a teaching assistant. His records for KS1 show that she was assessed at level 1 in reading and writing and 2B in maths. However, as a result of EAL support she achieved as expected with a score of 100 at the end of KS2. This was indeed a good achievement for someone with D stage level of fluency in English to achieve as expected and has contributed very positively in terms of value added.

**Child B Case Study:** Child B came from Portugal and speaks Portuguese at home. He was assessed as a beginner stage English on arrival in the school in Reception. His achievement at KS1 was 1 in reading and writing and 2C in maths. Significant

English support was given through one to one and in class support. Additional EAL support has helped child B to make a huge progress at the end of KS2.

**Child C Case Study:** Child C came from Portugal and speaks Portuguese at home. She was assessed as stage B level of fluency in English with the need for considerable support. Her achievement at KS1 assessment was 2A in reading, writing and maths. At the beginning of Year 6, she was assessed as fully fluent in English. As a result of the additional targeted support child C had made a huge improvement in reading and maths in the KS2 test.

**Child D Case Study:** Child D is a disadvantaged EAL pupil with SEN. He has learning difficulties and really needy. He came from Portugal and speaks Portuguese at home. He has a problem with reading and maths. The school targeted particularly his language development in maths, English and science and provided additional support through interventions. However, with targeted support and interventions, daily phonics, extra reading each day, one to one and booster class by classroom teacher he made a huge improvement.

**Child E Case Study:** Child E came from Poland and speaks Polish at home. He joined the school near the end of Year 1, had no English on arrival and was assessed as a stage 1 beginner and required a lot of support in improving his language proficiency. The achievement at the start of the school in September suggested he was on 1B level in writing, reading and maths. This had improved to 1A by December. With additional EAL support from the teachers and teaching assistants he improved by one level between September and December. This is indeed good achievement for a child who had only been in the school for 3 months.

From the outset all the case study children needed effective support to achieve good results by improving their level of fluency in English to access their primary education. With their limited language and literacy levels of English when they joined school, they had considerable needs. However through targeted support, effective assessment systems and tracking of pupil performance, all pupils proved being disadvantaged or having English as an additional language need not be a barrier. The gap at KS2 between disadvantaged pupils and others has decreased over time faster than nationally.

Overall, the observations and interviews suggest that teachers, school leaders and TAs all know the achievement gaps in their school. The first step in the cycle of identifying the gap involved data analysis to identify target groups of underperforming disadvantaged pupils including EAL, SEN and minority ethnic groups in the schools. To secure this, leaders and managers:-

- Use historic data to identify patterns that repeat themselves year after year and that need intervention in relation to pupil groups, teachers, subjects or courses;

- Test these patterns against live data, tracking pupils in school now;
- Drive analysis down to groups and individual pupils, to target action to support improvement.

We would argue that data is used very effectively in this school to target interventions for disadvantaged pupils and there are excellent systems in place for monitoring the work of pupils, identifying those who need additional help or extra challenge and then providing them with appropriate additional support. This can be summarised by comments from the Headteacher who stated that:

*“Additional pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used exceptionally well and they do at least as well as, often better than other pupils nationally.’ They share the same high aspirations as the other pupils in the school.”*

### 3.2.5 Effective targeted support and intervention

*‘Disadvantaged pupils also have any individual needs identified and highly effective support helps them to overcome any barriers to learning that they may have. Pupils at an early stage of learning English receive similarly effective support and rapidly become confident users of the language.*

*Teachers’ detailed knowledge of their pupils means that they can match learning to specific individual needs. This helps pupils to gain confidence and make rapid progress. Teaching assistants are well trained to support individuals and small groups very effectively. This particularly helps pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make at least good progress from their different starting points.’ (Ofsted July 2017)*

#### Early intervention

As intervening in the early years enhances the chances of success in capturing the missing talent of pupils who are disadvantaged, early intervention is the key to success at Granton. Through continuing observation and formative assessment, teachers diagnose a child’s strengths and needs early and intervene with strategies that support and guide, in order to manage, minimise or eliminate the specific need/s.

The assessment of pupils within their first week in EYFS identifies knowledge and understanding of letter sounds, letter names, colours, shapes, and number. The EYFS Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) explains:

*“We carry these assessments out with individual children and from that we identify the groups I will work with. I had five children in my group, one had never been to nursery and two had EAL. The three little boys formed a group and I took them once a week for 20 minutes. We did a pattern project within maths and we did a lot on speech and language and I encouraged them to support each other. The rest of the class wanted to do the same patterns so the boys taught the rest of the class how to do the pattern. They are now due to reach ELG in maths and one will do this in literacy, communication and language.” (HLTA)*

Increasing the children’s confidence in communication is key, as the HLTA makes clear:

*“The fundamental thing is to get their confidence up and once they get that they grow in everything. They will want to be challenged and even if that’s too great for them, even if they get it wrong, they can learn from that’.... ‘We get good feedback from parents. I remember going on a home visit and saw a very nervous child and a worried mum. It’s lovely to read her comments now she is so happy. In EYFS you are supporting a nervous parent as well as a child.” (HLTA)*

From the Nursery and Reception classes onwards, individual progress is almost always at least good and frequently outstanding. About a quarter of the pupils join the school later than their peers. Where these pupils are at risk of not achieving as highly as others, the school quickly puts support in place to improve their rates of progress and raise attainment. Consequently, most of them are able to catch up rapidly.

More than half the pupils in the school speak English as an additional language and as a result of focused work and support their progress is comparable to that of others. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress from their starting points. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, make similar progress to other pupils. Some make exceptionally good progress. For example, in most year groups these pupils have made slightly better progress than others in writing because teachers have planned the work well to meet their specific needs.

Teachers from Year 3 and Year 6 gave examples of the progress that pupils eligible for pupil premium funding have made:

*Year 3: “A boy with very low levels in maths, reading and with moderate learning difficulties had daily phonics in a group, extra reading each week and TA support for maths and English. I had many meetings with his mum and would chat with her informally. The progress he has made since last September is as follows: Sept 1b – March 1a – May 2c in reading, writing and maths.” (Year 3 Teacher)*

The Year 6 teacher gave another example of a pupil's progress in her class:

*"He was 5c in maths, reading 5b and writing 5b. He had lots of problems with maths – number bonds to 100 not a good understanding of number. We used the booster approach and he is also in a trained HLTA booster group. He had difficulty with behaviour and attendance. The parents didn't have a very good understanding of the school. He is now 6b and needs to achieve 6a; he is 6b in writing and still 6c in maths. The new maths mastery approach has made a big impact and Saturday morning booster classes are very effective." (Year 6 Teacher)*

A TA working in Year 6 describes her role in supporting pupil premium pupils:

*"We like to build up their self-esteem. I give them a lot of praise, lots of high-level questioning in a small group to build confidence. The children are targeted and they have intervention groups for reading, maths, or 1:1 support. Within lessons if there is anyone who struggles to grasp concepts, I take them later in the day to give further explanation. I am still learning maths mastery and every Friday morning we get training from subject leaders." (TA)*

### **Inclusion Team - Pastoral Care**

The school employs a Pastoral Care & Family Support Lead (formerly a teacher and EAL specialist) who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and a Family Support Worker and Pastoral Care Assistant (formerly a Youth Worker and Police Officer). They monitor and track attendance for all pupils and those at risk of persistent absence. They have key roles in engaging parents and work tirelessly to promote the personal and professional development, behaviour and welfare of all staff, pupils and families alike through researching, organising and/or delivering exciting new initiatives. Interventions or enrichment opportunities (Forest School partnership with Nature Vibezzz, Wick Court Farm trip, Family Learning Courses and visits, Emotion and Behaviour Coaching, Cluster School Council meetings, SLSP Family Learning Activities).

The team has successfully sourced additional funding, in addition to Pupil Premium to support the formal curriculum for disadvantaged pupils, enabling them to take part in extra-curricular artistic, musical, sporting, cultural and social opportunities.



### Parental involvement

The Family Support Leader (FSL) describes how the pastoral team's roles have evolved over the years:

*"Our success is based on good practice; of breaking barriers to learning, why families are not engaged and what's stopping children from achieving for a range of reasons, temporary housing, social care and mental health issues. These are the disadvantages families come to school with. We work in many ways with families. A lot of parents may not have had a positive experience at school themselves. If we are pleasant and friendly then they will come in." (Family Support Leader)*

The pastoral team make themselves available to go into the playground before and after school and are known to parents by their first names which they say makes it easy for them to be approached.

The team will target families they think will benefit from family learning courses, as the Family Support Leader makes clear:

*"We would invite parents to arts and crafts courses and sometimes they need us to walk them in, it breaks down barriers; making them really welcome. Classes are open to parents so it makes it easier for them. We speak to everyone in the playground so they do not feel they are being targeted. We don't just focus on a particular group. What do you do when you get a huddle of parents? We speak to them and find out what their interests are. We now have a textiles course because they wanted to sew things and then sell them at school fairs or at random sales. They have now asked for ESOL courses, so sewing and ESOL go on together."*

The Pastoral Care assistant's background in Youth Work and the Police Force has given her much strength and expertise to bring to her role in school as she describes:

*"I worked with adults with mental health difficulties and homelessness. There are organisations that schools may not know about and I was able to bring those ideas into school. I am able to communicate with anybody and support particular issues."*

The pastoral team makes sure families are aware of the support available, for example breakfast club, after-school care and support during holidays. They are responsible for bringing in providers for before and after school care and have been able to negotiate on behalf of some children who cannot afford to attend these groups so that they are able to have free access to clubs and summer clubs.

The Reading Café which is run by the pastoral team began about nine years ago and every Wednesday from 9 – 10 am targeted children and parents from different year groups are invited for coffee but also learn about phonics, reading and comprehension, and maths from different members of the teaching staff. The staff believes that has boosted parents' confidence in supporting their children at home

### 3.2.6 Conclusions

There were a number of good practices that were highlighted during the case study research in the school including

- Leaders have created a strong family atmosphere where pupils and staff feel highly valued and share a love of learning.
- The school has a well-developed pupil tracking system known as 'Pupil Asset' which records and analyses pupils' summative attainment and progress. It has detailed information on FSP, KS1, KS2 and non-statutory assessment data followed by background data such as ethnic background, country of origin, language spoken, level of fluency in English, date of admission, eligibility for free school meals, EAL stage of fluency, SEN stage, mobility rate, years in school, attendance rate, types of support and interventions.
- All teachers are responsible for collecting data and understand what data tells them and what adjustments they need to make in their teaching in response to what the assessment information is telling them.
- Teachers' detailed knowledge of their pupils means that they can match learning to specific individual needs and teaching assistants are well trained to support individuals and small groups very effectively.
- The assessment of pupils within their first week in EYFS identifies knowledge and understanding of letter sounds, letter names, colours, shapes, and number.
- Outstanding range of intervention strategies, including pastoral care and support for pupils and families.

### 3.3 HITHERFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### 3.3.1 Background

Hitherfield is a three form entry primary school with 704 pupils on roll. 8.5% of pupils receive additional special educational needs/disabilities (SEND) support and 3.1% have a statement of SEND/EHCP. 18.6% pupils receive FSM and 26.3% eligible for pupil premium funding. 33.1% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's vision is to create a school community where everyone feels valued, has the opportunity to explore and develop their strengths and is able to participate in new experiences. It aims to become an inspirational school, to produce good citizens for the future in an atmosphere that promotes confidence, high academic achievement, physical health and emotional wellbeing.

The school provides a caring, supportive environment where pupils feel safe and secure and where they are encouraged to develop their talents to the full.

#### 3.3.2 A strong, effective leadership team

In striving for academic excellence, school leaders have worked hard to engage the support of parents and carers, and to ensure that governors are very closely involved in the school. Many parents in responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, spoke very positively about the impact community leaders and governors have created. They feel valued as an integral part of the school community.

The strong leadership in this school is broadly distributed. In addition to the Executive Headteacher, there is a Head of School, four Assistant Headteachers, a school business manager and senior SENDCo. The Assistant Headteachers are phase leaders, have line management responsibilities for other staff and broad areas of responsibility such as, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, EAL and assessment.

Ofsted carried out a short inspection of the school in 2018 and noted:

*"Leaders work well together to keep the school under review, to identify appropriate development priorities and to check the progress made. Governors play an active role through their different sub-committees and through their regular visits to the school. These are used well to ask the right questions and, as a result, governors understand what impact leaders are having on tackling issues identified for improvement."*

Like other schools in this study, Hitherfield has been highly successful in closing gaps in achievement and the Head of School explains how this has come about:

*“The leadership is the reason for this being so tight – pupil premium money is spent on this, so we need to ensure the money is spent effectively. We think about how we need to make things happen day to day for children. We know that interventions make a difference to a certain level but you have to think more about the wider needs of the individual child. We really try and pin down one or two things that are going to make a difference for every single child.”*

Another of the strengths of the leadership is that its entire strategies and processes link back to the School Development Plan (SDP) as the Executive Headteacher describes:

*“Our SDP looks brief and the headline areas don’t change too much because the key thing is about the quality of teaching and learning. Each year we think about ‘what are we doing to improve the quality of teaching and learning?’ So currently one focus is feedback. There is a target within the SDP on the progress of every pupil premium child, especially to increase the number attaining a higher standard. Every staff member’s appraisal is linked to that target.”*

The middle leaders are called ‘school improvement leaders’ and they lead teams of teachers and staff from each phase and this has great benefit in terms of the professional development of teachers and in succession planning:

*“Every single teacher and some support staff are in a school improvement team. It is part of the coaching culture in the school. We aim to have teams that are representative of the whole school from EYFS to Year 6. We try to put people into the teams they want to be involved in but we also take into account their development needs and the SDP. A senior leadership team member will take a back seat as part of the team so as not to dominate. We are a very supportive school.” (Executive Head).*

Leaders understand that improving the quality of teaching and learning requires more than the odd training experience. Indeed they recognise the gaps some teachers have in their knowledge of educational theories of how children learn and their understanding and skills of the teaching process and seek to provide appropriate training and development for them. With this in mind, the school has embarked on a ‘lesson study’ model guiding the teaching improvement process by ensuring teachers have time to collaborate with one another in small groups; meeting to discuss learning goals and planning a ‘research’ lesson and observing how their ideas work in lessons with pupils and then reporting on the results so that other teachers can benefit from it. The Head of School explains the benefits of lesson study:

*"We want to find out how we are operating in a particular area of learning, for example, writing... staff consider 'does it work better for children to think up their own ideas rather than being given a title for a piece of writing?' When staff produce their findings, we (SLT) look at how much further we will go with this. Theoretical evidence can come from many sources, it can be about reading a particular book."*

*She continues...."for example 'visible learning', developed from the research of John Hattie, which is about teachers evaluating their own teaching. It's a programme based on the meta-analysis of research in terms of 'what works best for pupils' outcomes.' It recognises five significant areas: feedback is one. We want to make sure we have a learning community with a deep understanding of pedagogy. This is crucial because many newly qualified teachers do not have the opportunity to address these important issues because their training courses are too short." (Head of School)*

The model of teacher as reflective practitioner is not a new one (Stenhouse, 1975), and there are many studies that demonstrate that teacher engagement in research, as part of evidence based education (Davies, 1999), can improve classroom practice and their own professional development (Donaldson, 2011).

Timperley (2008: 28) recognises that 'teaching is a complex activity' in which teachers' beliefs and theories shape what it means to be effective. Her study reveals that the research evidence indicates that involving external expertise can be crucial for promoting this kind of teacher inquiry and knowledge building; professional development opportunities that are carefully designed and have a strong focus on pupil outcomes have a significant impact on student achievement and teaching approaches that have been subject to research and wide debate are most likely to have positive impacts on pupil outcomes

In answer to the question, 'what can we do to improve TAs skills?' the Head of School responds:

*"We obviously believe in the development of all staff and the TAs access certified programmes as well as in-house coaching. We have gradually moved away from the general classroom TA model. We moved to Teaching and Learning Assistants (TALAs) whose main focus is supporting the learning of pupils. All TALAs, apart from those based in Year 1 and EYFS, are working with identified and targeted children. If they are working with a child with an EHCP we provide extra time and training so that the TALA can effectively support groups of children within the class."*

Pathways into teaching for TALAs are available for those wishing to follow this route:

*“If they are planning on going into teaching or have other career aspirations we provide them with opportunities and training to support learners in groups. A lot of support goes in to begin with, for example, two days a week a school leader jointly plans and then models the session and continues to oversee the sessions run by the TALA going forward.” (Head of school).*

How has the school managed to close the achievement gap? The Head of School comments:

*“There is no magic bullet... it’s about leadership and the confidence shown in the leadership that they understand what they are doing. We are all accountable, but you need to be confident enough to take risks based on the evidence gathered. This ethos trickles down from the SDP, we leave no stone unturned.”*

### 3.3.3 An innovative curriculum

The school has developed their own exciting curriculum underpinned by the national curriculum through thematic or topic-based approaches, normally cross-curricular with a strong emphasis on reading, writing, communication and numeracy at every opportunity (Figure 3). The school has given much thought to making the curriculum reflective of the diversity of its pupils and in each year group there is a focus on inspirational people, all of whom came from the black diaspora as they have been under represented in the curriculum. Inspirational places combine individual interests of the children with the requirements of the national curriculum as the Head of School describes:

*“Our curriculum is based on what the children will find interesting and what we, as educators, see as important for their development and rounded education. There is the potential to explore the world in a wider sense. For example, we have a partnership school in Tanzania that was initially established through a Cluster partnership and a British Council grant. For three years we sent one of our teachers there for a week and one teacher from Tanzania came to us. It was very worthwhile as it engaged the whole school community and inspired the children and teachers from both countries. Our curriculum turns the children’s thoughts outwards from their own experiences. We also have a link with a school in Paris so we teach French across the school from EYFS. We have sent a group of children, ten of whom were pupil premium, and they went with a French Team Leader on Eurostar at 5:30 a.m. Teachers have visited each other’s schools to share practice and pupils maintain links with each other.”(Head of School)*

Figure 3: Hitherfield – Curriculum overview:

EYFS -					
The areas for learning in the EYFS will be developed through the children’s daily interactions and interests except for term 4 in which, in addition to this, they will be introduced to these aspects of Tanzanian culture.			Tanzania – instruments/songs /dance		
			All around the World - Tanzania - the place		
Inspirational People TERM 1: Major focus = History	Interesting Places TERM 2: Major focus = Geography	Brilliant Inventions TERM 3 + 2weeks TERM 4 Major foci = Science/ History	Connecting with Tanzania TERM 4 (3 weeks) Major focus= Geography	Time Travelling Through London. TERM 5 Major foci = Science/History	Our Bodies Our Effect on the Earth TERM 6 Major focus = Science
Year 1					
Bessie Coleman (Female Aviator)	Asia – Countries of Asia	Toys and how they move and work	Tanzania – <i>animals and habitats/U.K comparison</i>	Prehistoric London	What our bodies can do - effects of littering
Year 2					
Mary Seacole (Nurse)	Americas – West Indies	Wheels and how we use them	Tanzania – <i>homes and gardens/U.K comparison</i>	Roman London Staying Healthy	British Habitats and how to look after them.
Year 3					
Marshall Taylor (Sportsman-cyclist)	Americas – Brazil	Boats, Water, Rivers and Seas	Tanzania – <i>animals and plants/U.K comparison</i>	Tudor London Our Eyes and light	How the ground is made up and how it is damaged
Year 4					
Wangari Maathi (Peace Prize Winner)	Europe – Greece	Trains and Railways	Tanzania – <i>schools and playgrounds/U.K comparison</i>	Victorian London Harnessing the power of steam.	The effects of polluting the air

Year 5					
Abolitionists – Olaudah Equiano (Abolition of Slavery)	West Africa – Benin	Aircraft and Flight	Tanzania – growing and selling food/ <i>U.K comparison</i>	London during WWI and WWII Our place in space.	The Circle of Life
Year 6					
Nelson Mandela (World Statesman)	Africa – Egypt	Bridges and Structures	Tanzania – The Maasai Culture/ <i>U.K comparison</i>	Modern London – Where have Londoners come from and where have they settled? Harnessing the power of electricity.	Keeping our Bodies Healthy

Curriculum and lesson planning is rigorous, with well-defined learning objectives for both the class and individual children. Teachers work in teams across year groups and are allocated assessment, planning and preparation time (APP) to develop their plans. Assessment for learning, constructive marking and reciprocal feedback are well embedded, and regular reviews of the progress of each class and each child are standard practice, with frequent feedback to the parents.

3.3.4 Effective use of data

One of the core elements in the school’s success in closing the achievement gap is the forensic use of data for tracking pupil attainment and progress and then using the data for targeted interventions and support. As pointed out by the Executive Headteacher, the *‘school is data rich with a range of data including phonics, FSP, KS1 and KS2 tests for monitoring performance and tacking individual pupils progress.’* Data is rigorously analysed to identify areas of improvement and support needs.

There were a number of good practices that were highlighted during the case study research in the school including:

- Assessment data is gathered as early as possible for tracking progress and analysed carefully by background factors such as ethnic background, levels of fluency in English, free school meals, pupil premium data, mobility and date of birth, year groups.



- Assessments recorded by staff on the curriculum markbooks on the Classroom Monitor tool will be consistently used by teachers to evaluate their coverage of the curriculum and to ensure that the children have every opportunity to make good progress towards meeting the expected standards within the National Curriculum. The recording of assessment will contribute to the staff member's overall appraisal.
- Data collected from the class markbooks on the Classroom Monitor tool will be used by the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher to determine the impact of teaching sequences and specific interventions on the learning outcomes for the children.
- A data report will be produced 3 times a year (in Terms 2, 4 and 6) based on the assessments recorded by teachers in the class markbook.
- Data is used to monitor and review individual pupil progress to identify any signs of underachievement and to help to set targets for pupils.
- Teachers, TAs, learning mentors, SMT and governors all use the data to review performance and expectations of pupils.
- Teachers make effective use of data to evaluate the quality of provision, to identify and support groups of pupils. These includes making changes to the teaching programme and providing personalised or differentiated teaching to meet the needs of EAL, disadvantaged and SEND pupils to improve performance.
- The most common type of interventions where data analysis highlighted issues to be addressed was providing additional support including one to one support, best teacher to teach English and maths interventions groups. Effective feedback and early interventions to support pupils that need additional help.
- The school's EAL and SEND team work closely with parents, staff and agencies to ensure the needs are met.
- EAL children are tracked well using levels of fluency in English and new EAL pupils with no English language receive a comprehensive learning package to ensure that they have a basic language skills set to feel safe and happy in their new school.
- Throughout school, children with additional needs are closely supported ensuring that they fulfil their potential.

3.3.5 The impact of targeted interventions: empirical evidence

We asked school leaders: *‘where is the evidence that you are closing the gap in the school?’*

The evidence provided during our research overall confirms that as a result of effective use of the data and targeted interventions the school makes outstanding progress academically, achieving consistently well above the national average and making better progress than nationally for disadvantaged pupils (illustrated in Table 3).

Table 3 and Figure 4 shows that pupil premium pupils did well between 2015 and 2017. The data confirms that the school has had a huge impact on disadvantaged pupils and reading, writing and maths results have improved for all children including disadvantaged pupils and those with EAL. The school is highly successful in closing any gaps in the attainment and progress of pupils through targeted interventions.

Table 3: Key Stage 2, reading, writing and maths combined by FSM/non FSM

KS2 FSM	2015				2016				2017			
	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP
Cohort	55	24	31	n/a	82	7	75	n/a	84	25	59	n/a
Reading	100%	100%	100%	0%	70%	71%	69%	2%	83%	88%	81%	7%
Writing	91%	83%	97%	-14%	76%	57%	77%	-20%	87%	88%	86%	2%
Maths	96%	96%	97%	-1%	68%	71%	68%	3%	89%	88%	90%	-2%
RWM	88%	75%	97%	-22%	54%	43%	55%	-12%	77%	80%	76%	4%

KS2 PP	2015				2016				2017			
	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP
Cohort	56	30	26	n/a	82	25	57	n/a	84	44	40	n/a
Reading	100%	100%	100%	0%	70%	56%	75%	-19%	83%	82%	85%	-3%
Writing	91%	87%	96%	-9%	76%	64%	81%	-17%	87%	86%	88%	-2%
Maths	96%	97%	96%	1%	68%	60%	72%	-12%	89%	84%	95%	-11%
RWM	88%	77%	96%	-19%	54%	40%	60%	-20%	77%	77%	78%	-1%

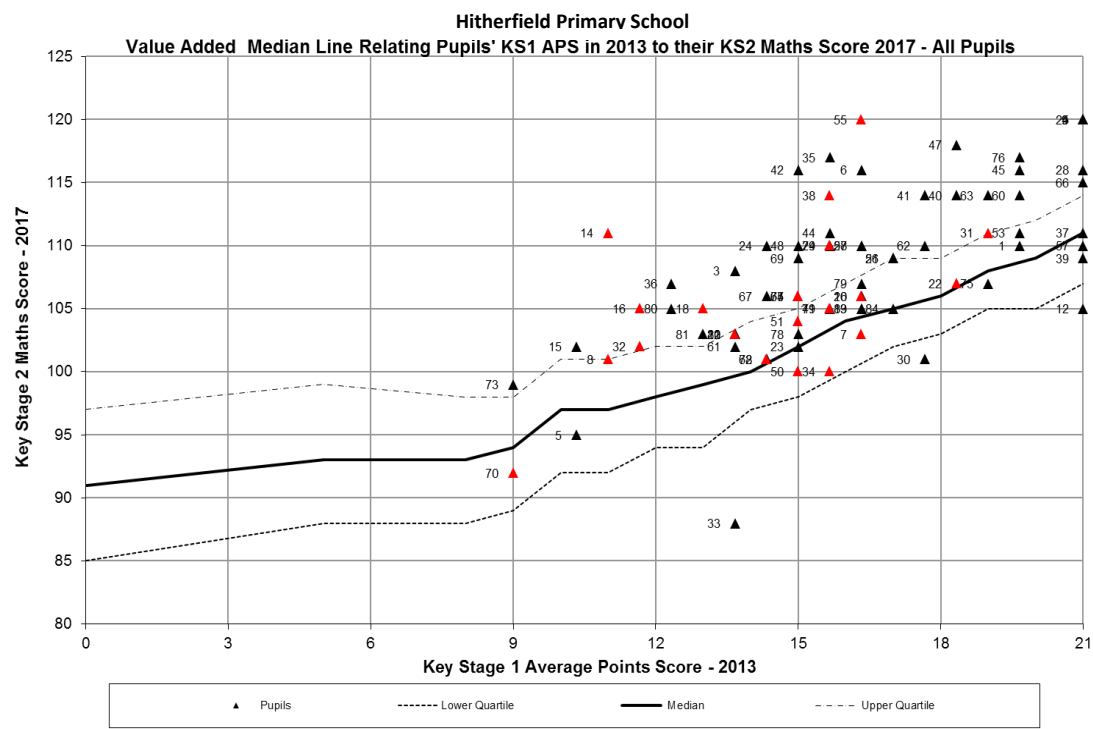
The value-added by the school for pupil premium pupils and other pupils is also very impressive (see Figure 4). KS1 to KS2 value-added data compares the relative progress made by pupils in the school with progress made nationally by all pupils in England. 53% of the pupils in the school are in the upper quartile in maths compared to 25% nationally, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. No disadvantaged child was in the lower quartile range, those making the least progress, compared to 25% expected nationally.

Similar evidence was also recorded between KS1 and KS2 for the school for reading, suggesting excellent progress in all curriculum areas for all groups.

**Case Study A:** Pupil 55 (Figure 4) is Black African and speaks Somali. She came from Somalia and is eligible for free school meals. She was assessed at beginner stage for level of fluency in English when she started school. In Year 6 her level of fluency in English was further assessed as stage D suggesting the need for some additional support to develop more academic language. She received one to one support, booster classes by the classroom teacher and EAL support by EAL teachers and TALAs. Her assessment record for KS1 shows that she achieved 2A in maths and 2B in reading. However as a result of the targeted support, by the end of KS2, she scored 120 in maths – the highest possible score. This indeed is an excellent achievement for someone with stage D fluency level in English and also disadvantaged. Her progress between KS1 and KS2 is outstanding, and can be attributed to the impact of the school's targeted intervention and support.

**Case Study B:** Pupil 14 (Figure 4) is White Other and disadvantaged. He came from Bulgaria and joined the school in 2013. He was assessed at the time he started in the school as beginner stage in terms of EAL levels of fluency in English suggesting he needed huge support in terms of language in order to access the curriculum in English. By the time he was in Year 6 he had improved to Stage D EAL level of fluency (which requires some support). The school supported child 14 to tackle barriers related to English acquisition and poverty factors through a range of targeted programmes including one to one, booster class, EAL talk partners, tailoring teaching levels, specific reading and maths programmes and initiatives to improve performance. He achieved 2A in maths in reading and 2B in maths at the end of KS1 and as a result of targeted support using pupil premium funding he made much better progress than found nationally for children with a similar starting point. In reading he scored 112 points at the end of KS2.

Figure 4: KS1 –KS2 progress in maths 2017



3.3.6 Effective targeted support and intervention

The Executive Head explained how the school is structured to meet the needs of pupils with a complex range of needs:

*“Inclusion is significant; we are now on the front line for social care and there is an increasing number of children with complex mental health issues. We have three learning mentors who support our vulnerable pupils and families, including those with social care involvement. There is a whole school approach and all staff members have a role to play.”*

The school’s leadership skilfully gathers information that determines how well the school is meeting targets and uses that information to refine strategies designed to meet or extend the goals. Thus, they find themselves in a constant state of analysis, reflection, and refinement that leads to the gaps in performance of individuals or groups of pupils being closed. Where the gaps are still evident over time, a change of strategy is needed and leaders challenge their staff to re-examine assumptions about their work and how it can be performed, as the Head of School explains:

*“At that point we might say let’s take a closer look at what’s being done for a particular group of pupils. For example, pupil premium pupils. We look at all the information we have about a child and put this onto a summary sheet in readiness for our pupil progress meetings. Some of the attainment evidence is from our teacher assessment system and we also include standardised maths and reading assessments and comparative judgements using the ‘no more marking’ approach for writing.”(Head of School)*

In terms of accountability, leaders provide a year group summary sheet for governors every second half term in which information about how well all pupils and the two focus groups, (pupil premium and Black Caribbean pupils), are achieving. This is discussed at length at the relevant governor committee meetings.

Pupil progress meetings happen three times a year and involve the Head of School, Assistant Headteacher (according to phase), SENDCo and class teacher, with an emphasis on pupils in the ‘vulnerable academic groups’. The Head of School spends the equivalent of one and a half weeks on these meetings which, together with appropriate interventions identified, is part-funded through the pupil premium. These meetings identify next steps and teaching strategies to support the learning of each individual child.

### **Parental involvement**

Ofsted made particular mention of the excellent relationships that exist with parents and the community. Following a short inspection of the school in 2018, Ofsted reported:

*“In striving for academic excellence, you have worked well to engage the support of parents and carers, and to ensure that governors are very closely involved in the school. This is reflected in the very positive feedback we received from parents. Many parents in responding to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, spoke very positively about the community you and governors have created. They feel valued as an integral part of the school community. As one parent commented, ‘This school has changed my life and I love the support offered to parents to help guide you into the role of being a parent and raising your child to be a well-rounded human being.’”*

The Head of School makes a distinction between parental involvement and parental engagement, as follows:

*“Parental engagement does not necessarily mean parental involvement. How can you be involved if you are working three cleaning jobs? People put in what they can and we are grateful for that.*

*We know our community; there are sections where the families have relatively chaotic lives. We know the families; we know that some families*

*are not going to support learning at home so we consider how we are going to address this at school? We identify and engage with these families as soon and as often as we can'..... 'We know we could entice parents to attend a meeting by offering tea, vouchers and so on, but it doesn't mean they are going to be able or willing to support their children's learning at home.' (Head of school)*

The Executive Head elaborates on this point:

*"Yes parental engagement is important, but at different levels. We recognise that for some parents just coming to the parents' meetings is how that parent is able to engage. It is about being realistic and knowing that you may not be able to get them to engage in supporting learning at home, for example reading regularly or taking children on trips out, so we have to fill the gaps."*

*"An example is that we have a homework club across the school for 20/25 children, targeted at those we know are unlikely to get help at home."*

*"In order to engage parents quickly we have meetings in the EYFS with focus parents every single week. Our pupil premium and disadvantaged targeted pupils have meetings six times per year and are seen more often by more people, for example, the class teacher, Assistant Headteacher, learning mentor group or the safeguarding team, we know where there are needs and we work hard to meet them."*

The Executive Head and Head of School have a strong sense of social justice, seeking to remove the barriers to achievement such as disadvantage and low parental aspiration by compensating for what the children lack and by working closely with families and the community.

*"We (Executive Head and Head of School) are at the gates morning and evening. We welcome every single person with a smile. We are accessible at all times... we see ourselves as 'we are in this together', we keep our grounds open to families until 5 pm every night – we are one community. Parents are chatting, children get to play together, they have picnics, we let them climb the trees, and sometimes they break a bone.... but that's life!" (Executive Head)*

Emphasis is placed on making school accessible, creating a warm and unthreatening environment to engage parents in their own children's learning where possible. The Head of School explains:

*“We try to be very open with them. We are not in the business of blaming each other. We always try to talk to them and say ‘this happened, what positively can we do about it’? Even with our behaviour management of the children we try to get this across.”*

Research suggests that a collaborative approach that includes children and their families in planning and decisions requires a culture of respect and trust on the part of schools and teachers. Ciuffetelli Parker (2013: 1), in her study on successful strategies employed by seven schools in Ontario to address poverty faced by pupils, suggests that building whole-school culture and ethos that is positive, bias free and respectfully inclusive ‘have garnered excellent advancements across Ontario.’

Successful strategies for addressing poverty range *‘from enhancing teacher awareness to community partnerships to changes in professional practice’* (Ciuffetelli Parker 2013: 1). The experience of successful schools in Ontario demonstrate that building trusting and respectful partnerships [to achieve] better understanding of how poverty affects families, schools and communities has been crucial in helping to close the attainment gap (Ciuffetelli Parker 2013: 4).

Ciuffetelli Parker’s (2013) research reveals that these successful schools and teachers have a different mind-set concerning poverty and do not assign blame to families when students are not performing in school, but are aware of and have been trained to understand the different types of poverty and its effects. Teachers *‘view children and families living in poverty in terms of their possibility and promise rather than their deficiencies’* (Ciuffetelli Parker 2013: 2).

The leadership have had a longstanding commitment to the school community and trust has been built up over time:

*“There is a lot of institutional trust within the community. We have built this up over many years by being out there every day. We are not hiding away; it stops angry parents going to the teachers first.”*  
(Executive Head)

People are sometimes angry about the school’s rules, but the Head of School comments:

*“If you stick to the rules and can explain them clearly, you cannot go wrong.”*

With such a diverse community, the PTA organises events which reflect the interests and values of pupils and parents as the Executive Headteacher highlights:

*“There are three main events of the year, Eid Fair, Christmas Fair and Summer Fair. In addition the PTA now sells healthier-option ice-creams once a week every Friday at the school, rather than parents buying from an*

*ice-cream van. This supports the community atmosphere. There is also a library open for three after school sessions per week so that children can borrow books, which gives families ownership of the school... a safe place.”*  
(Executive Head)

Parents are involved in hearing what is going to be taught in Relationships & Sex Education and the school goes to great lengths to maintain the trust of parents. They explain why the school is doing this so that they can understand. There is also a weekly newsletter by email and paper which explains what is coming up in the diary and the website and Twitter. At the beginning of the year parents have an annual calendar so they are aware of their children’s assemblies. Parents meetings are usually from 2 – 7 pm but the school is flexible in arranging alternative meeting times.

The Executive Head sums up their partnership with parents:

*“Relationships with parents are key, this is why we are available but then so are many other staff including our learning mentors. Parents may feel more comfortable talking with them – parents have a range of different staff to talk to – it’s never just one person here. It’s not a big personality school; there is no charismatic leader who jumps through hoops. Everyone plays a part.”* (Executive Head)

### Improving behaviour and attendance

The school employs three learning mentors who support barriers to learning and work with the most vulnerable children and families who are known to social care. They may have a range of social and emotional issues, which include anger or domestic violence. Children know they can self-refer if necessary. The Executive Head describes the learning mentors’ roles:

*“One is a former school governor who lives in the community and has good knowledge of the parents and the community. Another leads on Looked after Children and play therapy. We look for people who are interested in a child holistically and especially vulnerable children.”*  
(Executive Head)

The learning mentors also have a role when pupils are transferring to secondary school from Year 6 and meet with the main feeder schools. Vulnerable pupils may have the support of TALA for a week or so where this is seen to be important for the child to settle. They also link with a local secondary school which has a mentoring programme for older pupils who will become buddies to vulnerable pupils.



### Language intervention

There are EAL specialist TAs who are line-managed by an Assistant Headteacher, two of whom are bi-lingual. They work with children with EAL to develop academic language or children new to the country, which have three intensive weeks support according to need.

### 3.3.7 Conclusions

There were a number of good practices that were highlighted during the case study research in the school including:

- The involvement of parents is a major success in strengthening the school's links between home and school and contributing to the strengthening of pupils' learning.
- Leaders have carefully planned well targeted support for disadvantaged pupils, through 1:1 help, or in small groups to improve pupils' phonic knowledge and to aid them in their reading, writing and language skills.
- The school employs three learning mentors who support barriers to learning and work with the most vulnerable children and families who are known to social care. They also work closely with secondary schools to support the transition of these pupils into Year 7.
- An exciting innovative curriculum which is based on what the children will find interesting and what is seen as important for their development and rounded education. There is the potential to explore the world in a wider sense not only through their partnership school in Tanzania but through other themes which strengthens pupils' understanding and appreciation of their own and other cultures.
- A sharp focus on assessment and on improving the quality of teaching which ensures that all pupils receive the appropriate level of challenge and support they need to make good progress.

### 3.4 IQRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### 3.4.1 Background

Iqra is a one form entry Islamic faith primary school with 39.4% of its 241 pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant. 25.7% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 1.7% receive special educational needs/disabilities (SEND) support. 4.1% of pupils have a statement/EHCP. Pupils come from a range of countries and with different languages and cultures, the largest group being from Somalia, then Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, North Africa and some from African Caribbean islands.

The Headteacher explained that the word Iqra is an Arabic word meaning 'A command to read' and that further:

*"Continuous learning is a consideration in the Arab communities. We do not see education in the school only it is also in the home, it is holistic. It is about how you raise children and give them the skills – worldly skills, to make the best decisions they can – to be the best practising Muslims they can be. All children learn Arabic – learning the language and knowledge of the religion. There is no such thing as worldly knowledge and religious knowledge. It is an obligation to seek knowledge." (Headteacher).*

Iqra's history started in 1995 when the local community felt the need to have an Islamic school because local schools did not meet the needs of their children. Firstly it was for girls only but then it became a primary school. The Headteacher recalls that in 2008 the governors took the decision to apply to become a voluntary aided school because they wanted a broader curriculum:

*"Hats off to Lambeth! They understood the needs of the community and supported the school. Otherwise parents would have home-schooled their children. We became part of the Loughborough federation of schools. The LA took care of the school right from the beginning. We are very out-facing as a school."*

We asked how parents felt at the time when the school was federated with a community school:

*"This is one of the reasons I was appointed as Headteacher. It was a journey. Part of my job was to explain to parents that we have a unique mission as a Muslim community, but at the same time reminding them that we are part of the wider community also. We now do not see any of these challenges."*

With pupils coming from a diverse range of countries and languages, the Headteacher commented that identity is often a challenge for some:

*“When the identity issues are taken care of then the children do really well. I have seen a lot of Muslim children who struggle with who they are. How do they fit into the community and with the issues of Islamophobia, children almost having double lives? The parents are saying one thing and the school another and in that process the focus of education gets lost. We have been able to gain the trust of parents and have been successful in that with regard to boys and girls, hijab, no-hijab and so on. At the same time there is a nurturing issue going on, to be confident as a Muslim, go out and be confident. You are Londoners and that has worked well for them. This identify they are developing is making them successful.” (Headteacher)*

Ofsted inspected the school in October 2017 and judged it to be outstanding in all areas. They reported on the excellent progress that disadvantaged pupils make:

*“Disadvantaged pupils, over time, make progress either in line with or above other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2. At key stage 1, their attainment is higher than that of other pupils nationally across all subjects. One reason why disadvantaged pupils achieve so well is because leaders monitor their progress carefully and change how they use school resources to diminish any emerging differences quickly.” (Ofsted 2017)*

### 3.4.2 A strong, effective leadership team

The leadership team consists of the Headteacher and two Assistant Headteachers with responsibility for KS1 and KS2 respectively. As a small school, the Headteacher works closely with Assistant Heads to deal with all the issues of the school and in particular to monitor the progress pupils are making. Half-termly pupil progress review meetings are rigorous and they hold teachers accountable for the progress of all of their pupils. There are specific questions in the PPRM form which relate directly to pupil premium children so each class teacher necessarily can identify these pupils, speak about their progress and attainment and think about interventions they might benefit from if actions are required to be taken.

*“Our progress review meetings are very focused. Teachers have selected objectives from the whole school plan – they choose but they are held to account. We use Target Tracker and we make sure that this is married with the learning objectives and mid-term objectives which are highlighted in the mid-term plan. I tell the teachers ‘you teach the way you teach and I will check the work in the children’s books.’ We do Singapore Maths and the whole idea of this is to free up the teachers from planning so they can think*

*about how they can get the concepts through to the children. Textbooks are there, planning done, the teachers own understanding and the pedagogy of how to deliver it is a focus for training. It's about delivery and work in the books.'* (Headteacher)

Before the twice termly pupil progress review meetings, monitoring takes the form of drop-in sessions and learning walks which the Headteacher describes:

*"A lot of professional dialogue happens with teachers. Teachers are required to reflect on the progress that different groups of pupils make, including those who make excellent progress..."*

*We had someone in to ask about our higher-attaining pupils. Everyone is a high attainer as far as I am concerned. There is an expectation that every child should be able to achieve. Sometimes we get children struggling who had (previously) been home-schooled. One could hardly read but the key thing is high expectations for all children. Every child has to have the opportunity to achieve the standard the government has set for them. We are mindful that there are a few children that won't be able to do it and the abilities of the teachers has a huge impact on how children progress. The first six weeks of every year is all about intervention and how we can close any gaps."* (Headteacher)

Nothing is allowed to stand in the way of these progress review meetings and the Headteacher sees them as an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice and to identify any opportunities for professional development:

*"Pupil progress review meetings happen religiously and I lead on them. They see it as an important assessment tool, how they can adjust plans to pick up on anything the children have missed out on. As a result of PPRMs staff are directed to target particular pupils and these may well be pupil premium children, particularly if their performance is lagging behind age related expectations, or indeed failing to hit the heights if they are in the 'more able' category. It's all about book looks, small tests to see where the children are. This is not part of performance management... I wouldn't use it as a stick'...."*

*The school embraced the Achievement for All programme over a two year period and is now accredited as an AfA school. Key aspects of this included a school wide focus on effective feedback by all adults (not just teachers) and the introduction of pupil conferencing as a tool to promote writing standards."* (Headteacher)

### 3.4.3 Quality first teaching

*‘Teaching across the school is highly effective. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge across the range of subjects that they teach. The training they receive, including their access to resources to support the wider curriculum, ensures that they are able to challenge pupils fully. Teachers ensure that the learning activities that they choose meet the range of needs of the pupils in their classes. As a result, pupils have to think carefully and deeply about their work. Additional adults provide high-quality support, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.’ (Ofsted 2017)*

The Headteacher has sound views about the teaching profession and the advantages of small schools for children from disadvantaged backgrounds:

*“Teaching is a vocation. We need to have smaller schools, one or two forms of entry because you have to know children – someone needs to do it for these children. When schools become huge then children become numbers. When our children come in they are excited! I know every child’s personality and it’s a joy to see them grow. One of the reasons we have been so successful with SEND pupils is because we know them so well. Everyone in schools knows that child, one of the factors is nurturing all children – it is part of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.”*  
(Headteacher)

We observed an excellent maths lesson in the Year 3 class where, in addition to the class teacher three members of support staff were working with 3 EHCP pupils in group work activities.

The teacher is very skilful in her questioning. Pupils are not given the answers but are asked to talk with a partner, or are challenged to think about how else they might know what each square represents on a chart. Pupils are given time to answer questions. Similarly, the teacher asks pupils, including pupils of higher capability, questions where they have to explain and/or justify their thinking. Pupils are also encouraged to ask questions whenever they are unsure. Overall, the way the teacher uses questioning is highly effective and helps pupils to fully develop their knowledge and understanding to a deeper level. Pupils use unifix or multi-link cubes to represent the bar graph enabling them to make the transition from concrete materials to interpreting the graph on the whiteboard. Mathematical vocabulary is developed by introducing the words ‘pictograph’, scale and the concepts of ‘more than’ and ‘less than.’ There are no significant differences in the progress of different groups of pupils. The most able attain highly because they are challenged in their learning. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported in

their learning by additional staff and strategies help them become confident and engaged with the learning.

The Year 6 teacher explains her focus on learning skills when she receives her new class each September:

*"I ask them 'what makes a good learner and what makes a good teacher?' 'What do you have to do in order to actually learn?' I get them to teach their own lesson... I buddy them up with someone, and I ask them what their talent is and I match them up with someone who wants to learn. In their pairs they have to be a teacher or a learner. It is really helpful; they are able to see why it is hard to teach. Then we come to agree then on what you need in order to learn." (Year 6 teacher)*

As an experienced teacher, she recognises that in many Year 6 classes, teachers end up filling gaps in pupils learning which have happened during the course of their primary years. However she admits that this has not been her experience at Iqra:

*"The problem with Year 6 is you end up filling gaps and it almost kills you. Here there are consistently high expectations in every year group and the pupil premium review meetings with the leadership team, children being tested, tracking progress, and sitting down as a team to see where the children are... by the end of the year everyone is making the right progress." (Year 6 teacher).*

The Year 1 teacher explains how the process begins in EYFS:

*"They encourage more independence from EYFS. We use the CLPE 'Power of Reading' Scheme in English. This gives the children lots of drama and reading ability before they get to writing. In maths they have lots of practical experience before going into books. We do a lot of pair talk and discussion." (Year 1 teacher)*

The importance of the PPR meetings and the good communication featured also in our discussions with the Year 1 teacher:

*"From early on, there is good communication with the class teacher they are coming from, where any issues that may carry on are raised and the monitoring every half term at the PPR meetings. We have a 'big write' every term and discuss this with the SLT." (Year 1 teacher)*

### 3.4.4 Innovative curriculum

The curriculum offers pupils a wide and diverse range of learning experiences and pupils benefit from a rich range of visits, most of which relate directly to their curriculum studies. The school works with King's College to give children aspiration, as the Headteacher explains:

*"Someone from the Institute of Education comes in to encourage the children in discussions and in listening to others. They do not have that exposure otherwise. We have class assemblies every half term and each child performs and speaks in public. We have trips all over London; by Year 6 every child should have seen all the monuments, the Science museum and the Museum of Childhood etc. in London. We make geography trips to give the children a wider experience of education. It was a step for our children to visit a Church but the vicar now comes to assemblies our Summer Fair and Christmas. It was a big step for parents but now they are very familiar with it. We want the children to have that cultural capital so we visit the Jewish Museum in Camden, the Hindu Temple, and visits to St. Saviour's School."*  
(Headteacher)

The school's long term plan links to the national curriculum with geography and history as inquiry based learning, always starting with a question. This is pupil led and as an example, the teacher arranges a visit to a historical building and the children ask the questions rather than the teacher giving them facts about the building.

In terms of the core curriculum, the school uses what is now called 'Singapore Maths' which is based on recommendations from notable experts such as Jerome Bruner, Richard Skemp, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and Zoltan Deines. Singapore maths is an amalgamation of global ideas delivered as a highly-effective programme of teaching methods and resources based on problem solving.

During her initial teacher training in New Jersey, the Headteacher was taught this method of teaching mathematics, so she looked for something similar and came across Singapore maths, she observes:

*"We do not expect pupils to have fluency of numbers, we use manipulatives, and it is about using real objects as Piaget taught. Maths is about problem solving. Some of our children in Year 6 are doing GCSE maths work."* (Headteacher)

When asked whether she considered the school's curriculum to be innovative, the Headteacher replied:

*"If you are living in England there are certain things you need to know, for example about Queen Victoria. Last year everything came to life through Ramadan, History, Geography etc. as much as we could within the National Curriculum. When choosing two different localities to study, we chose another Islamic country. For us our children are interested in this country and they want to know about it because their backgrounds etc. are celebrated at all times. We have plenty of opportunities for cultural/religious celebrations and their identity is secure – they are not fighting for it. I think we need to encourage our children more with the national curriculum so they feel more a part of this society. We need to find a way to engage with it. We need to treat it creatively." (Headteacher).*

### 3.4.5 Effective targeted support and interventions

In response to the question, **'how has the school's targeted support contributed to the school closing the achievement gap?'** the Headteacher responded:

#### *Effective feedback*

*"We have developed a whole school approach towards effective feedback which includes marking that targets praise specifically and critically, next steps marking that directs pupils towards further progress, formative marking that requires a pupil to respond to the teacher and evidence improvement."*

#### *Mastery learning*

*"We have high expectations for our pupils. This includes a drive towards the mastery curriculum, with specific mastery activities and questions prepared and used as a targeted resource for able pupils. Older pupils are familiar with the term 'greater depth' and in their preparation for end of KS2 assessment segments, target the sorts of scores that will enable them to achieve it."*

#### *Oral language intervention/early intervention*

*"As a school we believe in intervention rather than remediation.' From their earliest days in school, our staff are working hard to provide our pupils with the exposure to English they need, supporting them in terms of developing their oral response to questions, or their confidence to share ideas or experiences to their peers and with adults. These opportunities develop*



*and, from Year 1, they take part in whole class presentations to the rest of the school and to their parents and show remarkable pride and progress in their levels of competency.”*

*Enrichment activities e.g. trips:*

*“We provide our pupils with at least an opportunity each half-term to take part in an educational visit which will give many of them the chance to see somewhere they would otherwise not get to see. These sorts of days, along with the work we do to support their understanding of British values and democracy, help us to nurture our pupils as young Muslims growing up as young Londoners.”*

As a consequence, these factors have contributed to improved results in the school which has succeeded in closing the achievement gap for disadvantaged pupils. Regardless of whether they enter the school in EYFS or as new arrivals in upper key stage 2, an assessment to find out how they are achieving is immediately carried out. The Year 1 explains how this works:

*“We had a new child arrive in Year 1 towards the end of the year and she had gaps in her knowledge and so I spoke to the Headteacher and to parents to look at what we could do about it. I didn’t say “it’s almost the end of the school year and she’ll be going up to the next class, it was what can we do for her now!”*

The Headteacher gave a further example of what happens when there are new arrivals in Years 4 or 5:

*“We do not have a lot of mobility but we work closely with parents – the key thing is to assess them straight away to find out where they are. We never write off a child. Every day counts. It’s about making every lesson count and every child count.” (Headteacher)*

When a teacher feels a child is not making the expected progress they meet with the SENDCo and complete a ‘cause for concern form.’ Initially any target for the child will hopefully be met through quality first teaching and this is tracked over half a term. The Headteacher explains what happens next:

*“If after six weeks no difference or little difference has been made, a referral is made to the educational psychologist. For pupil with EAL we monitor speaking and listening skills and if necessary they will be referred to the speech and language therapist. Pupil premium money is spent on speech and language therapy and our LSAs are trained and support pupils three times per week. 70% - 80% of pupils are below the*

*expected level (22-36) in language and communication. We have to develop listening skills and social skills. Some of our Somali children are from single parent families and have 5 or 6 siblings and mothers struggle with them. We involve parents early on; we talk about what is going to happen. Through this parents are able to learn also. This is important because they are then happy to help at home. Regular reviews are held with the child and teacher. 3% of pupils have EHCPs and parents can be very resistant to this so the school has to work hard to convince them it's in the child's interests. I have developed trust with the parents."*  
(Headteacher)

The Headteacher sums up the school's success in making early intervention a priority:

*"We do not do booster classes. By the time they get to Year 6 they are very much there. This is because of remediation. I do not care about percentages I want to see names behind the numbers!"*

### **Improving behaviour and attendance**

The Headteacher explains the school's approach to behaviour:

*"We have a consistent behaviour policy here. Everyone is involved in this. At one time I seemed to be just focusing on behaviour, children running around and we had our fair share of difficulties. The key thing is to have a consistent policy and approach. We had some very angry children and they didn't respect authority so you need to find something more for them to get them to do the right thing. We have our fair share of challenges. I am indebted to the staff because they all work towards high expectations. If we don't teach children to be obedient and respect authority they will, as adults, not become good citizens."* (Headteacher).

Teachers in Years 1 and 6 supported the Headteacher's comments:

*"Children know that they have to treat all adults in the school with the same respect."* (Year 1 teacher)

*"There is a very supportive team here – more so than in other schools I have worked in. We can be open about the help we need. You can say 'I am struggling with this' – there is no judgment. We get on so well and the children see it."* (Year 6 teacher)

### Use of well-trained teaching assistants

The very good relationships that exist within the team were also endorsed by support staff:

*“There is a good relationship between the staff and the SLT, we communicate well and that is the foundation of any organisation – good teamwork and communication. There are good professional relationships also with the children, they can trust us and are open to our advice. When children feel comfortable with the staff they are in the best position to move forward.”*

*“Our Headteacher always tells us the focus is on the children. She is out there first thing in the morning and welcomes them. It is a combination of all those things. At the end of the day, we have teachers and support staff outside until all the children have gone home. We work as a team.”*

The support staff are included in the professional development of teachers and they spoke about how useful this has been in understanding how to manage pupils' behaviour:

*“We recently had training on behaviour management. We spoke about how to deal with children. I never realised how important it is not to take it personally. When you feel indifferent they will calm down.”*

*“Every week we have training. In other schools this might not be the case but here it's important. Everyone is clued up on what we have to do. Personally I find it very beneficial.”*

The professional development of all staff is a key feature of this learning community. One staff member had not had a positive experience while he was at school and his GCSE grades reflected this. He started at Iqra as a volunteer but then became a TA, progressed to Level 3 and as he put it:

*“I went back in time and did GCSEs and passed them all! I have worked here for four years and it's the best job I've ever had.”*

Another member of the support staff came to the school ten years ago, and through carefully planned professional development, she plans to enter the teaching profession:

*“I came as a mid-day meals supervisor and TA. When the Headteacher came she said you are a TA and put me on the Level 3 course, I then did a foundation degree one evening per week for two years and next year I will only have one placement and dissertation for my BA QTS!”*

Parental involvement

Iqra has a Parent Council and in the past the school ran ESOL and Phonics classes for parents, however as a small school, space to run these classes is at a premium. Nevertheless, the Headteacher describes other ways in which parents are involved in the life of the school:

*“Parents are currently organising an Eid Party and we channel their interests in the right direction. We have a majority of single parents. We prefer it that parents don’t teach their children maths because it can cause a problem. They are sometimes unable to help their children so we do not rely on this.” (Headteacher)*

The school provides various books for children for home learning as the Year 6 teacher explains:

*“I meet with parents and explain this to them and what they can do to help their children with learning. We set out expectations for the children and explain it to the parents and they can then follow up. I then monitor what’s going on. All the children enjoy self-study and it helps them to be more independent. It teaches them to do their own study. I just make sure they understand it. For children with harder to reach parents, we have additional sessions for them, either before or after school. We give them extra time to work on it. Most of the time the children have good attitudes to learning.” (Year 6 teacher)*

The impact of targeted interventions: empirical evidence

During the interview, we asked the Heads of School and the Headteachers ***‘where is the evidence that you are closing the gap in the school?’***

The evidence provided during our research overall confirms that as a result of effective use of the data and targeted interventions the school makes outstanding progress academically achieving consistently well above the national average and making better progress than nationally for disadvantaged pupils, the extent of which is illustrated in Table 4:

Table 4: Disadvantaged pupils KS2 performance

KS2 FSM	2016				2017			
	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP
Cohort	23	14	9	n/a	29	11	18	n/a
Reading	87%	86%	89%	-3%	93%	91%	94%	-3%
Writing	87%	100%	67%	33%	97%	91%	100%	-9%
Maths	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	0%
RWM	78%	86%	67%	19%	93%	91%	94%	-3%

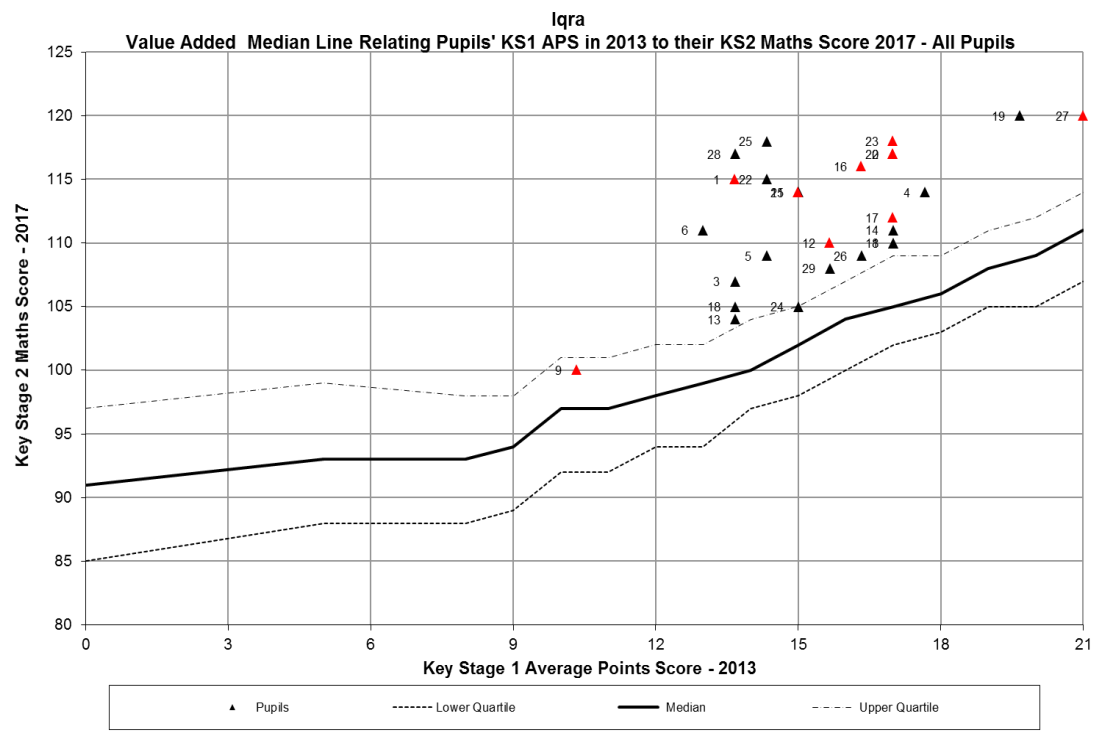
KS2 PP	2016				2017			
	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP
Cohort	23	20	3	n/a	29	19	10	n/a
Reading	87%	85%	100%	-15%	93%	95%	90%	5%
Writing	87%	85%	100%	-15%	97%	95%	100%	-5%
Maths	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	0%
Rwm	78%	75%	100%	-25%	93%	95%	90%	5%

In the school disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium make outstanding progress because additional support is paid for by the funding, such as specialist small groups for English and mathematics, is highly effective in accelerating progress and high quality teaching. The school also uses intervention and support strategies such as effective feedback, mastery learning, oral language intervention/early intervention, enrichment activities e.g. trips, improving behaviour and attendance programme, use of well-trained teaching assistants and parental involvement initiatives. Consequently, the gap between their attainment and that of other groups in school is closing rapidly. This is confirmed by recent data which shows that both pupil premium and non-pupil premium both did very well with both groups outperforming the national non-pupil premium average in each subject (see Table 4).

This is further confirmed by the value-added by the school which shows very impressive performance for PP pupils. KS1 to KS2 value-added data in the graphs below, which compare the relative progress made by pupils in the school with the progress made nationally by all pupils in England, show that pupils have made very good progress. About 93% of the pupils in the school are in the upper quartile in maths compared to 25% nationally, indicating that about three times as many children made the highest rates of progress than might be expected. There were no children in the lower quartile – which represents children making the lowest rate of progress. A similar picture was also apparent between KS1 and KS2 for the school for reading, indicating that all groups of

pupils make excellent progress. This is a school where all pupils make impressive progress between KS1 and KS2.

Figure 5: Iqra KS1 to KS2 Maths value added scatterplot



Overall at Iqra, pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are consistently above average. This picture of outstanding progress and very high standards of attainment is evident throughout the school and year groups.

3.4.6 The student voice: Evidence from student focus group

Five KS2 pupils were asked the following questions:

Q.1. What do you like about your school?

- 'They help you and they teach you a lot of stuff'
- 'The school is fair and they educate us very well and we do fun things'
- 'They give us school dinners. I like chips'
- 'Summer Fair, bouncy castles and food'
- 'Environment is Islamic and you can learn about your faith.'

### **Q.2. What is your favourite subject?**

- 'Art'
- 'English'
- 'Maths'
- 'Maths – fun and helps with everything. When you are older you can do a lot of stuff with maths'
- 'Art – fun and when we see other peoples' paintings and projects you learn more about it.'

### **Q.3. Do you get any support or help with your schoolwork at home?**

- 'I do not have help from home'
- 'Sometimes, with maths'
- 'Maths and English from my mum'
- 'When I was younger I got help, now my mum just checks my work to see if I've done it.'

### **Q.4. What would you like to do in the future?**

- 'Electrical Engineer'
- 'Footballer'
- 'Teacher/Doctor'
- 'Doctor/Pilot'
- 'Marine Biologist'

## **3.4.7 Conclusions**

There were a number of good practices that were highlighted during the case study research in the school including:

- A 'family' ethos where every child is known and cared for.
- The school is inclusive, welcoming and friendly. Pupils and staff, regardless of their cultural differences, gender or backgrounds, all talk with confidence and positivity about the school's environment.
- Leaders and teachers have the highest expectations of pupils and have ensured high levels of consistency in the school's work.
- All groups of pupils make substantial and sustained progress across the curriculum. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is high, particularly by the end of key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve so well because their progress is monitored assiduously and resources provided immediately to address any emerging differences.
- The quality of professional development is highly effective and leaders support additional adults to encourage them to become teachers.

### 3.5 VAUXHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### 3.5.1 Background

Vauxhall Primary School is an average-sized maintained school with 244 pupils on roll. It serves one of the most deprived wards in Lambeth. It is part of the Wyvern Federation and is a lead school in the Lambeth Teaching Schools Alliance. The majority of pupils at the school are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and over two thirds speak English as an additional language. 57.8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. About one fifth of the school is included on the register of special educational needs, of which a greater proportion than average has an education, health and care plan. The number of pupils who join or leave the school mid-year is high. This mostly occurs during Key Stage 2. The Headteacher joined the school one year ago. She works in partnership with the Executive Headteacher, who maintains an overview of all schools in the Wyvern Federation. The school has recently opened provision for two-year-olds called Tiny Tigers, which caters for 16 children in two groups.

Vauxhall is characterised by its high expectations and the high achievement of its pupils. It provides a calm, nurturing learning environment where teachers and staff really know pupils and their parents and every child can flourish. Vauxhall aims to enable all its pupils to realise their full potential, despite their starting points and provides them with every opportunity to succeed. The school supports and stretches pupils to find their talents through rigorous and engaging learning both within and outside the classroom. Through outstanding leadership, exceptional teaching and support Vauxhall provides an inspirational environment which celebrates success and encourages pupils to strive for excellence in everything they do.

#### 3.5.2 A strong, effective leadership team

Vauxhall is at the forefront of leading edge practice through research-based learning and development as part of the Wyvern Federation of schools and the Oval Learning Cluster of schools. There is an ongoing commitment by the Head of School and leadership team to the dissemination of good practice, locally, nationally and internationally. Vauxhall leaders were congratulated by the Education Minister in 2015 for the effective strategies employed to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and in closing the gap. It was also nominated for the Pupil Premium Awards and won the High Aspiration Award from the DfE. The leadership team of this one form entry school comprises Executive Headteacher, Head of School, two Assistant Headteachers and a SENDco. An additional Assistant Headteacher is currently on maternity leave. The Assistant Headteachers hold a range of managerial, phase and core subject responsibilities.

Vauxhall has a 'family culture' with values shared by parents, pupils and staff which are expressed in the following statement:



*“We model exemplary behaviour by being: honest, respectful, kind, calm, supportive and we always do our best.”*

An Assistant Headteacher referred to the ethos of the school as ‘the Vauxhall family’ and spoke of how the committed staff team have the highest expectations of pupils and will go the extra mile to ensure children have the best possible chance of success:

*“We want every single child to achieve. I think it’s the fact that we know every single child; we know them and we love them – I say ‘they are mine’, I talk to them as my own. We will reward you if you do well but there will be sanctions if you don’t. I used to love being in the classroom. Children know they can come to us. It’s about the attitude of the staff – if you want to know the families you will do. We are here from 7.45 am in the morning for breakfast with the children. I will call parents and ask why their child hasn’t been in, so we don’t deal with excuses from parents.”*  
(Assistant Headteacher)

In 2018 following an Ofsted visit, inspectors again judged the school to be outstanding in all areas. The report includes the following statement:

*‘The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The great majority of pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, more pupils achieve standards at, or above, those expected for their age. Unvalidated results for 2018 show that the standards attained by Year 6 pupils were much higher than in the previous year, including for disadvantaged pupils. This improvement is evident in pupils’ books.’*

As an innovative school, Vauxhall is always in the process of reviewing and evaluating its work and finding ways of improving outcomes for pupils. They decided on their own school-based assessment system and developed a web-based database driven by the concept of mastery learning which was eventually funded by the National College of Teaching and Learning. Under review is maths mastery while the school is introducing Shanghai maths which is about teaching for deep understanding.

Teachers spend longer on each topic so that children really understand what they are doing, rather than a superficial, one dimensional way of learning. This method gives children the chance to transfer their new knowledge from their finite, short term memory to their infinite long term memory so that pupils don't have to keep revisiting topics because they've forgotten most of what was taught when they last covered the topic. Shanghai maths gives pupils the skills to use their knowledge flexibly; teaching

them to reason and to communicate their reasoning and enabling them to apply their knowledge in a range of different situations.

A number of staff are non-class based so that they can provide cover for colleagues who are engaged in supporting the leadership in other local primary schools, and sharing best practice. The Head of School comments:

*"I think it's about expectation. Every single member of staff here makes sure that pupils make good progress – this is why we have progress masters."*

This idea came about because two of the Assistant Headteachers saw children coming from KS1 with high attainment and wanted to ensure that this was maintained right through to the end of KS2. One Assistant Headteacher remarked:

*"96% of pupils pass reading and maths – this is the power of reading masters. It doesn't matter about the child's background; it's our job to ensure that every teacher gets the best out of every child. I get fed up of hearing excuses about children's backgrounds, parents not working... what are we going to do to make our children achieve?"*

This culture of 'no excuses' stems from high expectations regardless of pupils' home backgrounds and as a consequence, all pupils, whatever their different needs and abilities, make excellent progress and have well-developed reading, writing and mathematics skills by the end of Year 6.

Every member of staff at Vauxhall has been trained in teaching phonics, the rationale being that there will always be someone available to lead a small group of pupils for the daily phonics lessons, if required.

Hours have been extended to cover breakfast clubs and early morning pre-teaching sessions. Years 5 and 6 have an extended day during the spring and summer terms beginning with breakfast at 7.45am followed by additional English and maths lessons. Pupil premium pupils have small group lessons in grammar, writing and mental maths.

### 3.5.3 Quality first teaching

Outstanding teaching at Vauxhall, the daily phonics teaching and reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 provide a firm foundation for children in basic skills. The involvement of teaching assistants in teaching phonics and mathematics enables children in Years 1 and 2 to make excellent progress as they are given activities and resources that match their needs. The well-qualified teaching assistants and additional

adults play a vital role in teaching and learning and over the last few years this has led to significant improvements in pupils' reading skills which they are then able to apply across the curriculum.

A Year 2 Shanghai maths mastery lesson was observed on the inverse operations of multiplication and division. The subject matter and learning content is broken down with clear learning objectives. The clarity of the teacher's questioning of pupils develops their understanding very well. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with a partner before answering, which builds their confidence and understanding. Children with SEND are given additional time to answer questions and individual pupils invited to come to the whiteboard to demonstrate how they have arrived at their answers. The teacher assesses the quality of learning that is taking place thoroughly, correcting misconceptions and moving pupils to their next learning steps as soon as they are ready.

The leadership work hard to make sure there is consistency in high quality teaching as the following comment indicates:

*"We tend to grow our own teachers. We are aware of what is going on in every classroom. All monitoring is supportive, we have regular book scrutiny. We expect teachers to share their planning on the drive. The SENDCo needs to know what has been planned for."*  
(Assistant Headteacher).

Ofsted supported the focus that leaders put on monitoring teaching and its impact on improved outcomes for pupils:

*'Leaders and governors are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and so can see the link between teaching quality and outcomes for pupils. Everyone is clear about how the high quality of teaching is to be maintained so that all groups of pupils achieve well. You encourage staff to reflect on their teaching and refine their practice even further. As well as improvements to reading, success in the teaching of mathematics has been noteworthy.'* (Ofsted 2018)

### 3.5.4 Innovative curriculum

As a fully inclusive school, Vauxhall is wholly committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. It is committed to overcoming barriers to learning and meeting any special educational need to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress. A relentless pursuit of excellence for all pupils underpins the work of the school. The school's proactive approach to change has led to the adoption of a 'mastery curriculum.'

Mastery learning breaks subject matter and learning content into units with clearly specified objectives which are pursued until they are achieved. Learners work through each block of content in a series of sequential steps and must demonstrate a high level of success on tests, typically about 80%, before progressing to the next unit. Those who do not reach the required level are provided with additional tuition, peer support, small group discussions, or homework, so that they can reach the expected level.

Mastery learning is a helpful strategy for closing the achievement gap. Low-attaining pupils may gain one or two more months of additional progress from this strategy than high-attaining students. Teachers plan carefully for how to manage the time of pupils who make progress more quickly.

Any schemes used in the school have been written by school leaders (both Assistant Headteachers are specialist leaders of education). One has developed the mastery curriculum for literacy which includes 15 minute 'grammar masters' lessons, and a structure for daily 'reading masters' whole class reading from Year 2 to Year 6. The school has received a grant to carry out a research project with eight other local schools on the impact of reading masters. Reading Masters runs as a five-day programme for reading fluency and comprehension. Each day a specific reading skill is taught, modelled and practiced in a whole class setting. This programme focuses on the teaching of whole class reading, focussing on specific reading skills each . A teacher from China visits the school between September and May each year to teach children across the school. This is part of a partnership with the Hanban organisation and the British Council.

In 2018 Ofsted made the following comments regarding the curriculum:

*'You have developed a rich and carefully planned curriculum where time is used effectively, and pupils achieve highly. The curriculum inspires pupils to learn with interest and enthusiasm. The range of subjects studied helps them to acquire a good range of knowledge, understanding and skills, including, for example, in science, humanities and the arts. Curricular opportunities available to pupils are wide reaching, and leaders make excellent use of the school's proximity to several London venues such as The Oval cricket ground and the South Bank.'* (Ofsted 2018)

### 3.5.5 Effective targeted support and interventions

At Vauxhall pupil premium funding has been used to deliver a wide range of intervention strategies to raise attainment in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. The school's intervention and targeted support strategies have been effective because they are driven by pupils' academic, emotional and social needs. As a result of quality first teaching, effective tailored individual support and effective use of pupil premium funding, the school has closed the attainment gap. We asked the SENDCo for her views on the school's success in closing the gap and she responded:

*“Rather than removing children we do a lot of class based support. We have a lot of support staff so we can do a lot of small group work in the class. The greatest area of need is speech and language and the speech and language therapist leaves activities for the TAs to do in the afternoons or during assembly so they do not miss out on core subjects. It can work with giving teachers’ strategies (for example making sure they are articulating words carefully/obviously to support children with SEND) but if it doesn’t work we may arrange for children to see the speech and language therapist or a Paediatrician but there’s a long waiting list.” (SENDCo)*

### Early intervention

Any additional needs are immediately addressed at whatever point pupils enter the school and a Year 4 teacher gave examples of how this works in practice:

*“Children are assessed and we provide support for those below three times per week, it may mean a 5 minute targeted 1:1 session for those having problems focusing, catch-up sessions in small groups. I had a new child in my Year 4 class, just after summer half-term and he is now one of my focus children. I have given him an old-fashioned handwriting book because his handwriting is not joined, he doesn’t seem to have had a good experience at his previous school... there’s no paragraphing and he cannot write a letter... he needs 1:1 phonic support. I am hoping he will improve in paragraphing and hopefully in handwriting.”*

A child entering the school at the end of the school year is given immediate support but then a detailed handover meeting is held with the receiving class teacher and the SENDCo to ensure there is continuity for the child.

Pupils benefit from having a ‘fresh start’ at Vauxhall according to the SENDCo, who reflects:

*“Children know they have a fresh start with us, we do not take any notice of negative comments made by other schools.”*

Teachers use time during assemblies to provide additional help for targeted pupils typically 20 minutes with a group of six pupils, where they go over particular teaching points. There is also 1:1 reading support, additional L5 mathematics, small group springboard mathematics support, English, revision materials for Years 5 and 6. Pupil premium funding has been used to subscribe to ‘Mathletics’ and this has contributed to the consistently improving standards in mathematics.

### Parental involvement

When class teachers are concerned about pupils' progress they ensure that parents are aware as the SENDCo explains:

*"Class teachers always keep parents up to date. We do what we can but we cannot make parents put things into practice. We work around them. Parents come and talk with us; we know where there are difficult circumstances at home. We have trusting relationships with parents. As SENDCo you know those families and I will be in the playground at the end of the day and I can just pop over and have a word with families."*

### Teaching assistants

Teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting children in small groups, individually in EYFS and in both key stages. Roles are flexible with some TAs teaching phonics, maths activities, taking story time with a whole class and administrative tasks. Others run breakfast and after school clubs. They know the children and families well as many live locally. They represent a wider age range than many of the teachers and speak various community languages which are a great help in communicating with parents. They also feel they have an in-depth knowledge of the children they support as they see them in the playground, at lunchtime and at after-school clubs, as well as in the classroom.

### Booster classes

In Years 5 and 6 there is an extended school day in the spring and Summer Terms which begins with breakfast at 7:45 followed by booster classes. Pupils have small group lessons in grammar, writing, mental maths and it is also a time for 'plugging the gaps' and 'going back to basics.' From 9 am pupils in Years 5 and 6 revert to the curriculum as usual. Taking into account any pupil mobility higher up the school, we asked why this was necessary when pupils' progress is so carefully monitored:

*"We know that some children have had interventions throughout their schooling, but maybe not consistently. We have now picked this up from Progress Masters – it catches the 'coasters' too. It tracks them all the way from KS1-KS2 on one sheet."*

### Enrichment activities

The school has been able to offer a significant range of curriculum enrichment activities as a result of pupil premium funding, which have proven successful in developing children's confidence and boosting self-esteem in addition to academic outcomes. High quality partnerships have been sought with public and private organisations to extend the breadth and reach of pupils' curricular and co-curricular opportunities. This includes annual performances at The Royal Opera House with the Royal Ballet, mathematics master

classes with the Royal Institution, staging of Shakespeare plays at the Peacock Theatre, or pupil exhibitions at the Tate Modern. The school choir has sung at the Royal Albert Hall and Year 5 has been engaged in writing and performing a play at the Polka Theatre.

The impact of targeted interventions: empirical evidence

During the interview, we asked the Heads of School and the Headteachers *‘where is the evidence that you are closing the gap in the school?’*

The evidence provided during our research overall confirms that as a result of effective use of the data and targeted interventions, the school makes outstanding progress academically achieving consistently well above the national average and making better progress than nationally for disadvantaged pupils (illustrated in Table 5).

Table 5: Disadvantaged pupils KS2 performance

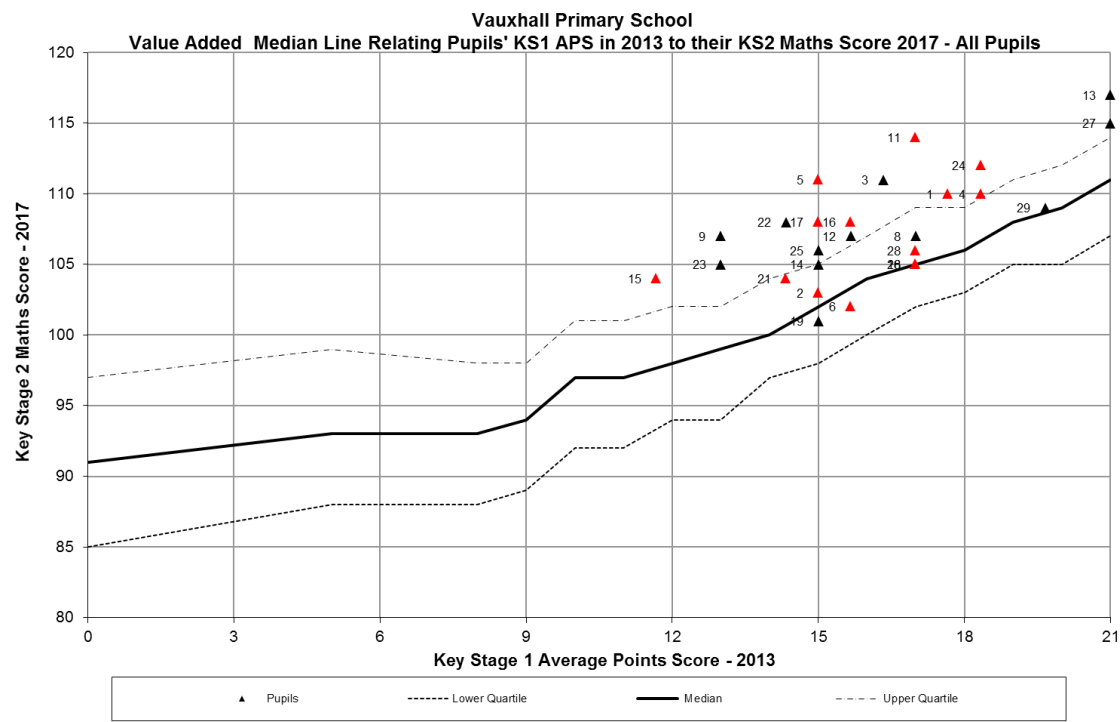
KS2 FSM	2016				2017			
	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP	ALL	FSM	non FSM	GAP
Cohort	30	17	13	n/a	29	16	13	n/a
Reading	63%	59%	69%	-10%	79%	75%	85%	-10%
Writing	90%	88%	92%	-4%	76%	88%	62%	26%
Maths	93%	94%	92%	2%	97%	94%	100%	-6%
RWM	60%	59%	62%	-3%	66%	69%	62%	7%
KS2 PP	2016				2017			
	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP	ALL	PP	non PP	GAP
Cohort	30	21	9	n/a	29	22	7	n/a
Reading	63%	57%	78%	-21%	79%	82%	71%	11%
Writing	90%	90%	89%	1%	76%	86%	43%	43%
Maths	93%	90%	100%	-10%	97%	95%	100%	-5%
RWM	60%	52%	78%	-26%	66%	73%	43%	30%

Overall pupil premium funding was used to deliver a wide range of intervention strategies to raise attainment in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. The school intervention and targeted support strategies were effective because they were driven by pupil’s academic, emotional and social needs. The classes we observed get lots of support from the class teacher, TA and learning mentors. As a result of high quality teaching and learning, effective tailored individual support and effective use of pupil premium funding,

early intervention, parental involvement, use of teaching assistants, use of booster classes, enrichment activities, and the school closed the attainment gap. Table 5 shows that the school is highly successful in closing any gaps in the attainment and progress of pupils. Those who are eligible for the pupil premium, for example, achieve at least as well as all other pupils in the school and better than similar pupils nationally.

The value-added by the school for pupil premium pupils and other pupils is also very impressive. KS1 to KS2 value-added data in the graphs below, which compare the relative progress made by pupils in Vauxhall School with the progress made nationally by all pupils in England, show that pupils have made very good progress. 62% of the pupils in the school are in the upper quartile in maths compared to 25% nationally, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. No pupils in the school are in the lower quartile range – those making the least progress, compared to 25% expected nationally. Similar evidence was also recorded between KS1 and KS2 for the school in reading, suggesting excellent progress in all curriculum areas for all groups. This is a school where all pupils make impressive progress between KS1 and KS2.

Figure 6: Vauxhall KS1 to KS2 maths value-added scatterplot





### 3.5.6 The student voice: Evidence from student focus group

#### Q.1. **What do you like about your school?**

- *Teachers are helpful and the people are sociable and nice and you fit in well when you join the school.*
- *It gives you a good education and time to play and they are helpful.*
- *All the teachers are friendly and you do your work if you do it well you might get a smiley face.*
- *Friendly teachers there to help you.*
- *Teachers make you comfortable*
- *Because they teach us right and the teachers are helpful*
- *Everyone respects each other and no-one spoils others rights to education.*
- *Teachers are helpful, if you are struggling, teachers are there to help*
- *Even if someone makes you upset there is someone who can help you.*
- *Teachers make sure you understand by the end of the lesson.*
- *Teachers make you feel like you are one big family.*

#### Q.2. **What is your favourite subject?**

- *Maths*
- *Art – drawing*
- *Art – creative*
- *Science – always something you can challenge yourself with*
- *History – It's nice to know the past of this country and many other places*
- *Maths & PE – you get to experience different things, maths is fun and helps you in life*
- *Literacy – creative writing – you get to display it in the classroom and makes you feel proud of yourself*
- *Literacy*
- *Literacy and art*
- *Science – new experiences*
- *ICT – how to code*

#### Q.3. **Do you get any support or help with school work at home?**

- *I get support from my mum, brother and sister*
- *I get support with my work from my mum or stepdad – helps me over the phone*
- *I get support at home, my mum buys me workbooks*
- *I get support from my mum*
- *I usually get help from my big sister*
- *I get some support from my sister and my mum*
- *I get some support from my mum*

- *I get support from my mum, dad and my mum buys me workbooks*
- *I get support from my older sister*
- *I get help from everyone in the family and some of my friends and my brother's tutor.*

### **Q.4. What would you like to do in the future?**

- *Paediatric doctor*
- *Doctor*
- *President or a teacher*
- *Doctor/teacher*
- *Paediatrician*
- *Teacher*
- *Teacher*
- *Gymnast*
- *Journalist/teacher*
- *Sportsman/ scientist.*

### **3.5.7 Conclusions**

There were a number of good practices that were highlighted during the case study research in the school including:

- Vauxhall has a 'family culture' with values shared by parents, pupils and staff.
- Through outstanding leadership, exceptional teaching and support Vauxhall provides an inspirational environment which celebrates success and encourages pupils to strive for excellence in everything they do.
- The great majority of pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, more pupils achieve standards at, or above, those expected for their age.
- Any additional needs are immediately addressed at whatever point pupils enter the school and a wide range of successful intervention strategies implemented.
- Teachers ensure that work is pitched at the right level, so that all pupils attain very well. In mathematics, for example, pupils have a deep understanding of the number system, which they apply successfully to solve complex problems.
- Curricular opportunities available to pupils are wide reaching, and leaders make excellent use of the school's proximity to several London venues such as the South Bank. The English curriculum is linked to History, Science and Philosophy for Children. The mathematics curriculum is based on Shanghai methods with a sharp focus on the development of skills, especially at KS1. The school teaches Mandarin as a modern foreign language.

### 3.6 LA RETRAITE CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

#### 3.6.1 Background

La Retraite is an oversubscribed voluntary aided Catholic Secondary School for girls serving pupils mainly from Catholic primary schools in Lambeth. The proportion of pupils who are Catholics is approximately 56%. The school takes pupils from 11 to 19 years and currently there are 1,019 pupils on roll, with 244 including boys, in the Sixth Form.

The attainment of most pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium is 45% and above the national average. 16.9% of the pupils receive extra support in class and 8% have a designated Special Educational Need (SEN) status. The number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is below the national average at 1.4%. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is above the national average at 48%. The majority of students are from ethnic minority backgrounds: 45% Black African, 14% Black Caribbean; 13% South American and 6% Portuguese. Attendance rates are very high at 96% which the Headteacher attributes to the systems in place to ensure phone calls get through to staff quickly.

To a visitor, this outstanding school may not appear a challenge as it seems to run like clockwork: an oasis of calm purpose, highly focused on learning, with well-turned-out students and staff. Appearances are deceptive. La Retraite is exceptionally well-led and managed. The staff work with many young people with complex personal histories, dysfunctional families, students who are cared for or who are themselves young carers, and communities that may not appreciate the efforts the school makes to provide a better life for its young people.

#### 3.6.2 A strong, effective leadership team

Under the outstanding leadership of the Headteacher, together with other senior leaders, pupils work and play in a safe and caring environment where each person is valued and encouraged to achieve their full potential. The school's Mission Statement is a clear expression of the school's vision for a life where staff and pupils '*act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.*' The ethos drives the expectation that staff are the pupils' primary role models. The result is a school that is calm and courteous. There is a strong sense of community and respect for all, and a deep sense of purpose and commitment, courage and ambition, stemming from the leadership of the school.

The leadership team comprises: Headteacher, Deputy Head, director of sixth form and five Assistant Headteachers. The Deputy Headteacher explains how the school leadership has contributed to the school closing the achievement gap:

*"I line manage Year Learning Co-ordinators, they lead on academic support for the pupils. We have two Pastoral Support Managers who focus on behaviour issues to allow the Learning Co-ordinators to focus on the academics. It has taken a load off the senior leadership team (SLT)."*

The Headteacher believes that one of the reasons why the school has been able to close the achievement gap is because of the hard work and commitment of the staff:

*"75% of our staff are on the Upper Pay Scale. The challenges are easier to manage because of good staff and good structures – staff do not leave. We put a lot of emphasis on politeness – staff cannot shout. We offer many rewards and teachers go the extra mile. Staff ask if they can do booster classes, although they are not paid to do this, they have a day off in lieu... people work very hard here." (Headteacher)*

The Headteacher also mentions another reason why there is high achievement in the school:

*"The key is happy children... if they are happy they will learn." (Headteacher)*

The school actively engineers the stability of teaching staff. Their approach runs counter to the orthodox view held in many schools that it is good for staff to gain experience and move on. This high level of stability has a number of benefits including reducing the turbulence in staffing that many schools experience. Teachers are strongly versed in the school's culture, values and norms, practices and policies. This helps to support consistent practice. Students know the teachers well. They do not have to spend time getting to know too many new teachers. This continuity is particularly valued by many vulnerable students, who can find changes of staff unsettling and it supports the development of a strong corporate, team-based culture.

Governors are highly effective in their role in both supporting and challenging the senior leaders. They are kept fully informed through a wide range of data and reports, as well as regular visits to the schools, including 'challenge visits.' They receive data analysed on pupils' ethnicities, SEND, Inclusion, and on the progress of all groups and attendance and punctuality. The Headteacher describes the relationship with governors as 'very open', he says:

*"They do not tell me where to spend money. They see Pupil Premium reports on spending and their impact. This is all on our website. The Governors gave me an action plan because they had observed that White British pupils were persistently absent and asked me to check on this to see if this was a pattern." (Headteacher)*

### 3.6.3 Quality first teaching

Another strength in raising achievement and closing the achievement gap is the quality of teaching. A high percentage of teaching continues to be outstanding (see Ofsted 2007 and 2013; Demie and Lewis 2010). Our previous and current research evidence confirms that high quality teaching is a feature of the school. There is good and outstanding teaching which is supported by a well-balanced, academically robust, multicultural curriculum that reflects the heritage, culture and experiences of students attending the school.

There are some examples of outstanding practice in lessons characterised by teachers' subject knowledge, teachers' questioning which involves all pupils, the differentiation of tasks with high-level challenge and formative marking.

It will not come as a surprise to hear that the school leadership regard the continual improvement of learning, teaching and pedagogy as their most important activity. Senior leaders acknowledge the importance of leading by example. It is seen as very important that all, or at least almost all, lessons continue to be at least good. They understand how powerful it is for learning, achievement, motivation and enjoyment of pupils for this to be the case. The monitoring of lessons is rigorous, and leaders can identify very accurately how good individual teachers are and what they need to do to improve further.

The emphasis on quality first teaching and student achievement is also confirmed by evidence from student interviews. Students who were interviewed spoke glowingly about the quality of teaching across the school; they valued the excellent working relationships they have with their teachers and particularly appreciate teachers' willingness to provide additional support and guidance when they fall behind or need extra help. When asked further what they value most about the school, a common response was to praise teachers who delivered interesting lessons and responded systematically to student needs.

### 3.6.4 An innovative curriculum

La Retraite has a superb record of exam success, with results well above national averages and all students making outstanding progress. This is achieved through the energy and commitment of the teachers and by carefully matching the curriculum to the ability and interests of our students. Students are set according to ability in English, MFL, Mathematics and Science, and exceptionally high pass rates in these core subjects demonstrates the success of this strategy. Small class sizes in Textiles, Product Design, Graphics, and Food Technology and in Music allow teachers to give students a very personalised experience and an opportunity to really master the practical skills. La Retraite has a strong musical and drama tradition and offers students a range of opportunities to learn musical instruments and to showcase their talents. There is a full programme of subsidised instrumental tuition and a weekly evening Music School. There are a range of performance groups, including several exceptional choirs and a fantastic

orchestra. Each year, a brilliant production is put on involving students from across year groups.

A huge variety of sporting activities are on offer at La Retraite, ranging from Gymnastics and Hockey, to Netball and Football. Teams do exceptionally well, often representing the Borough and beyond. Year 9 and 10 students from La Retraite have the opportunity to qualify as Sports Leaders and can be seen regularly at many primary schools, officiating competitions and coaching teams.

The school has a 'scholarship programme' the purpose of which is to raise students' aspirations for their future careers, as the Deputy Head explains:

*"If you don't know anyone who is a doctor, it's very difficult to know the steps, so we have a coaching programme to enable them to get to know what steps are necessary. Key Stage 5 has mentors, lawyers, doctors, media, who come in and talk to them, give them work experience. We have an administrator to organise them and set it up. There is a cost to that. Former pupils who have become doctors etc. come back to raise aspiration. We have meetings with parents and "Target Oxbridge" has agreed to come in and meet parents and talk about other careers." (Deputy Head).*

Students are encouraged to take an interest in additional afterschool clubs where they can learn a new language such as Mandarin and Latin, or deepen an understanding of their home language, for example, through the Portuguese School.

The enrichment programme provides an extensive range of opportunities for participation in activities to increase resilience and self-esteem. Educational trips and visits, often abroad, are a valuable and popular element of school life and cover a range of curricular areas. Frequent visits to the theatre and to political and sporting events in London are arranged. Every year there is a PGL trip for Year 8 students and a Year 10 History trip to the battlefields of World War I. There have also been residential trips to Rome, New York, Barcelona, Pompeii, Iceland and Washington DC, to name but a few.

### 3.6.5 Effective targeted support and interventions

The school generate about £250,000 pupil premium and extra money every year through the work of the support staff, especially the finance team. It has used the fund effectively for a number of interventions/strategies including:

#### **Pastoral care**

Pastoral care at La Retraite is outstanding. The school is totally inclusive of students with different strengths and offers unstinting support to their families. Year leaders and two pastoral support managers are an integral part of the pastoral provision. They

demonstrate great empathy with the challenges pupils' face that might have an impact on learning as the Deputy Head explains:

*"Pastoral Support Managers are key because we are data focused and pupils' profiles can change quickly, for example, 'Looked After' children may no longer be 'Looked After' – we keep abreast of things. There are two or three children who can go to the canteen and get something to eat as their needs are... we have had more families evicted... one child said "I have only my uniform and my pyjamas". It could be visa issues, unable to pay rent, change in benefits... these parents are in need but their children are not on free school meals, but are still in need. This goes against a backdrop of pupils or parents with suicidal thoughts. I think it has got a lot worse now at a time where pennies are being pinched." (Deputy Head)*

She continues to reflect on the factors which are contributing to the need for the school to put extra focus on pastoral support:

*"No social workers, or a different one every time we meet and they do not know the families. Not being able to access mental health services or social care. The effects of austerity are now coming through." (Deputy Head)*

The school also employs three learning mentors whose backgrounds include working as youth workers, residential social work (adult mental health), and working with SEND primary school pupils. They work closely with the pastoral support and safeguarding teams. They describe what they do to make a difference to pupils' achievement:

*"We have high expectations of every student, particularly with under privileged pupils; we put in a lot of emotional or practical support. Year 11 visit colleges and we get them to visualise their aspirations and to believe in themselves.... 'I can do this.' I think this is the core of what we do. It is not therapeutic as we are not counsellors, it's about guidance and giving them confidence. Also we can be a point of reference." (Learning Mentor)*

We asked for an example of the type of practical and emotional support they offer students:

*"I had a Year 11 student who had been in an abusive home. Social Care was involved and she was taken out. The student was seeing me and a Counsellor. They were preparing for examinations and the Prom. This student wouldn't be able to prepare for the Prom so we got her clothes to wear and did her hair etc. so she could take part like everyone else. She wasn't an outcast. There was a door open to her for her to speak to someone when she was feeling down. We looked at Colleges for her, and provided a uniform. We treated her with respect like everyone else and tried to keep her in a normal state." (Learning Mentor)*

How did the school identify her particular circumstances?

*“We began to see that she was experiencing problems because her work was suffering. We have an early warning system where behaviour consequence points are administered by the pastoral team and if they are behaving out of character, it is followed up. The situation with this girl is ongoing but she continues with her studies. A lot of young people without that support might drop out. We are building up her resilience, teaching life skills, for example going to the Bank so she has a bank account and her family support worker and social care are involved.” (Learning Mentor)*

A learning mentor summarises their way of working with students:

*“There’s a lot of emotional and practical support given in a consistent, low key way. Support is discreet so we make sure pupils get lunch for example, whether or not they receive FSM but we know they are in need.” (Learning Mentor)*

### **Structured interventions and support**

For pupils with low attainment in English and maths a range of interventions have been implemented from Year 7 onwards: ARROW which is a two week programme, successfully trialled last year with excellent results and Rapid Plus which develops reading accuracy, comprehension and spelling for struggling learners in Years 7-9, there is Catch Up Numeracy for up to 5 months and termly Dyslexia support for pupils from Years 7-13.

### **Booster classes**

There is a willingness among the teaching staff to go the extra mile to support groups of students to achieve their very best and staff give generously of their time. Many booster classes run during the spring half term break, Easter holidays and May half-term and Maths and English teachers volunteer to run them. After school boosters begin in the autumn term and continue until the spring term although it is up to departments to decide how they target various groups:

*“We have been encouraging departments to have a particular group and then to move on to another group. Departments such as maths have weekly booster days but it is up to them how they target them. The whole class is getting extra revision to cover what they haven’t been taught. Sometimes an external tutor would iron out particular difficulties – it feels special to have someone from outside take a group.” (Deputy Head)*



The school uses some of its pupil premium funding to reduce the number of maths 'sets' and to buy in extra specialist support for maths, which she believes is another contributory factor to the high achievement of pupils:

*"Without pupil premium funding we wouldn't be able to have eight sets for maths, we would have to go back to six without any specialist support."*  
(Deputy Head)

### EAL support

The EAL (English as Additional Language) team speak a range of languages between them and welcomes and supports new arrivals and students who speak other languages at home. They prepare and enter students for their community languages in GCSE and A Level examinations, and celebrate students' national days.

They provide interpreting and translating services, including sign-language, for parents who cannot speak English.

### Homework

Some students find it difficult to study at home and many parents are not in a position to support them. The schools overcome this barrier by investing additional time in teaching and learning. Staff are generous with their time after school, and in the holidays. These students receive a significant amount of individual help and attention. This also reinforces the positive relationships that exist between students and staff, because students see that staff 'really care.' There is no doubt that this approach is extremely demanding of teachers' time and goodwill. The Deputy Head explains the school's approach:

*"We have an online platform 'show my homework' to inform parents. Someone has responsibility to ensure that homework is working well. We have a homework club run by learning support assistants (LSAs) for pupils who do not have access to computers at home, a shared bedroom and latch-key kids. They are here working so at least it is being done. Often parents cannot help them because they are at work or are not familiar or confident with the curriculum. Another factor is that some pupils prefer being here than going home."* (Deputy Head)

### Impact of targeted interventions: empirical evidence

La Retraite effectively uses pupil premium funding to address the underachievement of disadvantaged pupils, and to close the attainment gap. The school uses this funding very successfully to deliver a wide range of intervention strategies, and while a high proportion of the GCSE cohort was eligible for pupil premium funding, the overall achievement in the school is outstanding, and above the national average on all measures.

The school also have an excellent record of closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others and have the highest aspirations for all pupils. The progress 8 data for the school suggest that disadvantaged pupils make good progress in the school and the gap is much smaller.

Figure 7: Progress of pupil premium and non-pupil premium pupils at La Retraite

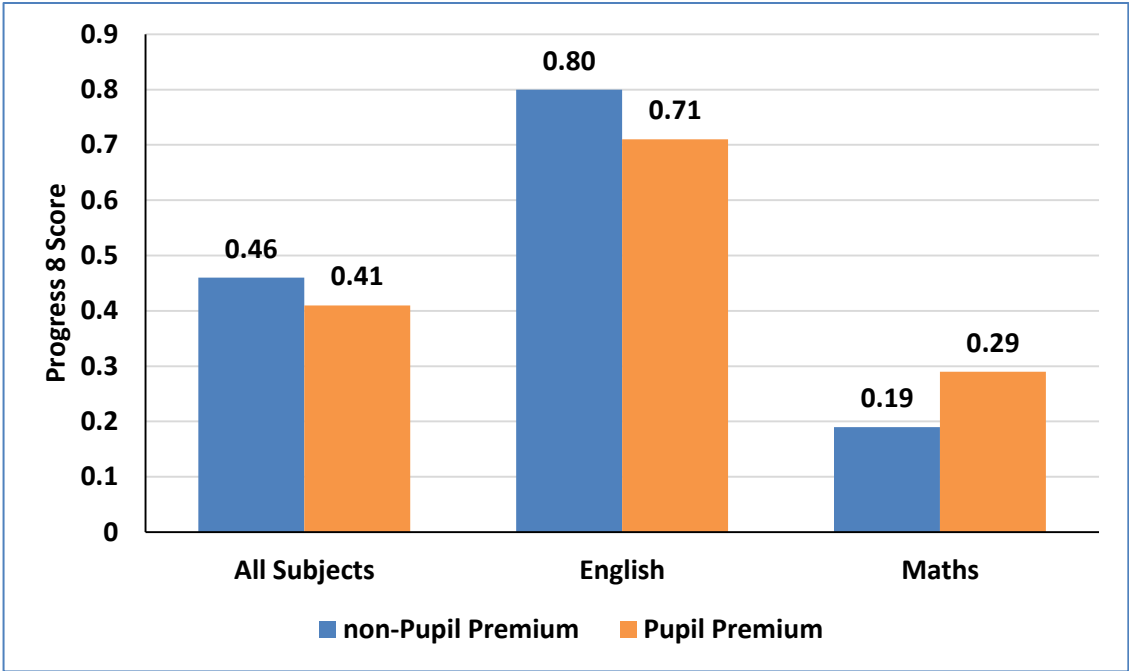


Table 6 also shows the impressive performance of Pupil Premium pupils in the school each year. The gap in attainment between PP and non PP pupils, on all key measures, is much smaller in the school than found nationally, and by 2018 the gap had almost completely closed.

The school is highly successful in closing any gaps in the attainment and progress of pupils through targeted interventions. School leaders have established a detailed programme of support, activities and additional resources for pupils eligible for the pupil premium as outlined above. These range from smaller groups with additional best teachers in core subjects to personal mentoring, booster class, pastoral care, EAL support, buying additional resources, supporting pupil premium pupils access nurture and enrichment activities e.g. extra curricula activities, and training teaching assistants and learning mentors to deliver specific interventions such as literacy and numeracy support and homework. They closely check how effective each has been to raise achievement and are flexible in their approaches to ensure that learning gaps are closing effectively. It is clear from our observation and evidence provided by school that school leaders pay close attention to the successful promotion of equality of opportunities for all.

Table 6: GCSE performance by pupil premium 2017-2018

GCSE - PP	2017					2018				
	All	PP	non PP	Sch PP Gap	Nat PP Gap	All	PP	non PP	Sch PP Gap	Nat PP Gap
Cohort	144	50	94	-	-	148	69	79	-	-
4-9 A*-C English and Maths	80%	74%	83%	-9%	-33%	70%	70%	71%	-1%	-27%
5 + A*-C incl. English and Maths	78%	74%	81%	-7%	-27%	67%	64%	70%	-6%	n/a
Progress 8	0.67	0.57	0.73	0.16	0.50	0.43	0.41	0.46	0.05	0.58
Attainment 8	53.4	50.1	55.2	-5.1	-12.4	50.2	48.0	52.0	-4.0	13.6

Source: DfE GCSE Performance tables

3.6.6 The student voice: Evidence from student focus group

***Pupils spoke very positively of their school and when asked what they liked about their school, they responded:***

- *‘Sometimes when you are struggling with work, teachers will help you after school one-to-one. Teachers will give extra time.’*
- *‘Teachers make things easier for you – complicated things they make it easier to understand.’*
- *‘They provide lots of resources to help us.’*
- *‘You get to meet new people, pupils and teachers are friendly. Teachers give you more time to study.’*
- *‘There are lots of activities here. I take part in Mandarin, Capoeira, target sports. Last year we went with our choir to Belgium. This year we are going to Paris and are going to Germany. We exchange letters with German students and they will visit here and we will visit their school.’*
- *‘Teachers are helpful if you don’t understand they will explain in detail.’*

***We asked them to identify their favourite subject:***

- *‘English – I understand it more; I put a lot of time into it.’*
- *‘Maths – it’s easy for me, my family help me they are good at it’*
- *‘Maths – it’s challenging’*
- *‘ICT – it is quite interesting’*
- *Art – every month we do different projects e.g. graphic design. This year we are doing a cookery project and hairdressing – it’s good to complement other more academic subjects’*
- *‘Art – you can be creative in it.’*

### ***Do you receive any support or help with school work at home?***

- *'It depends on the subject – my dad helps with maths and RE. My sister helps with maths and geography.'*
- *'My mum helps me with French'*
- *'My sister helps me with geography and my mum with Spanish'*
- *'My mum helps with geography, my sisters with French and maths and dad with history.'*
- *'My sister helps me and my mum and dad with other subjects.'*
- *'My mum helps with Spanish and my sister with history and art.'*

### ***Where do you see yourself in the future?***

- *'I am still debating University. I wouldn't want to go here I would rather go to the US. There you would have more opportunities to be diverse coming from here.'*
- *'I want to go to University but don't know which one, to study business and maths.'*
- *'I would like to go to Cambridge to study English.'*
- *'I don't know which University I want to go to but I would like to be a RAF doctor.'*
- *'I want to go to University but I have no idea yet.'*
- *'I don't know which University I would like to go to but want to be writer or an artist.'*

### **3.6.7 Conclusions**

La Retraite is an outstanding school in which each and every pupil really does matter. The study identified a number of key factors for success:

- The school's strong ethos and Christian values are based on the expectation that all pupils will strive to achieve their best.
- The exceptional pastoral support provided by the school is a great strength.
- Strong leadership and strong systems. The excellent Headteacher, working with a committed and talented senior leadership team, has created a thriving, purposeful school with achievement and care at its heart. Expectations are high and, as a result, girls flourish and achievement is outstanding.
- Intensive targeted support for pupils through extensive use of learning mentors, SENCO and EAL teachers and assistants.
- The use of data is a strength of the school. Rigorous pupil level tracking is established as one of the core elements of raising achievement in the school. The intelligent use of this tracking data enables the school to identify underperforming pupils and to then target intervention support appropriate to promote accelerated progress towards age-related expectations.

### 3.7 ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

#### 3.7.1 Background

St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls is a Church of England School steeped in history and tradition. Originally established in 1699, it is the oldest girls' school in England and linked to the church of the same name in Trafalgar Square. The school is committed to closing the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students and encouraging students to be inspired to learn and ambitious for the future.

The school is dedicated to St Martin of Tours and his inspiring story, riding on a horse and cutting his cloak in half to share with a beggar. Encapsulated on the school logo, *Caritate et Disciplina*, his message of love, selflessness and service remains just as relevant today. The original philanthropic and charitable connections remain strong to this day.

The essence of St Martin's is its Christian ethos underpinned by the values of service, compassion, justice and perseverance which are central to the life of the school. Students are at the heart of the school's vision; every girl is cherished, grows in faith and is developed academically, spiritually, morally and socially. Students of all faiths and none feel welcome and have a sense of value within the school community.

St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls is a smaller than average sized school of 489 students, including a co-educational Sixth Form. The sixth form works in partnership with the SL6 group of sixth forms to provide post 16 students with an enriched curriculum. The school has a largely Black British population containing students of Caribbean and African heritage. The majority of students are from Christian backgrounds with a well above average proportion of students eligible for pupil premium at 46%. 12% of students have special education needs receiving additional support. 1% of pupils are statemented or with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP). 48% of students do not have English as their home language.

The school has an exceptionally welcoming and inclusive ethos. Students value the socially diverse and community-spirited aspects of the school and the fact that they are known by staff and their peers. One of the central reasons for students' success is the clear and very effective promotion of their well-being. The centrality of prayer has a significant impact on the personal, health, social, citizenship and enterprise understanding of the students, leading to a transformation in their aspirations. This, along with the introduction of the school's vision and values, impacts on the students' performance which is above the national average in many subjects and is improving.

The significant improvements in behaviour and attendance, resulting from the introduction of the expectations prayer at the start of every lesson and the application of the school's values through the monthly themes, give a sense of confidence and pride to the school community.

The school is committed to academic excellence and personal well-being. The school's vision is to create a safe, caring, happy and inclusive community. Leaders at St Martin's want their girls to shine and grow together in faith and knowledge, developing their unique gifts and talents both in the classroom and in the wider life of the school and beyond. In May 2018 Ofsted said *'The motto of the school, Caritate et Disciplina – with Love and Learning - is driven by all staff in a common endeavour to improve the life chances of all students'*.

### 3.7.2 A strong, effective leadership team

The senior leadership team is comprised of the Headteacher, two Deputy Headteachers and two Associate Assistant Headteachers. The director of the sixth form is also an Assistant Headteacher. Very effective strategies have been put in place to raise standards and these have been successful in closing gaps in attainment.

The Headteacher is passionate about the school and its mission *'Inspired to Learn, Ambitious for the Future'* and this is reflected in the culture of the school and the outstanding quality of display that graces the wall and highlights the ambition and high expectation of the school. The strong mission, led by the Headteacher, is powerfully transmitted through the processes and systems used to monitor the performance of students. Strategies to overcome barriers to learning and access to the curriculum have been reframed within an overall commitment to building an inclusive, Godly learning community. Data is very effectively used across the school, by the senior leadership team, governors, heads of department, progress leader and class teachers. All members of staff play a role in monitoring the academic, social and emotional wellbeing of students.

Detailed strategic plans have been developed and aligned across all aspects of the school. At regular intervals, governors and staff at all levels have contributed to the School Improvement Plan and its evaluation, with the following aim, articulated by the Headteacher:

*"This ensures there is ownership of the plan from everybody... making sure lines of accountability are clear".*

Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's current performance and they work together very effectively to identify any barriers to learning for particular groups of students. This collaboration results in the sharing of good practice, which raises achievement. Staff morale is high and relationships are warm and supportive. Middle Leaders are a strength of the school, they demonstrate both enthusiasm and a focused ambition to do the very best that they can to improve student outcomes. To ensure that students eligible for pupil premium funding are receiving the additional support they need, the school appointed a 'Pupil Premium Champion' eighteen months ago, who is a middle leader and has taken on this additional responsibility. The Pupil Premium Champion works with all staff to develop strategies to meet the needs of

disadvantaged students. There is regular sharing of good practice between teachers and swift identification of the barriers to learning that these students may face. For example, the school day is extended in Year 11 to allow students to develop independent learning skills which have had a significant impact in closing the achievement gap. Leaders have put in place effective strategies to improve standards and these actions are now showing clear impact.

The Headteacher has been assiduous in improving the culture and performance of the school during the four years she has been in post and provides a very positive role model for the rest of the school. She has created a culture and ethos of high standards where everyone pulls in the same direction, with students' needs and interests at the heart as Ofsted recognised when the school was inspected in May 2018:

*"The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your senior leaders are persistent in driving the school forward. You have taken clear actions to respond to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection report. Governors and representatives from the local authority and the diocese speak highly of the changes that you have made in the school since your appointment. You have forged successful partnerships with other schools to further develop your staff and support your pupils"*

The school received an 'outstanding' grade from a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) last year and the following is a quote from the report:

*"The Headteacher's capacity to lead, enable and serve is excellent. She strategically engages the school with the local church and the wider community, developing a sense of pride amongst parents, staff, former students and students, which raises aspiration in students. This is illustrated by the work of a former student from an estate who, whilst studying to be a doctor, is running an extra-curricular club to inspire learners to consider medicine as a career option." (SIAMS report April 2018)*

### 3.7.3 Effective governing body

The expertise of the governing body are a key feature of its effectiveness in holding the school to account for the standards students achieve. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's vision and values and their application to the daily life of the staff, parents and students enabling the senior leadership team and middle leaders to lead rapid positive improvement.

A foundation governor who was appointed to the school last year, recognised that her own background in using data would give much value in fulfilling her role as governor.

When asked whether governors discuss students' achievement and what they would need to do to raise it, she replied:

*"Every term we are given a report so we can see how pupil premium students are doing. As governors we want to ensure that all pupils are achieving and there is no gap. When we feel the impact could be better, we ask them to come back and give us more detail. Every term we have CAP sub-committees and the Deputy Head will come and explain the report and give us an opportunity to question her and she will clarify. Data raises questions and we start acting on them. Data also tells us what interventions there have been, how much money has been put into it and the impact it has had. We talk about whether we need to continue with an intervention. There are so many areas that are working really well. The additional maths teaching is working well and we feel that is something good for the students. The phonics programme is really important for students for whom English is an additional language as they need additional support to ensure the gap is closed. Then there are school trips – not all students have the ability to pay to go on visits." (Pupil premium governor)*

This particular governor is a link for pupil premium and despite her role as PhD assessor at City University, she finds the time to spend a whole day in the school with the pupil premium champion and do a learning walk in addition to the full governors and sub-committee meetings.

*"I came for a whole day's orientation and I was also here again last night for a meeting. This school wants us as governors to hold them to account". (Pupil premium governor)*

Governors are proactive in seeking further information regarding pupil premium spending and the pupil premium governor appreciates the fact that the senior leaders seek active involvement of the governing body. Governors hold leaders to account for the deployment of the pupil premium grant and their input feeds into the regular review of the School Improvement Plan, ragging the progress towards meeting objectives and identifying next steps and the contribution governors can make to these.

*"As governors we are encouraged to bring our outside experience into the role to bring a different and broader perspective to students. For example, I said I could arrange for students to visit the University I work in". (Pupil premium governor).*

The governing body clearly share the school's vision and appreciate the dedication of the staff. The foundation governor summed this up in the following statement:



*"I can tell the leaders and teachers are really dedicated... they do not want pupil premium students to feel they are disadvantaged - when all the hard work has gone in the gap will continue to close".*

### 3.7.4 Quality first teaching

St Martin's has had an unrelenting focus on improving teaching and learning which is now being confidently embedded in the life of the school. The Ofsted inspection in May 2018 confirmed this:

*"Leaders and teachers now monitor learning against more challenging targets. They identify and intervene earlier if there are any lapses in a pupil's individual progress. Pupils reported that they now have high aspirations for career choices and say that they feel more challenged. Visits to classrooms, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own information about pupils' progress, indicates that recent actions to improve progress are working". (Ofsted 2018)*

Teachers have a commitment to getting to know all their students on an individual basis, with a particular focus on those that are underachieving and the more able. To ensure a smooth transition from one year group to the next, teachers are given a context sheet with a photograph of each student, to familiarise themselves with progress data and future targets for students and information about individual needs. The monitoring of students' progress is thorough. The Pupil Premium Champion plays a key role in sharing information about pupils and where there are any concerns about progress, heads of department are made aware of this and plan appropriate interventions.

There is a regular monitoring cycle to review students' workbooks and senior leaders and middle leaders carry out lesson observations to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.

We asked teachers 'what worked well in raising the achievement of disadvantaged students in your school last year'?

The Associate Assistant Headteacher who is also a science teacher commented:

*"It was a clear focus for the whole school. We have something called 'Focus Friday'. The pupil premium champion met every member of staff and asked them to identify those students that were in receipt of the pupil premium. Teachers knew who their pupil premium students were, then they put them at the forefront, rather than talking about the whole class".*

The head of the English department concurred with his comments, as follows:

*“We as teachers across the school know who they are, not just focusing on our individual subjects but as individual students. This works because we are looking at the whole child, sharing what that student is doing in each subject. We have termly meetings, six weekly meetings and every week there is a focus. Pupil premium is always on the agenda for key postholders”.*

Three short lesson observations were made one where the head of English was teaching a very large group (which also incorporated students from another class). Her earlier comments about knowing the students well was borne out in her lesson as her questioning of students clearly indicated that she knew their names and had prior knowledge of their levels of achievement. Despite the size of the class, students were actively engaged in a well-planned lesson and were able to explain clearly the purpose of the task and what they were learning. In the second observation of a drama lesson, students were thoroughly absorbed and keen to respond to the teacher’s excellent questioning. In groups of 4 they were asked to create three still images that showed their journey to ‘Darkwood Manor’. A lively Mandarin lesson showed evidence that students are responding very positively to the teaching of this language that was introduced in April 2018. There were good attitudes to learning and positive behaviour in all lessons.

Heads of department and progress leaders co-operate very well and the evidence of shared success points also to shared effort and willingness to do the best for students. Excellent teamwork and collaboration by teachers and support staff ensures that students have every opportunity to have their learning needs met. Their aim is to help students to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities to the highest possible level and to engender a love of learning.

### 3.7.5 Innovative curriculum

St Martin’s endeavours to offer all students an outstanding curriculum that equips them to meet the challenges they will face in the future, thereby maximising their life chances. The school strives to ensure that students leave the school as confident and independent individuals who are able to adapt to the many challenges in adult life. Students are at the heart of the school ‘family’ and curriculum planning focuses entirely on the needs of students and how best to support them through close work with feeder primary schools, colleges and other outside agencies to ensure all transitions are as smooth as possible.

The school provides a balanced pastoral structure to give students the confidence to develop holistically through a wellbeing programme so that they are able to demonstrate teamwork and leadership skills. The broad, balanced and inspiring curriculum enables students to achieve high standards of attainment and make excellent progress in all their subjects.

At Key Stage 3, the school aims to provide students with a challenging curriculum that fosters a love of learning and enables all students to reach their academic potential. Building on their achievements in Key Stage 2, the breadth and depth of subject knowledge, skills and understanding, prepares students thoroughly for the end of Key Stage 3 tests and assessments in Year 9 and for taking academic GCSE and vocational courses at Key Stage 4.

Students are given many opportunities to take responsibility and put their learning into practice in a range of different experiences. For example in Year 10 they become 'maths ambassadors' teaching Year 8 students at an early morning session from 8.15 a.m. – 8.45 a.m. This gives students a high profile and an opportunity to develop confidence and a chance to share their knowledge with other students. Sixth formers act as mentors to younger students as part of the 'Jump' programme (just under my potential), where goal setting, ways of studying, examination practice and preparation are shared. Mentors also work through the "Journey to 6<sup>th</sup> Form booklet" in their sessions with the younger students.

St Martin's offers a wealth of extra-curricular activities as well as many homework clubs. They encourage all students to engage in at least one weekly activity either during lunch or after school. Clubs include robotics and coding, Chinese calligraphy, gardening, art and STEM. A wide variety of academic and social activities are also offered including a range of sports, choir, drama, maths and chemistry. Extra-curricular musical activities include: guitar and ukulele club, Year 7 choir, festival choir, woodwind ensemble and music technology club.

A wealth of trips and enrichment opportunities to enhance learning outside the classroom and build cultural capital are planned, these include the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, the Lion Heart Challenge Programme, residential trips to the Brecon Beacons, Paris and Spain and shorter day trips to France.

### **3.7.6 Effective targeted support and interventions**

At St Martin's leaders are rigorous in the way that they use target-setting, assessment and tracking to raise achievement. They have developed information and data systems that suit the needs of their school, and they continually refine them, ensuring that data is simple, accessible, easy to understand and manageable, especially for those that find data difficult. The school also realises that assessment information is useless if it is not highly accurate and leaders have worked hard to ensure that teachers are able to estimate students' attainment precisely and use it to inform their planning. There is frequent use of data to track the progress that students eligible for the pupil premium are making and the effectiveness of interventions used to raise achievement of these students. Effective monitoring ensures that interventions and approaches can be changed and adapted quickly if they are not working. Staff are aware that the key success for all students is that

the day to day teaching meets the needs of each learner rather than simply relying on interventions to compensate for teaching which is less good.

The Pupil Premium Champion and a Deputy Headteacher have worked closely together to refine a process of gathering detailed information on students eligible for support through the pupil premium, by tracking their progress and sharing outcomes with all staff. The Pupil Premium Champion explains how this has evolved:

*“When we first met we looked at where our needs were. We used data, GCSE results and our Ofsted report which highlighted what we needed to do. Our pupil premium students were not making progress. We thought ‘where are we going to start? What do we want to achieve and how we would go about it? We did an audit with staff to find out what they knew. We wanted them to really get to know these students. We introduced ‘Focus Friday’ to teaching and support staff – each week there would be a short meeting with a focus on pupil premium students. The purpose was to educate staff so that they know the students well and understand what interventions they should use and also what other staff were using with the same students.” (Pupil Premium Champion)*

### Pastoral care

It is evident that the staff at St Martin’s have a professional sense of pride at seeing students achieving well through a careful combination of support and challenge and the sharing of information and of good practice. Leaders state the importance of students coming to school and feeling safe and cared for, especially those who are vulnerable. They are acutely sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged students and try not to make it apparent that they are being treated any differently from other students:

*“We are all about all students not just focusing on pupil premium. They are sensitive and we are sensitive. As a PE teacher when we go on trips, FSM have to collect a meal and they do not want anyone to know they are eligible for FSM.” (Pupil Premium Champion).*

Examples of support for students’ individual needs were given:

*“Student A came in Year 7 (she had come to this country from the Congo in Year 6) when she started she couldn’t read even in her home language and could only speak a little French. She had never been to school before coming to the UK. The first thing was about inclusion and familiarisation. She got support from a learning assistant in core subjects and did Toe-by-Toe reading. She was a success because she could hold her own, her confidence and self-esteem were raised because she learned to read. When left us her English was of a high standard and she went to do a hairdressing course.”*

The Pupil Premium Champion continued.....

*“I do 1:1 interventions with 20 pupils. Pupil A asked “why do I bother, I don’t get the grades”? I told her, when you came here you couldn’t even read or speak English, you have come a long way”.*

Another example of the school’s care and sensitivity to students’ needs was given in the following case:

*“One particular student wasn’t in school so that was her target – to get her in. She was studying at home but she had a cleft palate and was too embarrassed to come to school. As a result of the support she received her attendance improved and she went to achieve a grade 4 in her English GCSE.”*

### Structured interventions

Chaplaincy: A safe space with experienced support to support vulnerable students going through difficult circumstance.

Free breakfast club sessions targeted at students with punctuality issues to ensure they arrive on time, are better prepared for their day and have a greater amount of time with positive role models. Having a nutritious breakfast also helps them to maintain focus, concentration and improve their behaviour.

Steps to Success Programme encompasses careers interviews, career meeting, workshops and work experience: Students receive careers guidance through wellbeing lessons in all year and 1 to 1 sessions with a Career Advisor and or Careers Lead. The programme aims to raise aspirations, challenge stereotyping and promote equality and diversity. The programme also equips them with the key skills, attitudes and qualities necessary to make a successful transition to adult and working life.

First Story KS4 initiative to build confidence in creative writing through poetry and oracy specifically amongst specifically disadvantaged students to increase their self-esteem, confidence and communication skills.

A learning assistant explained her role in supporting pupil premium pupils:

*“I do lots of interventions: Toe-by-toe, reading support before school, lunchtimes and after school. I work from 8.15 – 4pm either in class or withdrawal of a small group of pupils. I also do some pre-teaching”.*

### Booster classes

Based on the monitoring of data, specific students are targeted for booster classes and revision sessions from Year 7 onwards. Weaker readers have extra phonics in Years 7, 8 and 9. Holiday booster classes take place usually during the Easter break.

### Attendance and punctuality

The Year 11 progress leader has a role in supporting the interventions that have been put in place and ensuring they are working. Underachieving students tend to have problems related either to their attendance or to their individual circumstances, such as difficulties at home as she explains:

*“I support things outside school so they can access learning. For example, in English they need a lot of text books so we help them to purchase these. These students have been targeted from the end of Year 10 based on the data.”*

The level of disadvantage that many students are experiencing becomes apparent as the Year 11 progress leader continues to explain:

*“I now work closely with the attendance officer, monitoring and tracking the attendance of students and putting in interventions as needed. We now focus a lot of effort on Year 11 because we have a lot of students with individual needs and disadvantages. They have additional support from learning assistants, myself, the designated safeguarding lead and they may also have social workers involved in their lives.”*

The focus on improving attendance and punctuality has had a positive impact:

*“We have put a great deal of emphasis on attendance and getting to school on time. In my year group there were 15 students last year for whom attendance and punctuality was an issue but I now have only six girls who are my key focus for getting to school on time.”*

Parents are made aware of the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality and they are all provided with a leaflet that makes the school's expectations clear. Parents are provided with regular updates about their child's learning, progress and attendance. The Head of English contributed to the discussion about attendance by adding:

*“When I have meetings with the Year 11 progress leader, we tell students that missing lessons impacts on their examinations as well as reducing their chances of getting into college, work etc.”.*

### More able pupils

A lead teacher talked about her role with more able students:

*“In our Ofsted report a key issue was regarding more able students. We needed to make sure that staff knew who the more able students were and to co-ordinate provision. 44% of our more able students are disadvantaged. One of the successes is that we have a very open dialogue in school and I can speak informally regarding concerns. I liaise with the Pupil Premium Champion and ask her to identify any students she thinks I should take on visits to Universities etc.”*

Two ‘more able’ students are now taking part in the “Sutton Scholars” scheme designed to raise aspirations.

### Homework

Homework is compulsory and in Year 7 it is linked to classwork. The head of English gave her views on homework:

*“Homework for homework’s sake is counter-productive and explaining the purpose is key”.*

The Year 11 progress leader concurred with this:

*“We make sure there is meaning behind homework, when they realise this they put in 100%”.*

There is a strong sense that the school equips its students to overcome any barriers and seeks, without being patronising, to ensure that students are not penalised because of their socio-economic circumstances. The school recognises their potential and provides them with opportunities to succeed and coaches them in the expectations that will be placed on them in their chosen professions so they are not disadvantaged.

### 3.7.7 The impact of targeted interventions: empirical evidence

As the school was selected for their success in raising achievement of disadvantaged students, it was not difficult for the school to demonstrate how the use of data was effective. The use of data is a key part of the process of school improvement. It involves all interested parties: staff, governors and parents. One of the core elements of the school’s success in raising achievement is its robust focus on tracking and monitoring individual student progress and achievement.

The school is particularly proud of its approach to pupil premium monitoring. It uses pupil premium data to identify individual strengths and weaknesses in school provision to make target setting more responsive to the needs of the students.

The school received a total of £275,000 last year. About 44% of the students receive the pupil premium. The school has effectively used the funding to support disadvantaged students. This has had an impact on closing the achievement gap.

**Table 7: The impact of targeted interventions using pupil premium in the school**

Outcome	Pupil Premium Students	Non-Pupil Premium Students	Gap Difference
% achieving A*-C in EM	47.62	46.15	1.47
Progress 8 score	-0.32	0.12	-0.44
Attainment 8 score	42.25	43.29	-1.03

Source: St Martins Pupil Premium Impact Report 2017-18

Table 7 shows that pupil premium students did well between 2017 and 2018 and the gap in achievement and progress of the pupil premium students and their peers is narrowing. The school data shows 55% of students in Year 11 were eligible for FSM. Of these 48% of disadvantaged students gained a good pass in English and maths compared to the non-disadvantaged students of 46%. The progress 8 score for disadvantaged students is -0.32 compared to the non-disadvantaged students of 0.12.

In the school the disadvantaged students are tracked and monitored throughout the year through robust and rigorous tracking and monitoring systems with detailed internal analysis systems by heads of department, progress leaders and teachers that allow all groups of students to be identified and monitored throughout the year. The Ofsted inspection also recognised and commented that:

*“There is an improvement in the performance of disadvantaged students. Work in books shows progress is similar for both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged students in all years are making better progress and meeting their target grades” (Ofsted, May 2018)*

Overall the use of performance data for school improvement is a strength of the school. The school uses data forensically not only for tracking pupil premium students but as an important tool in raising achievement. Data is incredibly useful and used in the school for a number of purposes including to track students’ performance, to assess the individual needs of students, to identify individuals and groups of students who might be underachieving, to evaluate the quality and impact of the school interventions to support teaching and learning, to inform the deployment of staff, inform teachers planning,



challenging expectations of staff and identify priorities for school improvement. This was clearly noted during the interview with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteachers, Assistant Headteacher, head of English, classroom teachers, learning assistants, the Pupil Premium Champion and also through classroom observations.

### 3.7.8 The student voice: Evidence from student focus group

***Students from Years 9, 10 and 11 spoke very positively of their school and when asked if they enjoyed coming to school, they responded:***

- *'Yes. Our school focuses on being a community and being close to one another'.*
- *'Yes. There is a sense of community and it's easy for you to interact with everybody and communicate with peers.'*
- *'Yes. There are good relationships with our teachers; they are available and you can speak to them, in some schools you can't'.*
- *'Yes because it's a small school you are able to be yourself; everyone knows who you are and it's a relaxed environment.'*
- *'Yes, it is easy to talk to everyone and easy to make friends and be yourself.'*
- *'Yes, the surroundings around us'.*

***We asked them to identify their favourite subject:***

- *'Art because in the art class it is quiet and calming'*
- *'Art, because it's a very artistic subject, you can do art in other subjects.'*
- *'English, history and RS. There's a lot of writing and thinking involved, thinking critically and I enjoy that'.*
- *'History. I like my teacher and I can understand the work'.*
- *'Maths and psychology: I enjoy psychology and human behaviour - maths calculations are involved and I like that stuff'.*
- *'Computer science: because my teacher has a passion for it and I feel challenged and I can talk to her about stuff I have tried.'*

***Do you receive any support or help with school work at home?***

- *'Most of the time I do it myself I do not feel I need it.'*
- *'I get help from my sister because she comes to the school too and she is in a higher year than me so she can help me with it'.*
- *'I get lots of help because my mum is a teacher, help with French.'*
- *'My sister is a teacher and she gives me past papers to work on'.*
- *'I do all my homework by myself. I am an independent learner. If I need help I go online'.*
- *'I do it by myself. In Year 7 I got help from my mum because I was speaking Portuguese.'*

### ***Where do you see yourself in the future?***

- *'I would like to go to Oxford and study Computer Science'.*
- *'I would like to go to University – Cambridge or Imperial College and study medicine'.*
- *'I would like to go to University and study social work'.*
- *'I'd like to take a couple of gap years, maybe study abroad; travelling to North, South and Central America. Maybe go to Drama School when I get back.'*
- *'I want to go to University and study art'.*
- *'I would like to be an Architect'.*

***Languages spoken in the group:*** Portuguese, Twi and German

### **3.7.9 Conclusions**

There were a number of good practices that were highlighted during the case study research in the school including:

- Strong, effective leadership with an absolute commitment to inclusion, where every student is known and valued
- A positive Christian ethos which welcomes students of all faiths and none
- Strategic school improvement planning and evaluation which are focused and aligned across all aspects of the school
- Data is used as a driving force to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students and to close any gaps in achievement
- An unrelenting focus on improving the quality of teaching which is now confidently embedded
- Governors who are very effective in holding the school to account for the standards that students achieve

# SECTION 4: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research has been undertaken to discover and disseminate good practice in Lambeth schools, so as to contribute to raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in all schools. It builds on the previous Lambeth report “Narrowing the Achievement Gap – Good Practice in Schools” (Lambeth 2015) which examined the success factors behind narrowing the achievement gap of disadvantaged pupils who are entitled to free school meals. While this report reinforces some of the key findings of good practice set out in the 2015 report, it has a different focus, specifically on schools that have successfully closed the achievement gap in both primary and secondary schools. This achievement belies the national trend. In the schools described in the case studies in this report, most of whose pupils have high levels of disadvantage, pupils are performing above national and LA averages.

Although a review of the literature shows there is a recent growth in case study research into successful strategies to raise the achievement of disadvantaged children, there is little research carried out to study good practice to close the achievement gaps in schools and to provide what works evidence for teachers and policy makers to use to address educational inequality.

The overall findings of the research shows that disadvantaged pupils reach exceptionally high standards at KS2 and GCSE in the case study schools and the LA. The research identified a number of success factors including strong leadership, quality first teaching, an innovative curriculum, effective use of data to identify underachieving groups, and effective use of pupil premium funding to challenge poverty through various intervention strategies.

As can be seen from the above examples there are a number of reasons for the vast improvement in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in Lambeth compared to nationally in England. The LA firmly believes that disadvantage has multiple causes and the many challenges faced by young people in the most deprived areas cannot be ignored or left at the school gates. The case study schools demonstrate outstanding practice in all areas and have succeeded in closing the achievement gap. Many are not new or different approaches but they require leadership teams and staff across schools to ensure that there is a sharp focus on disadvantage. The first step is to make every member of staff aware of which pupils are disadvantaged and ensure that they take clear and accountable action to accelerate pupils’ progress.

### What are the factors that contribute to this success?

All the case study schools exhibit many of the characteristics of successful schools nationally. They demonstrate effective practice in key aspects such as strong and visionary leadership, quality first teaching, a robust focus on performance data and good behaviour management that encourages good pupil motivation. The schools have very

high expectations of their pupils and provide a 'family' ethos where every child is known and valued. It is the latter point that stands out in each case study school. No matter how large or small the school, or whether community or faith school, leaders and staff expressed a commitment to know which pupils are disadvantaged and to do all they can to see them achieve their very best.

### Leadership and vision

The single factor that links all the case study schools success in raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is the excellence of their leadership. All are driven by a commitment to do their best for every child in the school. It is in this sense that their schools are 'child-centred.' Children come first. These school leaders also have a strong sense of social justice, seeking to remove the barriers to achievement such as disadvantage and low parental aspiration by compensating for what the children lack and by working closely with families and the community.

The quality of governance is also an important but not usually a determining factor in school improvement, where outstanding school leaders are in post. Their ability to inspire, develop and empower staff and – through them – pupils and parents is paramount. The case study school leaders invest in the development of all their staff as a fundamental aspect of how the school operates. Many of them are active in training and developing other leaders.

A 'Do as I do' approach is much in evidence in these schools with outstanding leaders where they have modelled what they want to see from others and retain a teaching commitment. This gives them huge credibility as respected instructional leaders, and adds authenticity to the knowledge of pupils' progress and the constant monitoring and dialogue that are core aspects of their work.

### What are the case study schools doing to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils?

Early identification of pupils' needs is a key feature of the case study schools at whatever stage pupils enter the school. Apart from assessing pupils' learning/language needs, these schools have an 'open door' approach and links with parents are maintained at all levels. Key people in developing a partnership with parents, apart from senior leaders, SENDCos and class teachers, are learning mentors and teaching assistants who generally come from the local community and are able to break down any barriers and establish the confidence and trust of parents. It takes time and effort to build parents' confidence and schools develop their own approaches. What they have in common is a core belief in mutual responsibility and trust.

The continuing assessment in detail of pupils' progress is an important factor in the case study schools' success. The schools draw on a wide range of data to track the progress of

individual pupils and of groups. Half-termly pupil progress meetings are held usually involving a senior leader, SENDCo and class teacher to discuss the progress of each pupil and the next steps required. Both teachers and pupils know their targets and are able to measure pupils' learning and attainment regularly and objectively and to review the effectiveness of any intervention. Assessment for learning, reflective marking and feedback are among the practices that help accelerate children's progress. The schools use assessment and feedback very productively to plan and adapt the curriculum and promote individual learning. Children know what they are aiming towards and what they need to do to improve.

All the schools in this study ensure that quality first teaching is their first priority. Their emphasis on the progress of each individual child, together with a preponderance of very high-quality teaching can – and does – make a difference.

Numerous examples were given of intervention strategies used by primary schools, for example, early morning interventions, in class in a small group with a TA, or 1:1 support tailored to individual needs. Assessments at the end of Year 5 covering Year 6 SATs papers, tailored questions and gap analysis to identify pupils in need of further booster classes which take place after school and a summer school led by an Assistant Head and a Year 6 teacher, for Year 5 pupils who need support before going into Year 6. Summer schools take place during the first three days and the last three days of the summer holidays.

Every opportunity is taken to fit in an extra bit of support for those pupils who need to deepen their understanding, for example, during assemblies TAs take pupils for particular interventions or a class teacher or Assistant Head will take a group to give them very in depth pre-teaching prior to the lesson. Teaching assistants are very well trained and equipped to teach phonics and early maths lessons.

Learning mentors work with children and parents (for example, where children enter the school as a result of 'managed moves' or those new to the area) to settle them into school. They support pupils with a range of challenges such as those who are LAC, bereaved, and those needing EAL or SEND support.

Peer tutoring is encouraged in some schools but pupils are given the option whether or not they wish to be engaged in either providing support or receiving it.

Pastoral care in the case study schools is outstanding. The schools are totally inclusive of students with different strengths and offer unstinting support to their families. A Pupil Premium Champion in one secondary school has a pivotal role in co-ordinating support for pupils and in another school Year leaders and 'pastoral support managers are an integral part of the pastoral provision. They demonstrate great empathy with the challenges pupils' face such as coming from families facing eviction or with visa concerns, poverty and mental health and social care issues. Pastoral care is provided through a lot of emotional or practical support by arranging visits to Universities and colleges to build pupils' aspiration, or discreetly providing for pupils physical needs for food and clothing.

In terms of structured interventions and support there are many catch up programmes such as ARROW and Rapid Plus to develop reading accuracy for pupils in Years 7-9, and Catch Up Numeracy which is a five month programme and termly Dyslexia support to name just a few.

There is a willingness among the teaching staff to go the extra mile to support groups of students to achieve their very best and staff give generously of their time. Many booster classes run during the spring half term break, Easter holidays and May half-term and Maths and English teachers volunteer to run them.

The case study schools do more than monitor pupils' academic progress. Staff throughout these schools have a sense of mission and are as committed to pupils' welfare and personal development through strong pastoral systems to promote this. They give pupils the opportunity to take responsibility and to achieve in a wide range of activities. There is an extensive range of Enrichment activities on offer to build the social and cultural capital especially for pupils who wouldn't otherwise have these opportunities.

The case study schools give priority to a thorough grounding in the basic skills of communication, language, literacy and numeracy, and interest in using and applying these skills, recognising that unless they do so children's chances of becoming functionally literate and numerate later are low.

Designing an innovative curriculum that teaches core skills rigorously, incorporates national curriculum requirements creatively and widens children's experience and horizons ambitiously is a particular accomplishment of these schools. These schools have rich and imaginative curricula, both within and beyond the classroom, which add value in many ways. Often the curriculum has to compensate for children's limited experience, language and powers of communication. Creative curriculum planning provides a strong stimulus for learning. An exciting curriculum has a direct effect on children coming to school and wanting to learn. They do not want to miss anything and attendance rates are higher than average.

Finally we would suggest that the case study schools' stories of how they have closed the achievement gap is of local and national significance. The lessons from the case study schools and Lambeth provide hope for the school improvement practitioners and policy makers who are try to address this issue, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The report demonstrates that it is possible to tackle the link between poverty and underachievement. The methods used by the case study schools can be used elsewhere. The key ingredients such as effective use of data to monitor performance and to identify underachieving groups; giving high priority to developing quality first teaching and targeted support through highly trained teaching assistants can be replicated in other schools.

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## Glossary- A guide to acronyms

ASH	Assistant Headteacher
AST	Advanced Skills Teachers
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
DfE	Department for Education
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
EAL	English as an Additional language
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FSM	Free school meals
FSP	Foundation Stage Profile
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
LA	Local Authority
LM	Learning Mentors
NC	National Curriculum
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PP	Pupil Premium
PPG	Pupil Premium Grant
PPR	Pupil Performance Review
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SENDCo	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator
SLT	Senior leadership team
SMT	Senior management team
TA	Teaching Assistant

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