

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Wednesday 18th October 2006

at 10.30 am

**in Ow ton Manor Community Centre, Wynyard Road,
Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Brash, S Cook, Fleet, Griffin, Laffey, London, Preece, Rogan, Shaw ,
M Waller and Young

Co-opted Members:

Elizabeth Barraclough, David Relton and Jesse Smith

Resident Representatives:

John Lynch and Ian Campbell

Education Advisor: Rob Lowe

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2006.

**4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE
COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

None.

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

None.

6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

None.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Scrutiny Investigation into Raising Boys' Achievements – Bridging the Gender Gap:-

7.1 Evidence Gathering – Boys' Achievements– Bridging the Gender Gap – Feedback from Site Visit to Schools in Hartlepool and Sunderland City Council:-

- (a) Covering Report (*Scrutiny Support Officer*); and
- (b) Verbal feedback/findings from Members of the Forum in attendance at the Site Visits.

7.2 Evidence from the National Education Breakthrough Programme (Boys' Achievement):-

- (a) Covering Report (*Scrutiny Support Officer*); and
- (b) Presentation by Janet Potts, Programme Director, National Education Breakthrough Programme.

7.3 Evidence from the Hartlepool's Blended Learning Project:-

- (a) Covering Report (*Scrutiny Support Officer*); and
- (b) Presentation by a Representative from the Blended Learning Project.

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

i) **Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 8th November 2006, commencing at 2.00 pm in Conference Room 2, Belle Vue Community Sports and Youth Centre, Kendal Road, Hartlepool**

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

1st September 2006

Present:

Councillor: Jane Shaw (In the Chair)

Councillors: Jonathan Brash, Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Pauline Laffey, Frances London, Arthur Preece and Maureen Waller

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2(ii) Councillor Rob Cook attended as a substitute for Councillor Shawn Cook

Co-opted Members:

Elizabeth Barraclough

Resident Representatives:

Ian Campbell and Joan Smith

Officers:

John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager
Helen White, Barnardo's
Ronnie Rowbotham, Barnardo's
Hawkridge, Barnardo's
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Support Officer
Jonathan Wistow, Scrutiny Support Officer
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

14. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Shaun Cook and Co-opted Members David Relton, Rev Jesse Smith and Rob Lowe and Resident Representative Joan Smith.

15. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

16. Minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2006.

Confirmed.

17. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum

None.

18. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

None.

19. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents

None.

20. Involving Young People – Progress Report (*Children's Fund Manager*)

At its meeting on 16th February 2006, Council approved the final report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum from its investigation into Involving Young people. The Children's Fund Manager updated Members of the Forum on the progress made in relation to the Forum's recommendations from the final report.

The Action Plan, which was attached by way of appendix, showed that clear progress had been made in the past six months. One area still to be actioned was section 1b of the plan. This had been delayed in the short term due to a range of factors including the pressures on schools during the summer term. However, this would be undertaken during the autumn term of this year. The Children's Fund Manager indicated that the Participation Strategy currently being developed would provide further opportunities for the involvement of children and young people in service development and the democratic process.

Decision

Members noted the progress to date.

21. Hartlepool Youth Parliament

The Chair of the Scrutiny Forum informed Members that Hartlepool's representative from the National Youth Parliament was in attendance at today's meeting. The Chair passed on the congratulations of the Forum to the representatives as they had received an award at the Government Office for

the North East's Youth Summit for 'Bridging the Gap'. This award was given due to the hard work undertaken by the representatives in setting up a Youth Parliament within the town and the associated support groups required.

22. **Involving Children and Young People in the Scrutiny Process: Presentations by the Children's Fund Manager, Barnardo's and Hartlepool Young Voices** (Scrutiny Support Officer)

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report which drew Members' attention to recommendation 1(e) of the Action Plan produced at the conclusion of the Forum's comprehensive investigation into 'Involving Young People'. This recommendation required that 'the Forum actively pursue the possibility of co-opting young people onto the Forum'. Suggested options for a way forward with regard to involving young people was considered later in the agenda, however, the Children's Fund Manager and representatives from Barnardo's and Hartlepool Young Voices were in attendance and gave short presentations setting the context and detail of what has been achieved so far.

The Children's Fund Manager indicated that a lot of work had been undertaken in tandem with the Forum's investigation, including involving Hartlepool Young Voices. It was noted that at the next meeting of the Hartlepool Partnership, it would be recommended that a young person's representative be part of the Partnership. A model was being developed that would show how the Council would give young people the opportunity to work together and with other groups.

A representative from Barnardo's gave a comprehensive presentation that outlined the background to Hartlepool Young Voices and the activities that they had undertaken over the last 12 months which included team building exercises, a residential trip and working closely with the TFM 'Have Your Say' Campaign. A 'getting to know you' exercise was undertaken by all in attendance at the meeting.

A discussion followed where the following issues were raised.

Are the young people who participate in Hartlepool Young Voices representatives from across the whole town? The representative from Barnardo's indicated that initially the HYV consisted of 13 team members, this being the basic premise for the group. This would be expanded as the group became more established.

Were any children with disabilities included as representatives in the group? The representative from Barnardo's indicated that Catcote and Springwell Schools had been contacted and they had felt at the time that they were unable to participate in the group. However, it was acknowledged that children with disabilities would play an important role within Hartlepool Young Voices and that the schools would be contacted again in the near future to ascertain if their position had changed.

How would the election for the Youth Parliament be promoted? Events would be held across the town, including attendance at school councils. Leaflets would be produced and distributed through the school councils and given to prospective candidates. All candidates would then produce DVDs as part of their election campaign and these would be shown in schools.

Decision

Members noted the content of the presentations.

23. Proposals for Involving Children and Young People in the Scrutiny Process (*Children's Fund Manager*)

The Children's Fund Manager presented a report that provided the options for consideration by the Forum on the practicalities of co-opting children and young people onto the local authority's Children's Services Scrutiny Forum. In involving children and young people in the scrutiny process, it was proposed that certain action points were implemented and these were included within the report.

The following options were presented for consideration, for involving children and young people, along with the strengths and weaknesses for each option,:

- Option One – No Change
- Option Two – A Shadow scrutiny process be set up
- Option Three – Children and young people be given pre-meeting briefings
- Option Four – Elected Members act as mentors.

As Members considered Option One – No change not to be a viable option, Members separated into three groups to discuss the other three options with a representative from Barnardo's as well as young people in each of the groups. Feedback was then given to all Members by the Barnardo's representative on the discussions from the groups about each of the options, a summary of which was set out below.

Option Two – It was suggested that young people would not feel as involved as they should as this process would mean that they would be kept at an 'arm's length' from the formal meetings. The young people indicated that if they felt passionate about a particular issue, they would prefer to be at the meeting discussing it themselves rather than through a third party.

Option Three – It was thought that formal arrangements for pre-meetings would present problems, in particular with regard to time constraints. However, Member and the young people present felt it may be beneficial to have a mechanism in place in order that requests for further information or clarification could be instigated and carried out as part of a two-way process.

Option Four – This option appeared to be the most favourable option as a basis for the involvement of young people in the scrutiny forum with the provision of being able to include elements of all the other options. For example, pre-meetings where it was felt it would be beneficial.

The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that the Children's Fund Manager would work together with the young people involved to formalise the details of the arrangements prior to a report being submitted to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Decision

The Forum agreed that Option Four – Elected Members act as mentors was the preferred option but with the facility to arrange pre-meetings where it was felt necessary.

JANE SHAW

CHAIRMAN

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

18 October 2006



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: EVIDENCE GATHERING - BOYS' ACHIEVEMENTS – BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP – FEEDBACK FROM SITE VISITS TO SCHOOLS IN HARTLEPOOL AND SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To facilitate a discussion amongst Members of this Forum in relation to a range of visits to schools in Hartlepool, and the benchmarking visit made to Sunderland City Council, with the aim of observing and comparing the strategies being implemented and their effectiveness.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 17 July 2006, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry/Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation.
- 2.2 In accordance with the approved timetable Site Visits were made to a range of schools in Hartlepool to observe and compare the strategies being implemented and their effectiveness. Sites visited were:
- West View Primary School – 15 September 2006
 - Golden Flatts Primary School – 20 September 2006
 - Kingsley Primary School – 22 Sept 2006
 - Manor College of Technology – 26 September 2006
 - Dyke House Secondary School – 5 October 2006
 - Brierton Community School – 13 October 2006

- 2.3 In order to compare the activities in Hartlepool with those of another Local Authority a visit was also made to Sunderland City Council, on the 4 October 2006. During the course of this visit a variety of issues were discussed and information provided on the Authority's work with the National Education Breakthrough Programme (NEBP). Members will note that further information on the work of NEDP is to be provided later in the meeting by the Janet Potts (Director of the NEDP).
- 2.4 During the course of each of the visits those Members present received a wide range of information. A summary of the information provided and the issues discussed is outlined in **Appendix A** which will be circulated to Members shortly.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum discuss their findings from the Site Visits with focus on:-
- i) The strategies implemented and how effective they have proven to be in Hartlepool; and
 - ii) How Hartlepool Borough Council might benefit from the adoption/adaptation of strategies implemented by Sunderland City Council.

Contact Officers:- Joan Wilkins – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
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Email: joan.wilkins@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Boys' Achievement – Bridging the Gap – Scoping Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on 17 July 2006.

FEEDBACK FROM SITE VISITS TO SCHOOLS IN HARTLEPOOL AND SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

WEST VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL - 15 September 2006

Present: Cllrs Shaw, Brash and Griffin. Rev. J Smith.

Format of visit – School tour/observation of single sex classes/discussions with teachers.

School view on the gender gap – The existence of a gender gap and differences in the way in which boys and girls learn is acknowledged and efforts made to address it. It was, however, observed that with whatever initiative was implemented girls tended to also improve.

Practices/procedures in operation to deal with the gender gap - In 2006 single sex classes were implemented for a trial period in year 6 with great success. Over 2006 boys reading and writing performance improved (89% improved reading by 3+ sublevels, 21% by 5+ sublevels, this compared to an expected improvement of 2 sublevels).

Single sex classes were, however, only used for literacy classes and teachers indicated that they would not like to see its use extended beyond that. Other issues discussed related to:-

- i) It was felt that whilst the use of single sex classes worked where marks are good, it is better to mix classes where marks are good.
- ii) In relation to the use of single sex classed outside year 6 attention was drawn to the differences with year 6 classes i.e. hormones. There were at this time no plans for the extension of such classes to other years.
- iii) Emphasis was placed upon:
 - The importance of social skills and interaction.
 - The importance of creating a positive ethos in the school, in terms of manner and speech with the aim of making learning 'cool'.
 - The importance of good teaching if the single sex class model was to work, in that boys need to feel secure in their learning environment. The initiative is only as good as the teachers implementing it.
 - The need to teach every child as an individual and address their learning needs.
 - The benefits of allowing boys to choose the type of literature they read. Boys tend to prefer to read fiction.

- The use of mixed ability groups had been tried; however, better results were achieved with single sex classes.
 - The need for teacher to adapt teaching styles in order to teach the much faster moving boys classes and the importance of a teacher and teaching assistant in each class.
- iv) Concern was expressed that the transition between primary and secondary school was not always managed as well as it could be. It was, however, highlighted that the transitional arrangements put in place by some schools was very good i.e. St Hild's.
- v) In relation to the use of supply teachers. The school utilised its excellent teaching assistants in conjunction with a small selection of supply teachers with excellent behavioural skills who the children know. The use of supply teachers was, however, not really a great issue in that staff are happy and tends to stay at the school. There is no real problem in terms of absences.

Further details of the use of single sex classes by the school are enclosed at **Appendix 1.**

GOLDEN FLATTS PRIMARY SCHOOL - 20 September 2006

Present: Cllrs Shaw and Young. Mrs E Baraclough.

Format of visit – School tour/presentation the Head Teacher/discussions with teachers.

School view on the gender gap – In 2001 the school was in poor condition and the need identified for a whole school strategy in relation to raising boys' achievements. Over three years refurbishment work was undertaken, staff training put in place and a new ethos given to the school.

In 2004 whilst the school received a good Ofsted report a problem was identified with boys writing across the school. During efforts to identify a solution it became evident that boys' achievement was problem in general. The school then undertook work to identify the differences between boys and girls learning styles.

Practices/procedures in operation to deal with the gender gap – The school has over recent years developed a range of initiatives which it now uses to improve boys achievement. These include:

- talking tables;
- mind mapping;
- kung-fu punctuation;

- upleveling;
- corners to learn;
- role play; and
- the punctuation pyramid.

Issues discussed during the course of the visit related to:-

- i) The success of the work being undertaken with girls now overtaking boys in some areas.
- ii) It was recognised that there is no one particular thing that can be done to address the issue of boys' achievement. The way forward is through the implementation of a combination of initiatives and the need for a variety of options to be available for schools to choose from.
- iii) In relation to the sex of a teacher and suggestions regarding the importance irrelevant and that the personality of the individual is more important.
- iv) In terms of the effect of learning styles on boys' achievements these had been taken into consideration and were now reflected in new homework style (models and creativity). Boys were now bringing in the best homework.
- v) Emphasis was placed upon the importance of:
 - Social skills and interaction.
 - Creating a positive ethos in the school, in terms of manor and speech and the need to make children feel respected and valued.
 - Gearing the curriculum to each child's needs/curriculum enrichment.
 - Parental involvement at all levels.
 - Personal and subject profiles so that everyone knows what is expected of them and what is needed to move onto the next level.
 - Excellent support staff.
 - Information and best practice sharing between schools.

KINGSLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL - 22 September 2006

Present: Cllrs Shaw, Griffin and London. Mr R Lowe

Format of visit – School tour/presentation by teachers/discussions with teachers and Head Teacher.

School view on the gender gap – It is felt at this school that a gender gap does not exist. The real issue relates to the raising of achievement for boys and girls.

Practices/procedures in operation to deal with the gender gap – The school has over recent years developed a range of initiatives which it now uses to improve achievement across the school. These include:

- kung-fu punctuation;
- upleveling;
- corners to learn;
- role play; and
- the punctuation pyramid.

Issues discussed during the course of the visit related to:-

- i) It was recognised that there is no one particular thing that can be done to address the achievement. The way forward is through the implementation of a combination of initiatives.
- ii) In relation to the use of supply teachers. The school's use of supply teachers is very limited as staff absence is not a real issue. When they are used they tend to be for longer periods of time. In thy their use does not seem to effect the children
- iii) Emphasis was placed upon the importance of:
 - Knowing Your children
 - Social skills and interaction.
 - Creating a positive ethos in the school, in terms of manor and speech and the need to make children feel respected and valued.
 - Gearing the curriculum to each child's needs/curriculum enrichment.
 - Parental involvement at all levels.
 - Personal intervention and subject profiles so that everyone knows what is expected of them and what is needed to move onto the next level.
 - Excellent teacher support staff.
 - Good transitional arrangements.
 - Training and keeping good staff.
 - Continuous monitoring of staff and pupil performance.

MANOR COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY - 26 September 2006

Present: Cllrs Shaw, Griffin and London. Mrs E Baraclough

Format of visit – School tour/presentation and discussions with Head Teacher and students.

School view on the gender gap – The College feels that it is not an issue of gender but of individual achievement.

Issues discussed during the course of the visit related to:-

- i) It was recognised that there is no one particular thing that can be done to address the achievement. The way forward is through the implementation of a combination of initiatives.
- ii) The emphasis placed by the school on managing the transition between primary and secondary school. Five teachers are sent out to partner primary schools in an effort to smooth the transition and in general secondary schools do endeavour to utilise their best teachers in years 7-8. It is, however, recognised that improvements to transitional arrangement could still be made.
- iii) In terms of dealing with disenfranchised children. The school endeavours, where it can outside the fixed curriculum to provide a more flexible curriculum. This appears to work with attendance at 90% and exclusions rare.
- iv) The College has trialled single sex classes (science and languages) with little effect.
- v) In relation to the sex of a teacher and suggestions regarding the importance and that the personality of the individual is more important.
- vi) Individual learning is the key to personal achievement and this is the way the College operates.
- vii) In terms of curriculum development the College has a Curriculum Development Team, upon which students sit. In relation to the curriculum the College would like to see greater flexibility but accepts the need for certain rigid elements. Would like more options earlier.
- viii) Emphasis was placed upon the importance of:
 - Knowing Your children
 - Social skills and interaction.
 - Creating a positive ethos in the school, in terms of manner and speech and the need to make children feel respected and valued.
 - Children's profiles from primary school and their use to see how a secondary school can add contextual value. Manner is ranked in band one for this nationally.
 - Curriculum choice in the final two years.

- Parental involvement at all levels.
- Excellent teachers and support staff.
- Gearing the curriculum to each child's needs/curriculum enrichment.
- Personal and subject profiles so that everyone knows what is expected of them and what is needed to move onto the next level.
- Excellent teacher support staff.
- Good transitional arrangements.
- Training and keeping good staff.
- Analyse what kind of a learner a child is and gear their learning in that way. This is not done on a gender basis. The Learn to Learn Programme undertaken by all those in years 7 and 8.
- Sharing information with other schools and does this at the Secondary Heads Group each year.

DYKE HOUSE SECONDARY SCHOOL - 26 September 2006

Present: Cllrs Shaw and Fleet. Mrs E Baraclough

Format of visit – School tour/presentation and discussions with Head Teacher.

School view on the gender gap – The school feels that it is not an issue of gender but of individual achievement.

Issues discussed during the course of the visit related to:-

- i) The emphasis placed by the school on managing the transition between primary and secondary school. Teachers are sent out to partner primary schools in an effort to smooth the transition and in general secondary schools do endeavour to utilise their best teachers in years 7-8. It is, however, recognised that improvements to transitional arrangement could still be made.
- ii) In terms of dealing with disenfranchised children. The school endeavours, where it can outside the fixed curriculum to provide a more flexible curriculum. This appears to work with attendance at 90% and exclusions rare.
- iii) The school trialled single sex classes and decided to stop them in light of issues around life and communication skills. The school is however looking at personalised learning as a way of providing learning options.
- iv) The school was successfully utilising vocational courses as a way of allowing children who would normally not leave school with qualifications to do so. 100% success rate in 5A* to C's.

- v) In relation to the sex of a teacher it was acknowledged that this can be a contributory factor in raising boys' achievement. The school at this time has slightly more male teachers than female.
- vi) Individual learning is the key to personal achievement.
- vii) Emphasis was placed upon the importance of:
 - Knowing Your children
 - Social skills and interaction.
 - Creating a positive ethos in the school, in terms of manner and speech and the need to make children feel respected and valued.
 - Children's profiles from primary school and their use to see how a secondary school can add contextual value. Manner is ranked in band one for this nationally.
 - Curriculum choice in the final two years.
 - Parental involvement at all levels.
 - Excellent teachers and support staff.
 - Gearing the curriculum to each child's needs/curriculum enrichment.
 - Personal and subject profiles so that everyone knows what is expected of them and what is needed to move onto the next level.
 - Excellent teacher support staff.
 - Good transitional arrangements.
 - Training and keeping good staff.
 - Analyse what kind of a learner a child is and gear their learning in that way. This is not done on a gender basis.
 - Sharing information with other schools and does this at the Secondary Heads Group each year.

FEEDBACK FROM BENCHMARKING VISIT TO SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL – 4 OCTOBER 2006

Present: Cllrs Shaw, Griffin and Fleet. Mrs E Baraclough.

Format of visit – Presentation and exercises displaying the 'learning conversation'.

View on the gender gap – Sunderland City Council recognises the need to deal specifically with boys' achievements and has a clear Raising Boys' Achievement Plan for 2006/07/08. The Council has also allocated specific resources

During the presentation to Members issues were discussed in relation to:-

- i) The established by Sunderland of the Boys Learning Project, which sits within and alongside developments in Secondary National Strategy.
- ii) The Boys Learning Project is being implemented in six schools across the city, all of which were volunteers. Each of these schools had varying gender gaps and had in the past implemented initiatives to try and address it. These include single sex teaching.
- iii) It was highlighted that boys tend to focus on technology in terms of how they spend their time and learn and in this way conversation and the use of it to learn was suffering. A focus of the project was the use of the Learning Conversation. This combined with mentoring within the conversation groups between teachers and students has proven to be successful. Efforts are, however, made to ensure that the gap between the achievements levels of students is not too great.
- iv) Learning Conversations are:
 - Teacher – pupil interactions.
 - Reviews.
 - Mentoring sessions.
 - One to ones.
 - Interactions between an adult and a small group of learners.
 - Ways of developing ongoing dialogue with learners.
 - Ways of focusing on how learners learn and encourages them to reflect on how they can learn more efficiently.
 - Ways of developing a precise and effective language for learning and the personalisation of learning.
- v) There is a need to get back to talking.
- vi) The project has been successful over the last year with the gender gap reducing by 4%.
- vii) Sunderland would like to roll the project out down to KS 1 and 2, however, it was at this time restricting it to KS 3 and 4.
- viii) Emphasis was placed upon:
 - Dealing with each student on their merits and providing them with the knowledge of how they are performing and what they need to do to reach targets.
 - The need to encourage students with positive messages i.e. the sending home of letters/cards congratulating on achievements. Other methods utilised included learning journals and motivational goody bags.

- Of sharing best practice and experiences with other local authorities. Sunderland would like to see a network set up.

Further information on the Boys' Learning Project and Learning Conversations are enclosed at **Appendix 2**.

WEST VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL

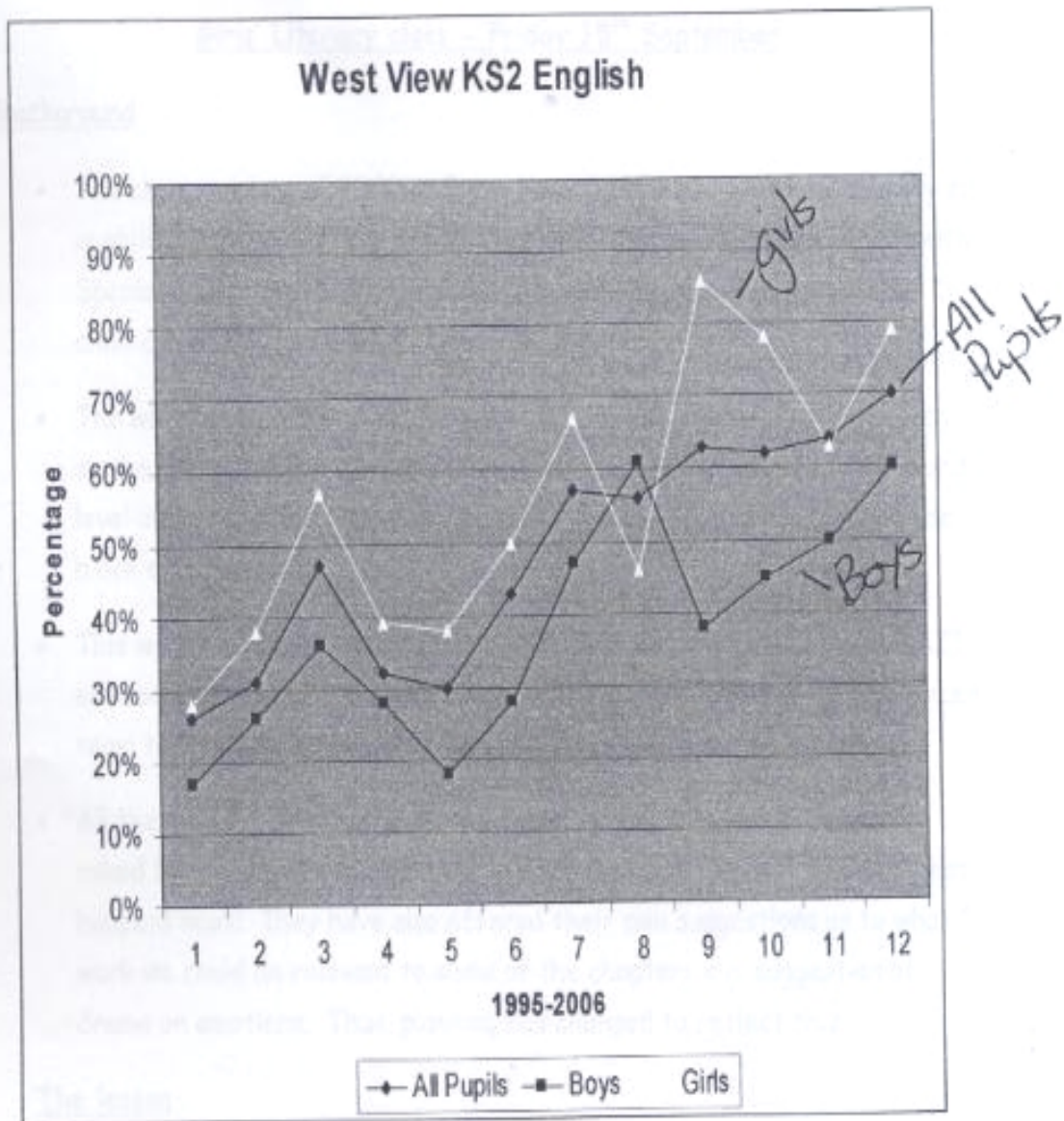
SCHOOL CONTEXT

• HEADTEACHER:	MR ANDREW A BROWN
• CHAIR OF GOVERNORS:	MR CHRIS SIMMONS
• ADDRESS:	DAVISON DRIVE, HARTLEPOOL, TS24 9BP
• TELEPHONE No:	01429 267466, 07799-582872, 07799-582869
• FAX No:	01429 236237
• E-MAIL No:	juliesmyth@westview.hartlepool.sch.uk
• NUMBER ON ROLL:	337
• SEN REGISTER:	35%
• FREE SCHOOL MEALS:	58%

COMMENTARY

The school is situated in a large council estate within North Hartlepool with high unemployment and social deprivation; it is located in the bottom 1.5% deprived wards nationally. It is part of a mini-Education action Zone. The school was opened in 1954 as three separate establishments and in the early 1980's all three were merged into a co-educational primary school. Considerable investment has been made to the fabric of the building, particularly the KS1 department, ICT suite, community room and security. This has now been added to by the addition of a £0.9 million pound Sports Hall and Nursery, plus inter-linking corridor and multi-use games area. The previous Ofsted inspection in 2002 the school was judged to be 'very good' and 'with many strengths'. Sats results at both key stages are very encouraging, and at KS2 in 2006 the results were the highest ever. The school is part of an international network with partner schools in Australia, Italy, Spain, USA and South Africa. Over the last three years four members of staff have been short listed regionally in the teaching Awards; two qualified for the national finals in London. In 2006-7 the school is piloting an innovative leadership structure with an Executive Head-teacher (supporting for 30 days over the year) and also a head-teacher. We are involved in the national DfES Next Practice pilot with neighbouring schools. A Children's centre has been approved for the school in 2007. The ethos within the school is a major strength with no exclusions for almost 2 years. We have recently been awarded the following:-

- International School's Award
- ArtsMark Gold Award
- Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark 2
- Sport England Active Mark Gold
- Education Extra Distinction Award
- DfES Achievement Award 2002 & 2003
- FA Charter Mark



Other Information

Reading results for both boys and girls were 75% in 2006

Writing results since 2001 have dramatically increased 23% to 66%, boys 34% to 60%

Girls' Literacy class - Friday 15th September

Background

- The class consists of 29 Year 5 and Year 6 children. Children normally sit in ability groups, and range in ability from under a level 2 (2 children with Special Educational Needs) to a level 5, for both reading and writing. 1 child can sometimes present behavioural difficulties.
- The work in the lesson today is part of a 3 week narrative writing block on the story "Room 13" by Robert Swindells. All text, sentence and word level objectives have been connected to this book and at the end of the block of work, children will do a piece of narrative extended writing.
- This work has been planned jointly by myself and Melanie Stenson (EAZ) as "Room 13" is on loan from the EAZ. The children have also experienced team teaching as part of this teaching sequence.
- All the children are thoroughly enjoying the book and have frequently asked to continue to the next chapter as they can't wait to find out what happens next! They have also offered their own suggestions as to what work we could do relevant to some of the chapters e.g. suggestion of drama on emotions. Thus, planning has changed to reflect this.

The lesson

- In this lesson, as there is only myself to offer support, children will work in mixed ability pairs to help each other with independent reading of the next chapter (mainly to help lower ability children as they have been struggling with parts of this text)
- The main part of the lesson will be conducted in mixed ability groups to ensure inclusion
- The children will take on different roles to work as 'detectives' to answer comprehension questions about the text
- At the end of the lesson in the plenary, children will be asked to take on a different role of a 'magic predictor' and talk about what they think will happen at the end of the story, using reasoning about what they have previously read. There will also be a re-cap on what they have learnt.

Larger groups. Good use of vocabulary
choice of literature. (more story based)

Boys' Literacy Class

The class

There are 26 boys in the class.

A group of 4 children who have Special Educational Needs (2 boys and 2 girls) and will be withdrawn for intensive support, are joining us for the first few weeks.

There are a further 4 boys with Special Educational Needs.

3 boys have severe behavioural difficulties -

1 has ADHD and can be very unpredictable even on medication

1 is being successfully reintegrated after spending a lot of time last year accessing the Behaviour Improvement Programme at St Hilda's,

1 has behavioural problems and also suffered brain injury in a road accident in May - the extent of his injuries are still being assessed but he is now sight and hearing impaired.

The adults

Caroline Elton - class teacher/Assistant Headteacher (5th year in Y6 at West View)

Michelle Nixon - Teaching Assistant (specialising in SEN)

Sandra Robinson - Teaching Assistant

The lesson

This is the last lesson in a 2 week block on story writing, linked to the reading of Roald Dahl's 'The Minpins'. This book was chosen because it is a simple adventure story with very imaginative pictures - the boys have all enjoyed inventing mythical beasts and slaying dragons in their own stories!

The lesson has 5 parts -

1. A quick warm-up to improve/ teach sentence structure, with a focus on punctuation (something similar starts every lesson).
2. Teaching/discussion about how the book ended, their opinions about the ending, and how they could use this idea to finish their own stories.
3. Paired work on writing a story ending - encouraging discussion and problem solving.
4. Time for independent writing to finish own stories (in some lessons this is independent reading time)
5. A plenary to recap on what they have learnt - how they ended their stories.

- structured - timescales + short deadlines
- work in couples (sm/gps)
- choice literature

Single-Sex Teaching in Year 6

Context

We decided to trial teaching literacy to single sex groups in Year 6 because of the huge difference between boys' and girls' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. The aim is to improve boys' attainment so that it is in line with girls' attainment, particularly in writing.

Teaching boys - methods used

- Texts are chosen specifically for boys that will interest them and fire their enthusiasm for reading.
- Lessons are planned in many parts, so that each section is short and snappy and does not allow them to lose interest.
- The varied learning styles of boys are taken into account in every lesson, with a particular emphasis on kinesthetic learning.
- The natural competitive nature of boys is encouraged, with a league table that they can move up or down depending on their attainment of their own targets (progress against own performance, not against other boys)
- Participation is insisted upon in discussion / question answering - if few are volunteering, names are picked from a box at random, and they must answer the question.
- The emphasis is on quality writing not quantity, with no redrafting of work - something that puts boys off writing.
- Honesty and personal opinion are encouraged - we have abandoned texts when they held no interest for the boys.
- Short sharp teaching of grammar / punctuation - no exercises.
- Cross-curricular links to interesting subjects such as science, history or sport - World War 2 links were very successful.

The successes last year

- All boys improved their reading and writing performance over the year - 89% improved reading by 3+ sublevels in a year, 21% by 5 sublevels (the expected improvement per year is 2 sub levels)
- Correct use of punctuation greatly improved since I introduced 'Punctuation Kung Fu'. (a kinesthetic approach to punctuation)
- All boys were keen to share ideas and show great imagination and wide vocabularies.
- Reading of class / group novels was enjoyed by all - they read in sustained silence and could discuss texts intelligently.
- Their enthusiasm was infectious - the lessons are a pleasure to teach.

The possible problems

- Behaviour management is an issue - having up to 30 boys in one room, including all the Year 6s with behaviour problems, requires careful handling.
- The lessons must be fast paced and lively to avoid them losing interest - the teacher has to be constantly on the move!

The views of the boys

Enjoy Literacy?	Prefer single sex / mixed?	Work harder now? Why?
23 - YES	Single - All of them	25 - YES Main reason - work harder for SATs / No girls / more interesting / want higher levels
4 - NO	Reasons - quieter, girls fuss and chat too much	2 - always worked this hard

Reasons for enjoying literacy

- Like writing stories
- Like independent writing
- Can express yourself
- Reading together

Favourite part of lesson

15 of the boys said extended writing was their favourite part -

- They get excited about seeing levels each week, and like to improve them
- They like working independently

How could lessons be improved?

Most boys said that they enjoy the lessons now, and can't think of improvements.

The only change they wanted was more access to ICT in lessons

So far this year -

There are more boys with serious behaviour problems, which may (or may not) become an issue.

The same enthusiasm is now being built up - but there's still more work to do!

I have high hopes for our SATs results.

Girls

Teaching girls - methods used

- Methods used are very similar to those used with boys, with emphasis on kinesthetic learning and speaking and listening as a stimulus to writing
- Teaching follows the format, for the main, where whole class teaching takes place with input and participation (often through talk partners), then independent work.
- Most independent work is conducted in ability groups, although sometimes mixed ability groups are used as the children have said that they like the opportunity to work with different people
- Some element of reading and writing is done every lesson, with one lesson per week focusing on a reading lesson (where a class novel and guided reading takes place) and an extended writing lesson
- Extended writing conferences are incorporated into the week, and children who have taken part in these have found them extremely useful
- Cross-curricular links to interesting subjects such as science, history or sport - for example, reports on our rainforest topic

The successes last year

- Girls feel able to put across their feelings without any fear of embarrassment from boys
- All girls achieved the levels that they were predicted in both reading and writing, with some children achieving higher than expected
- A large percentage of children achieved more than 2 sub levels progress, particularly those children who were classed as border line between level 3 / 4
- All the children felt that with simplified targets and level descriptors they could continue to improve with their writing, especially those who have taken part in extended writing conferences feeling more confident on knowing how to improve
- Enthusiasm for class novels

The possible problems

- Girls can be more chatty and take longer to settle down than the boys, especially when there is a different teacher taking the lesson

Overall, I enjoy teaching the girls, but do feel that single sex teaching is of more benefit to the boys.

The views of the girls

Enjoy Literacy?	Prefer single sex / mixed?	Work harder now? Why?
23 - YES 2 - sometimes 1 - NO	Single - 16 Mixed - 10 (Reasons for wanting mixed was mainly comments about girls being too fussy)	24 - YES Main reason - because teacher expects it and boosts your confidence / work harder for SATs / No boys 2 - NO Reason given - because girls are chatty

General comments from the girls:

- Better explanation of levels - simplified targets / levels were introduced
- Read more
- More work
- Sit where you want
- Most children said nothing

Favourite part of lessons

- Writing stories
- Reading
- Extended writing
- Using IWB
- Working in partners
- Poetry

How could lessons be improved?

Children felt that to improve lessons there should be more opportunity to work with a wider variety of children and more opportunity to read for more extended periods of time. These improvements have now been put in place for this year; children work in mixed ability groups where appropriate and read independently for longer periods.

So far this year

There is a much wider spectrum of ability in the class; hence more use of mixed ability groupings for support.

The girls have been much quicker at settling down to work, avoiding chatter this year; sometimes getting them to speak has been a problem!

Boys' Learning Project

Learning conversations

July 06.

Issue 1

The learning conversation a way forward for improving boys' learning.

Learning is not something that can be done to you, but is something you go through with the support and aid of others. Learning is a social activity.

Nothing new in that I hear some of you say and I would agree. However for boys we know that the constant diet of text books and worksheets stops them from engaging in the classroom. We know that boys enjoy thinking skills based lessons because they can take risks with their answers and in the thinking skill lesson there is less formal writing.

So bring on the learning conversation. In 5 LEA schools action research over a two year period will investigate the value

of the learning conversation to Raise Boys' Achievement. The schools will use the Maths and Science Departments to identify cohorts of boys in Key Stage 3 that are an insecure level 4, and at Key Stage 4 only likely to achieve a grade E/D. Using dialogue it is hoped that pupils engage more in their lessons and key learning. The project will be aiming to increase level 4 to a 5+, and GCSE grades to a C.

All schools will use motivation and aspirational actions to further develop pupil confidence.

Let's hear it for the boys.



The 5 Schools involved are Biddick, Monkwearmouth, Sandhill View, St Aidans and Thornhill

Whats hot

Personalisation.

Gary Wilson.

Mr Wonderful.

Andrew Walmsley
maths research.

Learning is a social process.

Gnarls Barkley "crazy" download.

i-pod—blended learning

Special points of interest:

- At the Secondary Strategy Managers meeting on the 11th July 06 at the Rutherglen Centre the yellow handout titled Secondary National Strategy Intervention Training the package for the school intervention team contained a module titled "Learning Conversations" this I am told will be an online.

England world cup - rich in talk.

The Bobby Moore Fund for Cancer Research cards are the inspiration for the Boys' Learning Project. The photograph 'kissing the world cup' in 1966 sends a clear message we need to do it again but we will now have to wait another 4 years

until South Africa in 2010. In the meantime no doubt lots of discussion and conversation will take place on the quality of the present England team.

In the meantime some of you may wish to ponder the following quote:

ing quote:

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream, not only plan, but also believe"

The learning conversation starts here.

Supporting continued improvement in English and mathematics



A key priority is providing support for schools to maintain and accelerate improvements in KS3, and to raise standards at KS4 in English and mathematics. Pupils should benefit from high-quality interactive teaching, which leads to learning for understanding; it will ensure that Key Stage 4 schemes of work reflect Key Stage 3 achievements and offer the majority of pupils routes to higher GCSE grades.

A close and responsive partnership with local consultants and schools has been established

through termly English and mathematics subject leader development meetings, and through other forms of communication, including targeted in-school consultancy.

It is important to help schools refresh and extend their provision of intervention for underperforming pupils, in both key stages. The Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) materials, developed by the National Strategy and QCA, will strengthen the frequency, consistency and accuracy of teacher assessment in both English and mathematics.

The range of available

support and guidance from the National Strategy team will be developed throughout the year.

ENGLISH:

- *Teaching Shakespeare* (autumn 2006): web-based resources that will improve the design, continuity and breadth of approaches to teaching Shakespeare
- *Raising Standards in English at Key Stage 4* (autumn 2006): web-based resources to support schools in improving teaching, learning and pupil progress at KS4
- *Teaching Speaking and Listening* (spring 2007): a DVD designed to strengthen schools' planning, teaching and assessment of pupils' speaking and listening. It has strong links to the speaking and listening objectives from the KS3 English framework and the GCSE speaking and listening assessment objectives.

MATHEMATICS:

- *Reasoning and Dialogue* (available now): an interactive DVD that will support teachers to develop strategies to strengthen pupils' learning in mathematics
- *Using Interactive Whiteboards in the Mathematics Classroom* (available now): guidance on how to introduce interactive whiteboards into mathematics classrooms
- *Teaching Mental Mathematics (TMM) From Level 5: Handling Data* (autumn 2006): continuing the TMM series, this provides guidance on focusing the curriculum around learning for understanding ■

The learning conversation

Learning conversations¹ are periodic, small group discussions that develop an ongoing dialogue with learners about their progress and preferences in learning. As a result they help:

- the negotiation of targets and choices in learning
- learners to plan, organise and reflect on their learning more effectively
- learners to make the best use of opportunities for learning in a range of settings and at home
- schools to personalise provision more closely.

THE APPROACH

The learning conversation is a new and distinctive process for discussing learning with learners, which is being developed by the National Strategies.

It builds on established learning approaches, such as mentoring, academic reviews and tutoring, using tried and tested classroom initiatives, including guided learning, shared starters and plenary reviews and reflection.

THE GROUP

Within the learning conversation, group interaction is central. Since learners' self-concepts are developed from an early age through social interaction, the learning conversation group forms a small social setting in which to engage with those prior assumptions and to change and develop them.

In short, it is about accelerating learner maturity and developing reflective and self-directed learners.

THE COACH

For the teacher, mentor, assistant or older peer pupil, their coaching role within the group is critical to:

- extend the range of conversation
- introduce concepts and vocabulary
- challenge perceptions
- make links between the discussion and applying learning skills in and beyond school.

A key role is to listen and build on what the learners say. The coach uses conversation to elicit as much as possible from learners, enabling

"I want to maximise the scope of every child to learn, achieve and participate: tailoring the curriculum and teaching method to stretch and challenge all pupils"

Alan Johnson, UK Youth Parliament, July 2006

them to construct their own understanding and to carry this forward into action.

STRUCTURE AND SEQUENCE

The learning conversation needs a clear sequence to make it focused and progressive. One possible pattern is:

- focus
- develop understanding
- share
- clarify
- review
- agree action.

These stages are flexible and the amount of support will vary according to learners' age, progress and confidence.

A prototype e-learning professional development programme is now available. ■
For more information: www.nationalstrategies.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=25

¹In this initiative, the term 'learning conversation' describes a very specific form of interaction between an adult and a small group of learners.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

18 October 2006



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: Raising Boys' Achievements - Evidence from the National Education Breakthrough Programme (Boys' Achievement)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that Janet Potts from the National Education Breakthrough Programme (Boys' Achievement) has been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into Raising Boys' Achievements.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 12 July 2006, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry/Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation.
- 2.2 Consequently, Janet Potts, Director of the National Education Breakthrough Programme (Boys' Achievement) has been invited to attend this meeting to provide an example of work being undertaken nationally in relation to raising boys' achievements. Information will be provided on:-
- i) The work of the Programme and its results;
 - ii) Key factors which it is felt influence the gender gap;
 - iii) Strategies and models which have been effectively implemented to bridge the gender gap;
 - iv) What could be done in Hartlepool to reduce the gender gap; and
 - v) Work already being undertaken through the Programme with schools in Hartlepool.
- 2.3 During this evidence gathering session with the Director of the National Education Breakthrough Programme, it is suggested that the work of the Programme be looked at with a view to identifying any strategies or areas of

best practice that could be utilised to improve boys' achievement in Hartlepool.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum note the presentation and look at the work of the Programme with a view to identifying any strategies or areas of best practice that could be utilised to improve boys' achievement in Hartlepool.

Contact Officers:- Joan Wilkins – Scrutiny Support Officer
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Boys' Achievement – Bridging the Gap – Scoping Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on 17 July 2006.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

18 October 2006



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: Raising Boys' Achievements - Evidence from
Hartlepool's Blended Learning Project

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that a representative from the Blended Learning Project has been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into Raising Boys' Achievements.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 12 July 2006, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry/Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation.
- 2.2 Consequently, a representative from the Blended Learning Project has been invited to attend this meeting to provide further evidence of work already being undertaken in Hartlepool to raise boys' achievement levels.
- 2.3 During this evidence gathering session it is suggested that questions asked should include clarification as to:-
- i) How the Project operates and what methods are employed;
 - ii) Who utilises the services offered;
 - iii) The number of individuals or schools that currently utilise the Project; and
 - iv) How effective the Project has been in helping to raise boys' achievement levels.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members note the presentation and consider the information provided during the formulation of the Forum's final report.

Contact Officers:- Joan Wilkins – Scrutiny Support Officer
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Tel: 01429 523339
Email: joan.wilkins@hartlepool.gov.uk

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