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Closing the gap

Case study: the work of a senior leader

Resource

Closing the gap

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This case study centres on the work of a senior leader, Jo, in closing the gap in an urban secondary academy. It focuses on:

- closing the gap between boys' and girls' GCSE attainment of five A*-C grades including English and mathematics
- working with curriculum leaders (middle leaders) in English (Lisa) and mathematics (Roz) to close this gap

Background

Shelbury is an urban, 1,100 pupil secondary academy serving a socially disadvantaged area. It is a sponsored academy formed from two neighbouring single-sex schools: Rossborough Girls School and Hurstpoint Boys School. The pupil population is largely White British although a range of other ethnic backgrounds is represented. The number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is around the national average, the number with special educational needs (SEN) is above average and those eligible for free school meals (FSM) well above average.

Jo has been vice principal at Shelbury for two years having previously been at Rossborough Girls School for four years: two as assistant headteacher followed by two as acting deputy headteacher. At Rossborough, she held key responsibilities for attainment, progress, and teaching and learning. Jo viewed Rossborough as a coasting school when she was appointed in 2005 but before its move to academy status saw its results improve from 33 per cent gaining five A*-C including English and mathematics (E&M) in 2006 to 54 per cent in 2009.

At Shelbury, Jo holds responsibility for curriculum, teaching and learning, the self-evaluation form (SEF) and performance management, and she also teaches science. Although in the first year of academy status she held key responsibility for attainment and progress, there has been a shift towards a more distributed model in the second year, characterised by greater shared accountability and leadership.

The case study is written in five sections:

- **The gaps:** what the gaps were, how they were identified and what the underpinning issues were seen to be.
- **The strategies:** focusing on the strategies used to close the gap.
- **The outcomes:** the impact of the strategies on closing the gap.
- **Key learning:** what senior leader Jo sees as her main learning points from leading closing the gap strategies and the leadership skills that have contributed to their success.
- **Next steps:** the school's next steps in closing the gap.

The gaps

As the person with lead responsibility for attainment and progress, when the two schools formed the new academy, it was Jo's role to look at the schools' relative performance data following the Key Stage 4 (KS4) exams in 2009. This showed that there was a major difference between boys' and girls' GCSE attainment of five A*-C grades including English and mathematics (see Table 1).

Table 1: Relative GCSE attainment of five A*-C grades including English and mathematics

School	Percentage achieving 5 A*-C attainment including English and mathematics
Rosborough Girls School	54 per cent
Hurstpoint Boys School	23 per cent

Seeking to understand why this 31 per cent attainment gap between boys and girls existed, Jo started with an analysis of the pupils' relative prior attainment on entry, using KS2 average point scores (APS). This showed a small attainment gap but not one that would account for the significant disparity between their respective results at the end of Year 11.

At that time, Hurstpoint was attaining 80 per cent five A*-C. There was, however, a substantial amount of alternative provision such as engineering qualifications that supported this attainment:

But when you looked at GCSE subjects such as English, maths and science, attainment was significantly below where it should have been.

Jo

As the acting deputy head at Rosborough prior to its becoming an academy, Jo was aware that Hurstpoint was relatively low attaining and, in advance of taking up her post as senior lead on attainment in the new academy structure, she asked a senior leader at Hurstpoint for the target grades for the cohort of boys about to start Year 11.

When that data came across, it was quite evident for me that the targets were lower than the targets that the girls had; significantly lower in terms of the level of challenge.

Jo

During this phase, Jo faced a number of leadership challenges including:

How do I suddenly go in and change all those targets, and have conversations with members of the leadership team who had set those targets? How do I share this information with teachers and curriculum leaders?

Jo

Jo considered that the targets had to be changed and contacted Peter, who was principal designate at the time, to consult him on the course of action she felt necessary. Peter agreed, acknowledging that a change in culture was required and that challenging existing systems and expectations would form part of this.

There really was a definite culture of glass ceilings and insufficient expectations of what pupils could achieve and it was almost endemic amongst staff and pupils and parents as well, so that was something that had to be broken quite quickly.

Peter

This challenge, they both recognised, would firstly include a conversation between Jo and the senior leader at Hurstpoint responsible for pupils' targets, who was imminently to be an academy colleague.

That was hard because we were going to be working together and I had to say, "Can you explain to me how you set your targets?"

Jo

This conversation included reference to the boys' relative low attainment, the target-setting process used by Hurstpoint and how that compared with Rossborough's, and how the latter would need to take precedence to raise boys' attainment.

There was an element of sensitivity around it and I made sure I didn't come across as: 'You've been doing this wrong' and 'I know better'. I was also aware that the cultures in the two schools were very different and they'd had totally different environments, but I also knew that one of the things we had to do was to raise the aspirations and expectations of staff and pupils.

I also made sure when I went into that meeting that I'd done all my preparation work and had all my justifications for why I was going to suddenly change all the targets; what the rationale behind it was. The rationale at that time was we had to improve the boys' attainment. If we were going on prior attainment, there was no reason why the targets should be lower. We were going to need to be quite ruthless and say, "Okay, let's take some of the social and cultural aspects away and say this is what we expect the boys to achieve; this is what we expect the girls to achieve."

Jo

Although conscious that she did not know the boys concerned or their individual circumstances, Jo set about this task over the summer holiday period so that Year 11 boys' targets reflected an increased level of challenge. She applied the same systems she used for setting the girls' targets, using KS2 APS scores, Fischer Family Trust (FFT) estimate data and teacher assessments to revise target grades. This step and its communication to leaders, staff and subsequently to pupils and parents was a significant one which served as a cultural marker and signalled a shift in expectations for attainment. It was, however, supported by Peter:

This is the data that we've used, this is why we have come up with this target and yes, it's an aspirational target but nonetheless could be achievable.

Peter

The first day as an academy was an in-service training (Inset) day and Jo shared with all staff the five A*-C including English and mathematics results shown in Table 1. This provided the platform to state that closing the gap between boys' and girls' attainment was going to be a priority and that the first stage of this had been to change the boys' targets and that, in the week ahead, staff would need to share this with them. The day also included an activity-based session on the staff's vision for the academy: what they wanted as educators, what they wanted the academy to feel like and what they wanted to see. Their contributions supported aspects such as high expectations and this helped set the tone for Jo's actions.

The step Jo had taken was, however, challenged at different levels. There were challenges from curriculum leaders and staff who knew the pupils, for example through line-management meetings or curriculum leader meetings. They expressed concerns such as:

"They're not going to get this, they won't achieve this, this particular pupil or group of pupils has had problems engaging in school, there are lots of issues outside school, their attitude to learning isn't right, they're not doing their homework, and yet you're expecting them to get a grade C; it's not going to happen."

Jo

When Jo presented the revised targets to the academy's governors, the chair challenged them, highlighting the level of aspiration. The governors put forward the view that the education the boys had received up until Year 11 had to be factored into considerations. Some would have a considerable amount of ground to make up and in being so aspirational there was a risk of demoralising staff and pupils who might see targets as not so much aspirational as unachievable.

Although resolute in terms of her demands for high expectations, Jo held conversations with curriculum leaders and staff around individual pupils so that there was an opportunity to review these and in some cases compromise:

It was understanding the data and how targets were set; why was a particular target set for one pupil and not another?

Jo

Progress towards agreed targets was kept under regular review both with staff and the pupils so that expectations remained high.

Jo states that although there was within-school comparison between departments at Hurstpoint, the national context was less evident in relation to target-setting and this was a shortfall that contributed to low expectations.

The strategies

In leading developments focused on boys' achievement and attainment, Jo and the school's leaders were conscious that these could not be to the detriment of girls' achievement and attainment. As a new academy, they knew that results would be under scrutiny, not least from parents, and that they needed to give the message that the academy move was the right one for its pupils.

The strategies were twofold in nature. At one level, these were targeted at teaching and learning and as such were largely the province of curriculum leaders, although Jo was integral to their development and support. At a higher level, Jo's leadership focused on equipping curriculum leaders to lead strategies effectively and there were several strands to this.

The first part of this section looks at teaching and learning strategies, while the second deals with curriculum leader development.

Teaching and learning strategies

You can't talk about progress and attainment without talking about the quality of teaching and learning as they dovetail together.

Jo

Central to Shelbury's closing the gap work were two main strands of activity:

- first, ensuring pupil performance data was used well and that accountability for this was clear, consistent and supported
- second, ensuring that teaching and learning strategies were targeted in order to raise attainment

The key message was that closing the gap was the result of a number of strategies, each of which made its own contribution. Allied to this was the message that some of these strategies were related to aspects such as whole-school systems and school culture. As such, they did not necessarily target boys solely, although they were major contributors to closing the attainment gap:

We were mindful that we needed to get the boys turned around. The first cohort as an academy hadn't improved enough [in maths]. Attainment had gone up from 27 per cent to 33 per cent for A*-C [in 2010], but then the jump from 33 per cent to 45 per cent in the second year [2011] was quite dramatic.

Roz, curriculum leader for mathematics

The main thing was changing the boys' perception of English and that was quite difficult. The boys had quite a negative attitude towards English and it was trying to get rid of that 'I can't do it' culture and breaking down those barriers.

Lisa, curriculum leader for English

This was compounded, Lisa felt, by prevailing Hurstpoint staff attitudes at the time that boys did not necessarily engage with English and their almost passive acceptance of this.

Adapting the learning offer

Although staff did informally gauge boys' learning preferences, adaptation of the learning offer in English came as a result of staff dialogue relating to changes they considered would help engage boys more (see also Figure 1 at Appendix 1). There was no formalised staff training related to gender learning preferences but a more experimental approach was adopted based on staff's existing knowledge. One of the ways in which Lisa, the curriculum leader, and her team shifted boys' attitudes towards English was through selecting learning resources that would hold greater appeal and relevance. This meant that at times there was a gender bias towards boys to help secure their engagement:

We'd pick those that were more suited to the boys as the girls were a bit more biddable and would have that ethos of analysing the text as it's a text that needs analysing, whereas the boys were more worried about what they were reading. There was however an effort to choose materials which would appeal to both genders.

I remember one particular lesson where we had to compare texts and I managed to find an article on a famous footballer and his wife and it generated a lot of discussion because you had both perspectives. And the really big one was that the boys generally didn't like studying 'poems from different cultures' as they felt they couldn't connect with them so we tried to get them to pigeonhole that negativity and we started with an entirely different cluster of poems [still from different cultures] and because they were new and they weren't those they felt they had failed at, it just helped. When we looked at the exam board results analysis, they had done much better on the poems than previously.

Lisa

The success of materials and approaches used were shared and evaluated at departmental meetings with outcomes informing future planning. Lisa acknowledged, however, that there was a fine line between choosing boy friendly materials and overdoing the approach so that it became obvious, as it was about engaging the boys, not running the risk of deterring their engagement.

Extended writing was also identified as an issue with all pupils, but particularly boys. Peter had the pupils sit a mock exam and then marked scripts produced by the whole Year 11 cohort to give a consistent picture of attainment and highlight strengths and weaknesses. Planning was highlighted as a key weakness within their extended writing, with pupils not having a clear structure and drying up well before the end of their allotted time. As a result, Lisa led a workshop for the whole cohort in the hall focused on the issues highlighted, supported by team members, and immediately following this, the pupils made a second attempt at their writing. During this second attempt, staff circulated giving instant feedback to pupils, referring them to what Lisa had just taught. When they had finished, staff circulated to mark them. This provided the instant response that Lisa considers boys prefer and resulted in significant improvements.

Extended learning time, competition and rewards

The academy has adopted an approach in which it uses three distinct sections within extended sessions in English and mathematics. This was an approach initially adopted by the English department for its three-hour lessons:

- The first hour would focus on a key aspect such as analysing non-fiction texts.
- The second hour would entail pupils writing an analysis of a non-fiction text, with as far as possible instant feedback built into this and then.
- The last hour would use a creative approach, such as working in a group to create a newspaper article. Boys responded particularly well to the instant feedback and creative approaches. Where possible ICT was used, as staff experience was that boys enjoyed using this as a medium for their learning.

The mathematics department changed to a similar structure from its two-hour, more traditionally structured sessions in which it was observed that boys' engagement could wane. In her role as strategic leader of teaching and learning, Jo supported the maths curriculum leader Roz in creating these three distinct components, each of which was 40 minutes long:

- The first part was teacher-led and would focus on aspects which pupils generally were finding challenging.
- The second part was bespoke learning, which enabled pupils to focus on improving their areas of weakness through, for example, individual study using text books, ICT or small-group work.
- The third part of the lesson used different approaches and included a strong emphasis on competition through, for example, quizzes using interactive voting pads. Roz identified this as raising the game for boys, including those more behaviourally challenging pupils, and was a strategy to which they responded very positively:

It just changed the dynamic, engagement and the enthusiasm in maths.

Roz

Indeed boys spoke of this as a preferred approach as they were keen to do better than their peers. This also included an applied approach, for example lessons were taken in the gym where physical activity was related to questions posed and this too responded to boys' preferred learning styles. This, Peter considers, 'enlivened sessions' for them.

Rewards were linked to strategies so that groups that performed best and made improvements from one exam paper to the next were awarded, for example, points towards rewards which they could claim at a later date, or on-the-spot prizes such as cinema tickets. This immediate response and positive reward for effort again suited boys' preferences, proving highly motivational. Phone calls to parents or carers and cards to say how well a pupil had done were also used and although this strategy was not confined to boys, it was seen by Lisa as particularly successful with them.

Successes were displayed on the television screens around the school and/or publicised in Peter's newsletters to parents, which helped reinforce the culture as well as celebrate achievement.

We had to be mindful of the girls but a lot of them were also motivated. Their results improved from 57 per cent to 60 per cent A*-C [in maths], so it wasn't at the expense of girls. It was just that we tapped into the competition element with boys and their results really improved through that.

Roz

Increased assessments and feedback

From September 2010 until the early entry exam in November, a project was trialled in which grade C/D borderline pupils in maths were assessed every three weeks using sections from exam papers related to the previous three weeks' focus. Marking of these was highly rigorous using analysis sheets and provided pupils with detailed, individual feedback. This feedback was fine-graded by teachers so that it went beyond, for example, a D grade to a D.1, D.2 etc. This helped pupils target and show incremental improvement and was more motivational than receiving just another D grade:

They understood that we knew the specifics they needed to do and so did they. If you asked a pupil what they needed to do to improve in their maths, they wouldn't just use the 'Oh, I need to revise more', or 'I need to do more work'. They'd say, "I need to factorise expressions" or "I need to be able to plot straight-line graphs". Because of the detailed feedback they'd know how to verbalise [their learning needs] and target their revision more.

Roz

Giving regular assessments but then also regular feedback to the pupils was key for the boys. It created an appetite that wasn't there before... they were hungry to find out what they did and what they could do to improve. We weren't enforcing that; they were independently wanting to improve and that was quite palpable in that changing culture.

Peter

Pupils were required to identify three areas of strength and three areas of weakness from this feedback with the latter becoming the focus for their learning in extended learning time. After early entry exam results were received in November 2010, the project was extended across the department, due to its success, so that it was not for grade C/D borderline pupils only. This project was shared with parents at a special meeting in September so that they were aware of its intentions, how they could support it and how they could check on provision through log-ins provided. This helped improve parental engagement.

There was some resistance within the maths team to the extension of the project, partly related to the increased demands on marking, but the pupils' increased ability to identify specific improvement points, allied to higher rates of progress compared with other classes, demonstrated its impact. With Jo's support in departmental meetings, Roz ensured that the project was adopted by all teachers. Following this, regular classroom monitoring was scheduled to ensure that it was happening.

After the results came out in January 2011, those who had not gained a C grade or above were placed in groups according to need. Curriculum flexibility was used so that if pupils had attained their C grade or above in English, they were able to spend more curriculum time learning maths. Although there was some initial resentment from pupils, they saw how important it was and their attitudes shifted:

The thing that inspired me most was that the pupils wanted to attend. They would approach staff and say, "I've finished in another subject and I've got some time, can somebody help me [in maths]?"

Roz

Pupil groupings

There was fluidity between groupings so that those pupils making substantial efforts in maths lower sets, for example, were able to move up to study for GCSE rather than foundation examinations. Pupils were aware of this movement and that if they did not apply themselves sufficiently there may be movement downward as well as upward.

A step on from deciding which pupils should be in which key groups was determining which teachers should teach them. After the early entry exam results, groupings were altered with the aim of making sure that, as far as possible, boys were placed with teachers they would relate well to and who would support their learning most effectively. This included considering the boys' personalities and motivation requirements and made use of early observations of teachers and the key skills they demonstrated.

This time [for 2010-11] we sat down and we matched every single pupil to a teacher as far as we could: "This group of students lacks a bit of confidence ...". We really did try and link up personalities and I think that worked so well.

Lisa

Additional study sessions

In maths, additional study sessions took place after school so that pupils were able to elect to attend and receive additional tuition from four maths teachers in specific aspects. Approximately a quarter of pupils attended these sessions with attendees varying according to their level of confidence in a specific aspect offered. As most of these were grade C/D borderline pupils, the majority were boys:

It was raising the expectations of the boys because at the start, when first they were in the academy, it wasn't cool to be clever and they didn't realise that they could do well. So the targets were aspirational and by their constant hard work they could see that it was achievable, so it was changing their ideas and changing their work ethic.

Roz

In English, too, there were revision sessions, both after school and in school time, some of which were for boys only and others dominated by them in terms of their attendance. These gave the boys:

... the feeling that they weren't being led by the girls but that they were setting the agenda.

Lisa

As in maths, the boys proved eager to use other times available for support. For example, Lisa states how she would work with boys during lessons when she wasn't teaching classes.

Targeted pupils also attended revision sessions in holiday periods when interventions were planned to meet their needs.

Knowing the pupils and fostering relationships, mentoring and assemblies

One of the underpinning strategies was staff making an effort to know the pupils well as individuals and develop positive relationships that would support their achievement. Whether this was related to their placement in a particular group with a particular member of staff, dialogue with the pupil and their parents, or ensuring that effort and success were acknowledged and highlighted, the aim was to ensure that the boys felt supported, valued and that their potential was recognised.

Lisa, for example, requested that team members let her know of notable pupil successes so that she would have the opportunity to mention this in the corridor when she next saw them. This gave the message to pupils that their achievements were recognised and circulated among staff.

You can make a big impact [as a leader] in your journey from room X to room Y with just one conversation.

Peter

Equally, if a pupil was not making sufficient effort he or she would have a one-to-one interview with Lisa who would offer tough love dialogue to help increase the pupil's efforts. Appealing to boys' interests outside school and sense of humour was also evident, for example when using anecdotes to assist learning:

I felt when that cohort left, I knew those boys inside out. There was that dialogue: "You are not working for Miss Jameson: why?" or "You've done really well for Miss Craven: well done!"

Lisa

They knew we had a full account [of their performance]; there was no place to hide... and yes, it was nagging and cajoling, but I think the positive part of that was the positive reinforcement the pupils got from all sides: senior leaders, teachers, curriculum leaders. All our conversations were about learning and attainment, so if there was a behaviour issue it was about its impact on learning and attainment rather than just the behaviour.

Peter

Shelbury has a behaviour for learning policy which clearly establishes the link between the two. Its expected standards, founded on respect and manners, are clearly communicated in posters in every room, are the focus for the reward system and are strongly emphasised in all communication, including newsletters and the academy's website. Behaviour for learning is also evaluated across departments so that what is expected in one subject area is commonly applied in another. Respect as a hallmark, for example, respect for others in the classroom, was taken from pupil consultation on what was important to them. Behaviour for learning also related to challenging passive pupil behaviours that while compliant did not necessarily support effective learning.

Mentoring of boys contributed to Shelbury's emphasis on knowing pupils and fostering relationships and took a range of forms with a commercial mentoring programme used with a target group of grade C/D borderline pupils, which Jo supported in the first year. This no-excuses approach supported boys' attainment, it was felt.

Assemblies were in some instances held for groups of grade C/D borderline boys only in order to provide additional motivation. They would highlight the boys' importance, their potential, their future educational or career aims in an effort to increase their aspiration and effort. Jo was conscious that these assemblies played an important part in meeting these demands, although a fine line had to be drawn so as not to over-stress the point and turn the boys off. Of the target group of 19 grade C/D borderline boys, 17 attained C or above in GCSE English.

Parental involvement

It was also changing the culture of achievement with parents and even their own aspirations for their child. I've had lots of conversations with parents about understanding targets and they're really good meetings as they're parents who are being proactive.

Jo

In order to shift boys' attainment, Jo and her colleagues made sure that the level of communication with parents regarding their child's schooling increased significantly. This included parents' evenings to discuss their child's progress, including a discussion focused on what pupils needed to do well to achieve in their exams; parents appreciated this input so they could support their child's revision. Meetings were also held with specific parents about changes to their child's targets, with groups of parents about specific interventions that were going to be used with their children, and meetings with individual parents about their child's behaviour and attitudes towards learning.

Jo supported curriculum leaders in communicating with parents both at a strategic and operational level:

We had a group of 20 Year 10 boys who had just done an exam module in science. They had achieved nowhere near what we expected so myself and the head of science met with every parent with their child over a two-day period and shared the expectations and also shared what we were going to do about it and the interventions we were going to put in place and what we would like them to do to work with us.

Jo

Celebration and reward evenings have also been used with parents and pupils to support cultural change. Jo states how the six-weekly progress data is sent out to parents to keep them up to date. In the first year Jo and the vice principal were attending approximately 15 meetings a week with parents in the early stages to establish the expected standards for pupil behaviour, progress, next steps and performance.

The level of communication with parents was evident to the pupils, with one commenting jokingly that his parents seemed to know what he was doing before he did. This was seen as an approach that helped support pupil achievement, with another commenting that if he needed redirection, the school was quick to inform his parents who would ensure this happened.

Curriculum leader development

In the first year of the academy, significant investment was put into training the senior leadership team. This was largely Peter's remit, although Jo contributed to it following her NPQH and Associate Principals' Programme work. This met dual needs: setting the cultural expectations, agreed ways of working, leadership behaviours, consistency of key messages and developing an understanding of each other's roles and their complementary nature, as well as agreeing short- and medium-term improvement priorities. While in this first year, Jo took a more hands-on role in supporting curriculum leaders and their work, but this shifted over time.

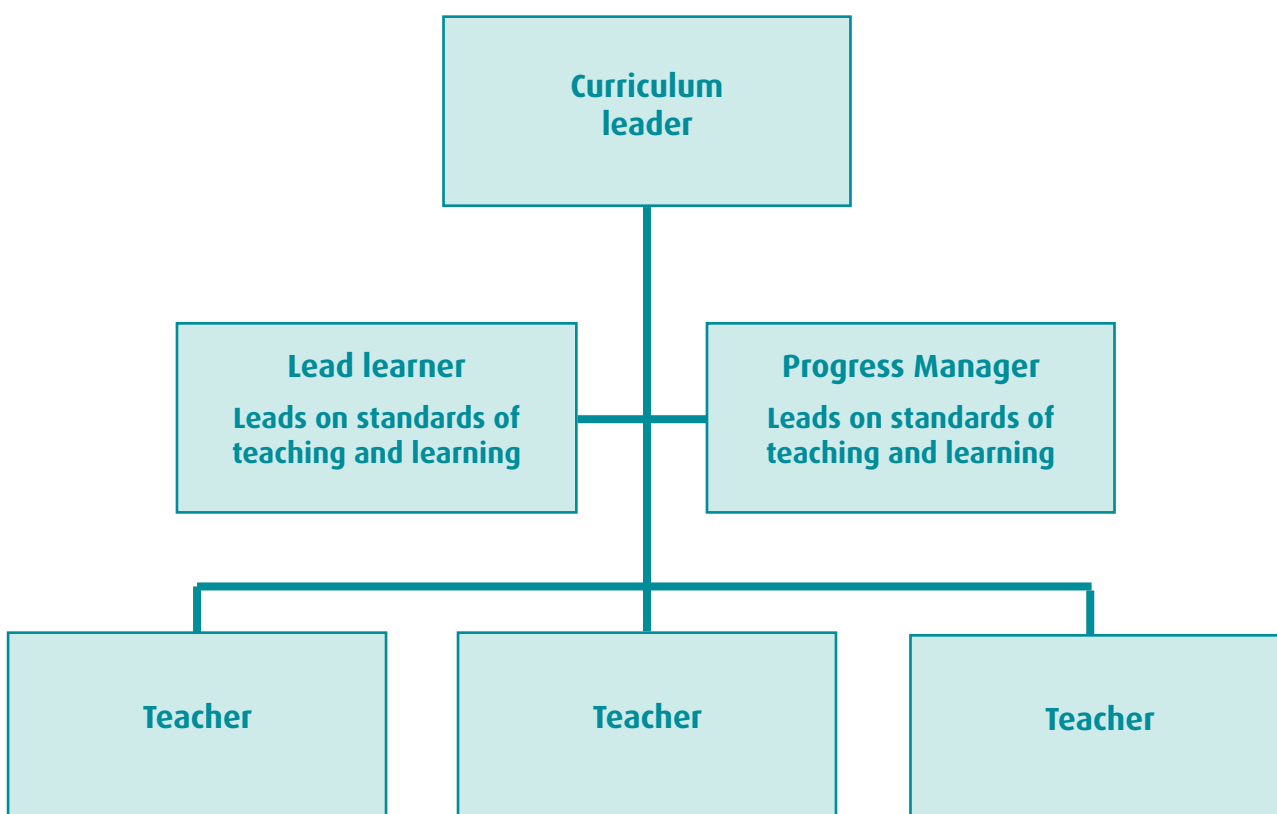
Increasing distribution of leadership

The dynamic changed between spoon-feeding [from Jo] and that leadership and drive coming from the curriculum leaders. So that cultural shift was clear.

Peter

Although the strategies for raising boys' attainment were put in place by the curriculum leaders, Jo's role was to work with them to ensure that they were challenged and supported to achieve these. The leadership structure within which curriculum leaders led is set out in Figure 2. As the line manager for both Roz and Lisa (maths and English curriculum leaders respectively), Jo is positioned in the tier above this structure.

Figure 2: Core department leadership structure¹



¹ In each core department, the structure is as outlined in Figure 2, although the number of teachers might be different.

A more distributed model in which curriculum leaders assume greater empowerment, responsibility and accountability was something in which both Jo and Peter took a lead, for example, leading generic training focused on leadership, vision into action and accurate self-evaluation. The expectation was set that all the approaches used could be used with curriculum leaders' teams so that messages were cascaded. However, this training emphasised a facilitative rather than didactic approach to break down the spoon-feeding culture both considered was in evidence.

Jo leads the training. All the training is cross-curricular [for example on use of pupil performance data] ... and... that's opened up dialogue between departments and between curriculum leaders. She's very proactive with every curriculum leader and I think we feel that we're very well supported as middle leaders and that we're a team in our own right: Jo's initiated that; she's trained us for it, she's coached us for it. It's self-sustaining now, it's not dependent on Jo. We've had instances where we've gone off and done planning or SEF work [as a group]... whereas in the past you'd have felt quite isolated. She models the behaviours, she models the coaching style that she wants us to use. I think that comes from Peter as well: he models to Jo, she models to us and we model to our department so it all filters down from the top.

Lisa

Training or support has centred on:

- assessment systems
- decisions on pupil groupings
- subject improvement plans
- joint lesson observations
- teaching and learning improvements
- performance management
- team management
- other team roles
- joint line-management meetings

Assessment systems and their use

As the leader of assessment, Jo ensured that she worked with curriculum leaders so that there was a clear understanding of assessment systems, expected progress, effective tracking and using data to inform interventions. Forms for the use of both teachers and curriculum leaders were developed to support these systems, ensuring accountability and analysis for improvement (see Figures 3 and 4 at appendices 2 and 3). This work was crucial to efforts to close the gap, as they related to challenging low expectations. Assessment was also the focus for moderation sessions in which Jo supported curriculum leaders in ensuring assessments were accurate.:

Being coached in how to interpret data and use data strategically [has been really helpful]; Jo has been instrumental in this ... not just with me but with other curriculum leaders; she's led workshops and training sessions and coaching sessions.

Lisa

As a consequence, Lisa, for example, is far more confident in using data to make strategic decisions related to meeting pupil needs, such as in relation to groupings, and is proactive in this, knowing that Jo is going to challenge her on what she intends to do about groups or individuals whom the data highlights as not making anticipated progress.

In its new guise we had class-by-class performance and residual performance, so we had a list of the pupil targets, teacher assessments, and in science we had the early entry modular test results. We have progress managers in each core subject so I was working with them also.

Jo

Decisions on pupil groupings

In the early days of the academy, Jo took a lead role within the leadership team in presenting to its members about attainment, achievement, progress and tracking. Part of her role at this time was establishing pupil groupings based on the data and what support and interventions would help the pupils in these groups meet their targets. For example, this included the five A*-C group including English and maths, the A*/A group and the grade C/D borderline group. She would lead discussions which centred on key aspects such as progress evidence, the rigour of data and the moderation procedures used. Jo now supports curriculum leaders in making these pupil grouping decisions.

Supporting the development of subject improvement plans

Jo provided anonymised example plans for annotation in terms of strengths and weaknesses. These were passed around the group to help develop a shared understanding of effective planning and lead to greater consistency and quality. This has led also to increased informal dialogue and support between curriculum leaders outside training sessions. Jo also provided guidance on what should be incorporated within improvement plans and she would hold meetings to support leaders in developing these through the use of peer moderation (see Figure 5 at Appendix 4).

Joint observations of lessons

In the first year of the academy, Year 11 pupils were taught in single-sex groupings in maths due to timetabling, whereas in English, this was altered later in the first term following early entry exams in November 2009. Jo's observations of these single sex sessions in the first term were what she termed 'an eye-opener' in terms of boys' relatively poor engagement.

Jo's joint observations and class tours with curriculum leaders have focused on pupil engagement in lessons, teachers' planning, the quality of different assessment strategies used and determining the rates of progress within lessons. Outcomes were fed back to staff individually as well as collectively in departmental meetings, so highlighting what was working well and what could be improved. This support has helped benchmark and moderate expectations of teaching and learning quality with curriculum leaders. It has also highlighted aspects which they can focus on for improvement, such as the way in which progress data can be used to plan for meeting the range of needs in the class:

Some teachers can say a group is doing well, but when you look at the lesson plan and observe the lesson, they've not differentiated for that group of learners, or they haven't used the progress data to provide the right level of challenge, so it's still ongoing work.

Jo

Improving teaching and learning

In addition to aiding curriculum leaders to develop their department's practice through carrying out joint observations, Jo also helped them to improve the quality of teaching and learning in other ways. One approach was to use lesson observation outcomes and explore this in more detail. For example, some observations revealed that more traditional teaching practices were not engaging the boys, causing them to be passive, uninterested and therefore not learning effectively. One strategy used was to identify effective practice and included the use of pupils as joint observers. This followed training and was done in agreement with the teachers concerned. This focus on pupil engagement centred on key questions such as:

Were they engaged in their learning, in the activities, were they on task? How did they respond to each other working, how did they respond in a group, on their own? What's the quality of dialogue between the teacher and the pupils? How do they speak to each other, do they ask each other questions? What does good learning look like? How do you know when you walk in a room, what do you see, what do you hear?

Jo

For example, one joint observation Jo undertook with a boy identified the following impact of the teacher's practice:

He said, "He did this with us. He makes you learn more because of the way he brings in everyday examples and it makes you think, and you can tell those students over there are working because they're asking each other questions." It was really good.

Jo

Part of the improvement process was therefore to promote and develop the more creative teaching approaches outlined earlier. To achieve this, Jo highlighted effective practice in other departments and brokered opportunities for this to be observed. For example, one maths teacher observed the practical, collaborative and active teaching strategies used by an outstanding science teacher and saw its impact upon boys' engagement. Another was paired with the same science teacher to improve their use of progress data to plan effectively for different groups within the class.

Teacher needs were identified through a combination of curriculum leader observations, those conducted by senior leaders such as Jo and teachers themselves identifying the aspects they wished to develop. A conversation between the teacher and curriculum leader was then formalised into a training plan², independent of the performance management structure. Jo would meet with the English and maths curriculum leaders to see how she might offer support in brokering arrangements between departments internally or externally. Jo would then meet and work with curriculum leaders in her line-management capacity to evaluate impact:

I would look at the whole process and ask, "What's the impact? How do you know? How are you evidencing it?" Then we'd look at progress; whether pupils had engaged in lessons.

Jo

Jo would carry out follow-up lesson observations with curriculum leaders to assess impact on the quality of teaching and learning, focusing on the aspect identified for improvement, for example progress and engagement.

² All Shelbury's teachers, including senior leaders, have a training plan linked to teaching and learning.

Supporting performance management

As curriculum leaders are line managers for the teachers in their department, Jo's training has aided consistency and high expectations through, for example, reviewing a range of performance management targets and facilitating discussion on which were more effective and why. Allied to this was considering approaches curriculum leaders can take if, in performance management meetings, teachers express concerns about the pupil achievement and attainment targets set. Jo's conversation with Roz around challenges experienced ran as follows:

Use RAISEonline, if that's going to support you, use the Key Stage 2 scores that pupils are coming in with, use how the same students are doing in science and English. If they say, "Our pupils are different" use the in-school variation [data to show that they're not].

Jo

Supporting team management, including managing difficult conversations

Where a curriculum leader met challenge from team members, Jo had been on hand to help coach them in ways to deal with this. One example of this was in supporting Roz as a new curriculum leader to *resolve* challenging people management issues such as blocking approaches deployed by a member of the maths team. This took the form of coaching conversations to help Roz develop strategies for dealing with this. For Jo, this has been an approach she has had to learn how to apply and a relative area of strength:

Sometimes I say things as they are and [am] quite honest and just say, "Right, that's unacceptable; your behaviour in the meeting just cannot go on any longer." [With Roz, I've had to think more about a] coaching style, to not tell her exactly how to do it but frame questions so that I don't give her all the answers, but ask her questions so she can think herself how to do it. Because she's not me and I was very aware she's a totally different character. For me, that was one of my development areas: coaching, giving her time to reflect and challenging her on her approach.

I'm very aware of my own style of leadership and you can't put that on someone else and it wouldn't be right to do that. I suppose it's knowing your own qualities, your own strengths and skills and areas for development and it's that honesty that I have with Roz and Lisa; and that's developed over a period of time through forming those relationships.

Jo

However, Jo was also prepared to support curriculum leaders by intervening if requested and meet with staff causing problems if such an approach was warranted.

One strand of this support was also to help mitigate low expectations and unsupportive staff attitudes within a department:

I'd go along and observe in those [maths department] meetings. It was the staff behaviours, the conversations around the boys, and it was the expectations [that were at times unhelpful]: "Well, this is a nice class because there are no behavioural issues; they'll do as they're asked or complete activities", not, "Well, they're a nice class, but they're not achieving what they should be achieving". The conversations centred on the pupils' behaviours and not perhaps enough on challenging those behaviours: Okay, they've got those behaviours, so what are we going to do to address them, how are we going to change the provision, how are we going to engage them in their maths, are we going to put a context to it, are we going to work in groups, how are we going to group the pupils?

Jo

Supporting staff in holding difficult conversations has been highly important in mitigating low expectations of boys' achievement. Jo has offered advice in a mentoring role as well as using more of a coaching approach, which asks curriculum leaders to reflect on their own strategy:

How are you going to have this difficult conversation? How are you going to plan for the meeting? What questions are you going to ask? What outcome do you want from meeting this particular member of staff? You've got a member of the leadership team in your department, how confident do you feel about challenging them? Because that's a hard one.

Jo

This is something that Jo knows is a challenging part of the leadership role and one that still presents her with challenge. Combating excuses for pupil underperformance is one example:

"Well, I've only had them since September", or "The move to the academy has had an impact", or "The targets you've set are too high, they're unachievable". And it started at the top; it started with the leadership team.

Jo

Jo's leadership of the pupil progress and attainment system has resulted in raising the level of openness of pupil performance data. This means that each teacher knows how departmental colleagues' classes have performed. One of the curriculum leaders' tasks is therefore to have conversations related to accountability for results and challenging pupil underperformance.

It's quite tough, that, because you know some teachers are going to be disappointed with their results but at least it opened up the dialogue.

Lisa

One way in which Jo supported middle leaders' development in holding these conversations was to develop a series of scripted conversations (see Figure 6). Middle leader feedback has been that this provides a helpful structure for dialogue, while for Jo it offered something additional:

I wanted consistency across departments. And at that time, they were leading departments where they didn't know 50 per cent of their team and it enabled that level of consistency and that level of challenge. We looked at the questions and moderated them; we asked, "Do you think this is an appropriate question? Why are we asking that question?"

Jo

This approach also enabled expectations to be set so that staff knew what questions would be asked in meetings, which again increased accountability and openness.

Where curriculum leaders initially lacked confidence in holding these conversations with senior leaders, Jo would offer to support. This might be through attending with them, rehearsing questions with them beforehand, or offering them the opportunity to practise using the scripted questions with her and discussing their performance with Jo. However, Jo ensured that this did not move to dependency, insisting that discussions were carried out alone after appropriate support had developed skills and confidence. The openness of the criteria, performance data and questions to be asked were all, however, established to support those offering challenge:

It's not personal, it's about us all looking at our students' performance and making sure every student has the opportunities to succeed. And those standards, and the criteria we use to ensure those, are the same for everyone, regardless. It's no different for senior leaders and they know the questions they are going to be asked.

Jo

Figure 6

Scripted conversations for curriculum leaders

Please use the analysis of assessment data and the following questions to discuss progress with each teacher in your area.

Analysis of student progress:

- How does the performance of girls compare to the performance of boys in your class?
- What successful strategies have been employed within the curriculum area to raise the performance of boys? Give details of evidence and impact.
- What is the performance of students eligible for free school meals and students who are looked-after children?
- Are there any significant differences between the groups?
- Are there any groups that have underperformed compared to target? Please record the figures.
- How have SEN students performed? Are they on target to achieve their potential?
- How do you use progress data to plan challenging and creative learning activities for particular groups in your teaching?
- What evidence is there of effectiveness or impact? Engagement of parents: have they been informed of any concerns?
- List next steps or areas of concern.
- Are there any specific training requirements?

Supporting other team roles

A similar approach was taken in support of progress managers (who lead on using data to inform interventions) and lead learners (who lead on standards of teaching and learning), both of whom form part of the core subject leadership structure (see Figure 2). They work with the curriculum leader in identifying pupils who are not making sufficient progress and in determining appropriate interventions to support them. Jo worked in support of them, understanding their specific role and its parameters, for example that challenging teachers on rates of progress would be the role of the curriculum leader (see Figure 7 at Appendix 5 for progress manager and lead learner actions).

Jo helped them develop a form that would be issued to teachers to establish expectations of their role in using data to understand individual and group progress and to inform their planning for teaching and learning. The message to teachers was:

You've entered data onto the school's tracking system. That's going to be analysed by the school's data manager and come back to the department. You need to work out the percentage of students [who] are on target, the percentage of students [who] are making expected progress, how many are making inadequate progress, how many are making outstanding [progress]. How are your free school meals children doing in your class; the looked-after children; the SEN School Action Plus children? It was all about making teachers aware of progress, that it wasn't all going to be done by the school's central system; there was an ownership of that class by the teacher: [We were saying,] "As a teacher, you need to be aware of the progress of students in your class".

Jo

The progress managers produced spreadsheets that were then populated by the teachers, who identified the interventions that were going to be put in place for those not making expected progress towards their targets (see Appendix 1). These are updated regularly, as progress is entered six times a year and supported by moderated assessments that Jo introduced. Progress managers and teachers meet to discuss interventions based on tracking documents.

Initially, Jo led meetings with progress managers to agree protocols for their work and subsequently share practice, strategies and data to create open and honest systems across the school. This again helped establish consistency and expectations while providing an open forum to discuss challenges and ways of meeting these.

Kharaj, the science progress manager, who has a particular talent in this role, now leads these, having offered to do so. This demonstrates a more distributed approach which Jo is keen to encourage:

I love that because it just shows they're developing as leaders.

Jo

Jo also worked with lead learners whose role was to lead innovation in the subject with the curriculum leader, introducing, for example, a focus on the teacher facilitating pupils to lead their own learning and developing different approaches to learning. Lead learners also carry out a similar role to progress managers in KS3. One aspect of their work has been to develop extended learning times.

Joint line-management meetings: coaching and mentoring

In addition to the curriculum leader training and support highlighted above, to enhance dialogue and sharing of practice between Roz and Lisa, Jo has put in place joint line-management meetings:

I think it's helpful for Roz and Lisa to share the strategies they're using and having open and honest conversations about what the difficulties are. What are the difficulties with staff and how does Lisa approach some difficult conversations; how does Roz? One of the things I shared in that meeting – and they were both there – was, “OK, Roz, what do you think one of your key development areas is in terms of leadership?” and it was her need to delegate and monitor the impact of others' work, because she does a lot herself.

Jo

Jo gave Roz time between sessions to consider her thoughts and ideas in relation to this with the expectation that she would share these at their next meeting.

Jo has worked really hard to get the English and maths departments working together. Last year and the year before that's happened and it's helped [the English team] understand the maths team's needs and them ours, and we've negotiated for pupils [who] need... intervention. It was all very strategically planned and Jo has facilitated that.

Lisa

Jo's role therefore balances challenge, for example in relation to raising boys' attainment, and support, and offering coaching and mentoring. They have covered issues relating to progress and intervention, reviewing the effectiveness of staff with a leadership role in their departments, but Jo has also provided bespoke training, such as in the use of RAISEonline.

The outcomes

Jo identifies that the work with middle leaders has paid dividends, with their exhibiting greater expertise and confidence in, for example, their use of performance data:

You could really see a shift in boys' attitudes. We had the prom at the end of the first year and for me, when I saw all the boys turn up for the prom and they were all suited and in the limousines and the behaviour was immaculate, I thought, "You know what, in September when you first walked through the doors, I stood there and thought, 'okay, job on.'" It was a real feeling of 'this is going to be tough'. And to see how in that year their attitudes had changed because the relationships [with staff] had developed, I thought, "Wow, that's what can be done in just a first year". It gave me confidence as a leader and a teacher, being part of that transition.

Jo

Lisa also saw the change in attitudes that had occurred with the boys since being in the academy and how this was reflected in their approach to the GCSE exam:

Last year's cohort, when I stood in front of them in the [examination] hall and said, "Right, Year 11, this is for you now to show us what you can do... You know I care; you need to show you care about it now as well", they were... all leaning forward and... practically nodding, every single one of them; it was such a contrast to the previous year... there was such a change in attitude. I'd like to think that was partly because of Jo's leadership and also because Roz and I worked very closely together, and my English [department] team and I worked very closely to change that.

Lisa

Lisa has made an evaluation of the English department's work in this area through pupil voice, one of the focus areas in its improvement plan, recognising this as an aspect it could have used more. The success of the work has triggered the need to capture impact more effectively.

Attainment

The impact of the school's strategies on boys' attainment and closing the gap between girls' and boys' attainment can be seen in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Boys' and girls' relative attainment of five A*-C and English and maths A*-C at GCSE

	2009 (final year of Hurstpoint Boys and Rossborough Girls)	2010 (first year of Shelbury Academy)	2011 (second year of Shelbury Academy)
5 A*-C (including English and maths) all pupils		46%	55%
A*-C English all pupils		57%	69%
A*-C maths all pupils		49%	57%
Boys 5 A*-C (including English and maths)	23%	27%	47%
Girls 5 A*-C (including English and maths)	54%	57%	60%

In 2011 Jo also submitted reports on headline data to the governors' committee (see figures 9 and 10 at Appendix 6).

Key learning

- Be aware of the challenges and create a non-excuses culture.

Jo was aware that some staff offered a range of excuses as to why the boys' attainment was lower than that of the girls. Key to success was challenging these low expectations using prior performance data to create higher expectations:

She was determined to see it through and I think there was a no-excuses culture which Jo permeated amongst the curriculum leaders and therefore, their staff.

Peter

- Track and monitor performance data rigorously and ensure the reliability of this data.

Creating robust systems helped aid consistency, clarity of expectation and the level of challenge. While this applied to all pupils, it supported efforts to raise expectations regarding boys' achievement and to challenge underperformance.

- Create openness in terms of accountability.

A no-excuses culture was strengthened through the creation of open use of data. There was no place to hide for all teachers at all levels, including senior leaders, and clear accountability systems meant that there were no surprises and everyone knew they would be held to account and the means by which this would happen.

- Ensure clarity and consistency of expectations.

Making expectations very clear to teachers, support staff, parents and pupils about what the challenges were, what was expected and how impact was going to be measured again supported systems and key messages related to improvement. This is an element that continually needs reinforcing and revisiting so that established systems and expectations are never assumed to be taken as read: "You keep coming back to it – setting those expectations," says Jo. This relates to all aspects, for example, the quality of teaching and use of data so that there is consistency across departments as well as across the academy.

- Adopt a shared, collaborative approach to identify solutions if pupils are not making expected progress.

This focused on proactive measures which again challenged underperformance and low expectations while offering support to find solutions. Collaboration supported shared ownership as well as accountability, reinforcing key messages related to closing the gap.

- Coach curriculum leaders.

This was central to a more distributed style of leadership in which curriculum leaders were enabled to lead more effectively. It was differentiated to meet individual needs and was used in relation to a range of key curriculum leader responsibilities. The focus on managing difficult conversations was a crucial element in this as Jo acknowledged that "it's the hardest part of their role". Peter states that this is something that he and Jo have humorous discussions about, as Jo sometimes wants to tell the curriculum leaders what to do but his stance is:

Yes, but if you do, you're always going to be doing that. Our shift as leaders is to empower them and get them feeling as a leader that they're in control of that destiny.

Peter

Jo sees Peter's challenge, as well as his support, as productive: there are times when he has caused her to make decisions which she might not otherwise have made and which she later considers to have been right.

- Model yourself what you demand of others and have credibility.

Jo says it is important that all aspects of her practice are of the standard she requires of others, for example when she is challenged by progress managers, or a sample of her exercise books is required for monitoring:

I taught Year 11 [grade C/D borderline] pupils in science and put myself in there [to teach them] when they weren't achieving. I knew the 22 boys I taught had to achieve the grades and when they did, I didn't have to say, "Well, there you go", because it was there for everyone to see. I was aware that as a leader, not only have I got to say it, I've got to model it. I've got to demonstrate that I can deliver as well. [Credibility] was very important to me as a curriculum leader and I think even more important now as a senior leader. I can't challenge others if I'm not doing it myself. It comes down to that respect.

Jo

Peter identified the key levers for change as:

- the dialogue between senior leaders, including Jo, and other staff, pupils and parents so that a culture of no-excuses, higher expectations and increased accountability was "modelled and reinforced at different levels"
- putting the right staff with the right students: "relationships are fundamental: with all pupils, but with boys - they needed that element of trust"
- combating boys' attitudes that learning is not cool, for example, through dialogue, assemblies and meetings with parents

Leadership traits

The leadership traits Jo exhibited that were identified by her and/or her colleagues were:

- clear vision and an ability to articulate that vision
- drive, enthusiasm and passion for raising standards: "I just know how important it is for pupils"
- moral purpose: doing things for the right reasons
- fair and honest in leadership approaches
- embracing high levels of accountability
- tenacity and determination
- no-nonsense and assertive approach but also open to others' opinions
- solutions-focused
- proactive

Very proactive: she's absolutely everywhere; very high profile. She's very well respected because she does a lot of work with middle leaders and, dare I say it, we tend to drive the school. She's respected by the pupils and is very supportive in a professional way. She's very clear in the way she sees things strategically and absolutely knows her stuff.

Lisa

I think I've developed more emotional intelligence and strategic leadership in the past two years. It is about a team and I do see myself as being a team person, but setting out clear expectations.

Jo

Next steps

Jo and Peter identify the following as next steps:

- extending good practice in the use of data so that their progress across a number of subjects is monitored to create a wider picture of individuals' progress
- continuing to unpick and understand the reasons why attainment is better in some core subjects relative to others, so that continued improvements can be made
- increasing the extent to which teachers model learning in classes
- embedding skills, aspirations and the desired learning culture across the school so that pupils at all stages develop a culture of achievement

Appendix 1

Figure 1

Attainment report to governors

1 November 2010

Review of targets for GCSE 2011

Following the results analysis in summer 2010 the targets for 2011 have been reviewed and are as follows:

Number of students on roll: 254

Girls: 149, 59% of cohort

Boys: 105, 41% of cohort

	% 5 A*-C (E&M)	% 5 A*-C	% 5 A*-G	% 1 A*-G	% 3 A*-A	% 3 levels English	% 3 levels maths
FFT data	45	68	95	N/A	N/A	64	54
Reviewed target	55	90	96	100	27 in cohort 100	68	62
Current grade Oct 10	37	83	92	97	96	TBC	TBC

Priorities for this academic year:

1. Improve the monitoring and tracking procedures across the academy.
 - The quality and use of teacher assessment to inform planning and intervention programmes will be more closely moderated and reviewed within each curriculum area. Leaders at all levels will be accountable for the implementation of a rigorous assessment framework that informs students of their progress towards targets. Curriculum leaders and line managers will review the impact on student progress and the performance of class teachers in securing the whole-school target of 55 per cent for five A*-C (E&M). Accountability structures are more transparent and actions have been agreed for short- and long-term developments. Aim high 'An ICT software programme' has been purchased to allow more effective and quicker tracking systems. Class teachers can use the information to inform their planning and delivery of challenging lessons and to track progress of students within their lessons. The following are the expected impacts.
 - Students have greater understanding of their targets, current progress and their next steps, evidenced in lesson observations, student interviews, work scrutiny and class tours.
 - Assessment is more meaningful and moderated to ensure consistency of standards within a curriculum area. Evidence for this is taken from line-management and curriculum meetings.
 - Assessment data is used to plan challenging lesson outcomes that give students the opportunity to make at least expected levels of progress.
 - Coursework grades are analysed and actions taken to ensure students have every opportunity to attain at least their predicted GCSE grade, if not a grade higher in the majority of cases.

- Progress data entered into the whole-school tracking database is more reliable and therefore specific students are identified for intervention, enabling them to achieve their targets.
- Whole-school current working grades are within 3 per cent of actual attainment; monitor this in January 2011, and early entry and module grades in science and history.
- Leadership within curriculum areas is more effective: clear accountability structures for progress managers, lead learners and key stage co-ordinators.
- Curriculum leaders and progress managers implement effective intervention in which impact on individual students is reviewed every six to eight weeks.
- Greater accountability for standards within each curriculum area: is to be achieved through more effective line management and greater strategic questioning during line-management meetings. The impact is reviewed by the vice principal and director of learning.

2. Close the performance gap that exists within groups

Group	Boys
FFT data	38%
Reviewed target	45%
Current grade	21%

Improve the attainment of boys

There are currently 105 boys on roll in Year 11. Of these, 47 have targets to achieve 5 grades A* to C (E&M). A total of 28 achieved English GCSE and 32 achieved core science in Year 10. However, 36 boys achieved grade D in English. From this group the curriculum leader has identified 19 boys who are engaging in an intervention programme, which involves attending extra English lessons, revision lessons and assemblies. The boys have been placed in intervention groups with an experienced English teacher. In science, for the 17 boys achieving a D grade, some are doing a re-sit module, others have been transferred onto a BTEC course and some are now doing an applied GCSE. In maths the boys have been placed into specific cohorts: A*/A, B/C, C/D and foundation. Assessments have been used to inform them of their specific areas of development and again extra revision and lessons are currently operating.

There are currently 26 boys who are not on target to achieve 5 grades A*-C. Of these 13, have attendance below 90 per cent. Another five attend college courses within the local authority; they should achieve their five A C passes.

There are 11 boys on the commercial mentoring programme. Others have been involved with one-to-one interviews and the parents of identified boys have been invited into school to meet with members of the leadership team to discuss attainment and agree actions for the forthcoming term. A total of 11 boys have now successfully completed the Waypoint programme (worth the equivalent of two grade Bs). The Artsmark qualification has also been introduced to some Year 11 boys to improve their engagement and attainment, and some are currently completing the ASDAN qualification.

Appendix 2

Figure 3

Class analysis 2011

Class teachers' data review sheet

Group:		Teacher:	
Ability:		Course:	
M:	F:	SEN:	
<p>Judgement on attainment</p> <p>Above target: On target: Below target:</p> <p>% students on or above target:</p> <p>Judgement on attainment</p> <p>Judgement on progress</p> <p>Outstanding: ____ students</p> <p>Good: ____ students</p> <p>Expected: ____ students</p> <p>Inadequate: ____ students</p> <p>Percentage of students making expected progress or better:</p> <p>Judgement on progress</p> <p>Percentage of teacher accuracy _____%</p>			
<p>Implications for next academic year: (assessment, SEN provision, closing the gap: boys'/girls' attainment, exam prep, intervention, your training requirements, moderation)</p> <p>What are the implications on learning within your classroom?</p> <p>Are there any aspects of your teaching or planning that will require adaptation as a result of attainment and progress of individuals within your groups?</p>			

Appendix 3

Figure 4

Curriculum area

GCSE results analysis 2011

Maths and English

Number on roll: 256 students

Please complete the following and then provide a summary for the questions asked.

% A*-C target	
% A*-C actual	
% A*-C early entry	
% A*-C provisional national results	
% A*/A	
% students D grade	
% students above target	
% students achieving target	
% students below target	

Make a judgement on attainment in your curriculum area. Give reasons for your choice. (Refer to the SEF judgements for guidance. When judging attainment you must always compare with national performance in your reasoning.)

Judgement	
Reasons	

Class analysis since early entry

Please complete the following table:

Class and teacher	Number of students	Number of students achieving target	Number of students below target	Overall +/-

Using the class analysis provide a summary on performance:

- Which classes performed well?
- Which classes performed below expectations?
- Using 'results plus', give areas of the curriculum in which students performed well or poorly in examinations.
- Give reasons why there may have been marked differences in performance between classes.
- How successful was intervention? Give evidence of impact.
- Looking at teacher predictions, are there any staff who are in need of specific training requirements?

Analysis of group performance

% A*-C girls	
% A*-C boys	
% A*-C girls who achieved target	
% A*-C boys who achieved target	
% SEN students who achieved target	
% FSM students who achieved target	
% Pakistani students who achieved target	
% White British who achieved target	
% gifted and talented students who achieved targets	
% of looked-after children who achieved target	

Please provide a summary of group performance:

- Please provide details on closing the gap agenda: compare boys/girls, FSM/non-FSM, SEN, looked-after children.
- Which groups have performed well/below expectations?
- List the outcomes of interventions employed during the year to improve attainment.
- SEN students are a key group within the academy. How did the students perform?
- What improvements are required in the next academic year to improve their performance in your curriculum area?
- How many students did you not enter? Can you give reasons?

Progress

	FFT data	Actual
% of students who have made three levels of progress from KS2		
% of students who have made four levels of progress from KS2		
% of students who have made inadequate progress from KS2		

Using SEF criteria, make a judgement about progress in your curriculum area.

Judgement	
Reasons	

Progress of groups

% boys making three levels of progress	
% girls making three levels of progress	
% White British making expected progress	
% Pakistanis making expected progress	
% FSM making expected progress	
% gifted and talented making expected progress	
% of looked-after children making expected progress	

Summary of progress

- Can you give details of specific classes where progress has been at least satisfactory, good and outstanding?
- Which groups or classes have made inadequate progress?
- How are you going to group students?
- Which staff are teaching which groups? Provide a rationale.
- Looking at the assessment breakdown, are there any areas of the course requirements that require further development for the whole curriculum area or for specific staff?

From all the analysis

Provide details of your priorities for raising attainment in the academic year 2011/12.

The detail and the 'how' will need to be developed further in curriculum area improvement plans.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

New specifications

Looking at the analysis of your GCSE results, what are the current implications of the controlled assessment on attainment and progress for the next academic year?

Appendix 4

Figure 5

Department improvement plan 2011–14

Key priorities:

- Leadership
- Learning and teaching
- Inclusion
- Provision and attainment

Action	To include	Timescale
Key issue 1: Leadership	Objectives on: Self Staff Department (including student leadership)	First draft to be completed and brought to CL training 15 November for moderation
Key issue 2: Learning and teaching	Objectives as the AIP CLs to establish internal priorities Focus specifically on how you will make this happen. How will you measure impact? Drill down and be specific. Monitoring and quality assurance	First draft to be completed and brought to CL training 15 November for moderation
Key issue 3: Inclusion	Objectives on closing the gap: Leadership roles and responsibilities Tracking and monitoring Data to inform planning Differentiation/SFL Role of the teaching assistant	First draft to be completed and brought to CL training 22 November for moderation
Key issue 4: Provision and attainment	Objectives on: Evaluating current provision Vision: where you want to be and skills for 21st-century learners Attainment: your priorities based on results analysis Progress: moving from expected progress to good progress	First draft to be completed and brought to CL training 22 November for moderation

Appendix 5

Figure 7

Actions for lead learners and progress managers

Action	Report to	Date agreed	Success criteria
Produce a teaching plan for each half-term, for each class in key stage not age .	Curriculum leader	1 March to 13 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent plan for all staff
Produce suitable assessments that include prior and current work with an element of functional skills, but must be across the levels 3 to 5 and 4 to 7. Mark scheme must be levelled.	Curriculum leader		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments available before each unit of work, with mark schemes every six weeks
<p>Organise and lead the production of suitable SFL for key stage not age. Ensure each lesson within has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> differentiated learning outcomes linked to levels maths in context, active learning activities assessment for learning strategies opportunities for group/independent work links to numeric/functional skills development ICT development 	Curriculum leader		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFL available for each unit prior to the start of a unit
Conduct a series of class tours in key stage not age.	SLT	<p>Tuesdays periods 4 and 5.</p> <p>Teacher will be used to cover period 4.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of assessment, SFL and learning and teaching evaluated Report on standards produced
Jointly observe a lesson to ensure understanding and correct use of Ofsted lesson observation criteria.	Directors of learning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardised judgements made on learning and teaching Consistency across leadership

Action	Report to	Date agreed	Success criteria
Produce a report on (SnA) identifying areas of strength and development.	Curriculum leader SLT		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Evidence-based judgements made; feeds into SEF
Review lesson plans from teachers. Ensure consistency, and challenge and progress within SnA lessons.	Curriculum leader		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Greater consistency across the curriculum area — Greater challenge in lessons
Conduct student voice with director of learning.	Curriculum leader		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Feedback from student voice to inform planning
Moderate assessments across SnA to ensure consistency in applying levels across SnA.	Curriculum leader Progress managers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Assessment data more accurate and meaningful — Improved reliability and consistency across curriculum area
Analyse rates of progress in SnA.	Curriculum leader Vice principal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Improvement in student progress — Higher expected progress levels
Introduce appropriate intervention strategies to ensure that students make expected levels of progress in SnA.	Curriculum leader Vice principal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Targeted intervention has impact on individual progress
Oversee impact of intervention strategies.	Curriculum leader		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Rigorous intervention plan across SnA
Lead SnA joint planning sessions.	Curriculum leader		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Greater collaboration within curriculum area — Development of good to outstanding teachers — Improvement in gradings of teachers
Share outcomes of SnA evidence and make judgements using Ofsted self-evaluation criteria.	Curriculum leader Line manager	Wednesday curriculum meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Outcomes feed into curriculum area action plan and SEF

Appendix 5

Figure 9

Governing body

Curriculum, quality and standards committee

Thursday 10 February 2011

Agenda item:

Purpose:	For information and discussion
Presenter:	Jo Baxter
Originator:	Jo Baxter

1. Introduction

- 1.1 To discuss the current attainment figures for Year 11 students.
- 1.2 To discuss the short-term strategies from January to May to enable students in the academy to achieve the target of 52 per cent A^{*}-C (E&M).

2. Key points

- 2.1 44 per cent of students have achieved an A^{*}-C in both English and maths (FFT estimate data 49 per cent).
- 2.2 35 per cent boys (FFT estimate data 41 per cent) and 51 per cent girls (FFT estimate data 54 per cent), a significant difference between boys and girls attainment remains. 64 per cent of students have achieved A^{*}-C in English (FFT estimate data 68 per cent), 45 per cent (FFT estimate data 62 per cent) in mathematics.
- 2.3 64 per cent (FFT estimate data 68 per cent) of students have made expected levels of progress in English. In maths, 40 per cent (FFT estimate data 58 per cent) of students have made expected progress.
- 2.4 Pakistani students remain the highest performing group with 64 per cent achieving 5 grades A^{*}-C (E&M). Currently 41 per cent of White British students achieved 5 grades A^{*}-C (E&M). 29 per cent of FSM students and 5 per cent of SEN students achieved 5 grades A^{*}-C (E&M). Both groups are below the academy targets. Intervention, reviewing the SFL and creating capacity within the inclusion team will support students in achieving their targets.
- 2.5 Students with attendance below 85 per cent are significantly underachieving. 8 per cent have achieved 5 grades A^{*}-C (E&M).

3. Key issue

- 3.1 Raising attainment in maths
 - Creating capacity in maths is now crucial if students are to be grouped according to their target grade.
 - Analysis from the results plus tracking system, consistent assessment procedures, adoption of a four-part lesson structure and the use of Method Maths (ICT) will support students in the coming months. The curriculum leader is working with a maths consultant to create a range of learning experiences that will hopefully engage students in preparing fully for the summer examinations.

-
- The percentage of students achieving expected progress must be improved to 65 per cent. All students who fail to achieve their target grade will be asked to take the examination again. Those who were close to the next grade above will have the option to improve on their grade.

3.2 Creating opportunities for raising attainment across all subjects

- Students who have achieved their target will have the opportunity to have additional time in another subject. This is dependent on the curriculum areas having capacity within their teams to deliver high-quality learning experiences.
- Curriculum leaders are currently using a range of intervention strategies to raise attainment: examiners, additional classes, reviewing SFL, changing specifications and improving the quality of assessment and moderation.

3.3 Raising the performance of groups

- In terms of progress on closing the gap between girls' and boys' attainment, this has reduced from 30 per cent to 16 per cent, which is a significant improvement. Strategies within lessons are beginning to have an impact on raising boys' attainment, although this is still an area of development and remains a whole-academy issue.

Figure 10

Governing body

Curriculum, quality and standards committee

Thursday 15 September 2011

Agenda item : Year 11 Attainment

Purpose:	For information
Presenter:	Jo Baxter
Originator:	Jo Baxter

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present Year 11 achievement and to set Year 11 targets for 2012.

Key points

- 3.1 55 per cent of students achieved 5 grades A*-C (E&M) (FFT estimate data 49 per cent).
- 3.2 48 per cent of boys (FFT estimate data 41 per cent) and 60 per cent girls (FFT estimate data 54 per cent) achieved 5 grades A*-C (E&M). The gap between girls' and boys' attainment has reduced from 30 per cent to 12 per cent. 68 per cent of students have achieved A*-C in English (FFT estimate data 68 per cent), and 57 per cent (FFT estimate data 62 per cent) in mathematics.
- 3.3 74 per cent (FFT estimate data 68 per cent) of students have made expected levels of progress in English. In maths, 56 per cent (FFT estimate data 58 per cent) of students have made expected progress.
- 3.4 Pakistani students remain the highest performing group at 88 per cent (E&M). Currently 50 per cent of White British students achieve 5 grades A*-C (E&M). 45 per cent of FSM students and 12 per cent of SEN students have achieved 5 grades A*-C (E&M).
- 3.5 Students with attendance below 85 per cent are significantly underachieving. 11 per cent have achieved 5 grades A*-C (E&M).
- 3.6 88 per cent of students achieved 5 grades A*-C, 90 per cent achieved 5 A*-G and 98 per cent achieved 1 grade A*-G.

The academy is reviewing alternative provision in order to address the 4 per cent of students who left the academy without gaining a qualification.

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Triumph Road
Nottingham NG8 1DH
T 0845 609 0009
F 0115 872 2001
E college.enquiries@nationalcollege.gsi.gov.uk
www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege

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