

## Case study – Pipworth Community Primary school

<http://www.pipworthprimary.co.uk/>

### Context

Pipworth Community Primary school is situated in one of the most deprived wards in Sheffield. Using the index of multiple deprivation, the school's locality is in the top 2% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas nationally out of 32,844. It is ranked in the top 2% most deprived neighbourhoods for income deprivation and education, skills and training, in the top 3% for health deprivation and disability and in the top 5% for income deprivation affecting children. It is ranked in the top 20% nationally for crime and barriers to housing.

Socio-economic factors result in high levels of free school meals, with 57% of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, significantly higher than the national figure of 26%. Our current free school meals numbers have dropped – this is largely due to only 9% of our Slovak/Roma pupils claiming, despite many of these families living in poverty.

Attainment on entry is well below average. Language scores on entry show that our learners have poor communication skills and limited vocabulary, and social and emotional skills are well below age related expectations.

The school has high levels of mobility, which began in 2010 due to schools in other catchment areas being full. The number of pupils travelling from areas outside the catchment area is high and a significant number of new admissions have arrived straight from overseas, mainly Slovak/Roma. They need high levels of support, which puts a strain on already stretched resources. In 2015-16 the school admitted 53 pupils outside standard admission time. 40 of these pupils needed additional support, for learning, language, attendance, behaviour or because the family were in crisis.

The pupils living within the school catchment area are predominantly non-EAL, white British, with some dual heritage non-EAL. Many of them have challenging home lives, within families where the adults have not been in work for generations. Education is generally undervalued and aspiration is often lacking and this can be difficult to break through. Attendance and punctuality is not seen as high priority and this adds another potential barrier to learning. Particularly for this group of pupils, we have to work hard to support the families, so that the children can thrive. Because we work relentlessly on this, as well as providing the 'building blocks for learning', boosting self-belief, aspiration and filling the gaps in learning, they enjoy being in school and make very good progress by the time they leave.

### Creating a culture of aspiration

Central to our work is the school ethos, which is epitomized by our school logo and motto, 'Reach for the Stars.' This was created by the pupils themselves, working with an artist in residence. We take every opportunity to embed the message that the pupils can achieve anything they want and that they should aim high. To support this 'can do' approach, we have School Values such as 'aspiration' and 'teamwork', which are promoted through assemblies, nominations for awards, the work of the school council and school displays. Every year, we invite aspirational visitors to 'career week', to talk to the children about their jobs and the role achievement played in getting them. We ensure that we include ex-school pupils who have gone on to achieve their career goals, which is particularly important for our white British long term free school meals pupils, who need to see that others from the same background have 'broken the mould'.

### Engagement with learning

We invest heavily in enriching, engaging activities for our pupils and although we do not restrict targeting to pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding, we have the expectation that groups accessing them will be top-heavy with these pupils. Many of our non-EAL, long term free school meals pupils lack self-belief and have low self-esteem, so it is essential that we give them the opportunity to achieve in areas other than the core curriculum subjects. We have an extensive, year-long programme of after school, early morning and lunchtime activities, including arts and craft, drama, sports, literary and film appreciation and gardening. We make sure we include coaching from experts in these fields whenever possible, as they are best placed to spot and hone talents. It supports the 'can do' approach embodied in our school motto and promotes engagement with

school for some of our harder to inspire pupils, who we specifically target through pestering parents if necessary. Enabling pupils to achieve success in these areas impacts greatly on their self-belief and this in turn impacts on how they view themselves as achievers in class.

Our Pastoral Support team and senior leadership team are critical to engagement with learning. Because many of our families need significant amounts of support, we invest in a large Pastoral Support team, including three learning mentors and two SENCOs, who are supported extensively by senior leaders. We ensure this team, as well as the headteacher, the senior deputy head and the deputy head, have enough non-classroom based time to dedicate to families in crisis, because we know that pupils cannot learn when they are living in chaotic situations. The pastoral support team and senior leaders have an open door policy and work closely with external agencies to provide the support needed. We also ensure that there are always members from both these teams who are on duty at less structured times, such as playtimes and lunchtimes, because this tackles any behaviour that would impact on engagement with learning back in the classroom. Senior leaders and the Pastoral Support team meet regularly to identify families and pupils in crisis and put in place support quickly, so that pupils can remain focused and engaged.

### **Early Risers project 2014 to present day - Y6 to Y7 transition project.**

Locality schools, including Pipworth, work together through the year to plan an "Early Risers" programme, whereby all Y6 children transfer, full time, to Secondary Academies for the last 3 weeks of the summer term. The aims are to prevent the identified Y7 dip in attainment, prevent anxieties about an unknown transition for Y6 children over the summer holidays, ensure parents are familiar with the secondary staff and that everyone is clear about expectations. The programme was jointly planned by secondary and primary colleagues and was enhanced by the fact that Y6 teachers and members of the primary inclusion teams could support the Y6 children in the secondary schools and could help maintain the standards the pupils were used to producing. This programme was given impetus by the action research project that the 2 secondary and 5 of the primary schools had the opportunity to participate in, in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University (SHU). The focus was to improve transition for vulnerable pupils, especially those in receipt of pupil premium funding and non EAL.

Teachers involved in the project were introduced to research methodology by SHU staff. The following research question was identified "To what extent will the development of a personalised transition plan for vulnerable students impact on their educational experiences?" Y6 staff used a tool, The School Transition and Adjustment Research Study, to identify the vulnerable pupils and to clarify their concerns and those of their parents/carers. A number of small scale interventions were implemented for these children before or during the Early Risers period. Interventions included creating personalised transition booklets with teacher interviews, maps and sample lessons and meetings of staff with vulnerable families and target children. Pupils were supported throughout the three week transition resulting in nearly all pupils attaining well and remaining in school.

### **Joint clinical psychologist**

Previously, pupils with mental health issues were referred to CAMHS with long waiting lists and for a variety of reasons, weak outcomes for our pupils. Both the primary and secondary school employed the same educational psychologist on a private contract through CAMHS for one day per week, increasing time available, which allowed treatment almost immediately for pupils in crisis. The psychologist began to have a working knowledge of all the family and carried out joint work with siblings. This resulted in quicker treatment, a smooth transition between schools and stronger links in understanding and knowledge. Additionally, with the psychologist being 'on site' this instilled parents with more confidence to engage with different agencies, as they were supported by the school and historically our 'hard to reach' parents were successfully engaging with support. The educational psychologist was also in a position to pinpoint training needs and benefits for our school and delivered staff professional development on a variety of issues.

### **Closely monitored bespoke interventions**

During pupil progress meetings, poorly performing pupils are identified, barriers discussed and interventions put in place. These bespoke interventions are personalised or for a small group. We always work to the needs of the pupils and never try to fit the pupil to the intervention, they are designed to close specific gaps in knowledge or skills and are closely monitored by a member of the senior leadership team. The staff and pupils are under deep scrutiny and results are expected within 6 weeks. The school evaluates each intervention and

reports are written and shared with all stakeholders. Any intervention that did not deliver successful results is scrapped. For some of our non-EAL, long term free school meals pupils, who are hard to reach, particularly in relation to behaviour or emotional needs, it requires the school to 'think out of the box', for example we have employed football coaches to work towards a behaviour barrier for a few pupils in Y6 and we have employed artists to help pupils in crisis. All of these interventions allow pupils to succeed, break down their personal barriers and give them the confidence to reach their full potential, including gaining gaps in their attainment and progress.