

Challenging Disadvantage: Project Case Study

School context

Pembury is a two-form entry primary school close to Tunbridge Wells with approximately 11% of pupils being of the Pupil Premium Register.

1: What problem were you looking to solve?

We have identified that a number of our disadvantaged pupils are finding their limited vocabulary as a barrier to learning in the classroom. We have previously carried out the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS) every year and have tried to implement support for those children regularly underperforming. This also affects our SEN and EAL children. These pupils generally miss out on experiences and homelife often impacts on this. These children tend to 'turn off' from their learning as a result of finding the work too hard – when discussed with children this often comes back to "I don't understand", drilling down further led to vocabulary not being taught explicitly so these pupils get left behind. This lack of understanding means that these pupils struggle to access the curriculum and has an impact on their literacy.

2. What were the anticipated barriers/challenges?

There is often an over reliance on interventions taking place out of the classroom and by a TA. This intervention needed to encompass all children that struggle with vocabulary – not just the disadvantaged. Ensuring staff feel confident to teach the sessions and subject knowledge is strong enough to support these sessions.

Time is another factor that may cause a challenge – an initial assessment needs to be carried out at the beginning of each unit, followed by 1 or 2 words being the focus at the beginning of each lesson. This would then need referring to during the lesson and recapped at the end of the session. Time would need to be given at the end of the unit to reassess the understanding if the children.

3. What did you do?

At the beginning of the first session of a new history topic the children were given large pieces of paper to share their knowledge of what each word given meant – they could write a definition, write a sentence using it, draw a picture (record in whatever way they felt comfortable) They were reassured that this wasn't a test and that if they didn't know then that was ok too. Teacher took notes during session to identify misconceptions, understanding of PP/EAL/SEN children.

After the first session, at the beginning of each lesson no more than two words would be shared with the class (it is helpful if these are words specifically used in that lesson) These words were broken down to their etymology. Images were shared. Definitions made together as a class. Children were allowed to record these in their note books if they wanted to – words were collected together for Working Wall.

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4. How are you monitoring the success of this intervention?

This intervention is being reviewed at the end of the unit of work. During the term there have been plenty of opportunities for monitoring of understanding by discussion with children and use of the vocabulary within their work across history and English lessons.

5. What is the impact of the project?

So far there have been improvements in the vocabulary being used in books as well as improved discussion during lessons. The identified children have an improved confidence when discussing the subject and are able to use the new vocabulary to support their discussion. Children have started to unpick words that they come across in other subjects in the same way.

Next steps:

- Discuss with SLT how to roll out across school (Suggest upper KS2 first)
- CPD for staff – keep PP profile high within school
- Staff Questionnaire to see how this may work in other parts of the school
- Continue to monitor provision to ensure improvements are sustained.
- Include project on review of Pupil Premium Strategy when reviewed in September – December.