Improving Outcomes for Disadvantaged Children and Young People at SEN Support

Part 1 of 3

Marc Rowland

South West England

21st June 2021

Whole School SEND Contract Aims

Equip the school workforce to prioritise and understand their responsibilities in relation to SEND and to share and embed good practice at individual and setting-level within their CPD and school improvement plans, particularly in relation to SEN Support, early intervention and effective preparation for adulthood

Equip schools to meet their training needs in relation to SEND to improve provision through the delivery of targeted training packages within specific Local Authorities

Build capability within the school workforce to ensure all professionals can contribute to excellent SEND provision at every point in their career by providing clear CPD pathways to support their development, including in relation to specialist provision

Session Objectives:

1) The key elements to developing an effective strategy

2) Addressing disadvantage in the classroom

3) Effective implementation

What do we hope this session will achieve?

- To provide leaders with the tools to develop an effective strategy to improve outcomes for disadvantaged learners with SEND.

From mitigation to success
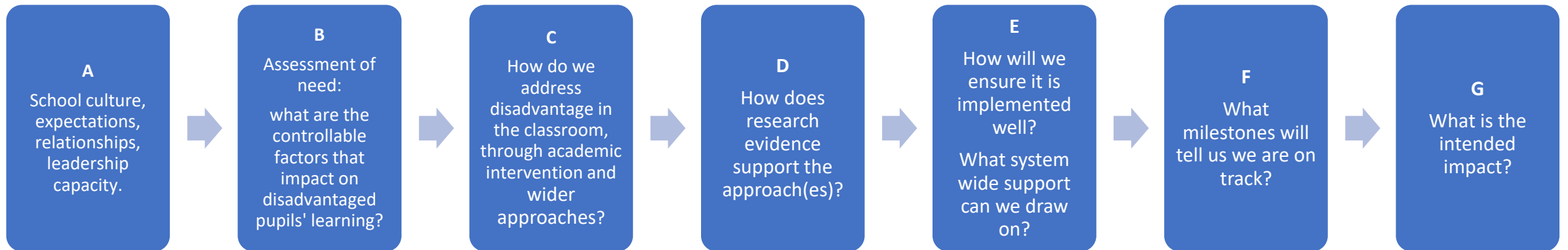**Improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners with SEND.**
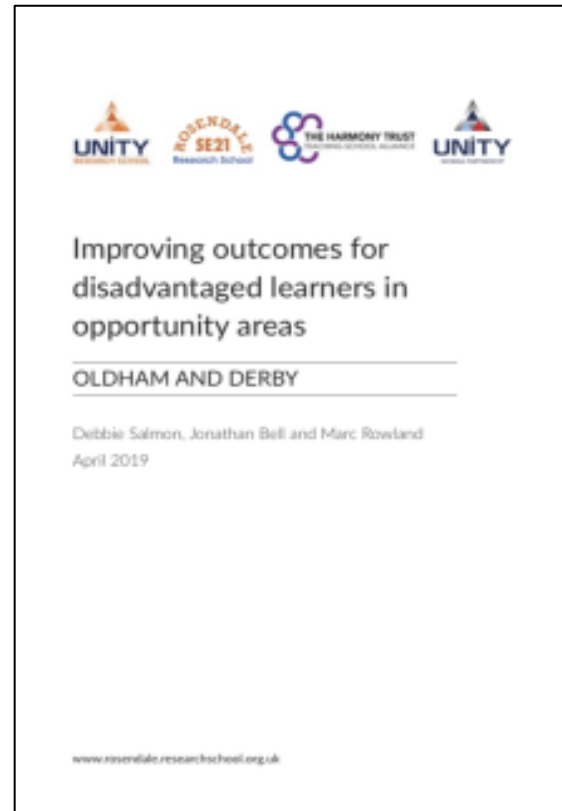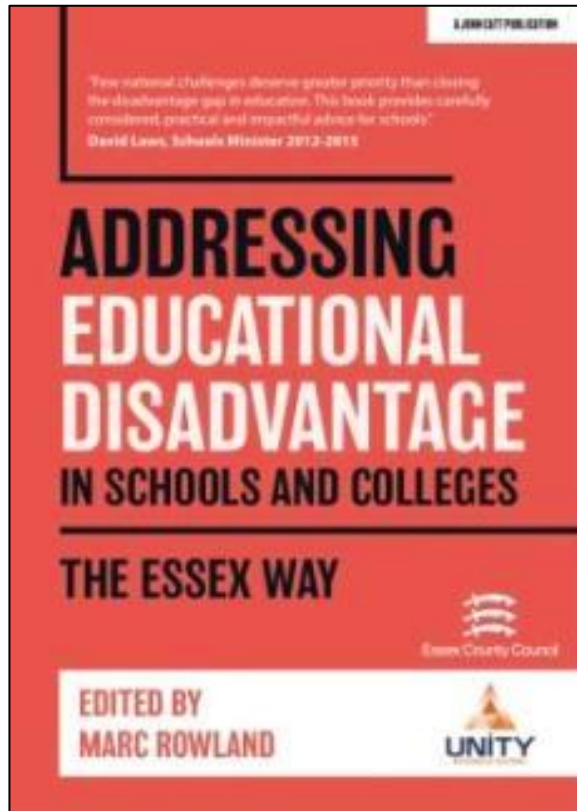**Whole School SEND**

Session 1

Marc Rowland
June 2021

Developing an effective strategy…

A
School culture, expectations, relationships, leadership capacity.

B
Assessment of need:
what are the controllable factors that impact on disadvantaged pupils' learning?

C
How do we address disadvantage in the classroom, through academic intervention and wider approaches?

D
How does research evidence support the approach(es)?

E
How will we ensure it is implemented well?
What system wide support can we draw on?

F
What milestones will tell us we are on track?

G
What is the intended impact?

'If you expect nothing from somebody you are never disappointed.'

Sylvia Plath

'The least dangerous assumption is that they [pupils] can do it!'

Edith Borthwick Special School, Essex

A

Securing school culture, expectations, relationships, leadership capacity.

- A strong, system wide knowledge and understanding of how best to address educational disadvantage is a key foundation.

- Strong, definable school culture (everyone collectively responsible for disadvantaged pupils).

- Strong, sustained relationships.

- High expectations are defined, and a shared language for this across school.

- Not avoiding difficult conversations with the community.

- Reflective leadership, not defensive leadership.

- A belief that pupils can attain well. Buying into the community.

- Recognise that attainment leads to opportunity, founded on strong pastoral care.

- Outward facing, keen to learn from effective practice and research evidence.

Relationships matter

Relationships as drivers of human development: Positive supportive contexts
Osher et al, 2019

Relationships between and among children and adults are a primary process through which biological and contextual factors influence and mutually reinforce each other. Relationships that are reciprocal, attuned, culturally responsive, and trustful are a positive developmental force between children and their physical and social contexts.

Such relationships help to establish idiographic developmental pathways that serve as the foundation for lifelong learning, adaptation, the integration of social, affective, emotional, and cognitive processes and will, over time, make qualitative changes to a child's genetic makeup.

Bornstein & Leventhal, 2015; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006.
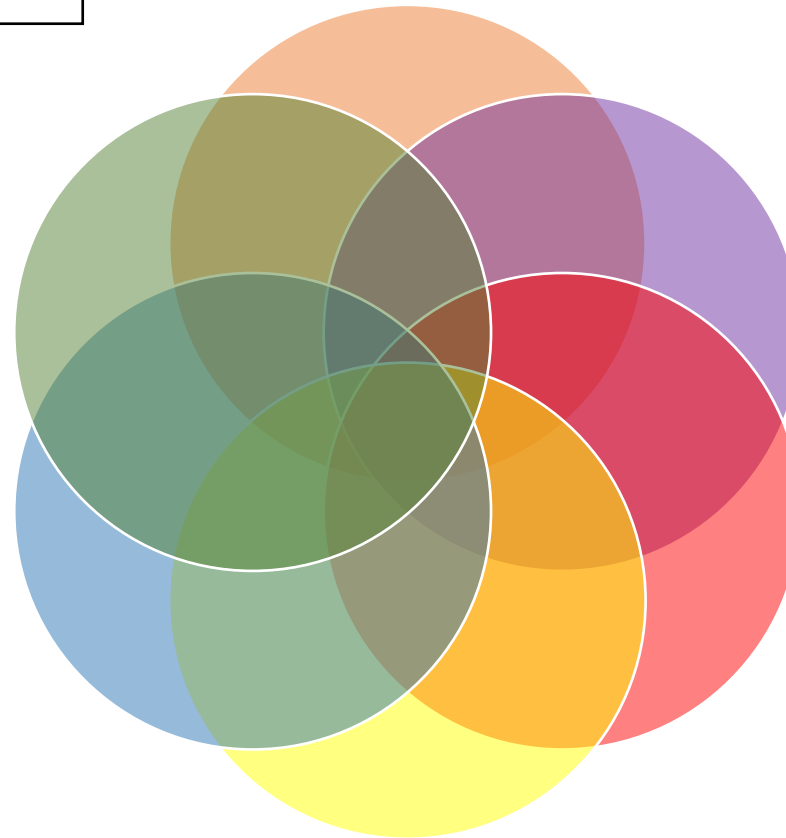
Disadvantage:
much more than Pupil Premium!

EAL (not homogenous!)

SEMH (not homogenous!)

Low income (not homogenous!)

Long term socio economic disadvantage (not homogenous!)

Special Educational Needs (not homogenous!)

Mobility (not homogenous!)

'*Be an expert in your pupils*'

Margaret Mulholland

B
Assessment of need: what are the controllable factors that impact on disadvantaged pupils' learning?

- A strong understanding disadvantage and its impact on learning.

- Broader that Ever6, but we accountability or Pupil Premium outcomes will remain (it's a good thing – despite being problematic!)

- Understanding disadvantage in context.

- Learning led, not label led approaches. Rooted in inclusion. Keep focus on learning!

- Assessment, not assumptions informs approach: Doncaster RS diagnostic assessment

- Take a long term view… rooted in early intervention. Focus on improving learners.

- Clear theory of change. X issue - addressed by Y approaches – leading to Z impact.

- Using data well? E.g. reading ages, impact evaluation.

- Focus on the factors causing of underachievement, not the symptoms.

- Focus on the *controllable* factors that are preventing pupils from attaining well.

Vocabulary at aged five

- There is a 27% gap between the lowest income quintile and the highest.

- The lowest quintile have 16% more likely to have conduct problems compared to the highest quintile.

- The lowest quintile are 15% more likely to have hyperactivity problems compared to the highest quintile.

Waldfogel and Washbrook, 2010

In addition to a lack of exposure to these 30 million words, the words a child from a low- income family has typically mastered are often negative directives, meaning words of discouragement. The ratios of encouraging versus discouraging feedback found within the study, when extrapolated, evidences that by age four, the average child from a family on welfare will hear **125,000** more words of discouragement than encouragement. When compared to the **560,000** more words of praise as opposed to discouragement that a child from a high-income family will receive, this disparity is extraordinarily vast.

The established connection between what a parent says and what a child learns has more severe implications than previously anticipated. Though Hart and Risley are quick to indicate that each child received no shortage of love and care, the immense differences in communication styles found along socio-economic lines are of far greater consequence than any parent could have imagined. The resulting disparities in vocabulary growth and language development are of great concern and prove the home does truly hold the key to early childhood success.

Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3" (2003, spring). American Educator, pp.4-9. http://www.aft.org//sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf

C

How do we address disadvantage in the classroom, through academic intervention and wider approaches?

- Use evidence to inform decision making *(for both academic and pastoral approaches, including parental involvement).*

- Develop staff to ensure they can meet the needs of pupils and families *(academic and pastoral).*

- Recognise that the classroom is where we make the biggest difference for disadvantaged pupils.

- Recognise that 'Quality First Teaching' is not enough. The development of teaching should to focus on the needs of disadvantaged pupils, for example, developing pupils oral language through dialogic teaching.

- Recognise the importance of teaching pupils to read well: from learning to read to reading to learn.

- Assessing things that are important (but difficult!) to assess!

C
How do we address disadvantage in the classroom, through academic intervention and wider approaches?

- A *relentless* focus on language acquisition and language comprehension. By addressing this issue, we will support better self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-regulation, self-confidence. Whole school expertise on addressing the vocabulary gap.

- No suggestion that there are subjects / learning that is better suited to disadvantaged pupils.

- A focus on the areas that will have the biggest effect size. Do a few things very well. Academic intervention supplements high quality, inclusive teaching.

- Broaden, rather than narrow vistas.

- Have a shared understanding of the process of learning: *Learning versus performance (Bjork et al)*

Reading improves teenagers' vocab, whatever their background, say researchers

22 November 2017

Teenagers who read in their spare time know 26 per cent more words than those who never read, according to researchers at the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS).

The research team, based at the UCL Institute of Education, found that teenagers who read often, and those who had access to plenty of books, were more likely to develop a better vocabulary than their peers.

Analysing the scores of nearly 11,000 14-year-olds in a word exercise, the researchers found that teenagers who read for pleasure every day understood 26 per cent more words than those who never read at all in their spare time. And teenagers from book-loving homes knew 42 per cent more words than their peers who had grown up with few books.

Even taking into account other factors, like parents' qualifications and profession, and cognitive tests taken by the teenagers when they were aged 5, teenagers who read for pleasure still got 12 per cent more words right, while those from book-rich homes scored 9 per cent more.

https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/reading-improves-teenagers-vocab-whatever-their-background-say-researchers/

Metacognition and Self regulated learning

Children persist less when adults take over:
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33484166/

Metacognitive awareness inventory:
https://services.viu.ca/sites/default/files/metacognitive-awareness-inventory.pdf

Bias: How bias subconsciously emerges in teacher assessment (EEF)

Daniel Kahneman, the Nobel prize winning economist, has demonstrated through forty years of experiments that people exhibit bias in their everyday and professional lives, mostly without being conscious of it. He describes one form of bias as an *anchoring* effect. Anchoring occurs when we try to think of a value for an unknown quantity before estimating that quantity. Anchoring is a natural human response, but as we are rarely conscious of it, when it emerges through assessment it can be extremely problematic. *Kahneman, D. (2013), Thinking Fast and Slow, Penguin, London*

When we assess a piece of work from a child that we know well, our bias emerges. Perhaps we know they can perform better than the piece in front of us, subconsciously prompting us to raise the mark. Even if the work is assessed anonymously, the existing evidence shows that bias is exhibited against pupils with SEN, those whose behaviour is challenging, those for whom English is an additional language, and those on Free School Meals. Assessment judgments can often be overly-lenient, overly-harsh or, indeed, can reinforce stereotypes, such as boys being perceived as better than girls at mathematics.

This doesn't mean that teachers should abandon teacher assessment altogether. But it does require an acknowledgement that reliable and unbiased assessment is a considerable challenge. To improve the quality of teacher assessments it is important to consider how to:
 improve the reliability (consistency) of assessments;
 increase the accuracy of teacher judgement
 increase the precision of inferences drawn from assessments;
 reduce systematic biases.

The key message here is not that teacher assessment can't or shouldn't be done; it is that teacher assessment is hard to get right, and that it requires excellent training, moderation, standardisation and quality control. Our starting point should be that great assessments are valid, reliable, purposeful and valuable, but these things are not easy to get right.

Pupils, not labels

"A key message has been not to look at the label of a child or even necessarily raw data but to consider where need is. For example, for intervention to consider where there is a skills gap or a knowledge gap rather than simply going of the results of one off tests. We also realise that we have been too hasty in attempting to ensure all disadvantaged students have a mentor when again we should look at need and ensure the skill set of the mentors is matched to the need of the student."

St John Fisher Catholic High School, Harrogate

Parents and children living in poverty have the same aspirations as those who are better off

Gill Main, University of Leeds, 2018

Children who were in a low income households were:

- 4.5 times more likely to have not eaten or not eaten enough when they were hungry
- 5.6 times more likely to have had to wear old or poorly fitting clothes or shoes
- 5.2 times more likely to have pretended to their family not to need something
- 6.7 times more likely to have pretended to their friends that they did not want to do something that cost money
- 6.7 times more likely to feel embarrassed by a lack of money
- 4.4 times more likely to miss out on social activities.

Their parents were 7.9 times more likely to have gone hungry. This points not only to the devastating impacts that poverty has on children, but also to the pervasive nature of ideas which suggest that poor people themselves are somehow to blame for their situation in life. Perversely, they are made to feel ashamed because they don't have the resources to have the same things and engage in the same activities as their better off peers.

The cover image text reads:

The British Psychological Society
Promoting excellence in psychology

Behaviour Change:

School attendance, exclusion and persistent absence

Persistent absence from school – defined in 2015 as less than 90 per cent attendance[1] – incurs costs: Economic, social and psychological, for the children and young people involved, for their communities and for society.

It is also claimed that children and young people who are absent from school to any extent are more likely to leave school with few or no qualifications and are more likely to be out of work, suffer mental health difficulties and become homeless. However, research has tended to be by questionnaire and analyses tend to be associative rather than causal[2]. The conclusion that a student cannot afford to miss even a few days at school without a significantly detrimental effect appears to be based on the unsubstantiated beliefs of teachers, parents and politicians rather than on quantitative longitudinal studies that isolate effects measurably caused by school absence.

www.bps.org.uk/behaviourchange

The British Psychological Society

The British Psychological Society (2017) Behaviour Change: School attendance, exclusion and persistent absence.

https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/behaviour-change-school-attendance-exclusion-and-persistent-absence

D
How does research evidence support the approach(es)?

- No approved list of evidence!

- Be wary of red flags!

- Avoid 'toolkit light' e.g. *'We have trained two ELSAs as EEF toolkit says Social and Emotional Strategies = 3+ months of additional progress'.*

- About informing practice, not box ticking for accountability.

- Evidence should inform and challenge, not justify.

- Sometimes evidence is weak.

- Don't cherry pick! See the broad vista…

Red flags: Author and publication

What would make you sceptical in relation to the author or where the article was published?

- The author has biases or vested interests.
- The author is not qualified to comment or has no experience in this field.
- The article is shared on a commercial website that benefits from the intervention or approach.
- Research that is funded by an individual or organisation with vested interests.

Red flags: Literature or evidence reviews

What would make you sceptical in relation to reviews of previous research?

- Reporting only studies which support the author's views, or are written by the author, and ignoring any other evidence.
- Uncritical inclusion of poor quality studies.
- Applying findings to situations or people beyond the original research.
- Conclusions which most experts in the field would disagree with.

Red flags: Experimental research methods

What would make you sceptical in relation to research methods?

- Small or biased samples.
- The intervention and comparison group not being similar before the research began.
- Measures testing things that only the intervention group has learnt.
- Measures created by the researcher.
- High rates of participants dropping out, which is not taken into account in the conclusions.
- Using a research method which is not appropriate to answer the research question.

Red flags: Data analysis and conclusions

What should you watch out for when people present data and their conclusions?

- Not reporting outcomes for all planned measures, especially if the outcomes reported support the author's initial opinion.
- Conclusions being drawn which are not supported by results.
- Applying findings to situations or people beyond the scope of the research.
- Over-complicated (or even made-up) scientific language.
- Not reporting limitations of the study or review.
- Correlations being used to conclude that A causes B.
- Graphs and results being presented in a misleading way.

Research Schools Network

Be wary with implementation plans

E

How will we ensure it is implemented well?

What system wide support can we draw on?

- Trying to address too many problems in implementation plans - narrow focus.

- The problem is too general e.g. improve the quality of teaching.

- Make sure the active ingredients are very well defined.

- Make sure the intervention activities are activities i.e. what are you actually going to do, rather than describing intended outcomes. Avoid 'launch and pray!'

- Common intervention activity - 'Improve quality of teaching'. Needs to be more focused and specific about the aspect of teaching. Teacher agency key.

- Be wary of focus on vocabulary without oral language.

- Remember to engage with evidence.

- Teacher – pupil interactions more likely to improve learners than structural changes.

System wide support

- Learn from excellence, both within and beyond school.

- Families of schools database.

- Recipe and ingredients > baked cake.

- Teaching School Hubs.

- Maths and English Hubs.

- System expertise e.g. Pupil Premium / SEND Reviews.

- In school expertise.

- School to school expertise.

- MATs are not islands.

- External expertise, WSS, Natalie Packer, David Bartram, Margaret Mulholland

- Research School Network.

- Education Endowment Foundation.

- Avoid the Wallace – Darwin effect!

F
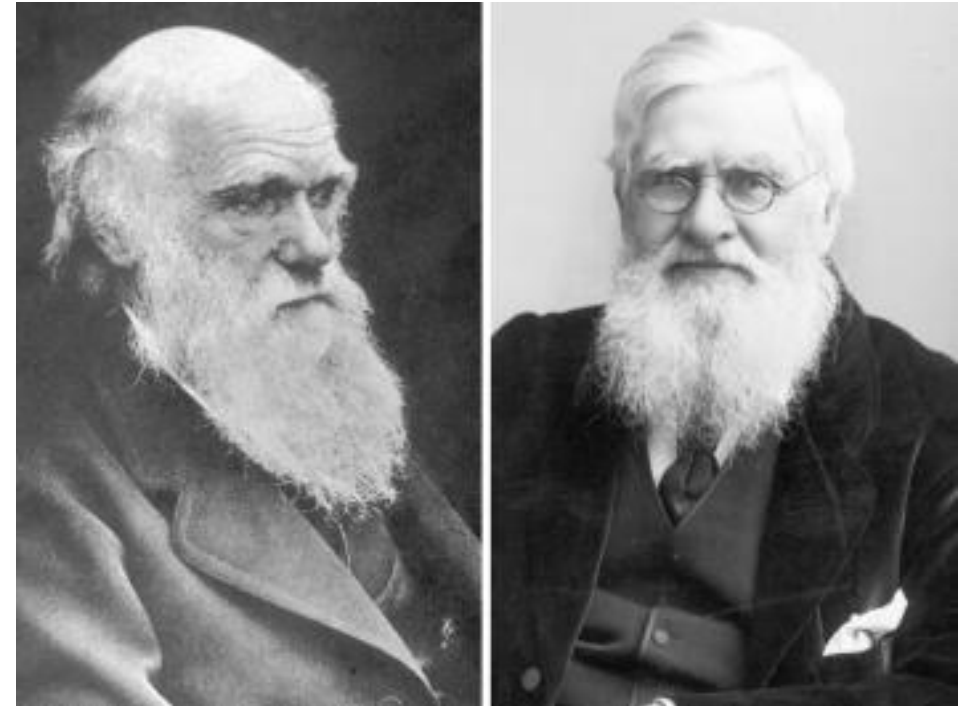
What milestones will tell us we are on track?

When evaluating impact, do:

- Focus on whether activity has been successful, and in what circumstances. *Evaluate, don't prove.*
- Look for evidence of impact on pupil outcomes
- Put in place a robust evaluation framework at the start of the strategy. *Set milestones.*
- Ensure that the evaluation framework is transparent. *Set out in advance.*
- Report on progress against that framework. *With governors.*
- Judge our success based on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, not institutions. *Pupil outcomes > Ofsted grades.*
- Decouple evaluation from accountability.

When evaluating impact, don't:

G

What is the intended impact?

- Base evaluation of improvement on the weakest datasets, in order to can claim credit for any small improvements.
- Base evaluation of improvement on the reactions of those delivering the plan.
- Base evaluation of improvement on selected schools that were the most enthusiastic about the plan.
- Use vague outcome measures from the start, making success easier to claim.
- Use one set of favourable data or ignore any negative findings: avoid *'X% of pupils didn't attain well as they have SEND'.*
- Use sets of data that avoid focusing on pupil learning outcomes.

Evaluation is fundamental to continuous improvement and to building a solid evidence base that will enable the plan to impact on pupils.

A Maturing Culture of Inclusivity

From a system that...

- Identifies pupils as separate - requiring different resource and strategic approach
- Uses diagnostic labels to inform strategic planning
- Sees labels as an anchor on attainment
- Plans for 'most' and then 'some'
- Assumes a 'deficit discourse' - preconceiving difficulties and difference
- Adopts 'bell-curve' thinking
- Focuses on operational compliance
- Defers to individual experts/designated staff
- Assumes individual ownership of pupil groups

Towards a system that...
- Recognising difference, acknowledges biases
- Applying pedagogy for all
- Developing a strengths-based discourse that celebrates difference
- Expecting to be surprised by pupil potential
- Seeing all pupils as their responsibility
- Planning strategically to consider accessibility for everyone
- Sees purpose of education as social justice through better attainment
- Focuses on inclusive teaching and learning
- System wide knowledge, responsibility and expertise
- Collective responsibility and ownership of pupil groups

People matter!

Schools matter!

School matters to all pupils, but particularly to disadvantaged pupils.

We'll probably never have a greater focus on disadvantage than now. Everyone has a role to play

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https://marcrowland.wordpress.com/

https://researchschool.org.uk/unity/

Make sure to join us for Parts 2 and 3 of this series

Part 2: **Wednesday 14th July, 4.00-5.00 PM**: Developing and Embedding Inclusive Practice

Part 3: **Tuesday 14th September, 4.00-5.00 PM**: Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating

Make sure to click the verification links in your booking email and contact info@wholeschoolsend.com if you have any issues.

https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/events/improving-outcomes-disadvantaged-young-people-sen-support

Thank you for attending!

- Join our member community:
  https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/register

- Get in touch: info@wholeschoolsend.com

- Sendgateway.org.uk

- Nasen.org.uk

- @wholeschoolSEND

- @nasen_org

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- Twitter: [@WSSSouthWest](https://twitter.com/WSSSouthWest)

References

- Addressing Educational Disadvantages in Schools and Colleges: The Essex Way

- Improving Outcomes for Disadvantaged Learners in Opportunity Areas

- Waldfogel and Washbrook: Low income and early cognitive development in the UK

- Bjork et al: Learning versus performance

- Daniel Kahneman: Thinking, Fast and Slow

- Gill Main: Parents and Childing Living in Poverty

Additional Useful Links:

- Recorded webinar: Speech, Language and Communication Needs: What Every Teacher Needs to Know

- Recorded webinar: Whole Class Reading

- Recorded webinar: High-Quality Teaching

- Recorded webinar: The graduated approach (featuring **Margaret Mulholland**)

- Recorded webinar: The evidence-informed teacher

- Recorded webinar: Being a research-engaged SENCO (Primary)

- Recorded webinar: Being a research-engaged SENCO (Secondary)

- TA Deployment Guide

New WSS Resources and Events:

- **Deployment of Specialists in Mainstream Resource Pack –** Research-based resources providing an in-depth understanding of the effective deployment of specialists: https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources/deploying-specialists-mainstream-settings-improve-outcomes-learners-send

- **Autism Resource Suite –** The latest guidelines, resources and practical strategies for education professionals supporting autistic learners: https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources/autism-resource-suite

- **Upcoming webinar – Leading Governance for SEND:** https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/events/leading-governance-send-using-whole-school-send-governance-review-guide

You can find all our resources on the SEND gateway and see all upcoming webinars on the Events section:

https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources

Let us know how this session has informed your practice!

Whole School SEND is always looking to improve our CPD offer by evaluating how attendees have changed their practice or embedded new strategies. We welcome any feedback on the session, either through our **post-events survey** or directly via **email** to info@wholeschoolsend.com.

If you would like to, we are also very happy for attendees to submit copies of any post-event activities so we can see how these have been used in practice

Let us know:

- What worked? What didn't? What were the challenges in putting ideas from this session into practice? What do you need more support with? Do you feel more confident after attending this session?

Find your region

- The WSS Regions are based on the boundaries used by the Regional Schools Commissioner areas.

- You can find out which region your local authority comes under here:

https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/whole-school-send-regional-send-leads

Recordings

- You can find recordings of our past webinars with the accompanying materials on the SEND gateway:

https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/page/wss-past-events

- You can also subscribe to our YouTube channel to keep updated:

www.youtube.com/c/WholeSchoolSEND

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SEND Gateway

Please get in touch if you are struggling to locate any of our resources.

info@wholeschoolsend.com