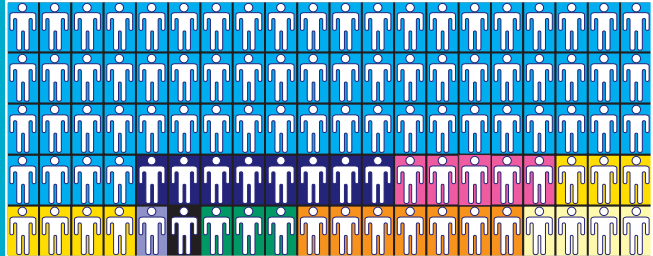




Keeping up – Pupils who fall behind in Key Stage 2

Making Good Progress Series



Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	2
Chapter 2: Identifying slow moving pupils in English in KS2	3
Pupil characteristics	4
Obstacles to progress in English	4
Specific issues arising	6
Chapter 3: Identifying slow moving pupils in mathematics in KS2	13
Pupil characteristics	14
Obstacles to progress in mathematics	15
Specific issues arising	16
Chapter 4: Taking action	23
Pupils who work in the comfort zone	24
The invisible children	25
Tracking pupil progress	26
Tackling the obstacles which limit progress in extended writing	27
Extending the range of strategies for solving mathematics problems	29
Extending coaching via guided groups	30

1 Introduction

1.1 The proportion of pupils achieving the national expectation of level 4 at the end of KS2 has increased significantly – in English, it has increased from 63% in 1997 to 79% in 2006; and in mathematics, it has increased from 58% in 1998 to 76% in 2006.

1.2 However, even with equal access and despite everyone's best efforts, children do not proceed or progress at the same rates. Many children who do well at KS1 are unable to maintain their progress during KS2 and in terms of the levels of attainment they achieve they slow down or even stall completely.

1.3 This report presents the issues arising from a small scale investigation focusing on pupils who are at risk of not converting a level 2 in English and mathematics at KS1 into a level 4 at the end of KS2. A subsequent investigation will focus on level 3 to level 5 conversions during KS2.

1.4 39 schools were selected (19 for English and 20 for mathematics) to take part in this investigation. There was a reasonable balance between shire, London and unitary local authorities.

1.5 A DfES school standards adviser visited each school for up to a day. A series of detailed interviews were held with Year 4 and Year 6 children (identified by the schools as 'at risk' of not adding two levels during the key stage), the headteacher, Year 4 and Year 6 teachers and their literacy or mathematics subject leader. In addition, some samples of children's work and teaching plans were examined. Lessons were not observed.

1.6 The report focuses on the experiences of approximately 240 pupils in the schools visited. It is split into separate chapters on how to identify those making slow progress in English and mathematics. Along with common characteristics it also outlines some significant differences – particularly between boys and girls.

1.7 Based on these research findings, the report also includes practical recommendations for schools and teachers on how they can improve the performance of these pupils.

CHAPTER 2:

Identifying slow moving pupils in English in KS2 4

Pupil characteristics 4

Obstacles to progress in English 4

Specific issues arising 6



2 Identifying slow moving pupils in English in KS2

2.1 The main findings from the investigation are grouped into three separate sections: the pupil characteristics, a summary of the obstacles to progress and the specific issues arising.

Pupil characteristics

2.2 Whilst not wishing to stereotype the children who were making less than expected progress in English in KS2, they tended to share the following characteristics.

- They were often boys (about two-thirds in the sample)
- They were generally well behaved
- They displayed a positive approach to learning, to the school and their teachers
- They were described by teachers as the ‘invisible children’, with the girls especially being quiet and undemanding of the teachers’ or teaching assistants’ attention
- They were often (in the case of the boys) bubbly, lively, keen to respond to questions but unlikely to reflect or think before doing so
- They usually persevered with the task set, especially when the task was routine and of limited challenge
- They lacked self-help strategies and depended on their friends rather than taking the initiative to overcome difficulties on their own
- When stuck they put up their hands and waited to be noticed – they did not mind if they did not receive immediate attention

Obstacles to progress in English

*‘I get mixed up when someone interrupts me.’ ‘It’s hard to concentrate, I forget which word I’m on.’
‘Writing long pieces is hard....I use all my good ideas at the beginning...’ Y4 boys*

Pupils’ own comments, together with evidence provided by their teachers and senior leaders, suggested the following:

In reading, pupils:

- Tended to rely on a limited range of reading strategies
- Had not developed a range of higher order reading skills



In writing, pupils:

- Displayed limited ability to combine all elements of writing simultaneously
- Had been given restricted opportunities for oral rehearsal
- Had limited opportunities to take part in guided writing
- Received feedback which often did not help them to meet their targets

In speaking and listening, pupils:

- Were unaware that speaking and listening is a skill
- Had limited opportunities to improve their speaking and listening through direct teaching
- Were unable to describe their progression within speaking and listening

Other significant findings

Pupils:

- Had low-level and low-value targets which often over-emphasised simple functional skills
- Were given limited opportunities to apply their targets when working in other areas of the curriculum
- Had developed an over-reliance on the support of teaching assistants

Teachers and senior leaders:

- Suggested that further support was needed in developing an understanding of what constitutes progress between levels
- Were not always aware of age-related expectations, particularly in lower KS2
- Stated that many children were being retested in Y3 due to a lack of confidence in KS1 results
- Recognised that the lack of a whole-school approach to the planning and monitoring of intervention had led to support being provided mainly in Y6 and less targeted in Y3 & Y4
- Indicated that review of pupil progress was often infrequent

Specific issues arising

Reading

When asked what they read and how often, two Y6 boys immediately answered *'every night'* and *'lots of books'* but when pushed each admitted that they never read for pleasure and couldn't name a favourite text. *'Reading is hard...because it's other people's ideas that you have to understand.'*
Y6 boy

2.3 A significant proportion of children, especially boys, rarely read for pleasure and many could not name a favourite text.

2.4 Over three-quarters of the children were very positive about the support they received from guided reading and the impact of this approach on the progress they made. Guided reading was planned for and effectively implemented in about three-quarters of the schools visited.

2.5 Many children in Year 4 demonstrated an over-reliance on a limited range of reading strategies, e.g. 'use of picture clues' or 'sounding out'.

Writing



'Sometimes I have a sentence in my head but by the time I've worked out how to spell a word... I've forgotten what I was going to say.' Y4 pupil

2.6 Evidence from the children's books showed that some children were unable to combine a good choice of vocabulary, spelling and grammar simultaneously. For example, in discussion about their writing, children said that they found it difficult to remember to include correct punctuation if their teacher had been recently focusing on improving vocabulary.

2.7 Writing samples showed that children were weak in sentence construction, paragraphing and text level organisation. Few of the children interviewed were able to talk knowledgeably about how to improve their writing at sentence level or how to improve the cohesion of their writing at text level.

2.8 All the children interviewed found planning difficult; many had very few planning strategies. Boys, in particular, admitted that they rarely completed or stuck to a plan, even though they found sustained writing difficult.

2.9 The teaching of extended writing was particularly effective in a minority of schools. More generally, there appeared to be little time given to planning and completing extended writing. There was evidence in some of the children's books that planning had been a teaching focus in Year 4 but this had not been sustained in Year 6.

2.10 In some schools children were unable to explain how they were taught to plan, compose and complete extended writing; the use of the teaching sequence for writing was often not evident. In fact, evidence of effective teacher modelling of writing was apparent in a minority of the schools visited. Overall, children had limited understanding of the purpose of modelled writing: they thought it was to *'just to show how writing is done'*. In addition, they were not able to give examples of when a teacher or other adult had supported them effectively during the writing process. It seemed that opportunities for guided writing were only being systematically planned for in a small minority of schools.

2.11 Almost all the children interviewed tended to identify functional aspects of writing as areas in need of development, e.g. spelling and handwriting, but were not able to identify other aspects of writing with any precision. When asked to choose a 'good piece of work', they tended to focus on presentational aspects. In many cases, this focus on the presentational aspects of writing was reinforced by checklists and aide-memoires in exercise books.

Speaking and listening

In one school Y6 children stated that they really liked work with buddies/partners as it was *'good to check with someone else and to work with them'*.

2.12 In most schools the children interviewed were unaware of speaking and listening as a discrete skill. They stated that they had few opportunities for group discussion and that these usually involved adult support. In addition, they rarely had opportunities to talk about their ideas before writing.

2.13 In about one quarter of schools children said that they worked with talk partners and they found this strategy very helpful. In these schools, children sometimes took part in drama, in particular role play and hot-seating. The children in these schools were able to explain how 'pupil questioning' was encouraged. The use of these strategies had clearly increased their active participation in and enjoyment of their lessons.

2.14 In most schools the teaching of speaking and listening was inconsistent and outcomes were not assessed. Most of the children interviewed were unable to describe their progression within speaking and listening with confidence or clarity.

Progression

One school reported excellent practice supported by the local authority. Writing tutorials, which have been initiated in Y6, are planned and scripted and lead to extended writing. The writing is tightly marked using assessment focuses and the draft progression grids for KS2. Y6 children really appreciated the one to one feedback from their writing tutor and this has resulted in detailed understanding of progress and next steps.

2.15 Teachers described the children interviewed who attained Level 2c at KS1 as not having secure skills to work across the wider range of genres and therefore unlikely to make two levels progress during KS2. There also appeared to be a significant lack of trust of KS1 results by teachers, as almost half of the Year 4 children interviewed seemed to have been re-tested in Year 3. In some cases, contextual data showed an apparent regression from KS1 during Years 3 and 4.

2.16 About three-quarters of children interviewed had a lack of understanding of what constituted progress between levels and were unaware that they should be aiming to secure Level 3 by the end of Year 4.

2.17 The tracking and monitoring of children's progress was developing well in about one-third of the schools visited. In these schools the curricular targets displayed in books were level-related, meaningful and beginning to be fully understood by the children, particularly those in Year 6.

Assessment for learning (AfL)

'Curricular targets for reading are set and then we put the Y3/4 reading targets in the children's books.' Subject leader. One Y4 boy said that *'he thought that he had had his target for more than two years'*. One pupil said: *'sometimes I'm at 4b but sometimes I'm only doing 3b'* and was able to provide evidence of these statements when discussing his writing.

2.18 A clear focus on developing AfL practice was evident in about seven in ten schools, often with a focus on peer and self-assessment.

2.19 In more than half the schools visited curricular targets were often pitched at a low or rudimentary level and over-emphasised simple functional skills, e.g. 'join up your handwriting', 'finish more worksheets' and 'be neater'. In addition, review of progress towards targets was often infrequent and it was not uncommon for targets to remain unchanged for more than a term.

2.20 Children fully understood their current literacy targets in only about one quarter of schools. Even in these schools there was limited evidence of children using or referring to these targets when working in other areas of the curriculum.

2.21 Marking in the majority of books seen, although frequently including positive comments, was often cursory and didn't provide pointers for improvement that the children could readily use. Many schools had evolved an elaborate mark scheme with a detailed editing code. In addition, even where books were marked in some detail, children were rarely given time in class to respond to the teacher's comments and corrections.

Intervention

2.22 'Wave 2' and 'Wave 3' targeted support and specific intervention programmes were evident in a minority of the schools visited. Overall there seemed to be less targeted intervention in Year 3 and Year 4, whilst a range of targeted interventions, including booster groups, were being used in Year 6.

2.23 In about six out of every ten schools teaching assistants were used almost exclusively to support target groups.

Involvement of parents

In one school a Y6 teacher had noted that children and parents were too focused on '*neatness and quantity*' in writing. He encouraged slow-moving pupils to rehearse sentences in their head and write a few quality sentences rather than a page of poor writing. He also encouraged children to correct and make changes in their work; this met with initial resistance from parents who said that '*the work looked messy*', but he was making headway in getting parents to understand his reasons and objectives.



2.24 All schools were experimenting with a variety of ways to engage parents in curriculum discussions. In about one school in six, parents were being provided with suggestions to support their children in achieving their targets, often through termly curriculum meetings.

2.25 Parents of the targeted children were often described as 'difficult to reach' and less likely to attend parents' evenings where the curriculum rather than children's progress was being discussed.

2.26 Although the majority of children interviewed said that their parents helped them with their homework, about half of these said that their parents' help was not always useful and so they sought help from older siblings or from friends either at school or via e-mail.



Chapter 3:

Identifying slow moving pupils in mathematics in KS2

14

Pupil characteristics

14

Obstacles to progress in mathematics

15

Specific issues arising

16

3 Identifying slow moving pupils in mathematics in KS2

3.1 The main findings from the investigation are grouped into three separate sections: the pupil characteristics, a summary of the obstacles to progress and the specific issues arising.

Pupil characteristics

3.2 Whilst not wishing to stereotype the pupils who were making less than expected progress in mathematics in KS2, the pupils often shared the following characteristics:

- They were often girls
- They were generally well behaved
- They displayed a positive approach to learning, to the school and their teachers
- They were the 'invisible children', with the girls in particular being quiet and undemanding of the teachers' or teaching assistants' attention
- They lacked self-confidence; they viewed mathematics as either right or wrong and they didn't like getting anything wrong
- They judged how good they were by the number of ticks and crosses they had in their books
- They didn't like answering questions in front of the rest of the class, they saw this as a risk
- They tended to work on their own but when they worked with others 'help' was largely about comparing and then aligning answers
- They usually persevered with the task set, especially when the task was routine and of limited challenge
- They lacked self-help strategies and depended on their friends rather than taking the initiative to overcome difficulties on their own
- Their work was neat and set out in the required way
- When stuck they put up their hands and waited to be noticed – they did not mind if they did not receive immediate attention



Obstacles to progress in mathematics

Pupils' own comments, together with evidence provided by their teachers and senior leaders, suggested the following:

In number and calculation, pupils:

- Have difficulty identifying related facts from known number facts
- Were reluctant to use their mental calculation skills
- Used formal written methods in preference to mental methods as they believed formal methods were better

When using and applying mathematics, pupils:

- Demonstrated weaknesses in problem solving, particularly where it involved two or more steps
- Had difficulty in keeping the intermediate information and answers in their heads
- Had difficulty with understanding and using the vocabulary of word problems
- Relied on one fixed method to get a correct answer
- Lacked images or models to help with visualising mathematics

Other significant findings

Pupils:

- Lacked opportunities for talk during mathematics lessons with their teacher, teaching assistant and peers
- Experienced a low level of challenge and tended to work within their 'comfort zone'
- Developed a low appetite for risk-taking

Teachers:

- Some believed that children would be more self confident if they always got the right answers, but this often led to routine and low-level work

Specific issues arising

Number and calculation

'I like fractions because we have just done those and I got them all right.' Y4 boy

3.3 Many children had a good grasp of place value and could partition numbers and use the values of the digits, particularly for mental addition. However, more generally, the children lacked flexibility with number and calculations. They had difficulty in finding related facts from known facts. They viewed multiplication facts as unrelated facts they needed to memorise, and they found this difficult.

3.4 In more than half of the schools the children were weak on mental calculation. They had few strategies and relied heavily on counting on and back, often making mistakes. In other schools they had the skills but were reluctant to use them.

3.5 The children's experiences indicated that the focus on the teaching and use of mental calculation strategies was diminishing in at least half of the schools, particularly in Year 6. The focus had shifted to formal written methods which many of the targeted children used in preference to mental or informal written methods, regardless of the numbers in the calculations. In a few schools, the Year 4 targeted children had better mental calculation skills than the Year 6 children. Year 6

children no longer considered the mental calculation strategies they were taught earlier in KS2 to be relevant.

3.6 The targeted children rarely looked at a calculation to decide whether to do it mentally or to use a written method. They showed a clear preference for using formal written methods as they perceived these to be better. When asked to do a calculation mentally, the children often verbalised the formal written method.



Using and applying mathematics

'When I can't do something in my head, I sometimes use a blank number line as that usually helps.'
Y4 boy

'These children need opportunities to work in pairs and groups so they feel supported. When they are working together I direct questions at them that take them out of their comfort zone.' Y6 teacher

3.7 The targeted children tended to work on their own. They equated talk about mathematics as helping a partner when “stuck”. They had difficulty explaining their thinking and their methods.

3.8 Many of the targeted children tended to focus on one fixed method when doing mathematics. They repeated this method to get a correct answer.

3.9 In at least one third of schools visited, most of the work in children’s books consisted of routine exercises of closed and similar questions, for example, writing numbers to the nearest 10, multiplying by 10 and 100. This suggests that teachers in these schools had a narrow interpretation of the targeted learning outcomes for the mathematics objectives they are teaching, possibly related to issues about subject knowledge. The approach placed an emphasis on right and wrong answers.

3.10 The targeted children got few opportunities to work on more open-ended approaches. Approaches like devising questions for a fixed answer, matching linked facts, focusing on different methods rather than the answer were rarely evident in children’s books or through discussion with children. In three of the schools, the children did not like being given open-ended problems because they were unsure about what they were supposed to do. Children’s work on open-ended activities appeared disorganised and untidy compared to the rest of the work in their book.

3.11 In about half the schools the targeted children had few images or models to help with visualising mathematics. For example, they had limited experiences of using number lines flexibly.

3.12 Problem solving, particularly involving two or more steps was a weakness for the targeted children in more than half the schools. In discussion, children often talked about having difficulty keeping the intermediate information and answers in their heads.

Mathematics vocabulary

‘Our biggest challenge is to help these children develop a mathematical vocabulary so they can talk about and explain their mathematics.’ Headteacher

‘Teachers need guidance on how to develop a mathematical vocabulary so that these pupils have lots of opportunities to compose mathematical sentences.’ Subject leader

3.13 Children’s use of vocabulary relating to problem solving was often weak, for example recognising that the words *sum*, *total*, *altogether* mean addition in word problems. Children sometimes had a feel for the properties of shapes but lacked the vocabulary to describe them, for example, they appeared to be unfamiliar with using words like *right angle*, *opposite*, *parallel*. The children had difficulty in giving examples of how they had been helped to develop such vocabulary.



Teaching and learning

'The front group get a lot of help from the teacher. They need it because they find maths hard.' Y4 girl

'My teacher doesn't work with me much.' Y4 girl

'We need help in knowing when a child has moved from say level 2a to 3b. I'm not confident with this.' Y4 teacher

3.14 Most of the targeted children did not like getting things wrong in mathematics. In their written work they left questions out if they did not understand; during whole class interactive teaching they had strategies to avoid being asked to answer a question they were not sure about.

3.15 Evidence from the children's books indicated that some teachers were striving to ensure the children always got the correct answers in their books, suggesting that they believed this would help boost the children's self-esteem and increase their confidence in mathematics. Frequently this led to low-level routine work.

3.16 Teachers in more than three-quarters of the schools described the children as either having low self-esteem or generally lacking in self-confidence. The children clearly preferred to work in their 'comfort zone', and in this 'safe' environment they generally behaved well and remained on task.

3.17 Children's mathematics books were typically neat and very similar in appearance. Exercises of questions were often identical. The focus was on the answer rather than the mathematical thinking.

3.18 The children tended to judge their strengths and weaknesses by the ticks and crosses in their books. A good piece of work was judged to be one that was complete with all the answers correct.

3.19 The descriptions the children provided indicated that oral and mental starters were well-established but had lost their purpose in a few schools. In some schools that reorganised the children into ability groups the starter was often used as a settling activity as children arrived. A few schools used the starter for practising mental tests.

Intervention and expectations

'They need to do work they are familiar and confident with – and then challenged to step out of their comfort zone.' Y6 teacher.

'The extra help I was given didn't last long enough. I was just getting better and it stopped.' Y6 boy

'ISP (Intensifying support programme) has helped us to bring the whole staff together to focus on raising standards in mathematics.' Headteacher

3.20 The nature of the curricular targets used suggested that question-level analysis of the QCA optional tests was the only source for curricular target setting in half the schools visited. In some cases the targets set were inappropriate for children whose progress was causing concern. For example, many of the targeted children had significant weaknesses with mental calculation, but very few had curricular targets to strengthen mental strategies. In about a quarter of schools whilst effective year group targets had been set for all pupils it was apparent that there was little layering of these targets during the year and for different ability groups of children.

3.21 In many schools the children who were making slow progress were placed in the lowest ability group and the planned teaching programme was unlikely to secure their progress to level 4 by the end of the key stage.

Parents

'Teachers tell me that a lot of mothers say that they are no good at mathematics and so cannot help their children. This is one reason for girls' underachievement.' Headteacher

3.22 All the schools were striving to find effective ways of working with parents, typically by keeping them informed about their child's curricular targets and by offering workshops to explain the approach to teaching aspects of mathematics, particularly calculation.

3.23 Parents of the targeted pupils were often described as 'hard to reach'. For example, all schools that had provided workshops on calculation for parents reported very low attendance for the targeted group. Where attendance was better, it tended to be fathers rather than mothers that attended.

3.24 The targeted children got little support from their parents with mathematics homework. Many children said their mothers could not help them with mathematics. The children either did their homework alone or got help from older brothers and sisters. Where parents did help, they often used different methods of calculation which confused their children.





Chapter 4:

Taking action **24**

Pupils who work in the comfort zone 24

The invisible children 25

Tracking pupil progress 26

Tackling the obstacles which limit
progress in extended writing 25

Extending the range of strategies
for solving mathematics problems 29

Extending coaching via guided groups 30

4 Taking action

4.1 This chapter highlights possible action that can be taken to address some of the key issues identified in this report.

Issue 1: Pupils who work in the comfort zone

Key concerns

- They are conservative in their learning style, eager to get things right but anxious about taking risks;
- They are uncomfortable with open-ended, investigative or exploratory work – they prefer routine right/wrong tasks.

What do pupils need if they are to address this issue?

- Support and encouragement to take risks.
- Experience of working in a range of different groups.
- Opportunities to take a variety of different roles in group work, taking responsibilities in relation to the particular role they have.
- Access to talk partners, carefully matched to each pupil's needs.
- Opportunities to develop assertive skills through activities such as drama.
- Access to visual keys and other support.

What do teachers need if they are to address this issue?

- Support and encouragement to take risks.
- Strategies and access to support the clear identification of pupils in the target group.
- Support to develop more open-ended approaches.
- Improved confidence/subject expertise in literacy and mathematics.
- Encouragement to develop displays of work that 'grow' and are developed in an on-going way throughout the year.

What support can headteachers/senior leadership teams provide?

- Establish a school ethos that supports risk taking and emphasises pupils' learning – challenge commonly held views such as a quiet classroom is a productive one.
- Identify clearly the groups of pupils that need targeted support (perhaps use the distinction between underperforming pupils and underachieving pupils).
- Track progress carefully, possibly termly.

Issue 2: The invisible children

Key concerns

- They keep a low profile – 'invisible children' – they are quiet and undemanding;
- They don't push for help and will sit for long periods waiting patiently for attention.

What do pupils need if they are to address this issue?

- Support in understanding personalised targets, set by the teacher.
- Opportunities to work in partnership with other pupils.
- Targeted small group intervention where appropriate.

What do teachers need if they are to address this issue?

- A range of teaching strategies/plans that are tailored to all pupils in the classroom.
- Opportunities to develop a thorough understanding of school's Assessment for Learning policy.
- Management skills to effectively deploy teaching assistants.

What support can headteachers/senior leadership teams provide?

- Effective tracking and targeting system for all pupils – to support the identification and early intervention of 'the invisible pupil'.
- Implement a whole-school approach to Assessment for Learning.
- Deploy resources effectively and efficiently to provide appropriate targeted support.



Issue 3: Tracking pupil progress

Key concern

- The progress of these pupils needs to be tracked on a regular basis and obstacles to progress identified and addressed.

What do pupils need if they are to address this issue?

- Challenging targets set and reviewed termly so they know what they need to do to get them next term.
- Understanding of targets so that they can use and remember them.
- Feedback marking with 'next steps for improvement' on significant pieces of work, so they can see how they can do better.
- Opportunities for reflection time in lessons to review their progress in relation to their targets and advice given in formative marking.

What do teachers need if they are to address this issue?

- Support to ensure that there is a close alignment between their layered targets and the 'next steps' advice given to pupils.
- Time to provide focused feedback to pupils, particularly on significant pieces of work.
- Freedom to operate flexible groupings within the classroom so that pupils get the opportunity to work towards achieving their targets with the help of other pupils.
- Support in planning for speaking and listening activities that allow pupils to extend their S&L skills and to develop the language of learning.
- Strategies shared with teaching assistants that inform the development of next steps for pupils and what they need to be taught to achieve their targets.
- Support in implementing the Primary National Strategy's renewed framework to help them plan for next steps and pupils' targets.

What support can headteachers/senior leadership teams provide?

- Model effective practice themselves in the classroom, as often as possible.
- Ensure that layered targets are given a high profile within the school environment through displays, etc. so that they have a high status and are used and remembered.
- Improve the conditions for learning for pupils by encouraging teachers to develop the classroom environment to support independent learning.
- Share pupils' targets with parents at parents' evenings and in reports.

Issue 4: Tackling the obstacles which limit progress in extended writing

Key concern

- For these pupils extended writing is a particular obstacle to progress.

What do pupils need if they are to address this issue?

- Planned opportunities for speaking & listening, including drama e.g. role play to develop and rehearse key vocabulary.
- First hand experiences to generate ideas and a real sense of audience and purpose.
- Stamina for writing at length – this needs to be built over time.
- A range of planning strategies and formats to draw on.
- An understanding that planning can be revised during the writing process.

What do teachers need if they are to address this issue?

- CPD to secure the skills of modelling – including the modelling of planning.
- Confidence to take time over writing rather than feeling under pressure to move on to new text types and genres before pupils are ready.
- Freedom to take risks by providing opportunities for talk for writing.
- A clear picture of progression in writing across the key stages.

What support can headteachers/senior leadership teams provide?

- Freedom to plan lessons which incorporate guided writing.
- Collaboration between colleagues in key stages 1 and 2 in order to secure an understanding of progression in writing.
- Development of a whole school awareness of the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Encouragement for teachers to take risks; flexible planning and more use of talk to support writing.



Issue 5: Extending the range of strategies for solving mathematics problems

Key concern

- These pupils need to develop a greater repertoire of strategies for solving mathematical problems.

What do pupils need if they are to address this issue?

- Structured and guided opportunities to develop a range of mental calculation strategies across KS2, but also need to focus on selecting an efficient method for specific calculations.
- Opportunities to work with children who are more able so that they can see how others explore and talk about their mathematics.
- Experience of different ways to approach a problem or to do a calculation and to be able to compare their methods and ideas with others.
- Support and modelling from adults to help them to work on more open approaches, to decide how and what to record.

What do teachers need if they are to address this issue?

- Support to plan for, use and value thinking and talk in mathematics.
- Encouragement to take risks, e.g. by opening up activities and by incorporating more problem solving in units of work.
- Support in teaching children how to decide on and evaluate their own ways or recording their work.
- Strategies to convince children that reflecting on and modifying incorrect methods and answers makes you a better mathematician.
- CPD in modelling talk about the mathematics, by asking open questions and encouraging children to explain – particularly in a small group.

What support can headteachers/senior leadership teams provide?

- Develop effective ways to engage parents, particularly in helping them to understand the approach to calculation, e.g. breakfast club for children with a parent – 15 minutes doing mathematics together before the start of school.
- Reconsider ability groupings for mathematics. The more able in mathematics are often the risk takers – by mixing children they will see others modelling more exploratory approaches to learning. They will also have more opportunities to talk about their mathematics.
- Enable teachers to work together on 'risk taking' – both in planning and in mathematics teaching.

Issue 6: Extending coaching via guided groups

Key concern

- These pupils need opportunities to be coached through the use of guided groupings.

What do pupils need if they are to address this issue?

- Support in developing the skills to enable them to work collaboratively.
- Opportunities to listen to, contribute and build on the ideas of others.
- Take control of their learning – develop the skills of independence.
- Opportunities to reflect on own learning and achievement of targets.

What do teachers need if they are to address this issue?

- Develop an understanding that guided sessions are underpinned by clear principles for teaching and learning in a sequence that flexibly suits the subject (not just reading and writing), context and pupils – not a tick list teaching sequence.
- Encouragement to use assessment/data/targets effectively to identify groups by ability/specific need.
- Support in planning sessions, for small groups, to provide challenge and support to pupils by intervening at the point of learning in order to develop independent skills.
- Opportunities to train the class to work independently whilst guided sessions are taking place.
- Support in the effective use other adult/TA to support rest of class whilst guided session is taking place.

What support can headteachers/senior leadership teams provide?

- Support the development of the climate for guided sessions to take place including the flexibility to plan for guided sessions within or outside of the lesson.
- Reinforce the value of guided work across the curriculum.
- Provide targeted CPD, including peer coaching.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of guided sessions.



You can download this publication or order copies online at:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

Search using ref: 00442-2007BKT-EN

Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

DfES Publications
PO Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham NG15 0DJ
Tel: 0845 6022260
Fax: 0845 6033360
Please quote the ref: 00442-2007BKT-EN

ISBN: 978-1-84478-942-9

PPSTER/D16(7106)/0507/53

© Crown copyright 2007

www.dfes.gov.uk

Published by the Department for Education and Skills

Extracts from this document may be reproduced for non-commercial research, education or training purposes on the condition that the source is acknowledged. For any other use please contact [HMSO licensing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMSO_licensing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk)

75% recycled

This leaflet is printed
on 75% recycled paper



When you have finished with
this leaflet please recycle it