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Moving beyond the floor target

A report on what made the difference in 20 previously low-attaining primary schools

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low-attaining primary schools**

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Introduction

In 2007 the DCSF provided funding to establish additional support for primary schools that had been below the 65% floor target for four years or more. It was anticipated that the schools selected would be able to achieve this target in 2008. The additional funding was to be used to develop bespoke interventions concentrating on those priorities for improvement most likely to improve rates of progress and raise standards. The interventions designed all made use of the tools and processes of the Improving Schools Programme (ISP), a supported whole-school, school improvement programme.

By July 2007 a number of the schools had shown significant improvement. This report identifies what made the difference in 20 schools and captures their success. The majority of the schools were involved in the ISP and all the schools worked in partnership with their local authorities (LAs) to bring about improvement making use of the tools and processes of ISP. The 20 schools are spread across 16 LAs:

Appendix 1 lists the schools involved and their location.

Appendix 2 provides full details of all the case studies.

Profiles of the schools

There were a number of similarities in the schools visited, following nomination by their LAs. Of the 20 schools:

- almost three quarters were in areas of high social deprivation;
- almost three quarters had high rates of free school meal entitlement;
- in almost three quarters there were high levels of pupils with special educational needs (SEN);
- prior attainment was identified as being low in almost a third;
- in three, over 96% of pupils had English as an additional language (EAL); in a further five more than half of the pupils had EAL. In total this was almost half of the schools visited.
- three schools had been formed as a result of amalgamations, and a further one was part of a federation, led by an executive headteacher of a local community school;
- standards of attainment were low in English and mathematics, and almost all had failed to meet floor targets before they became involved in intensive support programmes;
- three schools had received Notices to Improve in Ofsted inspections.

As schools were in the situations described above it is clear that considerable support from the LA is essential. The schools concerned had shown that they did not have the capacity to improve themselves. Without concerted action, therefore, improvement was unlikely.

Barriers to improvement – what needed to change?

Given that all of the schools concerned were causing concern, and did not have the capacity to improve themselves, it is perhaps not surprising that there was a considerable coherence within the schools as to why they had not improved. The main barriers to improvement could best be described as follows.

1. There were clear inconsistencies in the overall quality of leadership and management in about three quarters of the schools. In some schools there was too little focus on leadership for learning, and too much focus on managing issues of care and welfare. In others there was little or no distributed leadership, and staff had not been given opportunities to develop professionally. Poor staff deployment, concerns about adequate recruitment, limited continuing professional development (CPD) and ineffective leadership led at times to a drop in staff morale. In a few situations the schools had been led for too long by staff in acting posts.

Some of the schools had been causing concern for a number of years and had shown little improvement. Most began to improve when there was a change of headteacher. Up until that point, however, little had changed and authorities had not been effective in improving the overall quality of the schools, or in ensuring children's needs were met. The question has to be raised, therefore, of the effectiveness of leadership at authority level.

2. There was an overall lack of consistency in the quality of teaching in most of the schools. In some there were clear concerns about capability, and some lessons evaluated by headteachers were regarded as unsatisfactory. This lack of consistency in the quality of teaching underpinned a lack of focus on improving standards of pupils' attainment.
3. Linked directly with concerns regarding the quality of teaching was a lack of consistency and challenge in pupils' learning, and inappropriate class organisation. In one particular situation the school had introduced a form of setting without appreciating the consequences of increased pupil mobility and consequent loss of crucial teaching time. Adopting any form of organisation without an analysis of the wider impact can be counterproductive.
4. In over half of the schools there was either a poor system for tracking pupil progress, or ineffective use of the data recorded. The result was a lack of effective targeting of teaching; inappropriate distribution of staff; limited progress in pupils' learning; and low standards of attainment. In a few schools there were concerns expressed about the accuracy of the assessments made, and this caused problems as far as building on pupils' prior learning was concerned.
5. The ineffective use of tracking meant that there was an overall lack of accountability among staff for pupils' progress, and this in itself hindered progress.
6. Low expectations were a key feature of about half of the schools concerned. Many staff had too limited a view of what pupils could achieve, with the result that their low expectations became self-fulfilling. A consequence of low staff expectations of pupils was that pupils had limited expectations of themselves, and did not believe that they could succeed. This inevitably led to low levels of self-esteem among pupils. Low expectations within the school often resulted in parents having too low aspirations for their children.
7. Issues with regard to pupils' behaviour were raised in almost three quarters of the schools. Pupils' social skills were not always well enough developed.
8. Poor attendance was a factor in low standards of attainment in about half of the schools. A few schools had issues of extended absence with pupils going abroad to visit relatives for lengthy periods.
9. Punctuality was also a factor where pupils, as a result of regular lateness, missed the initial part of some lessons and also input from their teachers in, for example, mathematics.
10. In just under a half of the schools parents were insufficiently involved in their children's learning. For some this was a result of difficulties with language, for others it was a result of lack of provision by the school. Whatever the reason, the lack of parental involvement led to low parental expectations and aspirations for their children.

In general, there was congruence between what the LAs identified as what had to change in specific schools and what schools felt had to improve. In some schools this was confirmed through an Ofsted inspection and report.

As might be expected, some schools were much more explicit with regard to the detail of what had to improve, referring, for example, to the need for curricular change, while some authorities were much clearer about the need for an improvement in the overall quality of leadership. These differences in emphasis were, in the main, slight. As there was general consensus about what had to change in the schools identified, some differences might well be attributed to different emphases during interviews.

Analysis of findings from the case studies

Analysis of the case studies showed that there were key areas which were crucial in helping schools improve. The following highlights all of these individually, but also demonstrates where all cohere and are necessary in order to ensure effective and sustained improvement. In the best practice sustained improvement was the key goal of the school, as opposed to short-term improvements in attainment at Key Stage 2.

Section 1 describes examples of effective practice in authorities and Section 2 provides an analysis of effective practice in schools. In each of these recommendations for future action will be made within the text, and also summarised in Section 4.

Section 1: Analysis of authority actions

It became clear during analysis of the case studies and discussions among those involved that there were key features of authority practice in effecting school improvement which were common. Minor details of practice or designations of staff or groups might have been different, but the essence of the actions taken was the same.

Authorities conducted reviews of the effectiveness of all of their schools using evidence from external inspection and the knowledge of their own staff. Thereafter they made decisions on the capacity of each school to improve without external support, and the level of support necessary for others. The following actions were then taken.

1. In a number of the schools new headteachers were appointed and this immediately had the effect of improving the overall quality of leadership. Some authorities involved newly appointed headteachers with mentors, and this had a positive impact on their effectiveness. Subsequently newly appointed headteachers, with the support of the authority, began a process of improving the distributed leadership within the school. In some schools, subject coordinators were trained, empowered to take actions and held responsible for the decisions they made. They were aware that they had become accountable for their subjects and pupil progress. In essence, this raised expectations within the whole school and made staff accountable as well as the headteacher.

Concerns remained, however, where progress in improving schools had been slow prior to the appointment of the new headteachers. In a few situations little progress had been made in raising standards of attainment or improving the quality of teaching and learning. Where school leadership had been unwilling or unable to cause improvements, authorities had not always been sufficiently proactive in taking decisive action. In other cases, authorities had not recognised that too many appointments of acting headteachers had a detrimental effect on schools and in their ability to meet the needs of pupils.

Advice needs to be given nationally and authorities should take action locally to ensure that appropriate action can always be taken to ensure effective leadership, and meet the needs of pupils.

2. LAs worked with schools to create action plans and Raising Attainment Plans (RAPs). Such staff confirmed the level of external support which was required for each school, and identified the time required of consultants and advisers. They also provided a welcome level of support for headteachers and the school. They ensured that the RAP/action plan contained appropriate targets, criteria for success and identified timescales which had to be met.

School Improvement Officers (SIOs)/School Improvement Partners (SIPs) conducted the audit of non-negotiables, gathered the evidence to support statements and focused staff on the requirement for actions to have a positive impact on school improvement. Authorities conducted reviews of progress with the RAP on a regular basis, and ensured that all staff were involved, including teaching assistants (TAs).

A feature of discussions between SIOs/SIPs and schools was the level of rigorous questioning and challenge which took place. Many headteachers were unaccustomed to the level of challenge experienced, and subsequently many schools' staffs were surprised by the overt level of accountability which was required of them. For some, the requirement to provide evidence to support statements they made was new. Nevertheless, while this level of rigour was new for many it was also welcomed and beneficial.

Authority staff need to ensure that they do challenge staff and that they conduct discussions in schools which are rigorous, and which require evidence to confirm statements of progress.

3. ISP consultants became involved in schools, brokering in literacy and numeracy consultants as required; some worked mainly with staff while some worked in classes with specific groups of pupils. Support was given with regard to class and school organisation to ensure that the most effective use was made of time. Schools were also given advice and helped implement new programmes, for example, for the teaching of phonics, reading and writing. Behaviour support advisers were also involved and available for staff in order to help them promote positive behaviour in their classes, and subsequently raise attainment. Where behaviour improved, the quality of learning improved. One authority appointed a TA as a teaching assistant consultant, and this was seen as having a very beneficial impact on the professional development of TAs. They believed they related better to someone who understood their concerns, and who was very effective in giving helpful advice both to them and the leadership within schools.

Authorities should consider the provision of consultants to ensure that they can build upon the strengths of all staff in order to meet the needs of pupils.

4. In at least four authorities specific groups were established to monitor and support the progress being made by schools. They were referred to, for example, as Review Groups, Support Groups or Core Action Groups. Whatever the designation their purpose was to hold the schools to account and ensure that they remained focused on the tasks in hand and did not become involved in unnecessary initiatives. In some authorities meetings to discuss progress with headteachers were held in authority offices, and this helped at times to emphasise the idea of accountability.
5. Authorities involved headteachers in meetings to celebrate success and share good practice. This had a positive effect on staff, and helped cascade effective practice among schools.
6. Performance management systems were established with targets based upon robust information. Authorities also ensured that schools put effective monitoring systems in place, which required evaluation of teaching and learning; scrutiny of pupils' work; discussion of teachers' plans; and the implementation of change following evaluation.
7. Authorities worked with governing bodies to develop their abilities to become critical friends of their schools. Training was provided, and headteachers reported that governing bodies had become more useful in holding them to account for pupils' progress.
8. Pupil progress meetings were held regularly as part of authorities' aim of making staff accountable for pupils' attainment and progress. This had the added effect of helping improve the culture of schools, raise staff expectations of pupils and themselves, and thereby raise attainment. The meetings helped in the process of developing a culture of achievement within schools. A number of authorities encouraged schools to identify more accurately specific groups of pupils requiring additional support. Some were identified as a result of EAL issues; some were underachieving; and many were capable of making greater and faster progress.

Authorities and schools should keep under review the deployment of all staff to help meet the needs of pupils more effectively.

9. Tracking systems were established in schools to ensure the effective recording and use of data. This required an improvement in the quality and accuracy of assessment in schools, and ensured that target setting for pupils was based on reliable data.

10. Linked with the points described in paragraphs 4 to 6 were actions taken to deal with issues of capability in teaching and inconsistencies in the overall quality of teaching. Targets were set for schools to ensure that specific percentages of lessons evaluated were at the very least satisfactory, or, over time, either good or better. Where necessary headteachers and authority staff involved Human Resources departments to give advice. Actions were taken with regard to the deployment of all staff to ensure that the most appropriate people were in the correct place, suited to their strengths, in order to meet the needs of pupils more effectively.
11. Decisions were made to target CPD on issues identified within school improvement plans. Although some individual members of staff were empowered to become involved in issues relating to their own personal professional development, most CPD was targeted at helping schools improve. There was also an expectation CPD would effect change, and that those involved would improve their practice.

Schools should ensure that all staff are aware that the purpose of CPD is to effect change and improve provision.

Section 2: Analysis of practice in schools

Analysis of effective action taken by schools to meet the needs of pupils showed that the following areas were key:

The overall quality of Leadership for Learning

- The effectiveness of individual headteachers
- The effectiveness of distributed leadership

The quality of learning and teaching

- The quality of pupils' learning
- The consistency of teaching overall
- The quality and use of assessment

Management systems

- The use of effective tracking systems
- The effectiveness of performance management
- The deployment of staff
- The professional development of staff (CPD)
- The ISP

The involvement of parents and governing bodies

It is important to emphasise that none of the above key areas exists independently. All are part of a coherent system, necessary for the creation and maintenance of an effective school which meets the needs of its pupils. Evidence from the case studies showed that schools which addressed all of the above areas in a coherent fashion made improvements and some were significant.

The following identifies some of the important steps taken by some or all of the schools.

1. The overall quality of Leadership for Learning

The effectiveness of individual headteachers

The title of the section by itself identified the critical area for development in some schools. Where leadership had not focused on learning but, for example, on dealing with social issues, pupils' learning had been affected.

In taking up post one headteacher had been quite clear with all staff that the culture of the school had to change. No longer, he maintained, would pupils be held responsible for their lack of progress. Such a speedy response to staff might not always be appropriate, but what all successful headteachers had done was set out their vision for the school.

Where a school culture or ethos has to change headteachers need to be clear in their own vision and communicate that directly to all staff.

The effectiveness of distributed leadership

While the previous section emphasised the importance of the individual headteacher, it was clear from the evidence of the case studies that successful headteachers had emphasised the importance of distributed leadership and ensured its effective development. Schools which rely solely on the individual headteacher fail to develop a sustainable capacity for improvement, and are at risk when that headteacher leaves.

In the schools which made improvements in this area there had been a deliberate policy of developing the professionalism and skills of middle managers. A number of headteachers commented on their desire to nurture staff, develop effective teamworking and build on everyone's strengths. Specific examples of what was done included:

- giving subject managers responsibility, encouraging them to take the initiative, setting priorities and holding them accountable for the impact of their actions;
- reorganising the leadership of the school into a faculty structure which also increased staff accountability, gave staff responsibility and increased the capacity for leadership within the schools;
- the appointment of staff such as Early Years managers, lifestyle and inclusion managers, home/school workers, personalised learning tutors and learning mentors. Whatever decision is made to appoint such staff, what is essential is that their effectiveness is evaluated on a regular basis. There can be no guarantee that the creation of any individual post will effect improvements.
- The appointment of a business manager in one of the schools. The appointment was made at the level and salary of assistant headteacher (AHT). The impact of the appointment was that the headteacher and other assistant headteachers were able to concentrate on pupils' learning as they were freed from dealing with such matters as budgets, purchasing, buildings, maintenance and human resources. The appointee was accorded the full status of an AHT, attended all senior management meetings and, like other AHTs, was from time to time left in charge of the school.

In taking such actions the effect was to raise expectations of staff, build their confidence, develop their knowledge and skills and create leadership teams which focused on meeting pupils' needs.

All schools should review the overall structure of leadership and determine whether or not they have developed a capacity for leadership which is effective, and which will sustain the school through change.

2. The quality of learning and teaching

The quality of pupils' learning

Schools involved all made specific efforts to improve pupils' engagement with their learning and generate an overall desire for learning. All schools had correctly focused on improving pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy. A number, however, had also taken the decision that attainment in these areas would be enhanced through providing an overall curriculum which motivated pupils, existed to ensure the overall development of pupils, and provided purposes for the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.

Fundamental principles which underpinned some schools' attitudes to pupils' learning were that pupils should be:

- engaged with their learning;

- active and not simply responsive;
- involved in tasks which caused them to improve;
- required to think for themselves;
- encouraged to talk about their learning.

In order to achieve the above some schools reorganised the school day to ensure that pupils had a width of curricular experiences which included creativity, and participation in a wide range of activities such as sports, chess clubs, music groups. Such schools were determined that the curriculum should not become a basic diet of literacy and numeracy tasks, but that account should be taken of Excellence and Enjoyment (*Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years* Ref: DfES 0518-2004 G).

Interestingly, one school had developed 'Learning journals' whereby teachers evaluated the quality of learning which had taken place on a weekly basis and adjusted their teaching programmes accordingly. In another, staff had implemented weekly 'Learning champion' sessions in Key Stage 2, where pupils in tutor groups of six were given quality time to reflect on their learning and pursue their targets. Both of these initiatives were successful in their own settings and what they also did, in addition to enhancing learning, was to help make connections with the importance of the quality of teaching.

Pupils' learning was influenced by more than the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Many schools implemented a number of strategies to ensure a greater involvement of pupils. These included:

- new behaviour policies and strategies. These meant, at times: changes in lunchtime procedures; the establishment of lunchtime as a social experience; the introduction of new play activities; and the creation of lunchtime clubs;
- the promotion of positive behaviour among pupils, and efforts made to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence;
- the introduction of care guidance and support systems;
- the development of 'buddy' systems;
- placing greater importance on Pupil Councils, and listening and responding to the opinions of pupils;
- using Special Educational Needs Coordinators to liaise with a variety of agencies to help support pupils and their families;
- establishing breakfast clubs as an important element in improving the lifestyle of some pupils and thus enhancing their learning.

All schools require evaluation of the quality of learning in every class and across the school as a whole.

The consistency of teaching overall

All schools recognised that one of the essential elements necessary for improvement in pupils' learning was improvement in the quality of teaching. It was necessary in almost every school to address consistency in teaching and, where improvements had been made in pupil progress, to detail any inconsistencies that had been addressed.

In addressing the whole issue schools adopted a wide range of strategies, examples of which are detailed here.

- Headteachers made efforts to build upon the strengths of staff. Where teaching was good, they helped staff improve it further. They were not content with evaluations of teaching as good. Overall, they 'raised the bar' as far as the quality of teaching was concerned.
- Some developed new approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. They did not accept the status quo if it was not being successful. At times headteachers faced difficult decisions in making such changes, but made them in the knowledge of some opposition.
- Classroom organisation was improved, and changes made to timetabling. In one school, where

setting had been established by a previous headteacher, the process was abandoned after it was realised that due to the nature of the school accommodation it proved wasteful of time. This example demonstrates that, whatever organisation is implemented, it must be evaluated to determine whether or not it is effective in meeting pupils' needs.

- Staff with responsibilities set higher expectations in everything, not just in attainment statistics. For example, they insisted that standards of presentation of pupils' work and handwriting were high. They would not accept poorly presented work if pupils were capable of better. They expected staff to present their plans on the dates stated and did not accept lateness. This culture of high expectation eventually permeated schools, and increased staff and pupils' pride in their work.
- Where necessary, issues of capability in teaching were addressed. Headteachers were not content to continue to support and make suggestions where no improvements were forthcoming. In this they sought help from education authority staff and from departments for human resources. Their working principle was that the needs of the pupils were paramount, and that action had to be taken where teaching was unsatisfactory.

It is essential that headteachers focus on the overall quality of teaching and take action to ensure that teaching in the school is at least good in every class. Where teaching is good, efforts should be made to make it very good.

The quality and use of assessment

The use of and quality of assessment was critical in every school in meeting the needs of pupils. While the recording of accurate assessment information was vital, what was more important was how well it was used to meet the needs of pupils. Effective use of assessment:

- raised expectations of pupils' progress;
- increased pupils', parents' and staff's aspirations;
- improved outcomes for pupils;
- increased accountability;
- improved teaching programmes;
- helped improve attainment;
- helped meet pupils' needs.

This section links closely to what follows on the use of tracking systems and performance management. The following, however, provides examples of what schools developed in order to improve their effectiveness in ensuring pupils' progress.

- Implementation of the processes contained within Assessment For Learning were vital in amending teaching strategies, and in helping pupils' identify where and how they could improve.
- Moderation of teachers' assessments ensured that there was a commonality of view with regard to standards.
- Continuous assessment, with appropriate recording, ensured that pupils' strengths and areas for improvement were speedily identified and action taken.
- In some schools termly assessment weeks were organised to monitor progress systematically.
- One school had created intervention logs to ensure the systematic meeting of pupils' needs. Another had brought some intervention strategies to an end as they were discovered to be ineffective. Another school was clear that intervention should be according to need, and not according to year group.
- In schools with a very high proportion of pupils with EAL, specific measures were taken to determine the baseline for such pupils. Thereafter, steps were taken to organise appropriate programmes of work and deploy staff.

Whatever assessment and intervention strategies are introduced, their effectiveness should be evaluated on a regular basis and appropriate action taken.

3. Management systems

The use of effective tracking systems

Having established effective assessment, schools visited had created tracking systems which were invaluable in allowing all staff to monitor pupils' progress and take actions to meet their needs. As was stated in the previous section, however, too much time and energy was used by individual schools in creating their own systems – irrespective of how good they were.

Effective tracking systems which were implemented by schools had all or some of the following features.

- They were ICT based. Some schools required teachers to input data on a continuous basis, another issued staff with laptops and flashdrives and asked teachers to update the data. Two schools used Fischer Family Trust data, which they found helpful as far as monitoring progress was concerned. Whatever system was used it provided access to information by all staff, and supported systems of performance management. Actions became evidence based, and more reliable.
- They were working systems and not simply recording procedures. The focus was on the use of information, and not on the information itself.
- They supported staff discussion and meetings to discuss pupils' progress. With all staff having access to the same information all were aware of the strengths of the school and where action was required.
- They recorded attendance, and took action on the first day of non-attendance. This was a particularly big issue in some areas with a large ethnic community.
- They recorded lateness. Analysis of punctuality in one school showed that a few pupils missed the teaching input in every mathematics lesson. Having identified the problem the school then took the appropriate action with parents.
- Their use in the schools concerned proved to be a positive tool for staff who were able to see the success of their efforts in raising pupils' attainment.
- They helped raise expectations further than staff thought possible. Through assessment and evaluation of initiatives implemented, staff saw the results of their actions. When they had met their original targets, they were then prepared to set others which were more demanding.

The effectiveness of performance management

All of the issues raised under the headings of leadership, learning and teaching, and management were addressed in some form or other through schools' systems of performance management. While the details of some systems varied they all had common features which were crucial in school improvement:

- they were founded on reliable data;
- they were linked to accurate assessment, tracking systems, target setting and the priorities in the ISP;
- they included the moderation of assessment;
- they involved leaders in the school discussing teachers' plans;
- they included the sampling of pupils' work;
- they included the monitoring of learning and teaching, including lesson observations. In one school the criterion for classroom monitoring was *'Are pupils making sufficient progress?'*, and before the observation teachers were required to identify how they had used assessment to improve pupils' learning. In most schools the focus for monitoring was a priority in the ISP;
- monitoring was not always done by the headteachers alone. Where there was effective distributed leadership, subject leaders, for example, were involved in the monitoring process;

- they involved all staff in individual and group meetings to discuss pupils' progress and targets. In at least one school the headteacher held termly individual staff interviews to discuss pupils' progress;
- in a small number of schools there were specific discussions with pupils regarding their learning. More than one headteacher was very clear in insisting that pupils had voices and they should be respected.

One important feature in a number of schools which is worthy of specific comment was the practice of some headteachers of 'walking the job'. Some were in every class daily, while one ensured that she visited every class twice per day. All headteachers involved in this practice were convinced of the benefits to pupils, staff and themselves.

Headteachers should take on board some or all of the key features of performance management listed in this section.

The deployment of staff

Linked to what has been stated earlier about improving the quality of learning and teaching was the need to have effective systems for the deployment of staff. Mention was made earlier of the efforts of schools to develop effective teamwork and that cannot be over emphasised. However, more had to be done in some schools than just the development of teamwork, and that is where effective action was taken by some headteachers. Features of positive action taken included the following elements.

- Close attention being paid to making the correct staff appointments. Many headteachers commented that no appointment was better than the wrong appointment.
- The deployment and use of all staff according to need and their strengths. In some schools headteachers moved teachers and TAs from stages they had been in for some time in order to meet the needs of pupils more effectively. In one school a newly appointed headteacher made staff changes within two weeks of being appointed, and this was shown to have had a positive impact on pupils' learning. This was a difficult decision to make but what happened demonstrated the positive effects of clear decision making.
- TAs moving with their class at transition points for one term before returning to the stage at which they normally work. This ensured continuity of provision for pupils, and helped ensure pupils' needs continued to be met. Such a decision is not always welcomed but is in the interests of pupils.
- The creation of, for example, literacy, numeracy, science and creativity specialists in one school which helped focus staff on issues other than basic skills, and raised expectations across the curriculum.

Headteachers need to deploy staff effectively to meet the needs of their pupils and ensure they make appropriate progress.

The continuing professional development of staff (CPD)

In the schools visited close attention had been paid to the professional development of all staff. In the best practice, support staff were well included in arrangements made. Features of practice included:

- professional development as an integral part of school improvement and aligned to the RAP;
- an expectation that participation in CPD led to improvements in classroom practice. In some schools monitoring of change formed part of the class monitoring process;
- the use in one authority of a TA consultant. The consultant, who was a TA, had a very positive impact on the professional development of TAs in schools who felt they related very well to her;
- the development of TAs as learning mentors in one school. This focused their role on learning, and was firmly linked to meeting the needs of pupils;
- very specific training for TAs in schools with a high proportion of pupils with EAL;
- coaching and mentoring of staff which was a feature in many schools. This particular initiative had a significant impact on individual performance.

Whatever was implemented from such a range of provision, the fundamental principle which was apparent in most schools was that CPD for staff had to make a difference for pupils.

Schools need to emphasise that participation in CPD by staff should lead to improvements in provision for pupils. Headteachers should take appropriate steps to monitor the impact of CPD.

The ISP

ISP tools and processes had become so embedded in the schools concerned that the headteachers regarded it as part of the normal working of the school, and did not focus on its component parts. What was also apparent was that schools were so comfortable with the processes of ISP that they had created their own names for actions which mirrored those recommended. Overall, schools had implemented the following essential elements:

- all were involved in school self-evaluation and the school improvement cycle;
- there was a clear focus on improving teaching and learning;
- all had clear action plans for improvement; some defined these as a RAP, others did not although they had the equivalent. All had school improvement plans;
- schools had developed effective tracking systems and, more importantly, had used these effectively to meet pupils' needs;
- pupil progress meetings were held regularly, either with groups of staff or with individuals or with both;
- CPD was well organised and focused on school improvement.

No school defined these explicitly as 'non-negotiables', yet all had put these processes in place. It is a strength of the programme, which was confirmed by some headteachers, that the formal processes of ISP had become embedded. More than one headteacher commented that all schools should be implementing the processes of ISP.

Schools should continue to implement the processes of ISP as the basic tools of the school improvement process.

It was also apparent that the processes outlined above were not wholly successful in the schools concerned without the overt support and intervention of the authority. Such cooperation took many forms but, in the main, included:

- regular rigorous meetings with the SIP/School Improvement Adviser which focused on school improvement and required action at school and authority level. Such meetings were based on evidence;
- clear, unequivocal advice from authority staff. While this was essential, the need to work in cooperation with schools and 'not rock the boat' at times led to slow progress;
- the use of peer headteacher mentors which many newly appointed headteachers found invaluable.

Where there was full cooperation between the authority and schools then appropriate progress was made. Where this did not happen progress was much more limited.

Authorities need to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that schools meet the needs of their pupils.

4. The involvement of parents and governing bodies

Parents

Many schools had made significant efforts to involve parents in their children's learning. They were correctly of the view that parental involvement did support children's learning, and could make a noticeable difference to pupils' attitudes. The impact of such involvement in some schools was that parents' aspirations for and expectations of their children were raised. Efforts made to involve parents included:

- the establishment of information evenings, and engagement with parents in the curriculum;
- involvement of parents in establishing the cultural norms of the school;
- involvement of parents in areas of high ethnic populations in literacy and numeracy classes to help them help their children with, for example, nursery rhymes and mathematical games;
- immediate telephone contact with parents when issues arose;
- the high visibility of promoted staff in the play area when parents were arriving and leaving to encourage informal discussion;
- information being given to parents about the links between punctuality, attendance and attainment;
- in one school the appointment of a Parent Support Adviser;
- the use of locally-based school support staff in encouraging other parents;
- the introduction of breakfast and coffee mornings.

Schools need to make strenuous efforts to involve parents with their children's learning.

Governing bodies

Many schools had made new efforts to involve governors more in the life of the schools. Successful initiatives included:

- providing training for governors in what should be expected of schools as far as attainment and curriculum were concerned;
- the development of governors' skills in tracking and monitoring pupils' progress;
- establishing termly meetings of governors to review progress with the SIP;
- regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress;
- governors becoming responsible for areas of the self-evaluation framework.

Governing bodies should be fully involved in school improvements and, in particular, should play a prominent role in monitoring pupils' progress.

Section 3: Sustainability

While improvements were made in all of the schools concerned, steps were required to be taken to ensure that the gains made were sustained and improved upon. The target for all of the authorities and schools was long-term improvement. To ensure that was the case authorities and schools developed a range of strategies to maintain and build upon the improvements made. For many there was a change in focus from the authority taking the lead to the school.

Features of actions taken included:

Authorities

- ISP processes were to remain in place, with authorities continuing to challenge and support schools.
- The building of leadership capacity in schools.
- The extension of CPD in key areas such as coaching.
- The development of the capacity of governors, parents and other agencies.

While there was to be a gradual lessening of direct support as part of exit strategies, authority staff were keen to maintain close links with the schools involved.

Schools

- Almost a third of schools referred to the importance of succession planning. Potential leaders had to be identified and nurtured so that schools did not become less effective when individual headteachers moved. All teachers were to be made more aware of their individual leadership roles.
- More care was to be taken in staff selection.
- Almost all were determined to build on their new effective practice and ensure it was consolidated. ISP processes were to be continued.
- A number referred to the need to improve the quality of the overall curriculum.
- One school had clear plans to improve assessment procedures further by extending internal teacher assessment, and trying to moderate assessment with neighbouring schools. Another had plans to liaise more closely with a local children's centre to try to improve prior attainment. A third focused on improving the attainment of boys.
- CPD was to be developed further, including the continuing of links with peer headteachers.

Authorities and schools had to ensure that gains made were sustained and built upon. In so doing they had to develop strategies to plan for long-term improvement.

Section 4: Conclusions

Summary of recommendations

Advice should be given nationally and authorities should take action locally to:

- establish clear strategies to strengthen leadership and take action early where this is identified as ineffective;
- secure consistent and effective leadership quickly for the long-term;
- support leadership through processes of amalgamation in order to maintain the focus on pupil progress;
- strengthen satisfactory leadership to make it good.

LAs and schools should keep under review the effectiveness of school systems and structures so that:

- the structure of leadership in school supports the development of a capacity for leadership and can sustain the school through change;
- staff deployment is designed to meet the needs of pupils.

LAs should be clear and consistent about the essential elements, identified in ISP, that need to be in place to drive school improvement. Schools should be explicit about their understanding and use of these elements to lead to improvement, namely:

- the school improvement cycle of analysis, action, evaluation and review;
- a single plan to raise attainment;
- tracking pupil progress;
- pupil progress meetings;
- an explicit focus on key aspects of learning and teaching;
- systematic whole-school CPD.

The deployment of LA staff in schools should meet the needs of teachers and pupils. Discussions in school need to be rigorous and require evidence to confirm statements of progress.

The consistent use of a simple, effective tracking system at whole-school and classroom level should be promoted by LAs and schools and used to monitor and evaluate the impact of actions on pupil progress.

Headteachers should have in place systems for regular monitoring and evaluation of the impact of:

- the quality of learning and teaching in every class and across the school as a whole;
- CPD – emphasising that participation in CPD should lead to improvements in pupil learning;
- any assessment and intervention strategies that are introduced.

LAs and the National Strategies should support schools in identifying how to move teaching from satisfactory to good. Headteachers should focus on the overall quality of teaching and take action to ensure that teaching in the school is at least good in every class. Headteachers should take on board some or all of the key features of performance management listed in this report.

Support needs to be provided, nationally and locally, to enable governing bodies to be fully involved in school improvement. Governing bodies should be fully involved in school improvements and, in particular, should play a prominent role in monitoring pupils' progress.

Schools, LAs and National Strategies should make strenuous efforts to involve parents with their children's learning.

Appendix 1

LA	School
Salford	St Andrew's Primary School (PS) St Thomas Canterbury RC PS Barton Moss PS
Liverpool	Middlefield PS
North Yorkshire	Colburn PS
Rotherham	Thornhill PS
Bradford	Atlas Community PS Bradford Moor Community PS Lapage Primary and Nursery School
South Tyneside	All Saints PS
Nottinghamshire	Farmilo Primary and Nursery School
Luton	Leagrave
Suffolk	The Grange Community PS
Lincolnshire	White Wood Lane Junior School
Peterborough	The Beeches PS
Somerset	Holway Park Community School
Lambeth	Christ Church PS
Buckinghamshire	Oak Green PS
Bexley	Slade Green Junior School
Southampton	Sinclair PS

Appendix 2

List of case studies

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Salford

1. School(s) context and profile

Barton Moss Primary School

Number on roll (NOR): 184. Age range: three to 11.

The school serves an area of high social deprivation and prior attainment is well below average. Approximately 50% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average (although this varies due to high mobility). The vast majority (93%) of pupils are white British and currently 7% of children speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) and these numbers have shown a recent increase. Almost 27% of pupils have Special Educational Needs (SEN), including learning difficulties, speech or communication problems or social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. This is slightly higher than the national average. The school last had an Ofsted inspection in 2004.

Results Key Stage 2 L4+

2005: English 52%; mathematics 43%

2006: English 62%; mathematics 62%

2007: English 72%; mathematics 80%

St. Andrew's Primary School, Eccles

NOR: 183. Age range: three to 11.

Prior attainment on entry is well below average and there is high pupil mobility. 33% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having SEN is well above the national average (36%). There is an above average proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities or who have EAL (48%, subsequently rising to 68%) of pupils arriving at Key Stage 2 without English.

Last Ofsted inspected November 2007 and judged good with some outstanding features.

Results Key Stage 2 L4+

2005: English 59%; mathematics 55%

2006: English 46%; mathematics 43%

2007: English 78%; mathematics 89%

St Thomas of Canterbury R.C. Primary School

NOR: 207. Age range: three to 11.

The school is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school in an area of mixed housing in the inner city area of Salford. Prior attainment is well below average. Just over half of the pupils (57%) are from minority ethnic backgrounds, including African, Polish and Czech and many are not fluent English speakers. Many pupils leave and start the school at different points in their primary education. Numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average (63%). Just over a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (25%).

The school has been in Special Measures since July 2006. Issues are to:

- raise standards and achievement throughout the school especially for pupils in Key Stage 2;
- improve the quality of teaching and raise expectations of what pupils can achieve;
- improve monitoring and evaluation and the use of assessment data to accelerate pupils' progress.

Results Key Stage 2 L4+

2005: English 56%; mathematics 50%

2. Barriers to improvement

Barton Moss

- Some pockets of unsatisfactory teaching.
- Lack of effective tracking systems.
- Low expectations of some teaching staff.
- Teacher subject knowledge.

St. Andrew's, Eccles

- A percentage of unsatisfactory teaching particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Lack of effective tracking systems.
- Low expectations of some teaching staff.
- An underdeveloped Senior Management Team (SMT).
- Pupil behaviour.

St Thomas of Canterbury

- The school was originally part of the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), however it did not function well due to weak leadership and management. Following the inspection, and special measures category, the decision was taken to bring the school out of ISP. This means there is no Raising Attainment Plan (RAP).
- A legacy of weak leadership and management.
- Unsatisfactory teaching in the past.
- Lack of effective pupil tracking systems.
- Low expectations among staff and pupils.
- Pupil behaviour.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

Barton Moss

- The SMT at the time was focused on management rather than on leadership for learning.
- Little or no Continuing Professional Development (CPD) available for staff.
- Ineffective tracking and little analysis of data.
- No target setting.
- A budget deficit which resulted in poor resourcing.
- No coherent monitoring of learning and teaching.
- Low attainment in literacy and numeracy.

St Andrew's, Eccles

- Poor attitudes and low expectations of staff.
- Poor quality teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- No consistent behaviour policy or procedures.
- Low attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- Poor quality learning environment.
- Inadequate communication with parents.
- A large budget deficit which impacted upon teaching and learning.

St Thomas of Canterbury

On appointment, the new headteacher was clear that the school had to improve. To achieve this he set out to:

- develop a coherent vision for the school which was adopted by all stakeholders;
- raise expectations of parents, pupils and staff;
- improve the overall quality of teaching and learning;
- improve the learning environment;
- improve behaviour;
- involve parents more in their children's learning;
- build upon the strengths of staff and recruit additional staff.

What was done?

Barton Moss

- With the headteacher appointment and a new SMT including core subject coordinators, a new leadership style developed. The assistant headteachers attended a middle management course.
- The headteacher invited the local authority (LA) to conduct a full inspection of the school. This, coupled with an Ofsted inspection, gave a clear starting point for school improvement.
- The ISP programme was introduced and despite some initial staff reluctance all were involved.
- There was an initial focus on changing the culture of the school.
- The RAP was used to prioritise and focus on achievable targets and actions. SMART targets were agreed, criteria for success confirmed, and subject leaders were made responsible and accountable for progress in their areas.

- Improvements in literacy and numeracy were seen as priorities, with an initial focus on reading, and a new reading programme is being introduced.
- Pupil tracking was introduced. Staff were involved in regular discussions of pupil progress, and target setting. Discussions raised expectations and included targets in Individual Education Plans for pupils with SEN.
- Performance Management System was made more rigorous.
- Strategic planning of staff deployment.
- CPD programme, focused on meeting priorities in the RAP/school development plan. Teaching assistants (TAs) included; all trained to TA3 level.
- Improvement in the quality of teaching and the learning environment. Introduction of Assessment is For Learning (AiFL) procedures and principles, better planning and clear guidance on what constituted a purposeful learning environment.
- New procedures for monitoring including observation, discussion of plans, scrutiny of pupils' work, interviews with pupils, and professional development meetings.
- Swift action taken to check on absence.

St Andrew's, Eccles

- Initial focus on improving behaviour and an agreed behaviour policy for promoting positive behaviour introduced. Celebration of success of 'Golden Children'. Supported by CPD.
- A focus on improving teaching and learning. CPD on, for example, guided reading, speaking and listening and writing for all staff. New teaching programmes introduced in speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- Weaknesses in teaching tackled: consultants supported teachers in classes; coaching and mentoring put in place; peer observation begun and appropriate action taken where necessary.
- Learning environments improved to ensure they were language rich.
- Curricular targets set.
- A clear culture of accountability introduced which included regular pupil progress meetings and individual discussions with teachers.
- An improved tracking system introduced and information used to affect teaching strategies.
- Discussion and scrutiny of desktop assessments.
- Very effective use made of the RAP to identify priorities: identify action and agree success criteria. This became a working document which increased accountability and involved all staff.
- Monitoring system introduced which included staff discussions; learning walks; discussions with pupils on issues in the RAP; sampling pupils' work and examining the quality of marking; formal class observations; and frequent visits to classes by the headteacher who 'walked the job' regularly.
- An increased number of meetings held with parents, targets and age-related expectations were shared with them and some family literacy and numeracy courses were held for parents to help them help their children.
- Governors were made more aware of the RAP and progress being made.
- Strengthening of subject coordinators' role.

St Thomas of Canterbury

- Initially staff implemented a booster programme over 10 days from February to May, which included the introduction of a programme of revision.
- An improved tracking system was introduced particularly in calculation, reading comprehension, writing and number for Year 6. Data collected was used to inform planning.
- Pupil targets set which raised expectations of pupils for their own learning.
- Parents were involved more, they were given advice on how to help with their children's learning.
- Funding was used to employ a part-time teacher for a short term to support a small group of pupils.
- A system of quality assurance was introduced which included, for example, classroom observation, scrutiny of pupil's work, target setting and staff discussion.
- AiFL was introduced, initially with regard to writing.
- A teaching programme was introduced in writing, and subsequently introduced in reading.
- Emphasis was placed on improving pupils' skills in number.
- There was a focus on ensuring high quality in all lessons.
- An EAL coordinator was appointed, and new programmes were introduced to support the large number of pupils with EAL. Six TAs were involved in CPD to help them develop their skills with such pupils. Baselines were established for all such pupils, and the impact of initiatives measured.
- Greater celebration of success: awards for good behaviour and a house system introduced.
- Sensitive consultant support for individual staff raised confidence and morale.
- Teachers and TAs were trained in the use of the Support for Ethnic Minority (SEMA) materials.

All three schools had training with SEMA materials to support EAL learners. All schools were supported in dealing with issues related to unsatisfactory teaching. Headteacher and subject leaders were supported when issues of capability arose.

Monitoring and evaluation

Barton Moss

Use made of:

- the success criteria in the RAP and termly monitoring;
- National Curriculum tests;
- pupil progress meetings;
- monitoring procedures;
- the review of progress with the School Improvement Officer (SIO);
- SEN pupil reviews and value added;
- a review of attendance figures;
- the scrutiny of progress by governors.

St Andrew's, Eccles

- The monitoring and performance management system used to ensure new procedures and decisions implemented and pupils made appropriate progress.
- Termly monitoring of the RAP, using the success criteria.

- Examination of the number of children working at agreed age-related expectations.
- Optional National Curriculum tests used in a system of formal and informal assessments.
- A constant review of progress and the effectiveness of intervention programmes.
- Regular pupil progress meetings.

St Thomas of Canterbury

- Targets were set and agreed with governors and the education authority. These included targets for the quality of teaching, targets for all years, targets to ensure Key Stage 1 became closer to national averages and a determination to ensure the school reached floor targets.
- A governor's monitoring sub-committee was established and was used to hold the headteacher to account every three weeks, and focus solely on school improvement. The school is also supported and challenged by the Diocese.
- An ongoing series of pupil progress meetings.
- A strong system of quality assurance.

What has been the overall impact?

Barton Moss

- More effective leadership for learning.
- Higher pupil and staff expectations.
- Greater consistency in teaching, and better classroom organisation.
- More confident staff.
- Good use of assessment data.
- An improved school ethos.
- Increased attainment and value added.
- Greater accountability of all stakeholders.
- An improved learning environment, and better behaviour overall.
- A more coherent curriculum.
- A clearer SEN structure and early recognition of need.

'The child is now at the centre of what we do.'

'Being in ISP meant that we all worked together.'

'This was not about the authority telling us what to do. It was about us driving improvements forward and controlling them – with the support of the authority.'

'Working together with the authority has increased trust, improved teaching programmes and the quality of teaching and learning. It has given an emphasis for change. The external 'critical friend' has been very helpful.'

St Andrew's, Eccles

- Improved ethos and relationships with children. An Ofsted inspection in November 2007 rated 'care, guidance and support' as outstanding.
- Children now aware of their learning and what they have to do to improve. They have become enthusiastic learners, and have developed a greater sense of responsibility. Children now being congratulated on their behaviour while on school trips.
- Parents now aware of the importance of their role, and the need for partnership with the school.
- Teachers more aware of the benefits of working with parents.
- Higher expectations from parents, pupils and staff.
- In November 2007, Ofsted rated 100% of teaching as good or outstanding.
- Much more teamwork and a greater sense of accountability within the school.
- Monitoring now much more effective.
- The school now becoming more creative in the curriculum and introducing, for example, an international curriculum to introduce global citizenship and develop pupils' skills.
- Subject coordinators have been challenged but have risen to the challenge.

'The programme has been really good and very helpful. It helped me, with the school staff in improving the school... training and support from the authority has been excellent.'

St Thomas of Canterbury

- Improved attainment overall.
- Improved teaching programmes which were impacting on pupil progress and attainment.
- Much improved attainment of pupils with EAL.
- An improvement in the quality of teaching: 100% of lessons were satisfactory, 30% were good and 10% were outstanding at the Ofsted inspection in October 2007.
- An improved culture for learning.
- Higher expectations among staff, parents and pupils.
- A greater number of parents attending assemblies.
- As a consequence of improved teaching and learning, pupil behaviour improved.

'We welcome the support and challenge from the authority. We are involved with good quality people who, at times, give us uncomfortable messages in a very supportive manner. We are now working together to improve the school.'

4. Local authority support and challenge

With all three schools the authority implemented its strategy for school improvement which has proved to be effective. What follows, therefore, describes what happened with all schools involved. Thereafter, specific points will be made regarding action taken in the specific schools described above.

- The authority Schools Causing Concern group reviews all schools, taking into account those in special measures, those with notices to improve and concerns identified locally. Schools causing concern are identified, and headteachers and governors notified.
- The School Improvement Officer (SIO), with the school, creates an Action Plan, determining the support required and time for consultants. The Plan contains three key elements:
 - What needs to be done?
 - What is the capacity of the school to deal with the actions?
 - What will be the milestones in the plan?
- An audit of non-negotiables is conducted, which includes rigorous questioning by authority staff. Evidence is required to substantiate answers, and there is a clear focus on impact. This brings forward areas for the RAP, which adds to issues raised by the school itself.
- The RAP begins with a detailed analysis of attainment which is shared with all staff. Foundation Stage teachers are included. Schools identify specific targets, such as to improve the quality of learning and teaching in Years 3 and 4, in a shared document. They also identify criteria for success, timescales and which staff will be responsible for which actions.
- Every two weeks the headteacher discusses progress with the RAP with staff. All staff are involved, including TAs. This has the effect of focusing minds and raising expectations. RAP is displayed prominently and objectives highlighted when achieved.
- An interesting innovation is the involvement of a TA consultant with school-based TAs. This consultant is skilled in determining whether the school has highlighted the correct pupils for intervention and in tracking their improvement over time. This has the effect of focusing on TA support for children, and an increase in their knowledge and professional development. As part of a work force strategy headteachers are encouraged to make decisions on the basis of what is best for children's learning and are dissuaded from allocating staff in order to give equal shares to everyone.
- Pupil progress meetings are held regularly: they are focused on teacher assessment, involve all staff, and are a key feature of the accountability strategy. Staff are given questions which must be answered in advance, and many schools prepare for these meetings by holding their own meetings in advance of the authority-led meeting. While the staff are clearly accountable for children's progress, the meetings develop a sharing culture, involve all staff and develop the school's capacity for improvement.
- Professional Development Meetings are tailored to school needs with CPD monies being targeted to school improvement.
- Headteachers are called in termly to the education office to discuss progress with targets set using a colour-coded traffic system. They are held to account, and discuss all reports on progress made.
- Headteachers and subject leaders of ISP schools meet regularly to share good practice.
- The authority also works with governing bodies to help governors become critical friends of schools.
- Where there have been issues of capability both with teaching staff and senior leaders these have been rigorously pursued and resolved over a short space of time to minimise negative impact on learners.

All of the above steps are taken with every school in the ISP programme and evaluation has shown that those schools improve when the strategy is implemented and schools join with the authority in developments.

What was done?

In addition to all of the above the authority was involved with the three schools concerned in the following ways:

Barton Moss

- A new headteacher was put in place with a focus on improvement, and some changes were made in staff.
- Considerable work was done to empower coordinators, and increase their knowledge and skills.
- A 'learning walk' was undertaken in every classroom.
- The LA established a tracking system.
- The headteacher was heavily supported and given structures and systems to use.
- Rigour was constant in all of the work undertaken.

St Andrew's, Eccles

- Support was given to the headteacher with regard to making strong management decisions.
- Considerable work was done with coordinators to raise their expectations; which they subsequently did with staff.
- There was a focus on progress for children with EAL.
- Decisions were made on which children to be targeted and for what reasons.

St Thomas of Canterbury

- Originally little engagement by the school. Subsequently, an experienced headteacher went in for a term and a project manager became involved, heavily supported by consultants who worked in classes.
- A new headteacher was appointed, and there was a continued focus from consultants on support in classes.
- There was some teacher movement which helped improve the overall quality of teaching, and focused work was done with TAs.

What has been the overall impact?

Overall the authority's systems have been effective in both supporting and challenging schools. Decision-making within the schools is now evidence-based in the schools concerned.

Barton Moss

Improvement in the quality of leadership.

Improved teaching and learning.

Raised expectations of staff.

Higher attainment.

Subject knowledge improving.

St Andrew's, Eccles

- A stronger leadership team which included subject coordinators.
- Improved learning and teaching.
- Higher attainment.
- Raised expectations.
- Improved behaviour.

St Thomas of Canterbury

- Improvement in the quality of leadership.
- Raised attainment.
- An improvement in learning and teaching.
- Raised expectations.
- An improvement in subject leadership.
- Improved behaviour.

'The support and challenge role is now well-honed within the authority and exists within a system where there is a good relationship between the schools and the authority.'

'...the original ISP schools are now carrying on the process developed while they were in the programme.'

'The high level of scrutiny from the authority has helped build a capacity for improvement within schools.'

'We have succeeded in becoming the critical friend of the schools involved.'

'Our teams and our consultants have credibility.'

What mechanisms are there in place to ensure improvements are sustained?

What will the school do?

Barton Moss

- Maintain and embed improvements made.
- Increase self-valuation by staff.
- Take action to ensure impact of CPD.
- Increase self-assessment.
- Develop a programme for the teaching of writing and increase expectations.
- Improve pupils' skills and speed of response in mental mathematics.
- Ensure that teaching is good for 100% of lessons.
- Improve the learning and teaching for science.

St Andrew's, Eccles

- Continue with the improvements initiated, ensure they are embedded and aim to be outstanding in everything.
- Expand the work with parents and establish a Parent Council.
- Do more with pupils who arrive with no English.
- Improve the attainment of boys.
- Develop the science programme and the international curriculum.
- Improve the play areas.

St Thomas of Canterbury

- The school now has a detailed SIP in place. It is a shared document with action plans defined. A Performance Management Cycle is linked to the SIP as is all CPD. Overall this is seen as a coherent process for improvement.
- Middle management is now taking on greater responsibilities; particularly subject coordinators.
- The SMT has been extended to include two teachers.
- Coordinators are being given time to fulfil their roles, and becoming more focused.
- The school is building on lessons learned in implementing their improvement strategies.
- Aim to ensure that all teaching is at least good.

What will the LA do?

- An exit strategy created for schools who have worked in ISP for three years.
- Continued support for the schools concerned where necessary.
- The schools continue to be considered within the authority's overall strategy, which takes account of local information on schools in addition to quantifiable data.
- Sharing good practice among schools at different stages within the programme, including those exiting.
- Termly health checks supported by SIO and consultant teams for schools requiring less external support and those exiting the programme.
- Consultant support available on request to schools exiting the programme.
- Continue to use expertise within the ISP schools as support for other schools.

Summary, and references to any resources

A handbook for subject leaders – 'Leading literacy and numeracy through ISP' includes all forms used; questions set for staff; red, amber, green 'Success criteria' sheet. Overall, a very valuable resource.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Liverpool

1. School context and profile

- Middlefield PS is a larger than average primary school situated in the southern outskirts of Liverpool. The school's location is recognised by the local authority (LA) as one of acute social need. Statistics show it to be an area of multiple deprivation with challenging social and economic circumstances.
- A very high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is also resourced to provide 18 places for pupils from across the LA, who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The number of pupils who start or leave the school at random points throughout the year is very high.
- The school was opened in 2002 due to the amalgamation of two schools, and was invited to join the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) for a second time in September 2005.
- The headteacher, who had been the deputy headteacher of the school since its creation, took up her post in September 2006.
- The New Relationship with Schools and the introduction of School Improvement Partners (SIP), coupled with the appointment of the new headteacher, has resulted in a productive working partnership which is effective in supporting and challenging the school to bring about improvement in standards using the ISP.
- The current SIP has worked with the school since October 2006 and the school was an LA project school 2006-2007.

The school's recent Ofsted report stated that the school needed to:

- raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science throughout the school;
- improve the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning, including in the Foundation Stage (FS);
- improve levels of attendance.

End of Key Stage 2 Results

	English		Mathematics	
	Level 4	Level 5	Level 4	Level 5
2005	54%	2%	42%	12%
2006	51%	6%	58%	16%
2007	79%	40%	81%	42%

2. Barriers to improvement

- At the beginning of the programme the end of FS Profile showed that children's development was significantly below national and local averages in all areas.
- Standards at Key Stage 1 in all areas had declined since 2002 and were significantly below national and local averages in all areas. The school's contextual value added score in 2005 was 98.2.
- The attendance was well below national average.
- The focus for the first year Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) was mainly mathematics, based on end of Key Stage 2 numerical results and the perception of the school's strengths and areas of development as identified in the school development plan.
- In addition to all of the above, a key barrier to improvement was the over-emphasis in the school on improving pastoral care often at the expense of children's learning and raising attainment.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- The style of leadership.
- Standards of attainment.
- Poor attendance.
- Inadequate use of data, and target setting done for its own sake.
- Low expectations of staff, parents and pupils.
- An over-emphasis on pastoral care which tended to deflect focus away from the curriculum.
- No real sense of accountability.
- Inconsistency in the quality of teaching; classroom organisation; and children's learning.

What was done?

The following describes the actions taken following the appointment of a new headteacher, which corresponds to Stage 2 described later in the section on the authority.

- Tracking systems were improved and became working documents, focused on meeting children's learning needs.
- Monitoring systems were reorganised and the focus changed to include not only lesson observations but progress tests; target setting; and termly headteacher/staff interviews to an agreed format with requirements in terms of documentation.
- The headteacher visits every class at least twice per day.
- A new management structure introduced based on the principle of distributed leadership. No deputy headteacher appointed but staff given responsibilities and held accountable.
- A new performance management system has been introduced to all staff.
- Moderation of teachers' assessments introduced to agree on standards.
- 'Learning journals' were introduced to help improve the quality of teaching: teachers evaluate the learning which has taken place on a weekly basis and adjust programmes accordingly; journals are monitored by the headteacher weekly.
- Flexible use made of individual staff strengths and skills, such as literacy, numeracy, science and creativity specialists.

- Subject managers given responsibility and encouraged to take the initiative and determine priorities to move their subject forward.
- Setting introduced from Year 1; this is a very fluid process using teacher assessment and 'Rising Stars achievement programme' to ensure consistency of assessment across the school. Children assessed every half term and groups adjusted accordingly.
- Class sizes were kept small, mostly at 20 to 22.
- Curriculum organisation was reviewed and adjusted. Literacy, numeracy and science were taught in the mornings and a wide variety of clubs and activities in the afternoon organised to meet the needs in other areas of the curriculum. Initially begun in Year 5 and Year 6, it has since been rolled out across the middle school.
- Interventions carried out according to need, for example, Further Literacy Support programme was undertaken with the whole Year 6 class with six children identified as the target group. As a result, the six targeted children made a minimum of two sub levels progress and the remainder of the class made a minimum of one sub level.
- Learning support officers given their own classes, for example, they have their own nurture groups, and are involved in all continuing professional development (CPD).
- A learning support officer was released to support the learning mentor with attendance and discussions with parents. Discussions with and involvement of parents increased.
- Action was taken on attendance: first day of absence contact made; daily check on lateness; and when necessary the courts involved.
- Termly reporting to governors on progress.
- A National Curriculum tests strategy meeting held every half term.
- A school council introduced to involve children in school improvement.
- CPD focused entirely on school needs and the RAP.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Use of National Curriculum tests percentages and RAISE online data.
- Analysis of class profiles.
- Analysis of attendance.
- Ongoing assessment.
- Interviews with children.
- Discussions with parents.
- Success criteria in the RAP.

What has been the overall impact?

- A headteacher focus on leadership for learning.
- Considerable improvement in children's learning; children have higher expectations of themselves; have increased self-esteem; and now focus on the tasks in hand.
- Much improved attainment: Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests were the best on record and RAISE online data puts the school in the first percentile for Key Stage 2.
- Attendance has risen by 2%.
- A much more positive ethos in the school, and overall, a changed culture; relationships and behaviour much improved. Overall, the school is a much happier place in which to work and learn.
- A greater consistency in the quality of teaching; staff more accountable; more reflective; have a greater sense of worth; and feel valued by senior managers.
- Higher staff expectations.
- A much greater focus on meeting children's needs, with the school now being focused on children's learning.
- More effective tracking of pupils' progress, and monitoring of classroom practice.
- School governors now more effective in holding staff accountable.
- Children now have a voice in improving the school.
- Improved breakfast clubs which are now better organised, with children being involved in adult-led activities (breakfast costs 50p per family).

'ISP has brought the human face of improvement to our school. They have enabled us to move forward offering differentiated support entirely tailored to our circumstances and needs. They have always treated the staff with respect and professionalism and instilled them with confidence. We have been fortunate to have taken part in ISP, so much part of Middlefield now that we no longer know where Middlefield starts and ISP ends.'

4. Local authority support and challenge

In 2005, the school was persuaded to join the ISP. From that point onwards progress can be described in two stages; stages determined by decisions taken by the headteacher at the time.

Stage 1:

- During discussions with the authority the school decides that its main focus was to be on improving attainment in mathematics.
- Once staff became confident in working with the authority, further analysis of attainment led staff to include literacy as a priority in addition to the examination of gender differences in attainment.
- The authority encouraged staff to examine end of Year 6 assessments, compare results in English and mathematics and analyse reasons for any difference.
- The assessment coordinator analysed all data to identify individual children's progress in English and mathematics, as well as progress in each year group. Subject consultants modelled lessons and delivered INSET to all staff, for example, the literacy consultant worked closely with Key Stage 1 and delivered an intensive reading programme. The mathematics consultant offered support in Year 6 to model lessons and boost pupils' attainment.
- The authority focused on learning and teaching through the use of curricular targets.
- All staff, including teaching assistants, were trained in intervention programmes.
- The RAP was discussed termly with the headteacher, ISP consultant and the two subject coordinators.
- This was an evolving process and it took about a year to reach the above stages with the headteacher and staff.

Stage 2:

- In September 2006 a new headteacher took up post and, from that point, actions were much more focused and there was much improved working with the authority to affect improvements.
- SIP was introduced in October 2006 with the new headteacher.
- The RAP was rewritten in September 2006, and had a clearer focus on raising attainment. The headteacher had a new vision for the school, and identified specific actions which had to be taken to raise attainment in mathematics.
- In January 2007 an Ofsted inspection took place which recognised the growing culture change in the school, and improvements in attainment.
- Pupil progress meetings were held half termly which caused staff to reflect on their practice. Staff kept 'Learning journals' as part of the reflective process, and began looking at short term assessments.
- Increasing work was done at the FS, increasing the staff focus on children's learning.

What was done?

In addition to what was described above, once the new headteacher was in post, key interventions were made by the authority's SIP and the ISP consultant, supported by subject consultants.

- In October 2006, an authority SIP made her first school improvement plan visit. This involved very rigorous questioning and was initially traumatic for the headteacher. The main focus of the discussion was pupil progress and performance management. In addition to questioning and challenge, considerable practical advice was given. In effect, the authority had increased the challenge on the school at a time when the new headteacher was willing and receptive to make improvements. This, and subsequent meetings, gave a clear steer to the school.
- The ISP consultant continued to discuss and build upon the new start made. Criteria for class profiles were defined and included the grouping of children where intervention was required; target setting and predicting. Senior Management Team (SMT) members were trained in data analysis and they subsequently appreciated the reality of attainment and children's progress. Comparison of data from similar schools helped focus discussions. Literacy and numeracy consultants focused on under-performing pupils. The authority was involved in ongoing discussions with the SMT over a period of time, helping focus SMT members' attention on monitoring and improving learning and teaching, including classroom management.
- All schools are in authority learning networks: a group of self-selecting schools with a learning coordinator. The schools share good practice, and are supported by the learning network coordinator, for example, in providing CPD.

Monitoring and evaluation

- An authority review group was established which included all key stakeholders, including the governing body. It was chaired by the authority's intervention manager, and held the school accountable for pupils' progress.
- Steps were taken to measure progress in:
 1. Key stage outcomes.
 2. The progress of target groups.
 3. Sub levels.
 4. The impact of intervention strategies.
 5. The RAP using the defined success criteria.
 6. The number of children reaching age-related expectations.

What has been the overall impact?

- Attendance has risen by 2%.
- Attainment has risen dramatically (see earlier statistics). The school is now ranked in the top 1% of similar schools at Key Stage 2; previously it was in the bottom 3%.
- Leadership for learning has improved. The headteacher has been decisive, and when necessary has taken difficult decisions, for example, with regard to the quality of some of the teaching.
- The quality of teaching has improved, and there is a greater focus now on meeting the needs of pupils. Teachers have reflected on the learning in their classrooms, and adapted their teaching accordingly. The school uses the different skills of staff in a flexible manner. Overall, there has been a growth in the professionalism of staff.
- Children are more engaged in their learning, and their self-esteem has risen. There is more active learning.
- Staff have higher expectations of pupils. Outcomes of all staff meetings are recorded with actions to be taken with timescales.
- Much more engagement in CPD, which is wholly focused on school improvements.
- The ethos of the school has improved, and there is a greater focus on celebrating pupils' achievements.
- Parents are now more involved; more are attending assemblies and attending open days.

'There has been an evolutionary change in the culture of the school.'

'The school is now a professional learning community.'

'When a school engages with the authority it is more effective in making improvements.'

'A crucial decision taken by the new headteacher and governors has been to embrace the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) provided through the LA and also to link with other schools in a local network, to support the drive to raise standards. This has brought about a cultural change in the school and set it on its current course by enabling staff and governors to set clear goals, which are moving the school forward.'
(Ofsted January 2007)

5. Sustainability – what next?

What mechanisms are there in place to ensure improvements are sustained?

What will the school do?

The school will:

- increase the focus on Key Stage 1;
- continue with ISP;
- continue with developments in the learning network;
- continue on the current path of improvement.

What will the LA do?

- The school will be involved in ISP for another year followed by a light touch programme of support from ISP.
- Will continue to offer support through additional literacy and numeracy consultant support.
- The SIP will be linked with the school for the next three years.
- Analysis will be done to include more children in intervention strategies.
- Learning networks will focus on management training.
- Progress plans will be developed.
- An exit strategy will be developed whereby the school will continue to receive high quality CPD through the ISP programme and the light touch ISP support and subject consultant support noted above.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies North Yorkshire: Colburn Primary School

1. School context and profile

Colburn CP is situated in a town adjacent to Catterick Garrison, the largest army garrison in Europe. The school community has a significant proportion of lone mothers and many of the school community are poorly paid part-time workers on the garrison, which lifts them just above Income Support threshold. As a result, free school meals statistics mask the real level of deprivation in the area. Colburn CP's index of multiple deprivation ranking is 28 out of 328 North Yorkshire (NY) primary schools. The school is in a pocket of deprivation in a rural area.

Key Stage 2 2005 results

Level 4+ English 57% Level 5 11%
 mathematics 62% Level 5 16%
 science 78% Level 5 32%

2. Barriers to improvement

- Attainment low on entry: proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is above average.
- Attendance below average for the NY quintile: 3.45% children with no absence compared to 7.15% for the NY quintile, 6.40% had 20% or more absence as compared to 4.4% for the NY quintile.
- Ofsted identified the need for more active support from parents to improve learning and attendance.
- Punctuality of a small minority was poor.
- Setting had led to wasted time and wasteful movement around school.
- Recruitment difficulties.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- The overall quality of leadership, including governance.
- The overall quality of teaching, including planning.
- Systems of monitoring, including self-evaluation and tracking.
- Pupil attainment, and a general underachievement of the majority of pupils. Key Stage 2 results below floor targets for past five years.
- Children were making insufficient progress in the Foundation Stage (FS) particularly in Communication, Language and Literacy and Mathematical Development.
- Pupils' learning; their self-esteem and attitudes to work.
- The expectations of staff, pupils and parents.

What was done?

- Headteacher had an agreed support plan and was very well supported by the authority, school management team and the whole staff. A much improved management structure was embedded, and better use was made of management time. School organisation was reviewed, and appropriate procedures were implemented to challenge practice and lead effective learning. The headteacher tackled the issue of weaknesses in teaching.
- The governing body was strengthened, and appropriate training has taken place to focus governors on challenge and monitoring.
- The Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) was tailored to be a termly action plan.
- Better assessment was implemented, using principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL), which led to better planning; and more effective differentiation.
- Classroom organisation improved, and time is now used much more effectively.
- Intervention provision map created. A good range in English, but still more to do in mathematics.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) focused mainly on performance management (75% of time used in this way; 25% for other school priorities). Teaching assistants trained appropriately.
- A development of 'Talk for learning' with pupils being encouraged to discuss their learning. 'Talking partners' now a successful feature of lessons.
- Continued focus on behaviour management, and the appointment of a home/school worker.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Optional National Curriculum tests used twice a year.
- Much more focused teacher assessment, using a range of diagnostic tools.
- Implementation of a comprehensive quality assurance system.
- Analysis of attainment plus pupil progress.
- Setting of appropriate targets in attainment and teaching and learning.
- In-house moderation plus moderation by the ISP team.

What has been the overall impact?

The following summarises the impact of the initiatives taken to improve the school.

- An improvement in the overall quality of leadership. Headteacher, management team and governors now much more focused on school improvement and setting high expectations. Headteacher focused on leadership for learning and reenergised with regard to his role.
- Improved self-evaluation; clear monitoring timetable in place including observation; work and planning scrutiny; pupil conferencing; specific focus for monitoring; learning walks; staff discussion; peer coaching and support plans for staff when appropriate.
- Much improved tracking system in place; staff inputting information; using it to influence teaching programmes; and identify pupils not making sufficient progress.
- Increased attainment overall in English and mathematics. An improvement at early Key Stage 2.
- Increased achievement.
- An improvement in the overall quality of teaching. The school will hit its target of 70% of teaching and learning being good or better. No lessons deemed to be inadequate.
- Improvements in pupils' learning. Pupils now taking greater pride in their work, and discussing targets.
- New aspirational targets being set which would not have been considered before.
- Raised expectations of staff and pupils.

The following quotes sum up the impact the ISP programme has had on the school.

'I am actually invigorated and enthusiastic about leading the school. I have regained my focus on leadership for learning, and feel sharper by using the tools ISP has put in place.' (Headteacher.)

'We are now working much more effectively as a management team.'

'The school is where it is now partly because of the rejuvenation this process has given the leadership team in the time available. Although it has been very pressurised, it has been a good experience.'

4. What did the LA identify as the key areas for support/challenge?

- The overall quality of leadership and management.
- Standards of teaching.
- Behaviour of pupils.
- AfL.

What was done?

ISP support for school to:

- enable the leadership team to keep all staff on board with ISP, and address inconsistencies in standards of teaching;
- establish a monitoring cycle using a range of methods;
- develop rigorous assessment procedures for mathematics, reading and writing, and establish a usable tracking system;
- implement early intervention packages so that fewer children become labelled as children with LDD;
- enable staff to improve the learning environment, and support teachers in helping children understand what they had to do to improve;
- supply relevant CPD through fortnightly professional development meetings;
- improve governors' understanding of how to hold leadership to account, and engage parents in their children's learning;
- improve resources, particularly for reading.

School Improvement and Targets Unit/ LA funding was used to:

- provide a mentor for the headteacher for care and well-being support; and fund dedicated headship and leadership team time;
- appoint additional teaching and support staff in both key stages to target interventions; and appoint a learning mentor;
- advanced skills teacher from another school worked in school to act as, and support, mathematics subject leader;
- help the school move away from setting arrangements;
- train a TA and deliver Reading Intervention (North Yorkshire Wave 3).

Additional support

- Good practice visits to schools in NY and beyond.
- Support adviser in place (approximately 24 days per year); two weeks' intensive support from seven LA consultants and advisers (30 days per year from consultants, three days' training for headteacher and governors, three days' training per year for English and mathematics subject leaders).
- Additional governor found by LA to improve governance.
- Termly ongoing LA reviews.
- Training for governors.
- Behaviour support from Access and Inclusion with intensive support from three LA advisers/ consultants to model the leadership of good behaviour management.
- Weekly consultation drop-ins for teachers from behaviour support.
- Partnership with local school funded at £10,000 to allow two local schools to share and learn from best practice.
- Training for teaching assistants on a full range of interventions (Early Literacy Support (ELS), Additional Literacy Support (ALS), Year 3 Literacy Support (3LS), Further Literacy Support (FLS), Wave 3 mathematics).
- Personal support plan for headteacher.

Monitoring and evaluation

Taken from LA support plan for school

- The school, through the leadership of the headteacher, has ownership of its systems and procedures, and positive progress is sustained.
- Governance is at least satisfactory. Governors understand and fulfil their role in holding the school to account for the education of its pupils.
- The headteacher's leadership is at least satisfactory.
- The headteacher holds individuals to account for their contribution to raising standards and achievement (links to headteacher's personal support plan and cohort targets on action plan RAP).
- 50% lessons observed are good as shown by lesson observations (trajectory towards 70% shown, see action plan/RAP).
- The headteacher leads on the improvement in pupils' behaviour.
- Behaviour observed in all parts of the school, and at all times, is at least satisfactory and often good.
- All staff consistently address inappropriate behaviours.

What information/data did you use to measure progress?

- LA review outcomes and progress against recommendations.
- ISP consultant's monitoring and progress against recommendations.
- Support adviser meetings, observations and records of visits.
- School Improvement Partner Records of visits and progress against agreed actions.
- Strategy meetings for all LA personnel working in the school.
- Pupil tracking.
- Optionals and National Curriculum tests.
- Behaviour and learning walks around school by support adviser.
- Monitoring of impact of behaviour policy through reported incidents/attendance and exclusion data as well as qualitative information as above.
- Impact of spending.

What has been the overall impact?

- Since the leadership team and the staff have embraced the support and worked in partnership with the LA team, the school has rapidly improved.
- Improved leadership and management, including governance. Governors feel empowered to question the leadership team and have an understanding of performance data.
- The headteacher is now seen as the leader of learning and all discussions centre around pupil progress.
- Systems for school improvement are now embedded and there is a clear timeline for key actions followed by all staff.
- The Foundation Stage team has had high quality intensive support from an Early Years consultant and over the last term this has had a significant impact on Linking Sounds and Letters (LSL) and early reading, raising standards and is beginning to affect practice in Key Stage 1.
- Provision in FS is now good, with some outstanding features, and leadership is improved.
- The learning environment is significantly improved across the school and is of a more consistent standard.
- Where teaching is good, all aspects of ISP (tracking, AfL, early intervention, involving children in their own learning journey and so on) are embedded.
- Fewer children are now on the Special Educational Needs register and LDD identification is more accurate.
- FS Profile higher or equal in all areas except Physical Development in 2007 from previous years.
- 2007 Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests, reading 53.8% up 3%; writing 46.2% down 14%; mathematics 84.6% up 14%; average point score (APS) 12.4.
- 2007 Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results are the best ever: English, 70% up 14%; mathematics, 62% up 6%; APS 25.4.
- All results are still significantly below national and LA averages.
- All teachers held to account in all year groups for progress of children, using pupil progress meetings as a basis for performance management.
- School above floor targets for English and close for mathematics.
- There is a strong and effective working relationship with the LA and other outside agencies.
- An aspirational, 'can do' culture has been developed in the school.

'This is now a school where the staff have turned a corner regarding their professionalism and expectations. The headteacher is stronger and there is a more effective governing body. The next step is to improve children's attitudes to learning.'

'The overall programme has been good at improving learning and teaching, leadership and management. This is reflected in test results which are much improved.'

'Once the school engaged with the authority and worked with them improvements began.'

'Pupil progress is at the heart of everything they do now, and there is a 'can do' culture in the school.'

5. Sustainability – what next?

- Final year of ISP concentrates on capacity of English and mathematics subject leaders to continue to use systems to identify vulnerable children; intervene appropriately; and evaluate impact.
- Some intensive support, including continued participation in social and emotional aspects of learning still required to embed a successful behaviour management strategy for the school; and involve parents.
- Further improve assessment for learning through participation in LA's pupil self-evaluation.

What will the school do?

- Continue to prioritise decisions in light of progress made.
- Appoint a learning mentor.
- Keep intervention for literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Increase provision for intervention for mathematics and behaviour.
- Continue to monitor the effect of management, and review the use of the senior management team's time.
- Retain teaching groups at approximately 25 to 29.

What will the LA do?

- Provide intensive help until behaviour management strategies are embedded.
- Provide support adviser to work with schools' leaders to build their capacity.
- Continue to give ISP support with phased withdrawal until July 2008; and encourage the school and headteacher to become independent.
- Continue to carry out termly reviews throughout 2008.
- LA have a planned exit strategy for the school including partnership with a local school and participation in the LA's leadership programme.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Rotherham

1. School context and profile

- The school takes its pupils from an area of socio-economic disadvantage.
- Pupils receiving free school meals: 35%.
- 59% speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) (home language mostly Punjabi or Urdu).
- Pupil mobility high – recent influx of children of asylum seekers and migrant workers.
- Attainment on entry is very much lower than is typical for their age.
- High staff turnover in last two years. Headteacher and deputy headteacher new to post in September 2006.
- Ofsted inspection March 2007 and judged as *'an improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils'*.

Areas for improvement

- Raise standards in English and mathematics across the school.
- Strengthen links between subjects to enrich the curriculum and introduce more investigative approaches to make learning more enjoyable and effective.
- Ensure that infant pupils benefit from a more active and investigative curriculum.

Leadership of headteacher judged to be good and some outstanding features: *'...her vision and drive ensures essential developments move at a rapid pace.'*

2007 outcomes

Foundation Stage: cohort size 39

All areas of learning below the local authority (LA) average. Particularly weak in Communication, Language and Literacy.

Key Stage 1: 30 children

Reading: All below LA and national. Improved from 2006 and highest outcomes in 2004-2007 period.

L2+ 67% L2b+ 63% L3 7%

Writing: All below LA and national. Significant improvement from 2006 at L2+ and L2b+. Average point score (APS): 12.7

L2+ 73% L2b+ 43% L3 3%

Mathematics: All below LA and national. Decline from 2006.

L2+ 80% L2b+ 60% L3 3% APS 13.3

Key Stage 2: 30 children

English: L4+ 57% L5 3% (Fischer Family Trust (FFT) D 71%, 14%) (Statutory targets: 66%, 0%)

Reading: L4+ 63% L5 20%

Writing: L4+ 47% L5 3%

Mathematics: L4+ 77% L5 7% (FFT D 71%, 7%)

2. Barriers to improvement

- For the first two years of the programme the school made limited progress. During the first year of the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) many staff were new to the school. They moved into the new school building and pupil behaviour deteriorated. The first year was spent focusing on creating/improving the conditions for learning and the school received support from the LA behaviour support service team to implement behaviour strategies. The leadership team changed from September 2006.
- Focus on a speedy start to Year 6 to address gaps in learning caused by weak teaching when children were in lower Key Stage 2 year groups.
- Inaccurate assessment caused by staff turbulence, high number of temporary staff which meant that assessment outcomes may not have been reliable. High pupil mobility (in and out of school).
- The overall quality of leadership.
- The Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) was not an effective tool for improvement.
- The school's tracking system was not used effectively to meet children's needs.
- Although targets were there, further development work was needed to ensure positive impact on learning. Underperformance was not tackled.
- Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) was not used at either a strategic or operational level. The development of the MAG has grown in all ISP schools as confidence in its worth has grown. Initially it was seen as a strategic tool with which senior leaders could monitor progress. Over time its importance has grown to where it is now – valuable at strategic and operational levels.
- There were no pupil performance meetings.
- Lesson observations were not regularly undertaken.
- There were no clear standards for learning and teaching, and too little emphasis given to pupils' learning.
- The curriculum was limited and there were few links across curricular areas.
- Parents were not involved in their children's learning.
- Overall the school was somewhat inward-looking and insular.

What was done?

With very well judged support from the LA the following actions were taken.

- The RAP became the key working document to drive improvements.
- Assessments were used to set pupils' levels; groups within classes and intervention groups.
- A formula was created for three-part lessons, with the headteacher ensuring that it was always implemented.
- Setting targets became a key feature for improvement:
 1. Child friendly pupil targets were set.
 2. Meetings were held with all parents to discuss targets.
 3. Staff were required to submit curricular target analysis forms every half term for analysis by the headteacher; target trackers for each year group were updated half termly and results published to all; target trackers showed the EAL pupils; focus groups in reading, writing and mathematics; when Individual Education Plan targets were met; and when Personalised Learning Tutor (PLT) targets were met.
- Underperformance was identified.
- The headteacher targeted the use of teaching assistants (TAs) and the effectiveness of interventions. TAs moved with the class on to the next year stage for one term to maintain continuity and ease transition. Thereafter they returned to their original class. This avoided settling in times at new stages.
- The headteacher met regularly with the PLT, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and Learning Support Services to discuss pupils' progress. The PLT uses results from the curricular target tracker to identify focus pupils who are not meeting targets and who face barriers in their learning. With deep, enriched fun support, these pupils are quickly back on track and are re-engaged with peers and learning.
- Termly pupil progress meetings held. Two days set aside each term for individual meetings of staff with the headteacher, using a range of data. Teachers were held accountable for their children's progress.
- Monitoring learning and teaching introduced with a focus for each term; paired monitoring developed using coordinators; each week the learning in each class was reviewed on Friday afternoons with pupils.
- Coordinator's school self-evaluation weeks established which included drop-ins to classes; scrutiny of pupils' work; staff and child discussions.
- Governor days established; governors responsible for areas of the self-evaluation forms.
- Strategies developed for improving writing and mathematics.
- Learning walls in each classroom created.
- Staff given more opportunities through continuing professional development (CPD) which was targeted at priorities identified in the RAP and SIP.
- Learning champions: A priority for Thornhill is the weekly Learning champion sessions in Key Stage 2, where children in tutor groups of six have quality time to reflect on learning and pursue targets.

All of the actions taken have been the result of the very positive leadership and drive of the headteacher. Her leadership has been clear and decisive and very well-communicated to all stakeholders. She has been particularly determined to communicate effectively with children regarding their learning.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The headteacher used a range of data to measure pupils' progress.
- The headteacher monitors the sub level progress of each child in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents used as part of the assessment process.
- The RAP and Developing Excellence Plan (DEP) review built into the senior leadership team and staff meetings each half term.
- Pupils' target books monitored.
- Ongoing regular discussions with staff.
- The monitoring process and performance management gives the headteacher and staff a clear view of pupils' progress and school improvement.

What has been the overall impact?

- The overall quality of leadership has improved and is now very effective.
- Pupils' attainment has improved in English, mathematics and science. In 2007 mathematics has improved from 43% to 76.7%; science from 53% to 76.6% and English from 46% to 56.6%.
- The overall quality of teaching has improved.
- Staff, many parents and pupils have higher expectations.
- Pupils now have a voice in the life of the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved, and they are proud of their school.
- Pupil attendance, behaviour and punctuality much improved.
- Parents now involved in the school and in supporting their children's learning through weekly Stay and Play sessions, Sure Start play shops, weekly parent and governor meetings, toy library every week and media bags.
- Overall there is now a culture of achievement.
- The LA has now involved the school as a case study for others to show how improvements can be made. Other schools have visited to discuss how target setting has been effective. Other schools are now taking ISP on board as good practice in Thornhill and elsewhere.

'The ISP gives a clarity of strategies which allows schools to ensure structures are in place to ensure children's progress... it makes sure everything happens for the right reasons... it is about achievement.'

'The LA support for the school has been phenomenal. The support has been well timed and planned, and has raised the profile of the school.'

4. Local authority support and challenge

The overall quality of leadership.

Pupils' attainment and progress overall.

What was done?

The following describes actions taken following the appointment of the new headteacher.

All of the processes within the ISP have been implemented, and tailored to meet the specific needs of the school. There was a major investment of time in supporting the new headteacher who was quickly identified as having the potential to move the school forward and make the necessary improvements. The significant factor in the improvement process was the attitude and drive of the headteacher who had a strong vision for the school based upon meeting the needs of all children.

The LA continued with the actions it had taken previously and supported the headteacher who clearly took charge of the overall process, in the knowledge that she was being well supported and challenged. The following actions were then taken:

- The headteacher was advised to conduct a detailed analysis of pupils' progress and data.
- The use of the LA tracking system was emphasised; as was the value of the RAP and the DEP as working documents.
- The headteacher undertook formal monitoring of learning and teaching, supported by the school adviser. They developed useful formats for use and provided feedback to individuals and the whole staff.
- There was minimal consultancy support in classes. Support was mainly at the level of subject leaders and developing systems.
- CPD was introduced and implemented based upon the SIP (DEP) with those involved being made aware that, following the CPD, there was an expectation of change. The focus was on literacy and numeracy. The headteacher used the monitoring process to check on whether or not the CPD had made a difference.
- Short-term targets were identified along with strategies designed to build a long-term capacity to improve.
- Inconsistencies in teaching were addressed.
- The headteacher conducted the pupil progress meetings in school; the LA discussed pupil progress with the headteacher.
- The LA was developing an authority strategy to meet the needs of children with EAL.

Monitoring and evaluation

The LA monitored the situation in the school half termly using the following:

- the RAP and SIP and the success criteria;
- records of pupils' progress;
- attainment;
- checks on how many children are at age-related stages;
- the results of the observation of some teaching by the ISP adviser;
- discussions with the adviser who was involved in moderating, analysing and discussing with the headteacher and staff on an ongoing basis.

What has been the overall impact?

- The headteacher has ownership of the programme for change and is being effective. An Ofsted inspection report in March 2007 reported that, *'The headteacher's leadership is good and some features are outstanding. In particular, her vision and drive ensures essential developments move at a rapid pace.'*
- A big improvement in attainment at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics.
- Learning and teaching is now overall good, rather than satisfactory.
- There is now a culture of success in the school.
- There are higher staff expectations.
- The school now has the capacity to improve.
- The LA now uses the school as a case study for improvement.

'The school is now a delightful and happy place for children to be... it has very high expectations.'

'The school has progressed and changed dramatically in a year... it is now a different place.'

'The authority knows the school... it has a very good knowledge of the school, and a very good relationship with the school based upon openness and honesty.'

5. Sustainability – what next?

What mechanisms are there in place to ensure improvements are sustained?

What will the school do?

- Continue to embed developments and evaluate their impact.
- Fine tune some developments.
- Work to gain an Enterprise Award.
- The school will not make any additional major changes during this session or next.

What will the LA do?

- The school will remain in the ISP for another 12 months depending on attainment and the results of continued monitoring. It will need to be above floor targets in both areas.
- SIP discussions in 2007.
- ISP discussions with the school regarding predictions and targets for 2008.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Bradford

1. School(s) context and profile

The case study involved the following three schools:

Atlas Community Primary School

Bradford Moor Community Primary School

Lapage Primary School and Nursery

Atlas Community Primary School

Almost all pupils are of Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage and 98.1% of pupils speak English as an Additional Language (EAL). The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average with 95% of the pupils living in neighbourhoods described as being among the 10% most deprived in the country.

In an Ofsted inspection report of April 2007 the school was given a Notice to improve, and required to:

- improve pupils' attainment;
- ensure that the quality of teaching was consistently good, and that pupils were suitably challenged;
- improve the use of assessment.

Attainment at Key Stage 2 over a three year period was as follows:

	2005	2006	2007
English	44%	54%	71.4%
mathematics	46%	46%	78.6%

Although a new headteacher was appointed in January 2007, improvements had begun prior to his taking up post.

In December 2007, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) judged that the headteacher was providing strong leadership and that the school was on track to be removed from category within 12 months.

Bradford Moor Community Primary School

The school serves an inner city area which has very high levels of social and economic disadvantage with 99.6% of pupils in the 20% most deprived in the country and 85% of pupils are in the 10% most deprived in the country, particularly regarding income, health and education. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the majority being of Pakistani origin. A very high proportion of pupils (98.1%) are at the early stages of learning EAL. The school was inspected in February 2007 and evaluated as satisfactory.

Attainment at Key Stage 2 over a three year period was as follows:

	2005	2006	2007
English	59%	61%	65%
mathematics	59%	59%	72%

A downward trend in Key Stage 1 results in reading and writing were largely due to concerns regarding the validity and reliability of pre-2006 data.

A new headteacher was appointed in 2005, and was very well supported by a deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher.

Lapage Primary School and Nursery

The school serves an inner-city area which has very high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the majority being of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin and 94.6% of pupils speak EAL.

The current headteacher was appointed in January 2005. Prior to her appointment the school had seven acting headteachers in the space of four years.

In an Ofsted inspection report of February 2007 the school was given a Notice to improve, and required to:

- raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics and science across the school;
- raise the overall quality of teaching and learning to good or better.

Attainment at Key Stage 2 over a three year period was as follows:

	2005	2006	2007
English	49%	42%	67.1%
mathematics	42%	45%	59.8%

In November 2007 HMI judged that the school was making good progress.

2. Barriers to improvement

Atlas Community Primary School

- There was considerable inconsistency in the quality of teaching, including issues of capability.

Bradford Moor Community Primary School

- A lack of consistency in teaching.
- From 2003 to 2005 there were concerns regarding assessment, the quality of leadership, and the inability of the school to build upon the very good start made by pupils. Overall, very poor value added.

Lapage Primary School and Nursery

There has been considerable staff turnover, and a general period of turbulence in the school since 2000. Concerns were expressed about:

- the overall quality of leadership;
- a lack of distributed leadership among staff;
- poor staff accountability;
- inconsistency in the overall quality of teaching;
- a tendency for the school to take on a number of initiatives before previous ones were embedded.

3. The school based issues – what needed to change?

Atlas Community Primary School

Standards of attainment in English language.

Low staff expectations.

Little staff accountability for pupils' progress.

Inconsistencies in the overall quality of teaching, with some examples of unsatisfactory lessons.

Too little focus on learning, and pupils too passive.

Too little account taken of pupils' prior learning, or a desire to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils unclear of what to do to improve.

Organisation of staff not focused on meeting the needs of pupils.

The engagement of the school with parents, and the involvement of parents in their children's learning.

Too many initiatives taken on board, thus weakening the school's desired aim to improve.

Bradford Moor Community Primary School

Standards of attainment in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, and contextual value added (CVA).

The assessment of pupils' progress at Key Stage 1.

Pupil attendance at Key Stage 2 in particular.

Pupil behaviour and their attitudes.

Inconsistency of approach by a small minority of the support staff.

The remits of the senior management team (SMT) and Teaching and Learning Responsibilities staff (TLRs).

The culture of the school with regard to raising standards.

Lapage Primary School and Nursery

The quality of leadership and management.

The overall quality of teaching; some was unsatisfactory and there were no systems for assessment or planning.

Expectations of staff.

Standards of attainment and achievement.

Pupils' learning was inadequate, and pupils were not active in their learning.

The culture of the school which did not value children, and where pupils' views were neither sought nor respected. There were no shared values among staff.

There were no systems for monitoring or performance management.

The school environment was not fit for purpose, and there was a considerable lack of resources.

What was done?

Atlas Community Primary School

- The previous headteacher had begun to tackle the major issues in the school, and had begun to build foundations for change.
- The newly appointed headteacher had initial discussions with the staff as a whole on the low standards within the school and weak teaching. Thereafter he took the following action:
 1. Organised one-to-one development meetings between staff and consultants, and bought in additional consultants' time.
 2. Initiated monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning using the criterion 'Are pupils making sufficient progress?' Prior to observation, teachers were required to identify how they had used assessment to improve pupils' learning.
 3. Began the process of changing the culture of the school, making it clear that there was no place for blaming pupils for making inadequate progress.
 4. Moved teachers to different stages, and used all staff more flexibly.
 5. Analysed the assessment of pupils' progress.
 6. Discussed pupils' progress with individual teachers; determined which pupils had regressed and where there was little value added; and questioned staff regarding next steps in pupils' learning. Staff were held accountable three times per year for pupils' progress. Teachers were given the statistics prior to meetings with the headteacher, and asked to respond as far as pupils not making sufficient progress were concerned. Targets were set for individual pupils and groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
 7. An assessment and review activity was introduced for all staff. Teachers targeted specific small groups of pupils and identified their needs with a view to influencing their future planning.
 8. Implemented new teaching programmes in reading and writing, and emphasised the need for teaching to be more interactive.
 9. Put a School Improvement Plan (SIP) in place as part of the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) with measurable success criteria. In this the School Improvement Officer (SIO) was very supportive.
 10. The SMT tackled the issue of staff capability. The authority provided intensive support for individual teachers. Individual teachers had been supported and coached and members of the SMT provided exemplar lessons. As a matter of policy all members of SMT teach at some point.
 11. Teaching assistants (TAs) trained as Better Reading partners. Increased help for support staff who have been empowered to take ownership of what they are doing.
 12. Continuing professional development (CPD) linked to the SIP and also to the needs of individual staff, where, if they were involved in specific CPD, the school would benefit.
 13. Pupils' work displayed well and valued to help build pupils' self esteem.
 14. Provided intensive support to Year 6. Members of the SMT gave individual coaching to Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science.
 15. Began to involve parents more.
 16. Support teachers where necessary. They have a key role in the process.

Bradford Moor Community School

- The analysis of data and the use of assessment became a more effective tool in raising standards. The system in practice included:
 1. Assessment windows in December and May.
 2. Data entered on memory sticks by teachers, each of whom had laptops, and given to the SMT. Data included the progress made by individuals in sub levels. Analysis now including issues of gender.
 3. Subject leaders review data; check value added for individuals, groups and years; and discuss with teachers where necessary. They have a key role in the process.
 4. Assessment manager (assistant headteacher) leads meeting with subject leader and Inclusion manager.
 5. Discussion by leadership team of implications for action.
 6. Action plans determined to influence planning and teaching. Decisions are evidence driven.
 7. Within this cycle is the school monitoring programme. Monitoring is done by subject leaders, TLRs and SMT. All staff involved in performance management, and all teacher members of the leadership team have a weekly teaching commitment.

All staff were trained to interpret and use data, which emphasised the principle that teachers were responsible for their pupils' progress.

Other activities included:

- Staff were placed in classes/years dependent upon their strengths.
- Booster groups were held in the evenings in English, mathematics and science from January onwards. They last for one hour and no pupil is allowed to attend more than two. In all 50-60% of pupils attend one or two sessions.
- Intervention strategies take place during the school day.
- Pupils were set from an early stage.
- Layered targets introduced and displayed.
- Individual targets written in literacy and numeracy books and renewed termly.
- Extended provision enhances the overall conditions for pupils. A total of 16 after school clubs meet and provide a wide range of activities including four sporting clubs and others in cookery, spelling, German, dance and recorders.
- The curriculum was reviewed and theme studies introduced.
- Coaching by the headteacher of particular staff to improve the quality of teaching.
- School focused on sustainability; does not become involved in one-off initiatives.
- Alterations were made to the school's internal structure to create quieter learning environments.
- Use of pupil questionnaires for feedback.

Considerable work was done with parents to try to involve them with their children's learning.

Activities include:

- Meetings with parents from nursery onwards to introduce them to the curriculum; how they could help their children; literacy, reading, writing and mathematics; and National Curriculum tests.
- Contact with parents when school has concerns.
- Speedy contact if a pupil is not at school and parents have not been in touch.
- Profile evenings on progress twice per year.

- Parents' meetings on progress twice per year.
- Parents' questionnaire used for feedback.
- The Parental Involvement Officer is a key staff member in supporting and challenging parents; in working with them to aid their development; and helping to develop parents' self-esteem to help them support their children.

Lapage Primary School and Nursery

The headteacher spent the first two terms evaluating learning and teaching, school systems and planning for the future. She proposed to the Interim Management Board (governing body) a plan for the appointment of an extended management team comprising four assistant headteachers and a School Business Manager (SBM) who would have the same status and salary as the assistant headteachers. This was agreed.

The following action was also taken:

- The headteacher was very clear and straightforward with staff regarding the state of the school and what had to change.
- New assistant headteachers, following a period of teaching, were taken out of full-time class commitment and began a process of coaching and mentoring staff.
- The headteacher dealt with issues of competence, and by September 2006, the workforce was no longer inadequate. Between January 2005 and September 2006 ten teachers left the school.
- Teachers were made accountable for pupils' progress and targets for teachers and individual pupils were set.
- The Performance Management System (PMS) was linked to targets for whole classes or groups of pupils in core subjects. Every half term discussions take place between individual teachers and subject leaders or the headteacher, using a very detailed assessment and recording system linked to intervention, support, value added and quality assurance. Teachers were constantly challenged about individual pupils' progress.
- The school began to move to internal moderation of teachers' assessments.
- Each teacher knows each pupil's starting point using the internal tracking system and information such as the Fischer Family Trust; targets and expectations are set and each teacher is held to account within a supportive environment.
- The headteacher walks the job daily and visits each class every morning; staff are thanked for what they do.
- The headteacher has specifically developed the professionalism of senior staff in areas such as competency, target setting, and monitoring. Their teaching was also a model of good practice, and monitored by the headteacher.
- One of the most important decisions made by the headteacher was the appointment of a SBM at the level of assistant headteacher. The manager has taken responsibility for all matters of finance, human resources, buildings and resourcing, thus releasing the headteacher to focus on learning and teaching. She is a key equal member of the SMT.
- The headteacher began to make parents accountable; she made clear to parents the link between pupil's attendance, punctuality and standards of attainment. Parents are given information about Year 6 National Curriculum tests and the effect of extended leave and poor attendance.
- The Inclusion manager is responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality; parents are contacted immediately if pupils are late or absent; and where necessary other agencies are involved in taking action. The community development worker works hard to bring parents into the school.

- The curriculum was improved to widen pupils' experiences and make them more active in their learning.

In all of the above the school was given very good support from the authority. The SIO was hugely supportive, and the authority provided additional funding to help raise standards in teaching and learning.

Monitoring and evaluation

Atlas Community Primary School

- SMT meets weekly and evaluates progress.
- Scheduled programme of monitoring teaching and learning.
- Meetings to discuss pupils' progress, including the analysis of each individual pupil's progress.
- The establishment of assessment windows.
- Target-setting meetings.
- Performance management.
- Weekly plans monitored, after the teaching and evaluation of the effectiveness of the teaching has taken place, to determine whether or not planning was adjusted to meet pupils' needs.
- Use of the criteria in the SIP.

Bradford Moor Community Primary School

- The use of assessment as a core process for school improvement.
- The PMS.
- Monitoring by the SMT.
- A clear, highly-focused approach to the SIP.
- Individual discussions with teachers.
- The use of findings from authority staff in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) and Ofsted inspection reports.

Lapage Primary School and Nursery

- The PMS, linked to staff targets.
- The quality assurance system, including the monitoring of teaching and learning – with a focus on learning.
- The tracking system.
- Discussions about assessments of pupils' progress.
- Formal and informal meetings with staff.
- Internal moderation of assessment.
- The SIP; the RAP; and criteria for success.
- The use of co-coaching across the school.

What has been the overall impact?

Atlas Community Primary School

- Standards of attainment in English and mathematics have risen.
- Assessment now has a purpose, and is used to meet the needs of pupils.
- Staff are now responding to children's needs, and are setting higher expectations.
- There is an improvement in the consistency of teaching, and teachers are now held accountable for pupils' progress.
- Lesson and medium-term planning is now taking account of pupils' needs.
- Pupils are now aware of their targets, and enjoy being both supported and challenged.
- Parents are now beginning to be more involved.
- The school is now using staff more flexibly to respond to pupils' needs.
- The school is now focused on key issues and its prime purpose.
- Overall, there is a changed culture in the school.

'We have been busy, but it has been enjoyable... the school has moved forward, but we are on a journey.'

'The authority has been helpful and supportive when necessary. Our school improvement partner is very challenging and makes us think.'

'The school is a better place than it was before – there is now a culture of learning where we are now meeting the needs of our pupils more effectively.'

Bradford Moor Community Primary School

- Standards of attainment in English and mathematics have risen.
- Improvement in the quality of writing, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Attendance has improved to the national average. The remits of SMT members including TLRs have been amended and improved. All have been empowered to make decisions and take responsibility.
- The core process of the analysis and use of assessment information has become more effective in helping to improve standards, the focus of teaching and pupils' learning.
- Teachers have a greater understanding of their individual responsibility for pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of support staff has improved.
- The overall curriculum has been improved.
- There is an overall improved culture within the school; pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work have improved.

Lapage Primary School and Nursery

- There has been a considerable improvement in the overall quality of leadership and management. The headteacher has driven improvements, but has also appointed and developed an effective SMT comprising four assistant headteachers and a SBM. According to pupils, *'The change came when the headteacher came.'*
- Quality assurance is embedded within the school and includes very effective tracking and the use of assessment information, linked to discussions with staff about the progress of individual pupils.
- Effective structures and systems are in place.
- An improvement in standards of attainment in English and mathematics.

- An improvement in the overall achievement of pupils.
- Pupils are now valued; they have a voice within the school; they enjoy school; they realise that the staff care and have become more confident.
- An enriched curriculum has widened the pupils' experiences.
- A considerable improvement in the quality of teaching; teachers have sense of pride in what they are doing. The development of a strong staff team, which is well supported by SMT and also self supportive. A greater desire among staff to see pupils succeed.
- Higher expectations of staff; and pupils with higher expectations of themselves. Pupils know the level at which they are working and know what they have to do to improve.
- An improved environment for learning. Finance spent wisely and effectively to improve the school.
- Parents more aware of school expectations.

'In this authority you are thanked, supported and provided with relevant data... it is very supportive... they want schools to succeed.'

4. Local authority (LA) support and challenge

What did the LA identify as the key areas for support/challenge?

In all three schools the following areas were required to improve:

- the overall quality of teaching;
- levels of attainment and overall underachievement.

In Bradford Moor Community Primary School and in Lapage Primary School and Nursery the following were also key areas for development:

- the overall quality of leadership;
- staff accountability;
- the effective use of assessment to meet pupils' needs.

What was done?

- Following a categorisation of schools the LA determined the schools requiring support: a total of 53 which is approximately one third of the LA's primary schools.
- There was a focus on working in partnership with schools.
- The LA had a clear determination to build every school's capacity for improvement. They wanted improvement in pupils' achievement to be built on solid foundations and be sustained for each pupil. They were not focusing on making short-term fixes to improve statistics through individual or small group coaching prior to testing.
- Having determined the schools which were either regarded as targeted or others requiring intensive support the following action was taken in all three of the named schools:
 1. An SIO has responsibility for the action plan and the RAP.
 2. Following confirmation of the RAP the SIO brokers support from consultants, who create a consultancy pack for each school.
 3. The SIO discusses non-negotiables in ISP schools only.

4. A senior SIO deploys consultants to ensure allocation according to need. Frequency of visits determined by need. For example, a consultant was in Lapage Primary School and Nursery one day per week from January until July.
5. The SIO is responsible for monitoring progress within the schools.
6. Frequency of visits by the SIO is determined by need; visits can be fortnightly or every half term.
7. Pupil progress is tracked termly.
8. The head of service thereafter holds the SIO accountable.

In essence the schools within the intensive group receive more support than others and there is a greater degree of external accountability.

In future a SIP will determine school needs and priorities and will hold the SIO accountable.

The above is generic action which was taken in all of the schools named. In addition to that, however, specific action was taken in Lapage Primary School and Nursery to deal with the difficulties in staffing. The LA created a package which resulted in ten members of staff leaving at the end of one year. In the subsequent year there was further staff turnover. This led to the headteacher appointing new staff and a new SMT. While this was seen as positive action and necessary, one of the consequences was a loss of continuity and experience.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Records of pupil progress and levels of attainment were key items of data used.
- The success criteria in the RAP were key pieces of information against which progress was measured.

What has been the overall impact?

Atlas Community Primary School

- Levels of attainment have improved and the school is now above floor targets in English and mathematics.
- There is improved leadership at all levels within the school, and greater consistency within the SMT.
- HMI confirmed in November 2007 that the school was making good progress.
- Continued effort is necessary to improve the overall quality of teaching.

Bradford Moor Community Primary School

- Considerable, sustained progress in raising attainment is being made and the school is now at or above floor targets in English and mathematics.
- More requires to be done to address satisfactorily all of the areas of concern indicated.

Lapage Primary School and Nursery

- Standards at Key Stage 2 are rising and the school is now above floor targets in English and mathematics.
- There is greater consistency in the overall quality of teaching.
- Subject leadership has improved, and staff are now more accountable.
- The school is now a more stable organisation.

5. Sustainability – what next?

All three schools will have another two years of support.

What will the school do?

Atlas Community Primary School

- Develop a greater understanding among pupils of what they have to do to improve.
- Ensure that the school curriculum reflects the community it serves and meets the needs of the community.
- Maintain the improvement for all agenda.
- Increase the challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Help pupils become more independent.
- Involve and support parents in their children's learning. For example, the Year 2 teacher is to train parents in supporting children's reading.

Bradford Moor Community Primary School

Continue to:

- improve Key Stage 2 results;
- improve CVA to be in top 20% of schools by 2009-10;
- improve attendance;
- develop the role of middle managers and the team of staff;
- enhance further the culture of the school and expectations of parents, pupils and staff;
- develop the extended school's agenda;
- develop the role of the governing body to help them become more of a critical friend;
- ensure pupils leave with higher standards.

Lapage Primary School and Nursery

- Discussions to take place with the governing body regarding succession planning.
- Extend the professional development of SMT members.
- Base future assessment on internal teacher assessment and moderation. Continue to ensure consistency in assessment across 28 members of staff.
- Continue to embed the new procedures and further develop the culture of the school.
- Move to collaboration and moderation of standards across teachers in similar schools in Bradford.

What will the LA do?

- In Atlas Community Primary School there will be continued support within the programme.
- Bradford Moor Community Primary School will remain in ISP this year; decisions on next year will be made depending on levels of pupils' attainment and progress.
- In Lapage Primary School and Nursery there will be targeted support to build the school's capacity for improvement.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies South Tyneside

1. School context and profile

All Saints' Church of England Primary School is located in the South Shields area of South Tyneside. An extremely high proportion of pupils are entitled to free schools meals, which reflects the high level of social and economic disadvantage in the area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is more than double the national average.

In their Ofsted inspection of November 2006 the school was placed into the notice to improve category. The main areas for improvement were:

- raise standards, particularly in English, and provide better opportunities for pupils to practise basic skills in other subjects;
- improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning;
- improve provision for the more able and ensure that all pupils have clear guidance about how to improve their work;
- improve attendance.

Overall, children were not enjoying school. In January 2007, due to the retirement of the previous headteacher, a new headteacher took up post.

Results for Key Stage 2 L4+ mathematics for 2005 – 62%; 2006 – 43%; 2007 – 70%

Results for Key Stage 2 L4+ English for 2005 – 50%; 2006 – 33%; 2007 – 70%

2. Barriers to improvement

Prior to the new headteacher taking up post the following characterised the school:

- overall low staff expectations of pupils in the areas of behaviour, attainment and achievement, coupled with low parental expectations;
- little involvement of parents in their children's learning. Overall limited communication between parents and the school;
- inconsistency in the quality of teaching;
- low self-esteem of children, who were given few responsibilities;
- poor behaviour, and ineffective measures to deal with behaviour;
- variable attendance.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- Staff expectations of pupils.
- The overall quality of teaching, classroom organisation and allocation of teaching time to specific areas of the curriculum.
- Low pupil self-esteem, with pupils having low expectations of themselves. Pupils were given few responsibilities.
- Poor learning and overall lack of pupil progress.
- A lack of rigour in tracking.
- A lack of accountability among staff.
- The monitoring of classroom practice was not used effectively.
- A poor curriculum structure.
- The reputation of the school in the community.

What was done?

Immediately on taking up post, and as a result of her assessment of the situation prior to that date, the headteacher moved the Year 2 teacher to Year 6 as part of a strategy to improve results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007. Thereafter the following actions were taken:

- the headteacher implemented her clear vision for the school and what she believed should be done for and with children. She 'walked the job' and spent time in classes. She monitored learning and teaching with the School Improvement Officer (SIO); provided feedback for staff and determined targets for improvement; scrutinised teachers' plans and pupils' work and provided feedback; and introduced performance management;
- a Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) was introduced with clear success criteria;
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was given a greater emphasis and focused on priorities in the School Improvement Plan (SIP);
- teacher planning was introduced and timetables were developed to ensure consistency in practice across the school. Clear expectations of staff were defined regarding timescales with teachers emailing their plans to the headteacher by specific dates. This was consistently reinforced over time;
- individual discussions were held with staff;
- pupil progress meetings were held which examined data; analysed individual pupil's progress; discussed reasons for any lack of progress; and decided on what had to be done to meet children's needs. Staff were made accountable for their children's progress;
- staff were involved in tracking and crucially in using the evidence in tracking;
- staff and children began to be involved in target setting; the headteacher had individual discussions with staff;
- Classroom Assistants' (CAs) time was increased and their role refocused into supporting learning, rather than supporting teachers. Planning sheets were developed for CAs who were also made accountable;
- overall, there was a refocusing on meeting children's needs and generating an enthusiasm for learning;
- standards for the presentation of pupils' work, marking and use of display were set;

- a policy of assertive discipline was reintroduced to staff;
- Assessment for Learning was reintroduced to staff and expectations made clear;
- a 'Getting Along' programme was introduced to help develop pupils' social skills;
- opportunities for children were increased with children being involved in educational excursions. The School Council was reinvigorated and children given a voice in the school;
- breakfast club was made available to all children in school;
- links with the wider community were re-established and greater contact made, for example, with the school nurse and school welfare officer.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Extensive use of success criteria in the RAP.
- Analysis and use of data.
- Pupil progress meetings with all staff.
- Discussions with children and parents.
- Questionnaires to parents.
- 'Walking the job' – the headteacher is in most classes every day.
- Monitoring of the quality of learning and teaching.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Use of the performance management system.

What has been the overall impact?

- Much more effective leadership for learning.
- The Senior Management Team (SMT) members much more empowered and accountable.
- Rigorous use of monitoring and performance management systems.
- More effective use of the tracking system to help meet children's needs.
- More effective use of classroom assistants.
- An improvement in the overall quality of teaching, but further improvement still required to ensure consistency and ensure that all teaching is good.
- Attainment improved at Key Stage 2, and improved outcomes at Foundation Stage.
- Attendance improved and no longer an issue.
- Exclusions reduced.
- Staff now more accountable.
- A much-improved school ethos.
- Children are more enthusiastic learners, they are asked for and give their opinions, they are more confident and overall are making more progress.
- Parents are now visiting the school and more involved in their children's learning, they attend assemblies and, at times, join children at lunchtimes.
- Staff are more aware of families and their needs, as a result of links with outside agencies, helping to meet children's needs.
- School governors more supportive.

4. Local authority support and challenge

The key areas for support/challenge?

- The quality of leadership.
- Staff expectations.
- Learning and teaching including planning; tracking; classroom organisation; and the teaching process.
- Attainment.
- Attendance.
- Children's attitudes to learning.
- Pupil behaviour.
- Parental involvement in their children's learning.

What was done?

Although the local authority (LA) is not funded within the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), it has adopted the processes and materials used within it.

Actions of the authority were in two stages: Stage 1 was the period of time when the previous headteacher was in post; and Stage 2 the period following the appointment of the new headteacher.

Stage 1

Consultants were involved in the school, one-to-one training took place and additional funding was provided. This had little overall impact due to a lack of cooperation from the school.

Stage 2

Following the appointment of the new headteacher, the following actions were taken:

- two SIOs worked initially in the school on aspects of leadership and management which included the SIP, timetabling and generally the provision of advice for the headteacher;
- a team of three consultants worked in the school, one for Early Years, one for Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2. Initially they gave very high levels of support to the school and were responsible for teaching, learning and curriculum development. One was appointed as a lead consultant responsible for the organisation of support. The initial priority was planning;
- a mentor headteacher was appointed to support the new headteacher; they worked together on tracking and the identification of under achievement;
- Education Action Zone (EAZ) provided support in assertive discipline and resources;
- a School Support Group (SSG) met every half term to monitor support and ensure the school was not overloaded. The group judges impact of developments and identifies other areas for support, such as providing support for the joint monitoring of lessons. The group comprises the headteacher, Chairperson of governors, the Diocese Director, the SCC officer and two SIOs;
- there is a RAP for each cohort and this is the main element of the SIP. It is proving helpful in setting targets for cohorts and individual pupils in addition to curricular targets;
- all CPD is linked to the RAP/SIP, for example, on tracking. Staff met weekly and were either led by the headteacher or consultants;
- the headteacher, with support from consultants, changed the stages at which teachers taught and used teachers' skills appropriately;

- a tracking system was introduced using the ISP model;
- progress meetings were held regularly;
- a monitoring process was implemented which included pupils' work scrutiny, lesson observations and the scrutiny of plans;
- a Performance Management system was introduced, with targets set being based on pupils' progress;
- monies were used from School Improvement and Targets Unit, Intervention and SCC to fund, for example, booster groups and intervention strategies;
- the school was part of the 'Making good progress' pilot which provided additional funding for one-to-one tuition;
- the headteacher 'walked the school' regularly.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Half termly SSG meetings took place where the headteacher reported to the group against the targets in the SIP.
- Use of the success criteria in the RAP.
- A termly SIP visit using a standard form where the following was discussed:
 1. Standards of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
 2. The impact of the SIP.
 3. The SEF (school self-evaluation form).
 4. Target setting.
 5. Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL).
 6. An invitation to be included in the LA's good practice directory.
 7. The budget.
 8. Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).
 9. School categorisation – discussions based on school self-evaluation and headteacher and SIP judgements of the school.
 10. Identification of needs for LA support.

What has been the overall impact?

- A major improvement in National Curriculum test results.
- Improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching.
- Improved planning and subject knowledge.
- Higher expectations of teachers, with staff being more open to change.
- Improved tracking and identification of under achievement.
- A greater focus on meeting children's needs.
- Effective intervention.
- Improved behaviour and an increase in children's self-esteem.
- An overall improvement in the ethos of the school.
- Staff more accountable and aware of their responsibilities.

- Much more focused and dynamic leadership.

'With the introduction of major initial intensive support to the school the LA found that the schools could be improved more quickly, and thereafter could remove the intensive support relatively quickly... but only if the headteacher continues to lead developments once the authority withdraws.'

5. Sustainability – what next?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure improvements are sustained?

What will the school do?

- Continue with efforts to embed improvements begun.
- Extend roles of SMT members to extend leadership capacity.
- Continue with intervention procedures.
- Increase the focus on the whole curriculum, and introduce a more creative curriculum.
- Raise staff expectations across the curriculum.
- Increase the focus on inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

What will the LA do?

- There will be a gradual withdrawal of support from consultants. The lead consultant will continue to go in regularly, along with a leading teacher.
- The school is now required to define what it sees as areas for improvement.
- There is a shift in focus from the authority taking the lead to the headteacher taking the lead.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Farmilo Primary and Nursery School, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire

1. School context and profile

Farmilo Primary and Nursery School opened in September 2001 following the reorganisation of the schools in Mansfield.

- Number on roll is 227, including Foundation Stage (FS). Age range three to 11.
- 96.7% of the learners are white British.
- 1.2% have English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- 27% of the school population are eligible for free school meals.
- 14% are on the register of Special Educational Needs.
- On entry attainment is below national expectations.

The school was inspected in January 2007 where it was judged to be a satisfactory and improving school. The 'rigour and determination', with which the headteacher (who had been in post for ten months at the time) had tackled underachievement in the school since his appointment, had resulted in 'significant improvements.'

Issues identified for improvement were:

- the attendance of learners;
- the incidence of good and better teaching in Years 1 and 2;
- standards in writing and investigative and problem solving in mathematics and science;
- independent learning;
- the rigorous monitoring of school performance by all levels of leadership.

2006 Key Stage 2 results: English L4+ 60%; mathematics L4+ 63%; science L4+ 63%

2007 Key Stage 2 results: English L4+ 77%; mathematics L4+ 77%; science L4+ 87%

Writing, elements of mathematics and science were below average at the end of Key Stage 2.

2. Barriers to improvement

- Underachievement had gone unchecked in previous years.
- Staff morale was low.
- There were few opportunities for professional development.
- There were a number of pupils who did not attend school regularly.
- There were behaviour issues in Key Stage 2, which were impacting negatively on standards.
- There was an imbalance in the curriculum, and concerns about resources for Key Stage 2.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- Staff required to refocus on achievement.
- The imbalance in curriculum had to be addressed.
- The development of effective systems for monitoring and tracking of pupil progress was required.
- The involvement of staff in consultation at all levels – team building and empowering.

Priorities for the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) included:

- teaching and learning;
- attendance;
- behaviour;
- distributed leadership.

What was done?

- The involvement of the school in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) for two years underpinned the refocusing of staff and children on achievement.
- The adoption of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) throughout the school, and appointment of leading behaviour teacher/SEAL and Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) for Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda to improve expectations, behaviour and attendance. Co-coaching model adopted.
- A focus on basic skills teaching and on how children learn, through strategic and rigorous planning, professional development and performance management.
- Curriculum enhancement developed to ensure pupils' engagement with learning. Including introduction of themed weeks linked to strands of ECM agenda.
- Provision of resources to enable staff to deliver the enriched curriculum more effectively.
- Development of staff to promote effective distributed leadership model, through staff teams led by three TLRs.
- Systems for promoting regular attendance by all pupils, including targets, rewards and so on developed and embedded.
- Working with local authority (LA) consultants, school has established a rigorous system of tracking and monitoring pupil progress at all stages to ensure that each child was on track to achieve their targets.

Monitoring and evaluation

Success criteria for the RAP included:

- 100% of target groups making expected progress;
- incidences of non attendance are reduced;
- behaviour throughout the school is improved. Fewer incidents of unacceptable behaviour;
- rise in levels of attainment.

Information and data used to measure progress included:

- six-weekly curriculum target data;
- mid-and end-of-year teacher assessment;
- teaching observations;
- FS Profile data;
- Key Stage 1/2 test and teacher assessment data;
- optional National Curriculum tests information;
- visual mapping data for all year groups;
- Ofsted inspection report;
- Hard to Shift external consultant monitoring information.

What has been the overall impact?

'It is easier to lead a committed staff; it makes the job a joy.'

'Leadership becomes a pleasure when your staff share commitment, enthusiasm and responsibility... and see the differences they are making.'

'The LA made it clear that they wanted us to take responsibility for our own improvement. What they provided was a process, structure and support to enable the school to find its own way.'

The school has been well supported by the LA throughout, and continues to be. This included support for the leadership of the school, both at a strategic level and operational level. The work of the advisers and the consultants who work with the school is highly valued. The tariff applied to the school by the LA ensured that there was a high level of consultancy support.

Quote from the headteacher: *'The LA has the courage to support a wider vision of attainment and how this can be achieved, then puts their money where their mouth is. It knows that we need enrichment and motivation to raise standards beyond what we can achieve through teaching just skills.'*

4. Local authority support and challenge

LA identified key priorities for the school:

- whole-school attainment and progress in literacy and mathematics, with writing as a priority, and particularly for boys;
- Year 5/6 attainment;
- reading at Key Stage 1;
- learning skills;
- middle management development;
- governance;
- priority was to empower the leadership to make the difference;
- to improve attendance and behaviour;
- support the development of effective tracking and monitoring systems.

What was done?

Role of school improvement partner (SIP), LA adviser, consultant:

- LA provided very good support and advice on data and its analysis. Met to look at school data and agree targets for improvement. Produced a performance handbook and gave the framework for the RAP.
- LA provided target grid, showing Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 progress, and age-related expectations.
- Mediation of Year 6 Primary National Strategy and Notts material.
- Introduction of Hard to Shift agenda.
- Development of SEAL and pupil voice.
- A range of strategies to support the teaching of reading at Key Stage 1, including introduction of letters and sounds.
- Training for subject leaders on monitoring, evaluation and effective assessment.
- Key aspects of learning advice from *Excellence and Enjoyment* document *Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years* Ref DfES 0518-2004 G.
- The categorisation by the LA of the school as Level 4 for support ensured that any additional support that the school requested/required was made available to them, such as consultants.
- LA consultants and advisers work alongside staff in developing effective monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Role of SIP and school improvement adviser (SIA) seen as complementary. The knowledge of the school through the SIA role enabled the SIP to identify and broker effective support.
- LA employed an external consultant to monitor the RAPs.
- School well supported by consultants and adviser in writing learning plans and leading Professional Development Meetings.
- ISP consultants brokered additional support – Wave 2/3 ICT, numeracy, literacy, FS.
- Joint evaluation of judgements contained in the self-evaluation forms.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Provision of RAISE online and LA data provided local and national comparisons for specific categories of learners.
- Attendance under constant scrutiny. Considerable improvements evidenced.
- LA working directly with the staff to monitor and evaluate progress against targets at all levels. To achieve green ISP judgements.
- To ensure that by 2007 the percentage of children achieving level 4+ is 70% in English and mathematics.
- To improve quality of teaching and level of expectations so that 100% of teaching is satisfactory and 75% good or better.

What has been the overall impact?

'The key to the school's journey has been the combination of a strong management team with a whole-school approach in which all staff are valued and well supported.'

Impact has been that:

- the school has moved from 60% L4+ in English in 2005 to 77% in 2007 with the same picture for mathematics;
- percentage of children on track has risen and individual school tracking data shows good progress;
- across the LA, the literacy and numeracy subject leaders have presented a case study of their transition arrangements from Year 5/6 at Notts central training;
- a Year 6 teacher has worked on production of a package of support materials for other Year 6 teachers in the LA;
- school is being used to support other schools in similar contexts.

5. Sustainability – what next?

What will the school do?

- The school, although no longer ISP, has adapted the ISP model to age-related target setting to continue the rigour of ISP.
- Ofsted judged the capacity to improve to be 'good'. The model of distributed leadership which the school is developing will support this.
- The monitoring and evaluation systems are now embedded in the culture of the school.
- There are key staff in the school who take a leading role in ensuring that the focus remains firmly on teaching and learning.
- SEAL is integral to the way in which the school operates and will continue to support good behaviour and attendance.
- School should exceed 2008 targets.
- Ongoing contact with subject leaders through exit programme (Building on success network).

What will the LA do?

- The school remains at Level 4 tariff with LA, which will ensure continued effective support and challenge.
- Provide rich data for the school, which will enable the effective self-evaluation cycle to continue.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Leagrave Primary School, Luton

School context and profile

Leagrave Primary School opened in September 1998, as a result of the amalgamation of Leagrave Infant and Junior schools. The current leadership team was recruited in September 2005. The LA had been working with the school prior to this. Audit at handover identified the provision as inadequate overall; teaching was 50% inadequate and attendance and behaviour had serious concerns.

- Number on roll is 390 including Foundation Stage with provision for 60 part-time nursery places. Age range: three to 11.
- The school is multi-lingual (19 languages) and multi-cultural, reflecting the local community.
- 20% of the school population have Special Educational Needs.
- 40% are eligible for free school meals.
- There is a high incidence of pupil mobility.
- 74% of pupils come from minority ethnic and traveller groups.
- On entry attainment is well below national expectations.

Much of the LA's support work was actioned soon after the arrival of the new leadership team.

The school was inspected in October 2006 when it was judged to be an improving school. The work of the headteacher was highlighted as a significant strength, and along with the governors and the leadership team has *'effectively implemented improvements and there had been dramatic changes in the last year.'*

Standards overall were judged to be unsatisfactory at this time, although it was stated that there was good capacity to improve.

Issues identified were:

- making better use of assessment and marking in order to raise standards;
- improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good;
- raising achievement by developing the expertise of all the subject leaders and governors in checking that pupils do as well as they should.

2006 Key Stage 2 results: English L4+ 30%; mathematics L4+ 59%

2007 Key Stage 2 results: English L4+ 70%; mathematics L4+ 62%

2. Barriers to improvement

- Quality of teaching and learning was unacceptably low.
- Recruitment and retention issues.
- Behaviour and attendance issues.
- History of low standards and lack of progress across the school.
- Children working at below age-related expectations.
- Lack of rigour and system in tracking and target setting.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- Change ethos and culture of under-achievement.
- Raise academic and behavioural standards.
- Significantly improve results at end of Key Stage 2.
- Raise standards by making better use of assessment and marking for target setting.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that it is consistently good.
- Raise achievement by developing the expertise of all subject leaders, to ensure that all children do as well as they should.
- Develop the expertise of governors in checking that all children do as well as they should.
- Legacy of poor leadership and management impacting negatively on standards.

Priorities for the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) included:

- teaching and learning;
- attendance and behaviour;
- knowledge and effective use of pupil tracking data to raise standards;
- development of distributed leadership model at all levels.

What was done?

- The involvement of the school in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) and designation as 'Hard to Shift' has supported the refocusing of staff/children on achievement.
- Additional time and resources allocated to Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education and a commitment to full inclusion in order to address the very specific needs of the children who live in this highly deprived local community.
- Introduction of Hard to Shift agenda and audit of non-negotiables for ISP.
- Development of focused, bespoke professional development, and use of mentoring, coaching and peer support to enable effective teaching and learning.
- Focus on basic skills teaching and on how children learn, through strategic and rigorous planning and delivery of professional development and performance management.
- Introduction of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) throughout the school.
- Development of distributed leadership has increased the effectiveness of subject leaders.
- Appointment of an Early Years manager.
- Innovative timetabling, curriculum content and design and thinking skills meet the needs of the pupils.
- A lifestyle and inclusion manager drives and secures inclusion and support for the most vulnerable children, including extended school provision.
- Benchmarks and robust systems and tools for self-evaluation, assessment and tracking progress are now embedded in the school.
- Systems for promoting regular attendance by all pupils, including targets, rewards and so on developed and embedded.
- Working with LA consultants, the school has established a rigorous system of tracking and monitoring pupil progress at all stages to ensure that each child is on track to achieve their targets.

- A range of appropriate intervention strategies accelerate progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Significant investment in ICT has provided all staff with state of the art equipment which enhances teaching and learning.
- Development of leadership teams to drive school improvement.

Monitoring and evaluation

Success criteria for the RAP included:

- Bespoke continuing professional development (CPD) is given priority to ensure that all staff are effective in their roles. Model adopted includes peer mentoring and coaching.
- Improvements in attendance and punctuality, and reduction in exclusions have been achieved through development of a reward culture and working with parents through Every Child Matters core offer services to raise aspirations of children and parents.
- Behaviour throughout the school is improved. Fewer incidents of unacceptable behaviour have been achieved through the work of the two family support officers.
- Rise in levels of attainment, driven by culture of high expectations, quality first teaching and effective systems for Assessment Recording and Reporting.
- Additional time devoted to core subjects.

What has been the overall impact?

Quotes from the children: *'School used to be a nightmare a couple of years ago.'*

'Now we have a very high level of work.'

'We have task wheels, VCOP and listen to other people's views.'*

'We have pupil power, and opinions about school improvement.'

Quote from the headteacher: *'Professional development grows passion.'*

*Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation

4. Local authority support and challenge

- Priority to support the school in recruitment of key personnel and development of effective leadership teams.
- Help and support with resources, particularly for English as an Additional Language.
- Provide support and challenge through ISP.
- Support with development of SEAL.
- Hard to Shift agenda led by LA.

What was done?

Role of School Improvement Partner, LA adviser, consultant:

- LA provided continuing support through ISP consultancy.
- Supported CPD through provision of consultants who coached staff.
- LA put in additional funding; 'making a difference' enabled school to fund physical education manager for Planning, Preparation and Assessment time.
- Supported provision of additional teacher for Year 6 from January 2008.
- Supported school with succession planning.
- Removal of previous ineffectual leadership.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Provision of RAISE online and LA data which provided local and national comparisons for specific categories of learner.
- LA working directly with the staff and team leaders to monitor and evaluate progress against targets at all levels, through ISP.
- Support and challenge through termly RAP reviews.
- Links to LA strategic planning evident and highlighted in the school plan. Links to key themes are made.

What has been the overall impact?

An excellent example of focused, sustained school improvement with strong partnership working to improve outcomes for pupils.

5. Sustainability – what next?

What will the school do?

- The school has very good procedures in place for succession planning, and the leadership teams are active, effective and held to account for standards.
- The organisation of the school into 'domains' supports this distributed leadership model.
- There is a clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- There are key staff in the school who take a leading role in ensuring that the focus remains firmly on teaching and learning.
- SEAL is integral to the way in which the school operates and will continue to support good behaviour and attendance.

'We are about stabilising and moving the school forward to produce leaders for the future.' (Headteacher.)

What will the LA do?

- The school will continue to receive LA support through ISP.
- Provide rich data for the school, which will enable the effective self-evaluation cycle to continue.
- Disseminate the very good practice at the school, through showcasing practice and using staff from the school as ambassadors of good practice in the authority.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Grange Community Primary School, Suffolk

1. School context and profile

The school serves an area of high social deprivation near the docks in Felixstowe. The school has had a turbulent period over the past three years, and has moved from an Ofsted category of serious weaknesses in 2004, to a judgement of good with outstanding features in that timeframe.

- Grange Community Primary School has 187 pupils on roll (164 full-time and 23 part-time).
- A small but growing number of pupils have English as an Additional Language.
- 26% of children are entitled to free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average, and includes those children with statements, who have a wide range of learning difficulties.
- Most children are from white British backgrounds, with a small number from a range of different minority ethnic groups.

The school was inspected in March 2006, following inspection in 2004, where it was judged to have 'serious weaknesses.' The judgement made was that the school is now good, with good capacity to improve, no longer has serious weaknesses, and provides good value for money.

Issues identified were:

- to continue to raise standards in English and mathematics at both key stages by improving writing and mathematical problem solving skills;
- to continue to work with parents to improve pupils' attendance;
- to further develop the role of the governors, to enhance their impact on school evaluation and planning for improvement.

2006 Key Stage 2 results: English L4 54%; mathematics L4 54%

2007 Key Stage 2 results: English L4 79%; mathematics L4 71%

2. Barriers to improvement

Priorities for the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) included:

- teaching and learning;
- attendance and behaviour;
- knowledge and use of pupil tracking data, including accelerated progress in target groups;
- increase motivation and engagement;
- increase parental involvement with learning.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- Effective and systematic interrogation of data to ensure positive outcomes for children.
- Development of effective systems for monitoring and tracking of pupil progress.
- Development of a new school structure, which would provide appropriate leadership at all levels.

What was done?

- The involvement of the school in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) underpinned the re-focus on effective systems for tracking, monitoring and evaluation impact.
- Careful appointment and deployment of key members of staff was made to lead the changes. There was a team working model in Years 5 and 6 which built on the strengths of individual staff.
- Strategic and rigorous planning and delivery of professional development and performance management, which supports the school development plan.
- Allocated time for subject leader development.
- Provision of resources to enable staff to deliver the enriched curriculum more effectively, particularly ICT, supported by use of Hard to Shift funding.
- Development and nurturing of staff to promote effective distributed leadership model.
- Systems for promoting regular attendance by all pupils and raising awareness of school expectations with parents have had a positive impact.
- Working with local authority (LA) consultants, and a school improvement adviser (SIA), school has established a rigorous system of tracking and monitoring pupil progress at all stages to ensure that each child is 'on track' to achieve their targets.
- Changes to the timing of the school day enable focused skills work, and minimise 'lost' time.
- Effective use of pupil progress meetings to engage children with their targets.
- Established weekly meetings for support staff, and directed time for support staff/teaching staff liaison.
- Establishment of, and high profile given to, the work of the school council to support good behaviour and develop pupil engagement.
- Governor working party established to reduce level of non-attendance. Education welfare officer and school council involved.
- Involvement of school with 'Playing for Success' with Ipswich Town football club.
- Training of teaching assistant as learning mentor.

Monitoring and evaluation

Success criteria for the RAP included:

- incidences of non attendance and exclusion are reduced due to: engagement of parents through better communication; raised attendance at parent evenings; and higher response levels to questionnaires;
- rise in levels of attainment achieved through developing focus on Quality First Teaching and improved Assessment, Recording and Reporting systems;
- staff structure includes new mathematics and literacy managers who have developed distributed leadership model, and more accountability for all staff;
- subject leaders are given time to fulfil their role;
- radical action taken with staff who, despite support, do not have the capacity to improve.

The school has been well supported by the LA throughout, and continues to be. This included support for the leadership of the school, both at a strategic level and operational level. The work of the advisers and the consultants who work with the school is highly valued.

Quote from the headteacher: *'End of Key Stage 2 results are not a Year 6 issue. We have changed the culture, everyone contributes.'*

What has been the overall impact?

'The School Improvement Plan and the RAP are integrated.' (Headteacher.)

'Dialogue during Pupil Progress Meetings is crucial. Where they are and what you are going to do about it.' (Headteacher.)

'The current leadership team has changed the whole culture and expectations of the school. It is now one in which pupils have an expectation that they will succeed and staff understand that they make a collective contribution to this. They understand how this can be achieved.' (LA.)

4. Local authority support and challenge

LA identified key priorities for the school:

- whole-school attainment and progress in literacy and mathematics, with reading and problem solving skills in mathematics as priorities;
- ensuring appropriate progress of gifted and talented pupils;
- improving attendance and behaviour;
- support the development of effective tracking, monitoring and evaluation systems;
- effective deployment of support staff to support teaching and learning effectively;
- to develop the role of the subject leaders to support a distributed leadership model and ensure sustainability.

What was done?

Role of LA adviser, consultant

- LA provided good support and advice on data and its analysis. Met to look at school data and agree targets for improvement.
- LA staff supported the school through ISP, with writing RAP and attending RAP reviews.
- Support for gifted and talented pupils.
- Introduction of Hard to Shift agenda.
- A range of strategies to support the teaching of phonics.
- Talk for Writing project.
- Training provision for teaching assistant as learning mentor.
- Effective 'Core action group' meetings on half-termly basis.
- The school specific knowledge of the SIA has enabled efficient brokerage of support for the school.
- LA consultants and adviser work alongside staff in developing effective monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Provision of RAISE online and LA data which provided local and national comparisons for specific categories of learners.
- Attendance and exclusions under constant scrutiny. Considerable improvements evidenced.
- LA working directly with the staff to monitor and evaluate progress against targets at all levels. To achieve green ISP judgements.
- To ensure that by 2007 the percentage of children achieving Level 4+ is above the floor target in English and mathematics.

Information and data used to measure progress included:

- termly RAP reviews;
- half-termly core group meetings;
- mid-year formal assessment (information is interrogated regularly, and in detail, to ensure progress for each child);
- teaching observations;
- work scrutiny reports by team leaders and mathematics and English subject leaders;
- Foundation Stage Profile data;
- Key Stage 1/2 test and teacher assessment data;
- optional National Curriculum test information;
- visual mapping data for all year groups;
- Ofsted inspection report;
- Hard to Shift consultant monitoring information;
- use of key practitioner to identify intervention required; deploy support staff; oversee corrective programmes; and evaluate impact.

What has been the overall impact?

- End of Key Stage 2 results in 2007 show significant improvements in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Key Stage 1 results in English and mathematics show considerable improvements.
- Reduced incidence of exclusions.
- Improvement in attendance rates.
- Some targets identified on the RAP for July 2007 across all year groups in Key Stage 2 have been met and exceeded.

5. Sustainability – what next?

What will the school do?

- The school continues in ISP for the third year, and the RAP is integrated into the School Improvement Plan.
- Ofsted judged the capacity to improve to be 'good'. The model of distributed leadership and succession planning which the school has developed will support this.
- There are now robust monitoring and evaluation systems throughout the school.
- The school is committed to the professional development of all staff, which is directly linked to raising standards and supported through performance management.
- The school has an effective model of team leaders and mathematics and English subject leaders who take a leading role in ensuring that the focus remains firmly on teaching and learning.
- School uses the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials to promote good behaviour and attendance.
- School should reach 2008 targets.

What will the LA do?

- The school will continue to receive a high level of support from the LA.
- Provide data for the school, which will enable the effective self-evaluation cycle to continue.
- Continue to act as challenge and support for the school.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies White's Wood Lane Junior School, Lincolnshire

1. School context and profile

White's Wood Lane Junior School is sited in the most deprived ward in Lincolnshire, and serves an area of high social deprivation.

- Number on roll: 186. Age range: seven to 11.
- Almost 100% of the learners are white British, no child has English as an Additional Language.
- Above average percentage of the school population is eligible for free school meals. A high proportion are on the register of Special Educational Needs, of these the proportion with a statement is very high.
- On entry attainment is below national expectations.

The school was inspected in June 2004 and was removed from the category of 'serious weaknesses'. It was judged to be a satisfactory and improving school. It was noted that there had been '*an effective response to the previous report.*'

Issues identified were:

- to raise standards further in English, mathematics and science;
- to review the afternoon timetable, so that it addresses the current difficulties with pupils' behaviour and concentration.

2006 Key Stage 2 results: English L4 59%; mathematics L4 59%

2007 Key Stage 2 results: English L4 79%; mathematics L4 74%

2. Barriers to improvement

- Quality of teaching and ineffective deployment of support staff.
- Difficulty in involving parents to improve attendance.
- Recruitment issues.
- Ineffective tracking and targeting systems.
- Low standards and lack of progress across the school. Children working at below age-related expectations.
- Behaviour issues.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- Refocusing of staff on achievement, challenging underperformance.
- Development and embedding of robust behaviour policy and positive strategies.
- Development of effective systems for monitoring and tracking of pupil progress.
- Involving staff in consultation at all levels – team building and empowering.
- Revision of curriculum to reflect Excellence and Enjoyment. (*Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years* Ref DfES 0518-2004 G.)

What was done?

- Introduction of new leadership structure to drive school improvement.
- Appointment of teaching and learning mentor.
- The involvement of the school in the ISP underpinned a refocusing of staff/children on achievement.
- Commitment to Quality First Teaching.
- Audit of support and effective provision mapping in place.
- Adoption of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) throughout the school to raise expectations, and support behaviour and attendance policy.
- Revision of four year framework to take account of Excellence and Enjoyment. Creative curriculum developed to ensure pupil's engagement with the learning, including introduction of themed weeks linked to strands of Every Child Matters agenda.
- Skills-based curriculum and assessments in place.
- Provision of resources to enable staff to deliver the enriched curriculum more effectively.
- Development and nurturing of staff to promote effective distributed leadership model, through staff teams led by two teaching and learning responsibility staff.
- Effective support for and deployment of support staff.
- Partnership with LA, SIP and peer head mentor has supported the development of robust systems for tracking pupil progress, which are used to ensure that all pupils across the school are working at or beyond age-related expectations.
- Investment in professional development of all staff and robust performance management systems which are focused on school improvement and are founded in reliable data.

Monitoring and evaluation

Success criteria for the RAP included:

- teaching and learning mentor in an established role;
- effective provision mapping involves all teachers and is effective. Includes gifted and talented children;
- adults deployed effectively;
- new tracking systems are informing planning for mathematics and English;
- teachers planning for opportunities for target setting.

The school has been well supported by the LA throughout, and continues to be. This included support for the leadership of the school, both at a strategic and operational level. The work of the peer head mentor, School Improvement Partner (SIP), LA advisers, ISP team and the consultants who work with the school is greatly valued.

Quote from the headteacher: *'LA and SIP have provided ongoing support and wise counsel... They challenged me all the time, and I needed that. I needed someone to say, "why?"'*

What has been the overall impact?

'I know we are building a very skilled team, and when they move on, they will take that practice with them.'

'I know that I have key staff I can totally rely on.'

'Everyone is "on message" and the standard of professional dialogue now taking place within school is impressive.'

'There is always a tension between the need to track children for age-related expectation targets and the need to track each child for their individual progress – the ISP has helped us to focus on the right groups.'

4. Local authority support and challenge

LA identified key priorities for the school:

- whole-school attainment and progress in literacy and mathematics;
- acceleration of target children;
- development of skills and key aspects of learning;
- appointment of key staff and deployment of teachers to ensure Quality First Teaching;
- to ensure that all staff work as a team and have a shared agenda through ownership of the RAP;
- support the development of effective tracking and monitoring systems;
- development of transition between the feeder infant school and the junior school.

What was done?

Role of SIP, LA adviser, consultants and peer mentor head:

- LA provided very good support and advice and has been involved in the termly review and writing of the RAP.
- ISP/literacy consultant spent 23 days in the school, working with staff and offering continuity of support.
- Introduction of Hard to Shift agenda.
- Development of SEAL and pupil voice.
- Mathematics consultant has offered a range of support, including leading professional development meetings, coaching and one-to-one support for staff.
- Training for subject leaders on monitoring, evaluation and effective assessment.
- LA consultants and advisers work alongside staff in developing effective monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Role of SIP seen as crucial to school improvement. Links between the school and the SIP school are developing, as are those with the peer mentor head.
- Effective LA systems in place to coordinate support, communicate actions and review progress.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Provision of RAISE online, FFT and LA data which provided local and national comparisons for specific categories of learners.
- ISP consultant working closely with staff, and monitors pupil progress meetings.
- Additional support for monitoring and evaluation through Hard to Shift classification. Core group meetings, LA reviews.
- LA working directly with the staff to monitor and evaluate progress against targets at all levels. To achieve green ISP judgements.
- To ensure that by 2008 the percentage of children achieving Level 4 and above shows measurable value added over and above expectations for Year 6 cohort.

Information and data used to measure progress included:

- teaching observations;
- outcomes from pupil progress meetings;
- Individual Development Plans;
- Key Stage 2 test data;
- environment audits;
- peer observations;
- children's self-evaluation against curricular targets;
- optional National Curriculum test information;
- visual provision mapping data for all year groups;
- Ofsted inspection report;
- Hard to Shift external consultant monitoring information.

What has been the overall impact?

- Impact has been that the school has moved from 59% L4+ in English in 2006 to 79% in 2007 giving a 20% gain. In mathematics figures have moved from L4 59% to 74%, showing a 15% gain. 37/45 children made three sub levels progress in writing and 33/45 made three sub levels progress in mathematics.

'The outcomes of the 2007 end of key stage tests exemplify the profound impact changes in the organisation of staffing in Year 6 have had.'

- Children are more actively involved in knowing how well they are doing, and are increasingly able to articulate what they need to do to improve.
- Impact of support from the ISP team across the school can be seen in greater security of teacher assessments.
- Children are being more accurately and effectively identified for targeted intervention.
- The school is acquiring an 'achievement culture.'

5. Sustainability – what next?

What will the school do?

- The school remains as an ISP school, and uses the processes as an effective tool for school improvement.
- The monitoring and evaluation systems are now embedded in the culture of the school.
- The recruitment and retention of key staff and the new staffing structure takes a leading role in ensuring that the focus remains firmly on teaching and learning.
- The crucial role of the teaching and learning mentor will continue to develop to drive school improvement.
- SEAL is integral to the way in which the school operates and will continue to support good behaviour and attendance.
- Links with the peer mentor head and the SIP will continue to support the leadership of the school.
- Increased involvement of the governors and their ability to challenge the implementation of the RAP and its outcomes will support the improvement agenda.
- Further work on transition with the feeder infant school will support the continuity of learning.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies

The Beeches Primary School, Peterborough

1. School context and profile

- The Beeches Primary School has 510 pupils on roll. There is a high level of social deprivation.
- All but one of these pupils has English as an Additional Language.
- On entry attainment is below national average, particularly in terms of Communication, Language and Literacy Skills.
- The school has 20% of children entitled to free school meals (FSM), although this does not include the Minority Ethnic New Arrivals (MENA) children, who are not eligible for FSM. (If they were to be included, it would bring the total to 40%.)
- 34% of the school population have Special Educational Needs.
- A fire at the school in 2004 caused considerable disruption to pupils' education.

The school was inspected in December 2005, where it was judged to be a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher was identified as 'a good leader, and the capacity for improvement is good'.

Issues identified were:

- to continue with the strategies in place to raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science;
- to make sure that teachers are very clear about what they expect pupils to learn in every lesson;
- to continue with strategies to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

2006 Key Stage 2 results: English L4 35%; mathematics L4 59%; science 65%

2007 Key Stage 2 results: English L4 72%; mathematics L4 69%; science 85%

2. Barriers to improvement

- Very high level of pupil mobility. For example, 20% of the present Year 4 pupils have moved out of the cohort and less than 55% of current Year 5 were in Key Stage 1 at the school.
- Attendance issues (there are a number of pupils who do not attend school regularly, and who continue to take extended trips during school term time).

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- Effective and systematic interrogation of data to ensure positive outcomes for children.
- Development of effective systems for monitoring and tracking of pupil progress.
- Development of a new school structure, which would provide appropriate leadership at all levels.

Priorities for the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) included:

- teaching and learning;
- attendance;
- knowledge and use of pupil tracking data, including accelerated progress in target groups;
- distributed leadership linked to sustainable self-evaluation systems.

What was done?

- The involvement of the school in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) for four years underpinned the refocus on effective systems for tracking, monitoring and evaluation impact.
- Careful appointment and deployment of key members of staff to lead the changes.
- Strategic and rigorous planning and delivery of professional development and performance management, which supports the School Development Plan.
- Provision of resources to enable staff to deliver the enriched curriculum more effectively, particularly ICT.
- Development and nurturing of staff to promote effective distributed leadership model, through staff teams led by three staff with teaching and learning responsibility.
- Systems for promoting regular attendance by all pupils and raising awareness of school expectations with parents have had a positive impact.
- Working with local authority (LA) consultants, school has established a rigorous system of tracking and monitoring pupil progress at all stages to ensure that each child is on track to achieve their targets.
- Effective use of pupil progress meetings to engage children with their targets.
- Establishment of 'buddy system' as peer support for target setting.
- Engagement with the Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL) Development pilot.

Monitoring and evaluation

Success criteria for the RAP included:

- progress across all year groups;
- incidences of non attendance are reduced;
- rise in levels of attainment; sound evidence base.

The school has been well supported by the LA throughout, and continues to be. This included support for the leadership of the school, both at a strategic level and operational level. The work of the advisers and the consultants who work with the school is highly valued. The tariff applied to the school by the LA ensured that there was a high level of consultancy support.

Quote from the headteacher: *'ISP is a good model for ensuring really focused pupil progress, but it needs to be supported by a tight structure of leadership and management that includes quality benchmarks as well as a monitoring process such as, "Is this being done?"'*

What has been the overall impact?

'The RAP is integral to the School Improvement Plan and ISP is now more at an operational level than a strategic level.'

4. Local authority support and challenge

LA identified key priorities for the school:

- whole-school attainment and progress in literacy and mathematics, with writing as a priority;
- Year 5 and Year 6 attainment;
- CLL in Foundation Stage (FS) and Key Stage 1;
- speaking and listening, specifically paired talk (including talk in home language);
- evaluation of impact of intervention/support;
- priority was to empower the leadership to make the difference;
- to improve attendance;
- support the development of effective tracking, monitoring and evaluation systems.

What was done?

Role of LA Adviser, consultant

- LA provided good support and advice on data and its analysis. Met to look at school data and agree targets for improvement.
- LA provided data pack for school.
- Introduction of Hard to Shift agenda.
- A range of strategies to support the teaching of phonics.
- The categorisation by the LA of the school ensured that any additional support that the school requested/required, such as consultants, was made available to them.
- LA consultants and adviser worked alongside staff in developing effective monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- LA employed a consultant to support the school as additional capacity.
- School well supported by consultants and adviser in writing and reviewing RAPs.
- Joint evaluation of judgements contained in the self-evaluation forms.
- Support from ISP consultant.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Provision of RAISE online and LA data which provided local and national comparisons for specific categories of learners.
- Attendance under constant scrutiny. Considerable improvements evidenced.
- LA working directly with the staff to monitor and evaluate progress against targets at all levels. To achieve green ISP judgements.
- To ensure that by 2007 the percentage of children achieving level 4+ is above the floor target in English and mathematics.
- To improve quality of teaching and level of expectations so that 90% of teaching is good or better.

Information and data used to measure progress included:

- termly RAP reviews;
- cohort files, including detailed information on individual/target children. The information is interrogated regularly, and in detail, to ensure progress for each child. Because of the very high incidence of pupil mobility in the school, this micro tracking and evaluation is crucial to raising standards;
- teaching observations;
- work scrutiny reports by team leaders and mathematics and English subject leaders;
- FS Profile data;
- Key Stage 1/2 test and teacher assessment data;
- optional National Curriculum test information;
- visual mapping data for all year groups;
- Ofsted inspection report;
- Hard to Shift consultant monitoring information.

What has been the overall impact?

'Using the LA school effectiveness triggers, we are very clear about what support the LA can give us.'

- End of Key Stage 2 results in 2007 show improvements in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some targets identified on the RAP for July 2007 for Key Stage 1 and across all year groups in Key Stage 2 have been met and exceeded.

'Tracking data and findings from pupil progress interviews are being used to inform professional discussions between teaching staff.'

5. Sustainability – what next?

What will the school do?

- The school continues in ISP for the fourth year, and is using the rigour of the ISP model to prepare RAPs for other curriculum subjects.
- Ofsted judged the capacity to improve to be 'good.' The model of distributed leadership and succession planning which the school has developed will support this.
- There are now robust monitoring and evaluation systems throughout the school.
- The school is committed to the professional development of all staff, which is directly linked to raising standards, and is supported through performance management.
- The school has an effective model of team leaders and mathematics and English subject leaders who take a leading role in ensuring that the focus remains firmly on teaching and learning.
- School uses the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials to promote good behaviour and attendance.
- School should reach 2008 targets.

What will the LA do?

- The school remains at high tariff level with the LA, which will ensure continued effective support and challenge.
- Provide data for the school, which will enable the effective self-evaluation cycle to continue.
- Continue to act as challenge and support for the school.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Holway Park Community Primary School, Somerset

1. School context and profile

Holway Park Community Primary School is an average-sized school, which serves a socially and economically disadvantaged area. The school is identified by Somerset local authority (LA) data as the ninth most needy in the county.

- Number on roll: 231, including Foundation Stage (FS). Age range: four to 11.
- Most of the learners are white British, but mobility is high.
- Almost 50% of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- On entry attainment is well below national expectations, with particular weaknesses in communication skills and social development.

The school was inspected in June 2007 when it was judged to be a good school, which has made good improvement since the previous inspection in 2001. The headteacher has 'real drive' and together with his leadership team provides a firm steer for the school.

Issues identified were:

- to improve standards in writing by providing more opportunities across the curriculum to develop skills fully;
- to improve the quality of marking to provide consistent advice on how to improve learning, and to encourage higher standards of presentation.

2006 Key Stage 2 results: English L4 59%; mathematics L4 56%

2007 Key Stage 2 results: English L4 70%; mathematics L4 66%

2. Barriers to improvement

- Quality of teaching and learning.
- Low aspirations: '*Nobody believed we could do better.*' (Headteacher.)
- Behaviour in and outside school.
- Narrow/inappropriate curriculum.
- The role of the subject leaders.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- Behaviour policy and practice.
- The engagement of pupils and parents with the curriculum.
- Systems for monitoring and tracking pupil progress.
- Expectations of staff, pupils and parents.
- Staff absence.

What was done?

- School engaged with the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP). First year focus on phonics. Now in second year of ISP.
- Development of strategic planning.
- School/LA used a 'residency' model of support, which has been highly successful.
- Reorganisation of leadership into faculty model, with clear expectations, linked directly to school improvement.
- Appointment of parent support adviser.
- Development of range of strategies to improve behaviour. For example, structured play, clubs and so on at lunchtimes.
- Halted some of the intervention programmes that were not shown to have a positive impact on standards.
- High priority given to professional development of all staff.
- Systems put into place to ensure that coverage for absent staff did not compromise the learning. Now deployment seen as equitable and effective.
- Effective deployment of support staff.
- Focus on basic skills teaching and on how children learn, through strategic and rigorous planning, professional development and performance management.
- Curriculum enhancement developed to ensure pupils' engagement with the learning, for example, ukelele orchestra and chess clubs.
- Provision of resources to enable staff to deliver the enhanced curriculum more effectively.
- Development and nurturing of staff to promote effective distributed leadership model, through faculty model.
- Systems for promoting regular attendance by all pupils, including targets, rewards etc., developed and embedded.
- Recognition of need for quality first teaching.
- Embedding of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) throughout the school.
- Working with LA consultants, school has established a rigorous system of tracking and monitoring pupil progress at all stages to ensure that each child is on track to achieve their targets.

Monitoring and evaluation

Success criteria for the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) included:

- raising standards in writing: assessing progress in writing and levelling work;
- raising standards in phonics (continued from previous year);
- effective use of level descriptors to raise standards in reading;
- development of more writing across the curriculum;
- 100% teaching to be judged good or better.

What has been the overall impact?

- The percentage of children making progress towards age-related norms has increased. Evidence of pupil progress is impressive.
- ISP has provided a sharp focus on literacy and a good vehicle for an examination of how effectively phonics/reading is delivered throughout the school.

'The cycle of meetings, and the idea of taking a whole-school focus for the first target for all staff will continue as a pattern next year and beyond.'

The school has been well supported by the LA through involvement with the development and review of the RAPs and provision of appropriate support and intervention. Advice and support on pupil progress meetings have been firmly established, and are valued as a school improvement tool. This included support for the leadership across the school, both at a strategic level and operational level. The work of the advisers and the consultants who work with the school is highly valued. The school uses a four-term ISP model, with a lead in time in the autumn term.

Quote from the headteacher [*quoting Robin Tanner*] *'We do not know how far they, our children, might go, they are constantly showing us new heights, new standards they can reach.'*

4. Local authority support and challenge

LA identified key priorities for the school:

- whole-school attainment and progress in literacy and mathematics, with phonics as a focus;
- reading across the school;
- governance;
- priority was to empower the leadership to make the difference;
- support the development of effective tracking and monitoring systems.

What was done?

Role of school improvement partner (SIP), LA adviser, consultant

- LA provided very good support and advice on data and its analysis. Met to look at school data and agree targets for improvement. Produced a performance handbook and gave the framework for the RAP.
- A range of strategies to support the teaching of phonics and reading. This included the development of a phonics action plan, clarification of phonics progression, and a full phonics screening for pupils from Years 1 to 5.
- Support and advice through whole-school training days and leadership of professional development meetings.
- LA consultants and advisers worked alongside staff in developing effective monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- SIP has provided challenge and support on the priorities identified in the school development plan. Judged the capacity to improve as very good.
- Residency model was adopted to raise standards in literacy across the school.
- True alignment of support enabled effective, focused support and measurable impact.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Provision of RAISE online and LA data which provided local and national comparisons for specific categories of learners.
- LA working directly with the staff to monitor and evaluate progress against targets at all levels:
 - to ensure that all children are on track to reach age-related expectations;
 - to ensure that there is a whole-school approach to phonic teaching, and that challenging and achievable group targets are set for each class;
 - to improve quality of teaching and level of expectations so that 100% of teaching is good or better.

Information and data used to measure progress included:

- teaching observations;
- FS Profile data;
- Key Stage 1/2 test and teacher assessment data;
- optional National Curriculum tests information;
- visual mapping data for all year groups;
- Ofsted inspection report;
- SIP, school improvement adviser and consultant notes of visit.
- pupil progress meetings response and analysis.

What has been the overall impact?

'Teachers are sharper in their planning and assessment and are clearly more ambitious about what might be achieved.'

'The ISP has been embraced by all staff, adding to the likelihood of success and has been well received by everyone. Teachers are confident in their delivery, have raised expectations and pupils are, equally, enjoying success. Teaching assistants have appreciated the input they have received and have grown in confidence.'

5. Sustainability – what next?

What will the school do?

'There is evidence of significant progress for pupils across the school, some children have made big gains and sustaining this is a challenge for the staff.'

- The school remains an ISP school, and continues to develop the processes with rigour and enthusiasm. *'The ISP cycle has certainly had a big impact on pupil progress and staff confidence in teaching phonics. There is a residual impact on overall expectations of individual pupils and what they might achieve.'* (SIP)
- Ofsted judged the capacity to improve to be 'good'. The model of distributed leadership which the school is developing will support this.
- The monitoring and evaluation systems are now embedded in the culture of the school.
- There are key staff in the school, developed through the faculty model, who take a leading role in ensuring that the focus remains firmly on teaching and learning.
- The SIP judged the capacity of the school to be very good.
- Targets for 2008 are: English L4 71%; mathematics L4 71%
English L5 21%; mathematics L5 18%

What will the LA do?

- Provide rich data for the school, which will enable the effective self-evaluation cycle to continue.
- The LA will continue to provide support, advice and challenge for the school, through the residence model and bespoke support.

Effective practice in Hard to Shift schools – case studies Christ Church C of E Primary School, Lambeth

1. School context and profile

Number on roll: 170. Age range: four to 11.

The school is one form entry and serves an urban area of high social deprivation, with 50% of pupils receiving free school meals. More than 90% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest being those from Black Caribbean and Black African backgrounds. Almost half of the pupils are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is well above average and pupil mobility is very high. The school has been 'soft' federated with a local community school since September 2005 when the headteacher of the community school became executive headteacher of both schools.

The school was inspected in June 2006 when both leadership and capacity to improve were judged as outstanding.

2005 Key Stage 2 results: English L4+ 29%; mathematics L4+ 38%

2006 Key Stage 2 results: English L4+ 64%; mathematics L4+ 64%

2007 Key Stage 2 results: English L4+ 89%; mathematics L4+ 78%

2. Barriers to improvement

- Leadership difficulties had been caused as a result of a period of acting headship arrangements.
- There were difficulties with administrative staffing and systems.
- There were no self-evaluation forms and school development plan in place.
- Staff morale was very low.
- Behaviour was very poor.
- The quality of teaching was generally very poor.
- There were very low levels of attainment (for Key Stage L4+ 30-40% range).

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- A functioning leadership team needed to be developed.
- Systems needed to be established for monitoring and tracking pupil progress.
- Assessment skills and systems to support planning had to be developed.
- The classroom environment needed to reflect enjoyment and achievement, and playtimes made more activity-focused.

Priorities for the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) included improving:

- teaching, including the learning environment;
- behaviour;
- attendance and punctuality;
- involvement of parents, especially raising their expectations about their children's learning.

What was done?

- The processes of the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) were implemented which was critical to improving pupil tracking and assessment systems.
- A learning and teaching policy which set high expectations was introduced.
- Joint planning with staff from the other school helped develop skills, a sharing of resources and curriculum expertise.
- Team teaching; peer support for staff; classroom observations; and scrutiny of work books was established.
- A whole-school behaviour policy involving restorative justice was developed.
- Whole-school training which included support staff introduced to support the implementation of whole-school policies.
- A Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) improved multi-agency involvement to support children and families.
- Efforts were made to engage and involve parents through coffee and breakfast mornings; additional information evenings; phoning parents about positive as well as behaviour issues; and being visible at the school gate.

Monitoring and evaluation

Success criteria for the RAP included:

- 100% of lessons to be at least satisfactory;
- reduction in number of behaviour incidents;
- improved attendance and punctuality;
- raised levels of attainment – termly assessments and National Curriculum tests;
- increased attendance of parents at pupil progress meetings and assemblies.

The local authority (LA) led the process of change by:

- negotiating the federation with the Diocesan Board;
- ensuring the school had expertise of consultants and advisers;
- providing additional funds and Human Resources (HR) support.

The Diocesan Board provided an interim Chair of Governors, the local Archdeacon.

The school has been continuously supported by the LA and the Diocesan Board through an 'Action Group' that met regularly.

What has been the overall impact?

'The atmosphere is now much more positive, purposeful, happy and calm.'

'The key has been the two staff groups working together, sharing ideas, seeing what's possible and having a laugh together.'

'The staff at both schools began to see that this was worthwhile for their own professional development. Now they operate much more like one team and the sharing of expertise is two-way.'

4. Local authority support and challenge

- The urgent priority was improving the quality of leadership which was achieved by setting up the federation and new leadership team.

In addition the following were seen as essential:

- raising the quality of teaching and learning;
- improving attendance and behaviour.

What was done?

Role of school improvement adviser; teaching and learning consultants

- Support for change was from the highest level of the LA and the Diocesan Board, who were key to the initial agreement of the community school/Church of England federation.
- Initially, leadership was improved by the secondment of another headteacher for a term. He identified the extent of the deficits; made key personnel changes including the appointment of a SENCO and improved the learning environment.
- The 'soft' federation arrangements then provided both quality leadership and continuity. The host school being large (600+ pupils) had the staffing resource and capacity to provide a deputy for the leadership team and advanced skills teacher (AST).
- LA adviser and consultants jointly monitored teaching and learning at regular intervals to address weaknesses.
- HR support was provided for teaching and administrative staffing issues.
- Consultant time for monitoring and staff development was provided. (30 days initially.)
- An action group, chaired by a LA adviser, met monthly and involved the headteacher and chair of Governors.
- A strategic LA group supported building developments.
- *'Introducing ISP raised the game.'*

Monitoring and evaluation

- Classroom observations and systems for assessment and tracking of pupil progress. Initially the target was 100% of teaching at least satisfactory.
- Provision of LA data provided local and national comparisons for particular groups of learners.
- Reduction in behaviour problems including exclusions.
- Bringing attendance closer to the national average – this remains a key priority.
- Ensuring that the school is continuously monitored by the LA through the school improvement monitoring group, which is chaired by the Director of Children's Services. This scrutinises the school's self-evaluation; receives feedback from the action group and the School Improvement Adviser; and allocates support on a termly basis.

What has been the overall impact?

'You can throw all the support you like into a school, but until you have a good leader with the ability to develop sufficient capacity within the school then you are not going to make a difference. The headteacher has a real gift for spotting talent within staff and developing their leadership potential.'

5. Sustainability – what next?

- The federation will continue until at least 2009.
- The consultant will continue working alongside the AST from the host school – expertise remains for both schools to access.
- A new school building is planned for completion towards the end of 2009/early 2010.
- The principles of ISP have been transferred to the host school.

What will the school do?

- Build on the learning of the last two years and consolidate for the next two.
- Continue with the quality assurance and monitoring measures.
- Ensure that recruitment procedures select the right staff for the future.
- Prepare for the end of the federation arrangement.

What will the LA do?

- In the long term, identify a suitable successor and transitional arrangements for when the soft federation comes to an end.
- Develop arrangements with the local children's centre to raise prior attainment of pupils.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Oak Green Primary School, Buckinghamshire

1. School context and profile

Number on roll: 341. Age range three to 11 years.

The headteacher joined the school seven years ago at a point of much turbulence when four schools were amalgamated and moved onto the current site. A children's centre has recently been established at the school.

- Almost half the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an Additional Language (EAL). The largest ethnic groups are white British and Pakistani.
- There is a high level of social deprivation and pupil mobility.
- Prior attainment is low.
- Around a third of pupils have Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The school was inspected in July 2007 and received an overall grade for effectiveness of 2 along with leadership and management and capacity to improve.

Key Stage 2 L4+ results 2005 English 54%; mathematics 44%

Key Stage 2 L4+ results 2006 English 55%; mathematics 63%

Key Stage 2 L4+ results 2007 English 62%; mathematics 68%

2. Barriers to improvement

- The learning and teaching environment.
- Punctuality, attendance and behaviour.
- The involvement of parents, and their expectations about learning.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- A learning and teaching environment lacking in stimulation and low expectations.
- Poor attendance and punctuality.
- Poor behaviour and oppressive behaviour management.
- Lack of parental involvement, low expectations of learning, poor adult basic skills particularly among white British families.
- Some personnel issues.

What was done?

- Introducing systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, such as lesson observations and improving subject knowledge.
- Moderation of planning and marking, so that this reflects the curricular layered targets.
- Key senior leadership appointments and development of middle managers.
- Pupil tracking and accountability, including expectations about age-related levels (this was introduced before the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP)). A traffic light system was used to focus attention on progress and pupil progress meetings to ensure that everyone is accountable and responsible for attainment.
- There are termly assessment weeks. QCA tests are used to support inexperienced teachers. Staff meetings moderate assessments.
- ISP was introduced two years ago and this consolidated progress made, increasing numbers of pupils in the 'could' and 'should' categories.
- Timetabling three lessons into the morning session. One each of literacy, numeracy and science. Afternoon lessons involve skills-based project work ensuring that basic skills are taught across the curriculum.
- Introducing care guidance and support systems – the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda. Modelling respect was also critical to building relationships between all of the school community.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Increased attendance and improved punctuality.
- Percentage of lessons good or better.
- Behaviour management improved – no children referred for pupil referral unit support.
- Raised levels of attainment.
- Improved levels of parental involvement.

What has been the overall impact?

'Years ago we used to have some bullies, but now we have people who care for each other.' (Year 6 pupil.)

The environment of the school – *'We have a nice garden with flowers.'* *'There are things to play with outside.'* (Year 5 pupils.)

'It is much calmer around the school and there is purposeful learning, children are more respectful to adults and adults towards children, there is a more cheerful and well resourced learning environment.'

'There are good systems in place to ensure standards continue to rise. Staff are now more skilled and that enables them to lead and manage.'

4. Local authority support and challenge

- Improving the quality of teaching and standards.
- Improving behaviour and attendance.
- Developing inexperienced leadership team members including subject leaders.

What was done?

- Supporting the amalgamation and building works.
- Human Resources support for personnel issues.
- Providing good quality data, standard attainment, contextual value added, average point score, Fischer Family Trust.
- Consultancy support including lesson observations, modelling planning, and providing training on assessment and subject knowledge.
- The ISP consultant introduced a Raising Attainment Plan, modelling the drafting of it and initially introducing layered curriculum targets.
- Supporting leadership development (Local Public Service Agreement 2).

Monitoring and evaluation

- Raised levels of attainment – above floor targets.
- Lesson observations, work scrutiny, and pupil tracking systems.
- School improvement monitoring systems (now involving the School Improvement Partner), a local authority (LA) group looks at all the data and other intelligence about schools and brokers appropriate support and challenge where needed.
- Promoting the ECM agenda, holistic approaches, raising attainment for all groups, inclusive education fulfilling each child's potential.

What has been the overall impact?

- *'You can have all the systems in place but unless you have effective leadership with the confidence to take calculated risks and with clarity of vision there will be no sustainable improvement.'*
- *'The Ofsted report is external validation of the success. It is a school confident to tailor the curriculum and the toolkits provided to meet the needs of this community. The school has engaged with the process.'*

5. Sustainability – what next?

- Continue with the principles of ISP – this is embedded.
- Support from the LA has helped build capacity and capability among subject leaders and other teachers.

What will the school do?

'Valuing everybody in the school community and their unique contribution.'

Continue to focus on professional development for all staff, teaching and non teaching, offering internal promotion where possible to capitalise on expertise and investment. Promoting learning in the community.

What will the LA do?

- Provide top-up courses for sustainability on subjects such as writing and reviewing RAPs, layered curricular targets and pupil tracking and interpretation of data.
- Develop a continuum of skills development, coaching, co-coaching, linking leadership and management skills into classroom practice.
- Develop capacity and capability of the community such as governors, parents, other agencies - all of whom need to contribute to ensuring the five ECM outcomes.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Slade Green Junior School, Bexley

1. School context and profile

The school serves an urban area of very high social deprivation. The school has three-form entry and there are three ability sets per year group for literacy and numeracy. Close liaison is achieved with the infant school that shares the same site and there is a well-established transfer programme.

- Number on roll: 255. Age range: seven to 11 years.
- A third of pupils receive free school meals.
- The majority of pupils, 71%, are white British, although recently there has been a rise of pupils who are Black African in origin (12%).
- Attainment prior to school entry is generally very low.
- There is also a higher than average number of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), especially those requiring a Statement of SEN.

Key Stage 2 L4+ results:

2005 English 58%; mathematics 58%

2006 English 63%; mathematics 60%

2007 English 73%; mathematics 73%

2. Barriers to improvement

- Children's low prior attainment, especially language skills and writing skills.
- Problem solving skills in numeracy.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

A whole-school approach was needed with ownership and accountability for success of pupils at Year 6 being seen as a shared responsibility.

- Staff needed to extend their skills in assessing and tracking pupil progress, setting appropriate targets and sharing success criteria.
- Strong leadership from the headteacher ensured the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) had high status across the school community and was fully incorporated into everyday practice.

What was done?

- Pupil tracking systems were introduced nine months before the school joined ISP. This meant staff saw success, so acceptance of the other elements was more easily embraced. *'ISP was a powerful motivating factor – success bred success.'*
- Writing was initially identified as a whole-school issue. Performance management for all members of staff included a target under pupil progress relating to this priority, also linked to their focus groups. This made the focus effective across the whole school. Performance Management Targets had alternated on an annual basis between literacy and numeracy, now they focus on both.
- Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation (VCOP) programme was introduced alongside the principles of ISP. The criterion scale assisted with precision in assessment, providing focused feedback and systematic teaching.
- The respect and trust given to middle managers, as they led key aspects of ISP, has underpinned the school's success.
- The pupil progress meetings encouraged staff to take ownership and accountability increased. Tracking sheets and use of Fischer Family Trust data meant staff raised expectations and outcomes for some children improved.
- Pupil progress meetings enabled subject coordinators to gain effective information about children and identify support needs of staff. All children are monitored from the tracking sheets, with a particular focus on the target groups (six children from each ability set).

Monitoring and evaluation

- The school development plan and the Raising Attainment Plan were closely aligned.
- A termly assessment system was established including a moderation process in the summer term. QCA mathematics, reading and writing tasks and the VCOP criterion scale were used. Teacher assessment supports tracking.
- Success criteria have been introduced for children so that they are involved in self-assessment.
- A range of targets were developed from the pupil progress meetings and displayed with examples. Termly targets were sent home.
- Subject coordinators and more recently the Inclusion manager carried out learning walks modelled initially by the ISP coordinator.
- Point scores were added to convey value-added measures.

What has been the overall impact?

'Teachers are more skilled and confident. Children are more informed and can talk about learning and progress.'

'The whole-school approach has been accelerated by use of ISP which has brought it all together.'

'Respect, trust and confidence within the staff team relationships have created a no blame culture.'

The leadership team's knowledge of the school has been strengthened. *'We should all know every child.'*

Pupil progress meetings and the quality of the data have raised the quality of professional dialogue about learning. *'Staff are motivated to succeed by this and it has also made people more accountable and aware.'*

The structure of assessment and target setting, increased consistency and precision planning across the year groups.

4. Local authority support and challenge

- The ISP consultant provided the summative and formative ISP assessments for mathematics the year before ISP was formally introduced.
- Analysis of National Curriculum tests data along with support for setting of curricular targets.
- The school became part of the Bexley excellence cluster. Support included the appointment of a learning mentor to help remove barriers to learning including working closely with families to improve punctuality and attendance.

What was done?

- The ISP consultant took a lead in providing the professional development meetings (PDMs) and some coaching for subject leaders.
- ISP was part of a comprehensive package of support and challenge provided to the school. The adviser and ISP consultant provided joint planned input and alignment was achieved with brokering other support from local authority (LA) service colleagues.

Monitoring and evaluation

- RAP meetings were effective because there were close working relationships and open communication between the school's leadership team and LA colleagues. Meetings were well organised, providing sound data and devoting quality time.
- Robust professional dialogue led to developments, such as the introduction of an Assessment Manager to provide a strategic overview plus valued-added point scores and Key Stage 1 results added to tracking sheets.

What has been the overall impact?

- *'Building capacity has been key. Working alongside staff to support the introduction of ISP, giving them the confidence to integrate it with other tools to suit the context of the school. This has meant that it has become embedded and staff confidence has grown with success.'*

5. Sustainability – what next?

- The systems and structures are in place and fully embedded. *'It is a layered approach with every teacher becoming responsible and accountable.'*
- The professional development provided by the LA has built capacity, so that subject leaders have been confident enough to provide PDM sessions for staff.
- Initially the ISP consultant would take the main role in writing the RAP supported by the headteacher. This process now involves all staff providing sticky notes identifying successes and priorities for the future. *'The RAP is fully owned by the school and will continue to form part of the school development plan.'*

What will the school do?

- Continue to evolve and build upon effective practice.
- Careful planning for when ISP funding ceases and in particular to balance the time for staff to develop ISP against the impact on the children's learning of this time away from their classes.
- Termly review meetings will continue to be held to evaluate progress and plan next steps.

What will the LA do?

- A LA exit strategy exists for schools coming out of the ISP programme. This will provide a graduated reduction in support.
- The school's promotion of pupils' and adults' emotional health and well-being is particularly strong and their role as a leading practice social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) school will be explored in the future.

Moving beyond the floor target – case studies Sinclair Primary School, Southampton

1. School context and profile

The school serves an area with a high level of social deprivation and most pupils are white British. The current headteacher joined the school four years ago, following an unsettled period in the school's leadership. An amalgamation was also planned of a nursery, infant and junior schools and a major building project.

- Number on roll: 174. Age range: three to 11 years.
- Prior attainment of pupils is low.
- Just over a third have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and this is mainly social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school was inspected in June 2006 and received an overall grade for effectiveness of 3 along with leadership and management and capacity to improve.

Key Stage 2 L4+ results: 2005 English 42%; mathematics 40%

Key Stage 2 L4+ results: 2006 English 44%; mathematics 41%

Key Stage 2 L4+ results: 2007 English 66%; mathematics 69%

2. Barriers to improvement

- An unsettled period of leadership, combined with the amalgamation of two schools, one of which was failing, and the major building project, presented significant barriers.

3. The school-based issues – what needed to change?

- The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher needed to be authoritative, to provide clear vision, and a relentless determination to raise standards.
- The learning environment needed to be improved to reflect enjoyment, engagement and achievement.
- Systems needed to be established for assessment and pupil tracking.

For the purposes of the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) the following priorities were identified:

- quality of the learning and teaching environment;
- poor assessment and lack of pupil progress tracking systems;
- poor behaviour and attendance;
- lack of parental involvement;
- low expectations of all key partners; teachers of pupils, pupils of teachers and parents of the school and their children's learning.

What was done?

- Address at every level the quality of teaching. The local authority (LA) adviser assisted with regular monitoring of teaching through observations and provided training especially to address poor subject knowledge.
- Inception activities were introduced to stimulate pupils' positive engagement in learning.
- A behaviour policy was introduced along with training. Other systems introduced had positive impact, such as lunchtime eating in class groups with a particular focus for the conversation led by the class teacher.
- Rigorous assessment and tracking systems had the effect of increasing accountability and raising teacher expectations. Three pupil progress targets per year of three sub levels, one for each term, reviewed at the end of each term.
- Pupil progress meetings and performance management systems needed to be put in place to include targets linked to pupil progress.
- Moderation and work sampling.
- Planning became assessment driven and exemplifies the personalised learning agenda.
- Intervention logs provide systematic addressing of learning needs. More recently, for one term an extra teacher was employed for Year 6 to provide individually tailored and immediate intervention to overcome misconceptions in learning.
- Introduction of synthetic phonics approach (Ruth Miskin literacy programme).
- Developing trusting relationships between adults and pupils.

Monitoring and evaluation

Success criteria for the RAP included:

- Raised levels of attainment using National Curriculum test results and other standard measures.
- Inclusion Quality mark was achieved (this involves a behaviour and attendance audit).
- Improved quality of teaching including improved subject knowledge.
- Staff professional development, including higher level teaching assistant status for all teaching assistants, middle leadership training from the National College for School Leadership and National Professional Qualification for Headship status for the deputy headteacher.

What has been the overall impact?

- *'The enhanced RAP was the vehicle by which success was measured. This was especially useful for providing more organised management of the complex initiatives needed to move the school forward.'*
- *'Significantly enhanced standards, ethos and attitudes which are evident today speak for themselves.'*

4. Local authority support and challenge

- Support for the headteacher to manage the turbulence caused by the amalgamation of the two schools and an unsettled prior history in one of those schools.
- A full LA review was conducted and found attainment and progress was minimal, teacher expectations were low and the quality of teaching was very variable.
- The Intensifying Support Programme criteria, structures, procedures and protocols were introduced to build a productive learning environment.
- The RAP identified climate for learning and pupil behaviour as key priorities.

What was done?

- The LA inspector carried out monitoring of the quality of teaching.
- Competency procedures were used in the case of some staff.
- Consultants for English and mathematics provided much input for inexperienced staff especially the English and mathematics coordinators who gained these promotions early in their career.
- The consultant for Pupil Engagement in Learning (behaviour support) provided support for teaching staff including coaching, especially for managing the learning environment for pupils with challenging behaviour.
- Routine LA supportive evaluation visits were provided, focusing on key areas of the self-evaluation form such as attainment and pupil progress, teaching and learning, and the quality of leadership and management.
- Building and property services assisted with the building project.
- Training and support for the governing body, especially clarity about their role.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Initially the target was set for 50% of lessons good or better; this was later raised to 75% plus.
- Reduction of and ultimately the absence of exclusions.
- Eliminating low level disruption in one or two classes.
- Ensuring the leadership below the headteacher and deputy headteacher level was effective, especially building the competency of the leadership of mathematics and English.

What has been the overall impact?

- *'The respect of the community for the school has risen immeasurably.'*
- *'The school is now a coherent purposeful school where children know about learning and want to learn. Attainment and pupil progress show the results of this change in climate and attitude.'*

5. Sustainability – what next?

ISP processes, procedures and protocol will remain in place. The LA is committed to the use of ISP for all its schools causing concern and believe this strategy of embedding ISP over a number of years in these schools is critical to success in keeping them out of, or removing them from, the Hard to Shift category.

What will the school do?

'Succession planning is vital; you need to enable the school to carry on without you. Leaders below the headteacher have to understand their roles and responsibilities. All our leaders are home grown. Every teacher needs to be able to take up his or her leadership role regardless of his or her stage of career.'

Continue to raise expectations of parents for their children's learning.

What will the LA do?

- Future LA support will be strongly focused on building further capacity, particularly with leadership below the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- School self-evaluation evidence will be drawn from the whole senior management team and phase leaders so that the judgments and impact of all leaders can be evaluated. Planned activities include regular interviews with various leaders reporting on their own self-evaluation, joint observations and so on.
- The focus is now on quality assurance.

Moving beyond the floor target - case studies Stoke on Trent LA

Context

- Focus on a local authority (LA) where a number of Hard to Shift schools have gone above floor target.
- How much is attributable to the systematic/effective work of the LA?
- What worked and why?

The LA is Stoke on Trent, which is part of the 'Three Cities' Project. This case study, although it includes school specific data as an illustrative technique, focuses not on the perspective of the individual schools, but on the actions of the LA in supporting and challenging the Hard to Shift schools in the LA. The consequent progress that the identified schools have made can be directly attributed to the systematic work of Stoke on Trent Local Authority.

School specific data: (All schools cited were in Hard to Shift category)

1. Whitfield Valley Primary School

Key Stage 2 results in 2007: English 78%; mathematics 89%; science 93%

Exceeded Fischer Family Trust (FFT) 'D' predictions in all subjects. Significantly in mathematics, were 14% above FFT D.

LA attributes the success of the school to the Quality First Teaching across Key Stage 2.

An ex-LA mathematics consultant is deputy headteacher and is a charismatic and outstanding practitioner who inspires other staff.

2. Heron Cross Primary School

This school has an attached Speech and Language Special Unit, and the results affect the outcomes for the school.

Quote from LA '*When the results from the special unit are not included, the results soar above the floor targets.*'

Key Stage 2 results in 2007 (including special unit): English 59%; mathematics 66%; science 78%.

Predictions/targets for the current Year 6, based on end of Year 5 data, indicates that results in summer 2008 will be:

English and mathematics 75% +.

Quote from the LA: '*A brilliant result.*'

LA attributes the success of the school to the immense strengths in Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 and in Year 5 and Year 6. The social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) philosophy drives the school, with a strong emphasis on the Every Child Matters philosophy.

3. Bishop Starmer Primary School

Key Stage 2 results in 2007: English 66%; mathematics 66%; science 73%

The school went above the floor target for the first time in many years. Predictions for summer 2008 are similar, so school will remain above the floor target in both mathematics and English.

LA attributes the success of the school to excellent, Quality First Teaching in Year 5 and Year 6, and also cites the change in the attitude of the school. Initially, school was resistant to Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) processes, and tended to 'adapt' them for the school use. However, since the school fully engaged with the LA three years ago...

Quote from the LA: *'The last three years have seen the school open up to the LA, and once the flood gates were open, they embraced projects willingly and made them their own.'*

The LA cites the following as evidence of the crucial role that they have successfully played, and continue to play in raising standards in all schools across Stoke on Trent.

- Putting rigorous systems in place, but also being prepared to tweak and amend where required (for example, new tracking of attainment and progress that has been developed).
- Detailed/focused tracking system which ensures accountability at every level and for every teacher.
- Internal meetings held half termly, which align support and track barriers to improvement.
- Open and honest sharing of developed resources and so on (for example, lesson observation form devised specifically for ISP schools).
- Close team approach.
- Consistently high quality sets of forms which have been developed with LA and schools, and are used by all concerned with the schools.
- School Improvement Partners are all (but one) from within LA, either headteachers or School Improvement Advisers. Have common agreement/understanding/systems (for example, agreed note of visit (NOV) forms for SIPs).
- All Raising Attainment Plans are quality assured by a senior LA officer.
- Strong leadership within the schools has been supported through the primary leadership programme (all Hard to Shift headteachers have been on the programme).
- Quality of dialogue with school leaders. Consultants, SIPs, Schools Improvement Advisers (SIAs) all have the same conversation with the schools, all about ISP topics.
- The LA 'protects' ISP heads and takes care not to overload them. For example, training for renewed frameworks, ISP headteachers made up their own cohort. In this way, the LA could tailor it to the needs of the group. For example, Gap task was focused firmly on raising attainment in mathematics and English. Other headteachers (non ISP) were given more freedom to choose the gap task group etc.
- Established non-negotiables and set deadline dates at the outset.
- Non-negotiable is that all schools become SEAL schools.
- ISP schools have set themselves up into three networks that meet termly and set their own agenda. Leader of the network feeds back to LA, and LA listens and acts where appropriate (for example, there has been a change to the headers on tracking grids).
- All ISP heads have additional continuing professional development half day together to look at impact, plan for next term and meet in larger group.

- Headteachers trust the LA so there is a true partnership where the LA is not seen as hierarchical, but supports and challenges where necessary.
- Headteachers are honest and open with LA about things that are successful and those that are not, enabling further improvement.
- Alignment of support is ensured through regular, frequent, focused meetings.
- Quality of consultants is excellent and is Quality Assured by Primary Strategy Manager (PSM) (all consultants spent two days teaching in schools in summer term observed by PSM). Feedback from schools on consultants' support is very good.
- Schools appreciate LA attendance at six weekly progress meetings.
- Very focused, detailed deployment of consultants is directly linked to tariff and needs of school as shown by the analysis of the school data. Direct link to internal Red, Amber, Green (RAG) ratings.
- Facility to respond to emergencies where required.
- Most schools in LA have adopted ISP model.
- ISP seen as underpinning school improvement and not an additional 'bolt on.' RAPs are the school improvement plans.

Acknowledgements and thanks

Dot Hulley at Stoke on Trent LA, who gave so freely and generously of her time in the preparation for the meeting and provided such detailed and pertinent information and data.

Headteachers and staff at the three schools cited in the case studies.

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Audience: Schools, local authorities, headteachers, teachers and consultants.

Date of issue: 02-2008

Please quote ref: **00150-2008DWO-EN-01**

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