Identifying Supportive Practice in Primary Schools for Children Facing Disadvantage

Clare Gilfillan & Joanna Lawson
Fife Council Educational Psychology Service
Outline of Session

• Background
• Literature
• Aim 1
• Discussion task
• Aim 2
• Recommendations and framework
• Discussion and questions
## Background and Context

### Research projects
- In 2013 funding received from Scottish Government for BCoD developments
- 1 EP post - 4 research projects undertaken

### Service context
- BCoD is an Educational Psychology Service improvement planning priority
- Reducing educational inequality is an Education & Children’s Services Directorate priority

### National context
- Education (Scotland) Act 2016
- Closing the Gap
- Scottish Attainment Challenge

[Improving life chances for all](www.fifedirect.org.uk/psychologicalservice)
Literature

• A pervasive attainment gap between the most and the least disadvantaged children (Bradshaw, 2011; Schleicher et al., 2015; Sosu & Ellis, 2014; Warren & Paxton, 2013)

• The Matthew Effect – advantage begets further advantage. Interventions to raise attainment typically do so for all learners but sometimes increase the gap
Higgins (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of 42 nationwide studies and found some approaches to prove promising in terms of reducing the attainment gap:

- A focus on improving teaching and learning processes
- Methods such as collaborative or co-operative learning
- Peer involvement in learning
- Meta-cognitive strategies that make learning explicit
- Specific subject strategies (e.g. phonics instruction in reading)
Collaborative work in small groups

Developing nurturing approaches

Make intelligent use of data to monitor the impact on attainment

Peer tutoring, metacognitive training and tutoring

Whole school developments that are informed by pedagogical research, include an overall strategic plan and staff development

Literacy instruction e.g. decoding, fluency, comprehension, engagement and digital literacy skills

Sosu and Ellis (2014)
Literature Cont’d

• The evidence for many of the interventions is limited and more robust research is required in order to determine their effectiveness (Lavy & Schlosser, 2005; Sosu & Ellis, 2014)

• The intervention that is chosen is less important than how well it is carried out (Higgins, 2000)

• There needs to be a balance between considering tried and tested solutions and adapting the intervention to the local context (Hutching et al, 2012)
Aim 1

• To understand the population data available in Fife’s Education and Children’s Services with regard to factors relating to ‘Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage’

• Cycle of disadvantaged defined by:
  – living in SIMD datazones 1 & 2 or being LAC
  – with ↓ attainment  ↓ attendance  ↑ exclusions
Data available

- Attendance, exclusion and attainment data for LAC & SIMD 1&2 for all primary schools for 2013-14
- Exploration of data by looking at 50 most disadvantaged schools ranked by %FME
- Exclusion figures so low comparison not meaningful
- No clear patterns for attendance and attainment
- Looked more closely at schools with >70% SIMD 1&2
- Other data considered - Value added reports, CfE attainment reports and exclusion reports published annually in Fife
Challenges / Limitations of data

- FME vs SIMD
- Availability of data
- Attainment measures
- SIMD 1 & 2 not considered as a separate group in reports to allow comparison across schools
What data in relation to ‘Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage’ do you have available to you in your service?

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of the data currently available?
Aim 2

- To identify establishments for further investigation in order to ascertain supportive factors for young people at risk of being in a cycle of disadvantage

- Identification of schools:
  - Over 70% of pupils in SIMD 1 & 2 areas → 7 schools
  - Value added reports, curriculum for excellence reports and exclusion reports also consulted.
Aim 2 Cont’d

• Three schools identified as performing relatively well:
  – ↓ exclusions
  – ↑ attendance
  – ↑ attainment

• Data gathered via semi-structured interview with school leadership team and online questionnaire to staff with an appreciative enquiry focus
Aim 2 Cont’d

- What does the school do well to promote good attendance?
- What does the school do well to have low exclusions?
- What does the school do well to improve attainment?
- Does the school do anything differently to support those pupils who are looked after or who live in SIMD 1 & 2 areas?
Thematic analysis

- Effective teaching
- Supporting parental engagement
- School ownership
- Multi-agency support
- Responsible teachers
- Supporting pupil autonomy
Recommendations

• Develop a framework for schools to use for year on year data gathering including attainment, attendance and exclusions for LAC and SIMD1&2
• Make evidence based research information available to schools about what works to enable further action research
• Make clear advice on implementation science available to schools
• Survey a wider range of primary schools to look at good practice
• Enable sharing of supportive practice between schools through a good practice framework
Recommendations cont.

- Consider more detailed attainment data across stages to drill down on good practice at the individual class and teacher level.
- Survey schools in the secondary sector to look at good practice across the school as well as in specific departments / classes.
- To link with current developments in the early years sector to identify supportive practice for LAC and SIMD 1 & 2.
Link to Scottish Attainment Challenge in Fife

- Good practice framework developed to share with SAC schools
- Potential to be used as audit tool
- Alongside advice on implementation factors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Ownership</th>
<th>Responsible teachers</th>
<th>Supporting pupil autonomy</th>
<th>Supporting parental engagement</th>
<th>Effective teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive ethos</td>
<td>Teacher autonomy</td>
<td>Teacher-child relationship</td>
<td>School – parent relationship</td>
<td>Whole school approaches to teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity for all</td>
<td>Teachers supporting each other</td>
<td>Meeting children’s needs</td>
<td>Engaging parents</td>
<td>Meeting learners’ needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes and strategies</td>
<td>Teacher commitment</td>
<td>Pupil voice</td>
<td>Supporting parents</td>
<td>Multi-agency support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking and monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions and Discussion

What are you / your service currently doing to support closing the attainment gap?

What else could Educational Psychology Services offer?
References


Evaluation

• Place your post it on the scale thinking about how useful and informative the workshop been

• On the post it, note down:
  – * Anything which you could take away from today
  – ⬆️ Anything which could have made it more useful for you