



*Learning is a journey not a race*

# *Closing the gap – Climbing the stairs*

## *The Disraeli School*

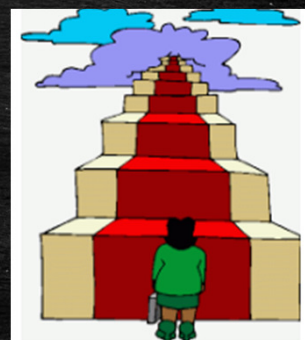
Jo Pikulski, Co-Headteacher  
Paula O'Shea, Lead DSL and Pastoral Lead

Shirin Vora – PP Lead and Vulnerable Groups – also attending today

Start with **WHY**



There is no elevator to success, you have to take the stairs.

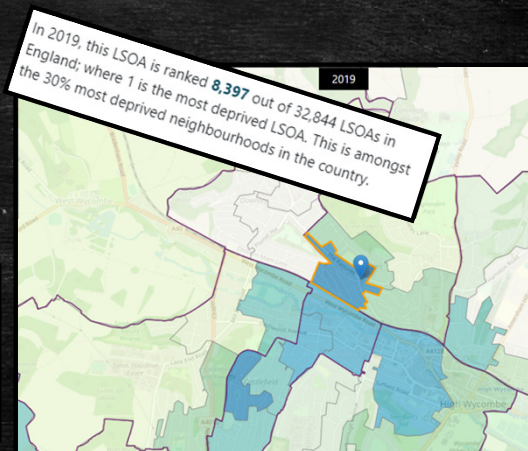


## Context

Number on roll	692 (3 f-e)
Age Range	2-11 years
Additional provision	ARP – 18 places, ASD designation
No' languages spoken	30
% BAME	67%: White British 33%, Pakistani 29%, any other white background 9%, White and Black Caribbean 7%
% EAL	25% (155)
% PP	15% (104) – an additional 47 now eligible since start of year (151 – will be 22%)
% SEN (incl EHCP)	21% (144)
% EHCP	5% (34)

(No of children in brackets)

## CHALLENGE 1 – BUILDING A COMMUNITY



[http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod\\_index.htm](http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.htm)

## Key document for us:

*The most effective schools and settings visited had a much wider definition of disadvantage. While the leaders and staff spoken to in these successful providers typically knew what disadvantaged children and families were entitled to receive in monetary terms, they went beyond this when defining what made a child, family or entire community disadvantaged. In these instances, adults used the term 'vulnerable' as a way of describing the unique circumstances surrounding an individual child, group of children or family.*

*Unknown Children Destined for Disadvantage 2016*



## Breaking Down Barriers 2000-now



## Key principles to our approach

- It's who **we** are – we recruit to our values and vision – our WHY
- Strive for our leadership (at all levels) to reflect the community
- Aim for long lasting generational change
- Start with children at the centre – who **they** are – not a label
- Relationships – RITA!
- Trying hard and not giving up – even more so with the hardest to reach
- What makes people tick?

Last minute booster classes to meet accountability measures create shallow learning. Sticking plaster solutions don't work - they fall off. Instead, school must put into place well-researched, comprehensive, and flexible long-term, plans if they want to address the fundamental barriers to learning and attainment.  
Marc Rowland



## Vision and Values

RESPONSIBILITY

RESPECT

At Disraeli, everyone reaches for excellence, with our v partnersh each child confident safe; aims high and becomes a life-long learner.

TRUST



EQUALITY

FRIENDSHIP

EXCELLENCE

LOVE

## Raising Aspirations

- Dizzy Degree Club with trip to Oxford University
- Mini-Enterprise - the world of work
- Careers Day
- Differences and Disabilities Day
- Ensuring children vulnerable groups have fair opportunity to take part in extra curricular events or activities without barriers
- AG&T performing arts film premier
- Job applications for school roles
- Competitions (young leadership)
- Adult Ed working with parents
- Staff modelling - PP Leader Hockey tour (2017) blog
- Handwriting staff challenge
- 99 club launch
- Science club and gardening clubs (emphasis on PP and vulnerable groups)

## Early Intervention and Help

- 2 year old nursery
- Children's Centre (until 2019)
- PEEP and PAFT, Incredible Years, Holding Hands, Helping Hands, VIG - parent support
- Little Talkers led by Early Years Senior Leader
- Music Sessions in other settings in the local area by our EYs senior teacher
- Munch Brunch cooking
- Domestic violence champions
- Lead DSL and Pastoral Lead on the Senior Leadership Team
- Assistant Head with responsibility for Vulnerable Groups incl PP on SLT
- Strong Safeguarding culture - proactive approach (recognised in 2019 OFSTED)
- Part of the Mental Health Trailblazer project
- Mental Health Ambassadors
- In school young carers groups, counsellor/play therapist, dramatherapist - The Ballinger Retreat (room that is "not like school"!!)
- Horse riding, Music intervention (ASD), Lego Therapy



## Parental Engagement

- Adult education, on site, with familiar staff, with the support of Bucks Adult Ed
- Family days and events such as picnics, carnivals, Family Christmas Dinner (serving over 800 dinners in 2019 over two days!)
- Reading Day - breakfast and after school workshops
- Consultation on PSHE and RSE policies with additional workshops on child protection for parents (2 separate evenings)
- Maths and Science evening with a real astronomer
- Staff on all gates in the mornings and afternoons (senior leaders and middle leaders) visibility and there to break down barriers in communication - a smile goes so far!!
- School run Breakfast Club and After School Clubs - supporting parents to work
- School run 30 hours provision
- New Parents' Forum
- FOD (PTA) events and Coffee mornings - now included information on curriculum, child protection and the importance of talk

## Community Cohesion

- Visual role models within community - parents from the Children's Centre now employed in school, pupils from vulnerable groups now employees
- Aim for leadership representative of the community - leadership at all levels
- Steel Pans - all events, clubs, staff
- Sitting on the Inequalities Advisory Group - Buckinghamshire CCG (aim to reduce health inequality - blood pressure checks at family picnic)
- Family picnics - celebrating together
- Christmas Dinner - celebrating together
- The power of food!
- Inviting neighbours to our circus September 2019
- Diversity in make up of children's leadership groups (peer mentors, house captains, school council, learning council)
- Children involved in all recruitment - panel of interviewers for every role, sometimes their responses have swayed the decision



## CHALLENGE 2: THE DATA

2015

Year Group	All children	Disadvantaged
FS2 - GLD	19%	0%
Y1 - Phonics	47%	36%

## What did we do in response?

### Pupil Premium Action Group BLT project –action research 2016

- Increased senior leaders' and middle leaders' ability to identify barriers, implement intervention and measure impact
- Lasting impact of this:
  - how we communicate with parents about expectations at the end of FS2, Y1, Y2 and Y6
  - how we support parents with phonics at home through workshops, coffee afternoons, resources, flash cards
  - how we identify children, organise phonics interventions and track children
  - increased expertise among middle leaders - this also led to identifying EAL as underperforming group in phonics in 2018-19 and using same approach we closed the gap for this group too (↑32% EAL, ↑ 30% PP, ↑ 15% SEN)

## What did we do in response?

### Appointed a leader with a TLR for Pupil Premium

This led to...

- a sharp focus on PP through CPD for all staff,
- someone to liaise with external support from Bucks CC / BLT
- training for governors
- a whole school shared understanding of what PP was and what that meant at our school
- increased leadership capacity
- someone always saying "what about PP?" in everything we did or talked about
- someone having time to gather evidence and look at impact
- someone to develop processes and policies and work on the strategic document with the Co-Heads
- someone with capacity to research best practise and bring ideas back
- The role is now an Assistant Head role and encompasses ALL vulnerable groups, including PP, and includes more of a strategic overview, as well as all of the above



## What did we do in response?

**Barrier Trackers in place for all PP children (and others as needed)**

This led to...

- Better understanding of barriers for children
- Better context around each child
- How can we break down barriers if we don't know what they are?



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## What did we do in response?

### Peer Mentoring – focus on metacognition

1. Peer mentor programme Y5-6 mentor Y3-4 on basic skills – identified by teachers, planned for by Y5-6 and delivered by Y5-6 (with support from PP lead)
2. Paired reading, chess games, lego, taught spellings, handwriting, all ages (older mentor younger)
3. Self-esteem peer mentors – older children (low attaining) support younger children with physical exercise, problem solving, play skills

### This led to...

- Increasing opportunities for children to work together and get to know each other – important as the school grew from 2fe to 3fe
- Raised self-esteem of mentor and mentee
- Reinforced 'how we learn' through teaching others - metacognition

## Disraeli Peer Mentor

### Job Profile:

As a peer mentor, you would be expected to...

- Complete a training course at school
- Work with a child from year 1 or 2 to help them progress with their learning
- Plan the session you will deliver during some of your lunch time once a week
- Run one session, to be timetabled during the week
- Evaluate your session to see how well it went and what you could improve on next time
- Be committed for a 6 week cycle

You may also get the opportunity to lead or run part of an after school club for a KS1 year group.



You have been chosen to apply for this role because we feel you have the skills and mind set needed to be an excellent mentor.



Please complete this form and hand it back to Mrs Yagg by Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

Name:	Date of Birth:
Why do you want to be a peer mentor?	
What skills do you have that would make you a fantastic mentor?	
What three words would you use to describe yourself?	

If a child was struggling to learn something, how would you help them?

What are your strengths in school?

What would you like to be better at in school?

Is there a question you would like to ask about being a mentor?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this application.



## What did we do in response?

**Action Research Project with Wycombe Challenge  
2 middle leaders (one PP lead)**

This led to...

- Supporting boys, reluctant readers, to engage in reading at home
- Supporting parents to read with their children
- Exploring the use of text to encourage and remind parents
- Explored the development of an initiative with parents
- Explored the benefits of meeting parents away from the school site (hotel!)
- Used the text system to send phonics reminders to parents in Y1 the following year – something we intend to do again this year

## What did we do in response?

**Using data wisely  
Selective with what we capture, developed a meaningful and efficient system for  
teachers and leaders to access and use**

This led to...

- Leaders having better understanding of performance and progress data for their subject areas
- Quicker analysis of groups of children and how well they are progressing (or not)
- Pupil progress meetings focused on removing barriers to aspirational targets
- Planning targeted interventions with clear start and end points

## What did we do in response?



Continued to review and develop our **CONTAGIOUS AND COURAGEOUS CURRICULUM** that is built around **ALL** of our children

This led to...

- More learning TALK in the classroom
- Focus on vocabulary and quality interactions – every second is an opportunity
- Learning built on experience and opportunity
- Maintaining Quality First Teaching in the classrooms and intervening swiftly if needed



## Outcomes

### Challenge 1: Community

- Overwhelming positive parental survey data
- Children have lots of opportunities before they leave
- School people choose to send children to now
- Rare for there to be serious behaviour issues, racism, bullying or discrimination

I take my hat off to you both for your time, patience, excellent gifting on choreography along with your vibrant personalities which observed by me has done great wonders within the area of Performing Arts for the children of Disraeli school. Keep up the excellent work because you are affecting the next generation in such a fantastic way. Parent, Y5, Black-Caribbean, 2019



### Challenge 2: Data

	2015 all	2019 all	2015 disadvantaged	2019 disadva
GLD (FS2)	19%	60%	0%	64%
Phonics Y1	47%	77%	36%	68%

I'd like to thank everyone involved with the lovely lunch we were lucky enough to share with the children today. The steel band, the kitchen staff, the clearers - much appreciated. Parent Y3, FS2, mixed Black-Caribbean and white, 2018

## Case Study A - Child

### History

Child A is a female aged 11, of mixed Black Caribbean, Traveller and White British heritage. A was a pupil at The Disraeli School from the age of 3. Home life was 'chaotic' and A had two younger siblings. The family history included crime, violence and leaving school after primary. Mum had complex mental health needs. Child A had both internal and fixed term exclusions for physical assaults on staff and extremely disruptive behaviour. Parents had a huge mistrust of professionals and there was ongoing Social Care involvement. Both parents had poor literacy and numeracy skills and stated that they would never let their children go to secondary school as they would be bullied. Parents were extremely difficult to engage with and attendance and punctuality were a concern.

### What happened

A range of interventions included: an allocated worker, home visits during and after the school day, Holding Hands group with the allocated worker and an Ed Pysch, and weekly drama therapy sessions in school for two years for A and sibling. SLT and teachers worked together with Child A to develop an individual behaviour plan. Almost daily contact was had during 'lockdown' and food parcels and support with uniform were given.

## Case Study A - Child

Over a period of time strong relationships and trust were built and Mum even became proactive about sharing concerns with school. School worked with the family 'as a whole' and Breakfast Club was provided free of charge.

Through ongoing discussions parents were able to understand the positive impact of A attending secondary school which Mum had refused to consider for a long period of time.

### Outcomes

Drama therapy led to increased trust in adults and an opportunity to understand her own emotions and worries. Long term support from the same key adults enabled A to have a voice and be part of the decision making process about behaviour management e.g. being part of reward planning. Home visits gave an insight into life for child A and enabled effective planning of parenting support. Punctuality improved and Child A was keen to come to school. When parents eventually agreed to consider secondary school, we liaised with admissions at county and local secondary schools to gain a place for A and be a 'bridge' for Mum. Transition support was given to the whole family, including extended family members (Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles) to ensure that all barriers to attendance were removed. Mum said 'I didn't want to send her, but I trust you, I know you want what is best for A'.

Child A told staff 'I know I can go to the Headteacher's office and tell her anything, it's like another home'. Child A has since been back to Disraeli and tells us she is enjoying making friends and learning new things.

## Case Study B - Adult

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### History

B is of mixed Black Caribbean and White British heritage, aged 26. Growing up in close proximity to the school B was a pupil at The Disraeli School from the age of 4. B had siblings at the school and a parent who worked at the school. Leadership knew outcomes were poor for many of the boys of Black Caribbean or dual Black Caribbean and White British heritage, who were ex-pupils of the school.

### What happened

B applied for a Learning Support Assistant post in 2014. Being part of a local steel band he asked if he could use the school for band practise, which was agreed. A free After School Club was then offered to targeted pupils. B then went on to use the school site for lessons for children and adults in the evening. Pupils, parents, staff and ex-pupils took up lessons. This then led to four members of staff and pupils performing at many school events, including Christmas lunches, picnics and summer fayres. One parent said 'I love coming and hearing the pans, I feel like my culture is being valued. I have had lessons and shown my son that I am still learning too'.

B then began to cover lessons and successfully applied for a team leader role in Extended Services. We believe it is vital for our pupils to see role models from within their community as Marianne Wright Edelman, President of the Children's Defence Fund said 'You can't be what you can't see!'

## Case Study B - Adult

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An example of how this modelling was effective was shown when one pupil with very challenging behaviour was supported by B. After many discussions with B, he then went on to join steel band lessons out of school hours and was able to self-regulate within these lessons. The pupil's parent told B 'He is able to focus because he says he wants to play like you. It's been amazing for his self-esteem'.

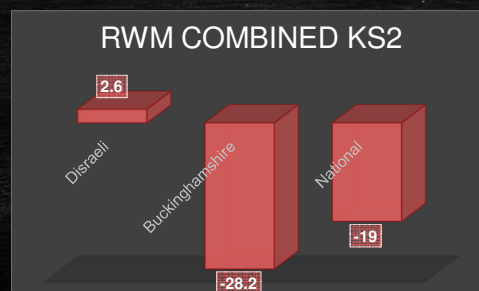
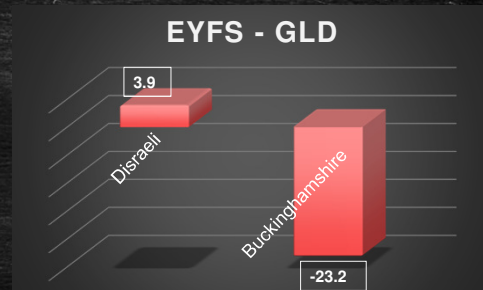
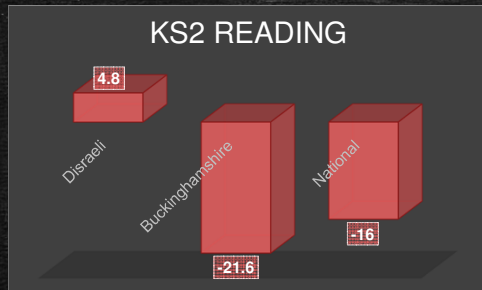
### Outcome

B and other staff members who are now in the band have held community days to raise funds for local charities and regularly perform for free at residential homes for the elderly, giving residents an opportunity to play. The school employing and supporting community members has enabled these individuals to go on and support and develop their community, whilst raising aspirations.

B is now completing leadership training funded by the school. Parents have said that they like seeing a member of staff who was an ex-pupil and also one that many of them went to school with.

When asked about working at the school B responded 'I love working in the community that I grew up in, being a positive role model and showing our pupils the difference they too can make'.

2018-19 Data outcomes – where we are closing the gap  
(in-school disadvantaged compared with in-school other)



## What's next?

### What's Next?

- Better tracking impact of all the interventions we have in place
- Auditing resources and books for better representation of all of our school community
- Ensuring there are more opportunities for professional development through action research and leadership development across the staff, including support staff, and including those from BAME and vulnerable groups
- Use our wellbeing and attitudes assessments to look at any trends for particular groups and act on this (self-efficacy key area for development)
- Characteristics of effective learning are being developed so consistent across the whole school
- Zones of regulation being developed so consistent across the whole school
- Signed up to work with the Youth Offending Team on a new initiative for BAME pupils
- Ensuring we keep disproportionately affected members of our community as safe as we can during COVID pandemic; decision making and risk-assessing takes in to account our community make up

## Thank You

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- We don't have the answers - we certainly aren't experts
- What works in our context may not work in another
- But we do genuinely care, we do think we know our community well and we want to make long term change
- We will keep climbing the stairs!!!!

## Documents or websites that were/are influential to us:

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<https://hbr.org/2017/09/research-how-the-best-school-leaders-create-enduring-change>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/541394/Unknown children destined for disadvantage.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/541394/Unknown_children_destined_for_disadvantage.pdf)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/rita\\_pierson\\_every\\_kid\\_needs\\_a\\_champion?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion?language=en)

