

National Education Breakthrough Programme for Raising Boys' Achievement Stakeholder Bulletin No. 2, May 2004

85% found the
Workshop good
or excellent

March saw the 2nd Learning Workshop for the Breakthrough Programme. We were delighted to welcome more participants than the first event in December, and to see sessions led by seven of our very own schools as they shared their achievements from the past few months.

'I came away totally motivated, inspired, refreshed'

One of the most popular sessions was run by the team from Blessed Edward Oldcorne School in Worcester, who you will remember from the first bulletin. Their very practical presentation highlighted the impact of staff training in using assertive techniques to speak to boys - such as saying 'move over here thank you' rather than 'move over here please' - and developing ideas for starters and plenaries. As one teacher from the school put it, 'I didn't realise that the way you speak to boys could have such an effect'.

And there's no stopping them....



After the 1st Learning Workshop, we told you of some of the 'Plan, Do, Study, Act' (PDSA) cycles that were implemented within only 8 days. At the 2nd event, almost 100 plans were developed. Here's just a sample of the exciting ideas that we saw...

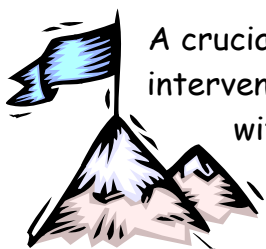
Blessed Edward Oldcorne School	Set up a 'B&Q' style teaching and learning leaflet wall in the staff room
Brownhills Community College	Hold an Easter holiday competition to design a praise postcard to send home
Charles Darwin School	Buddy up poor attenders with pupils that live nearby who can knock on their door on the way to school
Coopers Technology College	Develop an online system for year 11 pupils so that they can send in revision progress and request support for particular areas
Costessey High School	Find two external industrial mentors to meet with the cohort of underachieving boys

Rising to the challenge of spreading the learning

Creativity seems to be the key to finding ways to spread the learning. St. John Rigby Catholic College worked with their Facilitator to run a whole school event to disseminate their learning. Eighteen different PDSA plans were produced covering an array of interventions from improving attendance by targeting regular truants to increasing participation in PE through ensuring kit is brought in to involving student mentors in an anti-bullying initiative.

At Halton High School, the school improvement plan has been radically redesigned to tie in with the five change principles for the Programme. Using PDSAs as the tool to enact change, this approach allows the whole school to achieve change rapidly but in a managed way.

Targeted intervention gets results



A crucial change principle for raising achievement is 'Use mentoring and targeted intervention'. Each school has identified three specific cohorts of boys to work with and track their progress using a set of common measures.

Sandhill View School in Sunderland have adopted a range of strategies to raise the attendance of their Year 8 cohort. First they implemented a policy of contacting parents when a boy is absent for more than three days. In another PDSA cycle, one teacher decided to test out giving only positive and friendly responses to specific boys in the cohort whenever she saw them in school. It had a marked effect on motivation and one boy who had been on report over his poor attendance for some time was taken off report (although one boy was overheard suggesting the teacher had 'flipped her lid!') In March, the school held a year 8 attendance and punctuality conference, featuring local business mentors working with pupils, target setting and giving prizes for 100% attendance, presented by Sunderland Football Club's manager. Attendance in the cohort has risen from 83.6 to 90.4% in 3 months. Watch this space...

At New Heys Comprehensive School in Liverpool a simple merit system linked to rewards for a group of poorly attending boys led to half of the cohort achieving full attendance in the first week. Harper Green School targeted pupils with incomplete geography fieldwork by running a dedicated catch-up session - all 35 that attended completed their work.

The Thomas Aveling School have raised year 10 ICT achievement by asking students to complete diaries of work. Boys who have problems writing can keep their diary using a Dictaphone.

Bridgewater High School brought in a motivational speaker to work with their year 11 cohort of boys and set target grades. They saw an increase in both motivation and esteem of the group and plan to spread it to all year 11 students.

Creating capacity – the ongoing challenge Pupils get in on the act!

Kettlethorpe High School recruited year 11 volunteers to run a stationery shop to sell basic equipment. Up to 80% of the stock sold out in the first week.

Sandhill View School's librarian worked with two boys to develop a boy-friendly library section. One of the boys earned his 'Young Librarian' certificate as a result.

Modern Foreign Languages teachers at Trinity School tried giving pupils stickers to signify when they had achieved the lesson objectives. Pupils liked the stickers so much that they wanted to try marking each other's work and have now started developing targets.

All schools in the Programme have been wrestling with ways to create capacity. We are learning that even small changes can have a marked effect. Here are a few ideas...

- Angley School ran an after-school session to help two boys with coursework - they increased their scores from 17 to 20 and 16 to 20 respectively that afternoon.
- Blessed Edward Oldcorne School used lunchtime sessions over three weeks with 20 prefect mentors to improve the reading of two groups of boys.
- Costessey High School restructured their admin team and created space in the pastoral office for them. The new arrangement has increased the effectiveness of both teams.
- Halton High School have employed a Teaching Assistant, who had been working successfully delivering progress units for year 7, as an Intervention Tutor.
- Hessle High School found that one year 9 group routinely lost between 7 and 10 minutes of teaching time when they moved between lessons. Supervision has cut this to a maximum of 5 minutes.
- Kemnal Technology College brought in an examiner for a twilight session to advise C/D borderline students how they can move up a grade.
- Speedwell Technology College have developed work packs for excluded students that are administered by the school office for all Key Stage 3 subjects and are developing them for Key Stage 4.

Mind your language!

At Fir Vale School in Sheffield, around 80% of the students have a home language other than English. To help with behaviour management, the learning support team have learnt swear words in a variety of languages and shared them with other staff! This was swiftly followed by a further PDSA to learn greetings and praise to help motivate students.

And finally.....



Learning Workshop 3 takes place on 15th and 16th June in Birmingham. It is the final Workshop for this unique group of schools but is really a beginning rather than an ending. We look forward to hearing all of the achievements from each and every school, and sharing them with you in the near future.