Project summary

- The Science Department initiated this project to raise the quality and assistance with revision for all formal examinations and in particular to raise attendance for Science Modular examinations.
- This was carried out in a variety of ways; both targeted and general revision sessions at different times of the day and school year, morale boosting exercises and increasing the perceived significance of modular examinations. These proved extremely successful, with 100% exam attendance achieved within 12 months of the commencement of the project. Pupil feedback showed increased confidence of pupils prior to exams and a much more positive attitude towards exams across the year group.
- Other departments then became involved; targeted revision days which spanned more than one subject were piloted for SATS pupils on the level 4/5 borderline. Success was achieved when more than 75% of pupils attending the revision day achieved a level 5 in their SATS.
- The revision project was then developed across the whole school leading to the Individual Revision Plan for Year 11 pupils. All departments contributed, providing tailored daily revision plans for all pupils in the run up to the final GCSE examinations. Pupil feedback on the IRP’s was very positive, with comments confirming that pupils appreciated better support with their revision.
- The IRP was used as evidence of good practice in the recent very successful OFSTED inspection and is being developed further for use in the future.

Specific aspect of practice accredited

- Introduction of a variety of intensive revision strategies to support pupils’ learning, improve pupil achievement and prepare pupils for examinations both socially and academically.

Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:

☑ Be healthy ☐ Stay Safe ☑ Enjoy and achieve
☑ Make a positive contribution ☐ Achieve economic well-being
What were you hoping to achieve?

- Raise achievement at the boundaries of grades (in GCSE's) and levels (in SATS).
- Ensure that pupils feel confident immediately before taking formal examinations.
- Prepare pupils physically before formal examinations.
- Facilitate independent study and group study amongst pupils.
- Achieve a positive work ethic amongst pupils.
- Increase attendance at formal examinations, particularly modular examinations at interim times during the year.
- Improve the quality of revision by Year 11 pupils in the final 3 months of their school education.

How did you identify the need for this practice?

- This project has been piloted in Science and English. The school had a 5 or more GCSE A*-C score of 75% in 2004. In the following year, the score decreased to 67%. It was felt that in order to raise standards back up to the record level, more support for pupils was required. It is hoped this will happen with strategies, including this that are being put into place.
- In Science, Modular tests are worth 30% of the final Double Award GCSE. Pupils often treated these examinations as unimportant and many absences occurred. Pupils who sat delayed Modular Tests due to absence never achieved their target in these tests and subsequently their final GCSE grade suffered.
- An online survey of pupils post Modular examinations 2005 showed that many pupils felt unprepared for the tests in terms of the amount of revision they had done and that many pupils were unclear as to the significance of the tests.
- It was felt that the importance of these exams must be stressed in some way in order to raise attendance and thereby raise achievement.
- We felt that we needed to improve the "it's not cool to learn" attitude that some pupils had.
- In Year 11, pupils were often set "revision" as homework and in addition were given study leave prior to final GCSE exams. Pupil feedback suggested that this time was not always used efficiently and to maximum effect. Little "extra" help was given to those pupils at the borderline of grades - significantly the C/D borderline and often, revision assistance was not tailored to the pupil’s ability.

What did you do?

- It was decided that Science would pilot a departmental approach to ANY formal examinations in order to raise attendance and achievement.
- August 2005 - School GCSE Results 5 or more A*-C decreases.
- September 2005 - Training Day - Ideas of raising achievement discussed at departmental meetings - Science discussed possible revision strategy.
- March 2005 - Year 10 first Modular Tests that year.
March 2005 - Post Modular Tests, pupils are surveyed online about their preparation for the exams.
June 2005 - First "Revision Breakfast" on the morning of the second Modular tests takes place.
May 2005 - "Revision Breakfast" for all SATS pupils.
January 2006 - Initial idea for Individual Revision Plan (IRP) for Year 11.
January 2006 - All departments involved in completing a revision proforma for their subject for different abilities (e.g. Maths produced three different revision schedules for Foundation, Intermediate and Higher Tier pupils).
March 2006 - A tailored Individual Revision Plan produced and distributed for every Year 11 pupil for the following 8 weeks.
March 2006 - "Revision Breakfast" for Science Modular Tests. 100% attendance achieved for these examinations.
Easter 2006 - Cross Curricular revision day held for borderline SATS pupils.
May 2006 - Science Revision breakfast held for all SATS pupils.
June Half term 2006 - Revision day held for C/D borderline Year 11 GCSE pupils.
June 2006 - "Science Revision Breakfast" for second Modular Tests. 100% attendance for the second time
BARRIERS TO CHANGE;
- A perception by a minority of staff that out of school hours revision sessions should not be undertaken - once successes had been proven this barrier became less apparent.
- Individual teachers extra workload associated with producing the IRP and for a perceived little reward - in fact the departmental revision proforma was very simple and quick to fill out and when all the proformas were collated the IRP was very impressive and useful for pupils.

Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?
- Led by Science teachers.
- Developed by Science and English teachers.
- Revision Day - targeted at borderline pupils.
- Revision breakfasts - all pupils invited.
- Parents informed through letters.
- Materials sponsored by Tesco Leyland.
- All departments involved in writing revision material for the Individual Revision Plan.

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?
- The practice originally began to raise attendance in Science Modular Tests but it has become so much more.
- On achieving successes with the original pilot, we began to increase the amount of intensive revision sessions that we provided. SATS and final GCSE examinations were included in the project.
• The English Department showed enthusiasm for the project and Revision Days were set up which encompassed both Science and English.
• The 7.30-8.30am revision sessions become so popular and successful that they were extended in 2006 from 7am onwards and the capacity of the event was also increased.
• After school Modular test revision sessions were also introduced in June 2006.
• The Individual Revision Plans were evaluated by Year 11 tutors with their tutor groups. It was felt that the plans could have started much earlier, perhaps up to 12 weeks before the first exam.
• Some departments had not contributed as detailed revision instructions as others and it was felt this could be improved next year.

What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

• Attendance at all of the 2006 Modular Science examinations was 100%.
• Of those pupils who attended the SATS revision day for borderline pupils, at least 75% of them achieved the higher level in their SATS in both English and Science.
• The IRP was used in different ways by different groups of students. Those who felt confident with their own revision used it to a lesser extent than those who required extra assistance with revision.
• Those who previously had the "it’s not cool to learn" attitude also wanted to be "in on the act" and get involved with using the IRP.
• We found it particularly popular with boys who often find it difficult to plan their own independent revision time.
• Pupils’ perceptions of formal examinations such as the modular tests increased in significance.
• Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and felt that their confidence was boosted prior to the exams.
• Pupil overall performance from 2005-2006 in the Modular examinations increased.
• Year 11 pupils always had revision to do based on the IRP - no longer the excuse of "I had no homework".
• Pupils who found it difficult to structure revision had a clear plan of revision they should follow.

What are the next stages in the development process?

• Encourage other departments to take on extra revision sessions - breakfast, after school and holiday for all ages and abilities.
• Develop the provision of online revision sessions in addition to the in school sessions.
• Develop the IRP to extend its use to 12 weeks prior to GCSE's.
• Develop the IRP to provide more detailed revision assistance across all subjects.
• Make the IRP available online.
What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?

- It was useful to begin this project with one or two departments to demonstrate its successes which encouraged others to take it on board.

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