

Leading the Way for High Achievers!

Saint John the Baptist's College (SJBC), Portadown, took part in the Literacy and Numeracy KS2-KS3 CPD Project in collaboration with their main feeder school, Saint John the Baptist PS. The project offered the Numeracy Co-ordinators from both schools the valuable opportunity to come together to share good practice and to explore links and possibilities for improved progression across KS2 and KS3. Moreover, the partnership enabled the pooling of resources and together the coordinators created a tailor-made transition scheme designed to stretch and challenge pupils across a variety of topics as well as presenting opportunities for them to develop enhanced cognitive processing skills.

Together the schools acknowledged that they had developed a wide range of effective strategies and support resources to assist children who were experiencing difficulties in Mathematics and English. They shared approaches and ideas which they felt would be useful across both phases. However, it was evident from the engagement that a dearth of provision for High Achieving pupils in Mathematics was an emerging issue in both schools.

Plans into Action!

Plans for addressing 'High Achievement' were developed and Mrs Aisling Hughes (SJBC) presented her proposal to the SLT in SJBC requesting that discrete provision be allocated within the timetable for dedicated lessons for high achieving pupils. She explained that the plan would be to create a High Achievers class in each year group which not only would cater for 'high ceiling' pupils in Saint John the Baptist's College but this would also have serious positive impact for pupils currently in P6 in two local primary schools. Part of the plan was to have the primary pupils commute to and from the college each Wednesday to access a bespoke Mathematics course which would be delivered by specialists. The SLT approved and embraced all plans wholeheartedly.

Where is it all going?

The out-workings of this plan will see primary school pupils attending two classes per week of both Mathematics and English within Saint John the Baptist College. The broad objectives are that the children will draw on and expand their current knowledge, grow in confidence, feel challenged and develop a range of higher order thinking skills which ordinarily they may not have had the opportunity to do so.

Principals, Parents, Pupils and Staff are on board!

Having contacted principals, staff and parents to outline the 'High Achiever Scheme' as well as hosting a full information morning was met with huge enthusiasm and great support. The scheme has created a great sense of

excitement within the local community and has already attracted the interest of another partner primary school who also wishes to work with the school on the Literacy and Numeracy KS2-KS3 CPD Project commencing in September 2017.

Mrs Noella Murray, Principal of Saint John the Baptist's College commented: "Having discussed the plans for implementation of the above programme with Governors, we are very supportive of this initiative which we believe is both innovative and will prove to be very worthwhile. We envisage that this programme will give rise to enhanced instruction and enable pupils with a strong aptitude in these areas to further develop their knowledge and skills as well as to develop their self-confidence and passion for these core curricular areas. This joint project will also provide a platform for recognising and celebrating student ability and achievement which we know will further motivate all involved."

Building Relationships!

Mrs Murray also commented, "Another positive by-product of this engagement will undoubtedly be the enhancement of good working relationships between the partner schools. This closer collaboration, we believe, will enable the formation of trusting and deeper relationships at various levels across the schools, which will undoubtedly encourage greater sharing of crucial information and data which is pivotal to effective transition.

In addition, this type of on-going pooling of expertise and resources is a model which could potentially be replicated or adapted to suit other areas for collaboration both in the sense of shared curricular provision as well as in relation to joint CPD within the network of schools."

