

# Challenging Disadvantage: Project Case Study

## School context

Slade is a 2 form entry school in the middle of Tonbridge with 15% Pupil Premium children (60)

## 1: What problem were you looking to solve?

When looking at our end of Spring term data it was identified that only 36% of Pupil Premium children were reaching the expected level of attainment in Reading, 33% were expected in Writing and 44% in Maths. Our Year 2 cohort had the most PP children (18%) and in this year group 27% of PP children were expected in Reading and 18% were expected in writing. 30% of the year 2 children also needed to retake the year 1 phonics assessment in June. I therefore decided to focus on one of the year 2 classes in particular as it contained 8 of the PP children in the year group. When talking to the teacher it was also evident that these children did not often demonstrate a readiness to learn so I decided to incorporate this into my intervention programme.

## 2. What were the anticipated barriers/challenges?

The programme involved children from year 6 and Year 2 coming into school at 8:10am two mornings a week. The first challenge I had to consider was what would happen if a child from either group did not turn up one morning. I therefore put a plan in place for both scenarios. If a year 2 child did not have a partner one of the two TA's supporting the intervention would work with the year 2 child. If the year 2 child did not arrive for the tutoring then the year 6 child would carry out preparation work for the following week. Another challenge I had to consider was that the Year 6 child and the Year 2 child may not work well together. I therefore met with the year 2 and year 6 teachers before the first session in order to think carefully about the pairings. Finally another challenge which may occur was that the year 6 children were unaware of how to support the younger child with their phonics and writing, I therefore met with the year 6 'tutors' a number of times before the programme started in order to train them on how to support younger children with their work as well as explain how we teach phonics in KS1.

## 3. What did you do?

At the end of term 2 2022 I asked staff to carry out a [pupil questionnaire](#) with all PP children within the school. The questionnaire asked children how they felt in school, what was going well and what they felt could be improved in order for them to learn more effectively. Having analysed the end of term 4 data and highlighting the need to design a programme for our year 2 children, I went back to my analysis of the questionnaire for ideas on how to support this cohort of children. Many of the children had answered the question asking whether they felt that working with a child older than themselves positively, so I decided to put together a peer tutoring programme.

I began by meeting with the year 2 teacher of the class which contained the most PP children to choose the children who would benefit from the peer tutoring programme. Having identified what was stopping them be expected in reading and writing we decided that the programme needed to focus on gaps in their phonic knowledge as well as their

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readiness to learn. The class TA then assessed the chosen children's phonic knowledge which gave me the gaps we needed to address.

I then met with all of the year 6 children and explained the new programme to them. Children were encouraged to apply for the position of Learning Ambassador by telling me why they should be chosen to tutor the younger children. In order to make this inclusive the children were allowed to write a letter, email or record a message explaining why they wanted to be part of the programme and what strengths they felt they have.

Initially we had identified 10 Year 2 children (8 of which were PP) however I received 12 applications from the Year 6 children so chose 2 more Year 2 children to benefit from the programme. I was then in a position to send letters to both sets of parents and was pleased that all 24 children were given permission to take part.

The week before starting I met with the Year 2 children for a 20 minute session to explain our new phonics scheme and explain how they could help the younger children with their learning. I also planned individual work for each of the 12 year 2 children to complete with their year 6 partner during the 7 week programme. As the children were coming into school early I also provided them with breakfast at the start of each session. I placed an order at the start of each week for cereal bars, yoghurt and fruit juice. These were a big hit with the children.

Then the sessions began. Each Tuesday and Thursday morning at 8:10am the Year 6 and Year 2 children would come into school early to work together. Having collected their breakfast the Year 6 children would go to a table and get the activities ready for their partners and the year 2 children would come to the carpet and I ran through a phonics PowerPoint where they had to identify the phoneme from the grapheme. Before sending the Year 2 children off to work with their partners I would also remind them on what it meant to be ready to learn and focus on their work. Year 2 would then go and complete their targeted work with their Year 6 tutor. The work focused on phonemes the children were unable to identify and differed for each child. On Tuesday the focus was on reading and the children would play games and read extracts identifying the focus phoneme. On Thursday the focus was writing and the children would choose words they had read on Tuesday and write these in a sentence. The Year 6 children would also support the children with the formation of their letters. At the end of each session if there was time the Year 6 child would also hear the Year 2 child read. The session would then finish at 8:40am. During each session 2 TA's and myself would be available to help the children where needed.

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

At the end of each week I would talk to the Year 6 children and ask if there was anything they felt they needed support with or they would like to change. I also regularly spoke to the Year 2 teacher to see whether the children were more confident in using their sounds in reading and writing and whether their readiness to learn had improved.

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### 5. What is the impact of the project?

Although none of the children in the project met the expected level at the end of the school year, 3 children moved from below Key Stage/Year to working towards in Reading and 2 children made the same progress in Reading. 3 of the 12 children retaking their Year 1 phonics screening also passed and all other children had made an improvement from their score in Year 1.

The Year 2 class teacher also reported a huge improvement in the children's readiness to learn on the days they were attending the tutoring breakfast club. The children entered the classroom in a much calmer manner and were more willing to complete their work. It was also noticed that these children were more willing to work with others and support their peers with their learning. The children were heard making the same comments to support their friends in class that their Year 6 tutor has said to them.

Although the programme focussed on Year 2 and the need to improve their attainment the children in Year 6 also benefitted a great deal from the programme. As the weeks progressed they were demonstrating an improved maturity and ability to support others. At the end of the programme the children talked about how they had learnt to help younger children and be patient. It was also great to see the Year 6 develop their independence and adapt how they worked with their child each week according to the need of their partner without being helped to do so.

#### Next steps:

- Once the first 7 week programme finished I ran a similar programme with the other year 2 class. Their focus was more on reading comprehension and developing their vocabulary so I adapted the programme to meet each Year 2 child's individual needs.
- I also set up a read and feed program where Year 5 children supported Year R and 1 PP children with their reading as well as others who would benefit from the extra support. They children again were paired with a Year 5 child who would hear the younger child read 2 mornings a week over breakfast. Teachers reported that the younger children were beginning to demonstrate greater confidence to use sounds to read new words and answer comprehension questions. The Year 5 children developed an understanding of what the Tutoring Programme involved and would then be able to apply the following year when they are Year 6.
- The following academic year I will once again analyse the PP data and identify the year group who would benefit tutoring from the programme. Having identified the Year group and children I will recruit the current Year 6 and the programme can begin again.