

**Closing the Gap – East Midlands Challenge Project
Leicestershire Teaching Schools
Interim Update – September 2016**

Closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers remains a key priority across the region, including Leicestershire. The East Midlands Challenge continues to be a focus for all nine local authorities. The six teaching school alliances in Leicestershire are currently working together to support this priority. This update provides information about some of the work that is planned for this academic year, some early ideas and links which all schools may find useful. We know that there is a plethora of resources, programmes and research already available, so our intention is not to add to that, but to signpost to the resources and research that we have found most useful in our planning.

Project plan summary

- Each teaching school has identified a lead person(s) to co-ordinate the work and each has an action plan to provide targeted support to a small group of schools within the alliance.
- As well as targeted support, every teaching school has identified ways in which all schools within the alliance can access additional support and guidance.
- The project is due to run during this academic year (2016/17) and has been partly funded through LEEP and partly by the teaching school alliances. Evaluation will take place in the summer term of 2017 and this will be summarised and shared with all schools and with the East Midlands Teaching School Alliance (EMTSA).

Key themes and messages emerging

The vast majority of schools are striving to address this issue and there is much effective practice already happening. Nationally there continues to be ongoing research and analysis which provides insight and challenge. The key themes that have emerged during the initial stages of this project planning have been:

- **Leadership involvement throughout:** focused and high profile work that is given prominence in drive for improvement and threads through all other priorities
- **Systematic approach:** forensic analysis of information and regular progress updates
- **Evidenced based pedagogical approaches:** using research to inform high quality teaching and checking that the approach works in the particular context of your school
- **Parental engagement:** listening to parents and carers then finding innovative ways of supporting them to participate fully in their child's educational and emotional development

Where to find out more – useful links

Evaluation tools for leaders

- Effective pupil premium reviews (NCTL/TSC 2016) - a guide developed by the Teaching Schools Council/National College which has useful self-evaluation tools within the appendices: [click here](#)

Evidence based learning

- Closing the gap: Test and Learn (DfE 2014) – recent research into the most effective interventions: [click here](#)
- Effective classroom strategies for closing the gap in educational achievement for children and young people living in poverty, including white working class boys – C4EO research review P33-36 highlights the key messages from this research: [click here](#)

Parental engagement

- Teacher Guide: Parental Engagement and Narrowing the Attainment for Disadvantaged Children (NFER 2013) – short summary guide to promoting parental engagement at whole school level: [click here](#)

More about the East Midlands Teaching School Alliance

- Teaching School Council – East Midlands – latest newsletter: For more information about the East Midlands Challenge and Teaching School developments within the region, [click here](#)

For more information contact:

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Some early case study summaries

Emotion Coaching – Kingsway Primary School – Affinity Teaching School Alliance

A project about increasing awareness of the impact of social and emotional needs on academic achievement and ensuring a whole school consistent approach. High profile project with strong leadership involvement. Specific training for all staff and regular follow up. Research driven. Has led to more consistent approach to management of anger and aggression. These behaviours are lessening throughout the school and pupils able to return more quickly to learning.

Performance management and pupil premium – Broom Leys Primary School – FWTSA

Leadership drive for improvement. Performance objectives for all staff linked to pupil premium children. Staff supported throughout the year. Pupil progress meetings showing evidence of interventions and impact, moderation, pupil interviews, 'I can' attitude in class. Gap in attainment between pupils eligible for pupil premium funding has narrowed significantly and these pupils are now making better progress.

Improving standards in reading – Manor High School - Oadby Learning Partnership

Focused project promoting reading for children aged 9-13 who are struggling to engage and achieve in literacy. Using Premier League Reading Stars as the basis for intervention, with additional input from author poet workshops, and further 1-1 reading sessions the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed and in some cases closed over the last three years.

Engaging parents – Groby Community College – TELA

A secondary school (upper) that has narrowed the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. One strand of a wider initiative. Analysis of attendance at parents' meetings and students living out of catchment. Workshops run at local leisure centre, targeting parents and following up with phone calls. Teachers dressed down. Revision materials shared without cost to the family. Taxi for some parents. Student achievement improved and sustained parental engagement