PiXL
INSIGHTS

PARTNERING WITH SCHOOLS TO

Stretch and challenge more able learners

PiXL
INSIGHTS

"The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other."

ROBERT JOHN MEEHAN

CONTENTS

WELCOME

This is our first PiXL Insights publication on stretching more able learners, and the second in our PiXL Insights series following the successful release of our first issue on raising boys' achievement.

PiXL Insights is much more than a publication, however. Condensed in these pages are the professional insights gleaned from colleagues in schools across the PiXL network, who have been working with us over the academic year 2022/23 to stretch their more able learners – whatever that means in their context. We hope that the insights shared in the following pages will give you ideas that can be adapted for your own context. We want to take this opportunity to thank the schools and colleagues who have volunteered to participate in the projects that make up this issue. Schools are busy places, and we appreciate the time that staff have made to engage with us on this project. Please do share any feedback with us on insights@pixl.org.uk.

HANNAH COSTANZO   PiXL Insights Project Manager

I am privileged to have worked full-time for PiXL for nearly a decade. In that time, I have worked on a number of areas of project development, from the conception and launch of PiXL's character provision to the development of our PiXL TV platform. In my current role as Head of Cross-Phase Projects, I get to work on the development and delivery of strategies that support across our entire membership network from Primary up to Post 16. All of my work with PiXL has been fuelled by my desire to solve problems and I'm thrilled that PiXL Insights has allowed me to engage with that passion on a much larger scale.

SARAH MURRELL   PiXL Insights Project Mentor

I am an educational consultant who has worked in education for nearly 30 years. I taught in West London schools for over 20 years and, as a Deputy Head, my key focus was on the curriculum, assessment, data, teaching and learning and staff CPD. It has always been important to me to reflect upon how students can reach their highest possible outcomes through the learning and teaching they experience. I currently work with PiXL on a number of projects, as well as with many schools in London and Northern Ireland as a PiXL Associate. It has been my honour to work with so many schools on this Insights publication. They have been inspirational in the way they have developed, implemented and reflected upon their projects.

NICOLA MANSFIELD   PiXL Insights Project Mentor

I work full-time at PiXL as a Primary Curriculum Manager, where I'm privileged to work with educators who are equally committed to improving the outcomes and enriching the education experience of young people. Before joining PiXL, I was part of a large senior leadership team leading on curriculum development. I'm fervently passionate about the incredible work that schools do to support and challenge all learners, including those who are more able. What fuels me is the belief that sharing practices between schools can unlock untapped potential and improve outcomes for pupils. It's an exciting journey, and I'm delighted to have contributed to this Insights project.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

The data this year (2023) has revealed variations in performance, that the gap between the genders still exists and that there are regional differences in grades at the highest levels. The data enables us to analyse our pupils within a national context, but it also gives us ideas and questions to raise and explore in our own contexts with our own learners and staff.

The data at Key Stage 2   Here are the headlines from the KS2 National Tests.

	COMBINED	READING	WRITING (TA)	MATHEMATICS	GPS
Expected Standard	59% (=)	75% (-2%)	71% +2%)	73% (+2%)	72% (=)
Higher Standard	8% (-1%)	29% +1%)	13% (=)	24 (+2%)	30% +2%)

The gender gap still exists:
- Girls outperform boys in all areas except mathematics.
- Girls outperform boys in writing by 13 percentage points.
- The gap between boys and girls in reading has narrowed by 4 percentage points at EXS and 6 percentage points at HS.
- The gap also exists in reading where 27% of boys are achieving HS in reading and 31% is being achieved by girls.

Data from our PiXL Primary colleagues has highlighted an interesting area of focus for us when analysing performance (meeting expected standard) against month of birth.

	RWM	READING	WRITING	MATHS
September born	66%	78%	77%	78%
August born	52%	67%	65%	68%
Difference (% pts)	14	11	12	10

This raises questions on how we analyse and track our students. The data becomes even more revealing when we add gender. We can assume that these differences may be even more pronounced when looking at students who are reaching higher standard.

	RWM	READING	WRITING
September born girls	69%	80%	83%
August born boys	49%	64%	58%
Difference (% pts)	20	16	25

KS4 & GCSE

At GCSE, the data shows a drop of 5.2% for all GCSE outcomes across all subjects for all ages at Grade 4/C and above. One area that the data highlights is that there are significant regional differences at grade 7/A[1].

- London 28.4%
- The South East 24.4%
- East Anglia 21.9%
- The North East 17.6%
- The North West 18.6%

There is also a significant difference in top grades 9-7 and A*A (for Wales and Northern Ireland) at GCSE, although the different countries do have different examination conditions. In England in 2023, 22.4% of entries were awarded 9-7; in Wales 22.3% A*A, and in Northern Ireland 34.1%. As suggested, the data is moving closer to 2019's results but it is still exceeding the results from 2019.

2023
17.6% 18.2%
18.5%
18.6%
18.4% 21.9%
20.8%
24.4% 28.4%
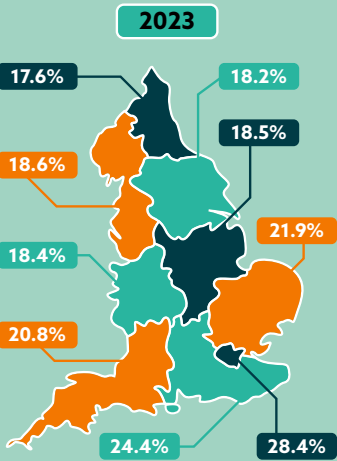
The gender gap is not abating and although it has slightly reduced it is still significant. 1,160 students achieved all grade 9s in England: 62% of them were female and only 38% male. The variance at subject level is also fascinating with the degree of differences and gaps varying on the subject. In English Language, 23.3% of girls achieved grade 7 or abov; for boys it was 14.5% – a gap of 8.8%. For Maths, the gap reverses with 1.9% more boys achieving at level 7 plus.

Another area of interest for our more able students is the grade distribution of subjects. It fluctuates at the top end with 4.2% of Maths entries being a grade 9 (21.9% of entries were 7-9) whereas in English Language it was 2.9% (with 18.8% being 7-9). There will be further school data analysis released as this publication goes to print, and really useful statistical information can be found on the JCQ website and here at **http://analytics.ofqual.gov.uk/**.

POST 16

At A level, the picture is equally interesting. Different subjects have very different results at their top end. In their press release JCQ stated the following:

Overall A level outcomes in comparison with 2019
- Results at A* up by 1.2pp from 7.7% to 8.9%
- Results at A*-A up by 1.8pp from 25.4% to 27.2%
- Results at A*-E down by 0.3pp from 97.6% to 97.3%[2]

Overall A level outcomes in comparison with 2022
- Results at A* down by 5.7pp
- Results at A*-A down by 9.2pp
- Results at A*-E down by 1.1pp

The press release also highlights that the ten most popular A level subjects in terms of entries are Mathematics (96,853), Psychology (80,493), Biology (74,650), Chemistry (61,284), History (48,378), Sociology (47,436), Business Studies (44,852), Art and Design (43,464), Economics (39,141) and Physics (38,379).

Some of these subjects also show different pictures in their A*A percentages with the number of students achieving an A*A in 2023 in Economics being 36.8%, in History it is 30.4% of students, and in Psychology 24.8% of students achieve an A or an A*. For more detail at subject level please visit the JCQ website.

In vocational and technical qualifications at Level 3 there are 256 qualifications. These differ greatly in scale, purpose and content. Nearly 23,500 (9%) top grades were awarded. It is, however, very difficult to make year on year comparisons and the number of certificates awarded in 2019 has changed considerably.

The regional differences remain at A level at grades A*A with variance from 30.3% of grades being awarded at A*A in the South East and 22% at the same grade in the North East. Of all A level students (3,820) in England who took 3 A levels and achieved 3A*A grades, 45% were male and 55% were female. So, although narrowed from GCSE, the gender gap still very much exists at A level when analysing the top grades.

There will be further school data analysis released as this publication goes to print, and really useful statistical information can be found on the JCQ website and here at **http://analytics.ofqual.gov.uk/**.

PiXL INSIGHTS
DEVELOPING OUR APPROACH

PiXL Insights was first developed in 2020. We wanted to find a way of supporting our members with stubborn national achievement gaps. The first area we wanted to tackle was the issue of boys' underachievement.

However, we knew that there were no silver bullets: no single strategy or technique that all schools could employ in order to eradicate the gender gap. Instead, we knew that context was going to be key – our students are all individuals, after all.

So we began to think: what if instead of sharing one idea, we deliberately sought out to share many?

What if we worked with individual schools across the network, for whom boys' achievement was a significant focus that year, and developed projects with them to specifically meet the needs of **their boys** in **their context**? And that's when Insights was born. In that first year we worked with dozens of schools on different projects at KS3, KS4 and KS5, and we published the professional insights of the colleagues who ran those projects in our first Insights publication.

We then started to think that there were other key cohorts of students that may benefit from the 'Insights treatment'. We agreed that we would look at the following four groups on rotation:

Raising boys' achievement	**Stretching more able learners**	**Improving inclusion for learners with SEND (ALN)**	**Empowering learners from disadvantaged backgrounds**

In academic year 2022/23, we worked with schools on projects aimed at more able learners and learners with SEND (ALN).

In academic year 2023/24, we are publishing the insights from those projects, as well as undertaking a new round of projects to target learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and boys.

In academic year 2024/25, we will publish the insights from the previous year's projects and begin a new round of projects looking at more able learners and learners with SEND.

And that's our plan for the future: to continue this cycle of investigation, innovation and support until the national gaps close.

Each project run as part of PiXL Insights is developed and designed by the participant school, however colleagues at PiXL are available to coach, mentor and support their thinking. We are on hand throughout the process to help troubleshoot issues, overcome barriers and celebrate success.

PiXL Insights is not action research, nor does it pretend to be. Projects run as part of PiXL Insights are just that: projects. The teachers share their professional insights (an underappreciated resource, in our opinion) and offer their perspective on what worked well and what they may change next time.

If you are interested in participating in future projects with us, do get in touch with the team on **insights@pixl.org.uk**.

"Nothing works everywhere, and everything works somewhere."
DYLAN WILIAM

USING THIS PUBLICATION
IN YOUR OWN CONTEXT

As you read through the projects, we hope that you gain an insight from each project into:

- why it was conceived
- how it was implemented
- what changes (if any) the project leads made throughout the process
- what the impact or outcome of the project was
- how that project might be continued, scaled up or moved forward.

Each project is by design bound up in the context of that school and all the other important work that they do. Getting the most out of the ideas shared in these pages will mean thinking carefully about how those ideas can be translated into your own context. We have included some ideas for how each project could be adapted or taken further at the end of each article. Each project includes some headline data about the school to help provide context. Don't skip projects just because, for example, they are targeting younger students than you support: there is so much that can be adapted and shared across different sectors.

The following reflection questions may help you get the most out of what is contained in these pages.

SHARING THIS PUBLICATION WITH COLLEAGUES
- Who in your school should read/use this publication? Key staff? SLT?
- How will you disseminate the project and its ideas to others? Remember that some of the project ideas could be adapted and implemented at classroom level.

REFLECTING ON YOUR 'NOW'
- Are you aware, now, of where your key barriers are in terms of supporting the highest level of achievement in your school? Particular areas of the curriculum, for example? Have that in mind as you approach the projects in these pages.
- How aware are your staff of issues relating to the achievement of more able learners? How do you know?
- What is the culture of achievement in your school? Have you discussed this as part of your conversation with staff and students? Do you need to?

FOCUSING ON YOUR SCHOOL
- What in this publication might help you to improve the achievement of more able learners in your school or college? Are there common themes that emerge when you think about more able learners in your school? E.g. confidence, aspiration, independence, resilience?
- How can you identify the areas you want to focus on? What is your data telling you? How does your data compare to national headlines?
- Drawing on your professional expertise and knowledge, which projects will have the most impact in your context? What is already established? What mechanisms already work?

TAKING YOUR NEXT STEPS
- **Reflect on what you have read** – are you inspired to run your own project, or implement any changes based on the insights shared in these pages?
- **Speak to your PiXL Associate** – they are well-placed to support your thinking and to help you identify target groups and areas.
- **Make a plan** – identify your why. Reflect on what and how the project can be developed, including any necessary adaptations for your context.
- **Contact us on insights@pixl.org.uk** if you have any questions or wish to speak with us about future participation.

CLASSROOM PEDAGOGY

SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL TARGET YR GROUP: 10 & 11

Closing the gap between high prior attaining girls and boys in KS4

CONTEXT

The Saint John Henry Newman School is a 11 to 18 mixed catholic comprehensive school, with 1600 students. In Years 7 to 11, there are approximately 240 in each year group. In 2022, using Progress 8 measure, the GCSE results were analysed. We had a very positive P8 result, an overall + 0.57, higher than national average achievement. The results did indicate there was a large gap between girls and boys, with girls outperforming the boys in all subjects except in mathematics and computer science. The largest gap was between high prior attaining (HPA) boys and HPA girls, with a difference of nearly half a grade, Progress measure 8 score of 0.44 difference across all subjects.

IMPLEMENTATION

Autumn Term

| Year 10 and 11 student questionnaire | Assembly for Year 11 and 10 boys | Staff questionnaire | Boy behaviour workshop for staff | All departments have HPA boys as an area of development on their development plans. Led by a member of their department. | Colleague focusing on intervention for boys in Trilogy Science at KS4 | Working with a colleague focusing on the mindset of boys and academic mentoring of KS4 boys |

¹. First developed by colleagues at the Horsforth School, this simple tool organises students into a quadrant with two axes: High/Low Effort and High/Low Progress. It helps identify what sort of support students need to improve.

INTENT

The focus from September 2022 was developing ways to reduce the gap between HPA boys and HPA girls in Key Stage 4. There were 34 HPA boys in Year 11 and 36 HPA boys in Year 10.

The areas of focus in the project include:

• Staff mindset on boys

• Identifying the HPA boys in all classes

• Teaching to the top – no extension tasks

• Academic mentoring – Year 12 mentoring the 34 HPA boys

• Tracking and intervention using the Horsforth Quadrant¹

The project started with a questionnaire obtaining student voice of girls and boys in Years 10 and 11. Questions were asked relating to working habits and work ethic. The overall answers between girls and boys had very little difference. The boys believed they are completing as much work as the girls and working just as hard. The next stage was to share the results with the Year 10 and 11 boys. It was a chance to talk to them all about the national gap in grades between girls and boys. Two Year 12 boys were chosen to discuss their views on GCSE and any tips they had for succeeding.

The staff questionnaire was on the whole positive, however it did highlight some stereotypical views. These included comments like *"boys lack maturity and attention"* and *"they are more disruptive than girls"*. To address this, two non-compulsory behavioural workshops were offered to staff.

Strategies were used from the book *The Boy Question*² by Mark Roberts and the following graphic³ was used:

JUST SURVIVING (AVOID LOSING)			AT YOUR BEST (PLAYING TO WIN)	
Angry Aggressive Righteous	Making others wrong Controlling In the detail	**HIGHER ENERGY**	Make it happen On the front foot Driving	Buzzing Confident
Withdrawn Quiet Playing safe	Deferring Isolated	**LOWER ENERGY**	Calm energy Peaceful Reflective	Seeing the big picture Grace under pressure

An important part of the project is that it has been embedded in the school development plan. This means each subject has to have a focus on HPA boys. There were also two members of staff completing an Education Led Development Programme (ELDP) with focuses on HPA boys. This is a project run by HertsCam organisation focusing on science intervention strategies and academic mentoring.

Science intervention strategies:

• Identified the group of underperforming HPA boys in Year 11 Science (Trilogy)

• Delivered weekly intervention sessions after school to this group

• Focused on exam questions, and exam technique

• Focused on praise, rewards and postcards home

Spring Term

| Parliament meeting with KS4 teaching and learning group – developing resources | Analysing Year 11 mock exams | Staff Inset. Talk to all staff and workshop ideas for mindset, challenging and stretching HPA boys | Sixth Form students mentoring a group of Year 11 boys | Continue to work with subject teachers to support and challenge HPA, through subject leaders meetings and a working party |

The School's Parliament has many committees. The KS4 teaching and learning group felt that to stretch students they needed to be given past paper questions and revision resources. This was achieved by creating a Year 11 area on our website where each subject shared this information. When analysing the Year 11 mocks, we highlighted the HPA boys who were not making expected progress. This was shared with departments so they could focus on these students in their lessons. HPA boys was on the agenda in the staff Inset in January. All staff had a workshop on stretch and challenge and mindset towards boys in the classroom. The following graphic was very useful:
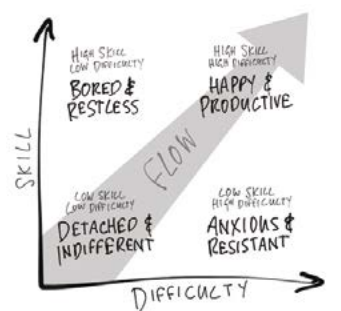
Inset take away strategies⁴:

• Identify the HPA boys in your classes

• Abandon differentiated learning aims

• Teach to the top – no extension tasks

• Live modelling

• Rewards and praise

• Use of Core 6 – Our school's six core teaching and learning strategies from WalkThrus⁵

². Roberts, M., (2021) **The Boy Question**, Routledge
³. Radcliffe, S., (2012) **Leadership: Plain and Simple**, FT Press
⁴. Csikszentmihalyi, M., (2008) **Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience**, Ingram International
⁵. Sherrington, T., (2020) **Teaching WalkThrus: Five-step guides to instructional coaching**, John Catt

Mentoring Programme

STEP 1

Analysis of data: Once we reviewed the data from the Year 11 mock exams, we identified areas where the 34 HPA boys had not made progress.

STEP 2

Consultation with heads of department and subject teachers: Heads of department provided names of specific students who were not making progress among this group of boys.

STEP 3

Recruitment of mentors: A Year 12 assembly was held, explaining the project, the benefits of it and how this could positively impact both themselves and the mentee, by acquiring many skills required in the workplace. Each student had the choice of supporting up to three subjects. The project was met with great enthusiasm and participation from a significant number of students.

STEP 4

Training of mentors: The aim of the training was to equip the mentors with essential skills and knowledge to be effective mentors. In a one-hour session, we discussed how to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) targets, understand safeguarding principles and actions, how to break down learning tasks into manageable chunks, how learning is affected by the concept of cognitive overload, what effective revision strategies and techniques look like to optimise learning and retention, best exam revision practice and exam skills (essay writing, note taking, time management techniques, revision plan) and setting holistic goals (develop/refine character virtues such as resilience, confidence, self-responsibility).

STEP 5

Matching process of mentors and mentees: When pairing the students, we looked at strengths, personality traits, interests and background. Mentors also showed flexibility and were able to adapt in case their mentee was absent and teach someone else or their second or third choice of subject.

STEP 6

The academic mentoring period: This ran from February to May, and took place once a week during a 40-minute registration. Attendance was high. The sessions were meant to end just before the Easter break, however due to the great success of the project we ran an extra four sessions throughout the month of May. In total there were 12 sessions.

Summer Term

Reviewing the last set of mocks, the subject leaders had a big focus on the high effort, low progress students. These were identified using the Horsforth Quadrant.

DIAGNOSIS
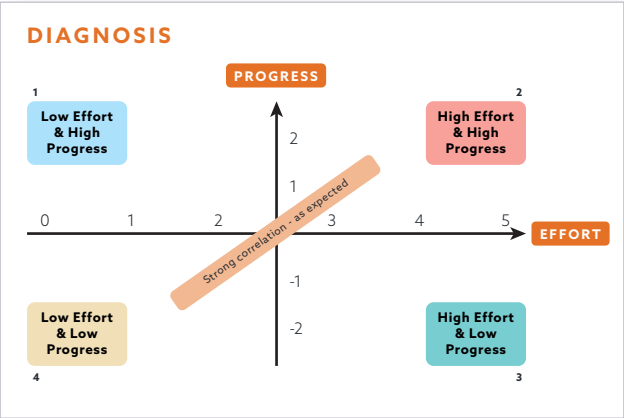
Strategies for the high effort and low progress group:

IMPACT

The Year 11 results were fantastic and the gap was reduced from a difference of 0.44 (Progress 8 measure) to 0.05. This year, our 34 HPA boys achieved 0.60 progress measure compared to the 36 HPA girls who achieved 0.65. The EBacc progress measure for HPA boys was 0.86, where the girls achieved 0.70.

The academic mentoring scheme was very rewarding for the Year 11 and 12 students involved. Some of the feedback from the Year 12 mentors:

"The programme helped me gain confidence on how to academically help others and how to help others work through areas of need."

"It gave me greater communication skills as well as the opportunity to analyse my own revision methods."

The Year 11 mentees wrote:

"I gained a deeper insight from someone who has recently done their GCSEs, who gave useful advice that I may not have received."

"My mentor taught me areas I needed help with, with great explanation."

"I learnt how to better approach questions and how to apply my knowledge."

Overall feedback from Year 11 students:

My mentor was understanding and I felt at ease asking questions about topics.	100%
My mentor tried his/her best to help me and explain the topics.	100%
The sessions were effective and as a result I gained knowledge or skills from it.	93%
The mentoring programme helped me with exam techniques.	81%
The mentoring programme taught me how to approach my studies/revision.	93%
My mentor and I had a plan of what to study in the next session.	81%
I was more confident facing the mock papers because I felt guided and supported by my mentor.	89%
I would recommend the mentoring programme to my peers. Taking part in it was worth it.	89%

In a final review, 100% of staff said that they identified the HPA boys in their classes. They all felt that the gap would close this summer. The staff were particularly impressed with the Horsforth Quadrant and the strategies used for each group; "It is effective and considers multiple aspects", "very helpful - quick and easy filtering to identify all groups". From this feedback we will continue to use the Horsforth Quadrant and the strategies around the four quadrants. The science intervention was also a great success with HPA boys out-performing girls in Biology, Chemistry and Physics Triple Science. In Trilogy Science, the HPA boys made a progress of +0.13 from their mock exams to their actual attainment.

Joanna Moles
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER
SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN SCHOOL

Chris Ng & Simon Cipolla
ELDP SUPPORTING PROJECTS
SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN SCHOOL

Adapting these ideas

- Peer mentoring, whether academic or pastoral, is a powerful developmental strategy for both mentors and mentees and could easily be adapted to benefit younger students in KS2 and KS3.
- If you haven't used the Horsforth Quadrant before to diagnose barriers to progress, that can be a really powerful exercise for staff and students.
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept of FLOW is the bedrock of our PiXL Change strategy, which can be used with students of any age, as well as staff, to bring about positive changes in behaviour.

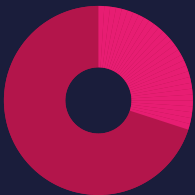# SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

1600

REGION
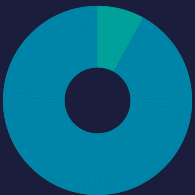**Hertfordshire**

NUMBER ON ROLL

YEAR GROUPS
Years 7-13

HIGH ACHIEVERS
29%

PUPIL PREMIUM
8%

HAWES DOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL   TARGET YEAR GROUP: YEAR 6

Supporting Year 6 greater depth writers in the classroom

INTENT

The reduction in the number of pupils achieving greater depth in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 was the main reason for this project. In 2022, 10% of our Year 6 pupils achieved greater depth in writing compared to our 2019 results, which were 38%. Time away from school due to lockdown may have been one of the reasons for this reduction, but was there something more than this that was stopping our pupils achieving greater depth in writing? What could we do to help raise standards in writing in Year 6 and could these strategies be rolled out across the school?

The project involved Year 6 pupils who were at greater depth in writing, had the potential to achieve greater depth, or were vulnerable of not converting from their Key Stage 1 starting point. We believed that by giving the pupils support in and out of the classroom, the pupils would have the time to learn key skills out of class and then apply them independently in their writing.

From analysing previous data from Key Stage 1 and Year 5, we identified 13 potential pupils from Year 6 – five boys and eight girls. Five were currently working at greater depth, five had the potential of achieving greater depth and three were vulnerable of not converting to greater depth from their Key Stage 1 data. We chose to work with the pupils all together, rather than in three separate groups, as we felt that by being together the pupils would have the chance to work collaboratively and learn from each other, not just the teacher.

IMPLEMENTATION

A range of strategies were put into place to support the pupils as part of the project.
The following are a selection of them:

THE A2 PACKAGE

As an established PiXL school, we first turned to the A2 package as an intervention to teach the pupils the skills needed to secure greater depth in writing. We used the A2 package for the pupils, as even though five of the 13 pupils were secure at greater depth, we felt that being part of the intervention would help secure the skills further and expose the vulnerable pupils to the writing skills of those pupils who were already secure.

We used the end of Key Stage 2 writing teacher assessment framework (TAF) to identify the group's weaker areas and then through a series of conversations with the Year 6 team, made the decision to begin the sessions focusing on sentence composition as the pupils were already secure with W1 – the child as a writer.

Impact

Attendance at the intervention was high with the pupils' attitude towards the group being very positive. Not only did the sessions impact the pupils' writing skills, but they also had an impact on the pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills – all the pupils in the project achieved greater depth in the grammar, punctuation and spelling papers at the end of Key Stage 2.

Although the children enjoyed the sessions and were able to retain the skills taught, the Year 6 teachers commented that the pupils weren't always able to apply the skills in their own independent writing when back in class. As a result of this, we moved the support that I was providing to the classroom, so that I was there at the point of writing to work with the pupils.

WRITING JOURNALS

After hearing Tara Magee speak about supporting greater depth writers at the March PiXL Primary conference, we decided to introduce writing journals to the children involved in the project. These journals allowed the children to 'try out' their writing and practice writing with a reader's eye. For example, when the pupils were writing a narrative, they used the journals to practice writing in first person and third person to see which version they felt suited their narrative the best. The journals were also used to replace their vocabulary books, where instead of recording vocabulary they liked/wanted to use in their writing, the pupils recorded sentences from their reading that they wanted to use in their future pieces of writing.

Impact

Using the writing journals had a positive impact on the children's writing as it allowed them to 'try out' their writing and not feel constrained to just writing in one way. It also helped secure the element of greater depth writing linked to drawing independently on what the pupils have read as models for their own writing. They were able to use the journals to keep ideas from their reading and then use them when the piece of writing suited what they had found.

> "A writing intervention proved to be a profound catalyst for a group of Year 6 writers who were already showing advanced skills. It provided them with the opportunity to delve into complex literary techniques, such as figurative language, advanced vocabulary, and nuanced storytelling. This intervention encouraged them to think critically about their writing, pushing them to explore deeper themes and perspectives. As a result, their compositions became not just well-structured but also more profound, meaning all of the children involved reached the greater depth standard for writing."

YEAR 6 TEACHER

TEACHING OF EDITING

From a 'book look' by the senior leadership team, it was noted that our pupils found it difficult to edit their work except for grammatical and spelling errors. The school decided to use PiXL's Editing Package to ensure that editing was taught explicitly, using either a teacher's model or a child's piece of writing to edit. The school came up with the anacronym AIMS to remind the children of when we use editing: A – as you go, I – impact, M – meaning and S – secretarial. The anacronym is displayed in all classrooms for pupils to refer to.

Year 6 chose to use a piece of writing from a greater depth writer as the piece that the class/teacher would edit using the class's visualiser. The teacher would edit the piece of writing, with input from the class, ensuring that it met the writing goals for that piece of writing as well as checking that it had elements from the Greater Depth Writing Assessment Framework.

Impact

Explicitly teaching editing across the school ensured that all pupils from Early Years to Year 6 understood the writing process and that the first draft is not the final draft. Teachers saw an increase in the number of pupils referring to thesauri and dictionaries to improve their writing for meaning and impact not just secretarial skills. The skill of editing is now entrenched into our writing process; children will automatically pick up a green pen to edit their work even if halfway through a sentence – they no longer wait until they have finished the piece to improve it. Using a greater depth piece as a model to edit in Year 6 was also beneficial to the Year 6 pupils. The pupils working below greater depth used it as a model to support their own writing, whereas the greater depth/potential greater depth pupils could use it as a benchmark against their own writing and use the editing advice given to help improve their own work.

OVERALL IMPACT

By putting a range of strategies into place including those above, all 13 pupils involved in the project achieved greater depth in their end of Key Stage 2 writing assessment. This raised the number of pupils achieving greater depth from 10% (2022) to 20% (2023). It did, however, uncover that further work is needed to support our staff with assessing greater depth writers and what next steps we provide these pupils with. It has also highlighted the impact of writing journals on a pupil's writing; this is a resource that we plan to roll out in Years 5 and 6 for pupils of all abilities. Writing will continue to be an area of focus on our School Development plan next year.

Donna Whiteman
DEPUTY HEADTEACHER / RAISING STANDARDS LEAD
HAWES DOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Taking part in the PiXL project gave our greater depth writers the opportunity outside the classroom to develop their own style and creative voice. Working in a small, focused group allowed them to grow in confidence and explore using a range of techniques, refining their writing to engage and entertain the reader."

YEAR 6 TEACHER

Adapting these ideas
- The team at Hawes Down deliberately included their more able learners who were already secure in some of their interventions, so that the target cohort could benefit from working alongside them. What opportunities could you provide for similar groupings of students?
- Writing journals proved to be a positive way to help students try out ideas in a low-risk way. There are many other skills or curriculum areas that might benefit from a similar approach.
- Editing is often an area where more able learners could do more to improve their progress, at all phases of education. Think about how students in your setting are taught to edit their work, and whether this is explicit or implicit.
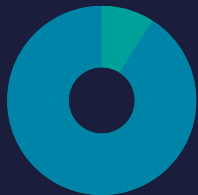
HAWES DOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

455

REGION	NUMBER ON ROLL	YEAR GROUPS	PUPIL PREMIUM
London		EYFS - Year 6	7.5%

DRIVEN FROM THE TOP

- A focus on the outcomes, experiences, and achievement of the more able is an essential part of the school improvement plan.
- A key member of the senior leadership team was tasked with making this one of their key priorities.

STAFF TRAINING

- Work was done with staff to increase expectations and the amount of work set for pupils and the work was focused on revision as well as consolidation of learning.
- CPD on both the Thinking Hard Collection and High-Quality Questioning[1] was delivered to the staff. This was also then followed up and further developed through departments, line management and learning walks.

CULTIVATING LEARNING AND STUDY SKILLS

- Planned discreet teaching of study skills was delivered for Year 11s, as was timetabled study and revision sessions.
- There was a key focus on developing independence and work outside the classroom. Expectations around independent learning increased.
- Varied strategies were also revisited for Year 11 including mock exams having scheduled independence and revision sessions built into the timetable. Mock results day was also planned which included a range of colleagues and activities and was focused on the students' aspirations for their next steps in education.
- An Alumni pupil reading PPE was hired as an academic mentor for a key group of Year 11 students. This also included subject mentoring for 7-9 grades in key subjects.

ASPIRATION AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR

- An "Aspire Plan" was created for over 64 Year 10 pupils who were identified following their summer exams. This included key work, tasks, reading and activities to complete independently. Work was set by all the EBacc departments to be completed for September.
- The school engaged with several different organisations including The Brilliant Club and universities to arrange trips, experiences, and avail of resources.
- Careers and Aspirations were also vital and there were varied strategies including university visits, events with the Sixth form, UCAS talks and for Year 11 a "Directions and Destination Day".

There are many other ideas and approaches that the school are adopting – both staff and students embracing challenge and having high expectations is one of the key objectives.

Sarah Murrell
PiXL INSIGHTS PROJECT MENTOR

[1] Both part of *PiXL's Teaching & Learning* provision, available for all schools to use
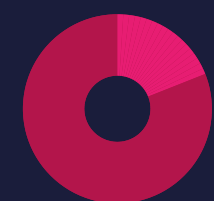
CARSHALTON BOYS SPORTS COLLEGE   TARGET YEAR GROUP: WHOLE SCHOOL

Zooming out: an overview of things we've tried

CONTEXT

Carshalton Boys Sports College is a very popular, over-subscribed boys' community comprehensive school for students aged 11-16 with a mixed sixth form. The school is located in the London Borough of Sutton. Over the last few years, the team at Carshalton Boys have been reflecting on the learning experiences and achievement of their high ability pupils. We sat down to discuss this with Matthew Robinson, a member of the school's senior leadership team. What follows below is just a brief overview of some of the different approaches they have explored.

CARSHALTON BOYS SPORTS COLLEGE

1500

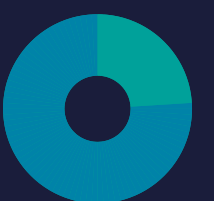**REGION**
South East / South London

NUMBER ON ROLL

YEAR GROUPS
Year 7 – Year 13

HIGH ACHIEVERS
19%

PUPIL PREMIUM
24%

RAISING ASPIRATION

CARLTON BOLLING SCHOOL   TARGET YEAR GROUP: WHOLE SCHOOL

Creating a culture of excellence

Our aim with PiXL Insights is to share the professional insights of colleagues who have undertaken projects to try and close a specific gap in their context over the course of an academic year. However, we also want to share with you some of the longer-term work that schools have been doing to stretch and challenge their learners. To that end, I sat down with Mohammed Azum and Inam Laher, Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher at Carlton Bolling School in Bradford, to talk about how they have been building a culture of excellence at the school.

CONTEXT

Carlton Bolling School is a large 11-16 school in inner-city Bradford. The school is in an area with a high level of deprivation and of organised and violent crime, including a high number of cases of child criminal exploitation. In their local community, relationships between residents and local services such as the police and schools have been historically fractious. Despite this challenging context, the school is flourishing and children secure excellent outcomes and parents have described the school as a 'beacon of hope' for the local area. The school received an Outstanding Ofsted rating in May 2023 and have previously won the Pearson Gold Teaching Award for 'Secondary School of the Year Making a Difference'.

NO EXCELLENCE WITHOUT TRUST

Azum considers their culture of excellence as beginning in the community. It is a high priority for the leadership team to be actively engaged with the community, and that the school is seen as a trusted and safe place. Azum says that it has taken about five or six years of dedicated work for them to build the level of trust that they now enjoy. The school lends its facilities to local community groups, particularly women's groups, and hosting charity events. The building is available as a warm place after school for parents and the local community. They offer classes for parents on employability skills. They also aim to build bridges between families and public services: they host the regional police cadets ceremonies and invite the police to attend their award ceremonies. The school's ambition is to help shape happy, successful and law-abiding young professionals who then in turn contribute positively to their community (something that Azum knows about personally, having formerly been a student at the school).

DEMONSTRATING EXCELLENCE AT LEADERSHIP LEVEL

Moving inside the school gates, Azum has prioritised fostering a research culture amongst the leadership team and wider staff. He subscribes to the idea that leaders are readers, and books on education and leadership are shared widely across the staff.[1]

Every SLT meeting (which they have fortnightly) will begin with one member of the leadership team sharing a case study or reflection from their reading. They spend at least half an hour of the meeting reflecting on that piece of shared insight: a recent conversation that has taken place in the school came from a Deputy who had read an article in the Harvard Business Review on collective genius.

For Azum, this isn't just about finding ideas for innovating or moving things forward in the school (although that is one outcome of the work). It's also about role modelling to students what dedication to excellence and life-long learning looks like.

FLOODING THE SCHOOL WITH EXCELLENCE

There is a Hall of Excellence outside the Headteacher's Office which is a showcase of high-quality work from across every faculty. The gallery includes work from students across all ages and abilities, as well as staff.

A recent project with the school council on inspiring figures has also resulted in new murals of quotations in the school café, so that students are constantly reminded of their potential. They have a Carlton Edge programme, where every student will be exposed to two cultural capital visits per year that are completely funded by the school. There are local businesses constantly being involved in competitions and talks at the school. Their girls' football team is sponsored by Sarah Khan Bashir MBE who has a Law Academy set up specifically for encouraging women to get into law.

It's important to the team at Carlton Bolling that there are no glass ceilings for any of their students. They have worked hard to demonstrate to students what excellent teaching (as well as excellent learning) looks like. Student voice is used frequently to gather feedback on teaching and learning, so they feel invested in the process. One way they do this is through Walking Talking Book Looks, where students talk through the work they have produced over the half term to a member of SLT using key vocabulary from the subject [speak as a specialist].

'THE FUTURE IS TOO FAR AWAY' – UNDERSTANDING LONG-TERM GOALS

The school use a strategy of reverse engineering with students and parents, whereby you work backwards from an idea end goal in order to work out key achievement milestones. This understanding of the long-term nature of success is particularly important to the team at Carlton Bolling given their context and the threat of the short-term 'wins' offered by criminal organisations in the area.

The school brought in an external speaker recently who was a former gang member and had previously served a prison sentence for attempted murder. He shared a poignant reflection in his talk: that teachers used to talk to him about his future, but the future was too far away, and he couldn't connect to it. So the team try very hard to make sure students have a pathway that feels achievable and aspirational.

[1] If you're interested in this approach, you may want to listen to our *PiXL Leadership Book Club podcast*, and also Geoff Barton's *Leaders are Readers* podcast for lots of recommendations on titles to explore.

During transition into the school, the team are keen to stress the view that the success of children isn't something that the school can achieve in isolation, and that there is a collective responsibility between the school and parents/carers to work together to create a climate that students can flourish in.

At Key Stage 4, the team run a series of parental workshops titled 'The Road to 9'. The purpose of these is to demonstrate to parents what is possible. They usually involve presentations from SLT, as well as ex-students (all of whom are briefed on the focus the school has on excellence).

NEXT STEPS: STAYING ON TOP OF THINGS

This year the team have introduced Weekly Engagement Trackers for their KS4 students. These are simple Google Forms with 10 recall questions for homeworking, and these also get sent out to parents who have to tick that they have seen the homework. This means that, alongside attendance data, the school will be able to share with parents at the first parents' evening how well both the student and the parent are engaging with schoolwork. Because of the high support that the school offer to their community, parents have demonstrated willing and readiness to meet the high expectations the school has of them and their children.

Azum encapsulates their approach: **"There's a lot of collaboration, but for me that's what excellence looks like"**. As a networking organisation, we completely agree. Many thanks to the team at Carlton Bolling for sharing their work.

Hannah Costanzo
HEAD OF CROSS-PHASE PROJECTS & PiXL INSIGHTS PROJECT MANAGER

Mohammed Azum   **Inam Laher**
HEADTEACHER   **DEPUTY HEADTEACHER (Curriculum & Standards)**
CARLTON BOLLING   **CARLTON BOLLING**

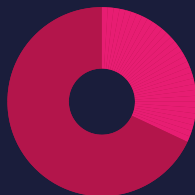# CARLTON BOLLING SCHOOL

1643

REGION
Bradford

NUMBER ON ROLL

YEAR GROUPS
Year 7 - Year 11

HIGH PRIOR ATTAINING 12%

PUPIL PREMIUM 38%

- The school is in an area of high levels of deprivation, air pollution and the risk of juvenile involvement in criminal activity is high.
- The cohort is drawn from wards which rank in the bottom 0.1% on the Government's indices of deprivation and have low starting points when they join the Academy.
- The Academy's IDACI deprivation indicator is 0.225 which highlights the challenges students face and contextual safeguarding risks which the Academy needs to mitigate.
- In September 2022, as per the crime stats agency in the area, 49% of all crime recorded in the BD3 Postcode District was violent crime.

- The vast majority of students (84%) are of British Asian heritage; of the remaining students, the most significant ethnic groups are Eastern European (5%) and White British origin (1%).
- Prior attainment on entry is well below national averages. Reading age data on entry shows that 78% are below their expected chronological reading age and 26% are not meeting SATs expected standard in maths.

"It's important to the team at Carlton Bolling that there are no glass ceilings for any of their students."

SWAKELEYS SCHOOL FOR GIRLS   TARGET YEAR GROUP: WHOLE SCHOOL

The transformational power of talk

Swakeleys School for Girls have been prioritising the development of oracy for over a decade in their school. Insights project manager Hannah sat down with Assistant Headteacher Lawrence Hepner to discuss some of the work they have been doing and the impact it's been having. What follows below is a summary of this conversation.

"Spoken language skills are one of the strongest predictors of a child's future life chances" VOICE 21[1]

Back in the era of specialist schools, Swakeleys received funding for oracy as a specialist subject and since then there has always been a senior leader with responsibility for oracy. Oracy is embedded in the curriculum and the school development plan, and all staff are aware of, and trained in, the impact of good quality talk in the classroom.

Swakeleys have slowly woven the four key strands of oracy recommended by Voice21 into their curriculum: physical, linguistic, cognitive and social/emotional. For each of these strands there are benchmarks which Swakeleys have introduced (these are not Voice 21 assessment benchmarks): apprentice, developing, confident and expert speaker. This progression is introduced to students from Year 7 so they understand what is meant by 'an expert speaker' and 'a developing speaker'.

ORACY IN THE CURRICULUM

CONSISTENT AND REGULAR MESSAGING

There are regular assemblies to reinforce the importance of oracy. The school also have begun to have drop-down sessions with extended form time, where they make use of our PiXL Orate resources[2] (among other things).

STAFF CPD AND TRAINING

All staff are training in oracy instruction, including how to use debate in the classroom and how to facilitate effective discussion[3]. Training, especially for new members of staff and ECTs, also includes understanding the oracy benchmarks – and also that students' oracy skills may present differently in different subject disciplines where they have more or less confidence.

TRACKING ORACY SKILLS

Oracy is included as an area on reports back to parents, indicating where students are sitting alongside the Voice21 benchmarks. Students are also encouraged to self-evaluate. On every book they have for each subject, there is a sticker on the front that states what type of speaker they are in that subject using the Voice21 benchmarks (apprentice, developing, confident, expert). This is also a really useful tool for asking questions about why students may be more confident speakers in some classes and not others, and Lawrence says it can actually be used as a piece of diagnostic data to determine what support some students may need in different subjects.

NO PENS DAY

Every year in May, to demonstrate the school's commitment to oral communication, they have a 'No Pens Day' where students and staff have to abandon pens and rely on their voices for an entire day.

No Pens Day has been running for around six years now. Lawrence said that at first there was quite a bit of resistance and uncertainty from staff about this idea, but that it has now become a source of a lot of pedagogical creativity and staff value how it makes them think differently about their teaching.

Student engagement in No Pens Day was excellent and they were keen to give their own suggestions. *"Students explaining what they did and how they designed their DNA model was fantastic. Students also fed back on the fact that some teachers talked to them more about themselves and their careers which gave them a lot of interest in knowing more about their teachers."*

The student oracy sub-committee (more about them in the student voice section below) will work with the leadership team to agree key focus areas or themes for each year. For example, last year the students decided they wanted to focus on discussion.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ORACY

DEBATING

As well as debate in the classroom, the school offers a number of other opportunities for students to engage in debate. There is a weekly debate club which is very well attended by students of all ages. They have a House Debating Competition that takes place over one week in March.

TED TALKS

In the summer term the school invites students to prepare and deliver TED talks. They receive training in what the talks look and feel like, but students are encouraged to speak about any topic that interests them. The speeches are 90 seconds and delivered to a panel of 'judges'. Lawrence credits this as being a good entry point for students who might not yet be ready for the more combative aspect of debating.

[1] Voice 21 is the UK's oracy education charity. They work with schools to transform the learning and life chances of young people through talk. *https://voice21.org/why-oracy-matters/*
[2] Please turn to page 52 for details of resources that we have available.
[3] Our *PiXL Up for Debate* programme has useful guides for how teachers can make use of debate in the classroom.

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

They compete in (and have previously won) external competitions such as those run by the ESU (English Speaking Union[4]) and they are also former champions of PiXL's Up for Debate KS3 competition. They put, as a minimum, 60 Year 10 students through the Speak Out Challenge every year, which is run by the Jack Petchey Foundation[5]. The training supports both students who are already confident orators as well as those whose skills are still emerging. Lawrence consults with his English team and Heads of Year to identify those who would benefit most from this opportunity every year.

Lawrence has highlighted that they wanted to focus more on Sixth Form opportunities this year. They are partnering with the Jack Petchey Foundation again to deliver training for their Sixth Form students on how to go for an interview, whether that be for university or employment. This builds on Swakeleys own in-house support for students around preparing for interviews, which begins with training for Year 11 students in preparation for Sixth Form interviews.

WHOLE-SCHOOL DEBATES

Four times a year the school engage in whole-school debates, using the PiXL Up for Debate format[6]. The whole school receives the motion two weeks in advance to give students time to conduct their own independent research. Every form tutor is trained in delivering debates, and so each form is able to participate in the whole-school debate simultaneously. This year, Lawrence is training oracy ambassadors who will be attached to each year group and will have responsibility for leading and coordinating these form-time debates.

SUPPORTING STUDENT VOICE WITH POWERFUL TALK

A crucial part of developing students' oracy is allowing them to see the impact of their voices.

The school are incredibly proud of their robust and active school council. They have two senators in each year group who are democratically elected through a hustings process. There are then ten sub-committees attended by every form in the school:

- **Canteen, Uniform & Transport**
- **Charities**
- **Constitution**
- **Diversity**
- **Environment**
- **Finance**
- **Oracy**
- **Public Relations**
- **Sport**
- **Teaching & Learning**

Over the course of the year, the chairs of each sub-committee then meet with the elected senators and key SLT, who then filter recommendations up to the Headteacher for decision-making. Throughout this process there are many opportunities for students to speak in different contexts, advocating for their peers' interests, as well as developing other useful skills such as minuting.

"Oracy is a big part of everyone's life! When I am older I am going to need to use my voice to persuade and communicate with others in the workplace. These skills are priceless." **SWAKELEYS STUDENT SENATOR**

The outcome of this is that students feel genuinely listened to, are able to voice their opinions in a professional manner and are actively engaged in their wider school community.

"I'm not trying to produce a thousand Barack Obama-style speakers", Lawrence says, *"I want to give students a voice."* Oracy is so much more than just producing confident and charismatic speakers. It's about giving all students the training and opportunity to understand and develop their communication. Whether it's more confident students taking part in external debating competitions, or those who prefer to work more 'behind the scenes' via the student council, it's Lawrence's ambition that every child in their school feels emboldened and empowered to use their voice.

Hannah Costanzo
HEAD OF CROSS-PHASE PROJECTS
& PiXL INSIGHTS PROJECT MANAGER

Lawrence Hepner
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER
SWAKELEYS SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

[4] You can find out more about the English Speaking Union's competitions here: **https://www.esu.org/competitions/**
[5] **https://www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk/opportunities/partnership-programmes/speak-out-challenge/**
[6] Resources explained on page 52, but the format we use is a three versus three debating team with a first, second and summary speaker for each side.

> "We are always pushed to achieve our best. We are stretched and challenged not only to reach our target grades but to exceed them."

SWAKELEYS STUDENT SENATOR
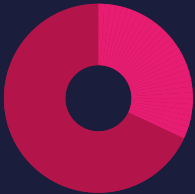
SWAKELEYS SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

1368

REGION	NUMBER ON ROLL	YEAR GROUPS	HIGH ACHIEVERS	PUPIL PREMIUM
Middlesex		**Year 7 - Year 13**	**32% (Year 7-11)**	**24%**

We are a very diverse all girls comprehensive in Hillingdon, West London. We have a mixed 6th form.

RAVENS WOOD SCHOOL   TARGET YEAR GROUP: KEY STAGE 5

Preparing for Success

CONTEXT

In education, we are all acutely aware that the impact of Covid-19 on our students has been significant and multifaceted. At Ravens Wood School (RWS), this has been particularly apparent with our 2022/23 Year 13 cohort. The repeated disruptions to education during their time in lower school, remote learning, and the potential disparities in access to technology and internet connectivity during this period, in addition to not experiencing Year 11 examinations and lack of social interaction during lockdowns, has culminated in a unique cohort of students. A significant sub-set of students met the success criteria of our A Level courses, due to the awarding of Centre Assessed Grades, whilst still having potential gaps in their fundamental knowledge. In addition, the isolation, anxiety and uncertainty brought about by the pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of a large proportion of our Year 13 cohort, which, in turn, has affected their ability to display the resilience and determination needed in order to excel in their KS5 courses. Whilst a robust programme of live online lessons and support was quickly embedded at Ravens Wood School during lockdowns, we have a large number of external students in our Sixth Form and so, collectively, our students had a somewhat varied experience during their lower school years.

INTENT

We identified a need for the Sixth Form team to reflect upon the raising standards provision of previous years, to ensure it is powerful and effective for this unique group of individuals, with a particular focus on A*-A attainment. In 2019, 15.2% of RWS A Level students achieved A*-A, rising to 24% in 2022. This academic year, we have committed to a Wildly Important Goal of maintaining the 2022 A*-A outcomes. We acknowledge that this is ambitious; however, we are determined to show improvement on the 2019 attainment figures. At the beginning of the year, the Sixth Form team developed several A*-A improvement strands as part of our overall raising standards programme, based upon the End of Year 12 (EOY12) assessment outcomes. As we have moved through the year, we have reflected upon and evolved the provision following forensic analysis of each Pre-Public Examination (PPE) data collection.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our curriculum is based upon the philosophy of 'teaching to the top', where all students are challenged and engaged, irrespective of their initial starting points. All lessons include pinnacle learning opportunities, designed to foster critical thinking, deepen analysis and allow application of knowledge in creative ways. The A*-A improvement strategies were developed to sit alongside the powerful classroom experience of our students. Some of these strategies are discussed here, along with their potential impact.

BREAKFAST MENTORING

Small, targeted groups of students were identified for short, one-to-one early morning meetings with members of the Sixth Form team and wider senior leadership team. The focus of the meetings was to go through student work and folders, discuss revision and independent study techniques, identify areas of concern and feed relevant support requirements back to subject teachers.

Based upon the EOY12 assessment outcomes, the first group through this provision were underperforming SEND and bursary students, with a second group being identified after Pre-Public Examination 1 (PPE1)[1] containing students who had been predicted A*-A in their EOY12 assessments, but who had not attained those grades in PPE1 of Year 13.

16–19 TUITION

Two waves of 16–19 tuition were scheduled. The first was after PPE1, with all bursary and SEND students receiving bespoke weekly tuition in their weakest subject, with the second wave based upon their weakest subject from their PPE2 assessment outcomes.

A*–A SUBJECT VIDEOS

The second PPE of the academic year was in February and 16.3% of the cohort achieved A*-A. Whilst this was going in the right direction, we felt that once a second RWS Aspire group had been identified, an additional 'last push' resource was needed.

Heads of department and subject leads were asked to record bespoke videos directing students on what they needed to do to achieve A*-A in their subject, including exemplar work and feedback from examiners. These were shared online with all students as part of our post-PPE2 raising achievement evening, although those in the second RWS Aspire group and those who had A*-B minimum target grades were specifically targeted to watch them.

RWS ASPIRE

The first PPE of the academic year was in October and 15% of the cohort achieved A*-A. Whilst this was in line with 2019, it fell short of 2022 outcomes. Therefore, after PPE1, students who achieved A3/B1 borderline outcomes were identified and placed into the RWS Aspire provision. They met as a group with the Sixth Form team and were given resource packs, including PiXL Independence booklets, PiXL Think Its and PiXL reading lists. From this, subject teachers were instructed to set specific tasks and monitor engagement.

Students were asked to complete an independent study log, which sat inside their subject folder, identifying the work they had completed each week, which was monitored by our silent study supervisor. Students were also asked to book another independent study session during period 5 in order to remain on site so that they could reach out to their subject teachers should they need support or guidance.

The strategy was communicated home and launched at an RWS13 raising achievement evening. In addition, the Sixth Form team had one-to-one meetings with those within this group who had minimum target grades of A*-A. Members of our senior leadership team were instructed to have a standing agenda item with heads of department to review the performance of these students and for heads of department were then asked to contact home with any concerns promptly.

This process was repeated after PPE2 in February as part of a larger intervention strategy, where students who achieved C3/D1 or E3/U in PPE1 or PPE2 were placed into RWS Endeavour and RWS Achieve initiatives respectively, each with their own specific targeted approach.

[1] Mock examinations sat in the second Autumn half term

POST PPE2 REFLECTION DOCUMENTS

After PPE2, all RWS Aspire, Endeavour and Achieve students were asked to complete a reflection document in each of their subjects, where they reflected on their preparation for their assessments, where they lost marks, their time management during the assessment and their planning of answers. Students were then asked to specifically outline what they would change in preparation for the summer examinations.

RWS SCHOLARS

This year saw the development and launch of the RWS Scholars Programme for both Year 12 and 13 students. Students were invited to attend bespoke lectures from guest speakers from a variety of fields, universities and industries. The aim is to deepen students' understanding and engagement with their courses, push students beyond their specifications, increase cultural capital, promote independence, support UCAS applications and bridge the gap between school and higher education and the workplace. Ultimately, we hope that this will lead to higher grades and increasing success in securing next step destinations. This academic year there have been 859 students targeted to attend over ten events. Whilst this lecture series was open to all Year 12 and 13 students, RWS Aspire and students with A*-B minimum target grades were specifically encouraged.

IMPACT

The A*-A outcomes have continually risen through the year between PPE1 and PPE2. We are also delighted to report that we have maintained A*-A outcomes in line with 2019 this summer. Whilst it would be foolhardy to attribute outcomes at each data point to any one aspect of a raising standards programme, the progress of students within each A*-A improvement strand has been analysed. Some are discussed below.

BREAKFAST MENTORING WAVE 1 (Bursary and SEND students)

42% of students improved between EOY12 assessment and PPE1. Indeed, when a gap analysis was performed, 21% of SEND students achieved A*-A at PPE1 compared to 15% of the whole cohort, which further improved to 25.5% after PPE2 compared to 16.3% of the whole cohort. This has continued into the summer examinations where our SEND pupils have continued to outperform the whole cohort at A*-A.

BREAKFAST MENTORING WAVE 2 (Predicted A*-A in EOY12 assessment, but did not achieve in PPE1)

78% improved at least one subject between PPE1 and PPE2.

"Breakfast mentoring allowed me to meet the students that I do not necessarily see in the classroom. This has given me the opportunity to develop relationships with these students and impact their academic journey. Students valued that we took an interest in their performance and often came to share positive news regarding grades after assessments." **DEBRA HOLLINGSWORTH** DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF KS5

16–19 TUITION (all Bursary and SEND students post PPE1 and PPE2)

A total of 25 grades went up between PPE1 and PPE2.

RWS ASPIRE (A3/B1 students after PPE1 and PPE2)

33% improved their grades between PPE1 and PPE2.

"This has really sparked my interest in an apprenticeship rather than going down the university route. I was unaware that a company like Network Rail would have a role that would tick all the boxes for me. Having access to these events and speakers allows us to engage with next steps providers." **YEAR 13 STUDENT** AFTER THE NETWORK RAIL SCHOLARS EVENT

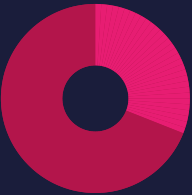Whilst we are delighted with our summer outcomes and very proud of our Year 13 students, it is always important to reflect and evolve. The Breakfast Mentoring was a very low input/high output strategy that we will certainly keep and develop – indeed, we have already planned to meet with our prospective Oxbridge students in our first wave in September. The RWS Scholars Programme also goes from strength to strength and we have five lectures already booked in for next half term. An area that we need to continue to develop is the use of post-assessment reflection documents. We feel that Year 13 PPE2 was too late for these to have had significant impact and that all students would benefit from completing this invaluable task earlier in the year. As such, in 2023-24 we will be rolling this out to all Year 12 and 13 students at each assessment point. Finally, the RWS Aspire programme has not been as impactful as we had hoped. If we are to continue to delegate the monitoring of these students on a weekly basis to department level, we need to ensure that this is consistently being applied across all departments and that silent study supervisors are proactive in monitoring independent study logs and having 1:1 discussions with students to encourage engagement in the provision.

Mrs Abi Snasdell
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER, SIXTH FORM
RAVENS WOOD SCHOOL

Adapting these ideas

- The use of reflection resources to encourage students to develop metacognition, independence and self-efficacy can be really impactful for students of all ages – how do you encourage students to reflect on their performance in different classroom tasks and assessments?

- There is a lot of power in exposing young people of all ages to external speakers – the lecture series is a great idea. For younger students, author talks, visits from creatives and careers talks provide similar enrichment and aspiration.

RAVENS WOOD SCHOOL

1606

REGION
London

NUMBER ON ROLL

YEAR GROUPS
Years 7-13

HIGH ACHIEVERS
31.3%

PUPIL PREMIUM
14%

Ravens Wood is a comprehensive boys school with a mixed Sixth Form. They are part of the IMPACT Multi-Academy Trust.

BIRKBECK PRIMARY SCHOOL   TARGET YEAR GROUP: WHOLE SCHOOL

Fostering a culture of high ambition

We met with Adam Kohlbeck from Birkbeck Primary school in September and discussed some of the developments his Primary school have been working on to develop not only the more able in his school, but to ensure high challenge and ambition for all pupils, staff and other members of their community.

CONTEXT

Birkbeck is a three-form entry primary school in Bexley. The school has relatively low numbers of students who are SEN, EAL or are FSM/PP. The school pride themselves on their commitment to their school vision: *"To create a learning community where we are planning and pursuing excellence and enjoyment through sequenced, evidence-informed teaching and learning that enables all children to be valued for their heritage and individuality and to be motivated to reach their full potential and to understand how they can influence the world of the future."*

The school's ethos is continually striving for social justice and equity of opportunity. Ensuring that all students receive a challenging and ambitious curriculum that pushes them to achieve is a key focus for the school. The key to delivering this was raising the expectations of all and stretching the thinking of the teaching staff in all areas of the school so that they are world class. This included thinking about how deep thinking and hard thinking can be facilitated throughout the ambitious and aspirational curriculum. The key to ensuring the success of this approach was ensuring that all staff were fully invested in the vision for curriculum and for what the school wanted for its children when they came to leave. Ongoing CPD and discussions around culture, ethos and purpose underpinned and helped to cultivate this sense. The school's approach to supporting staff in this endeavour was twofold. Firstly, they heavily invested time and resources into their bespoke programme of Pedagogically focused CPD which was implemented through instructional coaching – an effective culture builder for the whole school. The programme introduced a strategic focus on 6 key principles of high-quality teaching that were central to high challenge and expectation through pedagogy.

These were:

- Examples and Modelling
- Explanations
- Practice with spacing
- Effective sequences
- Retrieval and revisiting
- Touching base and checking for understanding

IMPLEMENTATION

Secondly, they also worked to cultivate attitudes characterised by high aspiration and reflective thinking. This includes a menu of planned activities that the school guarantees all children will get, such as trips to Oxford University, theatre and world heritage site visits and exposure to a strategically designed enrichment programme. The BE Birkbeck Enrichment programme is something that the school have developed themselves to further embed and cultivate a sense of high expectation and ambition. The programme's motto is Be Ambitious and it builds through the three terms of the school year.

BE INSPIRED – In the Autumn term, every year group has a session with a guest speaker. The speakers who are invited have rich and diverse professional backgrounds and speak about their own personal journeys, inspiring children to think and dream big and make the plans to back this up.

BE IMPACTFUL – In the Spring term, children identify aspects of the local community that they think should be developed and the role they could play within that process. This may include committing to a weekly litter picking session or providing singing or reading for a local retirement home.

BE CHALLENGED – In the Summer term, children identify a challenge from a set list provided to them that they would like to take on. Children are encouraged to choose something that they feel really pushes them outside of their comfort zone so that they develop a sense of being able to expand and extend their own sense of their personal capabilities. Challenges may include dry slope skiing or zip lining.

BE AMAZING PEOPLE – This is an award that runs alongside the enrichment days and identifies ten well-known people who have achieved amazing things while showing amazing character traits. Children who also show these same traits in anything they do, either inside or outside of school, get the award for the corresponding person. The aim is to collect all ten awards over the course of the school year.

THE IMPACT

93% of students reached the combined expected standard at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2023. This was the highest figure in the borough of Bexley and places the school in the top 5% of schools nationally. Reading alone was 97% expected and 72% greater depth while Maths was 95% expected. Pupil voice indicates that pupils talk about what they want to do, what they want in their futures and their ambitions. Teacher buy-in has increased and the culture of the school has changed for the better. Staff hold each other to account and push each other to improve through the coaching programme. Engagement in work and belief in the meaning and purpose of their roles and their job satisfaction has also increased.

THE NEXT STEPS

The key is to continue to strengthen ambition. The school wish for more trips to top universities, and to increase experiences of the Arts, Sport, and academic experiences. The school are striving to make their offer for pupils "World Class". A key area of focus is also engaging teachers even more in deepening their pedagogy. Teacher CPD on instructional coaching has been developed and is the key driver for this academic year. This includes peer to peer coaching, feedback loops, modelling and the normalisation of broadening and deepening.

The school are on a journey focusing on high expectations and challenge for all within their community. They are relentlessly focused on making their vision and ethos a reality.

Sarah Murrell
PiXL INSIGHTS PROJECT MENTOR

Adam Kohlbeck
DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER
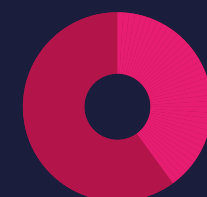**BIRKBECK PRIMARY SCHOOL**
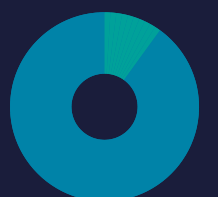
BIRKBECK PRIMARY SCHOOL

585

REGION	NUMBER ON ROLL	YEAR GROUPS	HIGH ACHIEVERS	PUPIL PREMIUM
London		EYFS - Year 6	40%	11%

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

BARNWELL SCHOOL

TARGET YEAR GROUP: YEAR 10-13

Creating a Culture of Scholarship

INTENT

Over the past two years, we have moved into relatively new territory in terms of high education progression at Barnwell School. We have had students successfully apply for and gain places at top universities, studying highly competitive subjects which has, most definitely, raised aspirations amongst subsequent cohorts. As a school situated in a POLAR 4, quintile 1 area[1], many of our students remain first generation university entrants where, historically, the majority have elected to study locally, residing at home. This shift in culture led me to question how we actively promote university as a pathway and how we prepare and support our students in making highly competitive applications to the top 30 universities.

In September 2022, after meeting with our PiXL Associate, it was agreed that our post 16 WIG would focus upon increasing the % of A*-B grades as it was identified that our higher attaining pupils (HAP) were making less progress than their middle/lower attaining peers. On further analysis, it was apparent that this trend was also reflected in our KS4 progress measures. Shortly after this meeting, I attended the PiXL Post 16 National Conference where I was completely inspired by the 'Bringing Opportunity' presentation by Matt Jones, OBE, of the Ark Globe Academy. Whilst travelling home and completing my 'Gains on the Train' document, Matt's presentation raised so many questions about our current HAP provision – it was clear that this was an area that we needed to address to ensure that our most able students were given the very best opportunities to realise their aspirations.

Returning to our busy secondary school, normal day-to-day life resumed. However, the question of how to develop our HAP provision was a constant niggle. During October half term, with time to reflect, I mapped a whole school proposal for a Barnwell Scholars Programme and shared these thoughts with our senior leadership team. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and phase one of the Barnwell Scholars Programme was launched.

THE PROGRAMME AIMS TO:

- Identify, support and celebrate our most able (and most motivated) learners.
- Raise aspirations and ensure that our most able students realise their full academic potential.

IMPLEMENTATION

The first task was to identify our students. Initially, the focus was based on our Upper School campus – Years 10, 11 and Sixth Form. In Years 10 and 11 we invited students with an average GCSE grade of 6.5 or above to join the programme; our post 16 scholars were identified by use of their ALPS data, but we also made the decision to extend the invitation to our most motivated Sixth Form learners. This information was shared with all colleagues.

We then actively sought super-curricular activities and programmes, from the top third of universities, for our scholars to engage in. The majority of these were found through the university websites, Twitter (now 'X') and via emails received from designated outreach teams.

Each opportunity was shared with the relevant students. We would meet each student initially face-to-face to provide them with the details of the programme, which were summarised in an ensuing email. In order to maximise parental engagement, telephone calls were made to parents each time their child was invited to apply for/participate in a programme. Whilst time-consuming, this was powerful. Parents were incredibly supportive and so very, very proud. Again, a letter and text message followed, in a bid to ensure that parents remained fully informed and were able to support their child from home.

To maintain a record of the many opportunities available, a scholars directory was created in the form of a OneDrive document which has developed over the course of the year. This notes the title of each programme, the target audience, the subject (where applicable), the launch date and deadline for applications. This will be used in future years to ensure that we maximise every opportunity available to our students as occasionally, this year, we discovered new programmes after the deadline for applications had passed.

A record of participation and reflection was also created for each student to maintain an accurate record of the knowledge and skills they gained from each activity. This will prove valuable when writing personal statements or attending interviews in the future.

FUNDING

We were extremely fortunate to secure funding to support the development of our Scholars Programme through a number of successful bids.

Gregson Teacher Scholarship, Balliol College, Oxford. This exceptionally generous grant awarded annually for the next three years has enabled us to:

- appoint a colleague who will formally co-ordinate and embed the Scholars Programme within the school.
- raise the aspirations of our scholars through further exposure to top class universities through workshops, visits and outreach programmes.
- open a Barnwell Scholars room with academic library.

It will also enable us to:

- develop a parent and carers programme to support the parents and carers of our Barnwell Scholars.
- develop a CPD programme to ensure all colleagues providing IAG have accurate and up-to-date knowledge in relation to our more able students.
- introduce a Barnwell Scholars Annual Conference.
- support the development of a student mentoring programme.

Widening Access Fund, University of Hertfordshire: Our bid to introduce the Uplearn platform for students in Years 12 and 13 was successful and we also secured access to the platform for our Year 10 and 11 scholars as part of a pilot programme. We also submitted a second successful bid to introduce the **Brilliant Scholars Programme** to students in Years 7 to 11 and to relaunch our alumni association, featuring an alumni gallery based on both campuses.

[1] **POLAR** classifies local areas into five groups – or quintiles – based on the proportion of young people who enter higher education aged 18 or 19 years old. Quintile 1 shows the lowest rate of participation. Quintile 5 shows the highest rate of participation.

IMPACT

Whilst still in its infancy, the Barnwell Scholars Programme is already having an impact. Some of the amazing achievements of our students are highlighted below.

KS3
Our KS3 aspiring medical students participated in the *Plant a Seed* programme, delivered by the University of Manchester's Medical School. It entailed a series of three webinars to raise awareness of the field of medicine and the application process.

YEAR 9
- 14 students invited to submit essays for The Perse School Cambridge Aristotelian Award for Research: Year 9 Research Essay with L. Haines, finishing in the top five nationally, winning a 'Highly Commended'. prize and a monetary gift of £25 in the Arts and Humanities category.
- Four students invited to apply for the UCL Scholars Programme.

YEAR 10
- 12 scholars completed the Year 10 Discovery Programme, Balliol College, Oxford.
- Ten scholars completed the Year 9 and 10 Gonville and Caius Programme.
- Ten scholars applied for the UCL Horizons Project.
- Ten scholars participated in a pilot programme with Zero Gravity.
- 14 scholars visited Balliol College, Oxford.
- Two students completed the *Learn with Us* residential programme with the University of Southampton.

YEAR 11
- Two students successfully gained places on the Eleven-Up Programme with Gonville and Caius, Cambridge.
- All Year 11 scholars attended the spring term series of interactive webinars hosted by Channel Talent.
- All scholars attended a celebration breakfast at the end of the autumn term hosted by our Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Sixth Form team.
- Retention from Year 11 into Sixth Form – initial applications rose by 85%.
- All Barnwell Scholars will receive their first choice A Level subject options.

YEAR 12 AND 13
- All Year 12 and 13 scholars enrolled onto the Zero Gravity Mentoring Programme (a digital platform which connects state school students with undergraduate mentors to increase access to Oxbridge and Russell Group universities).
- Two students successfully gained places on the LSE Springboard Programme.
- One student successfully gained a Nuffield Research Placement.
- One student successfully gained a STEM Potential Placement with Imperial College, London.
- Two students successfully gained places on the Oxford Brookes *Engage* Programme.
- One student successfully gained a place on the Imperial College London *Levelling Up* Programme.
- One student successfully gained a place on the Monday Maths Programme with Balliol College, Oxford.
- Ten of our Year 12 scholars visited Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.
- One student successfully gained a place on the Telegraph's Media Literacy Programme.

FEEDBACK FROM OUR SCHOLARS

"The programme has helped increase my confidence and belief that I can achieve top grades."

"The programme has given us so many opportunities and an insight into what our futures could be like with consistent and dedicated support."

"It's motivated me to continue to excel at school and strive to do my best. It's good to know that the school recognises our hard work and is willing to support us in achieving a good future."

DATA

The majority of the strategies adopted targeted Year 10 and 12 students; therefore, we will see the full impact of the programme in 2024. However, this year, we can report the following successes:

YEAR 11 HAP   P8 2022 -0.60   P8 2023 -0.08
YEAR 13   All of our scholars gained places at their first-choice universities.

Anecdotally, we have witnessed:
- an increase in the number of conversations about post 16 and post 18 subject choices and destinations.
- an improvement in the behaviour of scholars during social times.
- excellent support and feedback from parents (a sense of pride).
- the excitement of successful applications for super-curricular programmes.

Of our 14 Year 10 scholars who participated in the Balliol College and Gonville and Caius programmes, eight now aspire to attend Oxbridge and have a very clear vision of which subject they wish to study and how this will be realised. At the beginning of the programme, only a few could tell me the subject they were interested in studying at university and none had considered which university they wished to attend.

"The programme has boosted the confidence of our high starters by demonstrating to them that they can aspire to consider universities and jobs which they may have previously thought were out of their reach due to their demographic." M TOWNSEND

NEXT STEPS

PHASE 2: LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2023
Years 7–9: Students in Years 7 to 9 will be encouraged to pursue their passions and achieve mastery in the subjects that may shape their futures through participation in the Barnwell super-curriculum – a series of subject-specific activities designed to encourage students to independently explore, ask questions and find answers. Students are to complete all of the challenges in one subject or five challenges in three subjects to be deemed a Barnwell Scholar. As previously mentioned, the following initiatives will also be implemented during the academic year 2023-24:

- Introduction of Barnwell Scholars Mentoring Programme
- Introduction of Barnwell Scholars Annual Conference
- Introduction of EPQ Level 1 and 2 (Years 8 and 10)
- Develop a Barnwell Scholars parent/carers programme
- Introduce a HAP CPD programme for colleagues

Jackie Johnson
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER & DIRECTOR OF POST 16 LEARNING, BARNWELL SCHOOL

Adapting these ideas
- Students are never too young to have aspirational university visits – arranging for KS1 and KS2 students to visit different universities can be a great way of fostering ambition from a young age.
- Inspired by Jackie's work, PiXL has developed a PiXL Network Scholars Directory, compiling many different opportunities available to schools to support widening access and participation. It can be filtered by year group or curriculum area, allowing you to target opportunities specifically to key students.
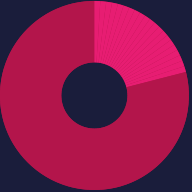
BARNWELL SCHOOL

1240

REGION
Hertfordshire

NUMBER ON ROLL

YEAR GROUPS
Years 7-13

HIGH ACHIEVERS
21%

PUPIL PREMIUM
26.4%

Barnwell School is a split campus, 11-18 co-educational school which is situated in a polar 4, quintile 1 area in the south of Stevenage.

BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE　　TARGET YEAR GROUP: YEAR 12 & 13

Leveraging the Zero Gravity platform to support disadvantaged highly able learners

CONTEXT

As the coordinator of Blackpool Sixth's Excellence Programme for high achieving students, I'm incredibly privileged to closely support many of our students on their journey to elite universities and competitive apprenticeships. One of our core values is 'Aspiration' and it's a key driver in encouraging our students to realise their potential and take risks, especially when applying for the most competitive universities and the life-changing opportunities they can bring.

However, while Blackpool benefits from a reputation for tourism, there are a range of socio-economic issues that, despite various attempts, continue to undermine these aims. Blackpool, like so many other coastal towns, continues to suffer from under-investment and government cuts[1]. Indeed, according to a 2019 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government report, 'neighbourhoods in Blackpool then account for eight of the ten most deprived neighbourhoods nationally'[2]

(Ministry of Housing, 2019:5). Similarly, the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 revealed Blackpool was ranked the most deprived area out of 317 districts and unitary authorities in England, when measured by the average rank. 39.0% of secondary school students in Blackpool are entitled to free school meals (this is the highest of all English unitary authorities) and compares to an average for all English unitary authorities of 18.7%. At Blackpool Sixth, 7.51% of students qualify for an income-assessed bursary, which has the same criteria as the free school meal criteria used by the local authority. The majority of our feeder schools perform well below the national average in terms of their GCSE results. 'Attainment 8' measures show the average score for Blackpool was the lowest percentage among the 14 local authorities in the broader Lancashire area. Currently 14.76% of our students receive a bursary (including travel bursary and free meal bursary).

INTENT

I am always on the look out for accessible, high-quality and cost effective (preferably free) resources to level the playing field. Zero Gravity immediately appealed to me because of the emphasis on mentoring. The fact that our students can speak regularly to others who have had a similar journey to them is invaluable. Moreover, the programme clearly showcased flexibility in the use of the platform which would suit many of our students who also work outside of their studies to support family finances. I was also impressed with and reassured by the strong safeguarding and mentor verification that's in place and the free School Dashboard allows me as a lead teacher to oversee student engagement right from the start.

IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to leading our Excellence Programme, I still have a large teaching timetable and coordinate a number of local schools in their teaching of classics and Latin. It was, therefore, very important that Zero Gravity would fit in seamlessly into complementing our existing offer. The School Dashboard was very easy to navigate and allowed me to refer a large number of students who I thought would benefit from the Zero Gravity approach.

In order to select appropriate students, I advertised the scheme to our cohort of students with an average GCSE point score of 7.0+. Using a quick Google Form I was able to assess which students fit the criteria, were interested, and would commit to the offer. Once I had registered my interest I was able to use the Zero Gravity resources to deliver a short assembly to interested students to explain the structure and advantages they would gain.

Once students complete their sign up form, they find out if they're eligible immediately – gaining access to Zero Gravity's mentors, masterclasses and community space, which combine to tackle the imposter syndrome so many students face when applying for a top university. The masterclasses, which run as live webinars, help to upskill our students on a range of topics, such as the personal statement, leveraging the insights of current admissions tutors (like Dr Matt Williams at Jesus College, Oxford) to give Zero Gravity members the inside scoop on all things UCAS and exams.

IMPACT

There have been a range of positive impacts of Zero Gravity for our students. Firstly, the super-curricular flexibility and masterclasses have allowed students to further explore their subject areas of interest at their own pace and to fit around college work, part-time work, and family commitments. Secondly, the further reinforcement, development and reiteration of oracy skills, such as the need to deploy specialist vocabulary, has been incredibly valuable. Historically, our students have found the interview stage of the Oxbridge application process a challenge. Spending regular time with Zero Gravity mentors perfectly complemented the workshops offered by the college. The large variety of additional webinars, admission test preparation and interview support aided in developing the confidence of our students. Finally, when speaking to students taking part it was clear that the scheme had a positive impact on their mindset in terms of responding to challenges and demystifying the process of applying for elite universities. We were especially delighted to see that Tabitha's strong engagement with the platform was recognised through the Zero Gravity Scholarship (£3,000), ensuring that she's supported financially throughout her university journey.

[1]　Suggested figure is £1.2 bn since 2010/11.
[1]　Parkinson S, 10th March 2021 **Blackpool Council Dodges Spending Crisis As Budget Approved**. Available at
　　https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/politics/blackpool-council-dodges-spending-crisis-as-budget-approved-3160496 [Accessed 07 June 2021]
[2]　Ministry of Housing (2019) **Communities and Local Government report, The English Indices of Deprivation**

AMY DUNN

"In my sessions my mentor, James, went over picking the right Cambridge college for me, doing past HAA exam papers, interview prep and personal statement workshops. They were all extremely helpful and he catered each session to what I needed help with at the time.

The sessions were very helpful. The exam prep helped me feel confident in the actual exam and I was prepared to deal with questions in the interview that I may have been thrown by if it wasn't for the interview sessions, in which James asked me his own questions from his Cambridge interview. I got offers from all my universities, including Cambridge."

TABITHA DAVEY

"We looked at personal statement final checks as well as working through substantial admission prep into the exams for Oxford. It was very useful as I was paired with a mentor who was a psychology student at Oxford, so she knew all about the admissions process. Though I didn't get an offer to Oxford I still think the help was really useful as it strengthened my personal statement, expanded my revision techniques and gave me clarity over finances at university – this ensured I got my second-choice university. An added bonus was that me and my mentor were able to talk about psychology and the recent findings in journals. I got an offer from Bath, Cardiff, York – I'm not sure about Bristol as I withdrew (didn't want that university anyway). University of Bath is my firm and York is my insurance.

As well as this, my engagement with the platform was recognised as being in the top 5% and I was successfully awarded the Zero Gravity Scholarship. This means I'll receive £3000 to support me through the costs associated with university. This is incredibly useful as I am from a low-income background and it is unlikely my mum can help towards the cost of studying."

Peter Wright
TEACHER OF CLASSICS & EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME COORDINATOR
BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Adapting these ideas

Zero Gravity's mentoring is available for Sixth Form students from disadvantaged backgrounds and is completely free to access for all UK state schools/colleges and their students. To find out more about becoming a Zero Gravity School/College head to their website: **www.zerogravity.co.uk/schools**.

BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

2100

REGION
Blackpool

NUMBER ON ROLL

YEAR GROUPS
Years 12-13

PUPIL PREMIUM
21.9%

Janhavi
University of Oxford
Law

The What, Why and When to Engage with University Widening Participation Opportunities

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE FOR ENGAGING WITH UNIVERSITIES?

Universities offer many high-quality opportunities to engage with academic subjects and experience different teaching styles. There are short, low-commitment activities such as lectures, workshops, online clubs and taster days, as well as programmes and experiences which require higher levels of commitment such as academic competitions, courses, MOOCs, summer schools and sustained contact programmes. Some of these activities are relatively broad in nature and may involve material relevant to a number of subjects while others may be subject specific. In addition to these subject-based activities, there are events which focus more on student experience such as shadowing schemes which allow prospective applicants to understand what it is like to be a student at a particular university. Many universities provide suggested reading[1] and other resources for applicants to explore different subjects.

WHY SHOULD STUDENTS GET INVOLVED?

Students who engage with university outreach activities are likely to benefit in a number of ways. They are likely to gain greater clarity about course choice and understand how teaching and learning are organised at university. They may also benefit by broadening and deepening existing subject knowledge and developing critical thinking and analytical skills. If they are considering applying to an academically demanding university, prospective applicants may be more realistic about the work it will take to achieve the highest grades and prepare for any admission tests and they may well benefit from meeting like-minded peers from other schools to form a network of support.

WHEN SHOULD ABLE STUDENTS GET INVOLVED IN WIDENING PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES?

It is never too early for students to begin to think about and engage with university. Most universities will offer visits for all secondary-aged students. It is important for students to understand that their GCSE grades matter and will definitely be taken into account by competitive universities. In addition to visits, Balliol College runs the

Discovery Programme for schools which want to engage their Year 10 students in wider learning. Sessions cover some subjects that many pupils will not have encountered before such as Economics, Philosophy and Neuroscience as well as exploring new aspects of familiar subjects. Schools are able to request the recordings and booklet for the 2023 sessions by completing the form[2]. We will announce details of the 2024 sessions in our bulletin. If you would like to receive these bulletins please email **outreach@balliol.ox.ac.uk**. Balliol College offers different pathways for able students in Year 12. Students from state schools across the country can apply for one of three sustained contact programmes, all of which have the same structure of 10 online taught sessions followed by a residential which includes tutorial teaching. Floreat is a broad-based Humanities programme, Frontier is a science-based programme and Fibonacci is for students contemplating studying a maths-based degree. In addition to these programmes, the university runs UNIQ[3] which provides a range of week-long residential courses for disadvantaged students.

WHAT ELSE IS THERE?

Some students will want to explore on their own. There is no hierarchy of resources; watching a documentary or listening to a podcast can be just as valid as reading an article about a subject – it is what the student learns that is important not how they learned it. Oxford Unvieristy offers a variety of resources for students to explore their subject interests.

- **Digital Resource Hub**[4] includes materials for Year 7-13.
- **Oxplore**[5] is a tool for secondary-aged students to debate topical issues and questions.
- **Springboard videos**[6] provide a bite-sized introduction to new subject matter for Year 11-13.
- **Balliol College Super curricular guides**[7] offer subject-specific suggestions for further reading.
- **Outreach Calendar**[8] lists activities for secondary students of all ages.
- **Teacher mailing lists exist for the following subjects:** Chemistry[9], Classics[10], Computer Science[11], English[12], Engineering[13], Geography[14], History[15], Maths[16], Materials Science (Teachers)[17], Materials Science (Pupils)[18], Modern Foreign Languages[19] and Physics[20].

TOP TIPS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF WIDENING PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Involve students with universities as soon as possible as many Year 7s have already made up their mind about whether or not they are going to university.
- Make sure that students understand that GCSE grades will impact on applications to competitive universities, preferably by hearing this first hand from a competitive university.
- Find out what your local universities can offer along with your Oxford link college[21] and Cambridge link college[22].
- Find out what universities can provide to support delivery of your GCSE and A Level curricula as well as super-curricular learning more generally.
- Encourage students to take part in academic competitions. These vary enormously in type from science video making to problem solving challenges and essay writing. Subject Olympiads[23] showcase the academic strengths of a student in an individual subject.
- Encourage staff and students to sign up for relevant subject mailing lists to find out about events.
- Make able and motivated students aware of outreach opportunities and be prepared to follow up with an individual conversation to ensure students do complete relevant applications and meet the deadlines.
- Ensure that sixth form students systematically record what they have learned from their super-curricula explorations as this will make writing personal statements much easier.
- Build in time for students to share their super-curricular learning so they are having regular academic discussions and can share what they have enjoyed reading and watching.
- Encourage older students who have taken part in relevant programmes and experiences to talk to students in younger years about what they have gained.

1   www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/suggested-subject-resources
2   https://forms.office.com/e/ELezXWhBg4
3   www.uniq.ox.ac.uk/
4   www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/increasing-access/ug-digital-resources
5   https://oxplore.org/
6   www.ox.ac.uk/oxfordforEE/springboard
7   www.balliol.ox.ac.uk/admissions/schools-and-outreach/resources-for-schools-and-prospective-applicants
8   https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/increasing-access/events-calendar
9   https://www.chem.ox.ac.uk/whats-on
10 https://clasoutreach.web.ox.ac.uk/teachers-advisors#collapse390066
11 https://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/mailinglist/
12 https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/article/sign-up-to-the-english-facultys-mailing-list-for-teachers

13 https://eng.ox.ac.uk/outreach/signup/
14 www.geog.ox.ac.uk/study/for-teachers/
15 www.history.ox.ac.uk/teachers-and-advisors
16 www.maths.ox.ac.uk/groups/number-theory/mailing-list
17 https://oxford.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/oxford-materials-teacher-mailing-list
18 https://oxford.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/oxford-materials-access-mailing-list
19 www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/newsletter/subscribe
20 https://oxford.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/teacher-mailing-list
21 www.ox.ac.uk/oxfordforUK
22 www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/area-links
23 https://natmatsci.ac.uk/olympiad-competitions/

MORE FROM PiXL

PiXL STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING STRETCH AND CHALLENGE

At PiXL we have a number of strategies and resources that can be used to provide stretch and challenge for students. On these pages you can find a quick summary of some of the most useful, although the list is not exhaustive. We'll begin with strategies available to PiXL Primary members.

BESPOKE A2 PACKAGES

Alongside our Personalised Learning Checklists there are tests and therapies for the EOKS1 and EOKS2 specifically for learners who should be working above Expected Standard (A2).

READING

Walking Talking Reading videos are available that support children in understanding how to break down and answer 3-mark questions. There are also resources to support the teaching of some of these strategies to students.

Many more resources are available to support with Reading, Writing and Mathematics – those listed here are the ones that might be most impactful specifically for more able learners.

WRITING

Units of resources are available to use for extending students' writing, including on narrative setting and writing persuasive text.

Also available is an editing strategy and resources, which breaks down different types of editing (editing for meaning, editing for impact etc.).

DEBATING AND ORACY

We have a Leadership Thinking Guide for developing oracy in the classroom, as well as classroom resources including resources for subject-specific debate topics that are stretching while still being age appropriate.

PiXL PRIMARY STRATEGIES

In PiXL Primary, we use a language of assessment based on students' likelihood of securing Expected Standard at KS1 or KS2. Please find below a list of the definitions of each grade.

MATHEMATICS

Resources to support explicit instruction on how to answer tricky 'explain how you know' questions to exceed Expected Standard.

A video is also available on how to use NRICH tasks to provide challenge and stretch.

CHARACTER UNITS

Finally, we have character resources available covering the explicit instruction of key attributes including independence, motivation and resilience (which may be where you diagnose the need with your more able learners).

PiXL GRADE	DEFINITION
A1	Based on current rate of progress, will secure Above Expected Standard.
A2	**Above Expected Key Marginal.** Based on current rate of progress, will securely achieve Expected Standard. With the right forensic support, has the potential to achieve Above Expected Standard.
E1	Based on current rate of progress, will secure Expected Standard.
E2	Based on current rate of progress, is likely to achieve Expected Standard but may require some additional support.
B1	**PiXL Key Marginal.** Based on current rate of progress, will not achieve Expected Standard but, with the right forensic support, has the potential to do so.
B2	Not expected to achieve Expected Standard in the current academic year.

THINKING BEYOND

Our Thinking Beyond package includes CPD for staff on how opportunities can be found across the curriculum for developing and maximising students' thinking skills.

PiXL SECONDARY STRATEGIES

Here are some of the strategies available to PiXL Secondary and Post 16 members to help provide stretch and challenge for students. All of these are available for both sectors, unless specified.

TEACHING & LEARNING CPD

As well as the CPD mentioned for Thinking Hard on page 56, we have CPD available for a number of key pedagogical areas including adaptive teaching and questioning.

These resources include:
- a video summary
- an adaptable PowerPoint for you to use to deliver a one-hour CPD session
- a Leadership Thinking Guide
- a reflection booklet.

PiXL INDEPENDENCE

Subject-specific resources for both GCSE and A Level that can be used for home learning with the aim to support independency and build knowledge.

PiXL KNOWLEDGE

Also available across a number of subjects at GCSE and A Level, our Knowledge mats progress from Know It (acquiring key information and content), to Grasp It (understanding how to apply that knowledge) and then Think It (challenge and stretching thinking). The Think Its would be particularly useful for more able learners. They can be used for independent study or in lessons.

PiXL READING

Our whole-school reading strategy aims to support leaders in developing a whole-school culture of reading, including providing a reading canon with age-appropriate, diverse and challenging titles (many of which we can also provide a discount on).

PiXL CHANGE

PiXL Change is a precise pastoral intervention based on cognitive science. It can be used to create positive behaviour change (for example in students who are not meeting their potential due to challenging behaviour or attitudes).

PiXL FUTURES

We have a number of resources available to help students plan for successful futures. Some that might be of particular relevance for more able learners include:

- **Scholars Directory:** inspired by the work of Jackie Johnson at Barnwell School (page 41), we have begun to put together a PiXL Network Scholars Directory. This spreadsheet includes numerous widening access/ participation opportunities for students to engage with. The aim is to save teacher time in finding opportunities for students.

- **Our Community Partners:** we are proud to partner with so many organisations that offer resources and support to schools for free. A number of our community partners offer support for students in terms of HE, Apprenticeships and Careers.

- **Getting Into Your Top Choice:** we have resources available to support HE leads and students in planning for successful university applications: from deciding what institutions to apply to, to personal statements and interview technique.

- **Medics and Law bulletins:** we produce monthly bulletins for prospective medics and termly bulletins for prospective lawyers. These bulletins include the latest developments in the field and are a brilliant source for students to use to support their independent learning and research in these fields.

PiXL STRETCH

This has a series of TED-style talks from a number of different experts in their field – from neuroscience to agricultural archaeology, from directing opera to tackling climate change. These videos are designed to stretch students' thinking beyond the curriculum. Each video is accompanied by a student handout to scaffold their reflections and engagement with the content independently and outside of lessons.

HORSFORTH QUADRANT

Named after Horsforth School who first developed it, this quadrant has two axes: one for progress and one for effort. It is a simple and powerful tool for diagnosing what the barriers are to student progress. We also have a number of resources targeted at different quadrants, as well as our Horsforth Quadrant Reporting App that can create custom reports for students in different subjects.

CHARACTER

We have resources available for use in tutor time or drop-down days that specifically teach the LORIC skills of Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative and Communication – skills which benefit all learners. In addition, we have Wellbeing resources including how to manage stress and anxiety.

ORACY & UP FOR DEBATE

As mentioned in the Swakeleys School for Girls case study on page 28, we offer resources for Oracy and Debating.

PiXL ORATE: resources from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 5 including lessons on how to specifically teach aspects of oracy.

UP FOR DEBATE: we have resources available to train staff in how to deliver debating, as well as subject-specific debating mats that can be used in lessons to introduce debating.

PiXL UNLOCK

Our Unlock vocabulary strategy can be used to support students in developing tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary. We also have an accompanying PiXL Unlock App.

PiXL THINKING HARD

"**Learning happens when people have to think hard**" PROF. ROBERT COE

The Thinking Hard Collection is one of the most popular strategies and sets of resources used by PiXL schools. It is used by schools in several different ways, but by far the most popular is as CPD for schools who are wishing to further develop high level thinking, challenge and ensure all lessons have high expectations and higher order thinking at their heart. **Thinking Hard** is at the heart of excellent classroom practice and students who **engage** in learning and **think hard** achieve well and progress. This is one of the vital elements in enabling learners to achieve their potential.

With the advent of more challenging curricula across all key stages and examination reform, practical strategies to develop students' depth of understanding are more essential than ever for students of all abilities. One of the main factors that distinguish expert teachers is challenge in the classroom.[1]

Ofsted currently highlights learning as *"…defined as an alteration in long-term memory… However, pupils learn by connecting new knowledge with existing knowledge. Pupils also need to develop fluency and unconsciously apply their knowledge as skills"*. This must not be reduced to, or confused with, simply memorising disconnected facts. When inspectors evaluate the impact of the education provided by the school, their focus will primarily be on what pupils have learned.[2] It is vital that we think about and plan for the application and development of knowledge and understanding. Thinking Hard and the twelve devices develop learners' use and application of knowledge.

Robert Coe, when defining learning, says it *"…happens when people have to think hard[3]"* so the question becomes: **how can I increase the amount of thinking for all in my classroom without increasing my workload?** One solution to this is adopting the Thinking Hard strategy and the 12 devices into classroom practice.

What is PiXL Thinking Hard?

The Thinking Hard Collection currently includes 3 key elements:

Thinking Hard Classic	Thinking Talk	Thinking Memory & Revisit

The strategy is influenced by Professor Robert Coe's 2013 publication, *Improving Education*. It is a strategy that was developed by Simon Hardwick and Martin Jones (both now Headteachers) when they were Deputy Headteachers at Dartford Grammar School for Girls.

Thinking Hard is a 'high challenge, low preparation' approach to supporting the achievement of all students. With the advent of more challenging curricula across the key stages and the demands of both broader and deeper subject knowledge, students are required to develop **depth of knowledge and understanding**, the ability to **analyse and evaluate** and greater **flexibility of thought**. These three themes are the foundation of the Thinking Hard Process.

The core of the Thinking Hard Process is our **12 Thinking Devices and Thinking Talk**. The everyday interactions, routines and habits that teachers use in the classroom have a profound impact on student learning. Thinking Hard supports the development of key 'high challenge, low preparation' habits that can transform the learning climate in our classrooms and support students' thinking.

[1] *Hattie, John (2003)* "**Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence?**" Australian Council for Educational Research Annual Conference; 15-16
[2] *Sept 2022* **Ofsted Inspection Handbook** https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/schools-inspection-handbook-for-september-2022
[3] *Coe, Robert (2013)* "**Improving education: A Triumph of Hope over Experience**" https://f.hubspotusercontent30.net/hubfs/5191137/attachments/publications/ImprovingEducation2013.pdf; pg 14-15

Thinking Memory and Revisit is a resource that develops the ideas of memory. **PiXL Revisit** is the final part in the Thinking Hard Collection. It builds on Thinking Hard principles and the devices but is a strategy for Revision. It develops the Thinking Hard devices to revisit the large body of knowledge, skills and information that is required in the linear exams. The team have used the Thinking Hard devices to focus upon the essential elements of revision, especially the processing phase of learning. A number of templates have been created for pupils and teachers to use to recall and deepen understanding of not only knowledge and understanding but complex ideas such as extent, significance and hierarchy. These resources will encourage pupils to interact with and **think** about the material they are revisiting/revising.

What resources are available?

There are three key approaches that can support deep thought in the classroom.
1. **Thinking Hard:** knowledge, understanding, analysis and flexibility
2. **Effective talk and explanations:** responses, discussion, analogy, role modelling, worked examples
3. **PiXL Memory and Revisit**

The resources and PPTs can be found here in the Strategies area:

Secondary Thinking Hard - https://auth.pixl.org.uk/members/subjects/Thinking%20Hard
Post 16 Thinking Hard - https://auth.pixl.org.uk/members/subjects6/Thinking%20Hard

All of the resources and the videos can be found here in the PiXL Teaching and Learning area:

https://auth.pixl.org.uk/members/teachinglearning/49892491. The Resources sit in two areas as there is also a comprehensive CPD package. It also includes a Leadership Thinking Guide for developing CPD and INSET for SLT, Middle Leaders and Heads of Sixth Form. **PiXL also offers bespoke face-to-face INSET training on all elements of the Thinking Hard Collection. This can vary from anywhere between one and four hours of training. The training can be booked via the PiXL website.**[4]

How can schools use PiXL Thinking Hard?

One school who placed Thinking Hard and Questioning at the Heart of their CPD strategy was Belfast Boys' Model school. Vice Principle, Dawn Farquhar, describes how they have developed this strategy in their context.

Belfast Boys' Model is a non-selective all-boys school and from 2019 we had been focusing on retrieval and through that journey we had used Thinking Hard resources to widen our pupils' repertoire of retrieval strategies. When our pupils returned from school closure, we were also examining our literacy data and had concerns; Thinking Hard – Effective Questioning suited our oracy agenda to get pupils thinking about their answers in class and simply talking again about their subjects. We also knew we needed to get them focused on the return to exams and that in getting our teachers to focus explicitly on questioning and the quality of pupils' answers, this would help improve the quality of learning in the classroom, understanding and embedding knowledge into the pupils' long-term memory.

A senior leader and myself ran our first whole-staff in-person staff development since school closure, which was an event in itself as it seemed so long since we had our whole teaching staff in one room (our last session had been in May 2022, focusing on Thinking Hard and effective questioning). Sarah Murrell then delivered Part 2 at a joint staff development day with our partner school in August 2022. Effective questioning was a priority for ongoing staff development and was baselined by staff and pupil surveys and focus groups. By August 2023 we could see the development in the range and depth of teachers' questioning strategies. Staff now demonstrate a commitment to planning questions, which are embedded into schemes of work. Staff are supported in their ongoing development of their questioning skills by classroom observations carried out by a trusted colleague.

Our use of Thinking Hard continues:
1. action planning for effective questioning in August 2023 to maintain focus
2. beginning to look at the pupils' use of questioning themselves to implement Metacognition
3. introducing the use of Exam Wrappers for the academic year 2023-2024.

[4] There is an extra charge for this CPD

THE WAVES POWERED BY PUPIL PROGRESS

PiXL WAVES

powered by pupil progress

PiXL's approach to assessment can be used to support all students, but remember that our new Waves powered by Pupil Progress, can be used to also strategically focus on specific students (such as those with high prior attainment).

DTTR

The beauty of the PiXL DTTR model (Diagnosis, Therapy, Test, Revisit) is the identification and focus on the gaps in learning; it focuses attention on what students cannot do. This overarching strategy came from the Covey notion of a Compelling Scoreboard (McChesney et al., 2012) and can be used as a framework for assessment across a setting. Diagnosing what a student does not know may come from a test but can also come from low stakes formative assessment in class too. Good quality therapy addresses the misconception or gap in learning and helps teachers to understand how it has occurred. Testing does not need to be summative; knowing if the therapy has worked can come from teacher questioning and further low stakes assessment. Revisiting what students struggled with makes use of the testing effect or assessment as learning. Reviewing using retrieval practice can help to embed the core fundamental factual knowledge into the memory (EEF, 2021), ready for retrieval and application to test and examination questions.

The why, how and what of educational assessment

The first consideration when designing an assessment should be its purpose.
• Why are you carrying out this assessment?
• Why is it happening now?
Assessments can be used to identify the gaps in student learning, determine whether they have misconceptions or misunderstanding, to inform teaching and pedagogy, and provide a summary of where a student is.

Newton (2017) highlights three different perspectives on why an assessment may be needed:
• Information – where the outcomes are used to inform decision making. This can include placement tests and determining how far students have travelled along the trajectory of learning linked to the learning objectives.
• Expertise – how much knowledge has been acquired by the students during their attempt to master the domain.
• Engagement – where the anticipation of an assessment motivates students to work harder on learning the specific knowledge which is being assessed.

All these considerations will influence the type of assessment that is used, and the questions asked. It is important that the purpose of the assessment drives the design, rather than doing things because it is easy or because that is the way they have always been done.
• How the students are assessed should be linked back to the purpose.
• How will you ensure the test does what you say it does?
• How will you ensure the assessment contributes positively to teaching and learning?
• How will you ensure the marking is consistent and reliable?

The structure of the assessment needs to be considered at this stage. Multiple choice or short answer questions, for example, are useful for determining if students have misconceptions or misunderstandings about a topic area. Therapies can be developed in advance to address these because the outcome is closed. In contrast, an open-ended or longer answer question can elicit more information about a student's mastery of a subject area but requires longer to mark. Therapies will need to be identified or produced in response to the student answers.

Marking consistency and reliability can be improved through the use of clear marking criteria, training, and moderation. These activities can be used to minimise the most obvious sources of bias and decrease assessor variance.

So, what makes a good assessment?
• It tests what it is intended to test.
• It shows repeatability and reliability.
• It rewards those who show good subject mastery.
• It encourages good learning.
• It tells us something useful about the learning.

Given the purpose of the assessment and how it will be structured, we need to consider the specifics of the questions themselves.
• What is being assessed?
• What should the students be able to show?
• What data will be produced and what will happen to it?

This is difficult to do in practice. Many will turn to past paper question banks looking at the overall subject of the question, rather than the structure of the question itself. It is important to consider if it is assessing what you think it is. Effective assessment forms a crucial role in teaching and learning. We need to know whether these assessments are fit for purpose, why they are taking place, how they have been designed and what happens to the outcomes.

How can we use The Waves powered by Pupil Progress to support assessment in schools?

The Wave was one moment in time, twice a year, where PiXL gathered data from PiXL schools on the outcomes of English and mathematics PPEs (Pre-public examinations) or mock examinations. Comparisons were made between schools and key areas of concern identified. PiXL Waves is an ongoing comparison using Pupil Progress. It means that throughout KS4, heads of English and mathematics can compare their data to the PiXL national data. Teachers input their results, from any whole or part past examination board paper (AQA, CCEA, Edexcel, OCR, WJEC/Eduquas), into Pupil Progress. There is no need to generate or download a spreadsheet – all data is input directly into the system. The number of English and mathematics courses has also been expanded to include: English language, English literature, mathematics, statistics and numeracy.

Schools can compare their data on a sub-topic by sub-topic basis and make comparisons between similar students at any point, including by ability (high, medium, low), gender, SEND and disadvantage. This enables a fine, granular analysis of the data and an ability to identify areas for intervention throughout KS4. The Waves powered by Pupil Progress still provides an opportunity for PiXL schools to compare outcomes of Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs or mocks) in English language and mathematics. To participate, schools use the same series of past examination papers produced by examination boards for their mock examinations, normally the last available set. After completing one or more of the papers, they input their data directly into Pupil Progress.

Why use PiXL Waves powered by Pupil Progress as a diagnostic tool?

For pupils in Year 11 (or those in post 16 settings resitting English and/or mathematics), PiXL Waves powered by Pupil Progress can be used as a tool for diagnosing where each individual pupil is in their learning as they approach the end of the taught curriculum. Participating not only enables the heads of English and mathematics to identify key gaps in knowledge or skills which need to be addressed, but also to see how their cohorts compare to other participating schools. Any misunderstandings or gaps in fundamental knowledge that these individuals have in Year 11 are likely to be mirrored in your current Year 7 cohort. Data from PiXL Waves powered by Pupil Progress can therefore be used to inform interventions provided for similar pupils at KS3.

Where can I find out more?

To make the most of this exclusive offer for PiXL schools, follow this QR code to the Pupil Progress website and register for English and mathematics at no cost to your school.

1. EEF (2021) **Cognitive science approaches in the classroom: A review of the evidence.** London: EEF Available from: Cognitive_science_approaches_in_the_classroom_-_A_review_of_the_evidence.pdf (d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)
2. McChesney, C., Covey, S. and Huling, J., (2012), **The 4 disciplines of execution.** New York: Free Press
3. Newton, P., (2017), There is more to educational measurement than measuring: The importance of embracing purpose pluralism. **Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice.** 36(2) pp 5-15

FURTHER READING

Our PiXL Insights on Boys' Achievement is available for all PiXL Members and is another useful source of ideas that schools have tried to close the gender gap – some of which focus on targeting boys with high prior attainment.
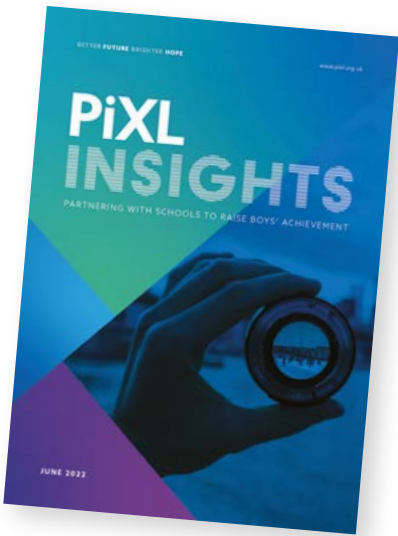
ON PEDAGOGY

1. Alexander, R., (2020), **Routledge**
   A Dialogic Teaching Companion

2. Aubrey. K. and Riley, A., (2020), **SAGE Publications Ltd**
   Understanding and Using Challenging Educational Theories

3. Berliner, W., Eyre, D. and Osman, S., (2022), **Routledge**
   Great Minds and How to Grow Them: High Performance Learning

4. Black, P. and Wiliam, D., (1998), **GL Assessment Ltd**
   Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment

5. Claxton, G., (2002), **TLO Limited, Bristol**   *Building Learning Power: Helping Young People Become Better Learners*

6. Hattie, J., (2009), **Routledge**   *Visible Learning; A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-analyses Relating to Achievement*

7. Jones, K., (2021), **John Catt**   *William and Leahy's Five Formative Assessment Strategies in Action*

8. Lowe, H. and McCarthy, A., (2020), **NACE**
   Making Space for Able Learners – Cognitive Challenge: Principles into Practice

9. Major, L.E. and Higgins, S., (2019), **Bloomsbury Education**
   What Works? Research and Evidence for Successful Teaching

10. Payne, T., (2017), **Crown House Publishing**
    Stretch and Challenge for All: Practical Resources for Getting the Best Out of Every Student

11. Powley, R., (2018), **Routledge**
    Powerful Pedagogy: Teach Better Quicker

12. Warwick, I. and Speakman, R., (2018), **Routledge**
    Redefining More Able Education: Key Issues for Schools

13. Willingham, D., (2010), **Jossey-Bass**   *Why Don't Students Like School? A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom*

ON MINDSET, RESILIENCE & HIGH PERFORMANCE

1. Barber, M., (2021), **Allen Lane**   *Accomplishment: How to Achieve Ambitious and Challenging Things*

2. Burchard, B., (2017), **Hay House**   *High Performance Habits: How Extraordinary People Became That Way*

3. Clear, J., (2018), **Penguin Random House**
   Atomic Habits: An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones

4. Csikszentmihalyi, M., (2008), **Ingram International**
   Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience

5. Daisley, B., (2022), **Penguin**
   Fortitude: Unlocking the Secrets of Inner Strength

6. Dweck, C., (2008), **Ballantine Books**
   Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential

7. Humphrey, J. and Hughes, D., (2021), **Random House**
   High Performance: Lessons from the Best on Becoming Your Best

8. Kross, E., (2021), **Vermilion**
   Chatter: The Voice in Our Head and How to Harness It

9. Syed, M., (2010), **Fourth Estate**
   Bounce: The Myth of Talent and the Power of Practice

ON ORACY & CLASSROOM TALK

1. Gaunt, A. and Stott, A., (2019), **R&L**   *Transform Teaching and Learning through Talk: The Oracy Imperative*

2. Gershon, M., (2013), **CreateSpace Independent Publishing**
   How to use Questioning in the Classroom: The Complete Guide

3. Knight, R., (2020), **Critical Publishing Ltd**   *Classroom Talk: Evidence-based Teaching for Enquiring Teachers*

4. Knight, R., (2022), **Open University Press Ltd**   *Classroom Talk in Practice: Teachers' Experiences of Oracy in Action*

5. Newman, D., (2019), **David Fulton**   *The Noisy Classroom: Developing Debate and Critical Oracy in Schools*

You may want to reach out to **Voice21** for oracy resources, or *The Noisy Classroom* for the practical use of debating and oracy in the classroom.

ON EDUCATION MORE WIDELY

1. Beard, A., (2018), **Weindenfeld and Nicolson**
   Natural Born Leaders: Our Incredible Capacity to Learn and How We Can Harness It

2. Christodoulou, D., (2013), **Routledge**
   Seven Myths About Education

3. Claxton, G., (2021), **Routledge**
   The Future of Teaching and the Myths That Hold It Back

4. Didau, D., (2015), **Crown House Publishing**
   What if Everything You Know About Education Was Wrong?

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INSIGHTS