*2024 Tony Stephens, Education Support*

**200 ways of raising secondary attainment**

1. **Key points**

* Student **subject targets** from Y7 to Y11 are based on a good degree of personalised, realistic challenge being expected from all students
* It is a key aim of the academy/school to raise **student expectations/aspirations** within an achievement culture, and there is a full understanding shown that all students have the potential to achieve much higher levels of attainment as reflected in public examination results and the general standard of work produced. The Academy/school has a clear strategy plan on how it is going to do this
* The academy/school also has a specific strategy plan which outlines in global terms going to be raising overall **attainment**
* There is a **leader responsible for raising attainment in each of the school years**
* Across the curriculum, students are always shown “concrete” **exemplars of what is outstanding work**, so that they get a clear idea of what outstanding means
* The academy/school works to counter any **“swot” or “square” syndrome** within the institution, i.e, where children are mocked if they work hard and it is not seen as cool to be a successful student
* The academy/school understands that success come from the relentless use of **rigorous and highly effective systems, with full attention to detail,** which are **personalised** in that they are focused on raising the attainment of individual students
* Specific, talented staff have the responsibility for raising the achievement and monitoring the progress of the **Pupil Premium** students and especially those who have been identified as underachieving
* Where there is clear evidence of underachievement by **gender**, then there are strategy plans in place to address this and leaders who have this specific responsibility. There will often be an emphasis on meeting better the needs of **white, working class boys**
* There is a high level of **personalisation** of learning programmes in KS4
* There is no reliance on **“fire- fighting” in Y11**, with students receiving maximum support, and the same sort of support, throughout all of KS4 and not just Y11
* Academies/schools do not insist that staff put in excessive amounts of **extra sessions for students** after school, at weekends and in holidays, when these would be much less necessary, and save a lot of staff time and stress, if there was smarter, more focused and more intensive work carried out within lesson time with, e.g, all public examination teaching completed by Easter at the latest so that there can be intensive in-class revision, done in an imaginative and enjoyable way, in the final weeks before the examinations, thus ensuring that all students enter examinations having fully revised
* Students are taught **how to revise** from Y7, and get plenty of practice through the frequent assessments and the use of recall as a key feature of lessons
* **Data tracking** is three times a year, with the first coming just after the October half term; it is based on a comparison between individual student targets and predicted grades, (which take account of working at grades)
* The academy/school has a strategy to ensure that **staff predictions are** **accurate**, e.g, departments use credible objective tests to provide accurate working at grades which are then the basis of predictions; departments regularly jointly moderate how staff assess work and make predictions, with support for those who have bad track records in this area
* The spreadsheets that come out of the data tracking process clearly show **individual student underachievement in all subjects in all years**; heads of department have a good understanding of data but are not expected to interrogate data, rather they are given what they need and thus have more time to actually do something about it, i.e, deal with individual student underachievement
* The data tracking outcomes are also used as a basis for **praising students** who are meeting or exceeding their targets
* Data tracking outcomes are sent to the staff responsible for the **ASP student groupings,** ( Pupil premium, Higher ability, SEND, Gender, Ethnic, EAL),so that they get a picture of how individual students within these groups are achieving
* Data tracking outcomes are used as the basis of both **reports** to parents and also **individual achievement plans for students**
* It is then a top priority to ensure that departments and teachers put in place personalised **intervention strategies** in the class room for underachieving students, not just in Y11 but in every subject in every school Year, and the success of these is closely monitored
* It should be easy to spot individual student underachievement via data tracking and the department’s continuous monitoring, but what matters is the quality of **the intervention strategies** in use, which should relate to the identified individual barriers to learning and thus be varied, personalised and sustained, and implemented by the class teachers, with regular monitoring of the success of these intervention strategies. Heads of Departments should ensure that these intervention strategies are being put in place within the department and that they are effective, individualised to these students with progress tracked on a weekly basis.
* Each **subject area** should have its own **“scorecard”** which shows targets and progress in relation to targets in terms of individuals, student groupings, teaching groups and in aggregate, this updated at each tracking point and then discussed in detail with the SLT line manager for the area
* Pastoral managers should make skilled use of trained mentors to put in place **mentoring** where a student is underachieving in a range of subjects, based on an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and their knowledge of, and relations with, the students. There should be recruited as large a number as possible of mentors (e.g from tutors, SLT, TAs, staff volunteers etc) and all tutors and mentors should be well trained. The most urgent cases should have the best mentors, e.g students who may get a higher grade in one core subject but not the other, but intervention should relate to all underachieving students, of all abilities
* **Mentoring should be on a weekly basis** for students shown by data tracking to be underachieving in relation to many of their targets
* It is useful where possible to allocate **two tutors** to each tutor group so that one of these tutors can be individually mentoring students during tutor time
* **Heads of Year** have their own **scorecard** for the Year, on a similar basis as that for subject leaders, and this too is updated and checked at each tracking point
* **Students** receive their own individual target setting **scorecard** which is updated after each tracking point and/or this is contained within their own version of the report sent home to parents
* In KS4, intervention strategies are related to the predicted performance of individual students in terms of underachievement in the subjects that will count for **Attainment 8**
* The academy/school is not obsessed with just moving students to the higher grades)**,** butinstead is trying to achieve the **highest possible levels of progress for all students**
* Data tracking outcomes are used as the basis of **an assessment of current and likely future performance week**, supplemented by attendance, behaviour, praise and lesson observation data etc. As part of this, performance data is formulated as closely as possible to an ASP **format** so that the SLT and Governing Body can get a clear picture of the likely end of year results, and thus have the chance to do something about it in advance
* Student attainment and progress is monitored in **all the academy/school years** and not just Y11
* There is a clear and understood vision of the role of **homework and extended learning** in raising attainment,so thatacross the curriculum it is differentiated, varied and challenging, integrated in to schemes of learning and monitored and marked according to an agreed and understood homework policy, with students motivated to complete it to a high standard but with sanctions in the last resort if they do not.
* The provision for **higher ability**, **gifted and talented** students is not mainly based on whole school activities but rather is concentrated on what goes on in terms of classroom learning, supplemented by individualised learning support.
* There is a determination to ensure that the **higher ability** students achieve only the very highest grades and achieve their potentials
* **SEND** provision is given a very high priority, with the recognition that these vulnerable students need a high level of resourcing and support
* Apart from the SENCO, there are also **SEND teachers**, who work with TAs to develop the learning of students whose needs really require support from highly trained teachers
* There is a comprehensive training programme for **TAs with an emphasis on raising attainment** and the best possible use made of them in the classroom
* SEND provision is not just about caring for SEN students, and there is a total emphasis on **raising the attainment** of these students and ensuring that they achieve their potentials, thus boosting their life chances
* There is full attention given to rapidly identifying and dealing with **variations in performance** **of different subjects** within the academy/school
* There is a significant prioritising of the **core subjects** in terms of extra support, resourcing and staffing, given that, whether it is fair or not, school performance table positions depend very much on the results in these subjects
* At the same time ,the **other EBacc** subjects are not neglected given their importance within Attainment 8
* There is an awareness that in the past many **foundation subjects** have results that are mediocre so there is strong SLT line manager support aimed at raising expectations
* Given that in many academies/ schools there are ever increasing numbers of **EAL** students, it is a high priority to establish quality leadership and management of effective provision for these students, and there is not just someone at TA level with responsibility for them
* There is limited use of **integrated courses** in the curriculum, and where they do exist there is monitoring of how successful they are and consideration of whether or not it would have been better to have separate subjects delivered by specialist teachers, backed up by cross curricular days when the timetable is collapsed for the day
* “ Academic” subjects are not delivered in **mixed ability classes** wherever teachers are unable to provide enough differentiation to allow all the students to make the maximum possible progress
* There is no **rigid banding** which takes no account of students’ different abilities in different subjects, whilst at a stroke lowering the expectations and aspirations of the students in the lower bands
* Where there is **subject setting**, student have every opportunity to move to higher sets if they are making good progress
* Students are rarely allowed to **enter early** for public examinations and then would have to re-sit if they have not achieved their target grades
* The **KS4 curriculum** enables most students to achieve maximum performance with Achievement/Progress 8. There is a three year KS4, with flexibility in Y9 in terms of how soon subjects actually begin KS4 courses. Vocational courses suit many of our students and should still be a key part of a KS4 curriculum regardless of GCSE equivalence; they are now tougher and have more credibility, and up to three can count in Attainment 8 as long as they are on the DfE list. It will also be even more important that students gain the best possible grades in the foundation subjects, and Progress 8 now means that it is important to try to achieve the highest possible grades at every level and not just the higher grade borderline.
* The criteria for judging the quality of **teaching** include analysing the extent to which there was a focus on raising achievement and how successful this was, e.g, looking at areas such as subject knowledge, public examination preparation, students’ revision notes, use of progress ladders etc
* There is full use of **lead lessons** by the very best teachers, and the use of **team teaching** which plays to the strengths of each teacher
* Some KS4 students receive an **alternative curriculum**, but there is rigorous monitoring of the quality of this provision and checking that the students have every chance of gaining worthwhile qualifications as well as useful life and social skills
* **SLT line managers** of departments act as agents for AIP/SIP implementation and monitoring within the departments; they meet together regularly to ensure that they are pursuing the same agendas and there is consistency of approach
* There is an agreed **quality assurance** system which is followed by all departments, and led by Heads of Departments and their line managers, e.g, for checking student work, marking, setting of homework etc. This is based on getting to know the specific strengths and weaknesses of each member of staff and then allowing support and CPD to be personalised
* **Middle managers** are empowered, so that they become significant and crucial forces for development and improvement within the academy/school, working with SLT line managers; there are a very large number of department meetings within the meeting cycle so the HoDs have enough opportunity to work with their staff to raise attainment enhance teaching and learning etc
* There is a planned programme of **CPD** for the academic year that is related to both the AIP/SIP and also appraisal, and which has a clear focus on raising attainment within it
* Teacher **appraisal** targets all include challenging but realistic teaching group attainment objectives
* Department targets should be aggregates of individual targets, but the staff in each subject area should be made fully aware of what are **national average** results and the need to achieve and then beat them
* **Assemblies** can be used to motivate students, and also to ease concerns and lessen stress
* Many schools find involving student in **growth mind- set and metacognition** sessions, backed by motivational videos in some cases, is very effective in raising the attainment levels of students
* All possible use is made of the **new technologies** to enhance learning, including provision for remote learning at home by students
* There is use of the very best **consultants** working with staff in the school
* The principal/headteacher ensures that most of his/her working week directly impinges on **raising student achievement and enhancing learning**, rather than being spent on trivialities and areas of the academy/school where responsibility should be delegated to others

1. **KS3**

* There are initiatives in place, working in partnership with the feeder primary schools, to develop an agreed **Y5-8 curriculum** and coordinated approach to developing teaching and learning; hopefully this will then avoid students repeating work, or being given work that is too easy.
* The **KS2/KS3 transfer system** includes initiatives to inspire and motivate students, and raise their expectations of what they can achieve at secondary school
* There is identification of the **higher ability students** in the primary schools, and they are all given a mentor once they join the secondary school
* The secondary staff given time to study in detail the format and content of the **SATs** that the primary students have taken so that they have a much better understanding of these than is often the case
* Once students are in Y7, there is **diagnostic testing** put in place to pin point student starting points and then their strengths and weaknesses in the core subjects, this adding to the information that can also be extracted from the SATs
* Use of flexible **setting** in the EBacc subjects once there is enough, accurate information about each student to make this possible
* There is in place a challenging, exciting **KS3** with a broad curriculum, based on the highest of expectations, which also includes planned provision across the KS3 curriculum for developing the students’ cross curricular literacy, numeracy and learning and thinking skills as well as focused preparation of students for the demands of the new GCSES
* A dedicated programme is launched in Y7 aimed at **raising aspirations, expectations** and attainment, and helping student to become skilled learners
* In Y8, a **careers/higher education** element can be added to this, with students being encouraged to believe that they are good enough to achieve and be successful in the future
* A **student leader** programme is put in place to help student develop their personal skills Student voice systems should be established from the very start, with students also having every opportunity to be involved in organising events and activities and learning leadership skills
* There are intensive, personalised **literacy and numeracy** cross curricular initiatives in place, supported by each teacher recognising that they are teachers of literacy and numeracy and not just their own subject
* The development of student **learning and thinking skills** should be based on whole key stage planning on what are the key learning and thinking skills and how can they be developed in KS3 in a coordinated fashion
* Students are fully prepared in KS3 for the new assessment methodology and other key learning and academic skills that feature in the **new GCSEs**, and this will include learning revision skills and regular examination experience as part of a well- structured, rigorous and accurate assessment programme;but at the same time every effort is made to keep teaching and learning enjoyable and interesting
* Aspirational **targets** for the end of KS4 are set from the start of Y7, with these explained fully to parents along with the progress ladder system; this should be the beginning of regular liaison and communication with the **parents/carers**
* The teaching of subjects in KS3 relates to **progress ladders** that are the basis of a high quality **life after levels system**, and there is thus focused preparation for KS4
* Use of model answers, exemplars of outstanding work and very clear success criteria to ensure that students know **what the new GCSE grades look like**, and especially 7, 8 and 9
* **Schemes of learning in KS3** always relate to both progress ladders and the related assessments, and are always revised while taking these in to account
* It is a policy decision that the **best teachers** will not just teach in KS4, but will also be leading KS3 teaching
* Teaching in KS3 gives students every opportunity to develop as **independent learners** and learn how to show initiative in learning and be resilient, confident, determined learners
* Personalised use of justified **praise** motivates students and gives them the belief that they can be successful learners
* Regular **data tracking** ensures that underachieving students are clearly identified
* It is a top priority to ensure that departments and teachers put in place personalised **intervention strategies** in the class room for underachieving students across every subject in every school Year, based on identification of the individual reasons for underachievement, and the success of these is closely monitored
* These are supported by **mentoring** from the pastoral system and the use of trained mentors
* There are the same **RAP strategies** in place in KS3 as in KS4 including regular Academic Board meetings involving all subject leaders. This will include a clear focus on intervening with all underachieving students including **disadvantaged students**
* It is a top priority to enhance the reading and writing skills of **SEND** students so that they have every chance of fully accessing the curriculum both now and in the future
* With **EAL** students, there are systems, staff and resources in place that will enable them to develop their skills in English as fast as possible
* Full use is made of **Y7 catch up funding**, with rigorous monitoring of its impact
* Programmes are in place to develop the **reading skills** of students who may not be officially SEND, but still have limited reading and comprehension skills
* There is continuous **monitoring of the impact** of all initiatives, and revised actions put in place when progress seems slow
* Continuous identification of **vulnerable and unhappy students**, leading to support and care; such student will find it very difficult to learn without such help
* **Option choice** for KS4is highly personalised with individual interviews for each student, and checks made that their choices allow them to achieve the highest possible Attainment 8 score in the wider context of a curriculum which best suits every students’ needs and interests

1. **KS4**

* There is close monitoring of how students are being **prepared for public** **examinations** by departments in all aspects. Teaching is closely related to the demands and requirements for success in each examination. There is frequent past/exemplar paper practice, and regular and frequent assessments. There is question level analysis after all key assessments and mocks and the production of resources to close the gap in student knowledge and skills as appropriate.
* There is a focus, continued from KS3, on developing the **generic skills** that students need in order to do well in these new GCSEs
* There is rigorous analysis of **the most recent public examination papers** to see what went wrong and what can be improved
* Some schools set up **new tutor groups** of students who will need all possible support to perform in the core subjects, with English or maths teachers as tutors and full use made of tutor time for study in these subjects
* **All underachieving students** should be targeted for intervention, but clearly special attention is going to those on the **borderline of achieving higher grades in the core subjects and/or are well below target in key subjects**
* In addition, the school should from the middle of Y9/10 be monitoring the likely **Attainment 8 performance of each student**, and putting in interventions when a student is below target in a subject that will be counting in Attainment 8
* Ensure that as many students as possible **achieve 10 scores**, i.e, the basis of Attainment 8. Are they being entered for all possible subjects? Could they move up from entry level? Are they being entered for prescribed extra qualifications? Are there any other vocational, GCSE equivalent qualifications they could yet gain as part of a curriculum change?
* Ensure that students are on **vocational courses** if these will suit them better than GCSE
* It is essential also to react quickly when **higher ability students** may be underachieving and not on course to achieve the higher grades that they should be obtaining, and this is especially true of disadvantaged higher ability students
* Have regular meetings of an **“Academic Board”,** comprising representatives from all subject areas which monitors individual student progress and coordinates the intervention strategies in place
* Careful analysis should be made of **examination papers returned from last year** so that lessons from last year can now be learnt to benefit the present students
* Every chance should be taken to **meet with Examiners** to gain tips, advice and updates
* There should be every opportunity take for **joint moderation** between schools, especially in relation to assessments
* It is expensive, but it can be very valuable to pay for **experienced public examination markers** to mark mock assessments
* **Subject specific profiles** can be drawn up for each student showing their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the examinations that they are taking
* Check **that all students are being entered** who could be, and that they have been entered at the correct level where this is relevant. Make use of early entry only where there is a very good reason. Students should only finish their courses early when they have achieved grades that reflect a good level of progress and then the school needs to ensure that they are kept motivated in Year 11 and are pursuing valuable extra qualifications in a 14-19 context, (nationally students do not do well if they take AS courses in Y11 and students are probably better off pursuing extra pre 16 qualifications)
* There should be plenty of practice for **controlled assignments** where they still exist, with an individualised approach to each student and students submitting extra controlled assignments where the first one could have been better
* **Science** is worth at least two grades usually and thus it is a priority to try to secure the highest possible grades by having a curriculum in place that makes this very possible, with as many students as possible taking triple or dual, and vocational science restricted just to those who cannot cope with GCSE Science
* **ICT courses** in KS4 can produce good grades and valuable points, with flexibility in what is offered and when over the three years of KS4. Ensure that all students have finished any controlled assignments and are ready for the final exams.
* The **Foundation subjects** should not be neglected, as it remains vital to enhance all students’ grades if possible; it is often the case that the results in these subjects are disappointing.
* With BTECs, OCR courses etc the aim must be to get as many students as possible to gain the **highest possible grade** and not just a pass
* With the move to linear examinations, the importance of students having good, **revision friendly notes** becomes even more important, and staff should be showing students how to produce these and then checking regularly that they are of good quality
* **Published revision note guides** for each GCSE can be a very useful way of ensuring that students have access to the key facts and concepts
* The best revision system is for all departments having to finish their syllabuses as early as possible, say 8 weeks before the exams so that there can be a good period of in class **revision,** with use of the most enjoyable and imaginative methods of revision. This then means that there is more certainty that students have actually revised and it cuts out the need for after school, lunchtime and holiday sessions when not all students attend; it also means that staff workload is much reduced.
* In addition, students should be shown again the various methods of **revision** from the very beginning of KS4, (having had plenty of exam and revision practice during KS3), and how these suit different people – parents’ meetings to show them how they can help – issue of free revision guides, commercial or home produced – students given revision planners and diaries – weekly checking of how much revision has been done by key students –– teachers shown how revision can be done in an enjoyable and fun way so that students don’t get bored – no study leave – students given revision sessions on days or half days prior to the actual examination in each subject – students given half hour reminder sessions before the actual exam starts – students encouraged to use Sam Learning, Bite Size and other ICT aids to revision including use of VLE’s – plenty of past paper practice – each department carefully monitored to ensure that they have a planned revision programme in place of good quality which is being delivered to a high standard
* Hopefully most underachievement intervention work can be in lessons. Where **extra booster support** is needed, then students’ timetables can be changed to give them more time for a set period with relevant subjects, in place of non-examination time. Students attending after school and weekend sessions clearly is valuable, but these are really only icing on the cake, with the cake being what goes on in curriculum time, (and it is also the case that some underachieving students cannot be persuaded to attend these sessions)
* Teaching of both examination technique and also how to handle stress in **PSHE** as well as in all subject lessons, e.g, tips on how to deal with an exam paper and tease out the most marks.
* Close monitoring of the **attendance and punctuality** of students, and action taken to get students in if their attendance seems to be dropping off.
* Students motivated to see the point and value of what they are doing by virtue of skilled and high profile **careers advice** and information (“if you get these grades you will be able to do this”). Ensuring that all students have something to aim for in September
* Extra sets of **mock examinations** put on across the key stage, each giving realistic examination experience
* Apart from mentoring of the ‘idle’, also **counselling and assistance** for those conscientious students who are getting stressed. The pastoral system and form tutors should be identifying and then doing all they can to support students who are facing difficulties
* Use of **praise** for those who revise well and are doing well in their public examination preparations with the aim of boosting confidence and motivation.
* Make use of **rewards** to keep students motivated, e.g, pizza nights, extra school privileges, food provided before revision sessions, entries in to prize draws, use of badges and stars etc
* Regular **liaison with parents** over all of KS4, ensuring that they understand about grades, targets, predicted performance etc – give them a contact to phone if their child is not revising or is stressed or if they have any other problems or issues
* Strict action taken against those who are **disruptive** in Year 10/11 lessons, and the breaking up of groups of students who may be making any particular class dysfunctional
* There are advantages in having Y10 and Y11 tutor groups **grouped together in one area of the school,** so that there is a sense of collective identity and feeling of achieving together
* The school **VLE** or similar can be used to store and then give students and parents continuous access to practice papers, model answers, learning resources, revision notes, exam timetable, key dates etc
* Early in KS4, checks should be made if students have **made poor course choices** in terms of their motivation and/or levels of attainment; this allows changes to be made before it is too late
* Schools need to ensure that all subjects have **enough curriculum time**, and that EBacc and foundation subjects do not have time taken off them for extra maths and English
* **Mock results days** following a key series of assessments, if handled well, can motivate some students and give others the message that they need to increase their work rate and take it all more seriously
* Sensible timing of the **prom** and good management of the **leaving day.**
* Arrangements put in place to pick up **students who don’t turn up for examinations**.
* With practical subjects, all **coursework** is finished to a deadline well before the theory exams
* The students receive **structured guidance and support** with their coursework throughout the course, building on the skills specifically developed in KS3
* The practical subject areas have a clear strategy for how students will be prepared for **the theory exams**; this takes place throughout the course and is not an add-on at the end and wherever possible is integrated in to coursework
* SLT leadership and Head of Year **co-ordination of the whole public examination** **preparation programme** and active involvement in it.

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