

» SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

Improving outcomes through a collaborative model of peer review and school improvement

Rethinking together how we support learners identified as vulnerable to disadvantage



Welcome & introductions



Chair:

Niki Thomas – SPP Associate, former Headteacher and NCSL/DfE associate

Presenters and panellists:

- **Marc Rowland** – Pupil Premium and Vulnerable Learners Adviser, Unity Schools Partnership
- **Philippa Holliday** – Assistant Director of Education, North East Essex
- **Neil Stirrat** – Headteacher, Cooks Spinney School, Essex
- **Anita Fagan** – Headteacher, All Saints Primary School, Manchester
- **Simon Ward** – Associate Headteacher of Fullwood Primary School, Ilford

Our audience:

School leaders, local authority colleagues and governors. Some with experience of Schools Partnership Programme where we have worked for some time. Many new to SPP. All with an interest in tackling disadvantage.

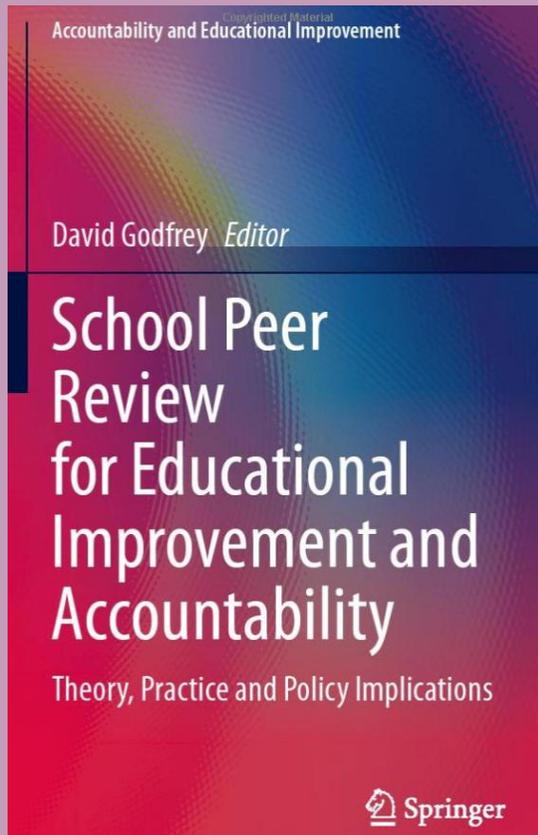
Our commitment to continuous improvement



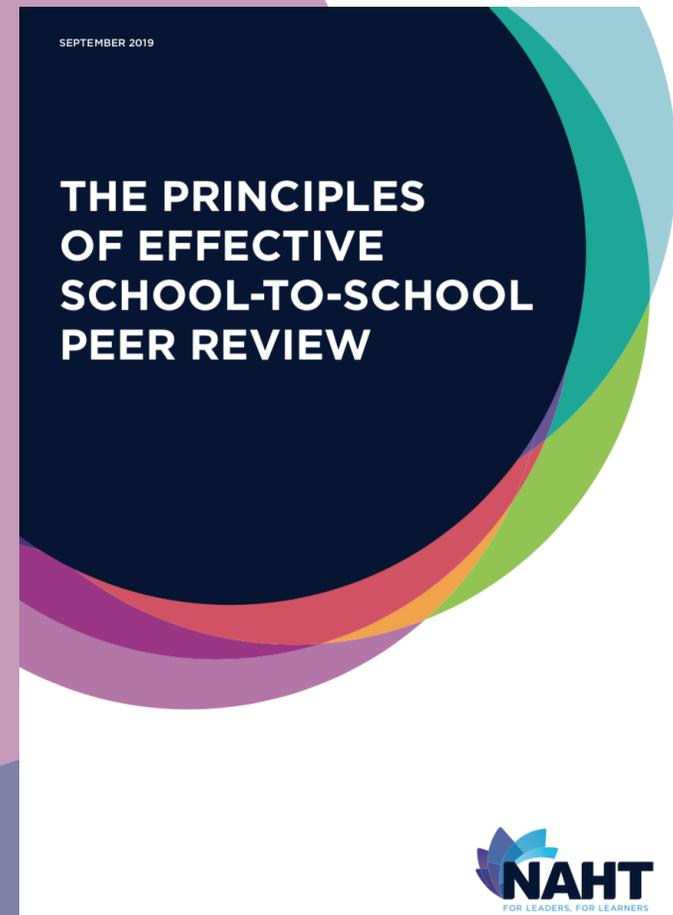
Securing continuous improvement, developing great leaders and teachers, and giving children and young people the very best start in life is what we do at Education Development Trust.

The Schools Partnership Programme (SPP) was developed in partnership with, and for, schools. Established in 2014 and founded on professional peer review, it provides schools with the essential tools and support to allow them to drive their own improvement in an increasingly autonomous school system.

Our vision is to build a sustainable, self-improving, school-led system where partnerships of schools are jointly responsible for the improvement of themselves and others.



“Peer review exists to help schools solve the most pressing issues facing them and their partnerships.”

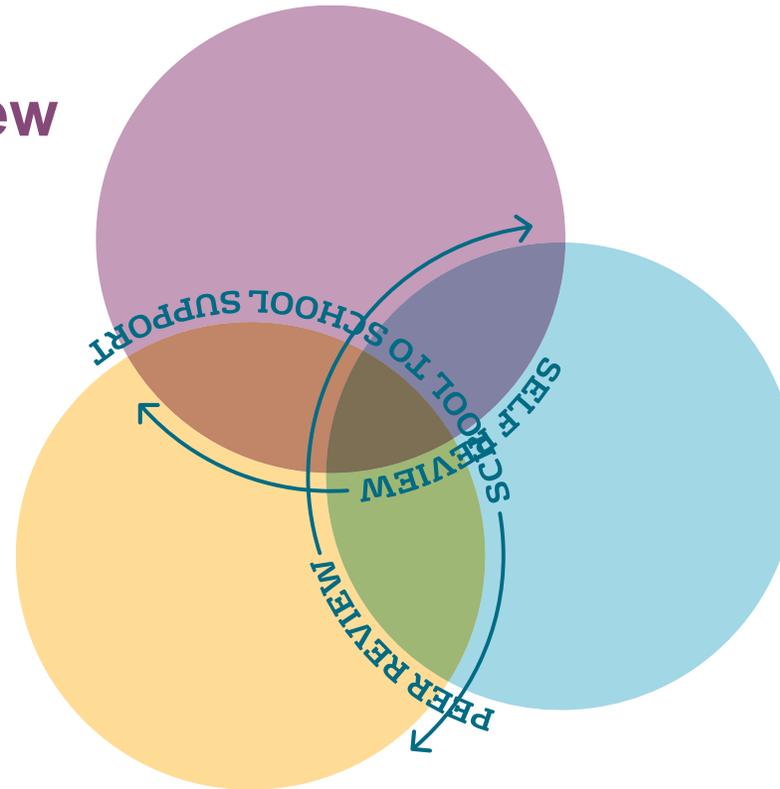


“Emerging evidence shows that by working together in a structured way towards actions and outcomes, teachers and schools can improve faster and more sustainably.”

The peer review cycle

Stage 1: Self-review

Stage 2: Peer review



Stage 3: Follow-up workshop and school-to-school support

Tackling Disadvantage

What do we mean by *disadvantage* in this context –
what is it and what is it not?

Why a specific framework on tackling disadvantage?



- Tackling disadvantage identified as a key enquiry area by school leaders attending partnership workshops in the Autumn term of 2020.
- Partnerships of schools told us that the underperformance of pupils vulnerable to disadvantage is a perennial concern and a persistent and complex challenge.
- The pandemic brought disruption to education that magnified the scale, reach and impact of disadvantage.
- The effects of this disruption, coupled with the existing and entrenched inequalities for disadvantaged pupils, will require leadership; a long-term strategic approach and clear and robust plans.

Enquiry framework for tackling disadvantage

Values, vision, culture & strategy

Looking forward

Engagement & performance of pupils

Our impact

Teaching, provision, curriculum & support

Looking inward

Collaboration with partnerships & wider community

Looking outward

The framework is organised in line with the four themes in the main SPP enquiry framework.

Colour coded strands invite schools to consider how the leadership of a strategy to tackle the impact of disadvantage is:

- **culturally inclusive & aspirational**
- **whole-school owned**
- **evidence based**
- **evaluative and impact focused**
- **flexible and adaptive**
- **partnership orientated**

How do SPP and tackling disadvantage converge?



Stage 1: Self-review

Using the **SPP enquiry framework, specifically the tackling disadvantage focused enquiry framework**, to reflect how well the school knows itself.

Using the enquiry questions to support schools in carrying out robust self-review to help inform the focus of the peer review.

Stage 2: Peer review

Agreed focus.

Structured conversation to discuss and agree a line of enquiry and agree areas to explore.

Review conducted to collect and process evidence.

Feedback conversation using evidence to celebrate successes, identify specific areas for development and define next steps.

Stage 3: Follow up workshop and school-to-school support

Staff ownership of the outcomes of the review – to ensure that the long-term and sustainable impact is more significant.

Post-review improvement workshop – using a range of facilitation tools to get to the root cause of issues, agree actions and broker any necessary support.

Principles of SPP aligned to tackling disadvantage

1. Teacher agency and wellbeing – empowering and enabling practitioners
2. Collaborative school improvement – shared responsibility and action on disadvantage
3. Enquiry-focused, non-judgmental collaboration – structured, robust, challenging & supportive
4. Trust and transparency – deeper relationships developing resilience and strength
5. Coaching approach – supports identification of strategies that will work in your context
6. Driven by schools – contextually relevant to tackling disadvantage in your community
7. Whole school – focuses on the leadership of the strategy for tackling disadvantage
8. For all schools – tailored to the circumstances of individual schools
9. Evidence based – evidence woven into the framework, the review and the workshop
10. Sustainable, local area model – generates and shared, locally led response

Marc Rowland

Marc is the adviser for improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners for the Unity Schools Partnership, a large cross-phase Multi-Academy Trust based in the East of England.



Marc has worked / is working with numerous Local Authorities, Multi-Academy Trusts, Teaching School Alliances and groups of schools nationally on long term projects to support better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

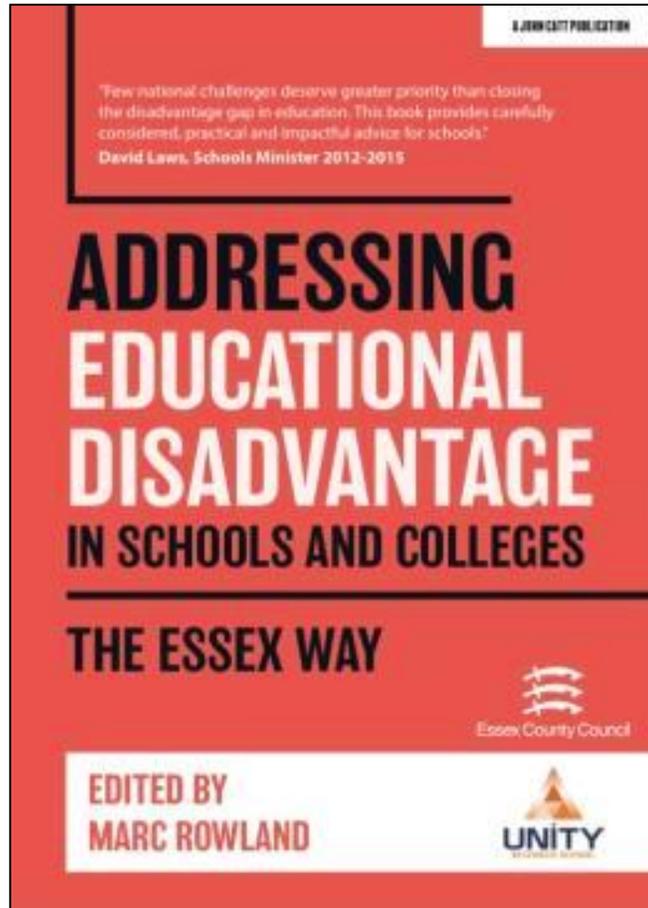
From mitigation to success

Addressing educational disadvantage

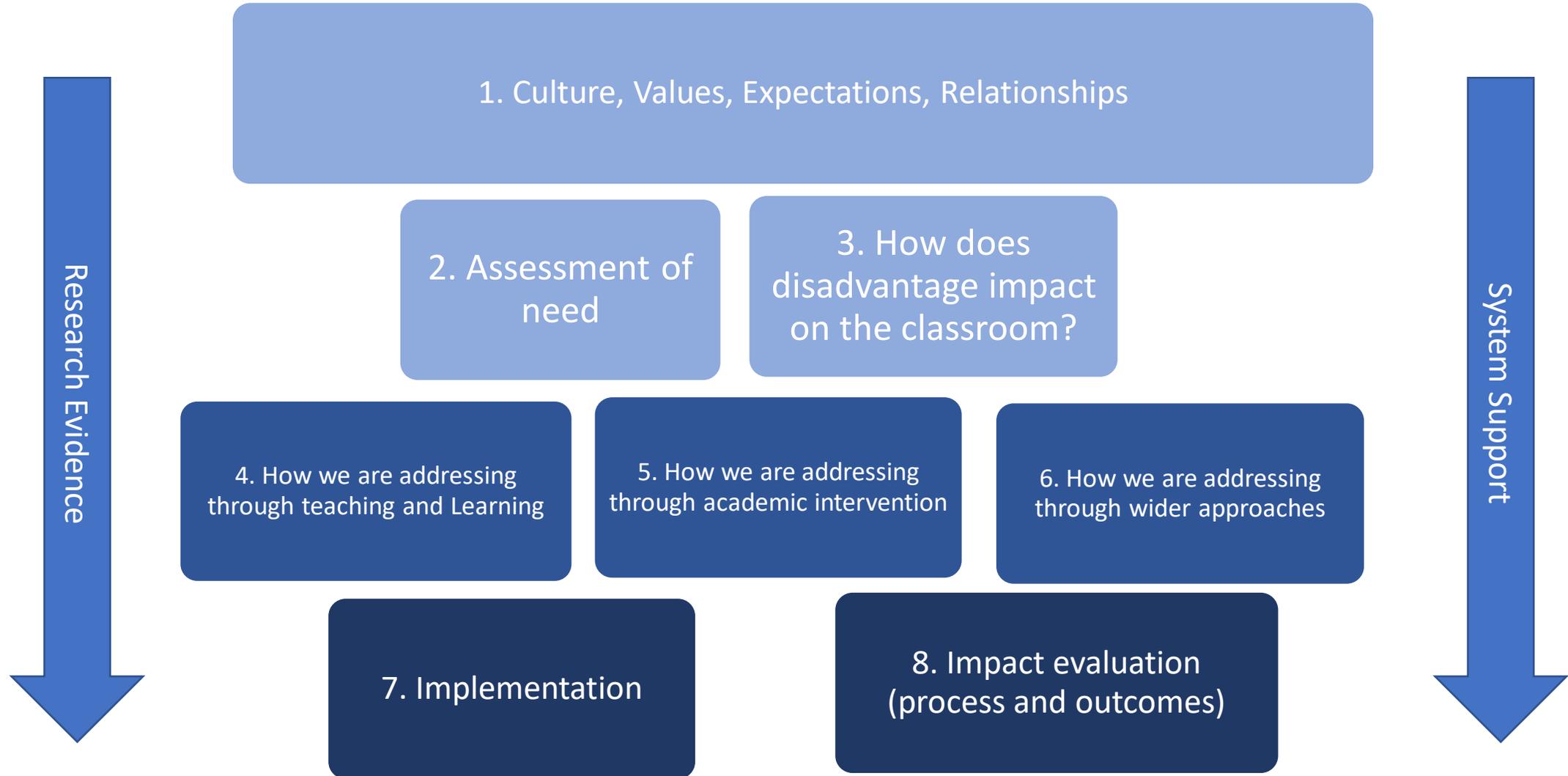
Learning from research evidence and working with schools

Marc Rowland
March 2021





Recommendations



‘Be an expert in your pupils’

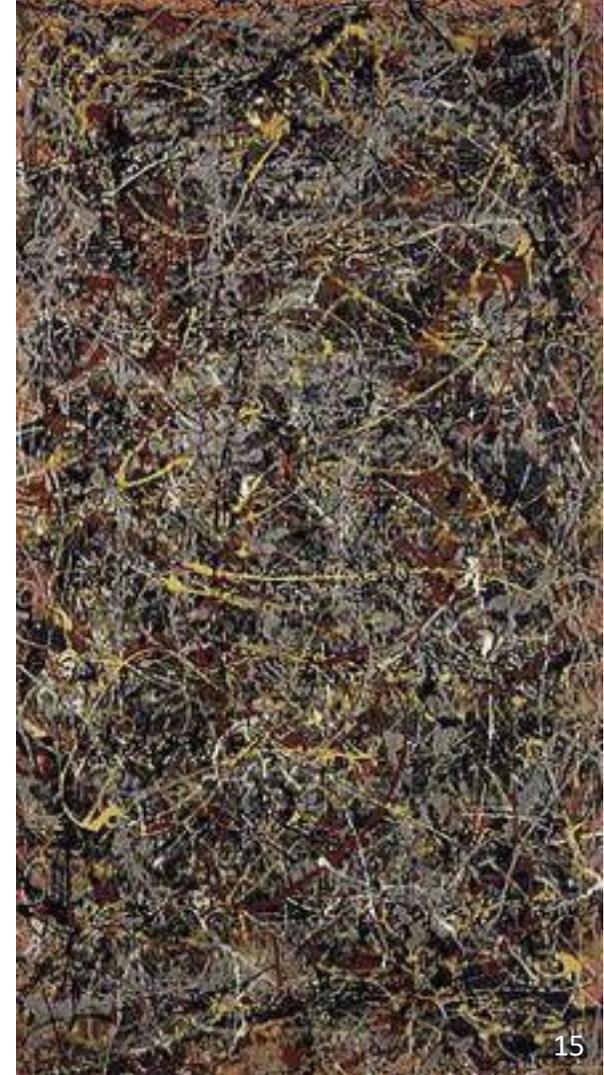
2. Assessment of need

What is the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on pupils’ learning?

How do we address this through:

- Teaching and Learning
- Academic Intervention
- Wider approaches?

Crenna -Jenning (2018): ‘Key drivers of the attainment gap’. *Education Policy Institute*



Covid catch up?

The 3 Rs

- **Restoration** into school life
- Securing **Relationships**
- **Responding** to pupil need

Two studies point to the power of teacher-student relationships to boost learning
[Pupils] do better when teachers know them well

<https://hechingerreport.org/two-studies-point-to-the-power-of-teacher-student-relationships-to-boost-learning/>

The catch up conundrum...

<https://researchschool.org.uk/durrington/news/addressing-the-catch-up-conundrum>



Relationships matter

1. Culture, Values,
Expectations, Relationships

Relationships as drivers of human development: Positive supportive contexts **Osher et al, 2019**

Relationships between and among children and adults are a primary process through which biological and contextual factors influence and mutually reinforce each other. Relationships that are reciprocal, attuned, culturally responsive, and trustful are a positive developmental force between children and their physical and social contexts.

Such relationships help to establish idiographic developmental pathways that serve as the foundation for lifelong learning, adaptation, the integration of social, affective, emotional, and cognitive processes and will, over time, make qualitative changes to a child's genetic makeup.

Bornstein & Leventhal, [2015](#); Bronfenbrenner & Morris, [2006](#).

Vocabulary at age five

3. How does disadvantage impact on the classroom?

- There is a 27% gap between the lowest income quintile and the highest.
- The lowest quintile have 16% more likely to have conduct problems compared to the highest quintile.
- The lowest quintile are 15% more likely to have hyperactivity problems compared to the highest quintile.

Waldfogel and Washbrook, 2010

Reading improves teenagers' vocab, whatever their background, say researchers

22 November 2017

Teenagers who read in their spare time know 26 per cent more words than those who never read, according to researchers at the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS).

The research team, based at the UCL Institute of Education, found that teenagers who read often, and those who had access to plenty of books, were more likely to develop a better vocabulary than their peers.

Analysing the scores of nearly 11,000 14-year-olds in a word exercise, the researchers found that teenagers who read for pleasure every day understood 26 per cent more words than those who never read at all in their spare time. And teenagers from book-loving homes knew 42 per cent more words than their peers who had grown up with few books.

Even taking into account other factors, like parents' qualifications and profession, and cognitive tests taken by the teenagers when they were aged 5, teenagers who read for pleasure still got 12 per cent more words right, while those from book-rich homes scored 9 per cent more.

<https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/reading-improves-teenagers-vocab-whatever-their-background-say-researchers/>

Metacognition and self-regulated learning



Bias: How bias subconsciously emerges in teacher assessment (EEF)

Daniel Kahneman, the Nobel prize winning economist, has demonstrated through forty years of experiments that people exhibit bias in their everyday and professional lives, mostly without being conscious of it. He describes one form of bias as an anchoring effect. Anchoring occurs when we try to think of a value for an unknown quantity before estimating that quantity. Anchoring is a natural human response, but as we are rarely conscious of it, when it emerges through assessment it can be extremely problematic. *Kahneman, D. (2013), Thinking Fast and Slow, Penguin, London*

When we assess a piece of work from a child that we know well, our bias emerges. Perhaps we know they can perform better than the piece in front of us, subconsciously prompting us to raise the mark. Even if the work is assessed anonymously, the existing evidence shows that bias is exhibited against pupils with SEN, those whose behaviour is challenging, those for whom English is an additional language, and those on Free School Meals. Assessment judgments can often be overly lenient, overly harsh or, indeed, can reinforce stereotypes, such as boys being perceived as better than girls at mathematics.

This doesn't mean that teachers should abandon teacher assessment altogether. But it does require an acknowledgement that reliable and unbiased assessment is a considerable challenge. To improve the quality of teacher assessments it is important to consider how to:

- improve the reliability (consistency) of assessments;
- increase the accuracy of teacher judgement
- increase the precision of inferences drawn from assessments;
- reduce systematic biases.

The key message here is not that teacher assessment can't or shouldn't be done; it is that teacher assessment is hard to get right, and that it requires excellent training, moderation, standardisation and quality control. Our starting point should be that great assessments are valid, reliable, purposeful and valuable, but these things are not easy to get right.

5. How we are addressing through academic intervention



A maturing culture of inclusivity

1. Culture, Values, Expectations, Relationships

From a system that...

- Identifies pupils as separate - requiring different resource and strategic approach
- Uses diagnostic labels to inform strategic planning
- Sees labels as an anchor on attainment
- Plans for 'most' and then 'some'
- Assumes a 'deficit discourse' - preconceiving difficulties and difference
- Adopts 'bell-curve' thinking
- Focuses on operational compliance
- Defers to individual experts/designated staff
- Assumes individual ownership of pupil groups

Toward a system that...

- Recognising difference, acknowledges biases
- Applying pedagogy for all
- Developing a strengths-based discourse that celebrates difference
- Expecting to be surprised by pupil potential
- Seeing all pupils as their responsibility
- Planning strategically to consider accessibility for everyone
- Sees purpose of education as social justice through better attainment
- Focuses on inclusive teaching and learning
- System wide knowledge, responsibility and expertise
- Collective responsibility and ownership of pupil groups

When evaluating impact, do:

- Focus on whether activity has been successful, and in what circumstances.
 - Look for evidence of impact on pupil outcomes
- Put in place a robust evaluation framework at the start of the strategy.
 - Ensure that the evaluation framework is transparent.
 - Report on progress against that framework.
 - Judge our success based on outcomes for pupils, not institutions.
- Measure success based on outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.

When evaluating impact, don't:

- Base evaluation of improvement on the weakest datasets, in order to claim credit for any small improvements.
 - Base evaluation of improvement on the reactions of those delivering the plan.
- Base evaluation of improvement on selected schools that were the most enthusiastic about the plan.
 - Use vague outcome measures from the start, making success easier to claim.
 - Use one set of favourable data or ignore any negative findings.
 - Use sets of data that avoid focusing on pupil learning outcomes.

Evaluation is fundamental to continuous improvement and to building a solid evidence base that will enable the plan to impact on pupils.



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<https://researchschool.org.uk/unity/>





Panel and audience discussion

How have school leaders turned
the thinking into practice?

Summary: Tackling disadvantage – Principles

- Relational approach – individualised connection with families
- High expectations – awareness of bias and preconceived limitations
- Individualised approach – no such thing as a Pupil Premium child
- Research evidence – challenges assumptions and beliefs
- Evaluative approach – using a simple framework to evaluate the impact of strategies and interventions
- Effective implementation – prioritising a small number of things, implementation as a process not an event
- Quality First Teaching – inclusive high, quality teaching for all
- Independent learning – teaching metacognitive strategies to support independent self-regulated learning
- Diagnostic assessment – diagnostic and formative assessment should shape strategy and interventions not labels

Useful resources

The importance of relationships to learning (looping): <https://hechingerreport.org/two-studies-point-to-the-power-of-teacher-student-relationships-to-boost-learning/>

Voice 21 Oracy <https://voice21.org>

Word Aware: <http://thinkingtalking.co.uk/word-aware/>

Guidance from EEF on Pupil Premium

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/pupil-premium-guide/>

DfE 'longer term' planning / reporting template and guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-strategy-statements>

Blog to be read alongside the template document: <https://researchschool.org.uk/news/pupil-premium/>

Blog on the Catch-up Conundrum

<https://researchschool.org.uk/durrington/news/addressing-the-catch-up-conundrum>

Thank you for joining us

Everyone that joined us will be sent a recording of today's session as well as a set of resources compiled by Marc Rowland.

If you are new to SPP, we'll send you a pack to introduce you to the programme and how it leads to impact. And please get in touch, we love to talk – there are a number of ways to work with us.

Already a part of the SPP community?

Remember you can access the [Tackling disadvantage focused enquiry framework](#) in the member resources area of the SPP website.

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