

**Teaching Schools Leicestershire**  
**East Midlands Challenge Project**  
**Tackling disadvantage and closing the achievement gap**

**Summary**

Improving the reading of disadvantaged students in Y7 with low reading scores

**Name of school**

Newbridge High School

**Brief description of what the case study is about**

To motivate disadvantaged students with low levels of literacy to improve their reading skills.

To engage these students in their education in the first two terms of Year 7.

**Why did this work take place?**

PP evaluation report 2015-16 indicated that although the school has had some success in closing the gap in teacher assessed English and Maths pathways, disadvantaged students fail to make progress in reading in line with the average for the year group. This is a barrier to closing the gap further in the future.

**Description of the work undertaken**

In September 2016, 18 'Pupil Premium' students were identified with low reading ages.

Accelerated Reader was introduced to the whole year group. This reading scheme, linked to the school library, motivates students to read more and promotes the improvement of reading comprehension skills. The target group were included in this scheme. In addition, those with the lowest reading ages were given an additional reading intervention through 'Rapid Reading'. Students have also been introduced to 'Read Theory.'

Letters were sent to parents to inform them of the various interventions. In addition parents were invited to attend an early Year 7 Parents Evening to find out more about how to support their child make progress with their reading. However only 4 of the target group of 18 attended.

Standardised Reading Scores were compared using the Star Reading Test, which is part of the Accelerated Reader programme. In addition attendance of this target group was compared to the whole school.

**Impact of this work**

**March results**

Student	Gender	Sept 2016 SS	March 2017 SS	Diff	Attendance (%)	Average Y7 attendance	Gap
A	F	76	82	+6	94.1	96.4	-2.3

B	M	82	81	-1	93.8	96.4	-2.6
C	F	87	90	+3	90.1	96.4	-6.3
D	M	92	97	+5	86.8	96.4	-9.6
E	M	87	79	-8	97.4	96.4	1
F	M	93	111	+18	99.3	96.4	2.9
G	M	95	Absent		96.3	96.4	-0.1
H	M	81	77	-4	94.1	96.4	-2.3
I	F	84	88	+4	96.3	96.4	-0.1
J	M	90	109	+19	98.2	96.4	1.8
K	M	86	83	-3	96.7	96.4	0.3
L	F	94	90	-4	86.8	96.4	-9.6
M	F	94	93	-1	98.5	96.4	2.1
N	F	86	91	+5	86.8	96.4	-9.6
O	F	91	90	-1	97.1	96.4	0.7
P	M	81	80	-1	91.2	96.4	-5.2
Q	M	72	74	+2	98.5	96.4	2.1
R	F	89	88	-1	96.3	96.4	-0.1
TOTAL	18			+38			
MEAN		86.67	87.88	2.24	94.35		-2.05

Group	Average reading SS (Sept 2016)	Average reading SS (Mar 2017)	Attendance %
All Year 7	99	100	96.31
All Pupil premium	97	97	94.09
Pupil Premium focus group	86.67	87.88	94.35

### Key learning points

1. On average standardised reading scores for the target group improved. However this amounted to just over a half of the group.
2. The target group appeared to make more progress than the average of all PP students in Y7.
3. Attendance of the group was lower than the average for the year group and similar to the average for all PP students in Y7.
4. The two students who made the most progress had good attendance. However there was not a clear correlation between good attendance and reading progress.
5. Parental engagement was very difficult to achieve. Other pressures during the year meant that we were unable to devote many resources to work on this aspect.

### Next Steps

The various reading interventions seem to have been successful in improving the reading of some of these disadvantaged students with low reading scores. We need to re-double our efforts to engage with parents in future and identify the causes behind those who did not catch up in their reading.

### **Recommendations to other schools**

Reading interventions can have success in making an improvement in reading scores for disadvantaged students who are poor readers in the first two terms of Y7. However attendance and poor parental engagement are significant barriers.