

Raising Achievement

Good Practice in Secondary Schools with Outstanding Leadership

St Martin-In-The-Fields High School

Stockwell Park High School

La Retraite RC School

Dunraven School

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this research "*Raising Achievement: Good Practice in Secondary Schools with Outstanding Leadership*" in the London Borough of Lambeth. These four schools have worked hard to raise the achievement of all pupils in their schools and have been recognised as providing an outstanding education. This research focuses on the successful strategies that these schools have used to raise achievement.

In Lambeth there is a continuing picture of improving schools. The case study schools studied in this report defy the association of poverty and low outcomes and they enable such young people to succeed against the odds. The attainment of all pupils has been exceptionally high.

- About 82% of the pupils in the case study schools achieve 5+ A*-C.
- The improvement rate of pupils in the case study schools is also impressive.
- Between 2000 and 2009 pupils in all case study schools improved from 33 % to 82% 5+ A*-C . This is an improvement rate of 49% compared to 21% at national level.
- In one case study school GCSE results improved from 11% in 2000 to 73% 5+A*-C in 2009. This is despite the fact that 72% of the pupils were on free school meals which is used as proxy for levels of disadvantage. In another school GCSE improved from 56% to 93% 5+A*-C between the same period.

Researchers highlighted reasons for improvement and high achievement in these schools. These include outstanding leadership, high expectations of all pupils and teachers, effective use of data, effective use of diversified workforce, effective teaching and learning, an inclusive curriculum which meets the needs of all students, a strong link with the community, a clear commitment to parents' involvement, and good and well coordinated targeted support through extensive use of e.g. Teaching assistants, English as Additional Languages teachers (EAL) and learning mentors.

This research celebrates the four schools that have achieved success for all their students ensuring that each student makes the best possible progress. It reflects the key characteristics of these schools and is intended to be a practical resource to support other schools in strengthening their work around student progression.

Our priority is to ensure that no pupil's potential is left unfulfilled and to create a reality where every school and every student in Lambeth is making great progress.



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Section 1: Introduction

Background

The core of this study is successful practice in raising achievement in secondary schools. Over the last three decades considerable attention has been devoted to studying how successful practices have helped in raising achievement against the odds in British schools.

Raising achievement in schools requires, at the very least, an understanding of the factors influencing performance in schools. In recent years the need for detailed case studies of schools that have been successful in raising the achievement of ethnic minority pupils has become apparent as a means of increasing our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement. The body of available British research suggests that most previous studies have focussed on the reasons why ethnic minority children are underachieving. However, in recent years, the need for detailed case studies of successful schools that raise the achievement of pupils has become apparent as a means of increasing our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement. For this reason a number of previous research projects looked at examples of schools that provide an environment in which pupils flourish. These identified the key characteristics of successful schools in raising achievement including strong leadership, high expectations, effective teaching and learning, an ethos of respect with clear approach to racism and bad behaviour and parental involvement (see for details Demie 2009, 2007,2005). Demie (2005, 2009) and DfES (2003) argued that there is no 'pick and mix' option. An effective school will seek to develop all these characteristics underpinned by the practical use of data to monitor the achievement of particular groups of pupils to pinpoint and tackle underperformance. Much of the previous British research in this area again is on Black Caribbean pupils and there is little research into the factors which contribute to educational success and high attainment of all groups of pupils in schools.

Research into successful schools in the USA has also provided similar insights into common practices in high-performing schools serving high-poverty student populations. For example, Edmonds (1982) uses high-performing schools to identify the common characteristics that could be the source of their success. The most recent body of research on school effectiveness has found that successful schools have strong leadership, frequent monitoring of student progress, shared goals in the professional community; parental involvement and an academically focused school climate (e.g. Williams et al. 2005). The findings of research into successful schools have increased our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement.

Recent studies by Ofsted in 2009 into twelve outstanding secondary schools also highlighted the prime contribution of leadership and management, together with a number of other features responsible for the success of each of the case study schools. The Ofsted review shows that the outstanding schools in the sample succeed for the following reasons:

- 'a strong and caring ethos and commitment to the children from all staff, coupled with a genuine desire to achieve the very best for our children
- a positive 'can do' culture where praise and encouragement prevail and self-esteem is high
- outstanding teaching by consistently high-quality staff who show great commitment and passion
- a constant focus on maintaining and improving standards of attainment, emphasising the systematic development of basic literacy and numeracy skills
- high-quality planning, assessment and targeted intervention to enable all children to achieve the best they can.' (Ofsted 2009)

One crucial aspect, without which the above would not be so effective, is the quality of leadership. The majority of the headteachers spread the credit for success widely and also play a pivotal role in creating the ethos of the school and exercising strong pedagogical leadership (Ofsted 2009). The evidence from the international literature also demonstrates that effective leaders exercise an indirect and powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school and on the achievement of students in most countries (see Muijis et al 2004). They argued that headteachers in effective and improving schools focus on teaching and learning issues. They put students first, invest in their staff and nurture their communities. In addition they are also good at proving constantly that disadvantage need not be a barrier to achievement, that speaking English as an additional language can support academic success and that schools really can be learning communities (see Demie et al 2006).

Overall the literature review shows that policy makers and schools need more evidence on 'what works' and there is now a need to look more closely at why these outstanding schools do well against the odds. An increase in research of this type which focuses on what works and challenges perceived notions of underachievement in schools, will provide positive messages.

The aim and objective of the research

The aim of the research was to investigate how schools have helped groups of pupils to achieve high standards and to identify significant common themes for success in raising achievement. It draws lessons from good practice research carried out in inner city outstanding schools and asks the following four questions:

- Why do some schools succeed against the odds?
- Why are they high achieving schools?
- What are the factors contributing to this success?

This study provides evidence based answers to these questions, drawing on the practice, experience and ambitions of schools in challenging circumstances.

Section 2. Methods

Methodological framework of the study

Most previous research has focused on the reasons why African heritage, Black Caribbean or ethnic minority children are underachieving. However this research looks at the success of all children against the odds in schools with outstanding leadership. Two complementary methodological approaches were therefore adopted, each contributing a particular set of data to the study.

Firstly GCSE empirical investigation was undertaken to draw lessons from the last nine years by examining in detail the attainment of all pupils in the authority.

Secondly, detailed case study research was carried out to illuminate how the complex interactions of context, organisation, policy and practice help generate effective practice in raising the attainment of all pupils. Four secondary schools that serve disadvantaged communities in Lambeth were selected for case studies. The case study schools' GCSE results were exceptionally good and the schools as a whole covered a range of ethnic groups, community languages spoken, free school meals, EAL. A higher than average proportion of students in these schools come from poor home backgrounds. On average about 37% of all secondary pupils are on free schools meals and in one school it is as high as 72%. Key criteria for the selection of schools were as follows:

- an above-average proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals
- 'outstanding' or 'good with outstanding features' grades overall in the most recent Ofsted inspection
- exceptionally good results, high standards and a sustained GCSE improvement over the last 10 years
- a pattern of high contextual value-added (CVA) scores from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.

Each of the case study schools were visited for one/ two days between July 2009 and March 2010. A structured questionnaire was used to interview headteachers, staff, governors, parents and pupils to gather evidence on how well all pupils are achieving and the factors contributing to their achievement. These included: the school curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning, how the school monitors pupils performance, how it supports and guides pupils, school links with parents, parents' and pupils' views about the school and its support systems, race and ethnicity in the curriculum, quality of school leadership and management, competence and materials to use the existing flexibility within the curriculum to make subjects more relevant to pupils' own experiences and to reflect their cultural heritage.

Background to the case study schools

Table 1. Characteristics of the case study schools

	Background Data	Case Study of Schools					All Secondary schools
		Dunraven School	Stockwell Park School	St Martin	La Retraite	All Case Study Schools	
	Total Roll	1218	981	894	952	4045	10097
Social Background	FSM (Eligible)	20%	72%	22%	19%	34%	33%
	Inward Mobility	4%	6%	2%	5%	4%	4%
	EAL Stage 1-3 (not fluent)	5%	26%	8%	19%	14%	13%
	EAL Stage 4 (Fluent in English)	23%	28%	18%	44%	28%	28%
	EAL Pupils	28%	55%	26%	63%	42%	41%
Ethnic Background	African	12%	27%	31%	44%	27%	23%
	Bangladeshi	2%	4%	2%	0%	2%	2%
	Caribbean	17%	23%	38%	15%	23%	20%
	Chinese	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
	Indian	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
	Irish	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
	Mixed Other	5%	4%	5%	3%	4%	5%
	Mixed White/African	3%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Mixed White/Asian	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
	Mixed White/Caribbean	7%	2%	3%	2%	4%	4%
	Other	2%	4%	3%	10%	5%	5%
	Other Asian	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
	Other Black	3%	7%	9%	1%	5%	6%
	Other White	6%	4%	1%	4%	4%	5%
	Pakistani	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
	Portuguese	2%	12%	1%	12%	6%	6%
	Turkish	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
	White British	27%	8%	4%	5%	12%	17%

This research paper considers evidence from Lambeth schools. Lambeth LA is one of the most ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse boroughs in Britain. About 83% of pupils are from black and ethnic minority groups. The 2008 census shows that there were 30,517 pupils in the LA's schools. Of these, African pupils formed the largest ethnic group with 24.3% followed by Black Caribbean 18.9%, White British 16.7%, White other 6.7%, Portuguese 6%, Other Black 4.6%.

There has been a change in the overall composition of the Black and ethnic minority population in the Local Authority schools. The 1991 census showed that overall 66% of pupils in the LA's schools belonged to Black and other ethnic minority communities compared to 83% in 2008.

The social and cultural diversity noted in the ethnic composition of the school is also reflected in the languages spoken. Around 150 languages are spoken in the LA's schools. 41% of students speak a language other than English as their main language. The most common being Yoruba, Portuguese, Spanish, Twi, French, Ibo, Ga, Krio, Tagalog and Luganda. The Local Authority therefore has a large proportion of bilingual pupils that need support in English as an additional language.

This diversity is a strength of the Local Authority to be celebrated and reflected in all aspects of schooling. These statistics also clearly demonstrate that in order to succeed in raising levels of educational attainment, we must raise attainment amongst all students in the Local Authority.

The case study schools studied in this report defy the association of poverty and low outcomes and they enable such young people to succeed against the odds. Table 2 shows that attainment of all pupils has been exceptionally high. About 82% of the pupils in the case study schools achieve 5+A*-C. The improvement rate of pupils in the case study schools is also impressive. Between 2000 and 2009 pupils in all case study schools improved from 33% to 82% 5+A*-C. This is an improvement rate of 49% compared to 21% in all schools at national level.

Table 2. GCSE attainment at the end of secondary education (5+A*-C)

Secondary Case Study Schools	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Dunraven	43%	43%	55%	53%	68%	73%	71%	71%	72%	78%
Stockwell	11%	29%	26%	39%	54%	53%	57%	67%	61%	72%
St. Martin	40%	54%	59%	59%	56%	73%	73%	69%	76%	85%
La Retraite	56%	55%	61%	69%	61%	64%	74%	75%	82%	94%
All Case study schools	33%	48%	51%	54%	56%	68%	69%	69%	72%	82%
LA Average	32%	36%	40%	42%	48%	52%	55%	56%	62%	73%
National Average	49%	50%	52%	53%	54%	56%	58%	62%	65%	70%

Overall the case study schools' data shows that from their generally low starting points, pupils reach exceptionally high standards. The key challenge is to find out what outstanding schools are doing and why their strategies are proving to be effective in raising the achievement of all pupils. For this reason Ofsted has looked at examples of schools that are excelling against the odds in raising achievement (OFSTED 2009). All these reports agreed on the key areas: Leadership and ethos, relationship in schools, expectation and commitment, parental engagement, monitoring and curriculum enrichment and good quality teaching and learning.

The next section explores factors which contribute to the success of the case study schools.

Section 3: Case Studies of Schools

Dunraven Secondary School

Background

Dunraven Secondary School is located close to the centre of Streatham. In 2008 there were 1,196 students on roll. 27% of students were eligible for free school meals. The school also has a high proportion of students learning English as an additional language. About 28% have English as a second language. 6% of pupils are not fluent in English and the inward mobility rate for 2008 was 4%.

Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Overall, their socio economic background is well below the national average. Almost all the students come from the local community. The school population is ethnically very diverse. Of the 1,196 on roll about 28% are White British, 16.2% Black Caribbean, 11% African, 7.1% Mixed White and Black Caribbean, 5% Other Mixed race, 4.4% Chinese, 2% Vietnamese, 2% Indian, 2% Bangladeshi, 2.3% Pakistani and 2.3% mixed White/African. Over 15% of the school population have a mixed race background- White and Black Caribbean or Black African and other ethnic groups suggesting strong community cohesion in the area served by the school. There are also other groups including Portuguese, Turkish, and Gypsy.

About 52 languages are spoken in the school. The most common mother tongue languages are English (72%) followed by Yoruba, Akan/Twi-Fante, Somali, Portuguese, Gujarati, French, Spanish, Swahili, Polish, Kurdish, Arabic, Linghala, Luganda, Ga, Russian, Albanian, Vietnamese, Urdu, Panjabi and Turkish.

The key stage data shows that the school has an impressive improvement rate over the last ten years. A recent Ofsted Inspection confirms that:

"Dunraven School is a good school with outstanding features. Expectations are high and there is a rigorous focus on learning, raising standards and improving the progress made by pupils" (OFSTED 2009, p.1)

Central to the school's success in raising achievement and progressing pupils well in the school are:

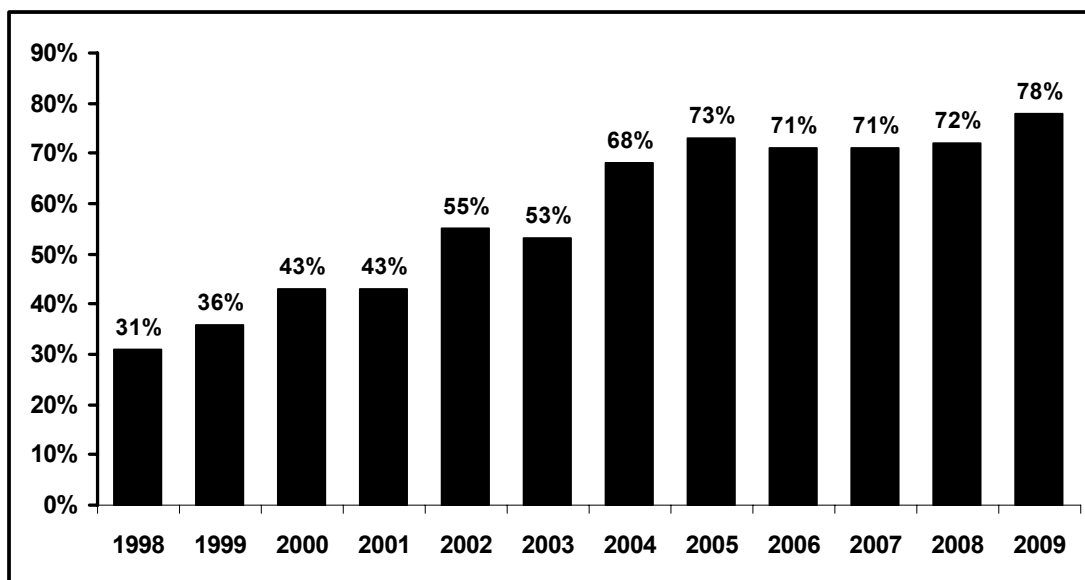
- A strong leadership team led by an outstanding headteacher
- Close links with parents and increasing community support
- Effective use of data
- An innovative curriculum
- Excellent care, guidance and targeted support for students
- High expectations

The evidence used to inform the judgements made here includes: interviews with the Principal, two Deputy Principals, 13 pupils, Assistant Principal, Data Manager, Director of Learning in EAL, Referral Centre Manager, 3 Learning Support Teachers and Mentors; analysis of students' work and attainment data; classroom observation of lessons and a student focus group ; scrutiny of

relevant documentation¹. The school was visited for 2 days to gather good practice evidence in raising achievement in June 2009. Details of the findings are discussed below.

Standards and achievement

Figure 1. Dunraven School GCSE Performance (5+A*-C), 1998-2008



Dunraven School rightly deserves the outstanding reputation it has among parents and in the community. Among the many positive comments made by students was *'this is a good school'* where every one is expected to achieve their potential. Dunraven is an inclusive school where staff and students are valued equally and as a result develop a deep sense of loyalty and pride. Excellence in students' achievements is not merely confined to academic progress but can be seen in their creativity, social awareness and confidence. The school nurtures each student, regardless of background or ability, and students thrive and develop in a secure and stimulating learning environment. They leave as young people who are very well prepared for their future lives. What makes this school special in South London for parents and students is its exceptional leadership and strength of teaching and learning that is enhanced by a top class curriculum and

¹ Details of Inspection reports and KS3, KS4 and value added data from

- Dunraven Secondary School, Ofsted Inspection Report, Ofsted, January 2009
- Dunraven Secondary School, School Profile: Making Figures speak for Themselves, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2008, p1-18.
- Dunraven Secondary School, KS3 Contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2008, p1-4.
- Dunraven Secondary School, GCSE Contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2008, p1-4.
- Dunraven Secondary School, KS2 to GCSE and KS3 to GCSE Value-added Analysis of Pupil Progress, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2008, p1-4.
- Dunraven Secondary School, FFT school self-evaluation report and data, FFT, December 2008
- Dunraven Secondary School, RAISEonline Report and data, Ofsted, January 2009, p1-46.

a caring ethos. However, students themselves are also key contributors because of their own attitudes, hard work and determination to excel.

Table 1. GCSE Performance Data

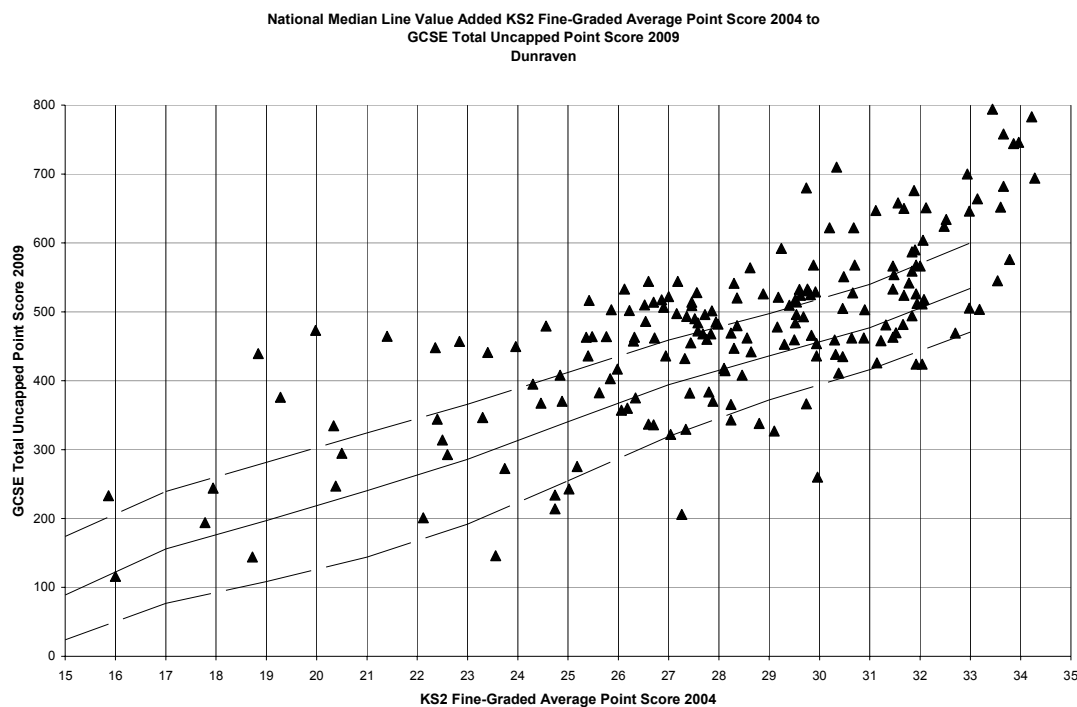
GCSE 5+ A*- C	GCSE including English and Maths						
	Dunraven	Lambeth	England	Dunraven	Lambeth	England	School CVA
2006	71%	55%	58%	60%	41%	46%	1010.1
2007	71%	56%	62%	61%	42%	47%	1006.8
2008	72%	62%	65%	61%	47%	48%	1001.4
2009	78%	73%	70%	61%	53%	51%	1001.2

Students show their enthusiasm for learning in excellent standards and achievement. From a variety of starting points, they make excellent progress at Key Stage 3, achieve well-above average standards at the end of Year 9 and continue this progress into Years 10 and 11. The trend over time is that they achieve GCSE results that are consistently well above national and local averages. The number of students achieving five higher grades, including English and mathematics was well above average. Current data on standards and progress indicate that the excellent pattern of previous years is being maintained. The GCSE results have shown significant improvement over the last few years and it is one of the fastest improving schools in Lambeth. Since 2001, the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE has consistently improved, from 43% to 78% in 2009. The performance results in 2008 72% were well above LA average of 62% and national of 65% in 5+A*-C.

The value added of the school is also very impressive and pupils in the school progress much higher than similar pupils nationally. This is shown in Figure 1, which compares the relative progress made by pupils in Dunraven School with the progress made nationally by all pupils in England between KS2 and GCSE. The findings from the school suggest that the pupils in this school have made good progress in terms of value added. About 35% of the pupils in the case study school are in the upper quartile compared to 25% nationally, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. The interquartile performance is even higher 54% of the pupils are in this range compared to 5% nationally. Only about 12% in the lower quartile progressed less well than expected compared to the national expectation of 25%. A similar trend can be seen for KS3 to GCSE suggesting the school is progressing its students well above national expectation. Evidence from the national median line is further supported by FFT and RAISEonline data and was used by schools to ask questions, such as, which students have made significantly better or worse progress than others? And to identify the reasons for this. The school has excellent practice in relation to self-evaluation. Every year findings from a thorough review of the whole school, including parental views feeds into the school development plan. All staff are aware of the key priorities under the excellent leadership of the Principal. The school uses ethnicity value added data to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. The median line graphs and RAISEonline national value added data for the school confirms that the school progress (White British, Black Caribbean, African and all major ethnic groups) is well above national expectation and average².

² For details of the value added evidence by ethnic background see Dunraven Secondary School, RAISEonline 2008 Full Report, Ofsted and DCSF, 15th June 2009, p1-60; Dunraven Secondary School, FFT School Self-evolution Report and data, FFT, December 2008

Figure 2. KS2 to GCSE Value Added in Dunraven School



Leadership and Management

Leadership and management at Dunraven School is outstanding. The impact of the Principal's inspirational leadership and outstanding management is evident in the school's sustained success over the last 5 years and in its determination to become even better. The Principal sets high expectations for the senior team and the staff as a whole. There is a relentless focus on improvement, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, effective use of data and higher achievement by students. The Principal is very well supported by an exceptionally effective senior team in guiding, monitoring and evaluating the many aspects of the school's work. There is an exceptional sense of teamwork across the school. This is reflected in the consistent and committed way managers at all levels work toward the school's aim to raise achievement. The school is proud of its efforts to maintain its inclusive ethos. This is seen in the very good progress made by all groups of students.

A strong culture of self-evaluation pervades all areas of the school. At senior level it is particularly incisive. Areas perceived as less than good are examined meticulously to determine how best they can improve. Some subject teaching, for example, that was previously no better than satisfactory, was analysed carefully and supported consistently to become good. Teachers appreciate the school's positive professional ethos as well as the talented support staff who also benefit from well-planned training. This finding is further supported by recent Ofsted Inspection reports which state:

“The Principal leads the school with passion, commitment and integrity, and he is determined to ensure that Dunraven becomes an outstanding school in every respect. He leads by example and is not afraid to acknowledge and tackle any weaknesses. For

example, robust action was taken to improve those subject areas that were underperforming, and this has resulted in raised standards.

The Principal is ably supported by very effective senior colleagues, and there is a strong sense of purpose and direction throughout the school. The principal and senior teams embody the inclusive motto 'excellence for all' in all aspects of their work. Staff and students speak extremely warmly of their direct day-to-day involvement in school life, and they are viewed as a powerful motivating force throughout the school.

The senior team works closely with a very good team of middle leaders, who are actively involved in the leadership and management of the school. They share effective practice, and they are well supported by members of the senior team. As a result, the school is making significant progress with the aim of ensuring that the performance of all departments matches that of the very best. A culture of openness and trust permeates working relationships among senior and middle leaders. The impact of their leadership can be seen in the high-quality education provided by the school, the good progress made by students, and in the creation of a school ethos that is friendly, welcoming and mutually supportive.” (Ofsted, 2009)

Ofsted inspection also shows that Governance is excellent and, through regular meetings and fact-finding visits, governors ably challenge and support the school. They strike a happy balance between holding the school to account and not unduly disturbing its smooth, efficient running.

“The governing body is very effective and plays an active role in the life of the school..... Governors, senior and middle leaders all share the same high aspirations for the students, and they approach their work with enthusiasm”. (Ofsted 2009)

The views of pupils, parents and students are sought regularly, are much valued and used to inform worthwhile changes.

Dunraven School has enjoyed its good reputation within South London for a number of years and it is noteworthy that leaders of excellent schools take care not only to preserve the traditions that may have been inherited from the past, but they set about the building of new higher-order traditions. Relationships between the school and the wider community have gone from strength to strength over the last few years.

One of the reasons for the school's dramatic improvements over the last decade is the promotion of a dynamic and decentralised approach to leadership. Giving staff genuine authority but supporting them in developing the best possible way of going forward is a feature of the distributed leadership at Dunraven. Clarity of roles and responsibilities are evident at every level. The Deputy Principal characterises the leadership team as: *“cohesive...it is not negatively competitive, it is cohesive”*. Moving on to the next tier of leadership, she comments: *“progress with middle leaders has improved capacity considerably, and subject and year leaders became Directors of Learning. We changed the name three years ago because both groups focus on learning and progress”. We wanted to give them more autonomy. It is about staff taking responsibility for outcomes... everyone is clear about their roles and everyone is supported!”*.

The development of a clear vision that every 'individual' student can achieve is central to the leadership's transformational approach – that is, shared vision, rather than supervision, which provides for the coordination of individual efforts. The building of a school culture in which individuals at all levels enjoy a degree of autonomy in relation to their own work, and the possibility of bringing their own knowledge, skills and creativity to bear in resolving problems and pursuing opportunities, is extended to students as well as staff. Now in its second year of operation, the

Junior Leadership Team (JLT), complements and reflects the work of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

A Year 8 pupil who is the Junior Principal of the JLT, describes its function as follows:

"We are a group of students. We shadow the roles of the SLT and we each have a counterpart. My counterpart is Mr. Boyle". The process of appointment to the role of Junior Principal provided those who applied for the post with early experience of the job application process! An application form was completed and references taken up (one student referee and one member of school staff) and interviews carried out. The successful candidate had been a member of the JLT last year and he articulated the selection process with relish. The JLT has its own small budget. Modes of communication, e.g. emails, agendas and minutes and team meetings are run in parallel with the SLT. Regular presentations are made to staff and governors on the JLT's recommendations, following consultation with students and the School's Council. The JLT are soon to host a conference for schools in South London, sharing this innovative and powerful example of distributed leadership to student level!

Leadership through the development of an organisation's culture means building behavioural norms that exemplify the best that a school stands for. It means building an institution in which people believe strongly, with which they identify personally, and to which they gladly render their loyalty. All of this gives meaning to the work that they do, gives it significance, which is highly motivating. Teachers, support staff and students working together is a feature of Dunraven. The Deputy Principal comments: *"we work to each others strengths. There is a great deal of respect between staff here – it is not about hierarchy"!*

Use of data

Use of performance data for school improvement is a strength of Dunraven School. The school sees this as an essential part of school improvement and has used data as one of the key levers of change and improvement. The use of data involves all staff, governors and parents. One of the core elements of the school's success in raising achievement is its robust focus on tracking and monitoring individual student's progress and achievement in the widest sense of the term. The school has a well developed management information and pupil tracking system that suits the needs of Dunraven school. It allows a good range of telling evidence to be collected, analysed and evaluated including detailed CATS, KS2, KS3, GCSE assessment data followed by background data such as ethnic background, language spoken, level of fluency in English, date of admission, attendance rate, eligibility for free school meals, EAL stage of fluency, SEN stage, mobility rate, years in school, which teacher's class has been attended, attendance rate, types of support, postcode data. The school continues to refine the data held in its information and data tracking system, ensuring the data sets are simple, accessible, easy to understand and manageable. The systems can identify 'threshold' students and so trigger interventions. Using red, amber and green to indicate actual against expected levels of progress, attainment is clear and easy to grasp, which is useful for discussion with families. Families are regularly informed about their child's progress reports.

Periodically, the data is updated and progress towards targets is estimated. Students and staff have regularly updated grids including: the pupil's current attainments and personal targets; cohort list; detailed background, attainment and target data; classwork concern; homework concern; KS3 and KS4 mock results; key stages current performance based on teacher assessment and the Dunraven targets. Targets are based upon Cognitive Ability Tests (CATS), Fischer Family Trust (FFT) estimate, RAISEonline prediction and Dunraven's additional challenging targets. Indicative grades are set for Key stage 3 and GCSE. This data enables the schools to identify what steps

they need to take to meet the needs of individuals, groups and cohort of pupils. The data system in the school is highly flexible. Data can be retrieved in many combinations at any time, to look at the performance, for example, of those with English as additional language, gifted and talented, different ethnic backgrounds languages spoken, free school meals, SEN stage, mobility rate, attendance rate, types of support, etc.”

There are a number of good practices in the use of data in Dunraven School and evidence provided during the school visit confirms that:

- The school produces its own internal CAT, key stages assessment and GCSE information which is widely circulated and used by senior leaders, directors of learning, classroom teachers, learning mentors and classroom assistants. The school also uses a range of other comprehensive benchmarking, contextual and value added reports provided by the Local Authority, FFT and national data from RAISEonline for self-evaluation, tracking individual student performance and target setting. Local Authority and nationally available data is effectively used for tracking students' progress between entry and KS2, KS3 and KS4 and to set challenging targets. The students are well aware of their targets and how they might achieve them, with a wide range of support mechanisms in place.
- Teachers have ready access to student data including attendance, behaviours and assessment results. Test results and teacher assessments are analysed to illuminate aspects of student performance. Subject teachers and tutors use data and other assessment information to review the performance and expectations of students. Teachers also make effective use of data to monitor and review individual student progress, especially to identify signs of underachievement or unusual potential and to provide support for differentiated groups of students and to help set targets for students and subject departments.
- Attendance data is extensively used at all levels to support teaching and learning. The data team provide all teachers and senior team with colour coded data where green refers to 95% and above attendance, yellow (90-94% and Red below 90%. This data is prepared by year group, class and individual students and is well used in the school.
- Data is made available across the school and is used to help review the pupils' progress and set targets. The Principal, the senior team and teachers have an accurate assessment of the school and individual student progress. As a result the school is effective in tracking and identifying any individuals or groups of all abilities who are not achieving as well as they could.
- Teachers make effective use of data to evaluate the quality of provision and to identify and provide targeted support for differentiated groups of students. The most common type of interventions employed in the school where data analysis had highlighted issues to be addressed were providing additional support including one-to-one support and making changes to the teaching programme or curriculum, such as, more personalised or differentiated teaching to meet the needs of EAL students or SEN or students in targeted initiatives to improve performance. This effective use of data and targeted support was demonstrated to us as part of the classroom observation we attended in the mixed ability group. Data is also used in the school effectively to review student setting and teaching groups and this has helped in raising achievement.

The above good practice is well articulated by the school's Data and Intervention team at the interviews. Discussions with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Teachers, Learning Mentors and Teaching Assistants also further confirmed that the school uses data to track student progress, set targets, identify underachieving students for further support, inform teaching and learning and strategic planning and to inform the setting and grouping of students. The school understands how well their students are doing. The school routinely monitors not just students' academic standards, but also teaching, learning and other aspects of their provision to evaluate the extent which they are adding to students' education, well being and care. The

monitoring is linked to evaluation and the identification of priorities for improvement. These self-revelation processes have helped the school to identify further potential strengths and areas for improvement. Overall, the school is thorough and rigorous in the use of target setting, assessment and tracking individual students performance to raise achievement. Data is used well to inform school improvement planning and self-evaluation. A recent Ofsted inspection supports the views of the Data Team, the school leadership team and states that:

“The detailed monitoring data based on GCSE module results and submitted coursework demonstrate that standards have not only been maintained this year but have improved from last year. These indicate that the challenging GCSE targets will not only be met but exceeded. The percentage of students leaving with 5A to G is very high and demonstrates the inclusive nature of the school” (Ofsted 2009)*

The successful use of data owes much to the Principal’s vision to set up a strong Data and Interventions team led by the Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal for Assessment and Data Manager. They are responsible for collating and monitoring trends and analysis of how the school performed in relation to similar schools and schools nationally. Comparisons are made between subjects using raw, contextual and value added analysis. Directors of Learning are expected to identify and target specific areas of improvement in their development plan. Teachers are also asked by the Data and Interventions team and the ST to identify and monitor the progress of individual students who are underachieving. The school developed a strong sense of unity of purpose in its effort to improve through effective use of data in teaching and learning. The rapid analysis of data by the Data and Intervention team in the school means that areas of weakness are picked up and can become a priority for targeted intervention. Our observation during a two day visit to the school confirms that school leaders identify what does or does not seem to be going well at an early stage and acts upon it swiftly to counteract underachievement, poor behaviour and unsatisfactory attitudes to learning.

To conclude one common feature of strategies for raising achievement in Dunraven School is intelligent use of assessment data, progress tracking, target setting and support for students slipping behind with targeted interventions. Every student is expected and encouraged to achieve their full potential by teachers in Dunraven Secondary School. These high expectations are underpinned by the effective use of data to pinpoint underachievement and target additional support:

“Data is critical for raising standards. It is useful to track pupil progress and identify strengths and weaknesses”. (Deputy Principal)

Excellent care, guidance and targeted support

Underpinning the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school is its ethos, articulated not only by the Principal but significantly, by other key staff. An emphasis on the needs of every individual child is at the heart of the school:

We have high expectations of everybody, every teacher expects pupils to do as well as they can. We do see their differences and we make a virtue out of them. It’s about the needs of those individuals...a focus on the individual student. I hope students never feel singled out for what they are, but we single them out because of who they are”.

In order to meet the individual needs of students, the school has developed an exceptionally strong, committed and very well-co-ordinated team, who draw on a wide range of external, multi-agency professionals.

On entry to the school students are placed into standard groups in each year group. They are screened using a range of tests. Visits to feeder primary schools are made and the SENCo attends all the Annual Reviews of statemented students transferring to Dunraven, prior to transition. In this way, the appropriate individual support is identified before the student starts school.

Any students, with attainment below national expectations, are put into smaller groups with specialist teachers and have, what the school describes as “a supportive curriculum” during Year 7.

The school deploys a SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) Lead Teacher working primarily with Year 7. This teacher team teaches Year 7 with the PSHE teacher at the beginning of year 7 and together they identify seven students who are then withdrawn to follow a curriculum, covering the five themes of SEAL:

- self-awareness
- managing feelings
- empathy
- motivation
- social skills

As a result of this work the Principal feels there are fewer incidences of poor behaviour:

“It is difficult to evaluate but my sense is that J’s work with SEAL has made a difference. How do you articulate your frustration other than by pushing and shoving? We would want all students to have that intervention if possible. Some students lack these empathetic, social skills. For some students a communication difficulty dogs them throughout school. There is a sense of powerlessness that can only be expressed through anger and aggression”.

The Learning Mentor also plays an extremely valuable role in enabling students to overcome barriers to learning.

‘My focus is always on what are this student’s strengths? Is it debating, poetry, sport? I try to get them involved in a range of extra curricular activities in and outside of school. It’s about finding them one good role model.’

“I focus on school work and reading: I set up ground rules with them, of respect, expectations of themselves and expectations of me. All students keep a Journal, to enable them to open up and get their feelings out on paper. It releases their stresses and the issues which are in their heads. I assign a book to them, e.g. the Diary of Ann Frank” – one which meets their own individual needs. Someone who has gone through a hard time. It is about getting them to relate to a particular character”.

From Years 7-11 students engage in the school’s Kick-start Project, which is a 12 week programme for boys and girls, which focuses on self-esteem, self-perception, and e.g the role of a male in society, sexual responsibility, and drugs awareness. Sometimes a former gang member will talk with them about the wrong decisions he made and the reality of gang life. They work in groups and there is a competitive element to their work. They work together well and encourage each other so that they can get points. We need to sustain this successful element.

A comprehensive pastoral programme and positive relationships help all students, including vulnerable students, to achieve their best.

The carefully focused intervention and support for students in Year 7, continues, as necessary, throughout the school. For example, the highly effective and innovative support from the Learning Support Team has a significant impact on pupils' achievement and progress. A Learning Support Teacher and three Learning Support Assistants is attached to each year group, thus providing consistency and continuity in provision for students. Many of the concerns about transfer to Secondary Schools of vulnerable pupils, or those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, stem from the difficulties students face in dealing with the wide range of teachers they need to engage with. The benefit of Dunraven's approach is described by a Learning Support Assistant (LSA):

"In this school you have an LST and three LSAs to a year group, so we know students well. This really helps at transition. We are a constant feature of the lessons, even when they change teachers, we are always there. Pastoral care is included. We try to balance up students to the adults they get on well with, because we spend all day every day with them."

We have a strong philosophy about working in the classroom in lessons, team teaching across the curriculum, not withdrawing. The strategies we use are good for all students, visual aids, key words, timing of activities. We plan with the teachers focusing on how will my child access this lesson, can we look at this activity in a different way?'

At Dunraven, this excellent, well-co-ordinated approach enables the staff to get to know students and their families very well, providing much needed stability. A LSA (who is also a qualified teacher), gave us examples of success stories for particular students she has supported:

"A statemented, autistic student, with social/communication difficulties I have been working with over the years, has achieved a GCSE in Drama and is on target to get five more GCSEs. I meet regularly with his mum and he has received additional support from the Larkhall Autistic Unit."

'We also run a club at lunchtime for the autistic children because this is a difficult time for some of these children. They can come and play Connect 4, draw etc. One child would only play with a car by himself but as a result of coming to this club he has learnt to interact and play with other children.'

"Another statemented student has completed the Duke of Edinburgh Award"

In Year 11, targeted students do less GCSEs and receive extra support at school where none is available from home. Thirty students were targeted to achieve a GCSE C grade and a mentoring programme was established. Mentors would meet with their students every two weeks to push them with their course work. The LST observed: *"We are like the parents... With this type of support you can push them to get over the C/D borderline... We make timetables for revision, e.g. 3 x 2 hour slots a day, eating properly, going out to play. The sorts of things you would do with your own children. The Learning Support system here is so efficient. It is such a difference from my previous schools. It takes communication between support staff and the teachers to make it work. This impacts on the children."*

Within the staff team there is focus on getting to know the whole family. There is an emphasis on the school, the family and the external agency working together to support the child and give them the same message.

'This is particularly important with behaviour interventions.'

The school has set up an Autism Support group for parents with children at the school who have autism. Parents are pleased with the progress their children are making and are keen to support the school.

Also, in Year 11, the 'Increased Flexibility' project enables students to attend local Colleges for practical/vocational training, e.g. Lambeth College. Students are able to work towards NVQ Level 1 or Certificates in Construction which feed into school qualifications. There is great enthusiasm for this project, especially among boys who have gained entry to courses at Lambeth College, following successful experience.

Case Study:

By Year 10/11 some of the students want to be doing something a little more flexible, something practical within their learning. Dunraven has links with various colleges, Lambeth, Southwark. These students go to college once a week to do e.g. car mechanics, childcare. ‘

‘These might be students who are always struggling at school but yet are the first to change a wheel on the college course! They are always on time for college, they like it, they get treated like adults, it’s a more relaxed environment. It’s a bit of a carrot and stick- going to college keeps them on track at school and many of them go onto college full time at a later date. They catch up with their missed lessons in curriculum support time.’

Child A in Year 10 goes to college once a week for motorbike maintenance. He states, *‘I’ve always been interested in fixing bikes.’* He expressed that he doesn’t feel overwhelmed with school work anymore and that college has helped with his behaviour and attitude because he gets treated more like an adult at college. It will also help him with his future plans to join the army which his head of year found out about for him.

‘I’ve had a lot of support here, I didn’t do anything from Year 3- Year 6 at primary school but here I’ve had an extra adult sat here helping me because I have dyslexia’.

A member of staff said of Child A- *‘the college course has had a big impact on him. We hope he gets into the army- it will be a way out for him’*

Child B is in Year 10. She has been to 4 primary schools including a Language Unit.

‘They picked 20 of us and explained what a college course was about. We had a booklet with different courses and I chose Childcare. I go to Southwark, I like it because I’m meeting new people in a different community. We get treated like adults too, school is ok if you are in Year 7 and 8, but it’s relaxed at college. I’ve had a lot of 1:1 support here. If I get my 5 GCSEs I want to do Sociology and Health and Social Care because I want to be a nurse or a midwife when I leave school.’

An LSA gave her views on the impact of this project on one Year 11 student’s motivation:

“He has behavioural difficulties, his reading age is very low and he has literacy difficulties. He receives in-class support, Educational Psychologist, Elexia Programme, two individual sessions per week with me, support with his course work in English, and time with the Learning Mentor. He is allowed 25% extra time for examinations and has me as his Reader. He is going to College once per week. He now knows he needs literacy for anything he wants to do in the future...The turning point for him was the realisation that he needs an education. He will be the first child in his family to get GCSEs. He has understood the correlation between putting in the effort and getting something back. He is from a loving, caring family, but education has not been a feature”.

Students in Year 9 have also been involved in 'Taster Days' at Lambeth College on the Motor Cycle Maintenance Course and the school believes that this has really motivated them. Another student who is studying Child Care attends a College in another Borough and enjoys the opportunity to go out of her immediate area. A member of the Learning Support staff comments:

"It is about recognising that not all students are going to get a lot of GCSEs and giving them an opportunity to access other areas to enjoy success. Stepping Stones to the future. They can see there is a purpose to learning".

The LSA continues: *"Year 9 students get a lot of in-class support. Most of our students are in the Standard set. We are working primarily with statemented students but support others as the teacher directs. It is about ensuring that students access the curriculum. "*

The LSA team are justly proud of the fact that this year, for the first time, they have had 100% English course work in, from students of all abilities! As she quite rightly points out: *"I think we add a lot of value!"*

The school's Referral Centre has also much to be proud of in that exclusion rates have reduced dramatically since its inception in 2007. The Head of the Referral Centre was formerly a member of the Senior Leadership Team and has been associated with the school for more than three decades. He believes that communication is enhanced because of his previous role in the school and this has helped to integrate services within the school. On the whole he believes it is more beneficial for pupils to remain within the school rather than to be referred elsewhere, with the proviso that for some pupils, attending a Referral Centre elsewhere could have positive effects.

A calm, purposeful and controlled environment has been established within the Referral Centre, for students who might otherwise be excluded from school. Students can only be referred to the Centre by members of the Senior Leadership Team. Referrals are mainly because of behavioural issues or because of poor decisions that have been made by students themselves. The majority of students who have spent time in the Referral Centre never return. The Centre Head echoes the Principal's articulation of the school's ethos:

"We have always focused on individual students. Every Child Matters. That is what makes Dunraven the school it is!"

Student Voice:

The students were asked to comment on what they like best about their school. As you can be seen in the comments below the vast majority of respondents felt that their school is a good school and they get good education and teaching is of a high standard. A number of them used the phrase *'our school is an outstanding school and an excellent school'*

- It is a great school
- It is outstanding school
- The teachers are good and strict
- This an excellent place to learn
- The activities are brilliant and there are many to do. Also people good to get on with
- I like how some students are recognised that they could be stretched to be better and improve. Or do your GCSEs early.
- The teachers are friendly and they look out for you and they want the best for you. The school sets up lots of after school activities that you can do.
- The school has a lot of good facilities such as the gyms in upper school and low school and the football

- The pupils are nice and friendly. Lots of clubs to do
- Well I like the multicultural people. Also the new gym
- I like that the school is multicultural
- The different range of subjects and after school activities
- The things I like most about school are interesting lessons, my friends, and getting to know new things
- I like all the facilities and after school clubs
- Well I like some of the lessons and I make friends
- I like some of the teachers they plan the lesson very well
- I like the people, the ICT club and the library
- I like the clubs, some of the lessons, how the class rooms are laid out, the football and basket ball pitches
- The best thing is that school helps to you get a good start in life
- I like the staff and most lessons
- The best thing I like is my lessons

Conclusions

The main findings of the report show that KS3 and GCSE results in Dunraven school have improved significantly in the last 10 years and that the school is bucking Lambeth and national trends. There are a number of reasons why this school is doing so much better with GCSE by improving from 31% in 1998 to 78% in 2009. The school proves constantly that disadvantage in the inner city need not be a barrier and has recorded an improvement rate of 47% over the period.

Among the key features that contribute to the success in Dunraven for bucking the trends against the odds are:

- Strong, inspirational leadership with emphasis on raising expectations for all students and teachers
- Strong values and high expectations and consistent monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
- Effective use of performance data for school self-evaluation and tracking students performance. Data is used as a driving force for raising achievement
- Effective teaching and learning. The school fulfils individual potential through providing outstanding teaching, rich opportunities for learning, and encouragement and support for each student
- A highly inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of inner London pupils and their families
- A strong link with the community and a clear commitment to parents' involvement
- Good practice in raising awareness of teaching staff, support staff, parents and governors on issues of underachievement
- Good and well co-ordinated targeted support to all groups of students through extensive use of EAL teachers, Learning mentors, Learning support teachers, Learning support assistants, Teaching Assistant (TA), SENCO etc.

Stockwell Park High School

Background

Stockwell Park High School is a Foundation School, a specialist Business and Enterprise College and a Training School. It serves one of the most deprived wards in Lambeth. Many pupils come from disadvantaged economic home circumstances. The number of pupils taking up free school meals is about 72% and well above average. There is a high proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at other than usual times. Over half the pupils are from homes where English is not the first language. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is less than average but the number with learning difficulties is very high, constituting over half of the school. There are over 980 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and speak more than fifty different languages. The school population mirrors the Stockwell and Brixton area community in which the school sits. Most pupils come from African, Caribbean, Portuguese and White British backgrounds. A significant proportion of pupils have a mixed heritage. Despite challenges in terms of the level of deprivation in the area, the overwhelming impression the school creates is of confidence and cohesiveness. The school is an exceptionally inclusive school. The school promotes community cohesion and ensures pupils understand and appreciate others from different backgrounds with a sense of shared vision, fulfilling their potential and feeling part of the community. Through the school curriculum, pupils explore the representation of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in the UK and in Lambeth.

Performance Data:

GCSE 5+A*-C

GCSE 5+A*-C	Stockwell Park	Lambeth	England
2006	57%	55%	58%
2007	67%	56%	60%
2008	61%	62%	64%
2009	73%	71%	70%

GCSE including English and Maths

Stockwell Park	Lambeth	England	School CVA
42%	41%	46%	1037.4
43%	42%	47%	1034.9
47%	47%	48%	1030.7
68%	53%	51%	1060.1

The school prides itself on the diversity of its workforce. The school has recruited good quality teaching and non-teaching staff that reflect the languages, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and faiths of the pupils in the school. The school recruits staff from the local community and this has sent a strong message to the community that they are valued. This has helped the school to become a central point of the wider community and has built trust. Teaching Assistants are greatly valued in the school. They play a key role in communicating with parents and supporting pupils.

The evidence used for this report included interviews with senior managers and pupils and scrutiny of relevant published, current and, where applicable, previous inspection reports and surveys involving the school, and performance data, including RAISEonline³. The school was asked to

³ Details of KS3 and GCSE performance and value-added from:

- Stockwell Park High School, *School Profile: Making Figures speak for Themselves*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-18.
- Stockwell Park High School, *GCSE contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-4.

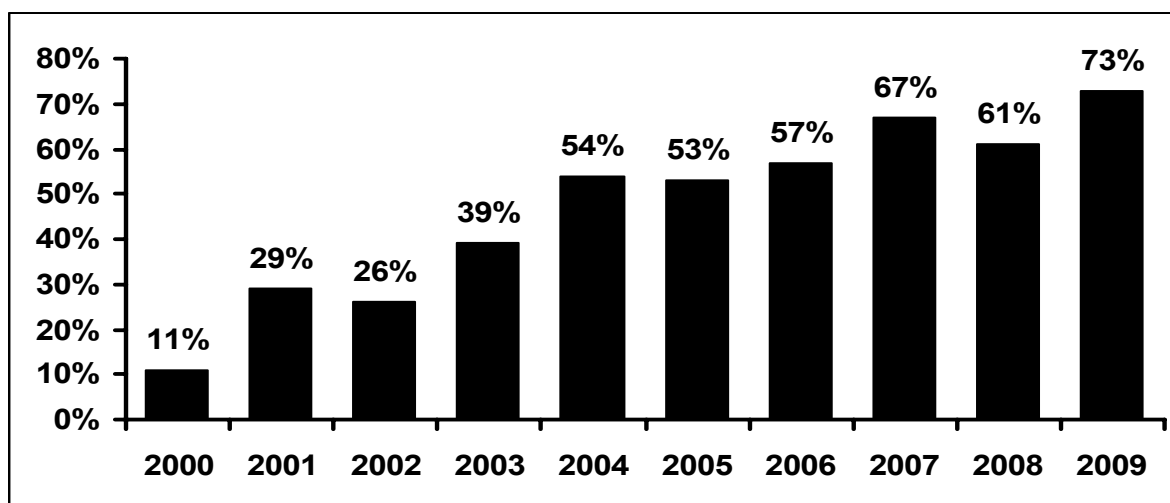
identify the features it considered central to its success in becoming and remaining outstanding. Researchers visited the school, each of whom had prepared a day's programme of meetings with key members of the school community. They explained and displayed, in effect, the 'secrets' of their school's success.

During the day spent at the school for the case study, the following members of staff were interviewed: the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher, the Deputy Head of Inclusion, 3 Assistant Headteachers, the EAL Teacher and Co-ordinator, two Class Teachers, the Community Education Co-ordinator, the Data Manager and Staff Governor. Twelve pupils across the school were also interviewed.

The following report considers the evidence collected from these interactions and draws conclusions from these and more informal observations, conversations and discussions made during the day.

Achievement and Standards

Figure 1 GCSE Performance in Stockwell Park High School, 2000-2009



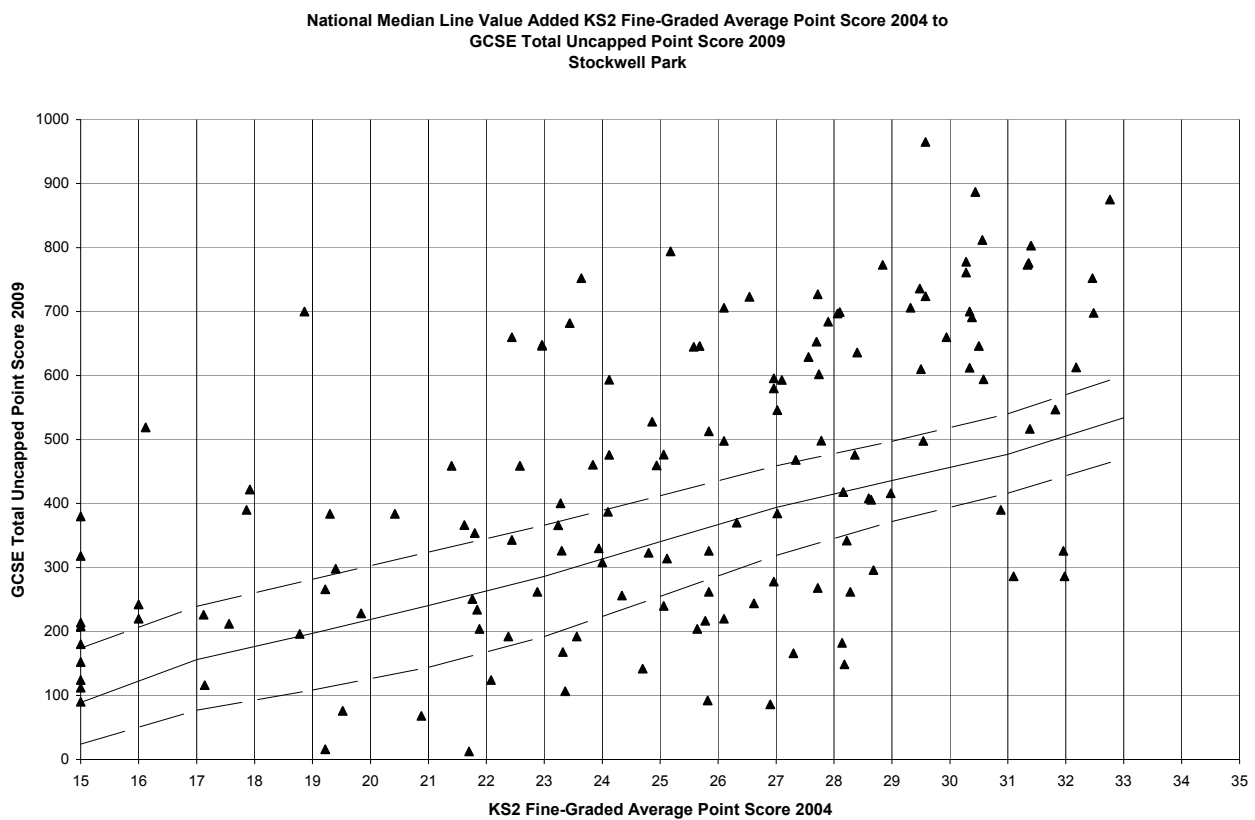
GCSE results have shown significant improvement over the last few years and Stockwell Park High School is one of the fastest improving schools in Lambeth. The arrival of the current Headteacher in 2000 signalled the start of an impressive journey of improvement, which has seen the school's achievement at GCSE rise from 11% in 2000 to 73% in 2009.

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- Stockwell Park High School, *KS3 contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-4.
 - Stockwell Park High School, *GCSE contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-4.
 - Stockwell Park High School, *KS2 to GCSE Value-added Analysis of Pupil Progress*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-4.
 - Ofsted (2008). Ofsted Survey inspection programme: narrowing the Gap in literacy and numeracy in Stockwell Park school, Ofsted.
 - Ofsted (2006). Stockwell Park Inspection Report, Ofsted, November.
 - Ofsted (2009). Stockwell Park school RAISEonline report, Ofsted.

The Headteacher is uncompromising in her view that the focus of the school is to ensure achievement for all. There is zero tolerance of poor behaviour and an unremitting belief articulated with staff that *'disruptive behaviour should not be allowed to damage the education of our pupils.'* The school has clear sanctions in the event of inappropriate behaviour. Her first priority on arrival was to tackle persistent underachievement in the school and to support the teachers by establishing and maintaining good discipline. Alongside discipline runs a strong care and encouragement for pupils and staff, supported by extensive staff CPD and training programmes. It comes as no surprise to see that expectations and academic standards have risen and the upward trends at GCSE continue.

The value-added by the school is also very impressive. KS2 to GCSE value-added data in the graphs below, which compare the relative progress made by pupils in Stockwell Park High School with the progress made nationally by all pupils in England, show that pupils have made very good progress in terms of value-added. About 54% of the pupils in the school are in the upper quartile compared to 25% nationally, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. The interquartile range performance is 25% compared to 50% nationally suggesting the pupils progressed as expected. Only 21% are in the lower quartile range making less progress, compared to 25% expected nationally. Similar evidence was also recorded between KS2 and GCSE for the school, suggesting excellent progress in all curriculum areas for all groups. This is a school where all pupils make impressive progress between KS2 and GCSE.

Figure 2: Stockwell Park KS2 to GCSE National Median Line Value Added



The most recent Ofsted themed inspection reported the school as *'an outstanding school'* (2008) and the previous 2006 Ofsted Inspection also reported that the school is outstanding and described Stockwell Park High School:

'This is an excellent school, where parents rightly feel that it gives their children every chance of succeeding in life. It is a purposeful place where everyone's right to work and learn is respected.'

Levels of achievement are described as exceptional and pupils' personal development is excellent. Further, *'positive attitudes are sustained through excellent care, guidance and support. Learning is monitored very carefully. Pupils are set appropriate targets that are reviewed regularly. Programmes of support are tailored to meet individual needs.'* The report also highlights the fact that many pupils enter the school with low levels of attainment and that high expectations by staff and good teaching enables pupils to succeed. Leadership is described as excellent and has a good understanding of the needs of pupils, using data effectively to impact teaching and learning. Overall, as noted by the Ofsted inspection reports *'students' achievement is outstanding in relation to their starting point because they receive strong support and encouragement from teachers. They make outstanding progress in both literacy and numeracy at KS3 and KS4'* (Ofsted 2006 and 2008). The researchers agree with Ofsted's findings that the school provides a purposeful learning environment in which pupils thrive whatever their background. The key to maintaining the school's excellence is a powerful culture and ethos of high expectations, based on a strong, shared commitment to meeting pupils' often complex needs. The tone is set by the school's outstanding Headteacher and Governors. Staff are trusted and valued, expectations of all pupils' social and academic achievement are high and the school is deeply embedded in the life of the area it serves.

The Headteacher is well regarded, both by the local community and by national policy makers, for her achievement in raising achievement in the area of challenging circumstances. In this school, poverty is not an excuse for poor performance and teachers are effective and push all children to do the best to their ability. It is seen as an opportunity for change and not an excuse for underachievement. In the view of the Headteacher *'anybody who says children from around here can not achieve is badly letting down local children and communities. We challenge stereotypes about the area served by the school by asking questions such as why can't a school behind Brixton be a good school? Why not let children in the area have their dream? We have strong values and high expectations that are applied consistently.'*

The school's improvement strategies are clearly effective in raising the achievement of all pupils. The school's aims and purposes are evident in the life of the school at work and at play. The factors identified by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher as significant in accelerating the progress of individual pupils, are the effective use of data, effective Governors and school leadership, diversity in the workforce, high quality targeted interventions led by confident and talented practitioners including good teachers, Teaching Assistants, Learning Mentors, EAL staff, CPD, personalised learning, behaviour management and an ethos which sets the school on course as first and foremost a successful learning community.

Leadership and Management

The Headteacher of Stockwell Park High School states *'What a great and noble thing it is to be around children and change society.'* An Ofsted inspection in 2006, which judged the school to be outstanding, said of the school leadership;

'Overall, leadership and management are excellent. The strong teamwork among the staff and governors has meant the momentum of improvement has continued apace. The

Headteacher's determined and rigorous leadership has been key in sustaining the rapid improvement of the school. She is well supported by her senior leadership team. Together they ensure there is a clear, shared vision placing the needs of students at the heart of the day to day life of the school. As a result, most students, whatever their background, achieve exceptionally well.'

The Headteacher states that *'what we try to do here is simplify things.'*

The Governors have a strong vision and have been righteous in the way that they have changed things. They have a vested interest in the school and the direction within which it goes. Throughout the rough times they have had the ability to be optimistic. The Governors have taken very difficult decisions. Ofsted reiterates this view;

'Governors are involved in the life of the school and its strategic direction. They are well informed about development plans and are increasingly effective in supporting and challenging those charged with responsibility for implementation.' (Ofsted 2006)

The Headteacher suggests that *'we are constantly reviewing ourselves, reflecting on why we are here, our vision, our ethos. Our spiritual connections are strong- the belief in the agenda goes beyond the contract, there is a moral obligation to get this right.'*

Every year the school reviews and restructures, but the fundamentals do not change. Such fundamentals are summarised by the Headteacher:

'There is an energy flowing through the school. It is almost an eastern philosophy- what you believe, you translate into reality.'

School managers had a clear rationale for their choice of school specialism. The Headteacher states:

'Many of our children come from family backgrounds where the ethos is 'if you don't do it for yourself then no one else is going to do it for you'. Therefore the Business and Enterprise specialism is very important.'

'Why shouldn't these children be business leaders? I believe it is morally wrong for children not to believe in themselves- why shouldn't these children have their dreams, without the ego of the Headteacher getting in the way?'

The Headteacher is clear on how the quality of the project management has changed and improved in the school. Teachers have become very good at monitoring outcomes and assessing the impact of what they do. The agenda has shifted to pupil leadership and involvement, reaching out to local schools as well as raising achievement.

'We have been on top of the agenda. We have a majority of staff who will go anywhere and do anything. It is like a good piece of music being played- everyone knows what they have got to do- I am not the conductor- I am a player. I stand back and admire the strengths of the school, e.g. the NQTs who have become outstanding teachers and now train others.'
(Headteacher)

'Other people are doing the change management – I'm not doing it now. As school leaders we have to be flexible, to look at our population- know who is the population- connect with the community. If the children will not buy into the agenda they will not do it. We constantly reflect with the children.'

The Headteacher wants the teachers and pupils to have a greater say in the way the school is run and greater involvement in their learning to get the culture of learning right. One pupil said to her recently:

'Well you know this place is good but we have to take it further.'

She states that the platform for a basic standard of education to fall back on, for economic survival, has been in place for a while and that the agenda for the school is getting the children to a higher level, an organisation that links into universities. Ofsted reinforced this view.

*'In particular, it (the school) would like to achieve the highest levels and grades in standard tests and examinations. Senior leaders have an intense focus on increasing the proportion of excellent teaching across the curriculum to support pupils in this endeavour. We are no longer driven by GCSE results- if we steady the ship in the 60s and 70s and concentrate on the As and A*s and getting the curriculum between Y8 and 10 right. GCSEs are seen as secondary to everything else we achieve.'* (Headteacher).

Staff convey the message to children:

'The school works hard to ensure that pupils acquire skills that are transferable to the workplace. We say to them your wages are those 5+A-C.'*

The school has its community links. This is the vision of the Governors. In the last few years the school has been used as a training school offering work experience and degrees. *'We have links with primary schools built around our expertise, the things we have developed and the pupil leadership.'* (Headteacher)

In summary, the Headteacher reflects;

'I am interested in the happiness curriculum- we teach children to be reflective learners – it is the meta cognition. We need them to be independent learners. Because we now know that we have the intervention strategies, we will change the culture of the school. Change is constant here- we are open to change and creativity. We continue to be like a child-enthusiastic. We know the privilege to be around children. The school is bigger than the individual. We are capable of making decisions about staff, exclusions, children and their behaviour. Many of us are spiritual, but we all live in the world of reality.'

'Heads and senior managers need to remain excited about the agenda'

An Assistant Headteacher gave us an overview of why she thinks that Stockwell Park High School is an outstanding school.

'This is the best case of a school that has improved and has sustained this improvement that I have been involved in.'

'In the case of this school, the role of the governors have been crucial. Their vision of what they want for the school has been clear all along the journey. Their development planning has been clear, lucid, simple and everyone has bought into it. They make decisions and explain why - they are transparent.'

In 2000-1 the school looked at the learning needs of children and realised that they had many children with a reading age below the age of 9 years. *'We set up a Supported Curriculum -each year we had 60 children on this programme. This intervention was revolutionary and successful.'*

These children needed the stability similar to that which they had at primary school- one teacher for the majority of subjects and not having to move around the building so much- this would be too disruptive for these children. They only went out for PE, drama etc.'

There would often be a small group of 12 -15 children with lots of EAL needs and behaviour problems but *'with targeted support, this made for a happy classroom.'* There were also other opportunities in the Supported Curriculum, for example a gender split in Year 7. There were 2/3 boys and 1/3 girls anyway and the gender split helped in raising achievement. *'It builds confidence amongst girls to experiment with their language. I would say the learning journey is about risk taking, the need to create an atmosphere where children can say the wrong thing- good teachers will make good learning out of wrong answers.'*

'Girls have different learning styles to boys, boys like the quick fire approach, competition. Girls prefer extended learning- we have good teachers who can do both.'

'We have no illusions about the children who come to us.'

Ofsted recognised the work of the school in Key stage 3;

'The majority of students enter the school with exceptionally low standards. By the end of Year 11 they reach standards that are broadly average. As a consequence of consistently good teaching most make excellent progress.'

Reiterating the words of the staff on the importance of the Business and Enterprise specialism, Ofsted states:

'The Business and Enterprise specialism has extended the opportunities available to students and is helping them to enter the world of work successfully. A variety of extra activities encourage students to explore and develop their potential...Students' workplace skills and economic well being are developed very effectively.' (Ofsted 2006)

'We have a strategic system to challenge children's leadership qualities. There are many opportunities for children to develop with Sports Leadership, Army Cadets, Sea Cadets, Boys to Men, London Young Chamberand Girl Guides.'

'The Black Rose was launched from here, which came out of the 'Make your Mark' challenge. It is a symbol to show that people do not agree with gangs, guns and knife crime. The Black Rose has developed a business selling badges, the wearing of which signals one's opposition to knife and gun crime in Lambeth. The pupils have developed the leadership side of this and the older children train up the younger children.'

Ofsted 2006 states that the *'children make an admirable contribution to the wider community through the wide range of business and other links that the school has successfully established.'*

The successful electronic data management system liberated teachers –

'We can get a lot more data about children to plan lessons and set targets. There has been a deliberate attempt to widen the range of significant adults working with children in the school. We have teaching assistants from the community and attendance and office staff who are embedded in the community themselves. We also have people from a youth service background. The governors introduced non-teaching Heads of House in 2001 who deal with the discipline, ethos and behaviour management within their 'House'. As they have no teaching timetable, they are always available to deal with parents and pupils. We

have people who do structured play with more organised games outside. There are lots of people on duty, more people around means a calmer atmosphere.'

Overall the findings from our study and a review of literature suggests that *'the leadership and management of the school are outstanding.'* The school instils a belief in pupils which permeates throughout the school. There is a conviction that *'all pupils can do'*. Senior managers have an intuitive awareness of their pupils and the community in which they live. They are fully representative of the local community and have a high degree of empathy with their pupils. The ethos of the school is one of listening to pupils, valuing and respecting them. There are high expectations for all to achieve well.

Use of data

The school is now data rich, with a wide range of data including KS2, KS3, CATS and QCA optional assessments/tests for monitoring performance. GCSE examination data is rigorously analysed to identify areas for improvement and to identify support needs and organise the deployment of resources appropriately. The school has good systems for assessing and mapping the progress of all pupils, including ethnic and bilingual pupils at individual and group level. High quality assessment and tracking pupils are therefore features of the school. The school sees *'the use of data as an essential part of school improvement and self-evaluation and is used as one of the levers of change.'* (Deputy Headteacher)

There is good practice in the use of data at Stockwell Park High School and evidence provided during a previous visit and this recent school visit confirms that:

- Key stage data is gathered as early as possible and analysed carefully by gender, ethnicity, and mobility, supplemented by other tests such as in English, Mathematics or verbal reasoning tests.
- The school extensively uses KS3 to GCSE and KS2 to GCSE value-added data to improve the attainment of individual pupils in addition to monitoring the standards of year groups or the whole school. Each individual pupil is plotted on the chart according to their GCSE point score or KS3 point score and a level point score. The value-added charts offer the opportunity to probe the strengths and weaknesses within the group.
- Data is used as a baseline to monitor and review individual pupils progress, especially to identify signs of underachievement or unusual potential and to help set targets for pupils and subject departments.
- Subject teachers and tutors use data and other assessment information to review the performance and expectations of pupils. Test results and teacher assessments are analysed to illuminate aspects of pupils' performance.
- The school produces their own internal CAT, key stage assessment and GCSE information which is widely circulated and used by senior managers, heads of departments, classroom teachers, learning mentors and bilingual classroom assistants.
- The school also uses a range of other comprehensive benchmarking, contextual and value-added reports provided by the Local Authority, Fisher Family Trust (FFT) and national data from RAISEonline.
- Data is made available across the school and is used to help review the pupils' progress and set targets.

- Heads of Departments use data to identify and target specific areas of improvement in their development plan.
- Teachers make effective use of data to evaluate the quality of provision and to identify and provide support for differentiated groups of pupils. At classroom or pupil level, effective use of data enables the school to highlight specific weaknesses of individual pupils, identify weaknesses in topics for the class as a whole, inform accurate curricular targets for individual pupils and provide evidence to support decisions as to where to focus resources and teaching.

In a research interview, the EAL Co-ordinator said that the school keeps a register of all children with EAL needs in the school by year group and that the school is very good at tracking the performance of EAL children. This register records their name, sex, date of birth, date on roll, SEN, family origins, home language/s, their stage of English fluency by each year throughout their school career and attainment and test results. This information is updated once a term. All class teachers are given this information so that they have an up to date picture of their pupils' EAL stage. There is an expectation that they will use this information in their individual target setting for individual children during independent activities. Strategies might include talk partners and speaking frames to reflect their level of fluency. Teachers could incorporate language structures into their planning- e.g. for stage 1 speakers, key words; for stage 2 speakers, a fuller response and for stage 3/4 an academic language response. These features are starting to be built into teachers' planning.

The most common type of interventions employed in the school, where data analysis had highlighted issues to be addressed, were: providing additional support, including one to one support or booster groups and making changes to the teaching programme or curriculum such as more personalised or differentiated teaching to meet the needs of EAL pupils, SEN pupils or pupils in targeted initiatives to improve performance. Data is also used in the school effectively to review pupils' setting and teaching groups and this has helped in raising achievement. The school also works to target and involve parents through home school partnerships and to encourage mentoring of pupils. The effective use of data has a major effect on teaching and learning in the school. The quality of teaching is very good and well informed by effective assessment and data. Teachers in the school analyse and build national curriculum tests and CAT information into their planning in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum areas. They structure their curriculum and teaching plans carefully and assessment and monitoring are an integral feature of the teaching and planning process. Work is planned carefully to match prior attainment and individual education plans are devised for all pupils with a below average profile, including EAL and SEN pupils. Staff think very carefully about strategies for grouping pupils and targeted support. Classroom lesson observation confirmed the standard of QTS teaching is very high and teachers unobtrusively and skilfully target questions, using their knowledge of individual pupils to good effect. There is evidence that detailed assessments of pupils' work are written and followed with helpful questions to aid pupils' learning. The children's contribution to the dialogue and discussion is impressive and there is good evidence of excellent teaching in the school.

In the words of the Deputy Headteacher, the Data manager and a teacher, the focus on the use of data and targets in the school has:

'Raised the expectation of staff and pupils and makes you focus on what children are actually learning.' (Teacher)

'The school is good in assessing all pupils and teachers look at data carefully.' (Deputy Headteacher)

'We use data incredibly well for personalised learning and we have a well developed tracking system with detailed assessment data and background information, including ethnic background, language spoken, level of fluency, SEN stage, data of admission, mobility rate, years in schools, which teacher's class has been attended, attendance data, type of support and postcode data that is used for tracking pupil progress.' (Data Manager)

'Teachers use the data to review pupil performance, to have reflections and good conversations and to produce class profiles. This has been useful for assessment for learning and tracking individual pupils' performance. You cannot do without data.' (Assistant Headteacher)

To conclude, every pupil is expected and encouraged to achieve their full potential by teachers in Stockwell Park High School. These high expectations are underpinned by the effective use of data to pinpoint underachievement and target additional support. Data is used effectively by senior managers, teachers, teaching assistants to pose and answer questions about current standards, trends over time, progress made by individual pupils, to track pupils' progress and to set high expectations in Stockwell Park High School.

Personal development and well-being

'Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students behaviour both in class and around the school is good. The school has a calm, purposeful atmosphere.'
(Ofsted 2006)

A wide range of interventions has certainly helped towards this. There is peer mediation training, restorative justice and an atmosphere of children being able to manage their own behaviour. Learning mentors play a major role in the school.

Pupils win and lose points throughout the year when they are rewarded for their Classwork, Homework, Attendance, Behaviour, Organisation and Punctuality (CHABOP) which is part of the Business and Enterprise skills for life - if the pupils do something right they receive merit points but can also receive demerit points. When pupils reach certain milestones, it is celebrated in assemblies with certificates and prizes. Assemblies offer big communication opportunities in this school. There is a trained counsellor who is a member of staff. She is skilled in restorative justice and is a strong role model as a woman. The Ofsted report (2006) talks of the pupils'

'Spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development is outstanding. Tolerance and respect are at the heart of the school's ethos. The excellent personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme provides opportunities for students to test and secure these fundamental values. Students know how to keep themselves safe and understand the importance of healthy living.' **(Ofsted 2006)**

Parental Engagement and Community Project

One of the success factors of the school is its good links with the community it serves and good practice in engaging parents. *'Parents are brought into the school with the aim of making the school the heart of the community. The purpose of their continuing education is threefold; to raise*

their aspirations, to support them to support their children and to bring the community together.'
(Community Education Co-ordinator)

Stockwell Park High School works together with Stockwell Community Resource Centre and Morley College, offering courses in English for Speakers of other languages (ESOL), ICT, advanced ICT, Digital Photography and Mathematics, among other subjects. The new school building provides an impressive venue for this Saturday programme. Through the Business and Enterprise specialism, the school is to launch a community project which will be available to 60 participants. This will bring together a range of ethnicities, including Portuguese and Somali. Together they will decide on their focus, learn how to get funding and about working together. The school facilitates as much as possible to get people back into work. Parents and members of the local community who aspire to work in a school have the opportunity to come in for 12 weeks, shadow teachers, receive help with their CVs. The school support parents and learning mentors to study for foundation degrees. The school also have an international link with a school in Sierra Leone, we run a World Family Day, have Aids Awareness and Rights and Responsibilities.

Curriculum

Ofsted recently judged *'the quality of the curriculum for students working below the attainment for their age is outstanding.'* The school has Supported Curriculum classes, where pupils are taught in smaller groups, mainly by one teacher. These groups are usually single gendered, with boys in classes of around 16 and girls in classes of around 20. These pupils will spend the majority of their time with one teacher. Teaching Assistants are deployed in these classes to support learning. Many of the teachers teaching in these classes are primary trained or have a primary school background and the pedagogy employed has much in common with primary practice. This classroom arrangement also provides emotional stability for pupils, which may be particularly important for groups of pupils who may have experienced trauma and difficult circumstances. The Ofsted inspection reports also confirm that:

'The supported curriculum provided at KS3 enables students working below expected levels to catch up quickly. Students who are placed in the supported curriculum from year 7 work predominantly with one teacher to allow for a smoother transition from the primary phase.' (Ofsted, 2008)

There is also a diverse curriculum on offer to pupils. 14 - 19 meets a variety of needs and there is the BTEC first diploma – Sales and Marketing. Stockwell Park High School is the only school in the UK doing this. There are different varieties of BTECs and the school offers up to 4 GCSEs in Science.

At the end of each unit, pupils and parents complete an evaluation form on the resources, internet site and learning styles.

'We try to promote independent learning. All of the BTEC courses have a work-related element. Much of the principle learning is done at Lambeth College. A Business Tracker focuses on how every subject is enhanced with Business and Enterprise skills.' (Assistant Headteacher)

The pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 follow a Business and Enterprise inspired course called Portfolio for Life. This portfolio provides pupils with a vehicle for development for skills for life. All pupils will compile a portfolio during their time at school, giving them a unique record of their achievement and business and enterprise learning.

'The portfolio is our way of ensuring that all pupils get a GCSE in Business and it promotes independent learning. It is the chance to leave school with a recognised GCSE.' (Assistant Headteacher)

'We have a set of programmes that we have written in house.- discrete subjects. An example is 'Possibilities' aimed at Year 7- what they want to achieve in school and the options they might take.' (Assistant Headteacher)

Pastoral care

An Assistant Headteacher has oversight for pastoral care and the curriculum. She works closely with the curriculum managers.

'We use the tracking sheets for some pupils and track their behaviour and communicate with home, finding out where children are with performance levels. There are pastoral Heads of House, they liaise with the curriculum managers and support the curriculum e.g. if there is a problem with attendance etc, they will get on to it.'

They might for example attend KS4 curriculum meetings and monitor and log how children are getting on and feedback to the parents. With KS3 children they meet with tutors to monitor how well pupils are progressing and feed back to parents.

'We might ask, why is this child receiving so many demerit points in English for example?'

Reintegration Programme

Child X is causing behaviour problems. The Year 7 tutor felt that the London Young Chamber would be good for this young man yet he was associating with a crowd that was negating the positive and he lost his way in the playground. Due to his subsequent behaviour he had to step down from his role as the Public Relations man for the LYC. His tutor removed him from his group in English and put him in a higher group which gave him the opportunity to be amongst high achievers. He is now in the Gifted and Talented stream. This pupil learnt that from being removed from the business group that when the opportunity came to be 'moved up' to 'achieve success' he would take it. This changed him. He is in Year 8 and if he continues along this track he will achieve A*s, As and Bs at GCSE. There are many leadership programmes in the school, committees, the Year 10 trainee leadership programme and the Year 11 prefect and head boy/ girl system. If 'child X' decides to embrace the positive aspects of this system, he will do well.

There are many programmes and opportunities for leadership development for pupils in the school, such as Army Cadets, Police Cadets, Girl Guides, Young Ambassadors and London Young Chamber.

An example is the Lambeth initiative, 'Emerge for Girls' which works with borderline Year 7 girls with potential. They meet once a week to work around identity-raising aspirations, looking at them as future leaders.

The school promotes inclusion rather than exclusion, looking at every type of support possible for a pupil before they begin to think about exclusion.

'Child W for example has been exhibiting poor behaviour. We found out that he has been witnessing domestic violence for years. We are working with the domestic violence team to support him in school and help with his behaviour.' (Assistant Headteacher)

'We have a Civil responsibility programme where pupils work with a police liaison officer around 'what does it mean to be a good citizen?'. This is targeted at pupils in school whose behaviour might be seen as criminal outside. There are programmes around anger management social skills and 1:1 mentoring.' (Assistant Headteacher)

'We do a lot of work in partnership with the Primary PRU. We had a child who was in the Primary PRU for 2 years. He had a reintegration assistant but was finding it hard to settle. We liaised with a support package to get him back in.'

The school does vocational programmes with colleges. Pupils do work experience every week. Pupils are initially given a presentation by the college, then parents are invited in to discuss this.

'We know we have challenging issues in this community but our free school meals children do well here. We have to admit that our children have needs. We always make sure our pupils have a hot meal in the day.' (Assistant Headteacher)

The school runs a variety of lunchtime clubs and pupils run these groups. Pupils take a lead- they promote 100% attendance around the school. They promote anti bullying- peers listen to their peers. This all has a knock on effect on pupil attainment.

'Since becoming a Business and Enterprise school we have focused on teaching the skills that pupils will need to use in the world, to break the cycle in the community- whatever is happening out there- poverty/recession- these pupils need to have those skills. We promote economic wellbeing from Year 7.' (Assistant Headteacher)

The school runs savings clubs and staff and pupils track what is happening in the world of finance, *'we have introduced online banking and we work with NatWest Bank to set up bank accounts for the Year 11s.'*

When the Year 11 pupils receive their grades, they speak to colleges where staff talk to them about their grades, 'you can make an application but you need a grade B.' The Year 10 pupils have taster classes and shadow first year pupils. This makes them realise what they need at an early stage, not waiting until the end of Year 10 to plan their future and think about grades.

There is work around transition Year 6 - Year 7. *'We look at anxious parents and help them to realise the importance of transition. There is a transition workshop with Year 7 tutors and Heads of Houses'*

Support for EAL pupils

'The level of expertise within the school to support pupils with learning English as an additional language is good. The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Co-ordinator is well qualified, experienced and knowledgeable. Staff are well aware of the needs of those learners who speak English as an additional language. As a consequence, these learners' needs are met in lessons and targets for their literacy needs are regularly set... These learners make very good progress during their time in school. Staff, including the high proportion who are themselves bilingual, recognise the value and importance of developing learners' bilingual skills to help in their development of English.' (Ofsted 2008)

There is comprehensive support for pupils with EAL. When a new EAL pupil arrives at the school an assessment is done within two weeks. They are then tracked to monitor their progress and their levels of English and targets are adjusted accordingly. This is in reading/speaking/listening and is modified depending on the child. This informs what group the child should go in to. If they are a

level but have a strong academic background in their own language then they will go into 7A or 7B. Pupils are withdrawn for English support between 1 and 4 periods a week depending on their level of English. This does not stop, although it might lessen if they have a strong background which is helping them to make good academic gains. The children are tracked and then picked up again in Key Stage 4 where there is a focus on academic language ahead of GCSEs *'more sophisticated tenses, different language, extending vocabulary etc. They might be at stage 3 but they need to start using the academic language.'* (EAL Co-ordinator). There are Individual Education Plan (IEPs) for pupils on stage 3 which recognises the need to support them to access the academic language of the KS4 curriculum. All teachers differentiate for EAL children in the school but appreciate that the language focus will benefit all children regardless of EAL needs.

There is in-class support which focuses on the core subjects from qualified EAL staff.

There is also pre-teaching in English lessons which gives them a head start when they start their lessons. *'They can go on to get a 'C'. We also give them any lunchtime or after school help that they might need. We also encourage the EAL children to read a book a week and encourage the use of a thesaurus. We send them away to watch the news and then ask them to summarise.'* (EAL Co-ordinator)

An Assistant Headteacher reiterated this;

'I can see an individual child make progress in one lesson if you throw them into a Year 7 lesson with collaborative learning. With the visual, media, drama and arts they learn to interact, as well as learn a new language. Teachers group them carefully.'

The Somali children are now the top achievers in the school with 71% 5+ A*-C.

Learning to Learn: There was a general recognition in school that many pupils do not have independent learning skills. This would have an impact on KS4 and going to University. In response to this, the school started the 'Learning to Learn' programme.

The Campaign for Learning promotes this as a process of discovery about learning and involves a set of skills that teaches pupils to be learners for life. At its heart is the belief that learning is learnable. It is based on a belief that lifelong learners are more likely to be happier, healthier, have better jobs, contribute more to society and live longer and more fulfilled lives.

There is a weekly lesson based in KS3 which promotes the 5 attributes to becoming a lifelong independent learner. These are resilience, resourcefulness, responsibility, reasoning, reflective learning.

The focus in Year 7 is 'I learn...', 'how do I learn on my own?', moving onto team learning, being a 21st century learner, communication skills. In Year 8 it is about being a peak performer- making the learning count, study skills.

The Maths and Science departments use Learning to Learn within their teaching. In Maths it is about being reflective.

'Our focus this year is to involve the heads of foundation subjects and see how it can be fitted into the foundation subjects and focus on which R for a particular year group. In Art for example there is a reflective log of learning.' (Advanced Skills Teacher)

'This all fits in with the leading learners because the older pupils link with the younger pupils with their learning. There are reading partners, identifying ways to learn better, pupils

reflecting on their CAT score- if I had done this I would have done even better. We are training leaders in learning to learn.’ (Advanced Skills Teacher)

There are effort grades against the Classwork, Homework, Attendance, Behaviour, Organisation and Punctuality (CHABOP) system.

School improvement strategies: ‘In the last few years we have had an active focus on learning in school. This is consistent across the school.’ (Deputy Headteacher)

There is a sustained focus on ensuring access to the curriculum for every pupil, whatever their background through scaffolding and differentiation. Teachers have an excellent understanding of where pupils are at in their learning; they know the learning profiles of each child and what interventions pupils might need. Pupil progression is very much an area of discussion in curriculum areas at the weekly team meetings where the learning of the pupils is discussed, especially in core subjects. *‘We are keen to bring this microscopic view into the foundation subjects too.’*

Ofsted comments:

‘Lessons are successful because they are well planned and students are clear about appropriate learning objectives. The frequent reference to national curriculum levels ensures they know what they are working towards.’ (Ofsted 2006)

Through weekly targets, teachers are focusing on pupil learning and constantly reviewing what they do in the classroom. *‘Are they achieving? It might be pastoral, we have a system of referral and have a dialogue with pastoral staff about our more vulnerable pupils.’*

‘After every 6 weeks the Directors of Learning and teachers look at the eight classes of Year 7. Maybe X amount are underachieving - this is what the teacher has done, this is what we are going to do to raise achievement, these are the resources. Maybe we will give support before and after school- many pupils prefer this rather than in the lesson.’ (Deputy Headteacher)

There is now a big focus on Gifted and Talented pupils in the school. The Directors of Learning take account of children in this area and all Gifted and Talented pupils have IEPs which are monitored. Using data as a tool identifies any gaps in the learning of Gifted and Talented pupils which is discussed with the teacher, pupil and parents in order to consider interventions to raise achievement. To meet the needs of the Gifted and Talented pupils, the Mathematics department is running different programmes, such as an after school club to organise trips and to prepare pupils for the UK Maths Challenge. One pupil was given the opportunity to attend a Maths Day, organised by UK Maths Challenge, which gave the pupil the opportunity to meet pupils from other countries.

A strong part of the school’s identity is the range of academies on offer to its pupils which extend the curriculum and develop skills beyond the classroom. Examples of the academies are those for Writing, Drama, Science, Sports and Film . Pupils must apply for the academies and *‘going through the interview process is part of the Business and Enterprise identity.’*

Writing Academy: This new academy started well in October 2008. The standard of entry to the Academy is extremely high. So far the Academy has worked on writing reviews and analysing video clips. The Academy is now working on a school newspaper and poetry competition. Journalists from established newspapers will also visit the Academy. This Academy, like all

academies is a real opportunity to develop skills beyond the classroom. (The Stockwell Park High school Magazine February 2009)

New Science Academy projects: The Academy members have been doing model making and making hot air balloons. They have also constructed a volcano. Science competitions have developed through the school: the Recycling project has been a tremendous success. They have planned the Fast Track Project and a Debating Group to discuss contentious scientific issues.

The Academy has planned trips to Kings College in order to look at access to Medicine, Science and Health related careers. (The Stockwell Park High school Magazine February 2009)

Training School status: As part of its higher performing school status, the school has been developing school improvement training.

'We have trained 31 PGCE students; their experience was broad, they got trained in data analysis and a lot of them had experience teaching the middle band. This really makes their experience real.' (Assistant Headteacher)

Some of the teachers have been doing their Masters Degrees 'in house' e.g. 'action research around the underachievement of Portuguese pupils and action research regarding the access of EAL pupils to Shakespeare in the curriculum.'

'We also offer foundation degrees in conjunction with Canterbury Christ Church University.'

'Many TAs and HLTAs benefit from this in house training.'

Many people are referred from the Stockwell Community Resource Centre to the school for a variety of training e.g. Family learning. 'They love coming here, it's like going to University!'

'There is a national dimension. We lead teachers from other schools. Many schools are interested in the strategies we employ to raise standards in the school. A range of staff are involved in training others and imparting information to other schools.'

'The training aspect within our own school is important. Our Headteacher is good at building capacity. We train on how to monitor learning and teaching, we observe each other in the classroom, look at pupil books and the comments made. Are they focused? Are there CPD issues we can pick up? There are regular discussions with staff. We gather pupil feedback from lessons- what have you learnt? What would you have preferred to see. How do you prefer to learn? This is part of our evaluation of the 6 week block of teaching'
(Assistant Headteacher)

Ofsted (2006) recognised that within the school, 'a particular strength of the school is the emphasis on professional development and sharing of good practice. This is instrumental in ensuring the consistency of approach which underpins students' excellent achievement.'

Pupil Voice

To conclude, we asked the pupils why their school is an outstanding school and what they like about their school. They pointed out during the focus group discussion that:

'This is an outstanding school.'

'This is a good school- the teachers care.'

'Teachers in this school teach well and help you.'

'The teachers push you- you can take GCSE Maths early and then take a new subject on like Media.'

'Every one helps and its easier to learn.'

The views expressed by pupils are supported by a previous Ofsted inspection which states that:

'Students talk enthusiastically about how they enjoy their lessons and other activities. They appreciate the wide range of opportunities to take responsibility, such as peer mediators or prefects.' (Ofsted 2006)

Pupils feel safe and secure in a supportive environment where staff have faith that pupils will achieve.

Some pupils took part in the Accelerated programme which enabled them to take some subjects early.

'I took English early. It gave me longer- the teachers were really encouraging. It was nice to move on and easy to work.'

One Year 7 girl had come from a school in Northern Italy and spoke no English on entering Stockwell Park High School. However, she was able to tell us that;

'The teachers help me. I have friends.'

One pupil told us that;

'The Drama Academy helps us to do our drama skills. We go and watch plays and practise acting skills like speaking out loud. We did a play for the opening of the new building, 'Reach for the Stars' and did it at the Young Vic too.'

The Drama Academy performed their own play at the Young Vic Schools' Theatre Festival on 9th July 2008. The play was based on ideas researched by pupils about the history of Stockwell Park High School and featured the themes of migration, school and friendship. Pupils gained valuable experience working with all the facilities of a professional theatre on a specially designed set. (Stockwell Park High School Achievement Magazine February 2009)

When asked how involved their parents were in the school one pupil said, *'There is quite a lot of communication between home and school. There are targets and ideas of how you can improve in all areas'*

Another pupil told us about her experience of the Girl Guides. *'I went to a garden party at the Palace. I also did a performance of the 'Cha Cha Slide' dance and have many badges e.g. Chocolate badge and a 3 nights away badge. We also went camping. The Guides is for Year 7 upwards.'*

There is a lot of Pupil Voice and consultation. Pupils are interviewed by the English department. *'If we are doing it for them, we need to know what we can do better for them. We need to know what they want from us.'*

'The School Council meets with the Headteacher, and head of tutor groups and there are pupil questionnaires. At Target Setting Days the tutor meets with tutees/parents, from the pastoral point of view too. We want parents to input on this too.'

Year 10 pupils have a leadership focus group- ideas of how the school can promote the Business and Enterprise specialism and how the school can amend the behavioural programme. There are also pupil committees, for example a Community Cohesion Committee.

'We want pupil voice to be credible to the children. Pupils do feel that they have an input into policies etc.'

Conclusion

The school is an outstanding inclusive school. The school promotes community cohesion and ensures pupils understand and appreciate others from different backgrounds with a sense of shared vision, fulfilling their potential and feeling part of the community. Through the school curriculum, pupils explore the representation of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in the UK and in Lambeth.

GCSE results have shown significant improvement over the last few years and it is one of the fastest improving schools in Lambeth. The arrival of the current Headteacher in 2000 signalled the start of an impressive journey of improvement, which has seen the school's achievement at GCSE rise from 11% in 2000 to 73% in 2009.

Main factors contributing to the success of the school include:

- The rigorous and inspirational leadership of the Headteacher.
- The role of the Governors in school improvement.
- Self evaluation, the Headteacher suggests that *'we are constantly reviewing ourselves, reflecting on why we are here, our vision, our ethos. Our spiritual connections are strong- the belief in the agenda goes beyond the contract, there is a moral obligation to get this right.'*
- The status of the school as a Business and Enterprise school has led to many opportunities for children to become leaders within the school.
- The focus on learning through Learning to Learn, the supported curriculum in Year 7, and a range of academies which extend children's learning.
- Inclusive strategies to ensure that every child succeeds e.g. the Civil Responsibility programme.
- The focus on school improvement through the school's status as a Training school, in-house CPD for teachers, TAs and the sharing of good practice nationally.
- Effective EAL support

St. Martin-In-The-Fields High School for Girls

Background

St. Martin's is a fully comprehensive voluntary aided high school with a strong Christian ethos. There were 894 pupils on roll in 2010. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 20%, higher than the national average. The school population is ethnically diverse and the main ethnic groups are Black Caribbean, African, Other Black, Mixed race and White British (see table 1).

The school is part of the Technology, Raising Achievement Partnership Programme (RAPP) and has Sports College status and remains committed to serving the local multi-ethnic community by offering a high quality of education. The motto of the school, 'Caritate et disciplina' forms part of the school logo, meaning '**With Love and Learning**'. The matching of the two is central to the ethos of St. Martin's school, since the most effective learning takes place in a loving, supportive environment. This is recognised by Ofsted which states that:

"Learners benefit from a rich experience of worship and diversity. The strong ethos of care and respect is based on Christian values and a commitment to inclusiveness." (OFSTED 2007)

The school has awards in SportsMark, as an Ambassador school for Gifted and Talented Youth, Lead Practitioner in Equality and Inclusion, Cultural Diversity Quality Standard - Diamond Award (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust), Financial Management Standard in Schools (DfES) and Healthy Schools Status (Lambeth Education Authority).

The school was featured in a series of previous Lambeth research projects into good practice of raising achievement of Black Caribbean pupils⁴, Black African Pupils⁵ and Ofsted research into Black Caribbean achievement⁶. It has also been recently involved in Lambeth research into school links- *The Triangle Project*⁷. The reports highlighted some of the basis of success that makes a difference for all pupils. It featured particularly St. Martin's strength of ethos, leadership, development in the innovative curriculum, monitoring of pupils progress, link with parents and celebration of cultural heritage. The overall findings of Lambeth and Ofsted's previous research shows that St. Martins serves some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country, but has worked with those communities to raise their hopes and aspirations along with the achievements of their young people.

The evidence used for this report included: interviews with senior managers and students; scrutiny of relevant published, current and, where applicable, previous inspection reports and surveys involving the school and performance data, including RAISEonline⁸. The school was asked to

⁴ McKenley, J., Power, C., Ishani, L. and Demie, F. (2003). *Raising the Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils in British Schools: Good Practice in Lambeth Schools*. Research and Statistics Unit, Lambeth Education.

⁵ Demie, F., Mclean, C., Lewis, K (2006). *The Achievement of African Heritage Pupils: Good Practice in Lambeth Schools*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, Lambeth LA.

⁶ Ofsted (2002). *Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils: Good Practice in Secondary Schools*, Ofsted

⁷ EMAG (2009). *The Triange Project: Cross curricular resources in Commemoration of the Bicentenary of The Abolition of the Slave Trade*, Lambeth Ethnic Minority Achievement, Lambeth LA..

⁸ Details of KS3 and GCSE performance and value-added from:

identify the features they considered central to their success in becoming and remaining outstanding. Researchers visited the school, having prepared a day's programme of meetings with key members of the school community. Staff explained and displayed, in effect, the 'secrets' of their school's success.

During the day spent at the school for the case study, the following members of staff were interviewed:

- Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher
- 2 Assistant Headteachers
- Class Teachers
- Gifted and Talented Co-coordinator
- School Chaplain
- Pupils across the school.

The following report considers the evidence collected from these interactions and draws conclusions from these and more informal observations, conversations and discussions made during the day.

Achievement and Standards

St. Martin's is "*an outstanding school*" (Ofsted 2007), providing an orderly and purposeful environment within which pupils thrive. The tone is set by the school's outstanding headteacher and leadership team. Staff are trusted and valued, expectations of all pupils' social and academic achievements are high and the school is deeply embedded in the life of the area it serves. Pupils are rightly proud of their school, of what they achieve there and of how it prepares them for life afterwards.

Table 1: School Performance Data

GCSE 5+A*-C

GCSE 5+A*-C	St Martin's	Lambeth	England
2006	73%	55%	58%
2007	69%	56%	62%
2008	76%	62%	65%
2009	85%	73%	70%

GCSE including English and Maths

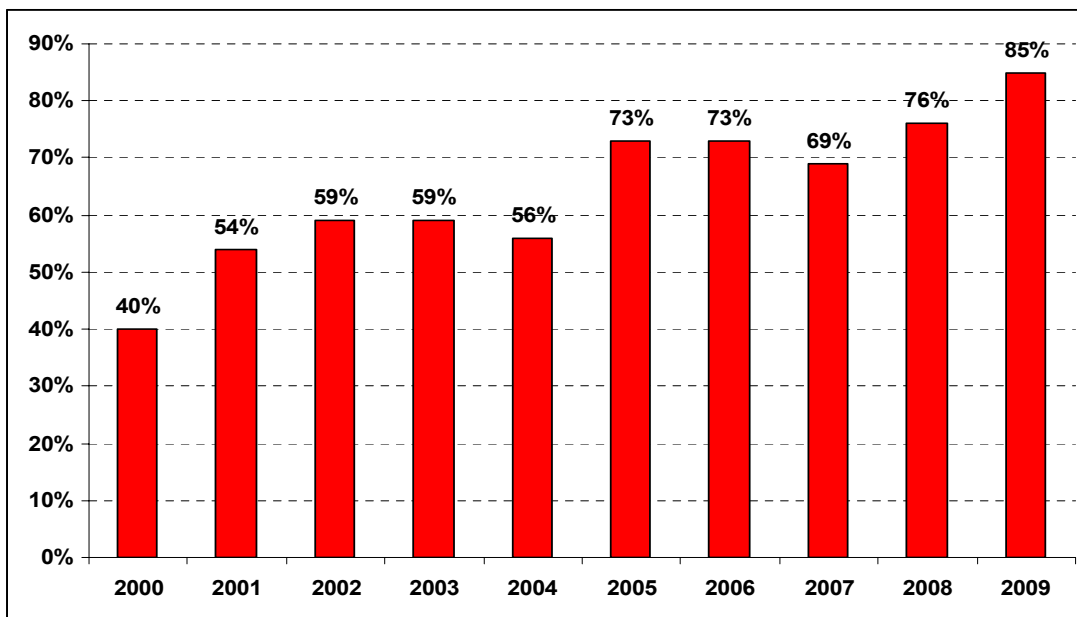
St Martin's	Lambeth	England	School CVA
57%	41%	45.8%	1023.1
47%	42%	46.8%	1025.9
57%	47%	47.6%	1033.4
68%	53%	50.7%	1014.9

-
- St Martins- in- the- Fields School, *School Profile: Making Figures speak for Themselves*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-18.
 - St Martins- in- the- Fields School, *GCSE contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-4.
 - St Martins- in- the- Fields School, *KS3 contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-4.
 - St Martins- in- the- Fields School, *GCSE contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-4.
 - St Martins- in- the- Fields School, *KS2 to GCSE Value-added Analysis of Pupil Progress*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009; p.1-4.
 - Ofsted (2007). St Martins- in- the- Fields School Ofsted inspection Report, Ofsted.
 - Ofsted (2009). St Martins- in- the- Fields school RAISEonline report, Ofsted.

Pupils' academic attainment is around the average when they start. However, their progress is outstanding overall, gathering pace the longer they spend at the school and enabling them to outstrip their peers nationally. GCSE results have shown significant improvements over the last few years and it is one of the fastest improving schools in Lambeth. Figure 1 shows that 85% achieved 5+A*-C grades in 2009. This is a great improvement, more than doubling attainment levels since 2000, up 45 percentage points. Furthermore, attainment is now 15 percentage points above the national average.

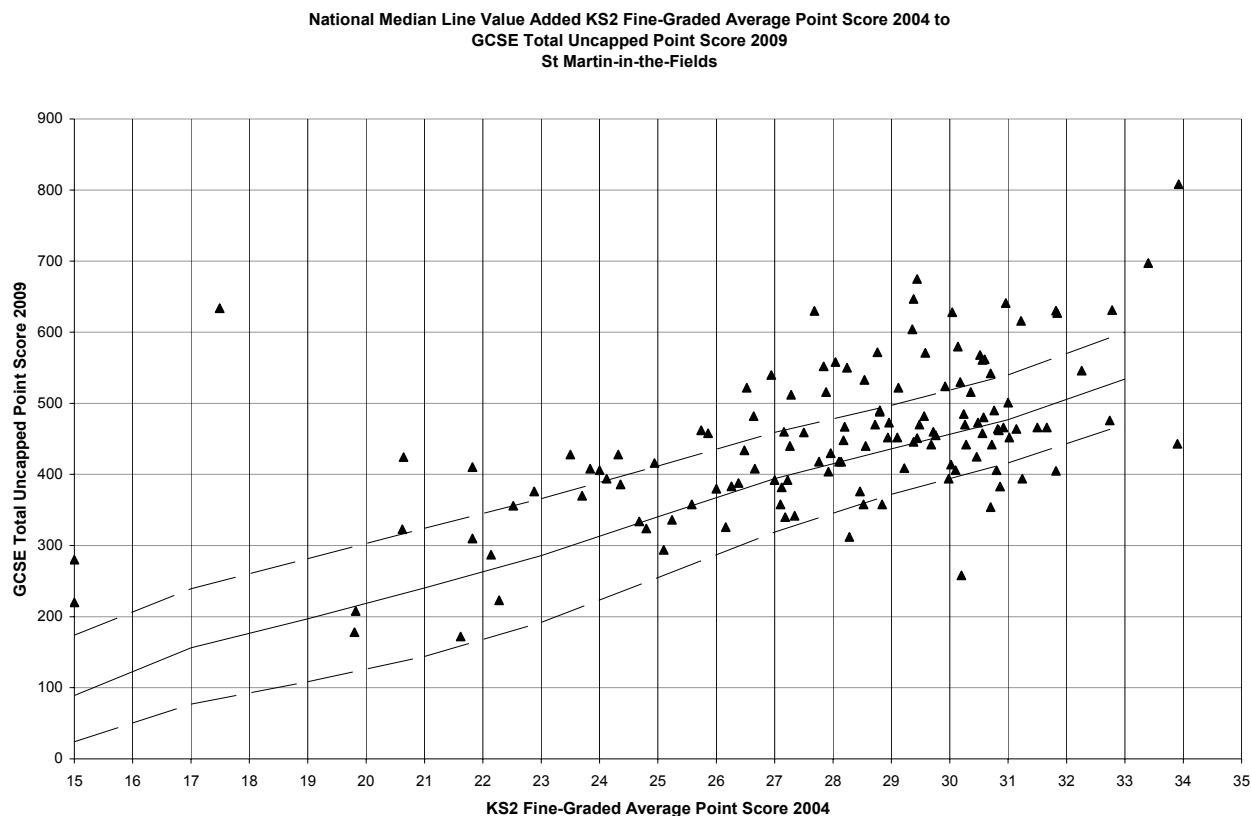
Overall standards reached by the end of Year 11 are well above average and a higher than average proportion of pupils leave with 5 GCSE grades A*-C, including Mathematics and English.

Figure 1 GCSE Performance in St Martin-in-the-Fields, 2000-2009



The value-added by the school is also very impressive. KS2 to GCSE value-added data in the graphs in Figure 2 below which compare the relative progress made by students in St. Martin's school with the progress made nationally by all pupils in England, show that students have made very good progress in terms of value-added. About 36% of the students in the school are in the upper quartile (compared to 25% nationally), indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. The interquartile range performance is 57% compared to 50% nationally suggesting the students progressed as expected. Only 7% are in the lower quartile (relatively making the least progress), compared to 25% expected nationally. Similar evidence was also recorded between KS3 and GCSE for the school, suggesting excellent progress in all curriculum areas for all groups. This is a school where all pupils make impressive progress between KS2 and GCSE.

Figure 2: St. Martins KS2 to GCSE National Median Line Value Added



Leadership and Management

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership of the school. She is supported by a very effective and able senior leadership team who share her vision. Senior leaders are strongly focused on raising standards. They are ambitious for their students and have implemented rigorous systems to improve achievement further. This is also confirmed by Ofsted which states:

“Leadership and management are outstanding. Very high expectations are communicated very effectively by the excellent Headteacher and her strong senior leadership team” (Ofsted 2007).

The headteacher's vision for the school is shared at all levels. Leaders have excellent understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and take appropriate action in light of their priorities.

There is an exceptional sense of teamwork across the school. This is reflected in the consistent way managers at all levels works towards the school’s aims to promote the school motto of “love and learning”. The school is proud of its efforts to maintain its inclusive ethos. This is seen in the very good progress made by all groups of students. In the words of the headteacher and Ofsted:

“This school is an inclusive school. We have a Christian ethos. All children are a God given gift. I have been given stewardship of their life while they are in school. We ensure their success. It is a team effort. I could have not done it on my own and it involves commitment of all staff to the school ethos of high aspirations to achieve. I have a staff that

*100% believe and are committed to the school's raising achievement agenda”
(Headteacher)*

“I want staff to make a contribution and we help and train them to ensure they understand and are committed to the ethos of the school. Any staff who do not buy in to our ethos will not last long in this school.”(Headteacher)

“The governing body is active and very supportive of the school. They are well-informed about students' progress, enabling them to effectively hold the school to account” (Ofsted 2007).

Use of data

One key strategy for raising achievement in the school is effective use of data. The use of data in the school is a particular strength, and data is central for raising achievement. The Deputy Headteacher responsible for the use of data sees this as an essential part of the school improvement process and has used data as one of the key levers for change. Data has helped the school to pose and answer questions about current standards, trends over time, progress made by individual pupils, to track pupil progress and to set high expectations.

The school has well developed management information systems (MIS) - SIMS so that all staff have quick and easy access to basic pupil data and timetables. This has guaranteed a consistent flow of information across all areas of the school. The system allows for individual pupils to be tracked, registered, reported on and monitored at all times.

Using the MIS system the school produces good KS2, KS3, and GCSE data in a format that is easily accessible to the SMT and classroom teachers. The school also uses FFT and RAISEonline data for school self-evaluation, tracking individual pupil performance and target setting. The Headteacher, the SMT and teachers have an accurate assessment of the school and individual pupil progress. Teachers and the SMT are well trained and confident in the use of the systems.

Data is used for a number of purposes and is widely circulated to senior managers, heads of year, heads of departments and classroom teachers. There is strong evidence that individual teachers within the classroom use data for: lesson planning; to inform accurate targets for individual pupils, gender and ethnic groups; identifying weaknesses in topics or aspects in the class as a whole; arranging groupings for teaching and learning; tracking progress of pupils; setting high expectations with pupils and identifying implications for planning for different groups.

The use of data in the school owes its success to the Deputy Head who has led in the use of data in the school for the last eight years. She was successfully able to empower all teachers and heads of departments to own the data that is needed for improving teaching and learning. The Deputy Headteacher argued that *“Data has the strongest impact and power when individual teachers use it to improve teaching and learning. The biggest change is when the staff own the data. It is important teachers and all staff understand and use the data effectively.”*

In this school teachers are empowered to use data for their teaching and learning and to identify underachieving groups to target interventions. The school makes available support and effective training on the use of data to develop their skills. They also make sure that data is available in a simple format for their use.

The school strongly believes that it is essential that parents understand how the targets are set. Data is effectively used to support parents. In the words of the deputy Headteacher *“ Parents*

are always fully informed of how their daughters are progressing towards them- hopefully exceeding them. It is essential that they talk to their daughters about their achievement and attainments along with staffs. We need to work together with parents to ensure they meet the targets”.

Care, guidance, support and well-being

A key factor underpinning the pupils' academic progress is their outstanding personal development and sense of well-being. The school cares extremely well for its pupils, takes rigorous steps to safeguard them and successfully develops them as a community. It is proactive in guiding them toward harmonious relationships. As a result pupils feel very safe, thoroughly enjoy school and attend well. Their excellent social development and behaviour are particularly strong features of the school. They value and contribute to the work done to encourage good behaviour and are confident that rare instances of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively. The pupils show strong tolerance and understanding of the rich range of cultural backgrounds from which they come and of the global community as a whole. They capitalise on opportunities such as the citizenship, personal and social education programme and assemblies to reflect thoughtfully on spiritual and moral issues. This has also been recognised also in previous Ofsted inspections which state that:

“Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding because care, guidance and support are outstanding and excellent opportunities within the curriculum develop their sense of citizenship and moral values. During one assembly, students were asked to reflect on the global issue of modern-day slavery as part of their wider work with schools in Jamaica and Ghana commemorating the abolition of slavery. Students' social development is excellent and their well-being is enhanced by the safe environment of the school. The Christian value of charity is evident in students' fundraising and they have good opportunities to contribute to their school and the wider community, as members of the choirs and as ambassadors for the school”

The researchers agree. Based on the interviews and close evaluation of available evidence the personal development and well being of students at St. Martin's is outstanding. Students interviewed confirmed that they are proud of their school and feel safe within it. They displayed real regard for their safety and each other's well being and showed a sensitive awareness of customs, cultures, and faiths other than their own.

The school has very good systems in place to help any vulnerable children. Staff have a clear approach to identify who are vulnerable children and they see each girl as an individual. A vulnerable pupil in the words of the Assistant Headteacher is *‘one with a statement of special educational needs, English as an additional language, one on the Child Protection Register, pregnant, disabled, one with a serious medical condition, a known gang membership or one involved in criminal activity, low self esteem and any form of mental illness. It also includes one whose family is experiencing breakdown, made homeless, involved in drug or alcohol abuse and one who is not attending and who feels they do not want to be part of the school community or any pupil who is not happy, healthy or safe, not enjoying or achieving in school.’*

For these vulnerable pupils the Assistant Headteacher highlighted that the school will:

- provide support with transfer from key stage 2 to key stage 3
- provide a pupil mentor
- help in forming friendships
- track academic progress of all vulnerable children
- help ensure entitlement to free school meals

- give access to advice on healthy eating, diet and exercise
 - encourage access to homework clubs and use of the library
 - encourage participation in extra-curricular activities, house events and assemblies
 - carefully monitor attendance and work with Home School Liaison Officer
 - support in choosing GCSE options
 - arrange individual interviews with Careers Officer
 - provide learning mentor support in Year 11
 - provide support in moving from Key Stage 4 to the next stage
 - make regular communication and meetings with parents/guardians
 - do whatever is necessary to access outside agencies or in school support as appropriate
 - use appropriate behaviour intervention strategies, education psychology reports, internal exclusion, parental meetings as needed.
- (Assistant Headteacher)

The school has strong systems and they go the extra mile to support pupils and to ensure their needs are met. *“We carefully use data to identify underachieving students or struggling children or vulnerable students. Use of data enabled us to focus and to ensure their needs are addressed. We are a proactive team. We act quickly. Good records are kept for all year groups and in addition to this data; there is also a day sheet to record teacher comments. Teachers in our school are good at keeping records and entering useful information that help us to ask questions and take actions as required. This record book and teachers’ comment are also passed to the year director to take action and ensure vulnerable pupils are well supported in class.”* (Assistant Headteacher).

Once the vulnerable pupil’s needs are identified and assessed, the school, led by the Assistant Headteacher, then designs individual programmes of support. Case studies of students described below are typical of the outstanding work done by the school with vulnerable children.

Case Studies:

Case Study A: Child whose mother died and as a result is experiencing a range of emotional and social difficulties including self-harm

Reasons for interventions and targeted support

Child A’s mother died while she was in year 10. As a result she was experiencing a range of emotional and social difficulties. The school referred to Social Care because of cases of self-harm. She is very withdrawn and emotionally needy. These factors have affected her progress academically. She is underachieving in almost all subjects. Her mock examination results reflect underachievement in six of the eight subjects which she sat.

Interventions and strategies implemented to support

On the basis of the above evidence the school organised targeted support to ensure that she achieves her GCSEs. This included referral to CAHMS for counselling, mentoring by learning mentor, referral to school counsellor, referral to social care via Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

Achievement

The school intervention and support strategies have helped greatly and she is predicted to obtain seven GCSEs with grades ranging from A*-C.

Case Study B: Support for pregnant student

Reasons for interventions and targeted support

Pupil fell pregnant in October 2009 when she was in Year 11. She has a history of poor attendance (74%) and punctuality.

Interventions and strategies implemented to support

- Referral to CAHMS for counselling
- Mentored by learning mentor
- Referred to school counsellor
- Referred to Social Services via Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

Achievement

The support and interventions have helped and as a result she is now predicted to obtain seven GCSEs with grades ranging from A*-C.

Case Study C: Child with statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Reasons for interventions and targeted support

The student is on SEN register with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Interventions

One to one support from SEN Department, Individual Educational Plan (IEP) in place.

Achievement

The mock GCSE results and teacher assessment confirm she is predicted to obtain A*-C grades in seven subjects, including English, Maths and Science.

The interventions and targeted support is based on data evidence and we use data effectively to monitor and to identify groups that are underachieving so no one is left behind.

"We take each student as an individual and draw targeted support to meet their needs. We want to maximise what we get out of our vulnerable pupils. We put every effort to support them so they achieve." (Assistant Headteacher)

Case Study D: Child on the child Protection Register

Reasons for interventions and targeted support

"Child D was a subject of child protection and we identified issues when she started in year 7. She was struggling with her learning and this has affected her education. Immediately she was referred to Social Care. They decided to make her subject to a protection plan. Following the LA assessment and School Action she was also put into foster care." (Assistant Headteacher)

Interventions and strategies implemented to support

"We put in place a number of initiatives including referrals, counselling and TA support, mentoring and 1:1 support, and classroom assistance so that her needs were met and she is on target in her learning. Her targets were reviewed from time to time and interventions were put into place. We have regularly met her social worker and reviewed her Individual Educational Plan. We also reviewed her personal plan with parents who are aware of her progress. We informed her progress to form tutors and we have also provided general reports about her to all staff and foster carers. She had extensive 1:1 tutoring paid for by Social Care. We put in place a revision programme and exam techniques e.g. how to answer questions. Overall staff have made a lot of effort and provided targeted support. Key in the support is sharing information and working together. Everyone from her teacher, foster carer, social worker, LA, TA and SMT worked together to ensure her needs are met". (Assistant Headteacher of Inclusion)

Achievement

"With the targeted support and intervention plan over time she has made friends and started focussing on her learning. Her GCSE achievement was impressive and she successfully achieved her targets and she now studies in Bromley College." (Assistant Headteacher of Inclusion)

Overall the care, guidance and support for vulnerable children who are experiencing personal difficulties is outstanding. The school aims for the stars and for girls to achieve their potential. The school has very effective and integrated support systems to ensure vulnerable students get the academic and pastoral support they need. As a result students with learning difficulties make exceptional progress and no-one is left behind at St. Martin's. This is further supported by students interviewed who rate the care, guidance and support the school provides as outstanding. More importantly they also involved parents and share the planned support/interventions and the success story. Parents are aware of the intervention strategies and they value highly such communications.

Partnerships with parents and celebration of cultural heritage

Parental engagement

The school encouraged and valued the active involvement of parents in their children's education and communication is a major strength. They tried to find imaginative ways to break down barriers and make parents welcome, being responsive to parents' needs. Information was shared with parents on achievement and development as well as discipline issues and there was a high level of communication. The school staff see themselves as being part of a community. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and know what the school does to provide an environment for learning. They were appreciative of the school's efforts to guide their children and give them grounding, both academically and socially. They felt that each child was valued in her own terms and although children might perceive differences in standards between them the school encouraged them to do the best for themselves:

"One parent wrote, 'I am extremely grateful for all the encouragement, care and support my daughter gets.' Care, guidance and support are outstanding" (Ofsted 2007).

The pupils interviewed also praised the school on parental engagement and communications and argued that:

'The school goes the extra mile to communicate and work with our parents'

'Parents are invited to get feedback about our performance and to celebrate our achievement during award ceremonies'

'The school uses text to send information to parents'

'They send parents information through leaflets and letters every time'

'They have prayer meetings for parents and these are well attended and valued'

'Our parents are very confident to talk to our teachers and staff'

'The school is seen by our parents like a family'

'Our school sees itself as part of the community'

Celebration of cultural heritage and links with community

One of the key success factors is the school's Christian ethos which has greatly contributed to links with the community served by the school. *"The school is like a family for parents and children. We are part of the community and the school has a leadership very committed to community cohesion and inclusion"*. (School Chaplain)

There are a number of very innovative activities that strengthen community links at St Martin's:

Gospel Choir: The school organises a Gospel choir every year where parents and communities play a key role in the singing. Parents and Governors join in the celebration of achievement.

Details of activities celebrating events such as Christian Aid, Triangle Project and poppy days are

shown on school posters and displays. One pupil commented in previous research *“The pictures on the walls mean a lot to me. I am in one of the choirs and I see my face”*. (McKenley et al 2003)

The school has a strong link with St Martin-in-the Fields in Trafalgar Square and the whole school go once every year to sing there. This is a tradition the school has kept going since it was established and *‘it is a beautiful finish to the end of the year by singing at St. Martins’*. (School Chaplain)

Display: The displays in the school celebrate pupils’ achievement and acknowledges the diversity of its pupil population. One staff member commented *“displays are the reflection of our community. They are part of the community dialogue. They reflect what is going on in the school. They are part of the ethos of high expectations”*.

The celebration of diversity is also embedded into school life through e.g. assemblies, the teaching of modern foreign languages and the curriculum.

One pupil stated:

“Everyone should be proud of their heritage; as a community we have embraced the different languages that we have. Everyone feels they can succeed.”

The school uses Black History month as an opportunity to explore different countries and celebrate diversity. *‘Every class studies a different country to give them a wealth of knowledge about the culture, the food, the language and the people’*.

Triangle project: This is the linking of the school with Anchovy High School, St James, Jamaica and St Andrews Complex, Sekondi, Ghana. The project was developed to mark the bi-centenary of the abolition of slavery in 2007. It was named the *“Triangle project”* in recognition of the historical triangle of trade which existed between Britain, Ghana and Jamaica. The aims of the project were:

- *To consider the impact of the slave trade and its abolition*
- *To consider and respond to global issues of human rights and social justice*
- *To focus on the impact of forced migration on the local and global economy*
- *To increase knowledge of identity and the contribution made by people of the Caribbean origin*
- *To create new KS3 cross curricular related to the transatlantic slave trade*
- *To forge links with schools in Ghana and Jamaica”⁹*

“The project has a Christian ethos of ‘love’ of other communities and shares the resource we are blessed to have here. Many of the children’s parents have a close link with the community and value the school link with Ghana and Jamaica. This project not only helped to enrich the school curriculum here but also helped to improve cultural understanding and exchange between Britain and the two countries. Parents are very supportive of the school link.” (School Chaplain)

The project produced a teaching resource entitled *“The Triangle Project: Cross Curricular resources”* which is widely used in the link schools. This publication is used to share the school and staff experience of visiting the schools in Ghana and Jamaica.

⁹ For details of the project see *“The Triangle Project: St Martin - in -the- Fields, Lambeth Ethnic Minority Achievement Team, 2009, p. V.*

The project continues to have a lasting impression on the school community. The link with schools in Ghana and Jamaica remains strong. One of the legacies of the “*Triangle Project*” was not only developing cross curricular material for classroom use but also the creation of GHAJAM, a charity dedicated to fund raising initiatives designed to support the partner schools and to sustain the links. To date, several fundraising initiatives were undertaken by the school including a street dance, staff barbecue, penny collection and the sale of ice lollies in support of GHAJAM. At present the charity is focusing on supporting the link schools with specialist equipment for science, sporting equipment, computer equipment and good quality used or new clothing.

“Staff, parents and students were all very busy last term fundraising for this project. In January 2009, staff and students spent a Saturday in Tesco Brixton packing bags for GHAJAM. They raised over £1,300. Since then numerous fund raising events have taken place including a Winter Ball”¹⁰. Overall as commented by the school Chaplain:

‘The school works closely with the local community to organise charity events to support people in need in Africa and the Caribbean through the Triangle programme’

The school staff have now visited St. Andrew's three times, and Anchovy High twice. The student netball team have also just come back from a tournament in Jamaica. The school was also delighted to welcome members of staff from both schools for a visit last term. The project continues to go from strength to strength.

Britishness Project: The school is an inclusive school. As part of the inclusion strategy it has now introduced a Britishness project, to ensure students understand what Britishness means and how to be involved and how to play a key role in British society. It wants everyone to feel part of British society from whatever background or heritage. *“We celebrate heritage of all groups in our school and the contribution all made to British society”*. The students had a period of independent studies on Britishness. Pupils were given time and opportunities to do research into Britishness and reflect. They were guided by teachers. This was very successful and a good experiment that worked well. Pupils came with innovative ideas and used the project findings to run workshops and assemblies.

Anne Frank Project: The school is involved in the Anne Frank Project which draws on the power of her life to challenge prejudice and to help foster an understanding among all pupils of positive citizenship, human rights, democracy and respect for others. The school was supported by the Anne Frank Trust to run workshops to see exhibitions on Anne Frank. All KS3 pupils went to the exhibitions and the Anne Frank Trust also ran successful workshops that were valued by pupils and teachers. They used the findings in the assemblies to share with all pupils. The pupils had a wonderful time participating in the informative workshops and exhibitions. They were able to reflect on what they had learned and become active ambassadors of the school and informed citizens.

The Student Voice:

In this section we asked a pupil focus group 'what is special about your school? What do you like best about this school?'

¹⁰ For details of the celebration of cultural heritage and links with community see the school website <http://www.stmartins.lambeth.sch.uk/>

As can be seen in the comments below the students felt that their school is outstanding, they get a good education and teaching is of a high standard. They gave a number of reasons why they like the school:

'The school is high achieving and the progress we make from where we started is very impressive'

'Good support is available for students in our school. They go all the way to support you'

'Teachers give extra help. We have a lot of help and revision support'

'We are encouraged to aim high and we are supported to achieve it'

'We celebrate our achievement at the Achievement Award Ceremony and Assembly'

'Our school is ambitious and helps us to achieve our dreams. We all want to achieve both academically and in social life'

'This school prepares you for life in addition to academic success'

'The school is good in accepting new ideas'

'Our school allows us to be active and be a good leader'

'This school is a great school'

'There are a lot of curriculum activities that motivate you in this school'

'They take us from our comfort zone'

'I think it is the best school in Lambeth'

'They give us opportunities to broaden our experience and travel to other educational places and institutions to learn'

'We are all like families'

'They help us to achieve beyond expectations'

'Our school ethos is based on Christian values. Our motto is 'with love and learning'

'School is a multicultural school. It is the school that values every culture, heritage and religion.'

'The school is good in breaking cultural differences and outstanding in community cohesion. They bring everyone together'

'They are strict and firm'

'The teachers are very good'

'We all enjoy learning here'

'Teachers are very good at teaching and making lessons fun'

'St. Martin's is an excellent place to learn'

As a concluding remark the researcher posed a question by reading back all the comments the pupils made about the school and asked further if this was the view of everyone, or was there anything they wanted to change? They could not wait to answer with a firm response; *"Yes this is our view and we have no doubt that our school is outstanding. This is what we will say and continue to say if we are again interviewed by anyone including Ofsted"*. The students are proud of their staff, appear happy and enthusiastic and feel secure at St. Martin's. This evidence confirms that the school is a happy and harmonious place.

The pupils were asked "How do you see your school achievement at the end of KS4?"

'High achievement and going to a top university is our aspiration. We are going to raise the bar in our GCSE achievement and we are confident to achieve A and better than previous performance in our school. This will make our parents and our school proud.'*

'Our parents value education highly and they will be proud to see we succeed and go to top universities.'

What subjects would you like to do when you go to University?

'We are high aspiring girls. We want to go to top universities in the Russell Group. I want to go to Cambridge, Imperial, Oxford, Bristol and Kings to do Law, Chemical Engineering, Medicine, History.'

Conclusions

1. St. Martin's is an outstanding school, providing an orderly and purposeful environment within which pupils thrive. It encourages students to 'reach to be a star'
2. The great success of the school has not come overnight. The Headteacher has provided sustained and inspiring leadership over 18 years. She has created a team of senior and middle leaders who are very effective at ensuring consistency. Relative underperformance in any subject is identified and tackled successfully.
3. The school is a champion of inclusion and staff are resilient in their determination to work with parents to ensure that every child has the best possible opportunities to succeed
4. Students' personal development and well-being are excellent. Students value education and want to succeed. They thoroughly enjoy school and all it has to offer and this is reflected in their good attendance rates. Attitudes and behaviour are exemplary.
5. The curriculum reflects the diverse backgrounds of students and their families. It is tuned sensitively on the basis of their changing needs with innovative projects such as the Triangle Project, the Britishness project and the Anne Frank project that helps to enrich the school curriculum. Parents contribute meaningfully to this through their high attendance at, and strong involvement in, the many religious and cultural celebrations. These events continue to grow.
6. The School is very successful in informing parents about ways in which they can help their children. Consequently, all students interviewed said that their parents were interested and fully involved in their learning at home.
7. Robust analysis and use of performance data helps the school to appropriately target resources to specific group's outcomes. Effective use of data is a strength of the school.

La Retraite RC Girls' school

Background

La Retraite is a multi-ethnic Roman Catholic comprehensive school, with 912 girls on roll. The school is popular and oversubscribed. Students come from a wide range of social, cultural and economic backgrounds and varied catchment areas. The proportions of students eligible for free school meals and those who have statements of special educational needs are above average. The main ethnic groups are Black African; Black Caribbean, Other White, White British, Other Ethnic Group, Mixed Race (see Table 1). A much higher proportion of pupils (63%) do not have English as their first language and the percentage of pupils with statements of SEN is much higher than national average. The school gained specialist status for science and mathematics in 2004. The Ofsted Inspection report in 2007 confirms that "*it is an outstanding school*".

Central to the school's success in raising achievement over the years are: the high expectations that staff have of themselves and their pupils; strong leadership led by an excellent Headteacher; a very capable senior leadership team that keeps a very close check on the school performance; high quality teaching and learning in the classroom; effective use of data for self-evaluation and tracking pupils' progress; parental engagement; the community involvement in the lives and development of the school and the high value parents place on their children's education. The evidence used to inform judgements includes interviews with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, 2 Assistant Headteachers, Head of Maths and Head of English, 3 Teachers, Learning Mentors and Teaching Assistants, student focus groups and scrutiny of relevant documentations.¹¹ The school was visited for one day to gather evidence of good practice in raising achievement and in previous years were also visited for 4 days to study what works in

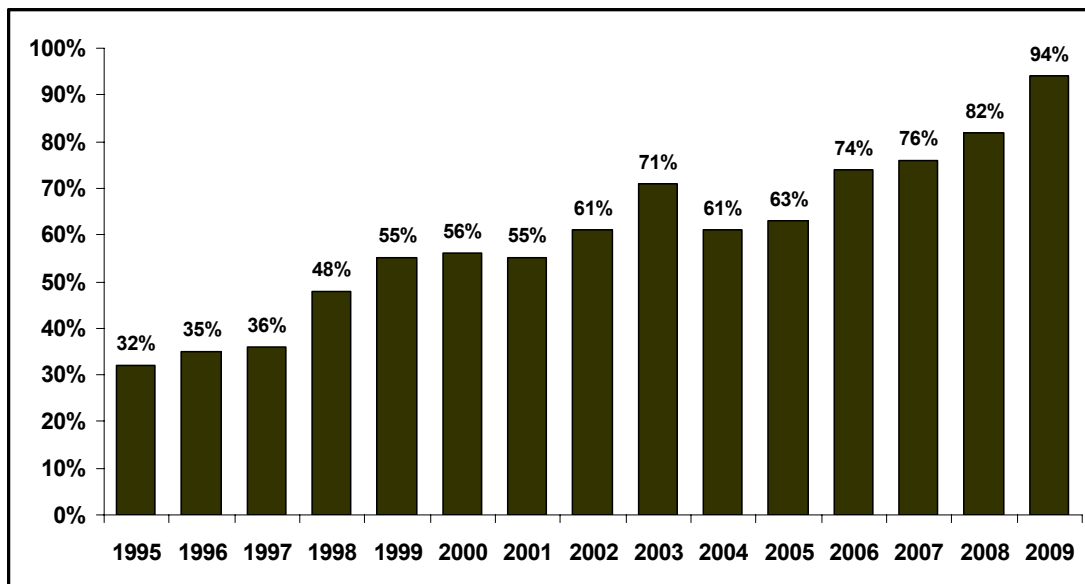
¹¹ The following documents were also used as additional evidence:

- La Retraite Girls School: *Making Figure Speak for Themselves*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009, p. 1-18.
- La Retraite Girls School: *GCSE Contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009, p. 1-4.
- La Retraite Girls School: *KS3 Contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009, p. 1-4.
- La Retraite Girls School: *KS2 to GCSE Value-added Analysis Pupil Progress*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009, p. 1-4.
- La Retraite Girls School: *FFT Self-evaluation Report*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2009, p. 1-4.
- La Retraite Girls School: *Raise online Self-evaluation Full report*, Ofsted, December 2009.
- La Retraite Girls School: *Ofsted School Inspection Report*, December 2007.
- Demie, F.; McLean C, Lewis, K. (2006). *Raising Achievement of African Heritage pupils: Good Practice in Lambeth schools*, Research and Statistics Unit, London Borough of Lambeth, March.
- McKenley, J., Power, C., Ishan, L., Demie, F (2003). *Raising Achievement of Black Caribbean pupils: Good Practice in Lambeth schools*, Research and Statistics Unit, London Borough of Lambeth, March.

raising achievement of Black Caribbean and Black African students in the school. Details of the findings are discussed below.

Achievement and Standards

Figure 1: La Retraite GCSE Attainment 5+A*-C (2001-2009)



Achievement is outstanding. When students start in Year 7, the standard of their work is slightly below national figures. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards are well above the national average. GCSE results are on a rising trend, and in 2009, 94% of students achieved five or more GCSEs at A* to C, with a rising proportion of higher grades. Achievement of A* to C is well above the national average in most subjects. Students' progress, including that of students with learning difficulties is outstanding both in lessons and over time.

The use of data to identify and improve performance is rigorous and supported well by detailed target-setting at all levels and for various aspects of students' performance. The school has used this well to identify those few subjects where performance is not so good and has implemented a range of improvement measures.

Table 1. School performance data

GCSE 5+A*-C

GCSE 5+A*-C	La Retraite	Lambeth	England
2006	74%	55%	58%
2007	76%	56%	62%
2008	82%	62%	65%
2009	94%	73%	70%

GCSE including English and Maths

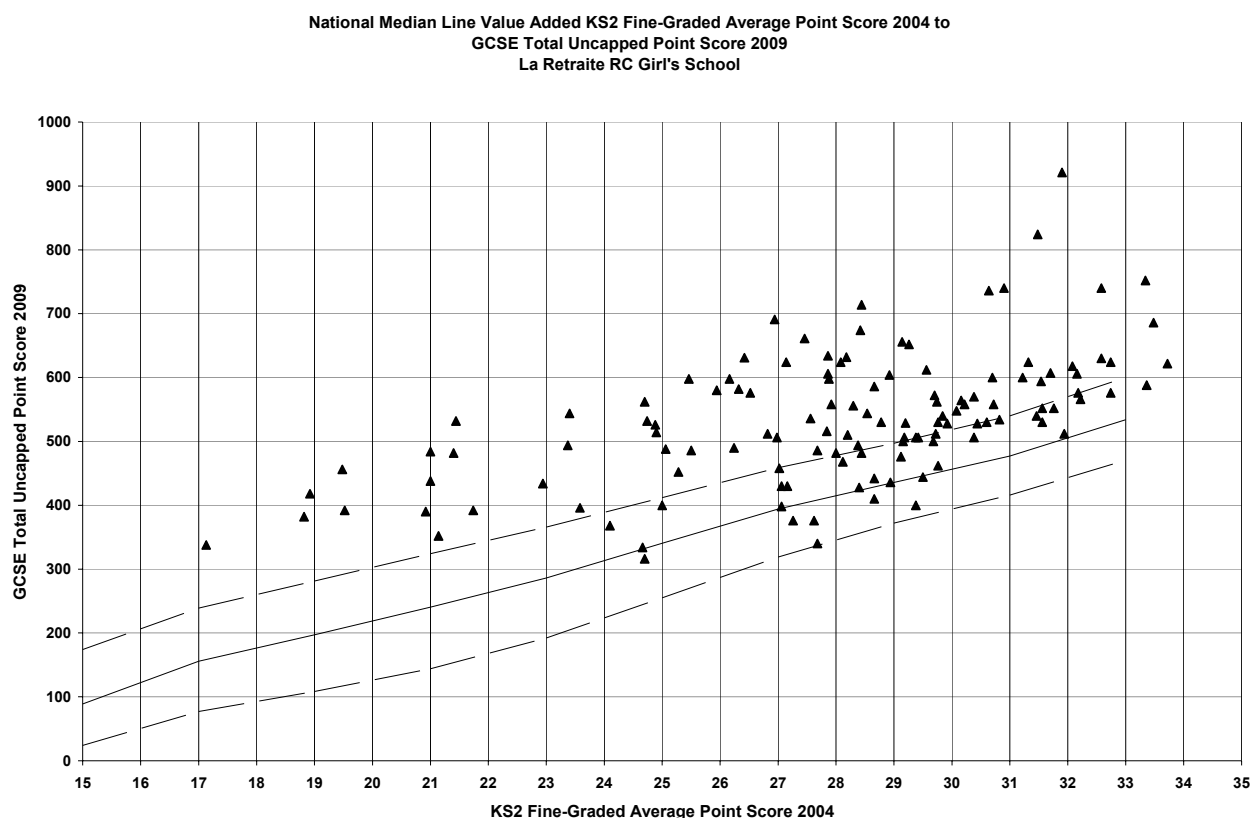
La Retraite	Lambeth	England	School CVA
65%	41%	45.8%	1010.2
57%	42%	46.8%	996.6
68%	47%	47.6%	1013.0
78%	53%	50.7%	1030.1

The contextual value added data of the school as can be seen from Table 1 as impressive as the raw data above and confirms all students have made good progress from KS2 to GCSE. In

addition the median line in figure 1 also shows that students in school have made a good progress in terms of value added and that the school performance in the top level in the upper quartile.

Overall the school has an excellent record of improving performance of all groups and individual students. Students in the school progress much higher than similar pupils nationally. Close monitoring and intervention at all key stages ensures all students receive the support they need to provide the opportunity to attain the best results they can.

Figure 1: La Retraite KS2 to GCSE national median line value added



Teaching and Learning

In this school the quality of teaching is seen as crucial to raising achievement of pupils. The emphasis on quality teaching and student achievement is accorded by evidence from teachers' interviews. We interviewed the Heads of English and Mathematics who work closely together at La Retraite to get more insights about school achievement and teaching and learning in the two Departments. They feel that they are well resourced and this has had a positive impact on results in their departments.

'We feel our Headteacher is listening to us when we say we need for example a bigger budget. The head has supported us in core subjects- made them the heart of the curriculum.'

'The fact of having an extra teacher in the Maths department means we can have seven sets across a year-group – much smaller classes..We also put the best teachers in the most appropriate classes to maximise achievement.'

'We let the girls know that it's OK to make mistakes in Maths- it's part of learning. We come to school to learn.'

There is a policy of early entry in Year 10 in Maths. If girls do well in Maths, gaining an A or A* in Year 10, they can go on to do GCSE Statistics. This allows them to increase the number of GCSEs which they achieve and to prepare better for A level Maths. For those students who won't get a C in Maths *'we identify areas of weakness and give them close mentoring. They also have to come to Maths club every Thursday, this is compulsory It is by focussing on the needs of individuals that the department achieves so well overall..*

The Maths Department also uses a wide range of 'additional extras' to add value. All students receive a Maths DVD to watch for revision. In the Spring term a representative from EdExcel comes into school to work with some groups who are on a borderline between C and D or between B and A. This is to give hints on exam techniques and *'what they need to do to get the results.'* In Year 11, the mock GCSE papers are scrutinised and topics highlighted that individual girls need to focus on.

The Heads of Maths and English also argued that they use data extensively for lesson planning and targeting support:

'We track pupils over the term, fill in the excel spreadsheet and identify key groups. Also I, with my deputy in the department, do a book scrutiny and give individual feedback to teachers. They look for constructive feedback. We do informal observations as a coaching tool.'

'Again in English we have 6 smaller sets across the year group in all years. This means that there are only 18/19 girls in the bottom set. We re-structured the department with the help of the head teacher recently and this really helped with supporting students. We are very well resourced. We place a lot of emphasis on differentiation – even within ability sets.'

At the end of Year 10, the English teachers look to see who is behind in their course work and review who might be in danger of getting below a C grade. Then they put in the additional support, giving a great deal of extra time, where necessary.

'We teach them to the highest possible expectation. We want them to keep their options open until the last minute. It's about our motto - 'For the greater glory of God'; we want the students to believe that they can do anything.'

'It's about team work- sharing good practice. People want to help the students. It's part of the Catholic ethos. Sharing the belief that we are all part of a whole and understanding that each child is an individual loved by God for her talents. We want these girls to achieve the very best that they can.'

'We have the support of the parents. They want their kids to do well. They appreciate that we are spending the extra time with them.'

Leadership and Management

A key factor in the school's success is its outstanding leadership and management. The ethos of the school is centred on achievement and the quality of students' learning experiences. There are high expectations for all students and the staff will not accept social deprivation or English as an additional language as excuses for underachievement. The approach is one of consistently challenging its students to do well. There is a strong Behaviour Policy, led by a Deputy Head, which supports learning and consistency in behaviour management.

The headteacher has successfully established a strong ethos of leadership throughout the school. Extremely good development plans and departmental reviews by the Senior Leadership Team

support this well. Senior and middle leaders set clear direction, with a particularly strong focus on continuous improvement. The whole school shares the common aims of raising standards and improving achievement. Promoting equality of opportunity and combating discrimination are central to the school's ethos and enable all students to succeed in this very caring environment.

Leaders' expectations of what can be achieved are very high. As a result, whole-school targets for students' progress are translated well into ambitious yet realistic targets for individual pupils. The use of data has been substantially reviewed over the last year and is now outstanding. The presentation of data is exceptionally helpful and is used by all staff to ensure that accurate analysis and monitoring of progress towards targets is happening at all levels.

The school's planning is very well focused and built on an excellent understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Rigorous self-evaluation is very well informed by regular monitoring of the school's work.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's context, strengths and areas for development. They work closely with the Senior Leadership Team and contribute significantly to school improvement.

At the last OFSTED inspection, attendance was at 91% and was noted as an area for improvement. In 2009, it was up to 94.6% and in 2010, it is likely to be above 95%. The whole school has made an effort at every level to improve attendance. Tutors, Year Learning Co-ordinators, the SLT and governors have all been involved either in taking action or in monitoring. *'It's been in the forefront of conversations'. (Headteacher)* Considerable resources have been diverted into improving attendance and this has worked.

The Head Teacher has a clear idea of how everyone in the school has worked together on many different fronts. She notes how all departments have worked together to achieve further success.

'Every department has also worked hard in their particular area. There have been extra classes, we've looked at the data to see where development is needed. It's about being fairly analytical. Looking at exam results. Looking at groups such as gifted and talented students looking to see where the development is needed. Sometimes, you might say that the talented children are doing well in their 'specialist' area, but that generally gifted or 'bright' pupils are underachieving across the whole range. Then you focus on those particular children and find out how you can support, and, sometimes, challenge them.'

The Head Teacher also speaks about how the senior team works to identify under-achievement and then to counter it:

'Three years ago, the CVA was 997 – a bit under the average. We could see that children could have achieved more. Only 46% were getting A - C in Double or Triple Science and we were convinced that, as a Science specialist school, we could do better.'*

'Also, we felt that we could offer something better to students with a less academic, more practical bent, so we changed the curriculum. Our curriculum became more personalised. Our curriculum planning focuses on the individual so that every child can find a successful route through school.'

'We are regularly analytical about the data. We have a brilliant Leadership Team. We introduced a sort of Venn diagram concept in predicting who would get a A-C in English and Maths, and who was heading for just one of those subjects That way, we could focus the intervention more carefully and precisely. Now, our Year 11 team know at any point in the year where the pupils are – how many of them still need to improve to achieve their targets. '

The Year Learning Co-ordinators identify the pupils who aren't moving forward fast enough. Their role is as much about learning as pastoral care. They look at data and, using the traffic light system, they identify who is on red/ orange, and what interventions are necessary to get them to green.'

'Departments might be red/ orange too. We hold our departments accountable. In September they come to see me with the line managers with their examination analysis, and then, mid year, we have a departmental review. We give them an Ofsted grade. Geography was failing for several years- achieving around 36% of A - C. To improve things, we moved the line management to the Deputy Head and between him and the Head of Department, they identified that one paper was losing all the marks. They needed to prioritise. A plan was made for the paper and it worked - this year they achieved 76%. Good improvement compared to 36% in previous year.'*

'We are trying to strengthen middle leaders. I know that they would say that they had been supported in terms of resources/ money- laptops etc. Certainly, they know they are accountable for their departmental results and work hard to effect positive change. Some heads of department have effected fantastic improvement over a short period.'

'In our classrooms there is a feeling that we want to get our work done and achieve. There is a brilliant work ethic among many of our pupils – particularly those from some ethnic minorities. Most girls want to go to University and do a profession.' (Head teacher)

Parental engagement

The school is very good at engaging with parents. There are Curriculum Evenings for all year-groups annually. These are with parents, not children. There are also parent teacher consultation meetings, and academic tutoring days.

'We talk to parents about feeding their children properly, regular sleeping habits, tips to support them with homework. We explore the target system with mid term monitoring. We talk to them, like we do the girls, about aspirations, the job market.'

The school uses a wide range of means of communication to provide parents with the information they need. They regularly survey parents to find out preferred means of communication and constantly looking to improve this.

'The Friday News (weekly newsletter) breaks down walls between home and school. We tell parents about school and local events. We consult with parents about, for example, the Behaviour Policy. We put things on the website for parents. We also survey parents regularly and have 95% feedback sometimes- there's a very strong sense of parental involvement. The Catholic school ethos helps too, it's a special kind of cohesion where our faith binds us together.'

'We invite parents in a lot. For instance, when they are new to the school, we have a Year 7 Mass for parents to bring them in to our community.'

The school is very successful in informing parents about the ways in which they can help their children. Consequently, all students interviewed said their parents were interested and fully involved in their learning at home.

The curriculum reflects the diverse backgrounds of students and their families. Parents contribute meaningfully to this through their attendance at, and a strong involvement in, the many religious and cultural celebrations. This positive parental involvement is clearly noted from a parent's comment during an Ofsted Inspection:

“Choosing La Retraite is one of the best decisions we have made as parents. We have never regretted it for a moment’. This comment reflects the high level of parental support that exists for this popular and oversubscribed school. Harmonious relationships, excellent behaviour and a strong desire to learn are features that make this an outstanding school where girls feel very happy and safe. They enjoy school because they know they are taught well and are supported to do their best.” (Ofsted 2007)

Use of Data

At the core of ‘every good school improvement strategy’ is the effective use of data in self-evaluation and planning for improved outcomes for pupils. Previous research in the school and the LA shows the difference that can be made at pupil, school and system level through the effective use of data, e.g. in setting high expectations, identifying underachievement and intervention, informing decisions on resource allocation and in monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking performance.(Demie et al 2006; Demie 2003)¹²

The School has used a range of national and local pupil data including LA data, FFT, Raiseonline and school data to enable them to evaluate pupil progress and attainment. Effective use of data enables the school to improve teaching and learning and to facilitate tracking pupil progress, challenging expectations of staff, pupils, parents; identification of pupils’ achievements and setting of targets, identifying underachieving pupils for further support, informing teaching and learning and strategic planning

From September 2009 the school looked carefully at the strengths and weaknesses in the way its data was used in previous years and has now developed a new approach based on a traffic light system to monitor pupils’ progress. There is now a watching brief on predicted grades for Year 11 pupils and interventions considered for individual children. A traffic light system is used to monitor pupils progress, across the school. The Deputy Head speaks about the way in which the school not only collects data but uses it to intervene in a meaningful way:

‘The use of targeted support works across the departments. We keep a very close eye on who is likely to pass English but not Maths or vice versa. We intervene with these pupils with booster sessions. We try to raise awareness of their situation with teachers, students and parents so that the students are focussed and supported during the run-up to GCSEs. I meet with the students regularly. We think it’s about having a teacher they trust and achieving the right mentality.’

‘We were aware last year that some students had skills or talents that were not accredited. They spoke a language fluently, for instance. Now, we make sure that they have the opportunity to do a GCSE in their home language if they are able. This also helps to make them aware of their own abilities and gives them confidence.’

¹² Demie, F.; McLean C, Lewis, K. (2006). Raising Achievement of African Heritage pupils: Good Practice in Lambeth schools, Research and Statistics Unit, London Borough of Lambeth, March.

Demie, F. (2003). Using value-added data for school self-evaluation: A Case Study of Practice in Inner City Schools, School Leadership and Management, Vol. 23, No.4, pp. 445-467.

'There has been personalised support, from the pastoral staff as well as from the academic staff. Year Learning Co-ordinators look as closely at the data as subject teachers and speak to the students about what they need to do as individuals to maximise their outcomes. We are working at developing the predictive skills of teachers so that we have increasingly robust data to work with.'

'The Sixth Form has been important in raising aspiration, important in bringing up achievement. As a result we have been able to attract better quality teachers.. Success breeds success; when students lower down the school hear about the Year 11 girls doing well, they want to emulate this themselves. There is a new optimism for education.'

'We find that the important thing is having the confidence to use the data. This is important for staff at all levels. We know that there is only so much data you can convey to people. We try to keep it simple so that everyone can understand just what they have to do to succeed. We say it's not so much about the actual data but about how you use it for improvement. It's a person to person job. Its about motivating the children to do their best. You have to get the relationship and trust right - that's what matters.'

The Deputy Headteacher is in no doubt that the more focussed use of data has raised teachers' expectations and introduced more challenges into the teaching. In the school, teachers use the data to inform teaching strategies to determine specific interventions with individual children, such as extra support in Maths or intensive EAL support.

Teachers interviewed also acknowledged the effectiveness of data and commented that:

'Data has been a fuel that has kept the 'engine for improvement' burning.'

'It has forced teachers to look at particular areas of attainment and decide what to do to help the children get to the next level.'

'The data provided by school helps you to target groups of children for specific types of help.' This is further supported by another Assistant Headteacher who commented that data provided to teachers has been extremely useful

- 'to highlight specific weaknesses for individual pupils, identify,
- weaknesses in topics for the class as a whole,
- inform accurate curricular targets for individual pupils,
- and tailor teaching to the needs of targeted groups.'

The effective use of data by the school to provide well targeted support is also well recognised in an Ofsted report that states:

"The school is very successful in identifying and tackling barriers to learning for students from different cultural backgrounds and providing well targeted guidance and support. The high quality of the school's self evaluation and review results from rigorous monitoring and analysis of performance at all levels. This helps the school to identify and prioritise areas for improvement such as developing the skills and roles of middle leaders and improving assessment for learning." (Ofsted 2007)

"The school mid-term monitoring system plays an important role in securing positive value added for each student as there is targeted intervention for students requiring specific support." (Ofsted 2007)

To conclude, evidence from this and previous research into the use of data in the school (see Demie et al 2006) confirms that the effective use of a wide variety of data has promoted teaching and learning by clearly indicating areas for development, identifying under-performing groups, the better use of staff and resources and for closely monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives and strategies. The interrogation of data is a key feature of pupil progress meetings (academic reviews) in the school. It supports schools in making judgments about the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of targeted interventions, as well as in planning further action to overcome barriers to attainment and progress.

Inclusion

Inclusion in the school is of a high priority. There is a strong belief in the school that 'to have a better life you need to get your academic qualifications' but teachers in the school take a holistic approach to supporting every girl to achieve this.

'As a school we've worked on rigorous monitoring of academic work but we have also developed the therapeutic support of each girl where necessary.'

The role of Head of Inclusion (Assistant Headteacher) covers many areas. Attendance and punctuality was highlighted by Ofsted as an area for development and the school has worked hard to raise attendance from 91% in 2007 to 94.6% in 2009.

'We keep a constant eye on attendance and discuss the latest figures at SLT meetings. We've made a breakthrough with persistent absence. We've kept it in the forefront of conversations with teachers and parents. The communication has been persistent and the personal contact with particular girls and their parents/ carers, essential.'

The Assistant Headteacher emphasises the importance of the students being known as individuals:

'I know all the girls, because I'm involved with the induction and interviews with all the Year 7 girls. This sets the scene, the girls all know me.'

Another area of focus has been early intervention where a student has identified need:

*'There are a large number of girls on School Action Plus. We are using a larger number of agencies than we have in the past to support girls. The **On it** team, **Compass** and **Young Carers** all of these teams support our girls. Some of them have very difficult lives and we know about their situation and aim to give them maximum support.'*

'We work closely with CAMHS (Children and Adult Mental Health Service).'

'We have a counsellor who is in for one and a half days a week and now a police liaison officer who is based in school. We also have a Chaplain who offers support. Certain girls latch onto her that haven't anyone else'

There has been 'in school support' with the development of the early morning reading club (8- 8.25 a.m.) for girls in Years 7 and 8 with lower reading ages run by the SEN department. The SEN Department is open all the time for girls to go up and obtain the additional support they need with homework/coursework. There are also homework and coursework clubs at lunchtimes for targeted children to attend which is run by LSAs.

The school has also opened 'The Retreat', an inclusion unit where students, possibly facing exclusion, are sent both to benefit themselves, because they get one-to-one attention and tutoring, and also to benefit the rest of the class. They can take their classwork there, receive support and some counselling and prepare for their reintegration back into the classroom.

The school tries to be creative in the way it deals with issues:

'We have systems in school - we use friendship groups a lot. A student went missing for two weeks and we were able to successfully reintegrate her by using the support of her friendship group. If it's a health issue for a girl, again we use her friendship group.'

There are five Year Learning Co-ordinators in the school, one for each year group. The Head of Inclusion can support the co-ordinators with social care needs which enables them to 'concentrate more on the academic needs. They can pinpoint issues that are barriers to achievement while I take on a role which involves personal and pastoral support.'

'We had three LAC girls in Year 11 last year. They all had so many additional needs, two had safeguarding issues, major emotional needs, and needed so much extra support- a large package of support. They all had attendance issues and needed the support of the learning mentors. Each girl had a Shaftesbury Tutor- before their GCSEs, once a week. It's harder after they reach 16 - harder to liaise with the Leaving Care Team. In one case, her foster carer had a really good relationship with the school and has stayed on to support her and liaise with us.'

She'll make it, she'll get her dream. She is very focused, she'll get there.'

The school organised a 'managed move' for one vulnerable girl to Westminster. The Learning Mentor went to the school interview with her.

'We still check on her, her results, her attendance. She'll definitely get all her BTECs.'

The school runs a 'parallel curriculum' for some students in Years 8 and 9. This is targeted at girls with self esteem issues- 'those that are shy, reticent, don't speak up in class, don't have any belief in themselves.' The girls work in small groups for a six week period, a mixture of group and 1 to 1 or 1 to 2 sessions, on SEAL support.

'This has had an impact on their self confidence, their health and well being, their attendance. J takes them into the group with a cup of herbal tea!'

Use of Learning Mentors

The main role of the learning mentor is to break down barriers to learning.

'I am working with 40 girls. Some need quite a lot of support, others are just ticking over. Girls get referred by their Year Learning Co-ordinators or my line manager or they can self refer. The reason might be school based or home issues, friendship issues, eating disorders. I will support them with their studies even if they were referred for personal reasons.' (Learning Mentor)

They might have support once a week but this is dependent on the issue.

'Once they get to Year 11 they know me quite well. There is a girl in the sixth form who has done well academically but needed support with her behaviour since Year 7. I helped her to get involved in different activities outside of school which has helped to focus her. Her family are supportive. It can be a long process especially if it's a deeper rooted problem. The most important thing is building relationships of trust and confidentiality if needs be.'

The Head of Inclusion says of this Learning Mentor, *'the girls are so trusting of her.'*

'The Learning Mentor and the member of staff in 'The Retreat'; are so keen to extend their knowledge. They are so supportive of each other. Everything they do is so calm and gentle, with ease - taking girls out of class, reintegrating them.'

'K supports a girl until 5 p.m. to help her with any outstanding work- she has found her BTEC work overwhelming. K helps her to organise herself. E has a group of 3 girls, they are shy and have problems socialising. One of them has had pressure with her parents wanting her to be a doctor- she doesn't want that. She sits and has lunch with them sometimes.'

'The current Year 11s- with a few it's a case of helping them to get into routine, sleep patterns, diet, easing down on the social life. Others have personal difficulties which impact on their work. Year 11 is a very difficult year for them- very stressful. I say to them 'OK, this is crunch time.' Some girls are really ready for college, for the outside world, it's about reining them in.'

It's hard to get a place in college and some girls don't get the support from home. There are homework clubs here though, they can get the support, there is no excuse not to get their homework done.

The Learning Mentor supports with attendance too. *'Among the Year 11s, there is some shaky attendance. Some need encouragement and support with their attendance. I check in with the girls, give them strategies for getting into school on time, give them a call on their mobile if necessary.'*

The work of the Learning Support Assistant

One Learning Support Assistant gives support to girls in Years 9, 10 and 11. For many of the girls support means, 'breaking down the instructions, helping girls to use the equipment.

'I vary the support for each girl I work with. One is autistic, one has dyslexia. I build a relationship with them.'

One important factor here is that the Learning Support Assistant is an ex-student on her gap year. Her role has been so successful that the Headteacher intends to recruit her replacement from the current Year 13 for next year.

'I am an ex-student on my gap year. I have done well - I am going to Bristol University next year to study medicine. I can be an example to the other girls, I know how hard it is, GCSEs are hard, A levels are hard.

I left my previous school at 16 and went to college for the sixth form but didn't have a good start so came to La Re traite and never looked back!. I also was a young carer looking after my dad who had an accident in the gym so I know how hard it is for some of the girls here. I got my grades because of the teachers and the ethos of the school. They were very supportive of me, they encouraged me with my university application. I had to do well to make my parents proud.'

'She is such a positive role model for the girls.' (Learning Mentor)

The student voice: Evidence from student focus group

Pupils spoke positively of their school. One student said *'When I first came here, I hated the fact that my mum had chosen it, but within a week I adored it.'*

Each of the nine pupils talked positively of the support and encouragement that their teachers gave them:

'They concentrate on our needs, so that we can get our work done and make sure we get our grades.'

'They are fair with their punishments. Behaviour is at a decent level.'

'When I started in Year 7 the teachers eased me through'

Pupils are positive about the positive behaviour system in the school:

'The teachers boost my self esteem, they give me merits, it's good because we are always competitive.'

'We get rewards - pizza, Chinese food if we are form of the week.'

'People who have tried really hard get 'student of the week'

One sixth form student talked of the tireless work of one teacher, who had supported her with her UCAS entrance:

'She helped me so much, - I did 15 to 20 drafts! She was pregnant too but she was willing to help me as far as I needed it.'

The pupils felt that their lessons were 'fun' and that in the sixth form:

'the pressure of the work is broken up because they make it fun; they break up the level between GSCE and A level.'

The school has developed a scheme for incorporating students in the life of the school, through 'Action Groups'. Examples of these are Chaplaincy, Environment and Fundraising where the students raised money for Mother Teresa's work in Calcutta and the Earthquake Fund in Haiti.

The family atmosphere of the school is reinforced by the mentoring which goes on between older and younger children, *'there is a presidential team and prefects in each of the form classes up until year 9 help each other out.'*

Conclusions

La Retraite is an outstanding school in which each and every pupil really does matter. The study identified a number of key factors for success:

1. The school's strong ethos and Christian values based on the expectation that all pupils would strive to achieve their best.
2. The exceptional care, guidance and support provided by the school are real strengths.
3. Strong leadership and strong systems. The excellent head teacher, working with a committed and talented senior leadership team, has created a thriving, purposeful school with achievement and care at its heart. Expectations are high and, as a result, girls flourish and achievement is outstanding.
4. Intensive support of pupils through extensive use of learning mentors, TAs, SENCO and EAL teachers and assistants.
5. Close links with parents.
6. Use of data is strength of the school. Rigorous pupil level tracking is established as one of the core elements of raising achievement in the school. The intelligent use of this tracking data enables schools to identify underperforming pupils and to then target intervention support appropriate to promote accelerated progress towards age-related expectations.

Section 4: Summary- Common features of school strategies to raise achievement

This study looks at schools that serve Britain's disadvantaged areas and examines the success factors behind their outstanding achievement and improvement over the years. Two overarching research questions guided this research: Why do some schools succeed against the odds? What are the factors contributing to this success?

The key criteria for the selection of schools was a very high proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals; an 'outstanding' grade in the most recent inspections; a high standard and sustained improvement of attainment over the period.

A complementary methodological approach was used to explore performance and the views of teachers, parents and their children about schooling. First, detailed GCSE pupil level data related to sex, ethnicity, free school meals, mobility rate and levels of fluency in English was collected covering the last 10 years and matched to their attainment data for contextual and value added analysis. Secondly, case studies were carried out to observe lessons and to hold discussions with headteachers, staff, governors and pupils to evaluate and gather evidence on how well all pupils are achieving and the factors contributing to this. The main method of data collection was open ended semi-structured interviews with senior management, teachers, administrative staff and support staff as well as pupils. Interviews were conducted by two researchers. Finally, pupil and parent focus groups were undertaken to ascertain the views of pupils and parents regarding their experiences and on what works in school. This was followed by 1500 pupil attitudinal survey using a questionnaire to ascertain pupils' views and opinions on school and learning and aspirations for the future. The common features of school strategies to raise the achievement of all pupils are summarised below:

School leadership and ethos: Ofsted inspections confirms leadership and management at each of the four schools as 'outstanding'. Leaders are described as 'inspirational' and 'visionary' each with a strong moral drive for pupils to succeed whatever their background. One headteacher states,

'What a great and noble thing it is to be around children and change society.'

Clarity of roles and responsibilities in leadership teams are evident at every level in each school. One school attributes its dramatic improvement over the last decade to the promotion of a dynamic and decentralised approach to leadership which has given staff genuine authority but supported them in developing the best possible way of going forward. A Deputy Principal characterises the leadership team as: *'cohesive...it is not negatively competitive, it is cohesive.'*

Leaders in each school set high expectations for their staff teams with a relentless focus on improvement, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, effective use of data and higher achievement by students.

'It is about staff taking responsibility for outcomes... everyone is clear about their roles and everyone is supported!'

There is an exceptional sense of teamwork across each school which is reflected in the consistent and committed way managers at all levels work toward the schools' aims to raise achievement. Schools are proud of their efforts to maintain an inclusive ethos. This is seen in the very good progress made by all groups of students.

'We are constantly reviewing ourselves, reflecting on why we are here, our vision, our ethos. Our spiritual connections are strong- the belief in the agenda goes beyond the contract, there is a moral obligation to get this right. Despite the regular reviews and restructures, the fundamentals don't change. Such fundamentals are summarised by one headteacher,

'There is an energy flowing through the school. It's almost an eastern philosophy- what you believe you translate into reality.'

'Heads and senior managers need to remain excited about the agenda.'

Governance in the four schools is strong and they share the school's aspirations for the students. Governors are involved in the life of each school through *'regular meetings and fact finding visits'* and it's strategic direction, well informed about development plans and increasingly effective in the balance between support and challenge. One headteacher states that;

'they have been righteous in the way that they have changed things. They have a vested interest in the school and the direction within which it goes. Throughout the rough times they have had the ability to be optimistic, the governors have taken very difficult decisions.'

A strong culture of self-evaluation pervades all areas of the schools. At senior level it is particularly incisive. It is underpinned by a drive to get the possible outcomes for each child.

'We teach them to the highest possible expectation. We want them to keep their options open until the last minute.'

'We have the support of the parents. They want the kids to do well. They appreciate that we are spending the extra time with them.'

Student Voice: The agenda has shifted to pupil leadership and involvement. At one school there is a powerful example of distributed leadership to student level. A Year 8 pupil, the Principal of the Junior Leadership Team, describes the team's function as follows:

"We are a group of students. We shadow the roles of the SLT and we each have a counterpart. My counterpart is the Principal".

The process of appointment to the role of Junior Principal provided those who applied for the post with early experience of the job application process! The JLT has its own small budget. Modes of communication, e.g. emails, agendas and minutes and team meetings are run in parallel with the SLT. Regular presentations are made to staff and governors on the JLT's recommendations, following consultation with students and the School's Council.

At another school the school specialism is Business and Enterprise which gives pupils opportunity to enhance their leadership across the school too. *'We have a strategic system to challenge children's leadership qualities'*. School managers had a clear rationale for their choice of school specialism. The head states;

'Many of our children come from family backgrounds where the ethos is 'if you don't do it for yourself then no one else is going to do it for you' therefore the business and enterprise specialism is very important.

Why shouldn't these children be business leaders, I believe it is morally wrong for children not to believe in themselves- why shouldn't these children not have their dreams, without the ego of the headteacher getting in the way.'

The Black Rose has developed a business selling badges, the wearing of which signals one's opposition to knife and gun crime in Lambeth. The pupils have developed the leadership side of this and the older children train up the younger children. There are many other opportunities for children to develop with sports leadership, army cadets, sea cadets, Boys to Men, London Young Chamber of Commerce, Girl Guides'.

The views of pupils, parents and students are sought regularly, are much valued and used to inform worthwhile changes in the schools. Head teachers are keen for children to have a greater say in the way the schools are run and a greater involvement in their learning, to get the culture of learning right. A member of staff in the English department of one school states, *'If we are doing it*

for them we need to know what we can do better for them. We need to know what they want from us.'

'We want pupil voice to be credible to the children. Pupils do feel that they have an input into policies etc.'

As school leaders we have to be flexible, to look at our population- know who is in the population- connect with the community. If the kids won't buy into the agenda they won't do it. We constantly reflect with the children.

The strength of pupil voice is summed up in the words of a one student to the headteacher,

'Well you know this place is good but we have to take it further.'

Pupil views are sought through School Council meetings with SMT, pupil questionnaires, target setting days, student committees and through a range of Action groups examples being Chaplaincy, Environment and Fundraising.

Inclusion: Inclusion in the four schools is of a high priority. Schools promote inclusion rather than exclusion looking at every type of support possible for a pupil before even beginning to think about exclusion. One Head of Inclusion suggested that *'to have a better life you need to get your academic qualifications'* but stresses the need for a holistic approach to supporting every girl to achieve this, *'developing the therapeutic support of each girl where necessary.'* Another school recognises that *the very best learning takes place in a culture of inclusion and loving environment, lives out it's school motto , 'Caritate et disciplina' 'With Love and Learning'.*

At all schools there is an emphasis on the needs of every individual child at the heart of the school. One member of school staff states:

We have high expectations of everybody, every teacher expects pupils to do as well as they can. We do see their differences and we make a virtue out of them. It's about the needs of those individuals...a focus on the individual student. I hope pupils never feel singled out for what they are, but we single them out because of who they are".

In order to meet the individual needs of students, schools have developed exceptionally strong, committed and very well-co-ordinated teams, who draw on a wide range of external, multi-agency professionals. These include the On it team, Compass and Young Carers, CAHMs, a police liaison officer and an on site part time counsellor.

Learning Mentors play an extremely valuable role in enabling students to overcome barriers to learning. One mentor states;

'My focus is always on what are this student's strengths? Is it debating, poetry, sport? I try to get them involved in a range of extra curricular activities in and outside of school. It's about finding them one good role model for them.'

"I focus on school work and reading: I set up ground rules with them, of respect, expectations of themselves and expectations of me. All students keep a Journal, to enable them to open up and get their feelings out on paper. It releases their stresses and the issues which are in their heads."

Highly effective and innovative support from the Learning Support Team in one school has had a significant impact on pupils' achievement and progress throughout the schools.

Any concerns about the transfer to Secondary Schools of vulnerable pupils, or those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, stem from the difficulties students face in dealing with the wide range of teachers they need to engage with. The benefit of one school's approach is described by a Learning Support Assistant (LSA):

"In this school you have an LST and three LSAs per year group, so we know pupils well.....We are a constant feature of the lessons, even when they change teachers, we are always there. We try to

balance up pupils to the adults they get on well with, because we spend all day every day with them”

We have a strong philosophy about working in the classroom in lessons, team teaching across the curriculum, not withdrawing. The strategies we use are good for all pupils, visual aids, key words, timing of activities. We plan with the teachers focusing on how will my child access this lesson, can we look at this activity in a different way?’

Such an excellent, well-co-ordinated approach enables the staff to get to know students and their families very well, providing much needed stability. There is an emphasis on the school, the family and the external agency working together to support the child and give them the same message.

Community and parental engagement: All four schools have strong links to their community and believe in the need to treat parents as partners in educating their children.

One school is a designated training school with a wide offer to the community; work experience, training, offering degrees.

A school Training status allows opportunity for community engagement. Many people are referred from the Stockwell Community Resource Centre to the school for a variety of training e.g. Family learning. Parents are brought into the school with the aim of making the school the heart of the community. The purpose of their continuing education is threefold; to raise their aspirations, to support them to support their children and to bring the community together.

As part of the higher school’s performing status the school has also been developing school improvement training.

‘We have trained 31 PGCE students; their experience was broad, they got trained in data analysis and a lot of them had experience teaching the middle band. This really makes their experience real.’ (Assistant headteacher)

Some of the teachers have been doing their Masters Degrees ‘in house’ through action research and many TAs and HLTAs benefit from this in house training.

The school works together with the local community resource centre which offers ESOL, IT, Social lessons and Morley College introducing parents / community members to e.g. advanced ICT, Digital Photography. Through the Business and Enterprise specialism the school is to launch a Community Project which will be available to 60 participants. This will bring together a range of ethnicities, Portuguese, Somali. Together they will decide on their focus, learn how to get funding and about working together.

At another school the headteacher believes an important way of bringing the community into school is to employ ex students, one is a Learning Support Assistant on her gap year. Her role has been so successful that the headteacher intends to recruit her replacement from the current Year 13 for next year. *‘I am an ex student on my gap year. I have done well- I am going to Bristol University next year to study medicine. I can be an example to the other girls, I know how hard it is, GCSEs are hard, A levels are hard.*

Use of data: Use of performance data for school improvement is a strength of the four schools. All see this as an essential part of school improvement and schools have used data as one of the key levers of change and improvement. The use of data involves all staff, governors and parents. One of the core elements of the schools’ success in raising achievement is a robust focus on tracking and monitoring individual student’s progress and achievement in the widest sense of the term. In the word of the teachers in the schools the use of data:

‘Raised the expectation of staff and pupils and makes you focus on what children are actually learning.’ (teacher)

‘The school is good in assessing all pupils and teachers look at data carefully.’ (Deputy Headteacher)

'We use data incredibly well for personalised learning and we have a well developed tracking systems with detailed assessment data and background information including ethnic background, language spoken, level of fluency, SEN stage, data of admission, mobility rate, years in schools, which teacher's class has been attended, attendance data, type of support and postcode data that is used for tracking pupil progress.' (Data Manager)

'Teachers use the data to review student performance to have reflections and good conversation and to produce class profile. This has been useful for assessment for learning and tracking individual pupils performance. You can not do without a data.' (Assistant Headteacher)

Targeted support: There is a broad range of interventions in the schools which have helped towards targeting support where needed. Examples include EAL support and pastoral support including peer mediation training, restorative justice and an atmosphere of children being able to manage their own behaviour.

English as Additional Language (EAL) targeted support: In all case study schools a high priority was placed on supporting language acquisition amongst EAL students not fluent in English. This often appeared to be the dominant feature of curriculum developments in these schools. The teaching and class support for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is well organised and led by able EMAG teachers or achievement co-ordinators. The individual support for EAL pupils is good and has enabled the pupils to take full part in school life. Every year a few pupils arrive in the school with little knowledge of English. The EAL or ethnic minority achievements grant co-ordinator assesses their language needs and works with subject teachers to help meet them. Pupils' success in English language and literature at GCSE demonstrates that this approach works well. Many pupils who arrive with little English are able and highly motivated. Once they reach a level of fluency in English which enables them to cope with the whole curriculum, they forge ahead.

Pastoral support: Specific examples of targeted support to pupils that need support with their personal development are the Kick-start Project, which is a 12 week programme for young boys, focusing on self-esteem, self-perception, the role of a male in society, sexual responsibility, and drugs awareness, and the Civil responsibility programme where pupils work with a police liaison officer around *'what does it mean to be a good citizen?'*. This is targeted at pupils in school whose behaviour might be seen as criminal outside.

An example targeted at girls is 'Emerge for girls' which works with borderline Year 7 girls who show potential. They meet once a week to discuss identity and work on raising aspirations, looking at them as future leaders.

Schools have also reflected on the impact of transition from primary school for many children. One school employs a SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) Lead Teacher working primarily with Year 7. This teacher team teaches Year 7 with the PSHE teacher at the beginning of year 7 and together they identify seven students who are then withdrawn to follow a curriculum, covering the five themes of SEAL- self-awareness, managing feelings, empathy, motivation and social skills. As a result of this work the Principal feels there are less incidences of poor behaviour.

One school has also opened 'The Retreat', an inclusion unit where students, possibly facing exclusion, might go to 'cool off'. They can take their classwork there, receive support and some counselling for their reintegration back into the classroom.

Similarly friendship groups are used a lot. An example of this is when a student went missing for two weeks and the school was able to successfully reintegrate her by using the support of her friendship group.

Academic support: There is also academic support for Year 7 and the transition process for certain students across the schools. One Assistant head stated:

In 2000-1 the school looked at the learning needs of children and realised that they had many children with a reading age below the age of 9 years. 'We set up a Supplementary curriculum - each year we had 60 children. This intervention was revolutionary and successful. These children needed the stability similar to that which they had at primary school- one teacher for the majority of subjects, not having to move around the building so much- this would be too disruptive for these children. They only went out for PE, drama etc.'

Another school set up an early morning reading club (8- 8.25am) for girls in Years 7 and 8 with lower reading ages run by the SEN department. This SEN corridor is open all the time for girls to go up and obtain the additional support they need with homework/coursework. They have access to computers. There is now a more formally run homework and coursework club at lunchtimes for targeted children to attend which is run by LSAs.

Similarly schools focus on the particular needs in Year 11 with targeted support. At one school targeted students do less GCSEs and receive extra support at school where none is available from home. Thirty students were targeted to achieve a GCSE C grade and a mentoring programme was established. Mentors would meet with their students every two weeks to motivate them with their course work.

Celebration of Diversity and culture: The four schools saw the diversity within the school community as a genuine asset to the life of our school, to widen students' horizons and to enhance learning. School leaders are committed to community cohesion and inclusion. Each school therefore is described by parents and staff as a family. A student from one school stated *"everyone should be proud of their heritage; as a community we have embraced the different languages that we have."*

One school organises a Gospel choir every year where parents and the community play a key role in the singing. Also the school has a strong link with St Martin-in-the Fields in Trafalgar Square and the whole school go once every year to sing there. This is a tradition the school has kept going since it was established and *'it is a beautiful finish to the end of the year by singing at St. Martins'*.

The displays around the four schools not only celebrate pupils' achievement but also acknowledge the diversity of its pupil population. At one school a staff member commented that, *"displays are the reflection of our community. They are part of the community dialogue. They reflect what is going on in the school. They are part of the ethos of high expectations"*.

The Triangle project links one St Martin's with Anchovy High School, St James, Jamaica and St Andrews Complex, Sekondi, Ghana. The project was developed to mark the bi-centenary of the abolition of slavery in 2007. It was named the "Triangle project" in recognition of the historical triangle of trade which existed between Britain, Ghana and Jamaica. The focus is on increased knowledge of identity, human rights, social justice and explores issues related to the transatlantic slave trade.:

The project has a Christian ethos of 'love' of other communities and shares the resource we are blessed to have here. Many of the children's parents have a close link with the community and value highly the school link with Ghana and Jamaica. This project not only helped to enrich the school curriculum here but also helped to improve cultural understanding and exchange between Britain and the two countries. Parents are very supportive of the school link." (School Chaplin)

One of the legacies of the "Triangle Project" was not only developing cross curricular material for classroom use but also the creation of a charity dedicated to fund raising initiatives designed to support the partner schools and to sustain the links.

As part of the St Martin's inclusion strategy it has introduced a Britishness project, to ensure students understand what Britishness means and how to be involved and how to play a key role in British society. It wants everyone to feel part of British society from whatever background or heritage. *"We celebrate heritage of all groups in our school and the contribution all made to British*

society". The students had a period of independent studies on Britishness. Pupils were given time and opportunities to do research into Britishness and reflect.

Teaching and Learning: There is an active focus on learning in the schools with a sustained focus on ensuring access to the curriculum for every pupil, whatever their background. Teachers have an excellent understanding of where pupils are at in their learning; they know the learning profiles of each child, what interventions pupils might need. Pupil progression is very much an area of discussion through the staff teams. A member of staff at Stockwell suggested '*We are keen to bring this microscopic view into the foundation subjects too.*'

Schools tailor their teaching and learning to their pupil bodies. In one school, Year 7 students, with attainment below national expectations, are put into smaller groups with specialist teachers, with whom they stay, and have, what the school describes as "a supportive curriculum". This eases transition from primary school. In Year 11, the 'Increased Flexibility' project enables students to attend local Colleges for practical/vocational training. Students are able to work towards NVQ Level 1 or Certificates in Construction which feed into school qualifications.

At one school there was a general recognition in school that many pupils did not have independent learning skills. This would have an impact on KS4 and going to University. In response to this the school started the 'Learning to Learn' programme which is promoted as a process of discovery about learning and involves a set of skills that teach pupils to be learners for life promoting the five attributes to becoming a lifelong independent learner; Resilience, resourceful, responsible, reasoning, reflective learning.

A strong part of the school's identity is the range of academies on offer to its pupils which extend the curriculum and develop skills beyond the classroom. Examples include the writing, drama, science, sports and film studies academies. Pupils apply for academies, '*going through the interview process is part of the Business and Enterprise identity.*'

There is now a big focus on Gifted and Talented pupils in one school. The Directors of learning take account of children in this area and all G and T pupils have Individual Education Plans which are monitored. Using data as a tool any gaps in the learning of G and T pupils is discussed with teacher, pupil and parents in order to consider interventions to raise achievement. To meet the needs of the G and T pupils the mathematics department is running different programmes, such as an after school club to organise trips and to prepare pupils for the UK maths challenge. One pupil was given the opportunity to attend a Maths Day which was organised by UK Maths Challenge which gave the pupil the opportunity to meet pupils from other countries.

Overall the evidence presented here enables the conclusion to be drawn that the four schools in this study demonstrate the many ways in which they work to support pupils from all backgrounds. Their success is due to a broad range of visionary and creative strategies that have raised the achievement of all pupils. Common characteristics include inspirational committed leaders; an inclusive ethos which focuses on pupils holistically; a celebration of diversity within the school community, links with the wider community, teaching and Learning that focuses on individual need and targeted support for individual needs to ensure the achievement of every pupil.

Section 5: Conclusion

The main findings of the research show that the GCSE results have improved significantly in the case study schools and the schools have consistently been rated as outstanding in their inspection reports. Overall the data shows that from the generally low starting points, students reach exceptionally high standards at GCSE in all schools, performing above national average. For example, in one school GCSE results improved from 11% in 2000 to 73% 5+A*-C in 2009 despite 72% of the pupils were on free school meals which is used as proxy for levels of disadvantage. In another school GCSE improved from 56% to 93% 5+A*-C between the same period.

There are a number of reasons why the schools are bucking the national trends and are doing much better. The research identified the reasons behind the schools' success, which includes

consistent student routines, quality of teaching and learning, effective leadership at all levels including maintaining discipline and paying attention to individual student's needs, supportive professional development by investing in staff and their communities, inclusive pastoral care, strong values and high expectations that are applied consistently and effective use of data to monitor performance and to identify underachieving groups. What is particularly special about the case study schools is that they adopt a range of strategies and target support to challenge underachievement and poverty through extensive use of a local diversified workforce including teaching assistants, EAL teachers and learning mentors. Each of the school strategies is explored in detail in the paper to reveal exactly what the school is doing to ensure it provides the very highest quality of education for all its students. This is followed by discussion on the findings of the focus groups and attitudinal survey that mirrored the views of those participants in the case study interviews.

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