

Case Study

Our Lady's Bishop Eton Primary School, Liverpool

Programme: 1-year sustained support 2009-2010

BEAM Consultant: Gill Potter

Context

Bishop Eton's Headteacher, Debbie Bostock, and her team have been working with their school community to heighten the profile of mathematics focusing on developing very best practice to ensure the highest levels of attainment for all pupils in a school where excellence is promoted throughout.

Debbie first contacted BEAM after a review period within the school whereby it had become clear that, whilst pupils were consistently achieving beyond Local Authority and National Levels, comparatively less progress was being made in mathematics than in English; fewer children were making the two-levels of progress. A gender split had also become apparent with slightly less girls achieving level five. The overall status and enjoyment of mathematics was not that of English or some other Foundation subjects. It was felt within the school team that there needed to be a change of attitude towards mathematics which would lead to increased enjoyment, achievement and attainment.

BEAM Support Programme

The programme began with a review of mathematics throughout the school which focused on progression and development and included a learning walk looking at the classroom environment, strategies used by pupils, resourcing available in each classroom which pupils could access independently and the ratio of teacher to pupil talk and pupil to pupil talk. This formed a baseline from which an action plan was developed with Gill.

A ten-day programme of support, spread throughout the year, was developed with the aim of continuing to raise attainment in mathematics with a focus on creativity and children's engagement. The programme focused on using and applying mathematics, children exploring their thinking, assessment for learning and APP. The support constituted of InSET days focusing on developing independent mathematical thinkers complemented by in-class team teaching days highlighting practical strategies alongside a continual process of review with teaching staff, pupils and the senior leadership team.

Throughout this process, the aim of increasing pupil enjoyment, achievement and attainment in mathematics, remained at the core. This led to a complete review of how the teaching and learning of mathematics was planned, moving away from set scheme planning to developing planning making best use of scheme

resources, BEAM resources and other exciting and relevant materials. Each block of learning is now mapped out into a teaching sequence with, for example, a ten-day block of learning including four days direct and quality teaching complemented by six days of explicit using and applying mathematics. This change of format has enabled teachers to improve assessment for learning, facilitating greater opportunity for assessing pupil progress.

Impact

Debbie, in discussing the impact of the programme, said “it challenges and supports children allowing more focused direct teaching”. She went on to add that she is now observing pupils who, when approaching mathematics, are utilising “totally independently systematic thinking, logical thinking, prior knowledge, collaboration, communication and exceptional mathematical thinking”, which has led to a “high standard of maths which is very creative and where pupils are taking charge of their own learning”.

BEAM Consultant – Gill Potter

Gill Potter is an experienced BEAM Consultant and, in reviewing her role, said, “I am privileged to be invited to work alongside schools and really make a difference to mathematics for their pupils – this gives me huge personal satisfaction and a keen sense of purpose. The work is both challenging and exciting and dealing with the unexpected is an everyday occurrence.

Working with the SLT is pivotal to the success of each project, building trust relationships, listening to the needs of each stakeholder and facilitating discussions with staff to identify areas for development that are real and purposeful is an integral part of each project. I am very aware that there can be no formula applied and that each school has its own unique set of needs for furthering mathematics for pupils. What is crucial for my role is to give an outsider perspective which draws from a huge wealth of experiences, nationally and internationally, in state schools and the private sector. In this way schools can reflect on different perspectives including current, relevant research so that the time and effort that is expended has a real impact on pupil learning”.

BEAM Education

BEAM works with individual schools, nursery providers, clusters, higher education providers and LA’s through tailor-made programmes to meet the specific needs of the organisation. We have a team of over seventy consultants that are at the very forefront of maths education providing the highest quality, learning–focused support.

We wish Our Lady’s Bishop Eton our very best as they continue on their pathway to promoting the teaching and learning of mathematics, helping to ensure that all pupils work to Be A Mathematician!

We're here to help

To discuss possible support programmes for your setting, please contact the BEAM Professional Development team on **01242 278600** or email **inset@nelsonthornes.com**

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