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**Establishing an attainment culture based on high expectations**

Where attainment remains low and to some extent stuck at the same level, it is difficult to raise attainment from students, and especially those well below national average in terms of prior attainment

There needs to be a sustained move to develop a stronger attainment culture in all schools, by prioritising actions and initiatives that are likely to have a direct positive effect on attainment

The document “Secondary Raising Attainment” gives suggestions for 200 ways of raising attainment based on research carried out when visiting a large number of schools and academies, but below are what I would suggest are the most important of these, in that they have proved to be the most effective and successful in a wide range of schools

**Suggestions for departments**

* Focused preparation work for KS4 in Y9
* Eight week revision period prior to the exams at the end of Y11 for each subject, (it is strange that we seem to accept that a very large number of student sit GCSE exams having done very little revision – how well could they do if they have all revised fully, and there would also be less need for teachers holding revision classes at lunchtime and after school)
* From the start of the KS4 course, each student to be compiling notes that will be user-friendly for revision – these could come from dictated notes, concise, to the point handouts or copies from revision guides. These to be kept in the school and not taken home where they may get damaged or lost. This is essential given the amount of content in most of the GCSEs
* Teaching, learning and all forms of provision as intensive in Y10 as in Y11- apart from the revision period as above, there is nothing extra in Y11
* An intensive KS3 which:
  + Helps students develop the generic skills that they will now need in KS4
  + Has a focus on the AOs of the KS4 course in each subject aiming to give the students the subject knowledge, concepts and skills that they will need in KS4
  + Sets the highest of standards and expectations for the students as learners
  + Is still enjoyable and motivating and covering a broad curriculum despite the KS4 focus
* Regular recall of all types as a key feature of all lessons, (past papers, assessments, quizzes, verbal Qs), so that there is a culture whereby students know that they have to make an effort to learn what is covered because they will always be tested
* Regular past paper practice, with an emphasis on students getting practice in understanding the wording used in questions and what the question actually means and is wanting as an answer
* Departments checking regularly that they are with the best exam board in terms of the results likely to be achieved
* Close contact with exam boards to get all possible clues and tips to what is expected from answers – exam board courses; visits from exam staff; regular in-house moderation; use of staff who are exam markers; partnerships with departments in other schools who are following the same exam spec
* Continuous assertion of high expectations, including confidence building through the systematic use of personalised praise but at the same time making it clear when something isn’t good enough- the result is an achievement culture, but with no “swot syndrome”
* Departments being aware of what were the national attainment averages in their subject last year and with a determination to meet and beat them
* Continuous issue and demonstration of exemplars of all sorts to show students what outstanding actually looks like
* Personalised intervention strategies in place for all under-achieving students, based on diagnosis of the reasons for their underachievement as identified by regular data tracking
* An individual subject scorecard for each student in place where progress, or lack of it, is recorded in some detail
* Vocational courses rather than GCSES are in place where it is likely that students will achieve better on these courses, (as is often the case)
* Staff realise that all grade increases count in Attainment 8 – there are as many points to be gained in moving a student from a 1 to a 3 as there are from a 3 to a 4, and we no longer just worry about getting students over the higher grade boundary
* The departments prioritise meeting the needs of both SEND and higher ability students
* There is full use of Edtech. Including provision for remote learning

**Suggestions for SLT**

* There be someone responsible for overseeing the raising of attainment in each school year
* Academic boards be established for each school year to monitor attainment of individuals and departments
* The curriculum be revised as necessary to give student at least 8 courses in KS4, and thus putting them in a strong position to ensure that they have the full eight results for attainment 8
* The placement of subjects in option blocks, and the subsequent timetable, be reviewed to allow sensible setting, e.g Computer Science, which needs ability with maths, blocked with ICT courses
* Checks put in place in KS4 to ascertain which of each student’s courses are likely to be those that count in A8, and then to prioritise any underachievement in these
* Checks put in place that, where applicable, departments are putting students in to the best possible level of entry
* There be as much emphasis put on the foundation subjects as the EBacc subjects; there is plenty of evidence that many foundation subjects could be achieving much better results and need to be achieving them to boost A8 via the open bucket
* If it becomes obvious in Y10 that students have made bad course choices, then action taken promptly to make changes
* Lesson observation practice modified to include consideration of the extent to which the teacher demonstrated the use of strategies to not just make general progress but to actually raise attainment
* Continuous monitoring or the attendance and behaviour of students which is limiting their attainment, including, where possible, moving students between classes where their behaviour or attitude is affecting the overall learning of the class
* Identification of students who are becoming stressed by the demands of their learning and then providing support

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