

'Learning to share' to benefit all WELL Schools



Implementation Learning

EEF Implementation - By changing the process of School Improvement Planning and the plan proforma to reflect the EEF guidance and by integrating Professional Development planning gives insightful details around how to ensure effective implementation. Use the language of implementation across the school. Equipping all staff with the understanding and application of this process means they then learn from each and quickly act when implementation is not going well at all stages.

[A School's Guide to Implementation | EEF](#)

Implementation Team & Whole School Approach - Balancing how to involve wider staff in implementation and how to avoid duplication of tasks or wasted staff time is difficult. They do need to understand the reason for the chosen priority and approach, and to be kept up to date with progress and changes and to feel involved.

- The key to success is an implementation team, is essential and the key person driving the plan does not have to be the Headteacher, but the Headteacher needs to maintain momentum. The team is crucial and it is essential they meet regularly, with the support of the Headteacher and Governing Body to review progress against final outcomes.
- A senior leader must lead the priority but building a team of staff to implement is essential. Regular meetings with the implementation team enables the team to come up with solutions to problems quickly.
- If the lead leaves, then there should be no impact on the continued implementation and success of the plan. Honesty is crucial and everyone's opinion should be valued and taken into account when evaluations take place.
- Invest time in securing the 'buy-in' of any new staff.
- The success of any identified school improvement focus does not just depend on and involve the key people in a particular area. Wider school support will be needed in some form and the extent to which this happens this can enhance or jeopardise the chances of achieving outcome ambitions. For example, in our school, not having a fully staffed exams and data team in school impeded our work in screening and then analysing data. Considering this as a potential pinch point before implementation begins can lead to more effective mitigations.
- The success was due to leaders recognising the importance of uniting around a whole school approach, staff and pupils speaking about reading positively. Everyone was on board and understood what they were doing and why. Staff listened to each other always stopped and ask questions - what was going well, what we needed to improve, what tweaks we needed to make.
- Having key staff in clear roles, enables the appropriate work to take place.

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- Have a full team from within all key stages part of writing the plan. Train more than 1/2 members of staff. Share the plan - even with staff who are not directly involved - tell them and share the targets so there is a shared understanding of what is being worked towards. Counter for new pupils/losing pupils, new members of staff and make allowances or highlight how this could have an impact. Regularly evaluate but stick to the plan and allow the time and consistency.

Protect Planning & Review Time - There is real power when Trustees and Headteachers allow the time to do the implementation process well.

- All teachers protect time to plan and prepare meaningful intervention activities, also, time to talk to colleagues and parents/carers so everyone is working towards the same goals.

Effective Professional Development (PD) - It is really important to plan effective PD for **all** staff using models that can be sustained over time - use the mechanisms of the EEF professional development report. Give PD time, over 2-3 years to allow work to be sustained.

[Effective Professional Development | EEF](#)

- Ensuring staff are exposed to PD, as we can continue to do what we always do, if we are not able to reflect on and learn from best practice. Providing time for PD is always a challenge, this is a greater challenge in our school, due to the supervision needs of our children, and the medical training required and the importance of positive and purposeful relationships with the children, but we have developed ways to overcome this, with allocated curriculum time to staff to enhance their knowledge and to expose them to development time.
- Ensure that **all** staff involved are adequately trained and that training continues throughout the deliver phase with follow on coaching (and using staff who had become 'experts' in delivery).
- Focus on high quality teaching and PD on all teachers **and** TAs to achieve consistency across school.

Take Your Time - Attending WELL EEF implementation training needs to be done without distraction during inputs. Being present and focused was instrumental, as it really helped us to fully understand what was expected.

- We won't be rushing into any short-term fixes again. We will trust our own professional judgement and use evidence to help us develop an approach that will work in our context.
- Explore and implement our project well - it positively slowed our school improvement process down and supported us to follow the path that was right for our school, our staff and our children.
- Giving enough time for the explore phase - Staff buy-in focus at regular intervals – and acceptance of the chosen approach- Ensure that you know what aspects of chosen intervention require fidelity- PD is meaningful and regularly revisited -Team approach rather than one person leading -Drawing on expertise of others and collaborate with other schools.

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- We now use the pre mortem mantra for everything we do. We allow time for the implementation cycle and don't panic when things aren't a success immediately. We know how and where to look for evidence and research to help guide us in our implementation. It takes time to fully achieve Staff buy into the approach and what being evidence informed means. Need to focus on culture and conditions Staff are less threatened by the approach if they are involved and recognise that implementation needs revaluation and refinement to make it a success.

Implementation AND Practical Expertise is Essential – All staff were highly trained in both implementation and the practical aspects of the focus, and regular check-ins ensured everyone had a clear understanding of the direction we were going and how to get there. We ironed out any implementation problems quickly **and** collaboratively to ensure the barriers we faced were quickly overcome.

- Having training delivered by experts from outside of the school to the full staff showed that we were all on a level playing field and learning new skills together. Having key staff with previous experience of the intervention from other settings helped enormously. Being able to rely on their previous experience and knowledge definitely sped up our implementation.
- Ensuring that cognitive load of staff is at an appropriate level when introducing the new strategies that we want to move forwards with. It is very easy to try to introduce everything all at once, but it is much more effective to build on the experiences of the staff to ensure that the application is effective. This has allowed us to evolve some of the strategies being implemented and really build on the strengths of the staff to develop our own mentors who can facilitate coaching for inexperienced staff in house. This links also to ensure that the pathways for communication always remain open and that it is 2 way. Staff involved have felt valued when they felt that their voices were being heard and they could see their own suggestions and successes forming the strategies moving forwards.
- Conduct surveys with staff about worries or concerns with implementation. Anything they want to share or need help with.
- Evaluation needs to be built into the cycle of development and regular opportunities to report to governors on the impact of implementation will help.

Commitment to the Shared & Agreed Focus/ Priority – Involve all stakeholders in the consultation process and revisit them in the QA of the priority: in particular the students.

- Consistency, rigour, commitment to targets and full engagement from all parties are what I believe have made the project work. Dedicated, trained and skilled staff who value the purpose and nurture success and achievement amongst children. I feel fidelity to the plan, with the original targets, seeing it through to the end and being consistent with minimal tweaks/changes has been vital and we will endeavour to do this again moving forward. The time and precision that has been allocated is why it has been so successful.
- WELL funding and encouragement to focus on evidence informed approaches was used to develop a detailed and well-planned programme of interventions for students. We have learnt that the key to implementation of all these elements was collaborative planning.

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Alongside this, ensuring all stakeholders were clearly communicated with **throughout** the planning and implementation phase.

- Ensure there are timely reminders of the priority and key messages (things learned, successes and failures) to staff.
- The biggest challenge is maintaining consistency. Recruitment and retention of staff, student attendance, pastoral needs and other aspects of school life that require a response that don't always figure in a plan all affect delivering a strategy in real time. Consider the best mitigations for these as we know they will arise.
- In a small school a key has been to ensure we do not have too many priorities running at the same time. With a smaller school team time and people resources are less therefore we need to be sure the priorities we focus on are those which address the needs of the cohorts in school which are very changeable year on year. Our original implementation plan had multiple foci, and this made it difficult to ensure the whole staff team could drive the progress forward to gain maximum impact.
- We have had to learn not to become disengaged with the process when something has happened that we have not planned for, or something that in principle worked well on a small scale but when rolled out into the larger environment of the school was not as effective. It was important to build reflection time into the process, both for the implementation team but also for all the staff who were facilitating the strategies.
- One of the main lessons learned is to keep the focus of the implementation tight, to ensure you can have a clear focus and have fidelity to the process. Another key aspect is ensuring that all staff, not just those directly involved in the implementation plan, are fully informed of the process and the active ingredients. We have ensured we come back to the key priorities time and time again to ensure they are embedded. Having the opportunity to discuss implementation plans with colleagues in other schools has been refreshing and enabled staff to reflect on the processes within their own settings. One piece of advice to other leaders in schools is to be adaptable and flexible with your plans. School structures and priorities change day to day, your plan has to be robust but also you need to reflect on the implementation in line with the demands of your school.
- Whole Trust focus and support for chosen focus is key. This means for example, work on reciprocal reading, and reading fluency will be enhanced with Cross Trust work.
- Development of “Squads” and make time to draw and learn from other schools.

Consistent Focus on Disadvantaged Pupils – Regularly look at progress data, focusing on (but not exclusively) disadvantaged pupils participating in interventions to check they are achieving what you want them to achieve.

- Closing the Gap for our disadvantaged pupils has been something challenging, when tackled in isolation. WELL recognised the importance of a strong and consistent focus on approaches that can effectively meet the needs of all pupils in the West, but in particular the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. The WELL project offered our school the opportunity to re-

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affirm and strengthen how we "Poverty Proof" the lives of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged. WELL recognises the challenges of the schools in the West. allowing time to focus on and develop the climate for learning, building social and emotional resilience of our children. Underachievement continues to be measured by performance data however WELL allowed us to explore why our disadvantage underachieve.

- We recognise that Quality Teaching and Learning is core to narrowing the gap, researched informed learning EEF supports our professional judgements. EEF Implementation process had a significant impact upon our curriculum review and Subject leader implementation plans. GTT raised awareness of the 4 dimensions of Quality practice and the 17 elements.

Evidence Informed Approach & The Power of Internal Evidence - Maintain a healthy degree of scepticism - if something looks too good to be true, it probably is.

- Listen to what the pupils are saying and observe and reflect on adult response to pupil feedback received (pupil voice / interviews / work sampling and discussions).
- WELL has been a role model in expecting a commitment they set high expectations for PD at all levels providing access to quality training opportunities. The support, advice, guidance and professional accountability expected by WELL has played a significant part in the progress our school has made and will continue to make.
- Monitor **how well** implementation is happening with a focus on maintaining momentum.

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Practical Learning

Metacognition – Avoid starting too big. Metacognition is a huge topic so we should have picked one thing to focus on and spent more time identifying the core components of it.

Literacy & Vocabulary Focus – Literacy interventions require careful consideration of the quality of Professional Development that sit alongside them. Subscriptions and guidance documents/website information is not sufficient and better to think three years ahead in terms of feasibility of embedding and developing effectiveness of a chosen approach.

- Focus on the reading culture within the school and put more effort into this than into parental engagement strategies. Focus on reading resources and strategies that enable pupils to do extra reading in the afternoon, place value on pupil and staff voice.
- The roll out of reciprocal reading across the school was part of a well-planned literacy development programme. **All** staff are fully versed in this process, and it is well understood and used at the school.
- If choosing a focus of vocabulary acquisition and development, and developing key teaching and learning skills, impact can be very difficult to quantify. Take some time to explore and identify assessment approaches. Improvements at scale will not be achieved if we cannot measure.

Data & Assessments - Ensure clarity of expectations with data and assessment teams and consider potential pinch points/risks to ensuring essential information and analysis will be available when it is needed.

- The roll out of the NGRT reading assessment tool as funded by WELL. The data from these assessments has already been scrutinised and used to deliver a range of reading interventions, targeted at the right students. The successful use of school led tutoring to improved outcomes for disadvantaged students.
- Using an online test to assess pupils can be a challenge to ensure that students don't just hit any answer to simply complete the test. We have therefore adapted our approach to ensure greater supervision of tests.
- Plan and undertake regular meetings to discuss children's progress and next steps - finding their challenge points quickly and acting on them.

Intervention Groups & Leads - Delivering interventions in too large groups, resulted in less effective learning and pupils not making adequate progress.

- Those leading interventions need to be supported, including checking that they have the assessment confidence to know when children are ready to move off the Phonics phase. Don't make assumptions that this confidence will be there. or that teaching will be effective

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after delivery of training/online training – they needed follow up support and this need to be planned.

Positive Relationships with Pupils/Students - The importance of positive and purposeful relationships with the children, This needs to be a core component of any chosen intervention.

- With the right training, diligence of sixth form students delivering an intervention programme combined with a tenacious approach of staff to ensure students got to sessions.
- PP profiles have been effective in part because staff have been given ownership and time and space to ask questions and clarify. All say they gave them insight into the student and in the majority of cases 'something to talk about' with the student to engage them in conversation but also use hobbies and interests as focal points in the lesson. It has also been really important to listen to the student as well. For example, at first lots were hesitant to be involved in literacy interventions but as they saw the progress they had made (and this was shared with them regularly), several requested to stay in intervention, even though they made their targets as they wanted to continue to progress and could see the benefit of the work that they had been doing.

ELSA Interventions – Active ingredients/ Core Components For ELSA interventions to be effective:

- A well-resourced, quiet, private room to work in.
- Training, protected time for children and supervision.
- All staff to have knowledge of ELSA show enthusiasm of the ELSAs.

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Core Components Examples

Core Component/ Active Ingredients Examples from Schools with Promising Outcomes

Phonics

- All teachers to prioritise time for pupil talk and modelling of target vocabulary in lesson planning for all subjects.
- Phonics to be ideally daily, with sessions focused on maintaining pace and coverage.
- Lessons and interventions to be 15-30 mins and timings to be matched to the age and stage of the children in the sessions for interventions.
- Group sizes will be a maximum of 6 pupils x minimum of 4 times per week (frequent, short bursts – focus on engagement and lots of praise throughout the sessions).
- PD to include planned time for all Teachers and TAs to stay up to date with latest guidance.
- All Teachers and TAs to refer to prompt cards when preparing for teaching.
- 'Reading Leader' has protected and dedicated time to monitor implementation and ensure any new staff access relevant training.
- Guided Reading time to be protected and prioritised in all year groups.
- Phonics to reading application through matching of decodable books.
- Adults to read aloud to pupils every day using a range of quality fiction and non-fiction texts.

Writing

Developing sentence construction

- Discussion – explicitly talk with the pupils about their language choices.
- Encourage pupils to debate, argue and justify choices with peers.
- Focus on the effect of language choice on the listener or reader.
- Select sentences from authentic texts.
- Use pictures/ short videos as prompts for pupils to create and write own sentences.
- Pupils practice saying their sentences out loud with partners or an adult, before writing them down. ORAL sentence building BEFORE written sentence building.
- Adults model how to write sentences and explain out loud their own thinking.
- Provide opportunities for pupils in lessons to experiment with language choice and sentence structure.
- Provide pupils with a stellar sentence and get pupils to justify why they think their choice is better in terms of impact on listener or reader.
- Break down writing tasks into short chunks. Focus on the ingredients of strong writing. Key concentration to be on ideas, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, grammar, tense and handwriting.

Group Reading Interventions

- Interventions to be timetabled and protected at least 2 session per week for 12 weeks – in addition to curriculum reading time.
- Pupils taking part to have been screened/ assessed prior to being placed in intervention groups.

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- Sufficient numbers of high-quality texts to be available, dictionaries and atlases also to be available to pupils.
- Key vocabulary to be evident in displays within the intervention base.
- Complete short stories, chapters from short novels, poems, coherent sections from information texts and longer texts to be used, in the sessions.
- Provide a balance of fiction and non-fiction texts during the intervention sessions.
- Adults to model reading intervention strategies and check pupil understanding.
- Sessions to be introduced by a focusing or recapping element.
- Sessions to conclude with a recap or review of what has been read.
- Adults read with and to pupils, rather than make individuals read out loud in isolation.
- Provide support and encouragement for those who are less confident.
- Monitor participation to ensure no pupil is over-dominant during the session.
- Encourage follow up reading or research linked to the focus of the text.